

PIŁSUDSKI AND PARLIAMENT:

THE CRISIS OF PARLIAMENTARY GOVERNMENT IN POLAND 1922-1931

by

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**Thesis submitted for the degree D.Phil.
to the Board of the Faculty of Modern History
in the University of Oxford**

Michaelmas Term, 1967. [1967]

ABSTRACT

The new Polish state which emerged after the First World War adopted a highly democratic constitution based upon that of the Third French Republic. The powers of the President and the Cabinet were indeed even weaker than those allowed by the French Constitution. Although the Senate could hold up legislation and demand that proposed laws be passed in the Sejm by an 11/20 majority, in practice political power was concentrated in the Lower House, elected by universal suffrage with proportional representation.

This constitution, adopted in March 1921, worked badly from the start. One hundred and thirty years of partition had created very different political traditions among those who had lived under either Austrian, Prussian or Russian rule. In addition, the political experience of the Polish clubs in the Reichsrat, the Reichstag and the Duma had been that of sectional groups whose sole concern had been to obtain the redress of minority grievances, a training singularly unfitted for members of a national legislature such as the Sejm, a body responsible for the effective control of the country's government. Widespread poverty and ignorance encouraged politicians to indulge in demagoguery, and the prevalence of corruption in public life tended more and more to be ascribed to the nature of parliamentary government, which became

increasingly discredited. The long years of foreign rule, during which Polish national survival had been the pre-eminent goal in politics, obscured the new state's obligations towards her own national minorities, who made up altogether one third of her population. Moreover Poland's perilous international position, her newly won independence threatened by both Germany and Russia, lent calls for a stronger government greater force. Parliament was further discredited by the failure of the politicians to deal successfully with the exceedingly difficult economic problems which confronted the new state. Finally, the persistence in the post-war period of the now largely anachronistic conflict between the National Democrats, under Roman Dmowski, and the supporters of Jozef Piłsudski, the charismatic leader of the Polish legions in the First World War and Supreme Commander in the victorious war with the Soviet Union, was a continual source of instability. Thus it was not surprising that the progressive breakdown of the parliamentary system, conflicts over the position of the Piłsudski-ites in the Army, and the recurrence of severe economic difficulties led to a coup in May 1926 which brought Piłsudski to power after three days of fighting.

Piłsudski had no well-defined political ideas. He was principally interested in foreign policy and Army affairs, and showed little interest in the day-to-day running of the Government. He did not, therefore, to the surprise of some of

his adherents, establish a dictatorship after his coup. Instead he maintained the 1921 Constitution, introducing a number of modifications. Of these the most important were the provision that the Government's budget proposals be enacted automatically if the legislature failed to approve a budget in the specified time, and that which deprived Parliament of the right to effect its own dissolution, a right now granted to the President acting with the approval of the Cabinet. Piłsudski attempted to co-operate with Parliament through the accomodating Kazimierz Bartel, a former radical politician who was Prime Minister from May to September 1926 and again from June 1928 to April 1929 (between October 1926 and June 1928 he was Vice Premier). The system of government pursued in this period was a sort of 'guided democracy' which allowed Parliament a limited role in criticizing the activities of the Government, but reserved the formulation and implementation of policy as the exclusive province of the Cabinet. The Cabinet was only formally responsible to the Sejm, and in fact could not be forced to resign by a vote of no-confidence.

Under Polish conditions there was much to be said for this semi-autocratic system. It allowed a fair degree of personal and political freedom; parties, apart from Communist organizations, were not banned, few people were arrested, and the press was relatively free. At the same time, it provided a strong Government with continuity of policy, a vital need

if any consistent plan was to be pursued concerning the national minorities, economic problems or foreign policy. Yet this 'Piłsudski-ite system' was to prove scarcely more successful than the 1921 Constitution.

Although Piłsudski had come to power with the support of the parties of the Left (the Polish Socialist Party and the two radical peasant groups, the Peasant Party and the Liberation), he came into increasing conflict with them, particularly after the elections of March 1928. This conflict culminated in the formation of an alliance of six parties of the Centre and Left, the so-called Centrolew, which demanded the replacement of the 'Piłsudski system' by a return to full democracy. Nevertheless, in the elections of November 1930, after arresting a large number of Opposition politicians and by using considerable administrative pressure to influence the voting, Piłsudski won a decisive victory over his opponents. The arrests, the Government's electoral victory, and the trial and conviction of the leading Opposition politicians in October 1931 saw the virtual abandonment by the Sanacja, as the Government called itself, of the residual parliamentarianism which had persisted after the coup. Although the press continued to enjoy relative freedom, and most political parties were allowed to exist openly, the Government became far more autocratic, though still not authoritarian. This development became much more marked, and the clash between the liberal and authoritarian elements within the

(Warsaw, 1964).

Sanacja more evident, after Piłsudski's death in May 1935 had exposed the ideological hollowness of his 'system'.

This thesis is an attempt to describe the failure of two constitutional experiments: that of the democratic constitution of March 1921, and that of the semi-autocratic system introduced after the coup of May 1926. It takes as its starting-point the elections of November 1922, the first to be held under the new constitution. The detailed narrative continues to the end of 1930, when the Government's victory in the elections and the arrest of the leading Centrolew politicians saw the culmination of the move to a more autocratic system.

The problem of Poland's political evolution during this period has been relatively neglected, both in Poland and in the West. In Poland, a fair amount of work has been done on the radical political parties, both Communist and non-Communist.¹ However, very little has been published on either the Piłsudskites in this period, or the National Democrats, although there are signs that something may soon be done to bridge this gap.² In America, a valuable book has recently been published on Piłsudski's coup,³ but since it concentrates its attention upon

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1. See, e.g., A. Czubiński, Centrolew (Poznan, 1963); S. Lato, Ruch Ludowy a Centrolew (Warsaw, 1965); S.P. Stęborowski, Geneza Centrolewu (Warsaw, 1963).
 2. See R. Wapiński, 'Niektóre problemy ewolucji ideowo-politycznej Endecji w latach 1919-39', K.H. lxxiii (1966), No. 4, pp.861-76. Wapiński is at present working on a history of the National Democrats between the two World Wars. Also A. Micewski, Z geografii politycznej II Rzeczypospolitej (Warsaw, 1964).
 3. J. Rothschild, Piłsudski's Coup d'Etat (New York, 1966).

the events of the coup itself and on its military aspects, its treatment of the political background and of subsequent political developments in somewhat sketchy. Apart from this book, almost nothing of serious academic worth has been written in the West on Polish internal politics between the Wars, although a number of useful works on foreign policy have appeared.¹

This thesis is based primarily on Government documents in the Archiwum Akt Nowych in Warsaw, on papers dealing with the Polish Socialist Party in the Archiwum Zakładu Historii Partii, on the minutes of the debates in the Sejm and Senate, on memoirs and on contemporary newspapers. Of the papers in the Archiwum Akt Nowych, principal use has been made of the minutes of Cabinet meetings, the special files of the Prime Minister's Office, the reports of the periodic meetings of local government officials, and the Świtalski papers. To the best of my knowledge, no one from the West has had access to this material before.

The first chapter of the thesis attempts to sketch the social and economic background of the new Poland. This has been treated in some detail, partly because a prevailing weakness of

1. See, e.g., P.S. Wandycz, France and her Eastern Allies 1919-1925 (Minneapolis, 1962); J. Korbel, Poland Between East and West (Princeton, 1963).

Polish historiography has been a tendency to consider political problems in almost complete isolation from their social context, partly because, although some valuable detailed work has been done on these problems in Poland, no synthetic treatment exists either in Polish or in any Western language.

The second chapter outlines the nature of the 1921 Constitution and the other basic laws of the country. It also describes the political parties, both Polish and those of the national minorities. Particular attention has been devoted to the conflict between Dmowski and Piłsudski, which had dominated Polish politics before and during the First World War and continued to exercise an enormous influence after Independence. The importance of the national minorities has also been stressed, since in a political system with universal suffrage their numbers ensured that their influence would be felt.

The third chapter deals with the way the 1921 Constitution functioned between the elections of November 1922 and the coup of May 1926. The importance of the failure of the elections to produce a clear majority in the Sejm, which precipitated the parliamentary crisis, has been shown, and an attempt has been made to illustrate the continual interaction of the economic crisis and the political situation. In addition, it is shown that disputes over the position of the Army and of the Piłsudskites within it meant that the Government could not count on the Army's loyalty in a clash with Piłsudski. Defeats in foreign

policy, the failure to deal successfully with the national minorities, and the prevalence of corruption all further undermined the parliamentary system.

In the fourth chapter is described the final political crisis created by the collapse of the Skrzyński coalition on 20 April 1926, which brought on the coup. It is argued that Piłsudski did not expect an armed clash, but believed that the whole Army would follow him, and that this demonstration of his power would induce his old friend, President Wojciechowski, to capitulate to him. The course of the three-day civil war is briefly described, and the chapter ends with an account of the extent to which the Piłsudski-ites had entrenched themselves in power by August 1926.

The fifth chapter is divided into two parts. The first describes the achievements of the new Government, the so-called Sanacja, in the first three years after the coup. It deals with improvements in the administration, the position of the Army, relations with the Church, the economic situation, the treatment of the national minorities and foreign policy. The second part relates how the Government came more and more into conflict with the existing Parliament, which it had not dissolved after the coup. It concludes with the elapsing of the Parliament's constitutional five-year existence in November 1927, and the proclamation of new elections for March 1928.

of any political compromise. It goes on to describe the

These elections are described in the sixth chapter. The Government saw them as a relative victory, although its electoral grouping, the 'Non-party Bloc for Co-operation with the Government', did not win a majority in the Sejm. Moreover, the methods which the Government had employed to obtain this result, notably the use of the local administration to put pressure on voters and the misappropriation of Government funds for its electoral expenses, were to prove a source of later conflict. Relations between the Government and the new Parliament were difficult from the start; an open clash was provoked by the Government's unwillingness to present to Parliament its supplementary credits (those not provided for in the budget) for legal ratification, as it was constitutionally obliged to do. This course of action was almost certainly dictated by Piłsudski's reluctance to reveal the fact that he had authorized the appropriation of public funds for the Sanacja's electoral campaign. The chapter ends with the resignation of the moderate Bartel, and his replacement by the first openly anti-parliamentarian 'Colonels' Cabinet' headed by Col. Kazimierz Świtalski.

The seventh chapter follows the course of the conflict between the Government and the Opposition. It deals first with the onset of the Great Depression in Poland, where it was to prove exceedingly severe and make more difficult the achievement of any political compromise. It goes on to describe the

impeachment of Gabriel Czechowicz, the Minister of Finance, whose trial ended with an inconclusive verdict, but one which was nevertheless seen as a defeat for the Government. The development of the clash between Government and Parliament led to the alliance of six parties of the Centre and Left, the Piast, the Christian Democrats, the National Workers' Party, the Liberation, the Peasant Party and the Socialist Party, in the Centrolew bloc. When the Government dissolved Parliament in August 1930, the Centrolew believed it could force the Sanacja to abdicate by defeating it in the elections. However, by arresting a large number of the Opposition and by strong administrative pressure, the Government won a resounding victory in the new elections. Nevertheless, it did not win in the Sejm the two-thirds majority necessary for constitutional revision.

The epilogue sketches the subsequent evolution of Polish politics in an increasingly autocratic direction. It also speculates upon the reasons for the failure of the semi-parliamentary 'Piłsudski system'. It failed partly because it was anachronistic. The methods of parliamentary control exercised by Giolitti in Italy before 1914 could no longer be applied after the revolutionary upheavals of the First World War. Piłsudski's increasing isolation, his failing health, his inability to grasp what co-operation with even a subservient Parliament meant, and the political incapacity of most of his subordinates also helped to defeat his attempt to work within a

semi-parliamentary framework. The impact of the Great Depression, which coincided with the clash with Parliament, considerably aggravated political differences. The failure to avert a direct clash between Government and Opposition was extremely unfortunate for Poland's political evolution. Although the Government never became openly fascist, it became increasingly isolated from public opinion, particularly after Piłsudski's death. Yet, in spite of increased repression, the Opposition parties survived. The Government formed under General Sikorski in France in 1940, after the catastrophic defeat of Poland in September 1939, was composed of their representatives and was unquestionably democratic in the Western sense. But the victory of the U.S.S.R. in Eastern Europe meant that the democratic experiment was not given a second chance in Poland.

describe how the various democratic movements and the political social and political conditions of the country and how they managed to show how a higher democratic movement was established in part of the state in that country, which was the result of the independent state which was...

It is based primarily on the proceedings of the... in the Archiwum Akt Danych and... Historii Partii, both in Warsaw, as published... and the... of...

FOREWORD

This thesis is an attempt to describe the functioning of the political system in the newly independent Polish state between November 1922 and the beginning of 1931. Like all limits, these dates are somewhat arbitrary. The former was chosen because the elections of 4 and 11 November 1922 revealed in a striking manner the nature of the crisis of Polish parliamentarianism, although it had, to some extent, been evident before. The final clash between Piłsudski and Parliament, the elections of 16 and 23 November 1930, and the Brześć arrests and trial seem the obvious events with which to conclude the detailed narrative. The subsequent evolution of Polish politics has been briefly sketched in the Epilogue.

This is primarily an account of the relations between the Government and Parliament during the period, an attempt both to describe how the various Governments dealt with the pressing social and political problems of the country and, more generally, to show how a highly democratic constitution functioned in one of the states in East-Central Europe which had become independent after World War I.

It is based principally on newspapers, on the minutes of the proceedings of the Sejm and Senate, on Government documents in the Archiwum Akt Nowych and papers in the Archiwum Zakładu Historii Partii, both in Warsaw, on personal accounts deposited

in the Józef Piłsudski Institute Archive in London, and on published and unpublished memoirs.

Considerable attention has been devoted to the social and economic background, since Polish history is too often treated as if it took place in a social vacuum, and since there is no readily accessible treatment of these matters available.

The importance has also been stressed of the political problems which arose from the fact that one third of Poland's population was composed of people whose language or religion was distinct from that of the majority.

The rendering of Polish place names in English creates many difficulties. The system followed in this thesis is not wholly consistent, but seems to raise the fewest objections. For towns such as Warsaw, Cracow or Lodz, which have a commonly employed English form, this form is used. For others, such as Poznań, Toruń and, slightly questionably, Wilno, the Polish form is used. The form Brześć is used throughout, except in referring to the peace-treaty of Brest-Litovsk, where to do so might have appeared pedantic. For some provinces (województwa) the familiar anglicized form is adopted, as Poznania, Pomerania, Polesia and Silesia. For the rest, however, such forms do not exist; in such cases Cracow province, Warsaw province, Wilno province etc., are employed. The names of Russian, White Russian and Ukrainian politicians and political organizations, and the titles of books in these languages and in Yiddish have

been transliterated according to a commonly used English system. An exception has been made in the case of Archbishop Szeptycki, the Uniate Metropolitan, since the rendering of his name in a form different from that of his brother, General Stanisław Szeptycki seemed to occasion unnecessary confusion.

It is always a pleasant task to thank those who have helped one in one's work, though considerations of space make it impossible for the list to be comprehensive. First of all, I should like to thank my supervisor, H.T. Willetts, for his much valued aid and advice, and Drs. A. Walicki, J. Milewski and J. Gołębiowski and Mr. A. Ciołkosz for reading and criticizing the manuscript. I should also like to thank Professor (now Minister) H. Jabłoński and Dr. A. Garlicki of the University of Warsaw for their invaluable assistance during the year I spent in Warsaw and on my subsequent visit, as well as Mrs. B. Skrzyszewska and Dr. H. Knoll of the Archiwum Akt Nowych, Dr. F. Tych of the Archiwum Zakładu Historii Partii, Drs. J. Molenda, J. Lewandowski and A. Ajnenkiel of Warsaw, and General Krok-Paszkowski, Colonel T. Schaezel, and Mr. W. Stankiewicz of the Piłsudski Institute in London. I also owe a debt to Mr. Michael Kaser of St. Antony's College for teaching me how to use a calculating machine.

Finally, I should like to record here my gratitude to the late Mrs. Regina Szenbaum, who taught me the Polish language and so much else about Poland.

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ABBREVIATIONS

A.A.N.	Archiwum Akt Nowych
A.Z.H.P.	Archiwum Zakładu Historii Partii
B.B.W.R.	Bezpartyjny Blok dla współpracy z Rządem
B.P.P.P.	<u>Bulletin Périodique de la Presse Polonaise</u>
C.A.M.S.W.	Centrales Archiwum Ministerstwa Spraw Wewnętrznych
Dz.U.R.P.	<u>Dziennik Urzędowy Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej</u>
K.H.	<u>Kwartalnik Historyczny</u>
M.R.S.	<u>Mały Rocznik Statystyczny</u>
N.D.	<u>Nowe Drogi</u>
N.D.P.	<u>Najnowsze Dzieje Polski</u>
N.K.N.	Naczelny Komitet Narodowy
O.E.H.P.	<u>Osteuropa Handbuch: Polen</u>
O.W.P.	Obóz Wielkiej Polski
P.H.	<u>Przegląd Historyczny</u>
P.O.W.	Polska Organizacja Wojskowa
P.P.R.M.	Protokoły Posiedzeń Rady Ministrów
P.P.S.	Polska Partia Socjalistyczna
P.Zach.	<u>Przegląd Zachodni</u>
P.Z.	<u>J. Piłsudski. Pisma zbiorowe.</u>
P.Z.P.K.I	Protokoły zebrań periodycznych kierowników władz i urzędów Jej instancji

P.Z.P.K.II	Protokóły zebrań periodycznych kierownikóv władz i urzędników IIej instancji
R.D.R.L.	<u>Roczniki Dziejóv Ruchu Ludowego</u>
R.S.R.P.	<u>Roczniki Statystyki Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej</u>
S.D.K.P. i L.	Socjal-Demokracja Królestwa Polskiego i Litwy
S.G.P. i S.	Szkoła Główna Planowania i Statystyki
S.S.S.R.	<u>Sprawozdanie Stenograficzne Sejmu Rzeczypospolitej.</u>
S.S.Se.R.	<u>Sprawozdanie Stenograficzne Senatu Rzeczypospolitej</u>
S.P.	<u>Statystyka Polski</u>
W.P.H.	<u>Wojskowy Przegląd Historyczny</u>
Z.P.W.	<u>Z Pola Walki</u>
Z.W.P.O.	<u>Żydzi w Polsce Odrodzonej</u>



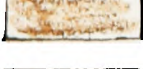

CHAPTER I.INDEPENDENT POLAND : THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC BACKGROUND.Independence

The struggle to regain the independence of Poland by armed insurrection received a catastrophic blow in the crushing of the revolt of 1863 and in the repressive measures which followed. On the eve of the First World War, the partition of Poland seemed permanently established. All but the most visionary of Polish politicians had renounced independence except as the most long-term of aims. Yet, Poland re-emerged in 1918, somewhat unexpectedly, from the military collapse of the Powers which had effected her partition at the end of the eighteenth century. The recreation of the Polish state and the absorption of its disparate parts, particularly in the difficult years after the First World War,¹ was an enormous task. For more than 130 years, the different areas which comprised the newly independent country had been ruled by different administrations and had formed integral parts of Austro-Hungary, Germany and Russia. In the various areas, wide divergencies of law and custom, of temperament and even of language hindered the smooth functioning of the state.

1. Even the exact date of the achievement of independence was a matter of dispute in the interwar period. See J. Piłsudski, Pisma Zbiorowe, viii, 90-119.



THE TERRITORIES MAKING UP THE NEW POLISH STATE

-  CONGRESS KINGDOM
-  EASTERN KRESY
-  GALICIA
-  FORMER AUSTRIAN SILESIA
-  POLISH UPPER SILESIA
-  POZNANIA AND POMERANIA

The former Russian territories, with an area of 262,000 sq. km. (67% of the total)¹ made up the largest part of the state. They were divided into two parts, the Congress Kingdom, in central Poland, and the Kresy, or eastern borderlands.

The Congress Kingdom, which retained after the crushing of the revolt of 1863 scarcely any vestiges of the autonomy it had been granted at the Congress of Vienna in 1815, covered 117,500 sq. km. (30% of the total).² Its population of 10.5 million in 1921 was largely Polish, although there was a substantial Jewish minority in the towns. Still largely agricultural, it had experienced rapid industrial development from the last quarter of the 19th century, supplying principally Russian and Far Eastern markets.³ By 1913, 317,000 workers were employed in mining and industry. The main industrial centres were Lodz, for textile production, the Dąbrowa basin, where a metallurgical area of 145,000 sq. km. (37% of the total).¹ This was a region

1. Based on R.S.R.P., iii (1925), 7-11, Table III.
2. Based on R.S.R.P., iii (1925), 7-11, Table III. These figures are somewhat difficult to calculate because prewar and post-war administrative boundaries did not coincide exactly. The above percentage was arrived at by assigning the provinces of Warsaw, Lodz, Kielce and Lublin, and the districts (powiaty) of Augustów, Suwałki, Łomża and Kolno in the Białystok province to the Congress Kingdom, and the provinces of Wilno, Nowogródek, Polesia and Volynia, and the other districts of the Białystok province to the Eastern Kresy.
3. For this development see: R. Luxemburg, Die Industrielle Entwicklung Polens, (Leipzig, 1898); S. Koszutski, Rozwój ekonomiczny Królestwa Polskiego w ostatnim trzydziestoleciu, (Warsaw, 1905); and J. Jedlicki, Nieudana próba kapitalistycznej industrializacji, (Warsaw, 1964).

industry had grown up alongside the coal mines, and Warsaw, with its metallurgical works and food processing plants of which the most important were sugar refineries.

The abolition of the corvée in the Congress Kingdom had been administered in such a way as to diminish the power of the Polish gentry, who were feared by the Russian government as the originators of the nationalist risings of 1830 and 1863. As a result, although large landed estates were important in the Congress Kingdom, medium-sized peasant holdings played a stronger part than elsewhere in Poland. As often happens when land reverts on a large scale to a self-sufficient peasantry, the Congress Kingdom could not provide for its own food requirements, and imported grain from the Russian Empire.

The Eastern Kresy, which had formed an integral part of Russia, had in 1921 a population of 4.8 million and covered an area of 145,000 sq. km. (37% of the total).¹ This was a region of mixed nationalities: the peasantry in the north was mainly White Russian, though there were also some Poles and Lithuanians, and in the south was mainly Ukrainian. The landowners were almost exclusively Polish, while the urban population was Polish and Jewish. Overwhelmingly agricultural, it was a backward region with poor transport and little contact with the outside world. The peasants of the Polesian marshes, for example,

1. Based on R.S.R.P., iii (1925), 7-11, Table III.



THE POLISH LANDS ON THE EVE OF THE 1ST WORLD WAR.

SHOWING THE ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS OF THE PARTITIONING POWERS,



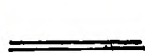
RUSSIA



GERMANY



AUSTRO-HUNGARY



BORDER OF THE CONGRESS KINGDOM.



CHELM REGION. 1912; INCORPORATION IN RUSSIA PROPER PROPOSED, 1915; IMPLEMENTED

still traded almost exclusively by barter. Such industry as existed was concentrated in Wilno, and was concerned with food and timber processing.

The territories formerly under German rule also fell into two distinct parts, Poznanian and Pomeranian, and Polish Upper Silesia. Poznanian and Pomeranian in the west, with a population in 1921 of 2.9 million and an area of 43,000 sq. km. (11% of the total),¹ were predominantly agricultural. One of the principal suppliers of food for the rapidly increasing urban population of Germany, this area had been among the most efficient and highly capitalised wheat and rye growing regions in Europe. Its agricultural structure differed markedly from that of the rest of Poland; it was characterised by the existence of many large landowners and prosperous peasants (grossbauer or gburzy), as well as a vast pool of peasants with dwarf holdings and landless agricultural workers who provided the labour force for the first two groups. The only important industries were food processing and the repair of agricultural machinery. Economically, the area was almost totally dependent on Germany. Between 1911 and 1913 the exports of Prussian Poland have been calculated as reaching 3,000 million marks annually. Of this 66.9% went to the German Reich, and only 9.8% to the other areas which would

1. Loc. cit.

later make up Poland.¹ Although strenuous efforts had been made, through colonization and Germanisation of the schools, to assimilate forcibly the Polish population, they had proved largely unsuccessful. Only in the towns and among the large landowners did the Germans form a sizeable element.²

Polish Upper Silesia, in the south-west, comprised that part of Upper Silesia which was assigned to Poland after the plebiscite of March 1921. It had at the time of independence a population of 980,000 and an area of 3,200 sq. km. (0.8% of the whole).³

Before the war, Upper Silesia had been, after the Ruhr and Saxony, the most highly industrialized area of Germany. Alongside its coal mines, most of which fell to Poland, and which in 1913 had produced 44 million tons of coal, there had grown up vast iron and zinc foundries, as well as an important chemical industry. In 1914 450,000 workers were employed in mining and manufacturing in this region.⁴ The agricultural system was characterised by the highest percentage of large estates in all of Poland, and by the many small plots held on

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1. A. Rose, Bilans handlowy ziem b. dzielnic pruskiej. (Warsaw, 1920), pp. 664-5.
 2. See R.W. Tims, Germanising Prussian Poland (New York, 1941).
 3. Based on R.S.R.P., 111 (1925), 7-11, Table III.
 4. On the industrial development of Upper Silesia see K. Popiołek, 'Rozwój kapitalistycznego przemysłu na Śląsku 1850-1910', Konferencja Śląska: Instytut Historyczny P.A.N., (Wrocław, 1954), i. 191-265.

lease. These smallholdings reflected the desire of agricultural labourers on the large estates for an independent, additional source of income, as well as the long-standing tradition among Silesian industrial workers of maintaining some link with the land.¹

Though the industrialists, landowners and officials had been, before 1914, almost entirely German, the overwhelming majority of the population was Polish-speaking and Catholic. The whole of Silesia had passed from Polish rule in the 14th century, first to the Czechs, then to the Habsburgs, and finally, in the 18th century, to Prussia. As a result, nationalist feeling was weaker here than elsewhere in Poland, and it was only in 1903 that a Polish nationalist was first returned to the Reichstag.² In the plebiscite only 44% of the total population of Upper Silesia voted to join Poland.³

The lands formerly under Austrian rule were two areas very different in size and importance, Galicia and Austrian Silesia, both in the south. Galicia, with a population of 7.6 million (0.3% of the total),

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1. M. Mieszczankowski, Struktura agrarna Polski międzywojennej (Warsaw, 1960), Chapter VIII.
 2. For the political background see: M. Orzechowski, Narodowa Demokracja na Górnym Śląsku (do 1918 roku) (Wrocław-Warsaw-Cracow, 1965), and E. Sontag, Adalbert (Wojciech) Korfanty, Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Polnischen Ansprüche auf Ostoberschlesien (Kitzingen-Main, 1954).
 3. W.J. Rose, The Drama of Upper Silesia (London, 1936), pp. 180-1.

in 1921 and an area of 79,000 sq. km. (20% of the total),¹ was predominantly agricultural. The way in which serfdom had been abolished, and the rapid rise in population throughout the 19th century had caused the greatest fragmentation of holdings in Poland. In 1921 4/5 of all holdings were of less than 5 hectares.² Little industry had developed here until the discovery of oil in east Galicia at the beginning of the 20th century. By 1909 the refineries centred around Borysław, which employed about 6,000 workers, produced annually almost 2,000,000 tons, nearly 4% of the total world production.³ Salt was mined at Wieliczka and Kalusz, as was paraffin wax, of which Galicia had a world monopoly until 1907. In the west, the population was largely Polish, while in the east the peasantry was mainly Ukrainian, the majority of the landowners and of the urban population was Polish, and the Jews formed an important minority in the towns.

That part of Austrian Silesia which fell to Poland had in 1921 a population of 145,000 and an area of 1,000 sq. km. (0.3% of the total).⁴ Also largely agricultural, it had in addition an important textile industry in Bielsko-Biała. The

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1. Based on R.S.R.P., iii (1925), 7-11, Table III.
 2. Based on R.S.R.P., iii (1925), 34, Table I.
 3. S. Bartoszewicz, 'Przemysł naftowy', Dziesięciolecie Polski Odrodzonej (Cracow-Warsaw, 1928), p. 1,031.
 4. Based on R.S.R.P., iii (1925), 7-11, Table III.

population was predominantly Polish, with a sizeable German minority. The creation of a single economic unit from these disparate areas, differing widely in social and economic development, was a slow and difficult process. It was only in early 1920 that a single currency, the Polish mark, was instituted for the whole of Poland. Until then as many as six currencies had circulated in the different parts. In addition to German marks, Austrian crowns and Russian roubles, there were Polish marks, 'occupation marks' issued by the German High Command in the area east of the Congress Kingdom, and Soviet roubles.¹ As late as 1920 a tariff barrier was maintained between the former Prussian partition and the rest of Poland, and one needed a passport to travel from Warsaw to Poznań.²

Poland lacked a unified transport system. The Vistula, which passed through all the partitions, had not been made suitable for navigation along much of its course. Other river communications, excepting those in former Prussian Poland, were of poor quality. The rail networks, fairly dense in Prussian Poland and rather less than adequate in Austrian and particularly Russian Poland, had been constructed bearing in mind the

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1. Z. Landau, J. Tomaszewski, Zarys historii gospodarczej Polski (Warsaw, 1962), p. 39.
 2. A. Ajnenkiel, Od 'rządów ludowych' do przewrotu majowego (Warsaw, 1964), p. 44.

1. J. Gienhart, Wzrost i upadek państwa polskiego (Warsaw, 1924), quoted in Landau and Tomaszewski, op. cit., p. 31.

interests of the partitioning powers. More than 50 Austrian and German railway lines led to the Russian frontier; only 10 continued on the other side. There was no direct rail link between Warsaw and Poznań, Kielce and Cracow, or between the centre of the country and the sea. The railway systems in the different areas had different equipment and different methods of administration. In 1937 a Polish historian wrote:

...of the three different systems of signalling and safety devices, of the three different group-braking systems [which did not allow rolling stock from different areas to be run together], of the 160 different types of engines, of the different width of Russian rolling stock which, although converted to the normal width, could only run in the Congress Kingdom and the Eastern Kresy, only the memory remains.¹

Four legal systems obtained in the new Poland. In the Congress Kingdom, civil law followed the Napoleonic Code, supplemented by a number of laws dating from the period of autonomy before 1863. Criminal law and legal procedure followed the practice of the Russian Empire, as they did in the Kresy, where Russian civil law also prevailed. In Prussian Poland German law obtained, while in Galicia Austrian law was the rule, modified by the legislation of the provincial parliament. The unification of the legal systems was still not complete by 1939, and caused great difficulties in the first years of independence. The legal systems differed considerably, and it was often the case that what was legal in one area was illegal in another.

1. J. Ginzbert, Drogi żelazne Rzeczypospolitej (Warsaw, 1937) quoted in Landau and Tomaszewski, op. cit., p. 51.

The forming of a joint-stock company, for example, required government authorization in Russian Poland, while in Prussian Poland it was necessary to register the company only after it had been formed.¹

The economies of the different partitions had been closely linked with those of the partitioning powers. The creation of a unified Polish economy posed serious problems for the more developed industries which had grown up behind the protective walls of the high Russian and relatively high German tariffs. Of the products exported by partitioned Poland, 83.3% had gone to the respective partitioning powers, and 85% of imports had come from them.² After 1918 the Russian market was virtually closed, while the high tariffs of Poland and the Habsburg successor states hindered trade. Some industries, such as sugar refining, were duplicated in the different partitions, but others, such as machine building and armament manufacture, were almost totally lacking.

The systems of taxation varied greatly. Until 1916 there had been no income tax in Russia, and the bulk of the state's revenue had come from indirect taxation, 47% in 1913 from purchase tax. Direct taxation in that year accounted for only

1. Landau and Tomaszewski, op. cit., p. 52.

2. F. Zweig, Poland Between Two Wars (London, 1944), p. 13.

7.9% of the national revenue. Austria depended on both direct and indirect taxation, while in Germany direct taxation was most important. The tax levels also differed. Between 1911 and 1913 the tax burden per head in the Congress Kingdom was 41 crowns, while in Galicia it was 29 crowns.¹

The extent and quality of education differed markedly from region to region. Universal education had existed only in Germany, but since the schools were seen as a medium for Germanisation, there had been no Polish language primary schools, to say nothing of secondary schools or universities. In Galicia, where the educational system had been under Polish control, a network of secondary schools, two universities, in Cracow and Lwów, and a technical college in Lwów had been established. Primary education was not, however, as extensive as in Germany. The educational system had been most primitive, and illiteracy most widespread, in Russia. It was only after the German occupation that a state-sponsored network of Polish language primary schools was established. A Russian language university and technical college existed in Warsaw.

The economic problems of the new Polish state were intensified by the devastation of the war. The front in the east, unlike that in the west, was not static, and tremendous damage was done in the Russian offensive of 1914, the German

1. Landau and Tomaszewski, op. cit., p. 53.

offensive of 1914-15 and the desperate Brusilov offensive. Because of the Polish-Soviet War, armed combat ceased in Poland only in 1920. By then 90% of the country had been directly touched by the war, and, of this, 1/5 had been the scene of heavy fighting. Only the Prussian partition was not seriously affected. By 1920 55% of the bridges, 63% of the railway stations, 48% of the locomotives and 18% of the buildings in the country had been destroyed.¹ The heaviest losses had been suffered by the Congress Kingdom, particularly around Kalisz and Żyrardów.

Wartime requisitions seriously affected Polish industry. When the Russians evacuated the Congress Kingdom, they took with them whatever industrial equipment they could. The Germans, in turn, sent large quantities of machinery back to Germany. The metallurgical industry ceased production entirely as its furnaces were dismantled and removed by the Germans. It was only in 1919 that the first new furnace started operating, and of the 11 functioning in 1914, only 7 were in use by 1922. The textile industry of Lodz also suffered severely from requisitions: 1,300 km. of transmission belts were sent back to Germany, as well as 1,000 electric motors, and 1,000 tons of copper parts of which there was a shortage in the Reich. The Polish delegation at the Peace Conference estimated total Polish losses at 73,000

1. A. Ajnenkiel, op. cit., p. 18.

million French francs.¹

In addition, no new investment was made in Polish industry during the war, apart from German investment in Upper Silesia. It thus fell behind the rest of the world technically. The gap was painfully felt in the next few years. The harsh effect of the war on industrial production in Poland is reflected in the tables below:

TABLE I

THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY IN POLAND IN 1920²

<u>Machinery in Operation</u>	<u>% of No. in use in 1914</u>
Finespinning cotton spindles	44.1
Mechanical cotton spindles	34.2
Long wool spindles	19.9
Short wool spindles	36.3
Textile machine works	11.2

1. According to a secret memorandum by Władysław Grabski, 'Wyjaśnienia dotyczące ratyfikacji traktatu pokojowego z Niemcami i umowy wielkich mocarstw z Polską przez delegata pełnomocnego Polski na Kongresie Pokojowym', MS. marked 'strictly confidential, Paris 1919'; quoted in Landau and Tomaszewski, op. cit., pp. 17-18.

For war damage generally, see Polska w czasie wielkiej wojny 1914-18, ed. M. Handelsmann, (Warsaw, 1936), iii, and Zniszczenia wojenne i odbudowa Polski (Warsaw, 1929).

2. H. Gliwic, 'Przemysł i Handel Polski', Polska w czasie wielkiej wojny, iii, p. 178.

1. ibid., i (1920-21), 17-18.

2. Only the Congress Kingdom.

3. W. Grabski, J. Stojanowski and J. Tomaszewski, Przemysł Polski 1914-20, Polska w czasie wielkiej wojny, iii, 178.

4. Ibid., p. 178.

TABLE II

INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION IN POLAND¹

	<u>1913</u>	<u>1920</u>
Coal	8,974,201 tons	6,411,668 tons
Oil	1,113,668	765,025
Paraffin wax	1,353	368
Crude iron	330,318	119,474
Processed iron ²	418,416	42,610
Rolling mills ²	467,100	48,970

The oil industry was seriously affected by the fighting in Galicia. By 1919 its output had fallen to 1.12% of total world production, from 4% in 1909. Sugar refining had dropped to 1/3 of the prewar level by 1918, to 1/6 by 1919.

Agricultural output too was greatly diminished as a result of the war. In 1919, 4.5 million ha. of land lay fallow, mostly the property of soldiers, and the number of cattle had fallen to 62.5% of the prewar figure, the number of pigs to 53% and of sheep to 40%.³ The following table illustrates the decline in harvests:

TABLE III

HARVESTS⁴

	<u>1908-13</u> (annual average)	<u>1918</u>
Wheat	16,782,700 quintals	5,356,800
Rye	57,111,600	28,753,100
Barley	14,889,900	6,998,700
Oats	28,143,400	12,309,600
Potatoes	247,899,200	140,704,800

1. R.S.R.P., i (1920-22), 134-5.
2. Only the Congress Kingdom.
3. W. Grabski, J. Stojanowski and J. Waręzak, 'Rolnictwo Polski 1914-20', Polska w czasie wielkiej wojny iii, 473.
4. Ibid., p. 478.

In these conditions it is not surprising that the American food mission of Herbert Hoover had reported that one third of the population faced starvation, and that typhus and scurvy had broken out in the more backward areas, particularly in the Eastern Kresy.¹

With an annual average population of 27 million inhabitants, Poland had one of the highest rates of population growth in Europe, exceeded substantially only by Russia, Spain and the U.S.S.R.² This rapidly rising population greatly intensified the already existing social and economic problems of the new state.

Of the inhabitants of independent Poland, 25% lived in the towns, and 75% in the countryside.³ The largest of the towns was Warsaw, with a population in 1931 of nearly a million; substantially smaller were Lodz, Lublin, Wlask, Cracow and Poznan. The following table describes the geographical distribution in Poland:

1. *RoS.S.R.* iv (1935-6), p. 100. For the territories not covered by the 1931 census, the 1926 census data for the Wilno region, those of the pre-war period for 1919, and for other territories, see the 1931 census data.

1. T. Komarnicki, 'Początki odrodzonego państwa polskiego po I wojnie światowej', *Bellona* (1958), 259.

2. Their populations in 1931 were: Poland, 27,000,000; Russia, 152,000,000; Spain, 25,000,000; and France, 40,000,000. For 1931, Poland's rate of population growth was 1.5%.

3. *RoS.S.R.* iv, p. 100.

Agriculture

In 1921 Poland had 27.2 million inhabitants.¹ Their number had more than tripled since 1800, for in that year the population of the former Polish Republic, an area somewhat larger than the re-created Polish state, had been barely 9 million.² With an annual natural increase of 15.3 per 1,000 inhabitants, Poland had one of the highest rates of population growth in Europe, exceeded substantially only by Yugoslavia, Rumania and the U.S.S.R.³ This rapidly rising population greatly intensified the already existing social and economic problems of the new state.

Of the inhabitants of independent Poland, 26% lived in the towns, and 74% in the countryside.⁴ The largest of the towns was Warsaw, with a population in 1921 of nearly a million; substantially smaller were Lodz, Lwów, Wilno, Cracow and Poznań.⁵ The following table describes the occupational divisions in Poland:

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1. R.S.R.P., iv (1925-6), 5, Table II. For the territories not covered by the 1921 census, the figures given are, for the Wilno region, those of the preliminary census of 1919, and for Upper Silesia, those of the last German census of 1910.
 2. 'Vie Economique', La Pologne 1919-39, ii (Neuchâtel, 1946), 99
 3. M.R.S. (1931), p. 11, Table II.
 4. Ibid., p. 4, Table VI.
 5. Their populations in 1921 were: Warsaw, 937,000; Lodz, 452,000; Lwów, 219,000; Wilno, 208,000; Cracow, 181,000; and Poznań, 169,000. From M.R.S. (1931), p. 6, Table XI.

land was in plots of less than 2 ha. TABLE IV

OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE POPULATION IN POLAND

	<u>IN 1921</u> ¹					
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Agric., Forestry,</u>	<u>Mining & Industry</u>	<u>Commerce, Insurance</u>	<u>Communi- cations, Transport</u>	<u>Other</u>
<u>Workers & Dependents</u>	100.0	63.8	15.4	6.2	3.3	11.3
<u>Active Pop.</u>	100.0	72.3	10.3	3.7	1.8	11.9

The overwhelming preponderance of agriculture in the Polish economy emerges clearly. According to the League of Nations figures for the years around 1930 (which do not differ materially from the earlier period), only Albania, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Lithuania exceeded Poland in the percentage of the population deriving its livelihood from the soil. As against the Polish figure of 63.8%, the Czech figure was 33%, the French 29%, and that for England and Wales 5%.²

A fundamental characteristic of Polish agriculture was the far-reaching fragmentation of peasant holdings. According to the census of 1921, (its defects are discussed below),³ 33.9% of all holdings, or 3.5% of the arable land was held in plots of less than 2 ha., while 64.6% of holdings, 14.8% of the arable

1. M.R.S. (1931), p.10, Table XIX. This table is based on the census of 1921, but extended to the areas not covered. See p. 16, note 1.
2. F.W. Moore, Economic Demography of Eastern and Southern Europe (Geneva, 1945), p. 26, Table II.
3. See p. 23.

land was in plots of less than 5 ha.¹ Many of these plots were not self-sufficient, and their owners were forced to supplement their earnings by working on larger farms.

Before 1914 the pressure of rapid population growth had been somewhat relieved by emigration, and by absorption into the rapidly developing industries of Poland. Between 1895 and 1913, 2,535,000 people emigrated from Poland. By 1913, 250,000 were emigrating annually,² and 800,000 agricultural labourers were finding seasonal employment abroad.³ But after the war, as emigration became more difficult, and industry in Poland failed to expand, the problem of the surplus agricultural population became increasingly serious, and was much discussed. In 1934, for every 100 ha. of cultivated land, there were 81 people in Poland, 49 in Germany, 64 in Czechoslovakia and 36 in Denmark.⁴ The surplus population was thought to be as high as 8 million, but the most reliable estimate, that of the Instytut Gospodarstwa Społecznego in 1935, showed that with no change whatever in agricultural technique, 2.4 million people could leave the villages.⁵ If the number of people only semi-employed is added, the surplus rural population was probably as high as 4.5 million.

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1. M.R.S. (1931), p.15, Table I.
 2. 'Vie Economique', La Pologne 1919-39 ii, 26.
 3. W. Thomas, F. Znaniecki, The Polish Peasant in Europe and America (Boston, 1918), iv, 73.
 4. A Żabko-Protopowicz, Rolnictwo w Polsce (Warsaw, 1938), p.34.
 5. L. Landau, J. Pański, E. Strzelecki, Bezrobocie wśród chłopów, (Warsaw, 1939), p. 146.

Large landowning was also a significant feature of Polish agriculture. According to the census of 1921, 0.9% of all holdings, but 47.3% of the arable land was in farms of more than 50 ha. Of this, 1.6% was Church land, 23.6% government land and 73.9% in private hands.¹ The average large estate was of considerable size. Of the 10,500,000 ha. of land held by large private landowners, well over half was in estates of more than 1,000 ha.² Some were truly gigantic: the Zamoyski estate covered 191,000 ha. the Radziwiłł estate 177,000 ha., the comparatively modest Potocki estate 19,000 ha.³ In fact, the amount of land held in large estates had diminished somewhat in the 50 years before 1914; this was due principally to the sale of land by large landholders who wished to obtain capital for modernization.

In 1921 the large estates occupied a strong position in Polish agriculture. From them came nearly half the harvests of rye, wheat, barley and oats, as well as most of Poland's grain exports; and they enjoyed a much higher productivity:

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1. 'Wielka własność rolna', Statystyka Polski (1925) v, p.viii.
 2. Ibid., p.1.
 3. Mieszczanowski, op. cit., p.21.

of the land, wholly or partly leased. This was a result of the fact that TABLE V THE YIELD OF POLISH AGRICULTURE IN 1938¹

	<u>I: Estates</u>	<u>II: Lesser ownership</u>	<u>%age I : II</u>
Wheat	15.3 quintals	11.8 quintals	129.7
Rye	14.9 per ha.	12.0 per ha.	124.2
Barley	15.7	10.9	144.0
Oats	14.0	11.3	123.9
Potatoes	125.3	113.0	110.9
Sugar beets	220.1	196.0	112.3

Large peasant holdings of from 20 - 50 ha. were rather rare in Poland, and played a significant part only in Poznan and Pomerania, the former German territories, where they comprised 14.9% of the land in 1921.² But medium peasant holdings of 5-20 ha. were common everywhere, comprising 30.8% of the land, or 32% of all holdings.³ The division of larger holdings through inheritance, the sale of land by large landowners in the period of inflated land prices before 1914, and the large-scale emigration, which prevented some fragmentation and brought more capital in the form of remittances, had all contributed to the growth of this group in the 50 years before 1914.

The leasing of land was rather unusual in Poland, outside Upper Silesia. Only 87,200 plots, or 2.7% of all holdings, were wholly leased, and only 10.5% of all holdings, or 6.2%

1. Ibid., p.322. Though this table relates to 1938, the situation in earlier years did not differ materially.
2. Based on R.S.R.P., iv (1925-6), 106-9.
3. Loc. cit.

of the land, wholly or partially leased.¹ This was a result of the high price of land before 1914, which made outright sale more profitable, and of the traditional hostility to the leasing of land on the part of the gentry (szlachta), who thought it low and tradesmanlike.

Archaic survivals persisted in Polish agriculture. The most important of these were common lands and servitudes:² the former were found everywhere in Poland except Poznania and Pomerania, while the latter occurred only in former Russian Poland. In 1921 common lands comprised 1.5 million ha., or 9.4% of the area of lesser landholdings.³ The larger part (58.9%) was common grazing land, particularly important for the small peasants, who were thus able to keep a cow. This was most significant in impoverished Galicia, where 70% of holdings benefited from common lands, as opposed to 46.2% in the Congress Kingdom and 35.5% in the Kresy.⁴ Servitudes, an old source of contention between village and manor, were inadequately estimated in the census of 1921. They were almost entirely done

1. Ibid., p. 121, Table IV.

2. Legally, servitudes were 'easements and services mortgaged on one property for the benefit of another' (Zweig, op cit., p. 130). In practice, servitudes conferred on the peasants the same rights (to graze cattle, to collect timber, etc.) on certain parts of the large estates as they enjoyed on common lands.

3. S.P., (Warsaw, 1927), xii, 25 (issue II).

4. Loc. cit.

(Geneva, 1934), p. 230, Table A)

away with in the land reform. However, the number of holdings for which servitudes were liquidated between 1921 and 1938 was 278,800, which gives some indication of their former extent.¹

The mediaeval strip system, whereby a peasant did not possess a consolidated holding, but strips of land scattered around the village, was widely prevalent in Poland. In the villages investigated by the Instytut Gospodarstwa Społecznego in 1935, only 33.4% of the holdings were consolidated; 39.1% were in 4 or more strips.²

Polish agriculture, outside the western areas and a few well-run estates elsewhere, was undercapitalised and inefficient. The yield of wheat per ha. was 40-45%, that of potatoes 20-30% below the German average.³ Much less fertiliser was used after the First World War than before: in 1913-14 63 kg. per 100 ha., in 1927 34.9 kg., in 1929 40 kg.⁴ Mechanization was very little adopted. As late as 1939, only 2,000 tractors were in use, or 1 tractor for 8,400 ha. This compared very unfavourably with the figures for France: 30,000 tractors (1 to 700 ha.) and for Hungary: 7,000 tractors (1 to 829 ha.)⁵

1. M.R.S., (1939), p. 70.

2. K. Czerniewski, 'Zagadnienia struktury agrarnej' in Instytut Gospodarstwa Społecznego, Struktura agrarna wsi polskiej (Warsaw, 1937), p. 87.

3. C. Poralla, 'Die Wirtschaft zwischen den Beiden Kriegen', Osteuropa Handbuch Polen (Köln, 1959), p. 79.

4. Mieszczankowski, op.cit., p. 321.

5. I. Svernilson, Growth and Stagnation in the European Economy (Geneva, 1954), p. 250, Table AXIX.

These features of the Polish agricultural system emerge quite clearly from the returns of the census of 1921, in spite of its many defects. It did not include Upper Silesia and the area around Wilno; many soldiers had not yet returned when the census was taken; the state apparatus was still inadequate; and many peasants falsified the size of their holdings, both because of lack of trust in the officials, and in the hope that if they understated their holdings they might obtain more in a land reform. In the following tables the census figures are given alongside the corrections suggested by Mieszczankowski.¹

TABLE VI

NO. OF HOLDINGS IN 1921

	<u>No. of holdings (in 1000's)</u>		<u>%age</u>		<u>Difference</u>
	<u>Census</u>	<u>correction</u>	<u>Census</u>	<u>correction</u>	<u>(%age)</u>
0-2 ha.	1,108.8	1,013.4	33.9	29.0	- 4.9
2-5	1,001.8	1,138.5	30.7	32.6	+ 1.9
5-10	733.3	861.1	22.5	24.7	+ 2.2
10-20	311.5	360.0	9.6	10.3	+ 0.7
20-50	76.4	87.6	2.4	2.5	+ 0.1
over 50	30.1	30.1	0.9	0.9	---
Total	3,261.9	3,490.67	100.0	100.0	---

1. For the census figures: R.S.R.P., iv (1925-6), p. 106, Table I. For the corrections: Mieszczankowski, op. cit., pp. 339-40.

2. ... (1931), p. 20, Table IV, p. 51.

expense of sugar beets: TABLE VIIDISTRIBUTION OF LAND

<u>Holdings:</u>	<u>Area (1,000 ha.)</u>		<u>% of total</u>		<u>Diff.</u>
	<u>Census</u>	<u>Correction</u>	<u>Census</u>	<u>Correction</u>	
0-2 ha.	1,075.6	1,060.7	3.5	2.8	- 0.7
2-5	3,432.6	4,248.3	11.3	11.2	- 0.1
5-10	5,156.8	6,562.6	17.0	17.3	+ 0.3
10-20	4,190.2	5,201.7	13.8	13.7	- 0.1
20-50	2,141.4	2,611.1	7.1	6.9	- 0.2
large estates & public land	14,344.1	18,241.6	47.3	48.1	+ 0.8
Total	30,340.7	37,926.0	100.0	100.0	---

Polish agricultural production was concentrated in cereals. The largest crop was rye, cultivated mainly in Poznania and Pomerania, and in the Warsaw and Lodz provinces. The average rye harvest between 1926 and 1930 was 62.3 million quintals, which made Poland, after Germany and the U.S.S.R., the world's third largest rye producer. Wheat was grown in the south, excepting the Cracow province, in the Lublin province and in Volynia, with an average harvest of 17.5 million quintals; oats were grown in Central Poland, in the south and in Volynia, with an average yield of 23.6 million quintals; and barley, an important export crop, was grown in most areas and yielded an average of 14.3 million quintals in the same period.¹

One of the results of the impoverishment of the Polish village was the increased cultivation of potatoes, at the

1. M.R.S., (1931), p. 20, Table IV, p. 21 Table VI.

expense of sugar beets: the average potato yield grew from 247.9 million quintals between 1909 and 1913 to 276.9 million quintals between 1926 and 1930. The main potato-growing regions were Silesia, and the provinces of Cracow, Lodz and Kielce, areas surrounding the large industrial concentrations. Sugar beets were cultivated principally in Poznanian and Pomeranian, but also in some parts of the Lublin and Lwów provinces and in Volynia. The average harvest between 1926 and 1930 was 43.9 million quintals.¹

The raising of livestock, especially pigs, was an important aspect of agricultural production. From this source came 4/5 of the money income of farmers.² However, its development was hampered by the low quality of peasant stock.

In 1930 22.2% of the land area of Poland was forest, and, as one would expect, forestry was a major industry. Forests were found all over the country, except in some of the more intensively farmed western regions; the principal trees were pines and firs, with some oaks, alders and birch. Most of the forest land (54.9%) formed part of the large estates, with 33% in public hands, 8.7% in small holdings and 2.7% in common lands.³

1. M.R.S. (1931), p. 20, Table IV.

2. Poralla, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

3. M.R.S. (1931), p. 24, Tables VIII and IX.

Agricultural products made up an important proportion of Polish exports, as the following tables show:¹

TABLE VIII

EXPORTS (in millions of zloties)

	<u>1928</u>	<u>1929</u>	<u>1930</u>
<u>All exports</u> ²	2,508	2,813	2,433
<u>Wood products:</u> ³			
Timber	317	254	211
Round timber	226	169	91
Wood manufactures	45	57	44
	<u>588</u>	<u>460</u>	<u>346</u>
<u>Farm produce:</u> ⁴	<u>1928-9</u>	<u>1929-30</u>	
Plant produce	277	326	
Animal produce	583	602	
a) live animals		219	203
b) animal products		364	399
Agricultural-Industrial produce	180	253	
	<u>1,040</u>	<u>1,181</u>	

1. The figures are not strictly comparable, because most agricultural exports (though not timber) are given in accordance with the economic year, i.e. August 1st to July 31st.
2. M.R.S. (1931), p. 59, Table II.
3. Ibid., p. 62, Table IV.
4. Ibid., p. 62, Table V.

Polish agriculture faced many difficulties after independence. The basically favourable situation which rapidly expanding industry had created before 1914 ceased, and the towns showed little absorptive capacity either for the surplus population of the villages, or for agricultural production on a large scale. The dwindling of the numbers of emigrants reduced the efficacy of another safety valve. Between 1920 and 1929 nearly 1 1/4 million people left Poland, but with the depression, emigration almost stopped completely, and after 1926 870,000 of the emigrants returned, mainly from France.¹ The Land Reform Bills of 1920 and 1925, which provided for the annual parcellation of 200,000 ha. could not, in these unfavourable conditions, do more than keep pace with the rapidly rising population.

Small producers, the overwhelming majority of the peasants, met additional problems. State policies of favouring heavy industry and large landowners hurt them. They lacked the capital to modernize their backward holdings, while credit became more expensive, and taxes rose above the prewar level. The extensive cartelisation of Polish industry aggravated the disparity between agricultural and industrial prices, the highly developed system of intermediaries in produce marketing meant that the peasant lost much of his profit to the various marketers, while monopolies in the retail trade kept the prices

1. Zweig, op. cit., p.20.

of the goods he bought high. The depression intensified these difficulties, and led to the increasing impoverishment of the village. Agricultural problems were among the most complex the new state was to attempt to solve.

Industry

Despite the preponderance of agriculture in the economy, Poland had experienced rapid industrial development, particularly in Upper Silesia and the Congress Kingdom, in the 50 years before 1914. By 1927, 849,500 people worked in the mines, and in factories employing more than 5 persons.¹ Such industry as had developed was closely linked with the economies of the partitioning powers, and its adaptation to the new framework created by independence proved difficult indeed.

Poland possessed some of the raw materials necessary for industrial growth. In the coal deposits of Silesia and the Dąbrowa basin, she commanded, after the U.S.A., Canada, China and the U.K., the fifth largest estimated coal reserves in the world.² Though the known reserves in the East Galician oil fields were being exhausted, they still provided for domestic needs. Vast reserves of hydro-electric power were also

1. M.R.S., (1931), p.37, Table XXI. In this chapter 'factory' denotes a workshop employing more than 5 people.

2. M.R.S., (1931), p. 32, Table II.

3. Based on Ibid., p. 34, Table II.

4. Based on Ibid., p. 59, Table II.

available, but because of both scarcity of capital and the fear of further increasing the difficulties of the coal industry, only 0.1% of the estimated 3.7 million h.p. was exploited in 1926.¹ More serious, the available iron ore reserves were inadequate for Poland's needs, and extensive government searching failed to uncover any new deposits. In addition, Poland possessed no supplies of such important minerals as manganese, tin and nickel.

In 1929 the coal mines employed 134,000 men,² and extracted 462 million tons, ranking fifth in the world in coal production.³ 74.5% of the coal was mined in Upper Silesia, 19.5% in the Dąbrowa basin, and 6.1% in the Cracow basin.⁴ However, most of this coal was unsuitable for coking, and coking coal had thus to be imported from Czechoslovakia. On the other hand, coal was an important Polish export. The ending of the three-year period of free export to Germany provided by the Geneva Convention, and the German-Polish tariff war created some difficulties, but the opportune occurrence of the General Strike in Britain enabled Polish coal to find new markets, particularly in Scandinavia. In 1929 coal made up 13.6% of the total value of Polish exports.⁵ Some attempt was made to encourage the use

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1. Ibid., p. 32, Table IV.
 2. M.R.S., (1939), pp. 128-9.
 3. M.R.S., (1931), p. 34, Table X.
 4. Based on Ibid., p. 34, Table IX.
 5. Based on Ibid., p. 59, Table II.

of coal as a domestic fuel in Poland, but it failed because of the cheapness of wood.

A high degree of concentration existed in the coal mines. There were altogether 33 mining firms, 11 of them mixed mining and founding enterprises; of these firms 5, the Polish Treasury Mines, the Rybnik Mining Co., Giesche, United Upper Silesia Foundries, and the Katowice Mining and Founding Joint-Stock Co., controlled 47% of the production of the Silesian basin in 1927 (34.5% of total Polish production), and employed 49% of all Silesian coalminers (33.5% of all those in Poland).¹ Coal marketing was also highly concentrated, 5 companies marketing 66.9% of the coal mined in 1929.²

Poland's oil deposits were concentrated in the Carpathians, in the south-east of the country. Although some modernization took place after the war, the average production of 735,000 tons between 1925 and 1930 was little more than half the average annual production in prewar years.³ Adequate though this was for Polish domestic requirements, it left no surplus for export. The known deposits, estimated at 60 million tons in 1932,⁴ were being gradually exhausted, and the proliferation of small wells

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1. R. Gradowski, Niektóre problemy kapitalizmu monopolistycznego, (Warsaw, 1959), pp. 16-18.
 2. Ibid., pp. 19-20.
 3. M.R.S., (1931), p. 34, Table XI.
 4. Poralla, op. cit., p. 89.

hindered rationalisation. Natural gas production grew, however, particularly from the late '20's.

Iron ore was mined in the southern part of central Poland, mainly in the Kielce province, and the principal deposits were at Kielce, Radom, Starachowice, Częstochowa and Olkusz. The supplies, estimated at 42 million tons in 1932,¹ and the average 1925-30 production of 484,000 tons annually,² were inadequate for Poland's needs. In addition, most of the ore required enrichment before it could be smelted. Ore and scrap iron made up a sizeable proportion of Poland's imports.

There were also other mineral resources in Poland. Extensive zinc mines, whose 1929 yield of 169,000 tons made Poland the third largest zinc producer in the world,³ were located in Upper Silesia, and smaller lead mines existed alongside the zinc deposits. Salt was mined at Wieliczka and Bochnia, not far from Cracow, and at Wapno, providing for domestic needs, while Potassium salts were found in the south-east, at Kalusz, near Stanisławów and at Stebnik.

Addendum:

Footnotes, p. 31.

1. Poralla, op. cit., p. 89.
2. Based on M.R.S. (1931), p. 34, Table VIII.
3. Based on ibid., p. 36, Table XVIII.

The output of potassium salts rose in the period after the war, and with 359,000 tons in 1929, Poland was the world's third producer.¹ Much of this was exported.

In manufacturing industries, metallurgical and electrotechnical plants (including foundries) had the highest output in value, and in 1927 employed 163,000 people (15.2% of the labour force in factories).² The foundries were located almost exclusively in Upper Silesia and around Kielce; metal, machine and electrotechnical plants were also found here, as well as in Warsaw and Lodz, and to a lesser extent in Poznań and Cracow. Founding was marked by a high degree of concentration: in 1927 the average number of men employed in a foundry was 1,404.³ The industry was dominated by 5 large firms; the Upper Silesia United Foundries, the Katowice Mining and Founding Joint-Stock Co., the Peace Foundry, Handtke, and the Bank Foundry were responsible, in 1928, for 88.9% of the production of the great ovens, and 84.7% of that of the rolling mills. When the first two of these firms amalgamated in 1930, they controlled 54.69% of raw steel production.⁴

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1. M.R.S., (1931), p.34, Table VIII, and p. 35, Table XIV.
 2. Based on M.R.S., (1931), p. 37, Table XXI.
 3. Loc. cit.
 4. Gradowski, op. cit., pp. 12-14.

The metallurgical industry was remarkable for the unequal development of its different branches, a heritage of partition. Machine tool and textile machine producing factories were few in number; ball-bearing, turbine and armaments factories were totally lacking, making large-scale importing necessary; however, the locomotive and agricultural machinery plants of Upper Silesia were far too large for the Polish market, and relied on export for survival. The low absorption capacity of the Polish market limited the profitability of metallurgical enterprises generally, and hampered modernization. The plants, already outmoded because of the failure to renew machinery during the war, fell further behind world standards.

With 182,100 workers in 1927 (21.4% of all factory workers), the textile industry was the largest employer of labour.¹ Its centre was Lodz, the 'Polish Manchester', which had grown from a small village in the mid 19th century to a town of half a million. Textile manufacture was also developed in Bielsko-Biala, in Austrian Silesia, in Białystok, Warsaw, and, to a lesser extent, Cracow. Before the war, the industry had produced mainly for Russian and Far Eastern markets, but independence saw a fairly successful refashioning to meet local needs. The industry included a large number of artisan workshops and cottage workers, but in factory production, large and middle factories predominated. In 1925, 8 factories with more than 3,000 workers

1. M.R.S., (1931), p. 37, Table XXI.

each employed 39.2% of all textile workers.¹ The average number employed in a spinning mill was 209.²

After 1918, cotton textiles were produced almost exclusively for the home market: about 5% of woollen cloth was exported. Both these branches were dependent on raw material imports, for government attempts to improve the quality of Polish wool had little success. The hope of saving foreign exchange led the government to encourage the development of linen production, for flax could be grown locally and would provide a useful supplement to peasant earnings. As a result, linen production grew, particularly in the '30's. Some attempts were also made to foster the development of artificial fibres, but lack of experience, and the conservatism of the Polish consumer hindered the production of synthetic textiles.

Food processing plants employed 83,900 people (9.5% of the labour force) in 1927.³ They were located everywhere in Poland, but were particularly numerous in the western areas. The principal food processing industries were flour milling, distilling and sugar refining. With 916,000 tons produced in 1929-30, Poland was the fifth largest beet sugar producer in the world.⁴ A substantial proportion of this was exported.

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1. Gradowski, *op. cit.*, p.22.
 2. *M.R.S.*, *loc. cit.*
 3. *M.R.S.*, (1931), p. 37, Table XXI.
 4. *Ibid.*, p. 44, Table XXXVI b.

One of the fastest growing industries was chemicals, with 41,400 workers in 1927 (4.9% of the labour force).¹ The plants, most of which produced munitions and artificial fertiliser, were largely state-owned. They benefited from protection, and were helped by the existence in Poland of many of the necessary raw materials. The production of mineral industries, which in 1927 employed 67,300 workers (7.9% of the labour force),² also increased greatly in the period. The most important products were bricks, glass, cement, porcelain and lime. Local needs were fully met, but little was exported.

Timber industries employed 71,100 workers (8.3% of the labour force) in 1927,³ principally in sawmills and furniture factories. We have already seen that timber and wood products were important exports.⁴ Of other industries, which altogether employed 6.1% of the labour force,⁵ the most important were clothing, leather and tanning, building and printing.

Polish industry generally, as we have noted in the cases of coal, iron founding and textiles, was characterized by far-reaching concentration. In 1928, 100 factories (excluding mines and foundries) employed 36.5% of factory workers.⁶ But small-

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1. Ibid., p. 37, Table XXI.
 2. Loc. cit.
 3. M.R.S., (1931), p. 37, Table XXI.
 4. See p. 26, Table VIII.
 5. M.R.S., loc. cit.
 6. Gradowski, op. cit., p. 10.

scale artisan workshops were also a marked feature of the Polish scene. In 1928 there were 319,400 of these, employing 886,200 people.¹ The most important crafts were smithing, cabinet making, shoemaking, tailoring and baking, but many rather more specialized crafts existed, such as gaitermaking, comb-making and wig making.

Cartels played a large part in Polish industry. They had grown from 9 in 1919 to 100 in 1929, when they controlled 40% of industrial production.² The Great Depression, which led to a breakdown of the internal price structure, saw a further growth in their number. All basic industries were affected by cartels; coal, iron founding, zinc, cotton, sugar, timber and petroleum were all highly cartelized. Although this is a feature more frequently found in highly advanced economies, special factors explain its occurrence in underdeveloped Poland. Industry was already very concentrated; high tariffs excluded foreign competition, and the scarcity of capital made it easy to control firms outside the cartel. The difference in costs in different areas of Poland meant that without agreements of this type some industries would be bankrupted. This was true, for example, of

1. H. Mianowski, 'O rzemiośle', Dziesięciolecie Polski Odrodzonej, pp. 1,083-6.

2. Zweig, op. cit., pp. 102-3; see also M. Kalecki, 'Udział karteli w działalności przemysłowej na rynku polskim', Prace Instytutu Badania Konjunktur Gospodarczych i Cen, (Warsaw, 1933), iii (No. 2), pp. 3-7.

the sugar refineries of central Poland, the Cracow coal mines, and the Kielce steel industry. However, the government, whose export policy depended upon selling abroad at lower than domestic prices, saw in the cartels a convenient economic tool. It was only in 1933, at the height of the depression, that some action was finally taken against them.

An important aspect of the Polish economy at this time was the large part played by the state. Etatism had been a characteristic of the policies of the partitioning powers. The railways before 1914 had been almost entirely state owned. In addition, the Austrian government had run state salt and tobacco monopolies, and had owned oil refineries and coal mines, while in Prussia, the government had owned coal mines and chemical factories. Etatism had been less developed in Russian Poland; apart from the liquor monopoly the state had owned one coal mine and one metal factory.¹ The war had everywhere seen a great increase in the role of government within the economy. The inadequate capital resources of Poland, coupled with the need to integrate the economy and to create industries such as munitions and armaments, necessary for defence, also led to far-reaching state action.

1. T. Lulek, 'Przedsiębiorstwa państwowe', D.P.O., p. 930; see also Etatyzm w Polsce (Cracow, 1932), and T. Bernadzikiewicz, Przerosty Etatyizmu (Warsaw, 1936).

The state exercised extensive control over the credit system. Though the Bank of Poland, established in 1924, was nominally independent, in practice its freedom of action was limited: the President of the state had the right to appoint its president, it was to hold some free treasury funds, it was watched over by a government commission, and the state held 75 million zł. worth of its shares.¹ Polish private banks were all too often weak and speculative. In 1926 only 43.2% of bank deposits were held in private banks, and by 1930 the amount had fallen to 36.7%.² State credit institutions occupied an important position in the economy. The most important of these were the P.K.O. (Post Office Savings Bank), the Bank Rolny (Agricultural Bank), and the Bank Gospodarstwa Krajowego (Bank of the National Economy), of which the last had capital deposits of 150 million zł. in 1927, as against 200 million in all the private banks.³ This bank also held shares in many industrial enterprises: in 1928 it owned 33% of the stock of the Polish Iron Ore Mines, nearly all the stock of the Potash Exploiting Joint-Stock Co., 89.6% of Ursus, the first motorcar factory in Poland, and owned the Starachowice Iron Ore Mines outright.⁴

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1. M. Szawleski, 'Bank Polski', D.P.O., p. 1, 114.
 2. Gradowski, op. cit., p. 125. See also J. Schön, Die Polnische Bankwesen (Katowice, 1928).
 3. Gradowski, op. cit., p. 141.
 4. Lulek, op. cit., pp. 931 ff.

1. J. Michalski, 'Bank Polski', Prace Komisji Historycznej, p. 923. See also Boruszkiewicz, Historia Bankowości w Polsce (Warsaw, 1934).

2. Lulek, op. cit., pp. 931 ff.

The Polish Government extended the individual state monopolies of the partitioning powers to cover the whole country. By 1925 there were five such monopolies: tobacco, spirits, salt, matches and a state lottery. With the exception of the matches monopoly, which was leased to a consortium controlled by Ivar Kreuger, the Swedish 'match king', and two potash mines, they were all directly run by the state, and accounted for an average of 31% of the national revenue between 1926-7 and 1929-30.¹

The Government also ran other industrial enterprises.

Apart from the state forests, railways, airlines, and commercial fleet, it ran the Brzeszcze Coal Mines, which it inherited from the Austrian government, the State Nitrate Factories in Chorzów and Tarnów, and 'Polmin', the State Factory of Mineral Oils in Galicia, which possessed one of the largest refineries in Europe. In addition, the government participated in joint enterprises with private industry. For example, the state owned half the shares in Polish Treasury Mines, it leased its lead and silver mines at Strynica in Silesia to a company in which it held half the shares, and its coal mines in the Dąbrowa basin to a joint Polish-French enterprise.²

The Ministry of War ran some factories on its own. These included the State Armament Manufactures, with headquarters in Warsaw, which made firearms in Radom and ammunition in Skarzysko;

1. J. Michałski, 'Monopole skarbowe', D.P.O., p. 925. See also Bernadzikiewicz, Koncern Państwowy w Polsce (Warsaw, 1938).
2. Lulek, loc. cit.

an explosives factory in Zagożdzone; and an aircraft factory, an engineering works, and a uniform factory in Warsaw.¹

Although it is difficult to calculate the exact share of the state in Polish industry, the table below may serve as a rough guide.²

TABLE IX

	<u>Percentage under government control in 1929.</u>
Railroads	93
Commercial aviation	100
Merchant marine	95
Post, Telegraph and telephone	95
Iron production	16
Armaments	100
Coal mines	20
Salt mines	99
Chemicals	60
Oil refineries	20
Metal industry	30

Much of Polish industrial growth before 1914 had been the result of foreign investment, and because the Government and its subsidiary credit organizations absorbed most of the domestic capital after the war, private industry was encouraged to seek capital abroad. It is rather difficult to estimate the amount

1. Ibid., p. 933.

2. The following estimate was made by taking the percentages of state ownership in 1938 from Buell, Poland, Key to Europe (London, 1939), p. 158, and adjusting them in the light of the nationalizations which occurred between 1929 and 1938. The most important of these were the taking over of the Zyrardów Textile Mills, and of the United Upper Silesia Foundries and Katowice Mining and Founding Joint-Stock Co. (the last two had amalgamated in 1930).

of foreign capital investment in Polish industry; foreign capital was often disguised as domestic, for the usual reasons, although the inducements which the government offered to foreign investors caused the reverse to occur as well. In 1929, according to official figures, foreign capital participated in 363 (of 1,552) joint-stock companies in Poland, with a capital investment of 1,831 million zl., (33% of the total of 5,497 million).¹ In addition, 67 companies, with a total capital in Poland of 236.6 million zl., operated in Poland with head offices elsewhere.² The proportion of foreign investment was particularly high in certain industries: 51.9% in foundries, 65.4% in the machine and electro-technical industries, 40.6% in chemicals and 75.6% in gas, water and electrical supply.³

The most important source of capital was France, with 25.8% of total foreign investment in 1931. French capital tended to grow in the period, particularly as a result of joint Franco-Polish ventures such as Skarboferm, a mining and founding company in Silesia, and the Silesia-Gdynia railway. It was significant in coal mining and petroleum, and in the textile and electrical industries. German capital, 25% in 1931, was almost entirely prewar in origin and tended to decline, largely through

1. M.R.S., (1931), p.29, Table IV.

2. Ibid., p. 29, Table V.

3. Ibid., p. 29, Table IV.

nationalisation. It was particularly important in Silesia, in mining and founding, but also played a part in the chemical, metal and electrotechnical industries.¹ American investment (21.3%) was important in petroleum and zinc, less so in the textile and metal industries;² Belgian capital (9.4%) was active in iron and steel, electricity and chemicals, while British capital (4.8%), almost entirely post-war, was concentrated in banking, electrification, insurance, transport, chemicals and sugar. Other investors were Switzerland (2.8%), Austria (3.9%), and Sweden (2.0%).³

Polish industry failed to expand as rapidly after 1918 as it had before the war. Though most of the war damage had been made good, and some progress in integration had been achieved, the 1928 index of manufacturing production, the highest before the depression, was only 116.4; in 1913 it had been 135.1.⁴ Poland was the only European country whose production figures in 1929 were still below the prewar level.⁵ There were many reasons for this decline. Much time was needed to overcome the economic difficulties presented by the integration of territories formerly closely linked with the economies of the different partitioning powers. War damage had been very extensive, and

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1. L. Wellisz, Foreign Capital in Poland (London, 1938), pp.151-2
 2. Ibid., pp. 152-3.
 3. Ibid., p. 153.
 4. Svennilson, op. cit., p. 305, Table ALXVI: (100 - average annual production 1925-9).
 5. Loc. cit.

manufacturing production had fallen to 47.4 in 1920.¹ Polish economic development was closely connected with world trade, which only recovered significantly from the war by 1925, and the lack of modernisation resulting from underinvestment since 1914 hampered competition in the world market. The need to import raw materials and many machine tools created a balance of payments problem, which was intensified by the repatriation of the profits of foreign capital invested in Poland, and the tariff war between Poland and Germany, her largest export market, also hindered recovery.

In addition, the poverty of the peasantry kept the domestic market for industrial products small. There was a relative lack of Polish entrepreneurs, and many state enterprises were uneconomically managed. Domestic capital was very scarce, and much foreign capital, particularly French and German, was cautious and slow to innovate, while excessive cartelisation and concentration led to rigidity. The Great Depression was cruelly to expose these shortcomings of Polish industry.

1. Loc. cit. to the estimate of

Industrii Polski jako podłoża gospodarczej, Wybór pism

Social classes

In Poland before the partitions all members of the szlachta, or landed aristocracy, had been equal before the law. In fact, however, both in the eighteenth century and more particularly in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, a distinction was made between the great magnates, like the Zamoyski's and Radziwiłł's, and the large mass of the gentry. By 1921, both magnates and gentry lost some of the social and economic pre-eminence they had enjoyed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The abolition of serfdom, the confiscations of land following the 1863 rising, the agricultural depression of the 1880's, and the importing of large quantities of wheat from the fertile Ukraine had all somewhat undermined their position. However, as we have seen, both medium and large landowners who, together with their dependents, numbered 178,800 in 1927,¹ still held a conspicuous place in agriculture.

The patriarchal way of life of the Polish country gentleman on his manor still enjoyed great prestige. Industrialists, bankers and lawyers might have more influence, but the status of a gentleman nevertheless eluded them. Almost all the prominent Polish industrialists bought landed estates. There was, remarked Andrzej Wierzbicki, head of Lewiatan, the

1. According to the estimate of L. Landau, 'Skład zawodowy ludności Polski jako podstawy badania struktury gospodarczej', Wybór pism (Warsaw, 1957), p. 187, Table V.

organization of Polish industrialists, 'an almost irresistible urge for land' among his associates: for

To create, according to one's best will and understanding, on one's own piece of land, in accordance with one's own plan, that was true work! I felt as if I had been born a landowner, and not an industrialist.¹

Roman Dmowski's supporters, stung by hostile allusions to his artisan background (his father was a roofer), were extremely sensitive about their leader's ancestry. 'Studnicki's remarks [concerning Dmowski's background], ' wrote Jędrzej Giertych, 'are so unjust they should be called libels.....Dmowski's family is a family of lesser gentry from Podlasia.'²

A fair number of prominent figures in the interwar period in Poland came from landed families. In politics, they included Piłsudski himself, who came from a gentry family in Lithuania; the two Grabski brothers, Władysław, Prime Minister in 1924-5, and Stanisław, Minister of Education and Religious Cults in 1925; Gabriel Narutowicz, the assassinated first President of the republic, and Władysław Raczkiewicz, Minister of the Interior in 1925. Among the writers, perhaps the most important were Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz and Maria Dąbrowska.

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1. A. Wierzbicki, Wspomnienia i dokumenty (Warsaw, 1957), p.188.
 2. J. Giertych, 'O rodzicach Dmowskiego', Słowo Narodowe 14/1/39, quoted in I. Wolikowska, Roman Dmowski: Człowiek, Polak, Przyjaciel (Chicago, 1961), pp. 227-8.

Peasants, who with their dependents numbered 15,550,400 in 1927,¹ were the largest social class. Though class stratification had, as we have shown, gone far in the countryside, consciousness of a common peasant identity was much stronger. The peasant differed from the townsman in language, dress and social customs, and the rate of population growth in the villages was twice that of the towns.² The central feature of peasant life was the existence of an extended family group, which comprised all the blood and law relations up to a certain variable limit, usually the fourth degree of consanguinity. Smaller nuclei emerged within this extended group, as a married couple reached a respectable age; it was around these nuclei that social life was organized, and the two family functions of mutual assistance to members, and control over their actions, were exercised.

It is in the light of the existence of the extended family that the peasant's attitude to land must be understood. Land was essentially familial. It could be managed by the father, the older son, the younger son, or the son-in-law. They were temporary managers; what was important was that it was well run. On marriage, a new homestead was generally created, carved out

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1. Landau, op. cit., p. 187, Table V.
 2. A. Zauberman, Industrial Development in Poland, Czechoslovakia and East Germany (London, 1964), pp. 70-1.

of the parental holding, but those unmarried children who remained with the parents had an obligation to work on the land, and a right to be maintained by it. Their responsibility to contribute to the homestead did not cease if they left the village to work elsewhere, and it was the acceptance of this responsibility which prompted unmarried Polish immigrants in America to send money back to their parents in Poland. 'The familial character of the farm,' explain Thomas and Znaniecki,

should not be interpreted as if the family were an association holding a common property. The members of the family [apart from the parents] have essentially no economic share in the farm. They share only the social character of the members of the group, and from this results their social right to be supported by the group, and their social obligation to contribute to the existence of the group. The farm is the material basis of this social relation, the expression of the unity of the group in the economic world.¹

But because the creation of new holdings for married sons, or for the heirs of the head of the family upon his death, was an established custom, peasants had great difficulty in accepting the idea that land was like any other material possession, and did not necessarily have to be subdivided.

The peasant's sense of the nation was very vague. He was far more conscious of his village and its surroundings. The Government too was something distant and almost incomprehensible. 'The attitude towards government,' comment Thomas and Znaniecki,

1. Thomas and Znaniecki, op. cit., i, 159.

can perhaps be compared with the attitude toward the material order on the one hand, and toward the divine order on the other; it is intermediate between the two. The political order appears to a certain extent as an impersonal and amoral power, absolutely mysterious, whose manifestations can possibly be foreseen, but whose nature and laws cannot be changed by human interference. But this order has also another side, more comprehensible, but more unforeseen, with some moral character, that is capable of being just or unjust and of being influenced; in this respect it is the exact parallel of the divine world.¹

Suspicion of strangers was increased by the absence of charitable traditions outside the family and the Church. Peasants had, therefore, great difficulty in understanding the motives of those who came to help them.

The peasants were deeply religious and superstitious. Religious processions were frequent, and on Sundays the countryside was filled with colour as the villagers, in regional dress, walked to church, holding their shoes in their hands to prevent unnecessary wear. The widespread belief in magic, with the consequent weakening of the notion of cause and effect, was a great obstacle to the introduction of rational farming practices.

One of the more curious features of the Polish peasantry, the result of the wide range of the szlachta before the partitions, was the existence of peasant nobles. In spite of their noble surnames and coats of arms, their villages differed

1. Ibid., p. 141.

in no respect from the rest of the villages in the countryside, and they themselves were distinguished only by a stronger feeling of the humiliating character of personal service.

By 1921, emigration and industrialization, with the new horizons they created, had done something to break down the closed world of the peasantry; but the extended family unit still had great strength, and change came very slowly in the villages. Since the amount of land possessed was held in the village to be an indication of a man's worth, it was to be expected that agricultural labourers should have a very low status. They, together with their families, numbered 3,217,200 in 1927.¹ In 1931, 43% lived in their own homes, and were for the most part seasonal workers, while 54.7% lived on the large estates, or with the more prosperous peasants.² Most of the permanent workers received a considerable proportion of their wages in kind. Some of those on the large estates, who had special skills, such as smiths, cartwrights, gardeners and hopgrowers, lived fairly well, but the majority were among the poorest people in Poland.

Entrepreneurs, who together with their families numbered 119,100 in 1927,³ did not play a large part in Polish social life. For one thing, industry was not much developed in Poland:

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1. Landau, op. cit., p. 188, Table V.
 2. Based on M.R.S., (1939), p. 259, Table II.
 3. Landau, op. cit., p. 187, Table V.

Upper Silesia was, in fact, the only highly industrialized area. For another, the old gentry prejudices against trade and manufacturing still persisted, and had been intensified by the fact that Polish entrepreneurs had been relatively unimportant in the early industrialization of Poland. The industrialists in Upper Silesia were almost entirely German. Even in the Congress Kingdom, foreign skills and foreign capital had been very significant. As late as the 1880's, ethnically Polish firms still kept their books in German, because of its prestige as the language of trade, and lawyers dealing with industrial matters often conducted their correspondence in German.¹ The development of Lodz had been achieved largely by German, and to a lesser extent Jewish, factory owners. In 1914 many of the richest industrialists in Congress Poland were German, such as the Geyer brothers,² the Grohmann brothers, Kindler, Biedermann, and Scheibler. Andrzej Wierzbicki was very conscious of the accusation that Polish industry was unpatriotic. He went out of his way to refute the

...primitive view, based on a priori assumptions, and not on a real knowledge of Polish conditions, that foreign capital affected government policy in a manner detrimental to Polish national interests. Capital had neither the need nor the opportunity to act in this way. It did not have the need, because its fate was closely bound up with the economic development of the Congress Kingdom, not

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1. J. Chałasiński, Przeszłość i przyszłość inteligencji polskiej (Warsaw, 1958), p. 171.
 2. Richard Geyer, although a German, was shot by the Nazis in 1939.

with its backwardness. It did not have the opportunity because Polish institutions represented our economic interests.¹

Though the social influence of the industrialists was not great, they were nevertheless able to exercise strong pressure on the Government, through the Central Union of Polish Industry, Mining, Trade and Finance; originally confined to the former Russian partition, it came, by 1932, to include the whole of Poland.

In the absence of a strong bourgeoisie, the dominant urban class was the intelligentsia, which embraced a far wider group than it would have done in the West. Świat Pojęć, a popular prewar encyclopaedia defined 'intelligentsia' in this way:

The intelligentsia, in the sociological sense of the term, is a social stratum made up of those possessing academic higher education. Typical representatives of the intelligentsia...are professors, doctors, literary figures etc. The social situation of the intelligentsia does not mean that its members have a rigidly defined social or ideological position. Members of the intelligentsia can identify with the most varied social and political trends. In fact they occupy the leading role in all political groupings.²

However, membership of the intelligentsia was not to be identified strictly with the possession of a secondary school diploma. It was more important that one's manners and language should be those of the educated classes, and that one should evince some

1. Wierzbicki, op. cit., p. 229.

2. Świat Pojęć (Warsaw, 1939), pp. 117-8.

familiarity with the humanities. This is amusingly brought out in the duelling code of one Boziewicz, who included among those capable of affording satisfaction apart from the gentry 'all those who have completed secondary education' as well as the self-taught 'who have reached, if not surpassed, the level of secondary education, for example, painters and writers.'¹

The intelligentsia can tentatively be divided into several groups. The first group comprised the free professions, including doctors and dentists, lawyers, judges and legal personnel, secondary school and university teachers, writers and artists. A second group was made up of senior administrative and technical personnel. It included higher government officials, the directors of government economic enterprises, senior people in the social services, members of the religious hierarchy, engineers, architects, builders and industrial chemists. Finally, a third group of lower ranking people included primary school teachers, lesser government officials, parish priests, junior technical personnel, and some clerical workers and shop assistants.²

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1. W. Boziewicz, Polski kodeks honorowy (Warsaw, Cracow, 1936), 6th ed. Quoted in J. Żarnowski, 'Struktura społeczna inteligencji w Polsce w latach 1918-39' (Warsaw, 1964), p.55.
 2. For different methods of classification, see Żarnowski, op. cit., pp. 306-50; and S. Szczepański, 'Struktura inteligencji w Polsce', Kultura i Społeczeństwo (1960), pp. 19-48.

could be extended indefinitely.

4. Żarnowski, op. cit., p. 133, Table V. For the limits of the 1921 census see above, p. 23.

In spite of the very marked differences in income within the group in the late 1920's (a prominent doctor or lawyer earned 700-1200 zl. monthly,¹ the average 'inteligent' only 260²), the intelligentsia possessed a strong feeling of collective solidarity and responsibility. The press was continually flooded with articles discussing the role of the intelligentsia, and whether its functions were being adequately performed.³

The occurrence in Polish censuses and labour legislation of the category 'intellectual worker' makes it fairly easy to estimate the size of the intelligentsia. It is true that not all intellectual workers could be considered members of the intelligentsia (this applies particularly to minor shop assistants), but the difference involved is negligible. Thus, adding together the census figures for members of the free professions and for intellectual workers, there were in the census area in 1921 488,000 members of the intelligentsia (522,000 in all of Poland), or 1,134,000 with dependents: they formed 3.5% of the economically active population.⁴ In

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1. Żarnowski, op. cit., p. 263. In 1927 £ 1 - 44.55 zl.
 2. Ibid., pp. 189-191.
 3. See, e.g., N. Czarnocki, 'Grzechy i omyłki inteligencji pracującej', Droga (1924) No. 8, 32-7; B. Heidenkhorn, 'Proletaryzacja inteligencji zawodowej', Droga (1930), No. I. 67-74; A. Hertz, 'Spór o inteligencję', Droga (1929), No. 10, 846-55; 'Inteligencja wobec Bolszewizmu', Droga (1931), No. 3, 193-207; 'Sprawa klerków', Droga (1933), No. I, 229-40; J. Wittlin, 'Inwentarz kultury narodowej', Skamander i (1925) No. 38, 76-93. The list could be extended indefinitely.
 4. Żarnowski, op. cit., p. 135, Table V. For the limits of the 1921 census see above, p. 23.

independent Poland the intelligentsia grew very rapidly: in 1931 it numbered 716,000 (4.7% of the economically active population), or 1,497,000 with dependents. By 1939, according to Żarnowski, it had reached 862,000 (5.2% of the economically active),¹ but it was still relatively small.

The intelligentsia adopted many of the attitudes of the szlachta. A sizeable proportion of its members were of gentry origin, and had come to the towns following the ruin of their estates in the difficult years of the '70's and '80's. In the towns they hoped to continue a way of life which had become impossible for them in the country. Maria Dąbrowska, in Noce i Dni, provides a fictionalised account of the process: Hipolit Niechcic, unable to prevent the collapse of his estate, moves to town. 'He fled to the town as if to a foreign environment, where he would be importuned by nothing, and where he could live quietly with what remained to him.'² But even those members of the intelligentsia who were not of gentry origin took up many of its mannerisms and ideas.

Of these, perhaps the most important was the belief that the intelligentsia was the representative of the Polish nation, its conscience and directing force. This feeling became particularly strong when, in the face of Germanization and

1. Loc. cit.

2. M. Dąbrowska, Noce i Dni (Cracow, 1934) ii, 26-7.

Russification from the 1880's, writers bore the main responsibility for the preservation of the Polish language. 'The intelligentsia', wrote Leon Wasilewski, 'was the guard which kindled the national spirit from a spark among ashes and carried its flame to Poland, reborn as a state.'¹ The consciousness of a special responsibility persisted in independent Poland. The professors of the Jagiellonian University, protesting against the maltreatment of prisoners in Brześć, declared:

In particular, we, as educators, as the intellectual elite, as those who have taken an oath of faithful service and of care for the whole republic, cannot indifferently pass over the Brześć affair.²

From the szlachta the intelligentsia inherited a certain disdain for trade and manufacturing. A member of the intelligentsia could not earn his living through small trading, or manufacturing on a small scale, though exceptions were made for really large manufacturers, or for endeavours of an artistic character, such as dealing in art objects or publishing. This attitude applied even more strongly to manual labour. It explains the penchant of industrialists for buying land, and the relative absence of industrial dynasties in Poland. A very common pattern, particularly among Jews, was for a father to

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1. Z. Wasilewski, 'Na widowni', Myśl Narodowa No.16, 15/IV/34.
 2. 'List otwarty profesorów Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego do J.W. Pana Adama Krzyżanowskiego, posła na Sejm R.P.', Robotnik 18/XII/30.

build up an industrial fortune; his son would, while maintaining the business, become a dilettante and patron of the arts; his grandson might become a full-time writer, or literary critic.

The hostility to industrial pursuits was strongly criticized by Dmowski. 'The new forms of national production,' he wrote,

were initiated by foreign elements, free of the traditions of Polish passivity, particularly Jews and Germans, and the declassed petit-noble intelligentsia made use of them only to obtain ready-made jobs.¹

Prus gave literary expression to the feeling of social inferiority among industrialists in his novel Lalka: Wokulski, a ruined landowner, moves to town, where he makes a fortune in industry; he dies worn out by unrequited love for the Countess Łęcka, to him the embodiment of aristocratic values.² It is significant that in Poznań, which was part of a highly industrialized state, these attitudes did not prevail, and that an intelligentsia of the type found in the rest of Poland hardly existed.

The wide cultural interests of the intelligentsia was also part of the szlachta heritage. However, this respect for knowledge was essentially that of the amateur and the dilettante, not that of the specialist. In the 1930's there was one university student for every 700 people in Poland, an

1. R. Dmowski, Myśli nowoczesnego Polaka (Lwów, 1904), p.88.
 2. B. Prus, Lalka, Warsaw 1934.

extraordinarily high proportion for a relatively backward country. (The corresponding proportion in England was 1:1,013)¹. But the two largest faculties were law and philosophy, hardly the most necessary for a developing state.² This overproduction of 'literary intellectuals' had much to do with the fascism prevalent at the universities.

Finally, service to the state, through the civil service, enjoyed great prestige. A feeling also existed that the state had an obligation to maintain gentry forced off the land. Galicia obtained autonomy in the 1870's, and a rapid growth of the bureaucracy was soon evident. The same was true of the rest of Poland, particularly after independence. According to Kajetan Garbiński, head of the Warsaw Polytechnic, writing in 1910,

The desire to be an official has increased to such an extent among Poles, that all youth, whether urban or rural, as if ashamed of the most useful endeavours of their families, have besieged the Governmental Commission and its subsidiary departments like ants. From this results the enormous number of useless, half-baked officials, claiming the right to do anything in the government, ready to grasp /at anything/ ... rather than work with their own hands for their upkeep.³

Poland had a fairly highly developed network of small traders. In 1921, 518,000 people, or 3.7% of the working

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1. Chałasiński, op. cit., p. 150.
 2. The Philosophy Faculty embraced all the Humanities.
 3. K. Garbiński, a report, as described by S. Askenazy, 'Pierwsza politechnika polska', Nowe Czasy (1910); quoted by Chałasiński, op. cit., pp. 167-8.

population, were occupied in trade and insurance.¹ By 1927, traders and their dependents numbered 1,372,300 people.² There was much talk in Poland of the excess of traders, but in fact the percentage of the population maintained by trade and communications (excluding the post office and the railways) was 6.4, as against 11.4% in Germany.³ The figures for the urban population alone, however, do show a somewhat, though not significantly, greater concentration in Poland (17.9% as against 14.9%).⁴

Polish small trade was rather primitive. The typical trader was an individual with his own shop (71.4% of all those in trade, as compared with 36.1% in Germany).⁵ His profit margins were small, and when he gave credit, it was often at a usurious rate. But the system was adapted to the level of economic development. The attempt of the government to replace private traders by peasant cooperatives had more negative than positive results. Trade was concentrated in Jewish hands. In 1921 62.9% of those employed in trade and insurance were Jews,⁶

1. R.S.R.P., iv (1925-6), 47-51, Table XII.

2. Landau, op. cit., p. 187, Table V.

3. Ibid., p. 190.

4. Ibid., p. 191.

5. Ibid., p. 192.

6. A. Tartakower, 'Zawodowa i społeczna struktura Żydów w Polsce odrodzonej', Zydzi w Polsce odrodzonej, ed. I. Schiper, A. Tartakower, A. Hafftko (Warsaw, 1933) ii, 557. (Afterwards referred to as Z.W.P.O).

and of that number 88.9% were engaged in the retail goods trade.¹ This concentration in the hands of a group who formed almost a separate caste was one of the reasons for the contempt with which that trade was viewed in Poland, and for the failure of a Polish bourgeoisie to develop.

According to Landau, in 1927 industrial workers and their families numbered 5,290,000.² The Inspectors of Labour estimated the number of actual workers in 1929 at 1,110,248,³ which is somewhat lower than Landau's figure would suggest,⁴ but the difference almost certainly results from the absence of artisans and cottage workers, whose places of work were not inspected.

The working class was divided into two distinct sections. Artisans, as we have seen, owned 319,400 workshops in 1928, in which 886,200 people were employed.⁵ Most artisans worked in small workshops, helped only by members of their families, but the smallness of the average workshop is exaggerated in the

1. Ibid., ii, p. 371.

2. Landau, op. cit., p. 187, Table V.

3. Based on figures quoted in M. Drozdowski, 'Położenie i struktura klasy robotniczej Polski lat 1918-39 w literaturze naukowej dwudziestolecia', Z Pola Walki (1961), No. I. p. 36.

4. In 1921, according to the census, of all those dependent upon mining and industry for their livelihood, 47.5% were economically active.

5. See above, p. 36.

6. Ibid. (1931), p. 37, Table III.

7. V. Gross, The Polish Worker (New York, 1943), p. 35.

statistics. To avoid tax, the number of journeymen and apprentices was often falsely lowered in census returns. Arnekker estimates that in 1931 280,000 journeymen worked in artisan workshops.¹ The number of apprentices must have been somewhat less than this.

Artisans were a colourful feature of the Polish scene, a remnant from pre-industrial times, which industrial development had not yet made obsolete. With few exceptions, their standard of living was low, and they worked extremely long hours. A large proportion (39.7% in 1921)² were Jews, who were especially numerous in the clothing crafts, in hides and skins, baking and bookbinding.³

There were 849,500 workers employed in large and medium industry in 1927.⁴ Wide differences in standard of living existed among the industrial workers. Best off were workers in government monopolies, who were not only highly paid, but enjoyed relative security, and skilled workers. Unskilled workers, often of peasant origin, generally earned the same wage as those on government relief projects, or slightly less.⁵

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1. E. Arnekker, Przejawy kryzysu w rzemiośle i chałupnictwie (Warsaw, 1934), p. 14. See also C. Niewadzi, 'Przemysł drobny i rzemiosło w Polsce burżuazyjno-obszarniczej', Zeszyty Naukowe S.G.P.i.S., ii (1955), 171.
 2. A. Hafftko, 'Żydowski stan rzemieślniczy w Polsce odrodzonej', Z.W.P.O., ii, p. 557.
 3. Ibid., ii, pp. 550-1.
 4. M.R.S., (1931), p. 37, Table XXI.
 5. F. Gross, The Polish Worker (New York, 1945), p. 35.

Particularly badly off were the cottage workers; they were most common in the textile industry around Lodz and Bielsko-Biala. According to Arnekker they numbered 200,000 in 1931, and this increased as the depression continued.¹ Because they were miserably paid, they were forced to work extremely long hours to make ends meet. The unemployed, who had increased from 126,400 in 1926 to 299,800 in 1930,² also underwent great hardship as the depression dragged on.

As often happens in economically underdeveloped countries, the industrial working class was relatively well off, particularly in relation to the peasantry. In December 1929, a skilled metalworker in Warsaw earned 85.92 zl. weekly, a fairly high wage; a spinner in Lodz earned 39.64 zl., a coal miner in Upper Silesia 48.35 zl. weekly.³ However, these figures tend to give a rather too optimistic impression. The estimates made by the Instytut Gospodarstwa Społecznego, on the other hand, show that in 1933, admittedly one of the worst years of the depression, 52.4% of all workers earned less than 20 zl. weekly.⁴ But in addition to wages, the fairly highly developed system of social security must be taken into account. Indeed, one of the real difficulties hampering any political cooperation

1. Arnekker, op. cit., p.55.

2. M.R.S., (1931), p. 99, Table VIII.

3. Ibid., p. 102, Table XI.

4. Gross, op. cit., p. 46.

between workers and peasants was the peasant belief that industrial workers were unnecessarily privileged.

The vast majority of industrial workers were Poles. In Lodz and in Upper Silesia, however, many skilled workers were German. Jews generally avoided heavy industry, but were important in the smaller clothing and food processing factories.

are almost certainly the same. The Polish workers in the
Poland were of two types: "industrial" and "artisanal". The
constituted a majority of the population in the industrial
dispersed minorities, which were found in the mountainous
of the country, but whose numbers were small.

Christians formed the majority of the population in the
They lived in the mountains of Silesia, in the Carpathians and
Polonia, and to a lesser extent in the mountains of the
Polonia. In 1931 3,200,000 people were asked their nationality
was Ruthenian (14.3% of the population).¹ In 1931
2,250,000 stated that Christians were their mother tongue.²
1,250,000 Ruthenian.³ These figures are very important

1. *B.S.R.P.*, IV, p. 30, Table 7.

2. *B.P.*, ser. C, vol. 2, (1932), Table 2. In 1931
1931 people were asked their mother tongue, not
not their nationality.

3. *B.S.R.P.*, loc. cit.

4. *B.S.R.P.*, (1937), pp. 20-1. The division
between Ukrainian and Ruthenian (1937)
the division between the nationalities
orientations among Ukrainians, was
by the Polish authorities, but of
importance in this period.

National minorities

Independent Poland was a multi-national state. In 1921 only 69.2% of the population gave their nationality as Polish,¹ while in 1931 only 68.9% gave Polish as their mother tongue.² Pressure to obtain politically satisfactory results was universal in nationality censuses in eastern Europe, and these figures are almost certainly too high. The national minorities in Poland were of two types: territorial minorities, which constituted a majority of the population in certain areas, and dispersed minorities, which were found scattered in most parts of the country, but nowhere formed a significant majority.

Ukrainians formed the largest of the territorial minorities. They lived in the provinces of Lwów, Stanisławów, Tarnopol and Volynia, and to a lesser extent in the provinces of Lublin and Polesia. In 1921 3,898,000 people stated that their nationality was Ruthenian (14.3% of the population),³ while in 1931 3,220,000 stated that Ukrainian was their mother tongue, and 1,220,000 Ruthenian.⁴ These figures do not reflect the true

1. R.S.R.P., iv, p. 26, Table V.

2. S.P., ser. C, xciv a, (1938), Table X. In the census of 1931 people were asked their mother tongue and religion, not their nationality.

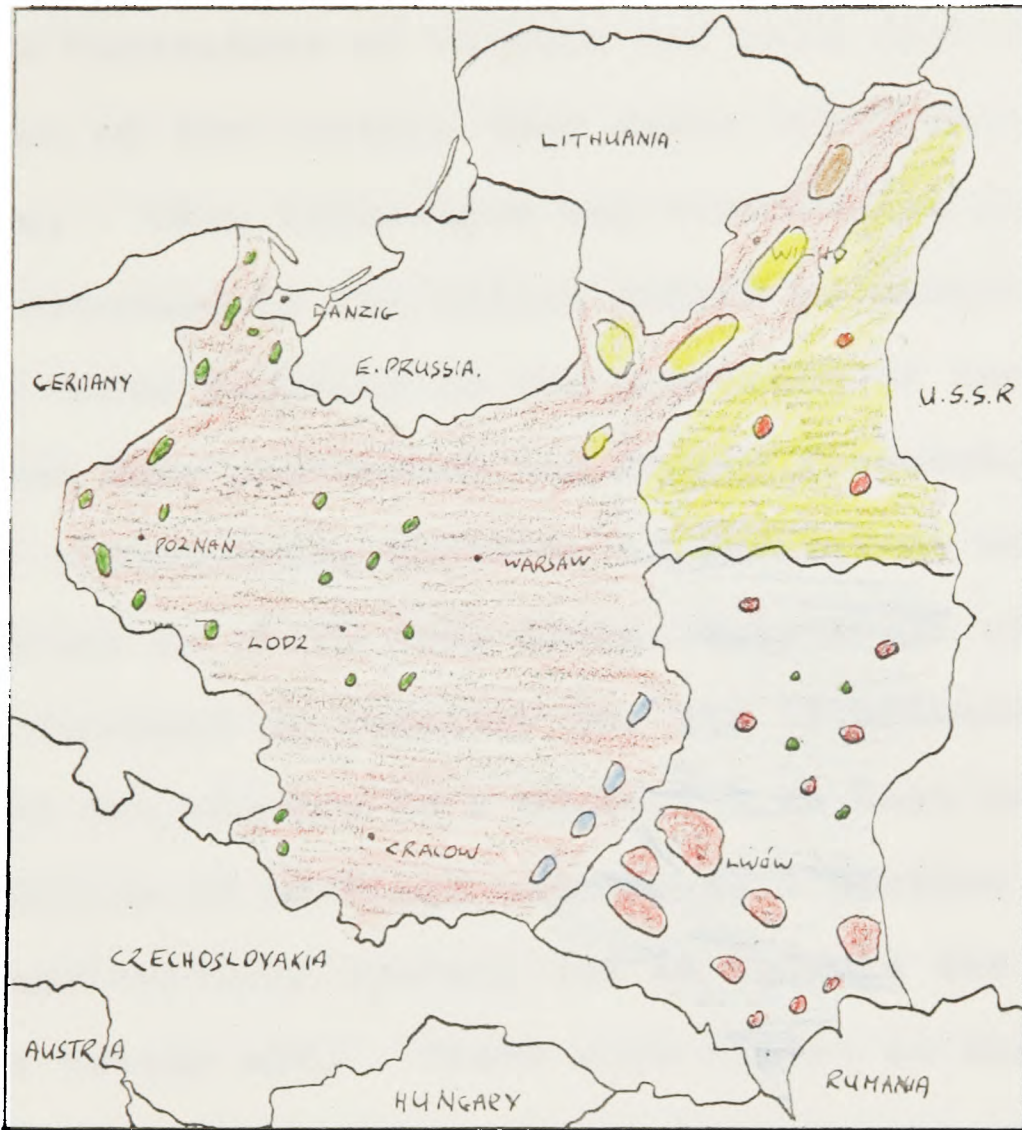
3. R.S.R.P., loc. cit.

4. M.R.S., (1937), pp. 20-1. The artificial differentiation between Ukrainian and Ruthenian (Little Russian), reflecting the division between the nationalist and Russophile orientations among Ukrainians, was fostered to some extent by the Polish authorities, but tended to decline in importance in this period.

position. Estimates of the number of Ukrainians vary from about 5 million, by Polish scholars, to 7 or even 8 million, by Ukrainian nationalists.

Religion divided the Ukrainians. In East Galicia they were overwhelmingly Uniate, or Greek Catholic. The Uniate Church was created at the Synod of Brześć in 1596 by the union with Rome of the Orthodox living in the eastern parts of the Polish republic; it preserved many features of Eastern Orthodoxy, such as the Old Slavonic ritual, and a married priesthood, but came to approximate more and more to Catholic practice. The filioque was introduced into the creed, the Roman teaching on transubstantiation was adopted, and the rulings of the Council of Trent were accepted; the Pope was named in the liturgy as the head of the Church, the Orthodox were referred to as schismatics and dissidents, and Orthodox clerical dress was abandoned.¹ Many Poles hoped that this process would lead to the national assimilation of the Ukrainians in East Galicia. In fact, the Uniate Church, under Archbishop Szeptycki of Lwów, became closely connected with Ukrainian nationalism, and throughout the interwar period was one of its main supports.

1. H. Koch, 'Die Unierte Kirche in Polen', O.E.H.P., pp. 109-10. See also J.S. (pseud.), W kościele i w cerkwi -- praktyczny wykład obrządków rzymskiego i greckiego (Cracow, 1926).



NATIONALITIES IN POLAND

ACCORDING TO THE CENSUS OF 1921.

- POLES
- UKRAINIANS
- WHITE RUSSIANS AND 'LOCALS'
- GERMANS
- LITHUANIANS.

Until the forcible reunion with the Moscow patriarchate in 1839, the Ukrainians of Volynia had also been Uniate, but in the course of the century they again became deeply attached to Orthodoxy. When toleration was established in 1905, very few of them returned to the Uniate Church or embraced Catholicism, like the White Russians in the provinces of Nowogródek and Wilno among whom this phenomenon was fairly frequent.

The overwhelming majority of Ukrainians were peasants. In the areas in which they lived, only 10.3% of the population in 1931 depended on industry for its livelihood, compared with 19.4% for the country as a whole.¹ In East Galicia, fragmentation of holdings had led to a serious deterioration of the agricultural system, but in Volynia the peasants were somewhat better off. There were almost no Ukrainians among the landowners, who were so important in the agrarian structure, and who were virtually all Poles or polonized. Some of the polonized gentry were still members of the Uniate Church, but few of them followed the example of Archbishop Szeptycki in identifying with Ukrainian nationalism.

The towns in East Galicia and Volynia had a majority of Poles and Jews. Ukrainians made up only 30.8% of the urban working class, and generally held the lesser paid positions.²

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1. M.R.S., (1937), based on pp. 29-31, Table XX.
 2. L. Hass, 'M. Kravets: Napisy Robitnichogo Ruchu Zachidni Ukrainy v 1921-39 (Kiev, 1959)' a review, Z Pola Walki, iv (1961) No. 2. pp. 218-22.

Government enterprises such as the railways, and some oil wells and refineries, usually preferred to employ Poles. There were almost no Ukrainian industrialists. From the late 19th century, however, a small intelligentsia had grown up, composed chiefly of priests, teachers and the managers of the extensive system of Ukrainian co-operatives.

White Russians were the other important territorial minority, and formed the bulk of the population in the provinces of Polesia and Nowogródek, as well as a large minority in the Wilno province, and a somewhat smaller minority in the Białystok province. In 1921 1,060,000 people gave their nationality as White Russian (3.9% of the total population), while 49,000 (0.2% of the total population) stated that they were 'tutejsi', or 'locals', and were almost certainly White Russians.¹ In 1931 990,000 people (3.1% of the population) gave White Russian as their mother tongue, and 707,000 (2.2% of the population) said that they spoke the local language.² These figures are probably rather low, for national consciousness was not strongly developed among the White Russians, and a large number of White Russian-speaking Catholics were probably persuaded by census officers to state that they were Poles.

The majority of the White Russians were Orthodox (91.3% of the White-Russian-speakers, 98.5% of the 'locals');³ however,

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1. R.S.R.P., iv (1925-6), 26, Table V.
 2. S.P., ser C, xciv a, Table X.
 3. Loc. cit.

there was a sizeable Catholic minority, composed principally of those who had left the Orthodox Church following the Toleration Edict of 1905. The figure of 7.9% for the proportion of White Russian-speaking Catholics in the population does not give a true impression of their number, and almost certainly many of them appear in the census as Poles.

The areas in which the White Russians lived were the least developed economically in Poland. Only 8.5% of the inhabitants of the provinces of Polesia, Nowogródek and Wilno derived their living from industry in 1931.¹ The overwhelming majority of White Russians were peasants and agricultural labourers. As in East Galicia and Volynia, the landowners were either Poles or polonized. The population of the towns was largely Polish and Jewish. However, a small White Russian intelligentsia did exist, particularly in Wilno.

The Germans must be regarded as a dispersed minority. Only one town, Bielsko-Biała, in Austrian Silesia, had a German majority.² In no single district did Germans constitute a majority of the population, although there were a fair number of predominantly German villages. According to the prewar census figures, which are probably somewhat exaggerated, Germans in the territories which later comprised independent Poland were

1. M.R.S., (1937). Based on pp.29-31, Table XX.

2. S.P., ser. C, xciv a, Table X.

approximately 1,720,000 in number: of these 1,100,000 lived in Poznania and Pomerania, 150,000 in Polish Upper Silesia, 450,000 in the Congress Kingdom, 100,000 in Volynia and 70,000 in Austrian Poland.¹ The passing of Poznania and Pomerania to Poland led to a large-scale emigration of German officials, army personnel, and others who did not wish to live under Polish rule. According to the census of 1921 (this time probably too low), 1,059,000 or 3.9% of the population gave German as their nationality.² By 1931, the number of people who gave German as their mother tongue had fallen, in the official statistics, to 741,000 (2.3% of the population).³

Most of the Germans in Poland were Protestant. In 1931 there were 599,000 German-speaking Protestants and 118,000 German-speaking Catholics.⁴ Most of the German settlement had taken place from Protestant areas; Catholic settlers, moreover, both in the mediaeval and modern periods, tended to be more rapidly assimilated.

Even after the emigration which followed independence, Germans continued to form an important element in Poznania and Pomerania. Many of the large landowners were Germans; according

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1. Cited in W. Kuhn, 'Das Deutschtum in Polen', O.E.H.P., pp. 138 ff.
 2. R.S.R.P., iv (1925-6), 26, Table V.
 3. S.P., loc. cit.
 4. Loc. cit. Of the Protestants, 49% were Lutherans, 2.8% Calvinists, 38.6% members of the Protestant United Church and 11.5% members of other churches.

to Radwan, Germans owned 36.2% of the holdings of more than 50 ha. in Poznanian and 43.7% in Pomerania,¹ and there were many Germans among the larger peasants. The agricultural labourers, however, who played such a significant part in the agrarian system of this region, were mostly Poles. In the towns, a certain number of officials were still German, and many agricultural processing plants were in German hands.

Upper Silesia was an area in which national and class divisions overlapped to a considerable extent. The indigenous Polish-speaking population, which had ceased to be ruled by Poland in the 14th century, had been diluted by the entrepreneurs and traders from Germany, who came in the wake of industrialization. Almost all the large landowners were German (90%, according to Radwan),² as were the industrialists. The majority of the peasants and industrial workers were Poles. National consciousness increased among the Poles when they left the large, semi-feudal estates to work in the mines. This emerged clearly in the plebiscite of 1921: the industrial east voted to join Poland, the agricultural west chose to remain with Germany.

The Germans in the Congress Kingdom fell into two groups. In Lodz and Białystok there were 140,000 Germans, most of whom

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1. J. Radwan, 'Agricultural Reconstruction in Poland', Poland, ed. B. Schmitt. (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1945), p. 225.
 2. Loc. cit.

were connected with the textile industry, before the First World War.¹ By 1914 many of the plants were owned by Poles or Jews, but many German industrialists remained. Among the skilled workers, Germans were also numerous. The remainder of the Germans in the Congress Kingdom were almost entirely peasant settlers, living in German villages along the Vistula, east of Toruń, in the Kalisz and Lodz areas, in the north-west and around Chełm. The 100,000 Germans of Volynia were also overwhelmingly peasant (94% in 1921).²

In Galicia, the Germans formed three distinct groups: 34,000 were peasant colonists, settled principally in the Ukrainian-speaking areas by Joseph II; 6,000 were Sudeten German forestry workers; and 30,000 were textile workers in the largely German town of Bielsko-Biała (German: Bielitz).³

The Jews were the largest of the dispersed minorities. According to the census of 1921, 2,110,000 people, or 7.8% of the population gave their nationality as Jewish. This meant that 25% of those of 'Mosaic persuasion' gave their nationality as Polish.⁴ This could be taken as an index of the amount of

1. Kuhn, op. cit., p. 140.

2. Ibid., p. 142.

3. Loc. cit. See also W. Kuhn, Die Jungen Deutschen Sprachinseln in Galizien (Münster, 1930).

4. R.S.R.P., iv, p. 26, Table V.

assimilation, but is more likely the reflection of a desire to please the census takers. The census of 1931 gives a more satisfactory indication of the extent of assimilation. Of the 3,114,000 people of Mosaic persuasion, 2,488,000 (79.9%) gave Yiddish as their mother tongue, 244,000 (7.8%) Hebrew, and 372,000 (11.9%) Polish.¹ The middle figure is almost certainly composed of Zionists who, though they may have wished to, in all likelihood did not use Hebrew in their daily lives, and should probably be divided between the first and third groups.

The majority of Jews were still extremely devout, observing to the letter the 613 commandments of Orthodox Judaism. The men continued to wear the long caftans and beaver hats, relics of the costume of Polish nobles in the 17th century, which had become identified with religious orthodoxy, and let their sidecurls grow long. The women still cut off their hair on marriage, wore wigs, and went once a month for purification to the ritual baths. Chassidism, an 18th century reaction to the unemotional and formalistic character of rabbinic Judaism, was strong, particularly in the regions around Chełm and Lublin, and in Galicia. In many areas it had degenerated into a cult centred round the court of a Chassidic rabbi, and miracle-working rabbis, such as the one at Góra Kalwarja, enjoyed wide

1. S.P., loc. cit.

renown. But under the influence of urbanization and industrialization, mediaeval Judaism was breaking up. More and more able men and women left the stifling atmosphere of the small towns to seek freedom in the big cities. This process has often been described in fiction, as in Głosy w Ciemności by Strykowski, and Three Cities by Sholem Asch.¹

The situation of the Jews differed considerably in the various partitions. In Prussian Poland, where in 1921 there were 20,600 Jews (0.67% of the population),² emancipation had come early in the 19th century. The vast majority of the Jews of that area had emigrated to the centre of Germany, especially to Berlin. In Galicia, where in 1921 there lived 607,000 Jews (10% of the population),³ emancipation had come in the '70's. Many Jews had enjoyed educational opportunities, and the percentage of Jews in the learned professions was high. Many Jewish members of the intelligentsia were polonized, and Jews like Szymon Askenazy and Józef Feldmann were important in the Polish national movement. However, the economic backwardness of Galicia kept the structure of the Jewish community relatively static. In 1921 74.1% of all those occupied in

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1. J. Strykowski, Głosy w ciemności (Warsaw, 1963); S. Asch, Three Cities (London, 1933).
 2. J. Parkes, The Emergence of the Jewish Problem (Oxford, 1946,) p. 131
 3. Loc. cit.

trade and insurance in Galicia were Jews.¹

In the Russian partition, where in 1921 there were 2,217,000 Jews (12% of the population),² full civil rights were achieved only after Independence. This was particularly true of the Eastern Kresy, but even in the Congress Kingdom Jews did not have the right to own agricultural holdings, or to be mayors of small towns. With the intensification of persecution in Russia, many Jews moved to the Congress Kingdom, where conditions were somewhat better; the percentage of Jews in the Congress Kingdom rose from 11.1 in 1842 to 14.5 in 1897. Large-scale emigration prevented a further increase, but in 1921 Jews still formed a substantial 14.25% of the population.³ This influx of russified Jews provoked fears that they would be used to russify the Congress Kingdom, and led to intensified anti-semitism. The industrial development of the Congress Kingdom had, however, created new economic opportunities for Jews. The old mediaeval concentration of Jews in trade diminished, and Jews became important both in the artisanate and in the industrial working class.

The Jews were largely urban. In 1931 76.4% lived in towns: 43.3% of the Jews were in towns of more than 20,000 inhabitants,

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1. Tartakower, op. cit., Z.W.P.O., ii, p. 367.
 2. Parkes, op. cit., p. 131.
 3. B. Wasiutyński, Ludność żydowska w Polsce w wiekach XIX i XX (Warsaw, 1930), pp. 8-9.

Professions in Poland, 1880-30. Journal of Jewish Studies, vi (4), pp. 313-4.

5. Ibid., p. 323.

where they formed 26.4% of the population; 29.8% lived in towns of less than 20,000 (28.8% of the population); while 23.1% lived in villages and in the country (3.2% of the population).¹ As one would expect, therefore, Jews were found mainly in urban occupations. In Galicia, however, where the granting of civil rights had enabled Jews to buy land, a class of Jewish landowners developed. In 1912, 4.3% of the land held in large estates was owned by Jews.² It was from such a landowning family that Sir Lewis Namier came.

There existed also a certain number of Jewish peasants. In 1921 9.5% of Jews actively employed earned their living from farming, forestry, gardening and fishing.³ It is true that the majority were market gardeners, but some were peasants, the result both of earlier attempts to solve the Jewish problem by agricultural settlement, and of the buying of land by small Jewish farmers in the immediate post-war years.

Jews formed a significant part of the Polish intelligentsia. They were particularly numerous in law and in medicine, for in 1931, according to Mahler, they comprised 49-50% of all lawyers,⁴ and 46% of all doctors.⁵ They were also important in Polish literary life: among Polish writers of Jewish origin were

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1. F. Beranek, 'Das Judentum in Polen', O.E.H.P., p. 120.
 2. S. Bronsztejn, Ludność żydowska w Polsce (Wrocław-Warsaw-Cracow, 1963), p. 54.
 3. Tartakower, op. cit., Z.W.P.O., ii, p. 366.
 4. R. Mahler, 'Jews in Public Service and the Liberal Professions in Poland, 1918-39.' Jewish Social Studies, vi (4), pp. 313-4.
 5. Ibid., p. 325.

Julian Tuwim, Antoni Słonimski, Józef Wittlin and Bolesław Leśmian, to name only a few.

There were some Jews among the larger capitalists: in banking, Kronenberg, Wawelberg and Bloch, in sugar refining Toeplitz and Epstein, and in textiles Poznański. But the typical Jewish 'capitalist' was either the owner of a small factory, or a master-artisan with a large workshop. According to the estimates made by the American Joint Committee (admittedly in the somewhat abnormal year of 1921) 60.6% of all Jewish factories employed less than 5 people, compared with 7.1% of non-Jewish factories.¹

The largest occupational group among Jews in 1921 comprised those in trade and insurance: 34.6% of all economically active Jews were engaged in this branch, (62.6% of all those in Poland)². Of these, 88.9% were employed in the retail goods trade.³ The Jewish trader faced great difficulties, both because of nationalist boycotts, and because of the general suspicion in Poland of all trade as somehow unproductive and parasitic. As Kwiatkowski, the Minister of Trade and Industry after the May coup, noted

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1. Tartakower, op. cit., Z.W.P.O., ii, p. 388.
 2. Ibid., pp. 366-7.
 3. Ibid., p. 371.

When the period of inflation [1922-26] created as an inevitable consequence a number of unhealthy and highly undesirable phenomena in the field of trade, there spread in the popular mind a certain hostility to trade as such. This hostility even took practical forms, expressing itself in the denial of the need for any aid (such as credit) for trade not directly linked with production.¹

In 1921 31.7% of the economically active Jewish population worked in mining and industry.² This group may be divided into two not entirely distinct parts. Jewish artisans comprised 39.7% of all those in Poland.³ In the more backward parts of the country, the percentage was even higher. In Polesia, for example, 81.1% of all artisans were Jews, in the Nowogródek province, 77.1%.⁴ The Jewish industrial working class was concentrated in smaller factories, particularly in the food and clothing industries. (46.7% of Jews in mining and industry worked in clothing factories, 15.4% in food processing plants).⁵ Jewish workers tended to avoid heavy industry, partly because they found it distasteful, partly because of discrimination and the difficulties created for the Orthodox by Saturday work.

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1. E. Kwiatkowski, Postęp gospodarczy Polski (Warsaw, 1927), p. 30.
 2. Tartakower, op. cit., Z.W.P.O., ii, p. 366.
 3. See above, p. 60. See also I. Bornstein, Rzemiosło żydowskie w Polsce (Warsaw, 1936).
 4. Hafftko, op. cit., p. 357.
 5. Tartakower, op. cit., Z.W.P.O., ii, p. 369.

Many Jews were cottage workers in the textile industry. In general, Jewish workers were rather poorly paid.

Perhaps the most pressing problem facing Jews in Poland was their extensive pauperization. Jewish poverty had been widespread in Eastern Europe before the First World War, but emigration and industrialization had done something to alleviate the situation. After the war, however, industrial production did not expand rapidly, and emigration dropped to half its prewar level. Jews were concentrated in the less modernized industries, and were adversely affected by rationalization, to say nothing of deliberately anti-semitic policies. By 1938 the situation had deteriorated to such an extent that 50% of all Jews could not afford to pay a 5 zloty (2/6) communal tax; 50% of the rest could not afford 10 zl.¹ A prominent Jewish leader in Lwów reported:

A year or two ago, 40% of our people applied for aid to the community, this year it is 50%, the next year or the year after that it will be 60%. We are waiting for death.²

Of the other minorities, the most important were the 69,000 Lithuanians (0.3% of the population), concentrated in an area separated from the Lithuanian border by a strip of Polish

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1. O. Janowsky, People at Bay: The Jewish Problem in East Central Europe (London, 1938) pp. 92-3. See also J. Börenstein, 'Zagadnienie pauperyzacji ludności żydowskiej w Polsce', Z.W.P.O., pp. 395-407.
 2. Quoted in Janowsky, op. cit., p. 97.

settlement, the 56,000 Russians (0.2%), living all over the Kresy, and the 31,000 Czechs (0.1%), settled in Volynia.¹ In addition, there were some interesting historical survivals, such as the Tartars, Polish-speaking Moslem descendants of Tartar and Turkish prisoners of war, and the Karaites, a people of Turkic origin who had adopted a heretical form of Judaism.

1. R.S.R.P., iv (1925-6), p. 26, Table V.

2. Ibid., art. 2, p. 24.
 3. Ibid., art. 11, p. 28.
 4. Ibid., art. 10, p. 27.
 5. Ibid., art. 5, art. 6, p. 25.
 6. Ibid., art. 7, p. 26.

CHAPTER II.THE CONSTITUTION AND THE PARTIES

The Polish Constitution of March 1921 was modelled on that of the Third French Republic. It established a democratic republic in which all citizens were equal before the law,¹ and sovereignty resided in the nation.² The legislature was composed of a lower house (the Sejm) and a Senate, but of these the Sejm was vastly more important. Elected by universal suffrage, it sat for five years, and could be dissolved before this period had elapsed only by a vote of two-thirds of its own members, or by a vote of three-fifths of the members of the Senate, acting with the approval of the President.³

Like the Council of Ministers, but unlike either the Senate or the President, the Sejm had the right to initiate legislation.⁴ The annual adoption of the budget, the annual renewal of conscription, the determining of the size of the army, the imposition of taxes, the establishment of monopolies, and the contracting of state debts all required legislative approval.⁵

The Sejm was also empowered to undertake an annual examination of the financial administration of the state.⁶

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1. Konstytucja 17 Marca 1921 r., (Warsaw, 1921), art.96, p.55.
 2. Ibid., art. 2, p. 37.
 3. Ibid., art. 11, p. 39; art. 26, p. 42.
 4. Ibid., art. 10, p. 39.
 5. Ibid., art. 5, art. 6, p. 38.
 6. Ibid., art. 7, p. 38.

The actual investigation of accounts was entrusted to the Main Auditing Office;¹ it reported to the Sejm, which could then vote on accepting the Government's report.² The Sejm exercised control over state debts,³ and had the right to decide whether a state of emergency proclaimed by the Government should be maintained.⁴ Members of the Sejm had the right to question government ministers on their policies or actions,⁵ and members of the Council of Ministers were responsible, both collectively and individually, to the Sejm.⁶ It could also establish commissions of inquiry, with the right to call witnesses, in order to investigate matters of importance to the state.⁷

In elections to the Sejm, all citizens over the age of twenty-one who were resident in their constituencies on the day before an election was proclaimed had the right to vote.⁸ The constitution stated that elections were to be 'universal, secret, direct, equal and proportional',⁹ and a modification of the d'Hondt system of proportional representation was adopted in an attempt to prevent excessive fragmentation of political groups. This modification intensified the d'Hondt system's bias in favour of larger parties by establishing a number of

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1. Najwyższa Izba Kontroli.
 2. Konstytucja, art. 9, p. 39.
 3. Ibid., art. 8, p. 39.
 4. Ibid., art. 124, p. 62.
 5. Ibid., art. 33, pp. 43-4.
 6. Ibid., art. 56, p. 49.
 7. Ibid., art. 34, p. 44.
 8. Ibid., art. 12, p. 39.
 9. Ibid., art. 11, p. 39.

indirectly contested seats (72 of the Sejm's 444), for which only those parties which had put up candidates in more than 6 of the 64 constituencies were eligible. The seats on this list were distributed in proportion to the number of seats a party won in the constituency lists.¹ In addition, the requirements that no elector should reside more than 6 km. from a polling station favoured the rural parties, and it made constituencies in the country rather smaller than those in the towns.

The Senate was also elected according to the d'Hondt system by all citizens over thirty years of age who had resided in their constituencies for over a year. Each of the 13 provinces formed a Senate constituency.² The Senate had no power to veto legislation, but it could, within 30 days of the passing of a law, suggest amendments which the Sejm could then adopt by a simple majority vote. To reject these amendments, a majority of 11/20 was required.³ In addition, the Senate, acting with the President, could dissolve the Sejm by a 3/5 vote.⁴ On any dissolution of the Sejm, the Senate was automatically dissolved.

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1. Law of 28 July 1922, Dz.U.R.P., 1922. No.66, pp. 590 ff. A.J. Groth, in his article 'Proportional Representation in Prewar Poland', Slavic Review, XXIII, (1964), No.1, pp. 103-14, fails to see that this system of proportional representation favoured the larger parties. He finds it difficult to understand why the National Democrats supported the electoral system; in fact, it favoured them: in the election of November 1922 their bloc won 29.1% of the votes and 38% of the seats. For a description of the d'Hondt system, see E. Lakeman and S. Lambert, Voting in Democracies (London, 1955), pp. 87-90.
 2. Konstytucja, art. 36, p.44.
 3. Ibid., art. 35, p.44.
 4. See p.79.

The Sejm and the Senate, sitting together, constituted the National Assembly. This body elected the President by an absolute majority,¹ and was responsible for the revision of the constitution called for every 25 years. Amendments were adopted by a simple majority vote.²

Many of the bitterest disputes concerning the terms of the constitution had arisen over defining the nature of the executive. The National Democrats, believing that their bête noir, Pilsudski, might be elected President, succeeded in drastically limiting the powers of that office. According to the constitution, the President was the chief executive in the state. He was not politically responsible to the Sejm, but his power was exercised through his ministers, who were.³ Elected for 7 years by an absolute majority of the National Assembly,⁴ he opened, closed and adjourned the Sejm,⁵ and, acting with the Senate, could dissolve it.⁶

Although he did not have a veto, he could affect legislation through the Government's right to initiate bills, through his right to call special sessions, and through his right to refuse to call Parliament in periods not specified in the constitution.⁷ Along with the government, he had the

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1. Konstytucja, art. 39, p. 45.
 2. Ibid., art. 125, pp. 62-3.
 3. Ibid., art 2, p. 37; art. 43, p. 46.
 4. Ibid., art. 39, p. 45.
 5. Ibid., art. 25, p. 42.
 6. Ibid., art. 26, p. 42.
 7. Ibid., art. 25, p. 42.

power to issue decrees in accordance with laws, but his acts were not valid without the countersignatures of the President of the Council of Ministers (Prime Minister), and the minister whose sphere of responsibility was involved.¹

As head of state, the President appointed and dismissed the Prime Minister, and appointed ministers and senior government officials on the advice of the Prime Minister.² He was the highest officer of the standing military forces, but in time of war he could not be Supreme Commander. He could, however, appoint a Supreme Commander on the advice of the Council of Ministers.³ Before a state of emergency could be proclaimed his acquiescence was necessary.⁴

In foreign affairs, he represented the state, receiving foreign diplomats and accrediting those of Poland.⁵ He had the right to conclude agreements with other states, and was obliged merely to inform the Sejm of these. However, exceptions were made for agreements placing an obligation on the state or its citizens, concluding an alliance, or changing a frontier, which required the acquiescence of the Sejm.⁶ In addition, prior approval of the Sejm was required for the declaration of war, or the conclusion of peace.⁷

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1. Konstytucja, art. 3, p. 38; art. 44, p. 46.
 2. Ibid., art. 45, p. 47.
 3. Ibid., art. 46, p. 47.
 4. Ibid., art. 125, pp. 62-3.
 5. Ibid., art. 48, p. 47.
 6. Ibid., art. 49, pp. 47-8.
 7. Ibid., art. 50, p. 48.

The President was not responsible, either before the courts or before parliament, for his actions while in office. In the case of treason, violation of the constitution or criminal acts, he could be brought before a Tribunal of State, established by the Sejm after a 3/5 vote against him.¹

The real executive power was exercised by the Council of Ministers, under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister or a deputy designated by him.² Ministers had the right to take part in the sessions of the Sejm,³ and the Cabinet as a whole, as well as each individual minister, was responsible both politically and constitutionally to the Sejm.⁴ The Cabinet was collectively responsible to parliament for the general policy of the Government, while individual ministers were responsible for the policies of their ministries, for their activities while in office, and for the consistency of both their policies and activities with the law of the state.⁵ The Cabinet was also individually and collectively responsible for the acts of the President.⁶ By a simple majority, the Sejm could force the government or an individual minister to resign.⁷

In addition, ministers were constitutionally responsible to the Sejm for criminal acts committed while in office.⁸ On

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1. Ibid., art. 51, p. 48.
 2. Konstytucja, art. 55, p. 49.
 3. Ibid., art. 60, pp. 49-50.
 4. Ibid., art. 56, p. 49.
 5. Loc. cit.
 6. Ibid., art. 57, p. 49.
 7. Ibid., art. 58, p. 49.
 8. Ibid., art. 59, p. 49.

the passing of a resolution by a 3/5 majority of the Sejm, a minister could be accused before a Tribunal of State, composed of the president of the highest court and twelve other members holding no state office. The tribunal was elected for the entire duration of the parliament; 8 members were chosen by the Sejm and 4 by the Senate. A minister could not renounce his office to evade trial, and while accused he was suspended from office.¹

In local Government, despite a constitutional provision that 'the principle of decentralization will be introduced',² a centralized system on the French pattern was established. The country was divided into 13 provinces (województwa), each of which was administered by a governor (wojewoda). The provinces were, in turn, divided into districts (powiaty) under the control of sub-prefects (starostowie). Although the constitution claimed that this system was based on 'the principle of broad territorial local self-government',³ the ideal remained largely a dead letter. However, some attempt was made to promote economic self-government through chambers of commerce, industry and agriculture, and organizations of artisans and industrial workers, as provided for in article 68 of the constitution.⁴

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1. Loc cit.
 2. Konstytucja, art. 66, p. 51.
 3. Ibid., art. 3, p. 38.
 4. Ibid., p. 51.



POLAND SHOWING PROVINCIAL DIVISIONS IN 1931

The constitutional position of the army had provoked great contention in the constituent Sejm, and continued to do so until the May Coup. Nominally, the President was head of the army, but its parliamentary dealings were conducted by the Minister of War, who was to be an army officer, and who was responsible to the Sejm for all acts of military officials, both in time of peace and in time of war. He served as a shield for the Supreme Commander, who was not directly responsible to parliament, and who was nominated by the President on the recommendation of the Cabinet, acting on the suggestion of the Minister of War.¹ As we have seen, the Sejm had to approve conscription annually, and determined the size of the army.²

A compromise was reached on the question of church-state relations which all but established Roman Catholicism as the state religion. 'The Roman Catholic faith', proclaimed the constitution,

being the religion of the overwhelming majority of the nation, occupies in the state a leading position among religions endowed with equal rights (równouprawnionych).

The Roman Catholic Church governs itself by its own laws. The relationship of the state to the Church will be laid down on the basis of an agreement with the Holy See, which will require ratification by the Sejm.³

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1. Ibid., art. 46, p. 47.
 2. Ibid., art. 5, p. 38.
 3. Konstytucja, art. 114, p. 60.

The traditional liberal safeguards were included in the constitution. The judiciary was to be independent,¹ and judges could be dismissed only by a judicial decision;² members of parliament enjoyed legal immunity for their actions in Parliament;³ persons under arrest were to be brought to trial within 48 hours;⁴ citizens had the rights of freedom of speech, conscience and belief, and freedom of petition;⁵ the press was free,⁶ and freedom of assembly and the inviolability of the mails and of personal dwellings could be waived only under certain circumstances laid down by law.⁷

The constitution set forth, in addition, some general principles. According to article 99,

The Polish Republic recognizes all property, whether owned privately by individuals or collectively by groups, institutions, local government bodies or, finally, by the state itself, as one of the most important bases of social and legal order. It guarantees every inhabitant, institution or group the protection of its property. It will allow expropriation or limitation of ownership only in cases provided for by law, because of the greater need of the state, and compensation will be paid.⁸

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1. Ibid., art. 77, pp. 52-3.
 2. Ibid., art. 78, p. 53.
 3. Ibid., art. 21, p. 41.
 4. Ibid., art. 98, p. 56.
 5. Ibid., art. 104, p. 58; art. 112, p. 59; art. 107, p. 58.
 6. Ibid., art. 105, p. 58; art. 106, p. 58; art. 100, p. 57.
 7. Ibid., art. 124, p. 62.
 8. Konstytucja, p. 56.

'Labour', declared article 102,

as the main wealth of the Republic is under the particular protection of the state....Each man has the right to state-supervised working conditions and, in case of unemployment, sickness or accident, to welfare benefits.¹

Every 25 years the National Assembly could revise the constitution, adopting amendments by a simple majority. In the interim, constitutional revision required a 2/3 majority, both in the Sejm and in the Senate. However, the second Sejm elected under the new constitution could effect revision by a 3/5 vote.²

Although the constitution was that of a national state (its preamble began 'We, the Polish Nation'), it guaranteed within its borders 'complete protection of life, liberty and property to all, without distinction of origin, nationality, language or religion.'³ Every citizen had the right 'to maintain his national identity and to preserve his language and national customs.'⁴ Minorities were to enjoy the 'full and free development of their national character through autonomous groups, of a public and legal nature, composed of representatives of the minorities.'⁵ They had the right to found private schools and religious and social organizations,⁶

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1. Ibid., p. 57.
 2. Ibid., art. 125, pp. 62-3.
 3. Ibid., art. 95, p. 55.
 4. Ibid., art. 109, pp. 58-9.
 5. Loc. cit.
 6. Ibid., art. 110, p. 59.

though nothing was said of minority rights within the state school system. The practice of any religion not disruptive to public order was permitted.¹

The rights of the minorities were more closely defined in the Treaty of 28 June 1919 between the Allied and Associated Powers and Poland. This formed part of the fundamental law of Poland,² and could not be changed without the agreement of the majority of the Council of the League of Nations.³ In addition to the rights already guaranteed by the constitution, the treaty provided that the Polish government could not limit the use of any minority language:

Notwithstanding any establishment by the Polish government of an official language, adequate facilities shall be given to Polish nationals of non-Polish speech for the use of their language, either orally or in writing, before the courts.⁴

It further ruled that Poland must

provide in the public educational system in towns and districts in which a considerable proportion of Polish nationals of other than Polish speech are residents, adequate facilities for ensuring that in the primary schools the instruction shall be given the children of such Polish nationals through the medium of their language.⁵

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1. Konstytucja, art. 111, 112, p. 59.
 2. Treaty between the Allied and Associated Powers and Poland, signed at Versailles on June 28, 1919, reprinted in J. Robinson, O. Karbach, M. Laserson, N. Robinson and M. Vichniak, Were the Minorities Treaties a Failure? (New York, 1943), pp. 314 ff. article I.
 3. Ibid., article 12, pp. 316-7.
 4. Ibid., art. 7, p. 315.
 5. Ibid., art. 9, p. 316.

Finally, Jews could not be forced to violate their Sabbath, and no election could take place on a Saturday.¹

Upper Silesia enjoyed a special autonomous position within the state. Before the plebiscite in German Upper Silesia, the Sejm passed on July 15, 1920, a law conferring wide self-government on those parts of Austrian and German Upper Silesia which would fall to Poland.² The law established as Silesia's legislature a provincial Sejm, elected by universal suffrage, and as executive a governor, appointed from Warsaw, with a council of seven. Two members of the council were appointed by the governor and five elected by the Sejm.³ The Silesian Government was empowered to deal with questions concerning the use of two languages in Silesia, matters of local government and public health, and the organization of a police force. It exercised control over primary education and all vocational training, and legislated in clerical matters, with the exception of those to be dealt with in the Concordat. Provision for the poor, agricultural legislation, local communications and electricity, the floating of provincial loans and the imposition of provincial taxes all fell within the competence of the provincial administration.⁴

1. Ibid., art. 11, p. 316.

2. 'Ustawa Konstytucyjna z dnia 15 lipca 1920 r. zawierająca statut organiczny województwa śląskiego,' Dz. U.R.P., 1920, No. 73, pp. 1298-1305.

3. Ibid., art. 13, p. 1301, arts. 24-5, p. 1302.

4. Ibid., art. 14, p. 1301.

Silesian autonomy was further strengthened by the Geneva Convention of May 15, 1922, between Germany and Poland.¹ Its purpose, as determined by the Council of the League of Nations, when it was decided to partition Silesia, was

To preserve for a certain time, for the industries of the territory separated from Germany, their former markets, and to ensure the supplies of raw material and manufactured products which are indispensable to these industries; to avoid the economic disturbance which would be caused by the immediate substitution of the Polish mark for the German mark as the sole legal currency in the area assigned to Poland; to prevent the working of the railways serving Upper Silesia from being affected by the shifting of the political frontier; to regulate the supplies of water and electricity; to maintain freedom of movement for individuals across the new frontier; to guarantee, as far as possible, to the workers that they shall not lose, in the portion of territory assigned to Poland, the advantages which were secured to them by German social legislation and by their Trades Union organization; and finally, to ensure the protection of minorities upon the basis of an equitable reciprocity.²

A League of Nations Tribunal of Arbitration was set up in Silesia to deal with any disputes over the interpretation of the Convention. Appeals against its decisions could be made to the League itself.³

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1. 'Convention Germano-Polonaise relative à la Haute Silesie faite a Genève, le 15 Mai 1922.' Reprinted in G. Kaeckenbeeck, *The International Experiment of Upper Silesia* (London, 1942), pp. 567-822.
 2. Quoted in Kaeckenbeeck, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-10.
 3. 'Convention Germano-Polonaise, Sixieme Partie: Commission Mixte et Tribunal Arbitral de Haute Silesie,' Kaeckenbeeck, *op. cit.*, pp. 801-16.

Before East Galicia was definitely assigned to Poland, a law was passed by the Sejm on 26 September 1922, conferring wide autonomy upon the provinces of Lwów, Tarnopol and Stanisławów.¹ This was intended to influence the Council of the League to accept the incorporation of East Galicia into Poland, and once the question was favourably decided in May, 1923, the provisions of the law were largely disregarded.

In 1925 there were 92 registered political parties in Poland, including youth movements and the parties of the national minorities. In the Sejm 32 parties were represented, organized into 18 parliamentary clubs.² The far-reaching differences which had developed during 130 years of foreign rule in the former partitions were partly responsible for this multiplicity. In Galicia, for example, people had become accustomed to thinking of themselves as Austrians as well as Poles. Stanisław Łańcucki, a Socialist leader, describes the prevailing mood of Galician railway workers in 1914-15:

Everyone trembled at the mere thought that Austria might undergo a catastrophe, and no one thought that she could possibly disintegrate. 'And who will recognize my years of service? Who will pay my pension if Austria falls? No, it is impossible. Austria must win.' These were the questions and desires of the railwaymen, both Socialist and National Democrat. This, moreover, was how almost

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1. 'Ustawa z dnia 26 wrzesnia 1922 r.,' Dz. U.R.P., 1922, No. 90, article 829, pp. 1553-5.
 2. A. Bełcikowska, Stronnictwa i Związki Polityczne w Polsce (Warsaw, 1925), p. 9.

everyone in Galicia understood the situation.¹

The contrasting traditions of political tactics in constitutional Austria and Germany and in autocratic Russia also hindered cooperation. In no sphere more than in politics, claimed the peasant leader Stanisław Thugutt, was it so important

whether one became active under the Russians or under the Austrians, with the tradition of armed uprisings and mole-like conspiratorial work in the blood, or with the habit of small struggles for the achievement of very limited aims. The general aim might be the same, but how greatly these psychological differences influenced tactics, a matter of such importance in politics, that it divided deeply and fundamentally people otherwise extremely close to each other.²

Although the electoral system was intended to prevent the excessive growth of small parties, the principle of proportional representation which it embodied brought about fragmentation. In addition, the 'self-confidence and exuberant individualism'³ of the Polish intelligentsia, which played a leading role in all the parties, hindered the formation of more broadly based political groupings.

The unfortunate effects of this atomisation were intensified by a lack of political experience. Before 1914, the Polish parties in the Reichstag, the Reichsrat and the Duma

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1. S. Łańcucki, Wspomnienia (Warsaw, 1957), p. 152.
 2. S. Thugutt, Wybór Pism i Autobiografia (Glasgow, 1943), p. 109.
 3. A. Micewski, Z Geografii Politycznej Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej (Warsaw, 1964), p. 377.

had always been among the opposition, demanding the redress of grievances. This habit was difficult to overcome. 'In Poland,' wrote Thugutt, 'everyone wants to be in opposition; on no account will anyone accept responsibility.'¹

Widespread poverty and ignorance increased the temptation to indulge in demagogy. As late as 1931, after 12 years of compulsory education, only 69.8% of the population could read and write. In the countryside the proportion of literates was only 64.4%.² The Eastern Kresy was the most backward region in this respect: in the Białystok province the proportion was 63.5%,³ and in Polesia 48.5%.⁴

Polish political life in the 'twenties was still to a great extent overshadowed by the increasingly anachronistic conflict between the National Democrats and the followers of Piłsudski, a conflict over tactics and orientation which had arisen before 1914 and had dominated the course of Polish politics during the First World War. In his account of Poland between the two World Wars, Mackiewicz claimed 'The history I am writing could be called "Dmowski and Piłsudski." The history of my generation is the struggle of these two men.'⁵

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1. S. Thugutt, Letter to Juliusz Poniatoński, Wyzwolenie 27.VII. 1924.
 2. Based on Statystyka Polska, Series C, xciv a (1938), Table XVI, pp. 60-73.
 3. Based on S.P., Ser. C, Lxxxiii (1938), Table XVI, pp. 58-9.
 4. Based on S.P., Ser. C, lxxxvi (1938), Table XVI, p. 52.
 5. S. Mackiewicz, Historia Polski od 11 listopada 1918r. do 17 września 1939r. (London 1941) p.34.

Roman Dmowski, with Jan Popławski and Zygmunt Balicki a founder of the National Democratic party,¹ and its principal ideological spokesman, formulated his views in the late 1890's in reaction against Positivism, the belief that nationalist aspirations should be subordinated to social reform, and the general acquiescence in foreign rule, both of which had dominated politics in Poland after the disastrous crushing of the insurrection of 1863. He felt that his position offered the possibility of a new solution for the old problem, a third way:

Where formerly it was held that the nation had only two alternatives, either armed uprising or complete abdication and acquiescence in the most miserable conditions of existence...the Polish nation has now found a new way, excluding both of these. It has realized the necessity of taking as its point of departure in politics the real political situation, the incorporation into three states, but it has understood that within each of these three states it can and must struggle for its national existence, for its separateness, for conditions of general advance, indeed, for its civil rights....²

As a result of his visit to Japan, he came to see national feeling as a combination of instincts 'independent of the will of the individual.'³ He hoped to make use of this involuntary national feeling to create among the Poles of all

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1. Demokracja Narodowa, also known as Endecja.
 2. R. Dmowski, 'Niemcy, Rosja i Kwestja Polska,' Pisma (Częstochowa, 1938), ii, p. 227. This is the reprint of a work first published in 1908.
 3. R. Dmowski, Dopełnienie : Myśli Nowoczesnego Polaka (London, 1953), pp. 98-9.

the partitions a sense of national community which would be strong enough to withstand the pressures of assimilation. His movement was solidaristic, and opposed to class parties, which he accused of political immaturity. Although he admitted that one group of Polish socialists had accepted the need for national independence, this 'does not prevent them from being socialists,' he wrote:

they cannot recognize cultural, economic and political antagonisms between nations, they cannot talk of the spiritual distinctiveness (odrębność) of a nation, of the unity of the desires of a nation in a given field, for what would then become of the doctrine of the international proletariat, or of the predominance of class antagonisms over all others?¹

He placed great emphasis on developing the national sentiment of the peasantry, who did not share the passivity with which he reproached the szlachta, and who, following emancipation, were showing 'activity, enterprise and flexibility of thought.'²

But though the National Democrats worked extensively among the peasantry, founding schools and cooperatives, they were not hostile to large landowners. Apologizing for his attack on the policy of the Conservatives in Galicia, Dmowski stressed that it was their politics and not their social position he was assailing. He maintained that

1. R. Dmowski, Myśli Nowoczesnego Polaka (Lwów, 1904), pp.169-70.

2. Ibid., p.91.

It is our great advantage, compared with other nations who have lost their existence as states, that we possess historic classes, inheritors of the political culture of the past, a factor of first-rate value in the contemporary evolution of our nation.¹

Although he called himself a democrat, Dmowski was opposed to liberal democracy as it was practised in the West, both because he believed it was dominated by 'Jewish-Masonic influences' and because it conflicted with his idea of a coherent national community with a common will. He saw as a feature of Western parliamentary development the polarization of political life between liberals and conservatives:

In general, conservative parties support strong internal policies, vote for greater state impositions, etc., while on the other hand, progressive and democratic elements advance liberal slogans, defend the individual against the state, attempt to reduce the aspirations of the state, and the burdens it lays upon its citizens.²

He felt that the uncritical acceptance in Poland of the principles of Western liberalism had placed Polish democracy on 'a false road.'³ 'Even today', he found in 1904,

many people are deeply convinced that true democracy cannot be concerned with such matters as the national interest, that it should only struggle for freedom and liberty, opposing broad national and state aspirations.⁴

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1. R. Dmowski, 'Upadek myśli konserwatywnej w Polsce', Pisma, iv, pp. vii-ix, the reprint of a work first published in 1914.
 2. Dmowski, Myśli Nowoczesnego Polaka, pp. 180-1.
 3. Ibid., p. 186.
 4. Ibid., pp. 185-6.

Dmowski regarded Germany as Poland's principal enemy. Prussia had played the most conspicuous part in the partitions of Poland, and, unlike Austria and Russia, had gained territories which she held to be indispensable to her national existence. 'To Prussia' he wrote, 'the lands she took from Poland were necessary for the territorial linking of her possessions.'¹ Without them the German desire for dominance in East-Central Europe would be rendered almost unattainable. Prussia was bound to oppose the reestablishment of a Polish state because it would call into question her hold on her Polish lands.

Dmowski held that

Prussia grew up from the fall of Poland; the revival of Poland... would be a brake on German eastward expansion and would undermine the leading role which Prussia plays in the German Reich. Thus Prussian politicians understand that they can make no compromise with the Poles.²

He believed that German ambitions in Eastern Europe would lead to a clash with Russia, and he hoped to win the trust of the Russian government by his anti-German policies and his general political responsibility so that Russia might reach some agreement with the Poles. Moreover, he believed that the internal difficulties of the Russian state would lead to a liberalisation of policy in relation to the non-Russian minorities.

1. Dmowski, Niemcy, Rosja i Kwestja Polska, p.30.

2. Ibid., p.151.

Anti-Semitism formed a fundamental element of National Democratic ideology. To Dmowski, the Jews in Poland were a coherent national group which could never be assimilated, and which was being used by the partitioning powers to reinforce their rule. He saw the Jewish predominance in Polish trade as the principal cause for the failure of a Polish bourgeoisie to develop, and for the political weakness of Poland which had led to the partitions.

The National Democrats first became important in Polish political life during the revolution of 1905, when they vigorously opposed the attempts of the Polish Socialist Party under Piłsudski to begin a national uprising. Dmowski even went to Japan to counteract the effect of Piłsudski's mission to the Japanese high command. By 1914 the National Democrats had become the strongest political force both in the Congress Kingdom and in Prussian Poland. In Galicia, because of their pro-Russian orientation and the dominance in politics of the large landowners, they had less success; however, their strength grew here, particularly after the introduction of universal suffrage in 1908.¹

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1. For a fuller account of the National Democrats before 1914 see: R. Dmowski, Pisma, i-iv; E. Von Puttkammer, Die Polnische National-demokratie (Cracow, 1943); S. Kozicki, Historia Ligi Narodowej, (London, 1964); W. Feldman, Geschichte der Politischen Ideen in Polen, (Munich, 1917).

Already in 1912, a secret all-Polish conference of the National Democrats in Cracow had decided that in the event of war the party would support the Entente. Thus in August 1914 the party accepted the Manifesto to the Poles issued by Grand Duke Nicholas, and in the autumn of that year formed a pro-Entente Polish National Committee¹ to counteract the influence of the pro-Austrian General National Committee.² The Polish National Committee bitterly attacked the Piłsudski legions, and formed Polish units, the so-called Gorczyński legions, to fight alongside the Russian forces. In May 1917, as Russia became a less significant part of the Allied coalition, the committee reformed itself in Lausanne. It adopted Paris as its headquarters, where it was headed by Dmowski himself, and established branches in America, London and Rome. The National Committee was recognized in 1918 by the Allies as the Polish government, and its delegation, with some additions to appease the Piłsudski-ites, represented Poland at the peace conference at Versailles.³

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1. Komitet Narodowy Polski.
 2. Naczelny Komitet Narodowy.
 3. For the National Democrats during the First World War see: T. Komarnicki, The Rebirth of the Polish Republic (London, 1957); R. Dmowski, 'Polityka polska i odbudowanie Państwa', Pisma, iv-v; M. Leczyk, Komitet Narodowy Polski a Ententa i Stany Zjednoczone 1917-19 (Warsaw, 1966).

In independent Poland, the National Democrats entered politics as the Popular National Union,¹ formed in 1919 by the amalgamation of National Democratic and allied groups from the different parts of Poland. These included the Galician National Democrats,² the Galician Christian Peasant Party,³ the National Democrats of the Prussian partition, and the parties which had made up the National Electoral Committee of Democratic Parties⁴ in Russian Poland.

The second congress of the Z.L.N., held in Warsaw on 26-27 October 1919, formulated the new party programme. Its links with the pre-independence policies of the National Democrats were explicitly stated:

The principles which gave the nation the strength of spirit necessary to achieve independence, the paths of national politics which led to liberty have not ceased to be appropriate because subjection has ended. They are the most valuable ideological heritage which we take with us into the new life in the independent Polish state.⁵

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1. Związek Ludowo-Narodowy, also known as the Z.L.N.
 2. Stronnictwo Demokracji Narodowej.
 3. Stronnictwo Chrześcijańsko-Ludowe.
 4. Narodowy Komitet Wyborczy Stronnictw Demokratycznych: formed by the Interparty Circle (Koło Międzypartyjne), the main pro-Entente grouping here, it had included the National Democrats, the Polish Progressive Party (Polska Partia Postępowa), the Party of Constructive Politics (Stronnictwo Polityki Realnej), the National Union (Zjednoczenie Narodowe), the Christian Democrats (Demokracja Chrześcijańska), and the Union of Economic Independence (Związek Niezależności Gospodarczej). See : Bełcikowska, op. cit., pp. 68-69.
 5. 'Program Związku Ludowo-Narodowego,' (Introduction), reprinted in Bełcikowska, op. cit., pp. 81-2.

The party claimed to be democratic. 'Poland', stipulated article xviii, 'if she is to occupy her appropriate place among civilized nations, must be a modern democracy.'¹ At the same time, according to article iv, 'The Popular National Union demands a strong government which will ensure the maintenance and execution of the law, as well as respect for authority.'² The principle of voluntary national activity was maintained, and étatism was criticised. The paragraph in the programme dealing with 'The Relation of the State to the Nation,' had the subheading 'As little state compulsion as necessary, as much effort by the citizens as possible.'³ The need for social justice was stressed: 'National unity in the state is illusory unless there is social equilibrium in the nation.'⁴

The Catholic church was to be given a leading position in the new state:

Basing the moral education of the Nation on religion, and recognizing the Church as the director of its moral life, the Z.L.N. demands for the Church complete independence and an appropriate position in the State.⁵

Rapid industrialization was called for, in order to prevent large-scale emigration, to end the dependence of Poland on foreign capital, and to create a strong middle class.⁶ The

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1. Ibid., p.91.
 2. Ibid., p.84.
 3. Ibid., p.85.
 4. Ibid., art. x, p.87.
 5. Ibid., art. xiv. p.90.
 6. 'Program Z.L.N.', Bełcikowska, op. cit., art. vii, pp.85-6.

Z.L.N. also proposed negotiated wages and 'broad social insurance.'¹ Land reform was considered necessary in order to create 'numerous prosperous peasant holdings,' but the parcellation was to involve principally state holdings, mortmain lands and 'excessively large' estates.²

The traditional policy towards Jews was accepted. The Z.L.N., stated article viii, 'calls for the securing of the Polish character of the towns, of industry and trade as one of the most pressing needs of national policy.'³ In relation to the other national minorities, federalism was explicitly rejected. 'The Republic must aspire to the greatest possible unity of state and nation (jednolitość narodowo-państwowa).'⁴ The eastern parts of Poland were seen as an important source of land for colonization.⁵

Finally, the Z.L.N. adhered to the National Democratic anti-German and pro-Entente orientation in foreign policy. 'It remains true,' stated the preamble to the programme, 'that the most dangerous enemy of Poland is Germany.'⁶

Dmowski, exhausted by his efforts at the peace conference, did not play a large part in the life of the party in the first

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1. Ibid., art. xii, pp. 88-9.
 2. Ibid., art. xi, pp. 87-8.
 3. Ibid., p. 86.
 4. Ibid., art. ix, p. 86.
 5. Ibid., art. xi, p. 88.
 6. Ibid., p. 82.

years after Independence. The leadership of the party in parliament fell to the veteran Galician parliamentarian Stanisław Głąbiński, while that of the national party was assumed by another Galician, Stanisław Grabski, who was succeeded in 1923 by Stanisław Kozicki. The party had an extensive press, with Gazeta Warszawska as its main organ. It also issued a morning paper in Warsaw, Gazeta Poranna which amalgamated with Gazeta Warszawska in October 1925. Among its provincial papers, the most important were Goniec Krakowski in Cracow, Słowo Narodowe in Lwow, Kurier Poznański in Poznań and Dziennik Wileński in Wilno.

It is rather difficult to assess the strength of the Z.L.N., for in order to take advantage of the electoral system, it formed a bloc in the elections of November 1922 with the Christian Democrats, the Christian National Party,¹ and the Christian National Agricultural Party² of Poznania. In this bloc, the Christian Alliance of National Unity,³ the Z.L.N. was by far the most important. The bloc won 29.1% of the votes cast, and 169 seats (38% of the total); 98 of these seats were assigned to the Z.L.N.⁴

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1. Stronnictwo Chrześcijańsko-Narodowe.
 2. Chrześcijańsko-Narodowe Stronnictwo Rolnicze.
 3. Chrześcijański Związek Jedności Narodowej (nicknamed 'Chjena').
 4. A. Próchnik, Pierwsze Piętnastolecie Polski Odrodzonej (Warsaw, 1957), pp. 133-5.

An account of the bloc's successes does give some idea of the areas of National Democratic strength. In the towns, the bloc did particularly well, winning 37.4% of the votes, while in the countryside it won 25.6%.¹ It was especially strong in Warsaw, where it won 42.0% of the votes,² and in Poznan, where it won 75.9%.³ Regionally, it was strongest in the former German areas. It won 48.9% of the votes in Poznania, 55.7% in Pomerania and 36.5% in Silesia.⁴ In the central provinces (roughly corresponding to the Congress Kingdom), it won 33.2% of the votes,⁵ while in the eastern provinces (roughly equivalent to the Kresy), inhabited largely by non-Poles, it won only 5.4%.⁶ In Galicia, where its pro-Russian orientation had always been a handicap, it won 18.5%.⁷ It did somewhat better in Galicia's eastern provinces, because the struggle with the Ukrainians had made the Poles more nationalistic, and it was helped by the widespread boycott of the election by Ukrainians. In the Tarnopol province, for example, it won 25.5% of the votes.⁸

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1. 'Statistique des Elections a la Diète et au Sénat effectués le 5 et le 12 Novembre 1922,' S.P., viii (1926), p. ix.
 2. 'Statistique des Elections', 1922, S.P., viii (1926); based on Table XII, p. 15.
 3. Ibid., based on Table XII, p. 48.
 4. Ibid., p. ix.
 5. Loc. cit.
 6. Loc. cit.
 7. Loc. cit.
 8. Loc. cit.

Elections to the Sejm, November 1922¹

	Votes in 1000's.	% age.
<u>Right</u>	<u>2,637</u>	<u>30.1</u>
Christian Alliance of National Unity (National Democrats, Christian Democrats, Christian National Party)	2,551	29.1
National - State Union	38	0.4
State Alliance of the Kresy	48	0.6
<u>Centre</u>	<u>1,914</u>	<u>21.9</u>
Piast	1,153	13.2
Polish Centre (Catholic Peasant Party and counterpart in former Congress Kingdom)	259	3.0
Bourgeois Centre	29	0.3
N.P.R.	473	5.4
<u>Left</u>	<u>2,221</u>	<u>25.2</u>
Liberation	963	11.0
P.P.S.	906	10.3
Peoples' Councils	46	0.5
Peasant Party - Left wing	59	0.7
Radical Peasant Party (Fr. Okoń)	115	1.3
Communist lists	132	1.4
<u>National Minorities</u>	<u>1,889</u>	<u>21.6</u>
National Minority Bloc	1,398	16.0
East Galician Zionists	175	2.0
West Galician Zionists	81	0.9
Jewish Populists (Folkists)	53	0.6
Chliborobi (Pro-polish Ukrainians)	87	1.0
Bund	81	0.9
Zionist Workers Party (Poalei Sion)	14	0.2

1. Based on Próchnik op. cit., p.133; 'Statistique des Elections à la Diète et au Senat effectués le 5 et le 12 Novembre,' S.P. viii (1926).

Piłsudski, the 'noble socialist', as the National Democratic leader derisively called him, was almost the diametrical opposite of Dmowski. Born on a large estate near Wilno, he was in many ways the direct descendant of the romantic Polish revolutionaries of the 19th century. To him, the uprising of 1863 was not the criminal folly it seemed to Dmowski.

'Historical currents,' he wrote in 1924,¹

derived from and faithful to the style of our generation, wanted to force us to accept the view that a score of hotheads, of madmen, of idiots, symptomatic of Polish lightheadedness, of Polish stupidity, prevented Polish caution, understanding, seriousness from endowing Poland with I know not what benefits. ...this was a war, a war, gentlemen, which great Russia had to wage for a whole year in order to win!

1908. Piłsudski first became active in Politics in Narodnaya Volya, the Russian terrorist organization. Sentenced in 1887 to five years in Siberia for taking part in a conspiracy against the life of Alexander III, (the same conspiracy for which Lenin's brother was executed) he quickly came to the conclusion that Tsarist Russia, 'that Asiatic monster covered with European veneer,'² was Poland's principal enemy, and that he had overestimated the strength of the Russian revolutionary movement. On his return to Poland, he soon assumed a leading

1. J. Piłsudski, 'Wpływ wschodu i zachodu na Polskę w epoce 1863 r.' P.Z., viii. 85-6.
2. J. Piłsudski, 'Jak stałem się socjalista,' Promień, Nos. 8-9, (1903). Reprinted in P.Z. ii. 52.

role in the Polish Socialist Party.¹ It seemed to him that now that both the landowners and the bourgeoisie had decided on collaboration with the Russians, only the industrial working class was interested in national liberation. During the Russo-Japanese War, he tried unsuccessfully to persuade the Japanese to sponsor a rising in Poland, and in the 1905 revolution he took control of the Fighting Organization² of the P.P.S. which he led on a series of terrorist attacks on Russian government outposts. His devotion to terrorism and his belief in the precedence of national liberation over social revolution finally split the P.P.S. in November 1906, and culminated in an attack on the railway station at Bezdany, north of Wilno, in September 1908.³

Piłsudski was now convinced of the need for military organization and training, so that in the coming war Polish military force would have some influence on the outcome. 'My latest idea,' he wrote to Feliks Perl in September 1908, 'is the necessity in our conditions of creating in every party, and most particularly in our party, organizations of physical force.'⁴

1. Polska Partia Socjalistyczna, commonly known as the P.P.S.

2. Organizacja Bojowa.

3. See J. Piłsudski, P.Z. i-ii; W. Pobóg-Malinowski, Józef Piłsudski, 1867-1914 (London, 1964); A. Żarnowska, Geneza Rozłamu w Polskiej Partii Socjalistycznej 1904-6 (Warsaw, 1965).

4. J. Piłsudski, 'List do Feliksa Perla' P.Z. ii. 299.

He moved to Galicia, where the situation was least restrictive, and where the Austrian Government was not unsympathetic to his anti-Russian aims. Already in June 1908 he had formed the Union of Active Struggle¹ to direct the organization and training of military units. Piłsudski's prewar military activity reached its high point in November 1912, with the formation of the Provisional Committee of Confederated Parties Demanding Independence,² which united in support of the legionary movement almost all the Galician parties, except the Conservatives and the National Democrats.³

By 1914, Piłsudski's disputes with the Committee, and the conflicts within it, had somewhat diminished its strength. On the outbreak of war, Piłsudski had attempted to foment a national uprising in Warsaw by proclaiming a National Government and announcing his intention to support it with his troops. However, the complete failure of the Poles in the Congress Kingdom to respond, and the formation by the pro-Austrian Conservatives of the General National Committee (N.K.N.), placed

1. Związek Walki Czynnej.

2. Komisja Tymczasowa Skonfederowanych Stronnictw Niepodległościowych.

3. For Piłsudski's activities in the years immediately preceding World War I see: J. Piłsudski, P.Z. iii. A. Garlicki, Geneza Legionów (Warsaw, 1964). ed. S. Arski, J. Chudek, Galicyjska działalność wojskowa Piłsudskiego 1906-1914, (Warsaw 1967).

before Piłsudski the alternatives of cooperation with the N.K.N. or the break-up of his legions. He decided on cooperation, writing to Władysław Jaworski, the Galician Conservative in August 1915:

...the political aim of the war, which I have placed before myself from the start, was and is the incorporation of Galicia and the Congress Kingdom into the framework of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. I did not, and do not, believe that it is possible to obtain better conditions for Poland in this war.¹

Piłsudski remained true to the Austrian orientation until mid 1916, when the increasing weakness of Austria and the hostility of the Hungarians, the Germans and the Austrian army to the Austro-Polish solution had become evident. He became convinced that a satisfactory resolution of the Polish question depended on an agreement with Germany. When the Germans established a rump Polish state on 5 November 1916, Piłsudski supported their action. He demanded, however, the creation of a civilian government before he would help in the formation of an army. When this condition was met in January 1917 by the formation of the Council of State,² he went ahead. 'You are right,' he told Baranowski after the 5th of November

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1. Letter, cited by J. Hupka in Z czasów wielkiej wojny (Niwiska, 1936), p.116. For Piłsudski during the First World War, see also: J. Piłsudski, P.Z., iv-v; S. Migdał, Piłsudczyzna w latach pierwszej wojny światowej (Katowice, 1961); S. Arski, My Pierwsza Brygada, (Warsaw, 1963).
 2. Rada Stanu.

that Austria is finished. From now on we are going to talk only in Warsaw, on a new basis, and with the Germans....I am again going to make a compromise, this time with the Germans.¹

Piłsudski realized very quickly that the Germans were interested only in a puppet state, and refused to take the oath of allegiance to the Reich which they demanded of the army, counselling his supporters to follow his example. In July 1917 he was arrested and interned in Magdeburg for the duration of the war. He was thus able to return to Poland in November 1918, following the collapse of the Central Powers, with the aura of a martyr and the reputation of an indomitable fighter for independence. He quickly assumed the role of leader in the new country, holding the positions of Head of State and Supreme Commander of the army. But his plan to exploit the weakness of Russia following the Civil War in order to dislodge White Russia and the Ukraine from the Soviet Union, and thus to ensure Polish security, failed and almost led to political catastrophe in Poland.² Internally, the National Democrats, his lifelong enemies, emerged as the strongest force in politics, and were able, in the new constitution, to circumscribe severely the powers of the president. They hoped

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1. W. Baranowski, Rozmowy z Piłsudskim 1916-31 (Warsaw, 1938), pp. 40-44.
 2. On Piłsudski's federal schemes see: T. Komarnicki, op.cit.; J. Lewandowski, Federalizm. Litwa i Białoruś w polityce obozu belwederskiego (Warsaw, 1962); M. Dziewanowski, 'Piłsudski's Federal Policy 1919-21', J.C.E.A., x, (1950) No.2, 113-128; No.3, 271-87.

in this way to prevent Piłsudski from exercising again the personal control he had held before 1922. Piłsudski had determined not to stand for president even before the elections of November, 1922, which further strengthened the National Democrats. His position in the army was also being undermined.

No single political group supported Piłsudski, but in the Polish Military Organization¹ which he had set up during the war, he possessed a body of utterly devoted adherents. The P.O.W. had established two organizations, Konwent A, to place sympathetic men in prominent positions in left-wing groups, and Konwent B, which was to do the same in right-wing groups. Konwent B was rather unsuccessful, but in the left-wing parties Piłsudski had many supporters. His influence was naturally greatest in the P.P.S., of which he had been a member until the early years of the war, when he allowed his membership to lapse on account of his other interests. But he had not yet openly clashed with the Socialists, and the authenticity of a remark which Mackiewicz attributes to him in 1918 is doubtful: 'For a long time,' he is supposed to have said, 'we have travelled together in the socialist tram. I have got out at the stop marked "Independence".'² Among the P.P.S. leaders, Tadeusz

1. Polska Organizacja Wojskowa.

2. S. Mackiewicz, *op.cit.*, p.183. On the question of the authenticity of the statement, see W. Pobóg-Malinowski 'Skoro nie szablą, to piórem', *Kultura* (Paris) 1960. No.5/151, pp.99-134.

Hołówko, Jędrzej Moraczewski, Leon Wasilewski, Bronisław Ziemięcki and Rajmund Jaworowski were his direct supporters, and he enjoyed much goodwill among the rank and file and the other leaders.

In the peasant movement, Piłsudski's influence was strongest in the Liberation Party,¹ based mainly in Russian Poland, but he hoped to widen this influence to cover the peasant movement as a whole. He warned his supporters against splitting the United Peasant Party in December 1922, advising them to 'gather [Witos] to themselves, and not force him into the orbit of the National Democrats by opposing him.'² When Witos nevertheless decided to make an alliance with the National Democrats in May 1923, his party split. P.O.W. members were prominent among those who engineered the break-up.³

In the elections of 1922, Piłsudski in an attempt to attract adherents on the Right, directly supported two rather small Conservative groupings linked with large landowners, the National-State Union in Galicia⁴ and the State Alliance of

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1. Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe--Wyzwolenie.
 2. A. Bogusławski, Pamiętnik, quoted in Lato, op.cit., p.81. Wincenty Witos was perhaps the most important peasant politician in Poland immediately after the First World War. See below, pp. 137-39.
 3. The most important were Bogusław Miedziński, Karol Polakiewicz and Antoni Anusz. See Lato, op.cit., pp.81-2.
 4. Unia Narodowo-państwowa.

the Kresy in Eastern Poland.¹ Neither won any seats, the former group receiving 38 thousand votes and the latter 48 thousand.²

But in spite of his political setbacks, Piłsudski had a wide, charismatic appeal in Poland as a whole, as the dashing and romantic legionary, who was at the same time indomitable and incorruptible.

Political groups representing the large landowners had been important in Poland before 1914, particularly in Galicia, where the lack of economic development, the relatively small proportion of lesser gentry, and the poverty of the peasantry had all contributed to their power. The most important party here was known as the Stańczycy, from a work by one of its founders, Józef Szujski's Teka Stańczyka.³ The Stańczycy had paved the way for the achievement of self-government in the 1860's, and controlled the new provincial parliament. They formulated the concept of 'trójlojalizm' (tri-loyalism), the idea that independence should be renounced, and that co-operation with the ruling powers might at least achieve tolerable conditions. In addition, they founded a historical school,

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1. Państwowe Zjednoczenie Kresowe.
 2. Próchnik, op. cit., p.133.
 3. Stańczyk was a jester at the court of Aleksander Jagiellończyk and Zygmunt the Elder. Through his wit he made the king aware of political realities. For the Stańczycy see: J. Buszko, Sejmowa reforma wyborcza w Galicji 1905-14 (Warsaw, 1956); M. Bobrzyński, Wskrzeszenie państwa polskiego, vol.i. (Cracow, 1920); S. Mackiewicz, op.cit., chapter I.

the Cracow School, which argued that the internal defects of the Polish Republic had been responsible for its downfall, and attempted to deal fairly with both Jews and Ukrainians.

As late as 1911, renamed the Party of the National Right,¹ the Stańczycy were the most important force in the parliamentary bloc of Governor Bobrzyński of Galicia, who was one of their principal adherents. But already their power was waning. Universal suffrage had given new political power to the peasants, who had no reason to feel grateful to their landlords; the bitter struggle over the modification of the franchise in East Galicia increased the strength of the National Democrats, who had opposed Bobrzyński's liberal policy towards the Ukrainians; and the growth of a new nationalism made 'trójlojalizm' appear tarnished and degrading. During the war the Stańczycy were the most powerful element in the N.K.N., but the bankruptcy of the Austrian solution, reflected in the military weakness of the Habsburgs, the division of Galicia into Polish and Ukrainian halves, and the granting of the Chełm region to the Ukrainians under the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, robbed the Party of the National Right of most of its former support.

None of the other landowners' groups before 1914 had such importance. In Galicia, they included a number of landlords

1. Stronnictwo Prawicy Narodowej.

in the east who objected to Bobrzyński's liberalism towards the Ukrainians, and the group around Stanisław Stroński in Cracow, who were closer to the National Democrats. In the Congress Kingdom, the National Democrats had succeeded in winning over a large number of the landowners; Maurycy Zamoyski, the largest property holder here, was one of their most important supporters. The Party of Political Realism¹ to some extent followed the lines of the Cracow School, and similar groups existed in the Kresy. In Prussian Poland, the Polish landowners were almost entirely National Democratic.²

In independent Poland, the landowners' parties were faced with the dilemma that their social base was too small to ensure them many votes, while their hostility to land reform alienated those peasants who might otherwise have supported them. What political tactics to adopt in this situation was a problem best resolved by those groups close to the National Democrats, from whom they differed principally in a stronger opposition to land reform. They were two in number, the Christian National Agricultural Party and the Christian-National Party, which together formed the Christian-National Club³ in the Sejm.

The Christian National Agricultural Party, led by Senator

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1. Stronnictwo Polityki Realnej.
 2. On these groups see Micewski, op.cit., chapter III.
 3. Klub Chrześcijańsko-Narodowy.

Tadeusz Szułdrzyński, was centred almost exclusively in Prussian Poland. In policy it followed the usual National Democratic lines, except that it laid great stress on its agricultural basis, attempting to win peasant support by underlining the common needs of the rural population. 'The Christian National Agricultural Party', stated its programme, 'is an organization primarily embracing the broad spheres of people living on the land, or closely linked with agriculture. It stands on a Catholic and national basis.'¹ The party opposed the lowering of agricultural prices, and demanded the lowering of the price of coal and of rail tariffs. It bitterly opposed the Land Reform Bill of 1920, calling instead for respect for private property, and for a return to the free sale of land and to private parcellation.²

The position of the Christian National Party, led by Edward Dubanowicz and based in Galicia and the Congress Kingdom, was almost identical. In general politics it held a National Democratic line; in agrarian politics it stressed the common interests of all those on the land, and opposed the 1920 land reform.³

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1. Program Chrześcijańsko-Narodowego Stronnictwa Rolniczego, reprinted in Bełcikowska, op.cit., p.107.
 2. Ibid., pp. 107-110.
 3. Deklaracja Programowa Stronnictwa Chrześcijańsko-Narodowego, reprinted in Bełcikowska, op.cit., pp. 1135 ff.

The Christian National Club fought the 1922 elections together with the Popular National Alliance. It received 27 seats in the Sejm.¹

The patrician Party of the National Right was one of the casualties of Independence. Refusing to make any concession to the new situation, it held that the 1921 Constitution was too democratic, and called for a weighted franchise. It opposed the 1920 land reform, and called instead for reforms which would 'raise the level of agricultural production'.² But it held fast as well to the more creditable aspects of its heritage: it opposed exclusive nationalism, emphasizing its danger to the state, and advocated fair treatment for the minorities. It also proposed a sophisticated set of constitutional controls over the administration.³ But although the pronouncements of its leaders were listened to with attention, and its daily newspaper, Czas, was one of the most important in Poland, its political strength was minimal. In the first Sejm it was fairly influential through the 16 member Club of Constitutional Work.⁴ Its deputies had entered parliament as former members of the Austrian Reichsrat, since elections were impossible in East

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1. A. Próchnik, op. cit., p.135.
 2. 'Program Stronnictwa Prawicy Narodowej,' art. xiii; reprinted in Bełcikowska, op. cit.; p.753.
 3. Ibid., pp. 745-55.
 4. Klub Pracy Konstytucyjnej.

Galicia on account of the continued fighting between Poles and Ukrainians. However, in the election of 1922 the Party of the National Right failed to win a single seat.

The small monarchist Conservative Party¹ lacked the intellectual eminence of the Party of the National Right, but shared its political insignificance.

The Polish Socialist Party, the largest of the workers' parties, was formed in April 1919 by the union of the Polish Socialist Party of the former Russian partition and the Galician Polish Social-Democratic Party.² The Polish Socialist Party in the former German areas, a rather weak group with a limited influence in Silesia, joined them some months later.

The Polish Socialist Party in Russian Poland was created in November 1892 by the amalgamation of four smaller Polish socialist groups active in Russia. After the secession, in March and July 1893, of those elements which believed that social revolution should be the party's main concern, the party came to concentrate its attention on national liberation. As we have already seen, Piłsudski's control of the party and his insistence on terrorist activity against the Russian Government led to a split in November 1906, following which the domination of the party by those elements which wished to stress the

1. Stronnictwo Zachowawcze.

2. Polska Partia Socjal-Demokratyczna (P.P.S.D.).

struggle for independence was secured. The achievement of a correct balance between social and national goals nevertheless continued to plague the party, and led to a further split late in 1911 between Piłsudski, Walery Sławek and Leon Wasilewski on the one hand, and Feliks Perl on the other. Perl left the party and formed the Polish Socialist Party--Opposition.¹ The two parties remained close in ideology, however, both believing that social revolution was not imminent, that a Polish military force should be built up in anticipation of a coming conflict between the partitioning powers, and that in such a war support for Austria, or at least for the Central Powers, was most likely to help the Polish national cause. As a result, they reunited following the outbreak of war in August 1914.

The party remained close to Piłsudski throughout the war. In December 1914 it joined him in acknowledging the leading role of the General National Committee, and it was one of the principal sponsors of the pro-Piłsudski-ite General Committee of United Parties Demanding Independence.² The P.P.S. applauded the establishment of a Polish buffer state by the Germans on

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1. Polska Partia Socjalistyczna-Opozycja.
For the P.P.S. in this period see J. Krzesławski, 'Dzieje P.P.S. od 1904 roku do wybuchu wojny światowej w 1914', Księga Jubileuszowa Polskiej Partii Socjalistycznej (Warsaw, 1933), pp.62-103; J. Holzer, 'Nurt opozycyjny w P.P.S. frakcji rewolucyjnej i P.P.S. opozycja (1909-14)', P.H., lxxvi (1959), No.3, 545-68.
 2. Komitet Naczelny Zjednoczonych Stronnictw Niepodległościowych.

5 November 1916, and its representatives sat for a time on the Provisional State Council,¹ the civilian authority set up by that state. In addition, the party supported Piłsudski in the legionary crisis of July 1917.² But it was at the same time increasingly establishing its independence from Comrade Ziuk. Piłsudski and his closest lieutenant, Walery Sławek, withdrew from party activity in 1914, and new men such as Norbert Barlicki, Mieczysław Niedziałkowski and Adam Landy, less subservient to him, became prominent in the leadership. The bankruptcy of Activism, as support for the Central Powers was known, grew increasingly evident. The military weakness of Austria was manifest, while Germany was obviously interested in nothing more than a satellite Poland, and preferred to deal with socially conservative groups. The harshness of German requisitions also caused much bitterness. Finally, the attempts of Piłsudski's followers in the P.P.S. to induce the party to co-operate with the National Democrats were resented. But Piłsudski-ite influences were still very strong in the party at the end of the war.

1. Tymczasowa Rada Stanu.

2. For the P.P.S. during the war see J. Holzer, Polska Partia Socjalistyczna w latach 1917-19 (Warsaw, 1962) and 'Polska Partia Socjalistyczna w latach 1914-19', Ruch Robotniczy i Ludowy w Polsce w latach 1914-23 (Warsaw, 1961), pp.319-54; H. Jabłoński, Polityka Polskiej Partii Socjalistycznej w czasie wojny 1914-18 (Warsaw, 1958).

The Galician Social Democratic Party (P.P.S.D.) had grown up in entirely different conditions in a constitutional state, and was based on a wide network of constituency parties, trade unions and co-operatives. From 1908, under its gifted leader, Ignacy Daszyński, it had been one of the principal supporters of independence and of the legionary idea in Galicia. Because of Galicia's general backwardness, it saw as its main goal in the internal political sphere the democratization of Galician society. Socialism was very much a long-term aim.¹

On the outbreak of war, it declared its support for Austria, proclaiming a 'class truce'. It remained in the General National Committee until November 1917, and broke with its long-standing policy by entering the Polish Club² in the Austrian Reichsrat, dominated as it was by the Stańczycy, in 1916. As late as May 1917 Daszyński declared that 'Poland, free and contented, will be a buttress of the Austrian throne.'³ This policy differed from that of the Polish Socialist Party in Russia, which inclined increasingly towards a German solution.

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1. For the Galician Social Democrats, see I. Daszyński, Pamiętniki (Warsaw, 1957), 2 vols.; J. Holzer, 'Polityka kierownictwa Polskiej Partii Socjalno-Demokratycznej w przeddzień powstania niepodległego państwa polskiego (luty-październik 1918r.), Z.P.W., iii (1960) No.I. 35-57, and Polska Partia Socjalistyczna w latach 1917-19.
 2. Koło Polskie.
 3. Speech to the Polish Club, 28 May 1917, quoted in Holzer, Polska Partia Socjalistyczna w latach 1917-19, p.65.

It also led to opposition from the Piłsudski-ites within the Galician party, such as Jędrzej Moraczewski, Zygmunt Klemensiewicz and Emil Bobrowski. But it was only the increasing unreality of the Austrian solution which led the party by the middle of 1917 to call for an independent united Poland, and even then sympathy for Austria was expressed.

When the Austrian occupying authority in the southern part of the Congress Kingdom collapsed, both parties played a significant part in the creation of the Popular Government in Lublin, headed by Daszyński. However, the return of Piłsudski, now tremendously popular, on his release by the Germans created difficulties. The Polish Council of State established by the Germans in Warsaw had acknowledged him their legal successor, and he had the overwhelming support of the armed forces maintaining the Lublin government. Daszyński decided, therefore, to resign, and to acquiesce in the formation of a new Popular Government with Moraczewski as Prime Minister, but controlled by Piłsudski.²

The elections of January 1919 were a disaster for the two socialist parties, who together won 9.4% of the votes and held 35 seats out of 394. This, together with the waning of the workers' council movement, in which the Communists were also

1. Rząd ludowy.

2. See A. Ajnenkiel, 'Z dziejów tymczasowego rządu ludowego w Lublinie', K.H., lxxv (1958), No.4, 1057-90.

important, saw the end of the period in which the Socialists had much influence on the course of government action.

The united party adopted a Social Democratic position. It opposed the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat, which Niedziałkowski defined as 'merely changing places with the bourgeoisie.'¹ Instead, it claimed, 'The P.P.S. wants to build a democratic and republican Poland for the Polish working masses.'² The 18th party congress in August 1921 decided that the party should participate only in a 'worker-peasant government,'³ but this was amended at the 19th party congress (30-31 December 1923): it was resolved that

in situations in which the achievement of a popular government is not possible, the P.P.S. cannot remain indifferent to the formation of a government, and on strictly laid down conditions, can tolerate and eventually support an anti-right wing cabinet whose activities will not be hostile to the interest of the working class.⁴

At the 17th congress it had been decided to join the Vienna International, the so-called 2 1/2 International. When the request for membership was refused on the grounds of revisionism, the P.P.S. joined the Second International in May 1923.⁵ The party remained very hostile both to Communism and to Russia. It

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1. Quoted in Holzer, Polska Partia Socjalistyczna w latach 1917-19, p. 403.
 2. Pre-electoral appeal for the elections of November 1922, Bełcikowska, op. cit., p.356.
 3. Ibid., p.354.
 4. Ibid., p.367.
 5. Ibid., pp. 353-8.

had supported Piłsudski's federal aims for White Russia and the Ukraine; Robotnik, the party organ, affirmed on 7 June 1919:

The Russian state must be limited to the solely Russian areas. This ethnic Russia must be ringed on the east, west and south by the independent states of liberated nations, strengthened by mutual alliances and enjoying the support of the powers leading in culture (mocarstw przodujących kulturze).¹

During the Polish-Soviet War, Daszyński, the party leader, had joined the government. The party formed a Workers' Committee for the Defence of Independence, and established a workers' regiment for the defence of Warsaw.² Attacking the Communists in Poland, the party declared in July 1924:

Those Polish workers, attracted by fine words about revolution and a better life, make themselves unconscious, passive tools of a foreign staff of military adventurers like Trotsky who, while issuing slogans of liberation, are selling the bloody labour of their own proletariat to the capitalists of the West.³

In internal politics, the P.P.S. called for the abolition of the Senate, a proportional system of representation and extensive local government.⁴ It demanded the separation of church and state and universal compulsory lay education.⁵ In

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1. Robotnik, 7. VI. 1919.
 2. A. Leinwand, Polska Partia Socjalistyczna wobec wojny polskoradzieckiej 1919-20 (Warsaw, 1964).
 3. Appeal of the Central Executive Committee of the P.P.S., 23 July 1924, reprinted in Bełcikowska, op. cit.; p.360.
 4. 'Program Polskiej Partii Socjalistycznej (17th Congress, 1919): "W zakresie wewnętrznych stosunków politycznych", reprinted in Bełcikowska, op. cit.; p.362.
 5. Loc. cit.

economic matters, it called for the maintenance of the 8 hour day and 46 hour week, for a minimum wage and for social insurance.¹ The clause on nationalization in the party programme was conveniently vague. It demanded 'the nationalization of those branches of industry ripe for this, in particular mines of all types, foundries and the means of communication.'² In agriculture the nationalization of forests and waterways was proposed. Large landholdings were to be expropriated, 'part remaining in government and communal estates, the remainder to be leased to groups of people with little or no land, and to workers' co-operatives.'³ For the minorities, the party advocated the recognition of their language rights, and the granting of territorial self-government in areas in which they formed a majority.⁴ The P.P.S. tried with some success to work with the socialist parties of the minorities.

As we have seen, Piłsudski-ite influences were strong in the party, although men like Perl, who had reservations about the 'Marszałek' were also important. The party possessed a series of newspapers, of which the most influential were Robotnik in Warsaw and Naprzód in Cracow. It enjoyed

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1. 'Program P.P.S.', 'W zakresie stosunków gospodarczych', Bełcikowska, op. cit. p. 363.
 2. Loc. cit.
 3. Loc. cit.
 4. Ibid., p.362.

considerable support in the Central Alliance of Trade Unions,¹ which by 1921 had a membership of 1 million. The Agricultural Workers Trade Union formed by Jan Stapiński was also largely sympathetic to the socialists.

In the elections of November 1922 the P.P.S. won 10.3% of the vote, obtaining 41 seats in the Sejm.² It won 12.6% of the urban vote and 9.4% of the rural vote,³ which showed that its campaign among agricultural workers had had some success. In Warsaw itself it won 15.5%⁴ and it also did well in the industrial area around Cracow (constituency No. 42), where it gained 26.9%.⁵ In Galicia as a whole, the P.P.S. won 11.3% of the votes, compared with 12.4% in the central provinces of Poland.⁶ It did surprisingly well in Polesia, with much support around Pińsk, and received 31.3% of the vote here.⁷ In Silesia it won 16.1%, but in the rest of Prussian Poland it did extremely badly, with 1.6% in Poznania and 1.0% in Pomerania.⁸

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1. Centralny Związek Stowarzyszeń Zawodowych.
 2. A. Próchnik, op. cit., pp. 133, 135.
 3. 'Statistique des Elections a la diète et au Senat,' S.P. viii (1926), ix.
 4. Ibid., based on Table XII, p. 15.
 5. Ibid., based on Table XII, p. 57.
 6. Ibid., p. ix.
 7. Loc. cit.
 8. Loc. cit.

6. See above, p. 115.

7. See M. Doleznikowski, The Socialist Party of Poland (Cambridge, Mass., 1933), p. 96.

8. See above, p. 115.

The Communist Workers' Party of Poland,¹ renamed in March 1925 the Communist Party of Poland,² was formed by the union of the Social Democratic Party of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania³ and the Polish Socialist Party--Left Wing⁴ in December 1918. Its ranks were swelled by the adherence in late 1920 of a Polish Socialist Party--Opposition,⁵ led by Stanisław łańcucki and Jerzy Sochacki-Czeszeyko, and in 1921 by left wing secessions from the various Jewish socialist parties, the Bund, the Zionist Workers' Party⁶ and the Fereinigte.⁷

The Social Democratic Party was formed as a result of the withdrawal from the Polish Socialist Party in March and July 1893 of those groups, led by Rosa Luxemburg and Julian Marchlewski, which believed that the Socialist Party's stress on the national question was harmful to socialism.⁸ The new party at first took the provocative name of the Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland, (i.e. the Congress Kingdom), slightly modified in 1899 on its amalgamation with the Union of Workers in Lithuania, led by Feliks Dzierżyński.

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1. Komunistyczna Partia Robotnicza Polski.
 2. Komunistyczna Partia Polski, known as the K.P.P.
 3. Socjal-Demokracja Królestwa Polskiego i Litwy, or the S.D.K.P. iL.
 4. Polska Partia Socjalistyczna--Lewica.
 5. Polska Partia Socjalistyczna--Opozycja.
 6. Poalej Sion.
 7. See M. Dziewanowski, The Communist Party of Poland (Cambridge, Mass., 1959), p.98.
 8. See above, p.118.

The Social Democracy never gained widespread support; it remained a small and predominantly Jewish group of impressive but relentless intellectuals. Even one of its admirers describes it as 'more of a pressure group in international Socialism than a political party.'¹ Stress on social rather than national goals was an old tradition in Polish socialism. Ludwik Waryński, the doyen of Polish socialists, had affirmed 'There is a nation more unfortunate than the Polish nation: it is the nation of proletarians.'² With the growth of revolutionary sentiment in Russia and the increased economic dependence of Russian Poland on the Tsarist Empire, this policy had even more justification. But what was new was the almost irrational fury with which Rosa Luxemburg and her followers attacked the P.P.S. for its nationalist deviations. 'Not even the most fertile fantasy of a cafe politician,' she declared on several occasions, 'could envisage the reconstitution of Poland....'³ This extremism made almost impossible co-operation with the left wing of the Socialists, which had finally emerged as a separate group in November 1906.

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1. P. Nettl, Rosa Luxemburg (London, 1966), i. 261.
 2. Quoted in Dziwanowski, op. cit., p.15.
 3. See, e.g., the article in the Cracow Przegląd Socjaldemokratyczny of 1902, quoted in W. Pobóg-Malinowski, Najnowsza Historia Polityczna Polski (London, 1963), i. 268-9.

It also complicated relations with the Russian Social Democrats, for the Social Democracy refused to join the Russian party unless the independence of Poland was specifically rejected. This, along with Rosa Luxemburg's hostility to what she regarded as the over-centralized ideas of party organization held by Lenin, and disputes over the peasant question, on which the Social Democracy was intransigently left-wing, delayed until 1906 its entry into the Russian party. However, internal ideological disputes continued, which together with the resentment of the groups in Poland to domination by emigrés, led to a split in the party late in 1911.¹

The Polish Socialist Party--Left Wing, led by Feliks Kon, Tadeusz Rechniewski and Max Horwitz-Walecki, had emerged as the majority faction in the P.P.S. during 1905. An attempt was made at the 8th party conference in February 1906 to smooth over differences within the party, but this proved impossible. The two groups finally split at the 9th party conference in November 1906. Impressed by the strength which the Russian revolutionary movement had shown in 1905, the P.P.S.--Left Wing believed that Piłsudski's stress on terrorism could have no beneficial results, and held that a constituent assembly in

1. For the S.D.K.P. i L. see: P. Netti, op.cit.; M. Dziewanowski, op.cit.; J. Reguła, Historia Komunistycznej Partii Polski, (Warsaw, 1934); S.D.K.P. i L. Materiały i Dokumenty 1893-1903 (Warsaw, 1962), 2 vols.

Warsaw would satisfy Polish national demands. However even this mild proposal was enough to make the Social Democracy refuse to work with them.

Both the P.P.S.--Left Wing and the two factions of the Social Democracy opposed the war in 1914, and a joint committee to co-ordinate action was established in Warsaw. It broke down, however, in March 1915, when the Social Democracy proved intransigently hostile to the self-government finally granted to the Congress Kingdom by the Russians. Both parties took part in the Zimmerwald and Kienthal conferences, where the two groups of the Social Democracy approached very closely Lenin's views on the war as a revolutionary catalyst. They were reunited in November 1916, passing a joint resolution that only the end of capitalism and the establishment of socialism could end wars.

Both parties hailed the Bolshevik revolution, though with some reservations. The Social Democracy still hoped to prevent the Russian party from adopting Polish self-determination, and on the breakdown of German authority in Poland called on the workers to assume power. For the P.P.S.--Lewica, the Bolshevik revolution seemed fully to justify the Social Democratic position, and calls for a union of the two parties became stronger. Nevertheless when union was achieved in December 1918, the Left Wing Socialists were faced with the secession of their organizations in Lodz and Poznań, and the breaking of their previously close ties with the Bund, the main Jewish socialist party.

The programme of the new party, adopted at the union conference, was almost entirely Luxemburgist. After stressing that the aftermath of the war would create a revolutionary situation, it reaffirmed the position of the Zimmerwald Left, that a new International was necessary because of the treachery of the revisionists. In Poland, it called for the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat through the workers' council movement. It opposed a land reform which would give land to the peasants, calling instead for the establishment of large co-operatives, and appealing almost exclusively to agricultural workers. It again specifically rejected Polish independence.²

For the next two years, the party believed that a revolution was imminent. It attempted to gain control of the workers' councils, and in January 1919 refused to register as a political party; it was thus forced underground. During the Polish-Soviet war, it encouraged the Bolsheviks to invade ethnic Poland, and to establish for Poland a Provisional

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1. For the war years see: J. Reguła, op. cit.; F. Tych, P.P.S.--Lewica w wojny 1914-18 (Warsaw, 1960); J. Kancewicz, 'S.D.K.P. i L. wobec zagadnień wojny, rewolucji i niepodległości Polski w latach 1914-18,' Ruch Robotniczy i Ludowy w Polsce, pp. 103-188.
 2. 'Platforma polityczna', Komunistyczna Partia Polska: Uchwały i Rezolucje (Warsaw, 1954), i. 36-45.

3. Quoted in Platforma polityczna, op. cit.

4. Komunistyczna Partia Polska, op. cit.

5. Ibid., 'Manifest II zjazdu Komunistycznej Partii

Robotniczej Polski do całego ludu polskiego

Revolutionary Committee. But the Treaty of Riga in March 1921, and the waning of revolutionary sentiment in Poland made a reassessment of party policy necessary. In accordance with the tactics of the 3rd congress of Comintern, which stressed the importance of co-operation with Social Democrats, a new line was formulated.¹ It was introduced at the 3rd party conference in April 1922, when the new leadership of Adolf Warski, Max Horwitz-Walecki and Maria Kostrezewa was established, and it was confirmed at the 2nd Party Congress in Moscow in August 1923, where Warski explicitly rejected the Luxemburgist 'errors' on self-determination. 'Our mistake,' he had written to Dzierżyński in November 1921, 'was in repudiating Poland's independence, for which Lenin always rebuked us.'² The party now held that 'only the victory of revolution can give the Polish nation lasting independence in a state. (niepodległość państwowa).'³ It called for a 'democratic' army, and urged the formation of a broad worker-peasant alliance to overthrow the existing right-wing government in Poland.⁴ Its agrarian programme was modified as well: while some of the estates would

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1. For these developments see: J. Reguła, op. cit.;
M. Dziewanowski, op. cit.;
For the present-day Communist interpretation of the immediate post-war years see J. Kowalski, 'Z zagadnień rozwoju ideologicznego K.P.R.P. w latach 1918-23', Ruch Robotniczy i Ludowy w Polsce, pp. 261-318.
 2. Quoted in Dziewanowski, op. cit., p.103.
 3. Komunistyczna Partia Polski, Uchwały i Rezolucje, p.198.
 4. Ibid., 'Manifest II zjazdu Komunistycznej Partii Robotniczej Polski do całego ludu pracującego,' p.251.

be maintained as model co-operatives, most of the expropriated land would be handed over to the poor peasantry and agricultural workers; the slogan 'land for the peasants' was adopted.¹ The party now also demanded 'the national unification of the Ukrainian and the White Russian people,'² presumably with the Soviet Ukrainian and Byelorussian Republics.

In the 1922 elections, the Communist Party put forward a list under the title of 'The Union of the Proletariat of Town and Country.' It won 2 seats, and 1.5% of the votes.³ One of the seats it won in Warsaw, where it received 6.7% of the votes;⁴ the other was in the constituency of Będzin (No.21), in the Dąbrowa basin, where it received 20.8%.⁵ Elsewhere it was quite weak. In the town of Lodz it won 6.3% of the votes,⁶ while in the province of Silesia its percentage was only 0.1.⁷

The party was fairly influential in the Central Alliance of Trade Unions, and was particularly strong among railway workers, miners and agricultural labourers. It had a

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1. Ibid., 'Uchwała w sprawie sojusza robotniczo-chłopskiego', p.209; 'Sytuacja polityczna i taktyka partii,' p.204.
 2. Ibid., 'Za naszą i waszą wolność,' p.228.
 3. A. Próchnik, op. cit., pp. 133, 135.
 4. 'Statistique des Elections, S.P., viii (1926); based on Table XII, p.15.
 5. Ibid., based on Table XII, p.33.
 6. Ibid., based on Table XII, p.26.
 7. Ibid., p. ix.

1. Narodowa Partia Robotnicza (N.P.R.),
 2. For its history see A. Kłoczek, 'N.P.R. 1918-1922',
 Y. Domstorska 'Narodowy Sojusz Robotniczy w latach
 1905-14'. S.P.R.V. VII (1926) no.1, 3-32.

significant underground press, of which the most important papers were Czerwony Sztandar, Głos Komunistyczny, Kolejarz-Komunista for railway workers, Żołnierz-Robotnik for soldiers, and the theoretical journal Nowy Przegląd, which appeared approximately once every 2 months.

The National Workers' Party¹ was formed in May 1920 by the union of the already closely linked National Workers' Union in the Congress Kingdom and the National Workers' Party of Prussian Poland. The National Workers' Union had been set up in June 1905 by the National Democrats, in order to counteract socialist influences among the workers.² In September 1908, it broke with the National Democrats, accusing them of an excessive propensity to compromise and of neglecting the goal of national independence. The Union joined the Provisional Committee of Confederated Parties Demanding Independence, supported the legionary movement, and advocated an Activist solution of the Polish problem until the Treaty of Brest showed that Germany was interested in nothing more than a puppet Polish state.

In independent Poland, the N.P.R. occupied a position which combined nationalism and social radicalism. Its programme, adopted at the 2nd party congress in Cracow in September 1921, underlined the party's opposition to the dictatorship of the

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1. Narodowa Partia Robotnicza (N.P.R.).
 2. For its history see A. Micewski, op. cit., chapter III, T. Monasterska 'Narodowy Związek Robotniczy w latach 1905-14'. Z.P.W. VII (1964) no.I, 3-31.

proletariat, and its adherence to parliamentary democracy.¹

The programme stated that the National Workers' Party 'takes as its most important goal the social and political liberation of the working class,'² but at the same time it emphasized the party's awareness of a common national interest, in which the working class participated:

Recognizing that the class struggle is an undoubted fact and an instrument of social development, the party pursues this struggle within the limits of general state interests, and does not push it to extremes.³

In the economic sphere, the party called for a planned economy, with the right to work and a minimum wage, and demanded the gradual extension of nationalization. Some private enterprise would, however, always remain.⁴ In addition, it supported the 1920 land reform.⁵ Claiming that it based its activity on Christian ethics, the N.P.R. demanded a predominant position for the Catholic Church, although other religions would enjoy ostensibly equal rights.⁶

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1. 'Program Narodowej Partii Robotniczej uchwalony na II Kongresie N.P.R. w Krakowie w dn. 4, 5, i 6 września 1921 roku;' reprinted in Bełcikowska, op. cit. Section I, art. 3, pp. 310-11.
 2. Ibid., Section I, art. 1; Bełcikowska, p.309.
 3. Ibid., Section I, art. 4, Bełcikowska, p.311.
 4. Ibid., Section I, arts. 5, 6, and 7; pp. 312-13.
 5. Ibid., Section II, art. 3; p.318.
 6. Ibid., Section I, art. 9; p.315.

2. Ibid., p.310.

3. A. Próchnik, op. cit., pp. 134, 135.

4. 'Statistique des Electeds,' op. cit. VIII, based on Table XII, p.26.

5. Ibid., p. ix.

6. Zjeżdżenie Zawodowe Polonii.

In relation to the national minorities, it stressed that Poland was a national state, but advocated for the minorities rights of national cultural autonomy.¹ On the other hand, the N.P.R. held,

that the predominance of Jews in certain branches of trade and production is harmful, and supports the Polish and Christian element in these.²

In the election of 1922, the party won 5.4% of the votes, and 18 seats.³ It did particularly well in Lodz, where national antagonisms were strong, winning 19.0% of the votes,⁴ in Poznan with 28.2% and in Pomerania with 24.2%.⁵ The N.P.R. was led by Karol Popiel, and had its own trade union organization, the Polish Trade Union,⁶ especially strong in Prussian Poland. Of its newspapers, the most important were Głos Robotnika in Poznań and Praca in Lodz.

One of the features of Polish political life, as indeed of the politics of most of Eastern Europe, was the existence of peasant parties, supporting the peasants' interests and claiming for them, as the majority of the population, a commanding position in the state. These parties all shared a commitment to parliamentary democracy, but particularly emphasized the peasants' dominant role in the nation. Wincenty Witos, a self-

1. Ibid., Section II, art. 2, p.318.

2. Ibid., p.319.

3. A. Próchnik, op. cit., pp. 133, 135.

4. 'Statistique des Elections,' S.P. viii, based on Table XII, p.26.

5. Ibid., p. ix.

6. Zjednoczenie Zawodowe Polskie.

educated peasant from Wierzchosławice in Galicia, and one of the most remarkable figures in the peasant movement, articulated this feeling:

Poland fell as a state of the nobility.... Poland rises again as a state of the peasantry (państwo ludowe), and as such can and must survive....

The peasant masses (rzesze ludowe) must assume responsibility for the future of the state, and if they are to bear this heavy burden, they must acquire political influence, the possibility of ruling the state.¹

Many attempts were made to unite the different peasant parties, and in the first Sejm their representatives formed the Parliamentary Union of Peasant Deputies.² But the different levels of economic development and the different political traditions of the three partitions hindered co-operation. So did political inexperience, for the peasant parties were all of relatively recent origin, and the leaders of the smaller groups feared that they would be swamped by the more powerful Piast Peasant Party. Political disputes over whether the peasants should ally with the Right or Left, and over the proper role of the church further intensified division.

Five peasant parties put forward lists of candidates in the 1922 elections. The largest of these groups was the Piast,³

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1. Quoted in Bełcikowska, op. cit., pp. 167-8. For the peasant movement generally see: W. Witos, Moje Wspomnienia (Paris, 1964) 3 vols.; M. Rataj, Pamiętniki 1918-27 (Warsaw, 1965); S. Thugutt, Wybór Pism i Autobiografia (Glasgow, 1943).
 2. Sejmowy Związek Posłów Ludowych.
 3. Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe 'Piast'.

led by Wincenty Witos. It had emerged in Galicia in 1913 from a split in the Polish Peasant Club in the Austrian Reichsrat, and had supported Activist policies during the early stages of the war. It broke with the Central Powers in 1917 however, rather earlier than many other parties, and pursued quite a moderate social line, preferring in many ways to work with the National Democrats rather than the Socialists. Its influence was extended at the end of 1918 by the accession of a splinter group from the Peasant Union¹ in the Congress Kingdom, and in November 1920 by the absorption of the Union of Peasants,² newly formed in Poznania, where before the war an independent peasant movement had not existed. In October 1919 the Piast had united with the Liberation Peasant Party,³ the strongest peasant group in the Congress Kingdom. The more radical members of the Liberation Party left the Piast in December 1919, but of its 57 members of parliament, 34 remained with Witos.⁴

Witos strongly impressed his stamp on the Piast. His attitude towards the other political groups in Poland is clearly outlined in his autobiography:

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1. Zjednoczenie Ludowe.
 2. Zjednoczenie Włościan.
 3. Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe--Wyzwolenie.
 4. For these developments see S. Lato, op. cit.

National Democracy:

Contrary to widespread belief, I did not feel a great devotion to, or weakness for, this party.... I disliked in the National Democrats not only their reactionary social standpoint, but their loudness, and their claim to a monopoly of patriotism.... I could not deny their virtues, however: a clear and distinct standpoint in national matters, ability to make compromises, and loyalty in maintaining them.

Socialists:

I held the majority of socialists to be unstable and noisy agitators, irresponsible people who knew no limits in building up appetites, and although they knew that these could not be satisfied, did not know how to tell their people this at the appropriate time....

Liberation Peasant Party:

'Liberation', in my opinion, comprised the rural branch of the Socialists, sometimes competing with them in demagogy. Dominated by semi-intellectuals and socialist school-teachers, directed, moreover, by an unseen hand [Piłsudski], it pursued a policy remote from the interests and desires of the peasantry, while appearing to have great concern for them.¹

The Piast party programme, adopted at the all-Polish congress of November 1921, called for the full implementation of the land reform of July 1920.² It maintained that Poland was a predominantly agricultural state, and that the government should foster particularly the development of industries which were linked with agriculture.³ The programme affirmed that the Polish people were 'deeply religious', and claimed that 'the

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1. W. Witos, op. cit., i. 46. It is true that Witos wrote this in the bitterness of exile in Czechoslovakia in 1938, but his position in the twenties was not markedly different.
 2. 'Program Polskiego Stronnictwa Ludowego "Piast", ' Bełcikowska, op. cit., Part II, art.17, p.187.
 3. Ibid., Part II, art. 26, p.189.

party stands on the position of observing Christian principles in private and social life, and in the state.¹ The national minorities were to be granted equality, but the Polish character of the Kresy was to be strengthened.²

In the elections of 1922, the Piast won 70 seats and 13.2% of the votes.³ It did particularly well in Galicia, where it won 32.6% of the votes, as against 10.1% in the central provinces and 5.1% in the west.⁴

The Liberation Peasant Party, second largest of the peasant groups, was the result of a merger in December 1915 of the three main peasant parties in the Congress Kingdom: the National Peasant Union,⁵ which had broken with the National Democrats because it considered them too yielding on the question of national independence, the Peasant Union,⁶ close to the Socialists, and the peasant politicians grouped around the journal Zaranie. Led by Stanisław Thugutt, Tadeusz Nocznicki and Kazimierz Bagiński, the Liberation Peasant Party had belonged to the Activist General Committee of United Parties Demanding Independence. It broke with the Central Powers at the same time as the Socialists, and was important in the

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1. Ibid., Part I, art.4, p.179.
 2. Ibid., Part II, arts. 4 and 6, p.184.
 3. A. Próchnik, op. cit., pp. 133, 135.
 4. 'Statistique des Elections,' S.P. viii, p. ix.
 5. Narodowy Związek Chłopski.
 6. Związek Chłopski.

formation of the Lublin government. In October 1919, as we have seen, it joined the Piast. However the opposition of the more radical ex-Liberation deputies towards the Piast's approaches to Dubanowicz of the Christian National Party in order to achieve a compromise on land reform led to the secession of 24 members in December 1919, and to the reconstitution of the Liberation Party.¹

The Liberation Party was much more sympathetic to the Socialists than was the Piast. 'We demand,' stated the party weekly on 6 March 1921, 'a worker-peasant government which above all, will have the courage to base itself on the broadest masses of the people....'² The party also called for the implementation of the 1920 land reform, and for the nationalization of basic industries. 'Neither the state nor political parties,' its programme declared, 'should interfere in religious affairs, for these are matters for the individual conscience of every citizen.'³ The national minorities were to be assured full civil rights, and to be granted territorial autonomy in areas in which they constituted a majority.⁴

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1. See above, p.138. For a description of the peasant movement in Russian Poland during World War I see H. Jabłoński, op. cit., chapters I and II; J. Molenda 'Masy chłopskie i ruch ludowy w czasie wojny 1914-1918', Ruch robotniczy i ludowy w Polsce 1914-1923, p.355-408.
 2. Wyzwolenie, 6.III.1921.
 3. Lato, op. cit., p.67.
 4. Loc. cit.

In the election of 1922, the Liberation Party won 49 seats and 11% of the vote.¹ It won 16.0% in the central provinces and 19.3% in the east. Its support in the south, with 2.9%, and in the west, with 0.1% was minimal.²

The Catholic Peasant Party³ was founded in 1913 in Galicia to counteract the growing strength of the existing peasant parties there, and to weaken the radicalism which it was thought this strength would bring about. Its programme was based almost entirely on that of the Popular National Alliance: it maintained that the interest of the state took precedence over that of any class, it proposed a strong position for the Catholic Church, and it was hostile to the demands of the national minorities, in particular the Jews.⁴

The party fought the 1922 elections in alliance with a similar group from the Congress Kingdom, the Peasant Alliance.⁵ Together, as the Polish Centre,⁶ they won 3.0% of the votes and 6 seats, 5 of which were in Galicia.⁷ The Polish Centre joined the parliamentary club of the Popular National Union, but the 5 Galician deputies soon split off, re-establishing the Catholic Peasant Party.

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1. A. Prochnik, op. cit., pp. 133, 135.
 2. 'Statistique des Elections,' S.P. viii, p. ix.
 3. Stronnictwo Katolicko-Ludowe.
 4. Program Polskiego Stronnictwa Katolicko-Ludowego; reprinted in Bełcikowska, op. cit., pp.145-57.
 5. Zjednoczenie Ludowe.
 6. Polskie Centrum.
 7. A. Próchnik, op. cit., pp. 133, 135, and 'Statistique des Elections,' S.P. viii, Table XIV, p.118.

The Polish Peasant Party--Left Wing¹ had emerged in Galicia in 1913 from the same split as had produced the Piast.² Led by Jan Stapiński, it reproached Witos for his conservatism, his clericalism and his willingness to compromise with the National Democrats. The dispute reached greater heights of bitterness, and attempts to unite the two parties after 1918 proved unsuccessful, partly because of personal antagonisms, partly because of the P.S.L.--Lewica's radical programme, which demanded the expropriation without compensation of the large estates.³ In the 1922 elections, the party won 0.7% of the vote, and 2 seats in Galicia.⁴

The Radical Peasant Party⁵ was the creation of the redoubtable Father Eugeniusz Okoń. With overwhelming support in the districts of Tarnobrzeg, Nisko, Kolbuszowo and Mielec, in Galicia, he had proclaimed a peasant republic here, on the collapse of Austria, which supported the Lublin government. The party's programme was notable for its stridency, and for its insistence on the pre-eminence in the state of the peasantry, 'which makes up 80% of our nation and constitutes the overwhelming and absolute majority.'⁶ Although it called

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1. Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe--Lewica, or P.S.L.--Lewica.
 2. See above, p. 138.
 3. S. Lato, op. cit., pp. 68-9.
 4. A. Próchnik, op. cit., pp. 133, 135, and 'Statistique des Elections, ' S.P. viii, Table XIV, p.118.
 5. Chłopskie Stronnictwo Radykalne.
 6. 'Program Chłopskiego Stronnictwa Radykalnego,' art. 3: Bełcikowska, op. cit., p.282.
For Okoń see: T. Rek, Książdz Eugeniusz Okoń (Warsaw, 1962), and S. Czerpak, 'Ruch Chłopski w powiecie Tarnobrzieskim w latach 1918-21,' R.D.R.L. iii (1961), 72-113.

for a far-reaching land reform, it allowed compensation to be made, stipulating only that it be low.¹ In the elections of 1922 it won 1.3% of the vote and 4 seats in Galicia and the area around Lublin.²

Although Poland was an overwhelmingly Catholic country, Western European-style Christian Democracy was not a major political force. The Christian Democratic Party, until 1925 called the Christian National Party of Labour,³ was formed in September 1919 by the union of Christian Democratic groups in Galicia and the Congress Kingdom. It was later joined by the National Workers' Party⁴ of Poznan, and the strong Christian Democratic group in Upper Silesia led by Wojciech Korfanty. Although Christian Democratic trade unions had been important in all the partitions, and particularly in Prussia, before 1914, the Catholic social movement in politics was of recent origin in Poland. In the '20's it was still only gradually emancipating itself from its dependence on the National Democrats, with whom it had formed a joint list in the elections of 1919 and 1922. Its growth was further hampered because it did not enjoy the full support of the Church hierarchy, many

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1. 'Program,' Part II, art. 3, Bełcikowska, op. cit., pp. 285-6.
 2. A. Próchnik, op. cit., pp. 133, 135, and 'Statistique des Elections', S.P. viii, Table XIV, p. 118.
 3. Chrześcijańsko-Narodowe Stronnictwo Pracy.
 4. Narodowe Stronnictwo Robotnicze.

5. 1922, p. 129.
6. Chrześcijańskie Zjednoczenie Narodowe Zrzeszenia Politycznego Polskiej.
7. Polskie Zjednoczenie Chrześcijańskich Związków Zawodowych.

of whose members were National Democrats. Edmund Dalbor, the first primate of independent Poland, was an enthusiastic supporter of the Endecja.¹

Led by Ludomil Czerniewski and Józef Chaciński, the party adopted a characteristic Christian Democratic programme. 'The aim of the Christian National Party of Labour,' stated the regulations of the parliamentary club, 'is the organization of the Polish state on Christian principles, and the defence of the labouring class from moral, economic and socio-political standpoints.'² The party programme called for a democratic state in which the principles of religion would be honoured,³ and proposed extensive social insurance. It saw the solution of the worker question in the part-ownership of the means of production by the industrial working class,⁴ and it called for the implementation of the 1920 land reform.⁵

The party had its own trade union organization, the Christian Trade Union Alliance of Poland⁶ in Warsaw, the Polish Christian Trade Union Alliance⁷ in Cracow, and allied groups in

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1. For Christian Democracy in Poland, see: A. Micewski, op. cit., Chapter III; W. Bitner, 'O prawdziwe oblicze "Partii Katolickiej" w dwudziestolecie,' Wież, No. 6, lxi, (1963), 110-12.
 2. Regulamin Kół Chrześcijańsko-Narodowego Stronnictwa Pracy, reprinted in Bełcikowska, op. cit., p.133.
 3. 'Program Chrześcijańsko-Narodowego Stronnictwa Pracy, "Sprawa Religijna",' reprinted in Bełcikowska, op. cit. p.124.
 4. Ibid., 'Sprawa Społeczna i Robotnicza', Bełcikowska, p.127.
 5. Ibid., p.129.
 6. Chrześcijańskie Zjednoczenie Zawodowe Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej.
 7. Polskie Zjednoczenie Chrześcijańskich Związków Zawodowych.

Pomerania and Upper Silesia. It fought the 1922 elections on a common list with the National Democrats; its total of 43 seats is therefore not a satisfactory reflection of its own support. In the 1928 elections, the first it contested alone, it won 18 seats. It was strong in Warsaw, particularly among the artisans, and in Upper Silesia, where Korfanty's popularity as the leader of the Upper Silesian revolts ensured it mass support.

The political life of the national minorities was almost as fragmented as that of the Poles. Among the Ukrainians, the political differences between those who had lived under Russian rule and those who had lived under Austrian rule were still great. Almost all the Ukrainian parties in former Russian territory (Volynia, Polesia, Podlasia and the Chełm region), where Ukrainian nationalism was a fairly recent phenomenon, joined the Bloc of National Minorities,¹ a loose grouping formed for the election of November 1922 to overcome the prejudice of the voting system against the smaller parties. The 20 members from these regions elected on the bloc's list formed the Ukrainian club in the Sejm, and issued a joint declaration, rather moderate in tone, shortly after the opening of the new Parliament:

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1. Blok Mniejszości Narodowych (also called Bloc No. 16). For the Ukrainians generally see: M. Hrushevsky, A History of Ukraine (New Haven, 1941); J. Reshetar, The Ukrainian Revolution (Princeton, 1952); M. Feliński, Ukraińcy w Polsce (Warsaw, 1931); and B. Paneyko, 'Galicia and the Polish-Ukrainian Problem,' Slavonic Review, ix (1931), 567-87.

The aim of the Ukrainian people is the rebirth of an independent Ukrainian state. Recognizing the true situation, however, we express our willingness to co-operate with the Polish nation, and with all the nations in the Polish Republic, on the following conditions: the Polish Republic, not nationally uniform, must be reformed to allow every nation within it...the right of self-determination.¹

Apart from a group of independent members, the Ukrainian club was made up of the representatives of three parties. The largest of these, with 7 seats, was the Peasant Alliance.² It proposed independence for the Ukraine, but stressed much more strongly the agrarian demands of its overwhelmingly peasant supporters. It claimed to be 'the political class union of the Ukrainian peasantry,'³ and called for 'the end of the exploitation of poorer peasants.'⁴

The Ukrainian Social Democratic Party⁵ had support both in East Galicia, where it boycotted the 1922 election, and in Volyńia and Polesia, where 5 of its members were elected. Originally closely linked with the Polish Socialist Party, it had broken away before 1914, and after the war it became increasingly sympathetic towards Communism. Eventually, in

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1. Speech of Deputy Podhórski, S.S.S.R. 23.1.1923, col. 66.
 2. Selansky Soyuz.
 3. 'Program Ukraińskiego Socjalistycznego Zjednoczenia "Selansky Sojuz", 'Zasady programowe', reprinted in Bełcikowska, op. cit., p. 544.
 4. Loc. cit.
 5. Ukraińska Sotsial-Demokratyczna Partia.

February 1924, it left the Ukrainian club, and with the 2 Communist deputies formed the Communist parliamentary group.¹

The third party represented in the Ukrainian club was that of the autonomist-federalists, which had one Deputy. This was a pro-Polish group, which called for federal status for the Ukrainian areas within Poland.² A similar group, without parliamentary representation, was the Ukrainian National Party,³ the rump supporters of Hetman Skoropadsky, head of the German-dominated Ukrainian state established during the First World War, and of Semion Petlura, whose alliance with Piłsudski had culminated in the Kiev campaign. They called for the re-establishment of an independent Ukraine, allied with Poland.⁴ Neither of these parties had much support.

In East Galicia the Ukrainian national movement was older and better established. Almost all the Ukrainian parties here boycotted the elections of November 1922, believing that participation would confirm the Polish claim to the region, at that time still unsettled in international law. The only Ukrainian party which contested the election in East Galicia was the pro-Polish Ukrainian Peasant Party;⁵ it won 87,000 votes

1. M. Feliński, op. cit., p.59.

2. A. Bełcikowska, op. cit., pp.452-60.

3. *Ukraińska Narodna Partia*.

4. Bełcikowska, op. cit., pp.915-22.

5. Known as the 'Chliborobi'; see Bełcikowska, op. cit., pp.551-6.

and 5 seats.¹ Its position on the national question was clearly described by its leader, Father Ilkow:

The Ukrainian people does not have enough strength or enough educated men to form its own state. We have only one alternative: to depend on Poland, thanks to whom we can preserve our national spirit, and in the course of time, united with Poland...to unite the whole Ukrainian nation.²

Socially, it demanded the full implementation of the 1920 land reform.³

The largest Ukrainian party in East Galicia was the Ukrainian National Party of Labour.⁴ Before the First World War it had been the basis of the Ukrainian national movement, founding co-operatives, and issuing the only Ukrainian daily paper, Dilo, in Lwów. It had played an important part in the West Ukrainian government established after the collapse of Austria; this was crushed by Polish military action, and the party came increasingly into conflict with the Ukrainian government-in-exile, led by Evgen Petrushevich. The party still called for an independent West Ukraine as the precursor of an independent Ukraine, but it objected to Petrushevich's political intransigence, and was restive over the electoral boycott of 1922. This conflict led to the victory of the

1. Próchnik, op. cit., pp.133, 135.

2. Quoted in Bełcikowska, op. cit., p.556.

3. 'Program Ukraińskiego Włościanskiego Stronnictwa.' Bełcikowska, op. cit., p.552.

4. Ukrainska Narodna Trudowa Partia.

moderates in the party, led by Volodimir Bachinsky, and a declaration was issued in May 1923 stating that as an initial step, only autonomy should be demanded for the West Ukraine. The radicals, however, led by Vyacheslav Budzhinkovsky, refused to accept this, and fought to regain control of the party.¹

The Ukrainian Radical Party² was socially more progressive, but also much weaker. It had participated in the 1918 Government, and demanded national independence. In its programme it called itself the 'party of the working masses of Ukrainian nationality',³ and proposed a far-reaching land reform. Because of its strong anti-clericalism, it provoked the hostility of the Greek Catholic church.

Though much weaker than it had been, the Russophile orientation, which held that the Ukrainians were really Russian, still had some influence in East Galicia. The movement split in 1921 between the conservative Russian National Organization⁴ and the more radical National Will,⁵ which based its programme on that of the Russian social revolutionaries.

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1. For these developments, see Bełcikowska, op. cit., pp.901-5.
 2. Ukraińska Radykalna Partia.
 3. 'Program Ukraińskiej Radykalnej Partii,' Bełcikowska, op. cit., p.910.
 4. Rusko-Narodna Organizatsya.
 5. Narodna Vola.

From 1921, the Ukrainian Military Organization,¹ an underground terrorist group, led from Vienna by Evgeny Konovalts, had been active.² In September 1921, it organized an attempt on Piłsudski's life, and in the summer of 1922, embarked on a campaign of burning Polish farms. During the election of 1922, it had enforced the electoral boycott through terror, attacking, even murdering, pro-Polish Ukrainians.

National consciousness was both more recent and less developed among the White Russians. They responded favourably, in many cases, to russification before 1914, and to the polonization which followed the war. The area they inhabited were very poor, and Polish radical parties had considerable strength there. Of the 35 seats in constituencies 59-64, which were largely White Russian, the Liberation Peasant Party won 15, the Socialists 5 and the White Russian parties 6.³ All the large White Russian parties contested the 1922 elections on the list of the Bloc of Minorities, winning 11 seats (9 in the constituencies and 2 on the general list). Their deputies formed the White Russian club in the Sejm, which in January

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1. Ukrainiska Voyskova Organizatsya.
 2. See Pobóg-Malinowski. *Op. cit.*, pp.437-9.
 3. 'Statistique des Elections', *S.P.* viii, Table XIV, p.118.

1923 called for 'territorial autonomy with a local sejm'¹ for the White Russian areas, and they all sent representatives to the White Russian National Committee² in Wilno.

The largest of the White Russian parties, with 7 members in the parliamentary club, was the White Russian Social Democracy.³ Founded in 1903, it had functioned before the war as the White Russian Socialist Hromada, with a generally socialist programme; however, it demanded the granting of land to small peasants, and the preservation of individual farming. After 1918, it stressed its allegiance to parliamentary democracy, declaring that socialism could only be achieved as a long-term aim, following industrialization and much preparation. This reformism and emphasis on peasant demands caused great discontent in the left wing of the party, and culminated in the secession in January 1924 of 4 members of the parliamentary club, led by Bazyli Rogula. They formed the White Russian Independent Socialist Party, which allied itself with the Communists.⁴

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1. Speech of Deputy Tarashkievich, S.S.S.R., 23.I.23, col.39. For White Russia generally, see N. Vakar, Belorussia. The Making of a Nation (Harvard, 1956); V. Poluian, J. Poluian. Revoliutsionnoe i natsionalno-osvoboditelnoe dvizhenie z Zapadnoi Bielarusi v 1920-1939. (Minsk 1960).
 2. Natsyonalny Bielaruskyy Komitet.
 3. Bielaruska Sotsyalno-Demokratychna Partia.
 4. Bełcikowska, op. cit., pp.620-6.

The White Russian Socialist Revolutionary Party,¹ with 2 Deputies in Parliament, was also socially radical, and had left the Hromada in 1917. It moved increasingly towards Communism, and in July 1924 expressed its willingness to work with the Communists.

The White Russian Christian Democratic Union,² led by Father Stankievich, had one seat in the Sejm. Supported largely by Catholic White Russians, in particular the priesthood, it was strong in the area around Wilno. Though it had no links with the Polish Christian Democrats, it was based on the same Christian principles, and while it made clear its support for self-determination for White Russia, its programme was primarily concerned with religious questions. It demanded that the state be organized on Catholic principles, and that the freedom of the Church be ensured. The party saw the solution of the industrial question in the extension of ownership and in profit-sharing.³ Its influence among the large majority of White Russians, who were Orthodox, was minimal.

From the Autumn of 1920 Vyacheslav Lastovsky, one of the leading White Russian nationalists, had been living in Kaunas

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1. Partia Bielaruskich Socjalistuv Revolutsyonistuv.
 2. Khrestijansko-Demokratychny Sauz Bielarusinuv.
 3. 'Program Chrestijańsko-Demokratyczny Związek Białorusinów,' reprinted in Bełcikowska, op. cit., pp.610-18.

in Lithuania. The White Russian emigration here was greatly strengthened by the deportation by the Polish authorities in the following year of 20 White Russian activists.¹ Lastovsky formed a government-in-exile, and established links with Petrushevich, now in Prague. The "government" demanded the annulling of the treaty of Riga and the establishment of a White Russian state within its ethnographic boundaries. It rejected any co-operation with Poland, and from 1921 organized terrorist attacks on Polish outposts, to which the Lithuanian authorities turned a blind eye.²

From 1921, terrorist tactics had also been adopted by the pro-Soviet White Russian Revolutionary Organization, which demanded the union of the whole of White Russia in the White Russian Soviet Republic.³

By 1924, the Polish authorities were considerably worried by the domination of White Russian politics by pro-Communist and anti-Polish parties. For this reason they fostered the establishment in May 1924 of the White Russian Democratic Council,⁴ led by Dr. A. Pavlukievich. The Resolutions of the conference which created the Council make its position clear:

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1. Pobóg-Malinowski, op. cit., ii. 442-3.
 2. Ibid., p. 443.
 3. Bielaruska Organizatsya Revolutsyna. See Ajnenkiel, Op. cit., pp. 259-60.
 4. Bielaruska Demokratychna Rada.

Bearing in mind:

1. that the present situation in Western White Russia exposes the Polish State and the White Russian Nation to a great insecurity from the east;...
4. that the articles of the constitution and the laws concerning minorities, although they do not embody all the demands of the White Russian Nation, are a first step forward on the road of the White Russian renaissance;...

The conference...advises the White Russian Provisional Council to make contact with the appropriate representatives of the government and of Polish social and political organizations with the aim of the most rapid implementation of these articles of the constitution ...and these laws....¹

The Council, later renamed the White Russian National Council,² did not acquire any significant support.

Among the national minorities, the Germans possessed the greatest political unity. Almost all the German parties stressed the importance of the defence of their minority rights over ideological differences. German politicians, particularly Senator Erwin Hassbach, played a conspicuous part in the formation of the Bloc of National Minorities, and all 17 German members of the Sejm were elected on this list. They formed the parliamentary club of German Union, which emphasized the loyalty of the German minority to the new state. Joseph Spickermann, the chairman of the club, declared in the Sejm on 23 January 1923:

1. Reprinted in Bełcikowska, op. cit., pp.953-4.
 2. Bielaruska Natsionalnaya Rada.

Our Polish State will not need to be ashamed of the citizens of German nationality for whom it cares.... We are the best guarantee for lasting and friendly relations with the neighbouring German State.... /From our behaviour/ our opponents will be convinced that one should not regard the German minority in Poland as an undesirable element, but should value it as an important and necessary factor in the state organism.¹

This, and many similar statements, were made partly, and possibly wholly, in good faith. But the German minority, to some extent against the will of several of its leaders, was forced into a false position by the almost universal support in Germany for the revision of the 1918 frontiers, and by the active efforts of the various German governments to achieve this.

The largest party in the German club was the German Alliance for the Defence of the Rights of National Minorities in Poland,² formed by the amalgamation of all the German political parties in Poznania and Pomerania, from the conservative German National People's Party³ to the Social Democrats.⁴ It had 5 seats in the Sejm, and called for the union of all Germans in

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1. S.S.S.R., 23.I.23, col. 12. For the Germans generally, see S. Paprocki, Minority Affairs and Poland, (Warsaw, 1935); O. Heike, Das Deutschtum in Polen 1918-39 (Bonn, 1955); M. Cygański, Mniejszość Niemiecka w Polsce Centralnej w latach 1918-39 (Lodz, 1961); S. Stoliński, Les Allemands en Pologne (Warsaw, 1927).
 2. Deutschtumsbund zur Wahrung der Minderheitsrechte in Polen.
 3. Deutschnationale Volkspartei.
 4. Sozialdemokratische Partei.

5. Katolische Volkspartei.

6. Katolische Volkspartei.

order to establish their minority rights as granted by the constitution and the Versailles treaty. It stressed, however, that

The German Alliance has no anti-Polish tendencies, and endeavours to create peaceful co-existence between Polish and German citizens of the state, upon whom the necessity of fate has imposed co-existence.¹

In Upper Silesia, a non-party organization similar to the German Alliance, the German Peoples Alliance for Polish Upper Silesia² was created in 1921.³

The nationalist elements in Upper Silesia were grouped in the German Party,⁴ with 2 members in parliament. A parallel organization of the same name, with 1 deputy, existed in Austrian Silesia. According to its programme, the German Party abided by the constitution, and intended to unite all Germans for the defence of their minority rights.⁵

The former centre party in Upper Silesia was now organized as the Catholic People's Party.⁶ It called for the defence of minority rights, but stressed far more strongly the Christian

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1. Deklaracja Niemieckiego Związku dla obrony praw mniejszości narodowych w Polsce, reprinted in Bełcikowska, op. cit.; p.572.
 2. Deutsche Volksbund für Polnisch-Schlesien.
 3. See S. Paprocki, op. cit., p.128.
 4. Deutsche Partei.
 5. 'Program Niemieckiej Partii w Polsce,' reprinted in Bełcikowska, op. cit.; p.576.
 6. Katholische Volkspartei.

Democratic aspects of its programme. The first of its ten basic principles was 'the Christian concept of the state, the Christian spirit of community, the Christian approach to legislation.'¹

In the Congress Kingdom, and particularly in Lodz, the German industrial workers were organized in the German Labour Party,² founded in January 1922. The party won 2 seats in the 1922 election, and emphasized the importance of minority rights. Its programme, however, was a fairly orthodox social democratic one, and the party attempted to co-operate with the other large socialist groups in Lodz, the Jewish Bund and the Polish Socialist Party.³

The German rural population in the Congress Kingdom elected two members of Parliament in 1922, who in 1924 formed the German People's Party.⁴ It called for the observance of the rights of the German minority, but also stressed the importance of government aid for agriculture.⁵

The only German group which did not stand on list 16 was the German Social Democratic Party in Upper Silesia. Formed by the union in 1921 of the majority Social Democrats and the

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1. 'Program,' reprinted in Bełcikowska, op. cit., pp. 584-5.
 2. Deutsche Arbeitspartei in Polen.
 3. M. Cygański, op. cit., Chapter I, pp. 17-48.
 4. Deutscher Volksbund.
 5. 'Program Niemieckiego Związku Ludowego w Polsce,' reprinted in Bełcikowska, op. cit., pp. 580-4.

Independent Socialists, it belonged to the Second International, and based its programme on the 1888 programme of the Austrian Social Democracy. In 1922, it called on its supporters to vote for the P.P.S. The Social Democratic Party in Poznan and Pomerania, which had won 1 seat as part of the German Alliance, united with the Upper Silesian party in April 1924.¹

Jewish politics were highly complex, a result both of the seriousness of the problems facing the Jews, and of the rapid changes in the structure of the community brought about by industrialization and urbanization.² Jewish parliamentary activity was dominated by the Zionists, but the main division here between those of the Congress Kingdom and Kresy, organized in the Jewish National Council and led by Isaac Grünbaum, and those of Galicia, led by Dr. Leon Reich, was not connected with Zionism itself. It rather reflected the different position of Jews in former Russian Poland from that of Jews in Galicia, and the resulting differences in political attitudes between them. Grünbaum demanded for the Jews full cultural autonomy, with the

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1. Bełcikowska, op. cit., pp.592-6.
 2. For Jewish politics generally, see S. Segal, The New Poland and the Jews (New York, 1938); A. Hafftko, 'Zydowskie Stronnictwa polityczne w Polsce odrodzonej', Z.W.P.O., ii. 249-285, and 'Zycie parlamentarne Żydów w Polsce odrodzonej', Z.W.P.O., ii. 286-311; M. Eisenstein, Jewish Schools in Poland (New York, 1950). L. Halpern, Polityka Żydowska w Sejmie i Senacie Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej 1919-1933. (Warsaw 1933).

right to run their own independent network of Jewish schools, established and financed by the state, and called for the transformation of Poland from a national state to a state of nationalities. He was the principal force in the creation of the Bloc of National minorities before the election of 1922, and he induced a fair number of non-Zionist Jewish parties, mostly in the Congress Kingdom and the Kresy, to stand on this platform, in particular the orthodox Agudas Israel and the non-political Union of Merchants. Altogether 17 deputies were elected from the Jewish parties on this list.¹

The Galician Zionists demanded only the securing of full civil rights for Jews in Poland. They believed in a direct approach to the Polish government, and opposed the creation of a Bloc of National Minorities, both because it would excessively antagonize the Poles, and because the Jews had no real common interests with the other national minorities. The Ukrainians and White Russians wanted national independence or territorial autonomy, while the Germans wanted a revision of the Versailles treaty. Jews, on the other hand, could accept the existing boundaries of Poland, and their need was for the implementation of the rights granted them by the constitution. The Galician

1. A. Hafftko, 'Życie parlamentarne Żydów w Polsce odrodzonej', Z.W.P.O., ii. p.293. For Grünbaum's views, see also I. Grünbaum, Milchamot ha Yehudim be Polaniya, Jerusalem 1946.

Zionists had 17 deputies elected in 1922, but this exaggerates their influence, since they won 15 seats in East Galicia, where the Ukrainians had boycotted the election.¹

The two Zionist groups agreed, however, on the need for a Jewish state in Palestine, established on a secular basis. They had a large daily and weekly press, including Nasz Przegląd (Warsaw) and Chwila (Lwów) in Polish, Lodzzer Tageblatt (Lodz) and Majer Hajnt (Warsaw) in Yiddish. A network of secondary schools, the Tarbut, had also been established.

The Mizrachi, with 5 members of Parliament elected on list No. 16, was the party of the Orthodox Zionists, calling for the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine organized on a religious basis. It adopted a moderate position in relation to the Polish state, calling for full equality for the Jews, and declaring that

because of the historic bonds linking Polish Jews with the Polish nation...it is the obligation of Jews to observe the most far-reaching loyalty and faithfulness to the Polish state and nation.²

The Zionist Labour Party, Hitachduth, with 3 deputies in the Sejm elected on the list of the Bloc of National Minorities, was an international Zionist socialist grouping

1. A. Próchnik, op. cit., pp. 133, 135.

2. 'Program Sjonistycznej Partii Ortodoksów "Mizrachi",' reprinted in Bełcikowska, op. cit.; Part II, art.3, p.493.

which appealed for support to all 'productive workers'. It called for the establishment of a secular Jewish state in Palestine, and in Poland for 'the renewal of Jewish national life...on the basis of productive and liberated labour, national autonomy and Hebrew culture.'¹

The strongest Jewish political group was the Orthodox Agudas Israel. Founded in 1916, during the German occupation and under the influence of German Orthodoxy, its attitude to the Polish state was friendly. It held to the talmudic principle 'Dinoh de Malchisoh Dinoh' (the law of the state is law), and believed that a direct approach to the rulers was more likely to alleviate the position of the Jews than political agitation. Its principal strength was in the Congress Kingdom, where the support of the famous rabbi of Góra Kalwarja brought it the allegiance of his many followers. Though not much concerned with parliamentary politics, its political branch, 'Peace to the Faithful of Israel'² had 6 deputies elected in 1922. Schooling was one of its particular interests, and it possessed the largest network of Jewish private schools in Poland. The Agudas was very hostile to Jewish radicalism, and fought the Jewish socialist parties, in particular the Bund,

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1. 'Rezolucja Programowa Światowej Sjonistycznej Partii "Hitachduth",' reprinted in Bełcikowska, op.cit., p.501.
 2. Shloyme Emune Israel.

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placing an interdict on the Bund daily, Naye Folkszeitung, and founding an Orthodox workers' organization. It favoured Jewish settlement in Palestine, but opposed the revival of Hebrew as a language of daily use.

The Jewish People's Party¹ advocated a programme of national cultural autonomy. Though not opposed to settlement in Palestine, it held that the Jewish problem in the diaspora could be solved by the granting of autonomy to Jewish communities: they should have the right to tax themselves, establish their own welfare organizations, and run a network of Jewish schools financed by the government. The party was not hostile to the Hebrew revival, but argued that Yiddish was the national language of the Polish Jews. It was strong among the Jewish petit-bourgeois and artisanate in Warsaw, Lodz, Lublin and Wilno, although its support had declined somewhat from a peak reached in the two years following the war. It opposed the Bloc of Minorities, and had 1 member elected to the Sejm in 1922.²

The General Jewish Workers' Alliance, nicknamed the Bund,³

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1. Yidishe Volkspartei.
 2. See A. Hafftko, 'Zydowskie Stronnictwo Polityczne w Polsce Odrodzonej', Z.W.P.O., ii. 268-9.
 3. Allgemeine Yidisher Arbeiterbund. For the Bund, see: H. Shukman, 'The Relations between the Jewish Bund and the R.S.D.R.P. 1897-1903' (Oxford D. Phil, 1961); Doires Bundisten, ed. J. Hertz, (New York, 1956); Finfuntzwantsik Yor Zamibuch (Warsaw, 1922) B.K. Johnpol, The Politics of Futility. The General Jewish Workers Bund of Poland 1917-43. Ithaca N.Y. 1967. The atmosphere of the movement is well captured in the photographs of Der Bund in Bilder 1897-1957, ed. J. Hertz (New York, 1958).

with which the Jewish Social Democratic Party in Galicia had merged in April 1920, was the largest of the Jewish socialist parties. Founded in Russian Poland in 1897, it had joined the Russian Social Democratic Party in 1898, splitting off from it in 1902, but rejoining it in 1906, and had co-operated with it rather uneasily until the war. Its social programme was very radical. In May 1920, the first congress of the party in independent Poland decided to accede to the Third International, but the party refused to accept the 21 points laid down by Comintern for all Communist parties. This led to the secession in August 1921 of the Communist elements in the party (the so-called Kom Bund). Since the Bund still refused to join the Hamburg International, which it accused of revisionism, it remained for the time being independent of any international affiliation. It strongly criticized the Communists for their destructive tactics within the movement.

The Bund had been on bad terms with the P.P.S. before 1914. The Polish Socialists criticized it as the creation of russified Jews and as an instrument for the russification of the Jewish working class. The parties differed on the national question, the Bund rejecting Polish independence and calling instead for autonomy for the Congress Kingdom. After 1918, many of the Bund leaders were suspicious of the P.P.S.; they found it excessively reformist and prone to compromise with the National Democrats. Co-operation between the two movements was at best sporadic.

On the Jewish national question, the Bund attacked all other Jewish parties, but especially the Zionists and the Orthodox. Nevertheless it demanded national cultural autonomy for the Jews, with a state-sponsored school system based on Yiddish. It had already built up its own private network of Yiddish schools.

In the election of 1922, the Bund, led by Maurycy Orzech and Henryk Erlich, put up its own list of candidates. It won 81,000 votes, mainly in the larger towns in Russian Poland, but did not win any seats.¹ It had a strong influence in the Jewish trade union movement, and issued a daily newspaper, Naye Folkszeitung.

The Zionist Workers' Party² was based on the ideology of Ber Borochov, who held that the Jewish problem could only be solved by the creation in Palestine of a Jewish state in which 'normal class relations' would prevail, and workers and peasants form the majority. The party split in 1920 between a right and a left wing. The right wing joined the Second International, while the left wing, after applying to join Comintern, rejected the 21 conditions, and saw its communist faction secede. Both groups called for Jewish cultural autonomy

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1. 'Statistique des Elections', S.P., viii, Table XIV, p.118.
 2. Poalej Sion. See A. Hafftko, 'Żydowskie stronnictwa polityczne w Polsce Odrodzonej', Z.W.P.O., pp. 270-3, 280, 284.

in Poland, and formed a common list in the 1922 election; jointly they won 14,000 votes, and no seats.¹

The assimilationists, who had been important in Galicia after 1863, lost much of their pre-war significance. Their chief organization was the Alliance of Poles of the Mosaic Faith from the whole of Poland.² They opposed Zionism and demands for cultural autonomy, and stressed that the Jewish question was a Polish internal matter. They demanded full civil rights for Jews. At its conference in May 1919, the Alliance declared:

Poles of the Mosaic faith, filled with a sincere love for Poland, will unshakeably serve their Mother Country as dedicated sons, without regard to the difficult conditions in which they live.³

In the light of this multiplicity of parties, reflecting not only political differences, but also national and regional allegiances, it is hardly surprising that the creation of a Government based on a parliamentary majority proved exceedingly difficult to achieve, once the enthusiasm engendered by the achievement of Independence and the ephemeral solidarity brought about by the Polish-Soviet war had dissolved.

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1. 'Statistique des Elections', S.P. viii, Table XIV, p.118.
 2. Zjednoczenie Polaków Wyznania Mojżeszowego wszystkich Ziemi Polskich.
 3. Quoted in Bełcikowska, op. cit., p.864.

CHAPTER III.THE CAUSES OF THE MAY COUP.

The economic and financial crisis is the axis of our present-day politics. On it, above all, is concentrated the attention of the Government and of society. All those who have any understanding, however superficial, are aware that our whole future depends on the way in which we deal with this crisis.

Roman Dmowski, 1925.

The coup of May 1926 which brought Piłsudski back to power after three years of political isolation was the central event in interwar Polish politics. It brought to an end the period in which the political parties had been dominant, and established the semi-autocratic system which worked relatively well under Piłsudski, but which showed such marked symptoms of decay and incapacity under his successors after 1935. The coup was the result primarily of the breakdown of the Polish parliamentary system, and of the politicians' failure to control the economic situation, in particular to prevent inflation getting out of hand.

In addition, disputes about the constitutional position of the army and conflicts resulting from the different traditions and political allegiances of the officer corps led increasingly to the involvement of the army in politics. Reverses in foreign policy, the failure to deal effectively with the

national minorities and the widely prevalent political corruption all contributed to undermine faith in the parliamentary system and the Constitution of 1921.

Since the economic and political problems affected each other continually, they can best be understood by examining their interaction. The crisis of the parliamentary system had already become evident before the elections of November 1922. After the collapse, in September 1921, of the Coalition Government of Wincenty Witos, created to deal with the critical situation arising from the Polish defeats in the war with Russia, it had proved impossible to form a Government based on a secure parliamentary majority. The two Governments of Antoni Ponikowski, rector of the Warsaw Polytechnic (19 September 1921 - 5 March 1922; 10 March 1922 - 6 June 1922), the short-lived Government of Arthur Śliwiński, the Piłsudski-ite historian (28 June - 7 July 1922), and that of the Cracow conservative Julian Nowak (31 July - 14 December 1922) had all been extra-parliamentary Governments, in which the majority of Cabinet positions were held by experts without party affiliation. They had depended, for parliamentary approval, on the support of shifting and uncertain majorities, since no single political group felt strong enough to assume the responsibilities of Government. The one attempt, in July 1922, by the parties of the Right to form a Government based on a secure parliamentary

majority and headed by Wojciech Korfanty, had led to a violent clash with Piłsudski, the Head of State, and ended in a fiasco.

The elections of November 1922 did not alter the situation radically. No single political group in the Sejm commanded a clear majority. The Right, composed of the Popular National Union and the Christian National Club held 125 seats, significantly more than in the previous Parliament, but still not a majority. The Centre, comprising the Christian Democrats, the National Workers' Party and the Piast Peasant Party, had altogether 132 seats. The Left, principally the Socialists and the radical peasant parties had 98 seats, and the national minorities had 89.

'Today', wrote the National Democratic Gazeta Warszawska, almost despairingly, on 28 November,

the new Sejm begins its work ... There is no one who does not affirm that the most pressing problem is the improvement of our financial position and that this can only be accomplished by a parliamentary government based on a firm majority.... The difficulty is that the elections have not led to a coherent majority.¹

1. Gazeta Warszawska, 28 .XI . 1922.

TABLE I: THE SEJM IN DECEMBER 1922¹

	<u>Seats:</u>	
	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
<u>Right</u>	125	28.0
Popular National Union	98	22.0
Christian National Club	27	6.0
<u>Centre</u>	132	29.9
Christian Democracy	44	10.0
National Workers' Party	18	4.1
Piast Peasant Party	70	15.8
<u>Left</u>	98	22.1
Liberation Peasant Party	48	10.9
Left-Wing Peasant Party	2	0.4
Radical Peasant Party	4	0.9
Polish Socialist Party	41	9.3
Communists	2	0.4
non-party	1	0.2
<u>National Minorities</u>	89	20.0
Ukrainians	20	4.6
White Russians	11	2.4
Ukrainian Peasant Party	5	1.1
Russians	1	0.2
Germans	17	3.8
Jewish Club	34	7.7
Jewish People's Party	1	0.2
	<u>444</u>	<u>100.0</u>

Only three parliamentary governments were possible under these conditions. An all-party coalition of the type formed during the Polish-Soviet War was one possibility, but it was extremely unlikely, except in a grave national crisis, because of the hostility of the Left to any co-operation with the

1. Próchnik, op. cit., p.135.

National Democrats. According to Witos, Thugutt, the leader of the Liberation Peasant Party, told him that he would join such a coalition only in the case of another Bolshevik invasion.¹

A Centre-Left coalition was also very difficult to arrange. Because the Right-Centre Christian Democrats would refuse to take part, a Government formed in this way would have only a very narrow parliamentary majority. Its survival would thus be dependent on the support of the national minorities. This would render it vulnerable to strong attack from the National Democrats, and some of the party leaders feared such a connection with the minorities as an electoral liability.

However, the principal difficulty in forming such a Government lay in the unwillingness of the two large peasant parties to collaborate. The political gap between them has often been attributed to differences in social support. The Piast, it has been held, was the party of the large peasants, prosperous and conservative, while the Liberation Party was supported mainly by the more radical small and middle peasants.² In fact, both parties represented the better-off and more independent peasants, for the poorest were generally most susceptible to clerical influence in favour of the Endecja. The differences between them were more the result of the

1. Witos, op. cit., i. 48.

2. See, for example, Ajnenkiel, op. cit., pp.56-7.

contrasting political conditions in which the movements had evolved. The Piast had a fairly long experience of political activity in semi-constitutional Austria, and the majority of its leaders were of peasant origin. The Liberation Party, though it enjoyed peasant support and had some peasant leaders, was led largely by urban intellectuals, like Stanisław Thugutt, for whose Western radical views the party seemed the best vehicle.¹

Witos was prepared to form a broad Centre-Left parliamentary coalition, and in this he was supported by Piłsudski. However, Thugutt was opposed, and a meeting arranged between the two peasant leaders by Fryze, the editor of the radical Kurjer Poranny, shortly after the election, proved abortive. Thugutt wanted instead to form a Centre-Left Government without a definite parliamentary majority, which would depend on occasional alliances. He felt that

After such bitter pre-electoral struggles, it was too early to achieve such a far-reaching understanding; it would seem like a division of the spoils.²

As a result, the most likely parliamentary grouping was a Centre-Right coalition. The Right had emerged strengthened

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1. The difference in atmosphere between the two movements is clearly reflected in the memoirs of their respective leaders. See Witos, op. cit., Thugutt, op. cit.
 2. Thugutt, op. cit., p.98. For Witos' attitude towards co-operation with the Liberation, see Witos, op. cit., i. p.29, p.48, p.50.

from the elections of 1922, and had recovered its self-confidence, which had been somewhat eroded in the early days of Independence. On 25 February 1920 Dmowski had written to Zygmunt Wasilewski:

It is certain that if we formed a Government -- let us assume with me at its head -- we should well and truly cut the throat of Poland.¹

But during the next two years others had tried, and failed, and since the governmental crisis of July 1922, the National Democrats had been determined to create a Centre-Right majority.

Some difficulties still stood in the way of an understanding with the Piast. Witos, proudly sensitive about his origins, resented the way the National Democratic press had mocked his peasant dress.² Moreover, the bitterness of the pre-election campaign, scarred by the breaking up of Piast meetings in Poznan by National Democratic hooligans, had not been forgotten.³

The question of the proposed land reform was also still unresolved. This problem had hovered over the first Sejm in its first years, and had even brought about the fall of the Skulski Government on 9 June 1920. A resolution outlining the

1. Biblioteka Jagiellońska. Papiery St. Kozickiego. Letter of Dmowski to Z. Wasilewski, dated 25.II.20 from Algeria.

2. See Witos, op. cit., i.29 and 60.

3. Ibid., iii. 11-13.

4. Ibid., arts. 27 and 28, p. 113.

principles of the proposed reform had been passed, only after strong opposition, by one vote, on 10 July 1919.¹ The advance of the Red Army, however, considerably increased the willingness of the Right to accept a land reform, and a fairly radical bill was passed on 15 July 1920.² It provided for the parcellation of government land, and of all land in excess of 180 ha., including forests, in large estates, with a higher limit in the east and a lower limit in industrial areas. Church land was also subject to division.³ Excess land in private hands was subject to compulsory purchase through a government agency, the Central Land Office.⁴ Compensation at 50% of the market price, estimated to make up about 30% of the actual value of the land, was provided.⁵ Land acquired in this way was to be sold to peasants with little land, or agricultural labourers, in order to create 'strong and intensively productive peasant holdings, based on private ownership'.⁶ Long term credit was to be granted to those who acquired holdings by a State Agricultural

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1. For this, see C. Madajczyk, Burżuazyjno-obszarnicza Reforma Rolna w Polsce 1918-39 (Warsaw, 1956), pp.137-144.
 2. 'Ustawa z dnia 15 lipca 1920 roku o wykonaniu reformy rolnej', Dz.U.R.P. 1920, No.120, 1229-1237. For a Stalinist discussion of the issue of land reform, see Madajczyk, op. cit.
 3. 'Ustawa z dnia 15 lipca 1920 r. o wykonaniu reformy rolnej', arts. 1-2, op. cit., pp.1229-31.
 4. Główny Urząd Ziemi.
 5. 'Ustawa z dnia 15 lipca 1920 r. o wykonaniu reformy rolnej', arts. 6-13, op. cit., pp.1231-35. (The estimate of 30% is given in Ajnenkiel, op. cit., p.114).
 6. Ibid., arts. 27 and 29, p.1235.

Bank, whose creation was proposed.¹

The National Democrats had by 1922 accepted the need for a land reform, although this had led to a split in the party and to the departure of most of the large landowners within its ranks. However, they called for the modification of certain aspects of the 1920 law, in particular the provisions on compensation, which were held to be contrary to the article in the constitution safeguarding private property (art. 99), and the limit imposed on private landholding, which they felt was too low. The Piast, on the other hand, called for the full implementation of the law.

The parties were further divided by their differing attitudes towards Piłsudski. Although the Piast had broken early with Activism, it was not unsympathetic to Piłsudski, and did not share the extreme hostility which the National Democrats felt for him. In the crisis caused by Piłsudski's refusal to accept a Government headed by Wojciech Korfanty, the Piast had voted against the motion of no confidence in the Head of State proposed by the Endecja.

Finally, the left wing of the Piast, led by the redoubtable and popular Jan Dąbski, was hostile to any co-operation with the Right, and threatened to split the party if such an agreement were reached.

1. Ibid., art. 32, p.1236.

The economic problems of Poland in the immediate post-war years, as of many other European countries, took the form of uncontrolled inflation. This had begun during the War itself, and accelerated considerably after 1918. If 100 is taken as the index of food prices in Warsaw in January 1921, the level had risen, by December 1922, to 1,298.2.

TABLE II: INDEX OF FOOD PRICES IN WARSAW, 1921-22¹

<u>Month</u>	<u>1921</u>	<u>1922</u>
1	100	274.2
2	126.7	279.2
3	130.1	300.9
4	125.2	339.6
5	128.6	372.2
6	139.3	395.2
7	180.7	483.8
8	208.4	557.5
9	231.5	612.7
10	284.9	655.4
11	285.0	830.5
12	279.3	1298.2

There were many reasons for this runaway inflation.² In part it developed because the supply of goods was insufficient to meet the demands of the available money income. The war in the east between 1918 and 1921 imposed a continuous strain on the supply of manufactures, as did the extensive needs of reconstruction after the devastation of the Great War.

1. R.S.R.P., (1920-2), part ii, p.215, Table VI.

2. On the Polish inflation, see: Landau, Tomaszewski, op. cit.; E. Taylor, Inflacja Polska (Poznań, 1926), and Finanz und Steuersystem der Republik Polens (Jena, 1928); L. Oberlender, K. Stein, S. Ritterman, B. Friediger, A. Zauberman, O. Lange: Przewroty walutowe i gospodarcze po wielkiej wojnie (Cracow, 1928).

The Government proved incapable of balancing the budget. There had been a deficit of 7,503 million Polish marks in 1919, and it rose to 445,000 million in 1922.¹ This was caused, to some extent, by the inadequacy of the tax system. Many of the taxes inherited from the partitioning powers were no longer levied after Independence, and the inexperience of the new Polish financial officials facilitated evasion of those still in operation. Moreover, the Government was forced to meet heavy expenses. During the Polish-Soviet War, the Ministry of War absorbed 50% of the state budget, and even after the Treaty of Riga, its share still accounted for 30-40%² The deficit on the state railways, which swallowed up 20% of the budget, was also a constant drain.

The Government bridged the gap between income and expenditure by printing paper money, thus accelerating the inflation. The amount of money in circulation rose from 1,024 million Polish marks in 1918 to 793,437 million in 1922.³ Once started, inflation had a momentum of its own. Factory owners held back on the repayment of loans and taxes, aware that by so doing they would considerably decrease the amount they had to pay. In fact, the inflation in its early stages

1. Landau, Tomaszewski, op. cit., p.63.

2. Loc. cit.

3. Ibid., pp.63-4.

aided in the reconstruction of the economy by increasing the profits of industry.

A psychology of inflation had been created by the rise in prices since 1914, and workers and salaried people continually called for rises in wages to meet the spiralling cost of living. At the same time, the Polish parliamentary system made the maintenance of any control over wages and prices difficult. The Socialists were unwilling to impose any sacrifice on the urban workers, while the peasant parties refused to freeze agricultural prices.

Finally, the adverse balance of payments led to the depreciation of the foreign exchange rate for the Polish mark, and further increased inflationary pressures. A dollar bought 9.8 Polish marks in 1918; by December, 1922, it bought 17,808.

TABLE III: THE DOLLAR EXCHANGE RATE IN POLAND¹

	(in Polish marks, on 31 December)
1918	9.8
1919	110.7
1920	579.3
1921	2,950.0
1922	17,808.3

In its initial stages, this fall in the exchange rate also helped industrialists, and facilitated industrialization.

1. Based on R.S.R.P. (1920-22) pt.ii, p.248, Table XXV.

2. A. Pradier, Les Pratiques de l'Industrie (London, 1966), p.220.

Since the fall in the value of the mark was faster than the rise in domestic prices, it constituted a continuous devaluation, an export premium which made Polish goods increasingly competitive on the world market. But as the inflation began to get completely out of control, the fall in the value of the mark ceased to be faster than the rise in local prices, and those engaged in foreign trade to a great extent stopped dealing in marks, preferring to reckon in dollars, pounds or French francs.

In spite of the help it afforded in the beginning, the results of the inflation were largely harmful. It wiped out the savings of the intelligentsia, and contributed greatly to the growth of political extremism among its members. In his autobiography, Adam Pragier, one of the leaders of the P.P.S., and the son of a wealthy Cracow doctor, describes what happened to his father's estate:

After his death, shortly after the War, his 'estate', which was worth about 150,000 gold crowns, sufficed, when I inherited it, for a three-week holiday in France. My mother placed her savings of 15,000 gold roubles in a mortgage on the house of a relative in Warsaw. After her death, soon after the war, that relative settled the mortgage....When he had received it, it had amounted to 1/8 of the value of his house on Marszałkowska. [A smart street in the centre of Warsaw]. When I cashed it in a bank at the corner of that street, I could buy myself a pair of brown shoes... on Chmielna.¹ [A poorer shopping area].

1. A. Pragier, Czas przeszły dokonany (London, 1966), p.220.

The inflation also hurt the industrial working class. Wages failed, after 1918, to reach their prewar level. By the end of 1921, the average real wage in industry in Warsaw was only 52% of the pre 1914 figure.¹ Moreover, wages did not keep pace with prices. Labour unrest increased, as workers found their pay more and more inadequate. In 1921 there had been 720 strikes, involving 479,000 workers. In 1922 there were 800, involving 607,000 workers.²

Finally, speculators were quick to take advantage of the opportunities afforded by the inflation, and since deputies were often involved in their schemes, there was a growing disillusionment with parliament. A striking case in point was the Dojlidy affair. Dojlidy was an estate in Prussian Poland which was bought in August 1921 from the Government Land Office by the Polish-American Peasant Bank, an organization in which several prominent members of the Piast, including Władysław Kiernik and Jan Bryl, were involved. The bank paid 14,400 Polish marks per morgen. Two months later plots were offered to peasants at 120,000 marks per morgen. The land was finally sold to the Lubomirskis, a large landowning family, for several

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1. W. Fabierkiewicz, Polska w Liczbach (Warsaw, 1924), p.73.
 2. Revue Trimestrielle de Statistique (Warsaw, 1924), Nos.2-3, p.260, Table I.

times the purchase price.¹

The first serious attempt to control the inflation was made by Jerzy Michalski, Minister of Finance in the non-party Ponikowski Government from 21 September 1921. He attempted to balance the state budget by drastic cuts in expenditure. The number of army officers and state officials was reduced, and three ministries were abolished. He introduced a special capital levy, to be imposed once only, which was intended to bring in 80,000 to 100,000 million marks, and a new tax on war profits. He tried to improve the running of state enterprises, and established a lucrative state tobacco monopoly. He hoped also to stimulate the economy by the voluntary abrogation of the eight-hour working day. No new currency was yet to be established, but for the time being the coining of marks was to be halted.² This programme had some successes; the rate for the Polish mark fell from 4,550 to the dollar in November 1921 to 3,957 by the beginning of June, 1922.³ But

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1. For the affair, see Madajczyk, op. cit., pp.166-7. W. Bazyłowski 'Sprawa Dojlid jako przyczynek do przeprowadzenia reformy rolnej na początku II Rzeczypospolitej', N.D.P. (1st series) VIII (1964), 19-50. The exchange rate for the dollar, in marks, during this period was:
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|---------|-------|----------|---------|
| 31. VII | 2,035 | 31. VIII | 2,800 |
| 31. IX | 6,300 | 31. X | 3,890.5 |
- (R.S.R.P., (1920), p.248).
2. For this programme see Ajnenkiel, op. cit., pp.192-3, and Zweig, op. cit., pp.35-6.
3. Zweig, op. cit., p.35.

the hesitations of the Sejm led to a dilatory application of the levy, which brought in much less than intended. Government income in 1922 reached only 51.4% of expenditure.¹

Moreover, the deflationary aspects of the programme, and in particular the attempt to revalue the mark, caused much difficulty. The granting of credit to industry was restricted, production slowed down, and unemployment grew, reaching 200,000 by mid-1922. The attempts by employers to lower wages because of the recession caused a wave of strikes, and the Government felt itself too weak to carry out its programme. After the Government fell on 7 June 1922, as a result of the National Democrats' attempt to secure the support of a parliamentary majority,² the finance policy was abandoned, and the inflation grew rapidly worse. Between July and December, the rate for the mark rose from 3,957 to 18,075 to the dollar.³

The political crisis re-emerged in an intensified form in the new Parliament. The parties of the Right and the Piast reached a compromise over the election of marshals (speakers) for the two houses of Parliament: Maciej Rataj of the Piast was elected Marshal of the Sejm, and Wojciech Trąpczyński of the National Democrats became Marshal of the Senate. However,

1. Ajnenkiel, op. cit., p.193.

2. See above pp. 168-9, 175.

3. Zweig, op. cit., p.35.

the election of the State President was not so easily arranged. Piłsudski, who would have had the support of all parliamentary groups except the Right, refused to stand, claiming that the prerogatives of that office had been diminished in the new constitution with him specifically in mind. At a meeting on 4 December of Left and Centre Deputies who had asked him to stand, he criticized the limited powers which the President possessed in relation to the Council of Ministers and the army. 'I do not believe', he concluded, 'that I possess those characteristics which are indispensable for the type of work laid down by the constitution.'¹

He proposed instead a broad Centre-Left alliance which would elect Witos president. When Witos decided not to stand, Piłsudski supported the Piast candidate, Stanisław Wojciechowski, one of the leaders of the peasant co-operative movement, and a former Socialist.² But his plan for a single Centre-Left candidate failed because of the hostility of the Liberation Party, and especially of Thugutt. This party nominated Gabriel Narutowicz, who had worked for many years as a chemist in Zurich, and had been Foreign Minister in the Nowak Government.³ The

1. Piłsudski, P.Z., v.295. For the whole speech, see pp. 286-96.

2. For Piłsudski's account, of the situation, see 'Wspomnienia o Gabrielu Narutowiczu', P.Z. vi. 36-59.

3. See above, p.168.

1. See above, Chapter II, p.82.

Right hoped to take advantage of this situation, confident that Wojciechowski would be eliminated in the voting, and that the Piast would, in the last resort, vote for their candidate rather than that of the Left. They made a great miscalculation, however, in nominating the Polish Ambassador in Paris, Maurycy Zamoyski, who was the largest landowner in Poland, and whose candidacy was bound to be repugnant to all the peasant parties. In addition, both the Socialists and the national minorities nominated candidates, but only as a matter of principle.

The President had to be elected by an absolute majority of the National Assembly. If no such majority was attained on the first ballot, the lowest candidate was eliminated, and another ballot was taken. This procedure was repeated until an absolute majority was reached.¹ On the first ballot, Zamoyski received 222 votes, Wojciechowski 105, Baudouin de Courtenay (the candidate of the national minorities) 103, Narutowicz 62, and Daszyński, the Socialist candidate, 49. On the final ballot, however, the majority of the Piast voted for Narutowicz rather than Zamoyski; thus the former was elected by 289 votes to 227.

The political situation at once became exceedingly tense and violent. The Right, which had emerged strengthened from the elections, felt that it had been cheated of its electoral victory by a conspiracy of the national minorities, particularly

1. See above, Chapter II, p.82.

the Jews. The parties of the Christian Alliance of National Unity published a statement on 10 December, the day after the election of the President, declaring that they

cannot, in this exceedingly unhealthy state of affairs, take any responsibility for the course of events, and they refuse to give any support to Governments created by a President imposed by foreign nationalities: Jews, Germans and Ukrainians.¹

Press attacks on the new President knew no bounds. The main National Democratic daily, Gazeta Warszawska, stated that Narutowicz was 'protected by Jewish world finance' and that he 'cannot even speak Polish properly',² (which was quite false). 'How could the Jews dare to impose their President on us?' asked the National Democratic Deputy, Father Kazimierz Lutosławski, in Gazeta Poranna.³ Deputies were molested by nationalist mobs outside Parliament, and stones were thrown at the President on his way to the Sejm to be sworn in. It was hardly surprising that Narutowicz was assassinated on 16 December, while talking to the British Ambassador at an art exhibition, by Eligiusz Niewiadomski, a nationalist fanatic. The assassination brought about a rapid popular reaction against the Right, and all the leading right-wing parties

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1. Gazeta Poranna, 10.XII.22.
 2. Gazeta Warszawska, 10.XII.22.
 3. Gazeta Poranna, 11.XII.22.

denounced the crime. Piłsudski hoped to take advantage of this situation in order to make a final reckoning with the National Democrats. Already on 11 December he had told Rataj:

I cannot give up power at a time when a band of gangsters is disturbing the peace, insulting the President, and the Government does nothing. Give me power, and I will quiet the streets. If not, I will do it alone--I cannot give way in these conditions.¹

After the assassination, a group of prominent members of the P.O.W., including Adam Koc, Ignacy Boerner and Ignacy Matuszewski, met Rajmund Jaworowski and other leaders of the Warsaw organization of the P.P.S., in which Piłsudski-ite influences were strong. It was decided to use the occasion of the funeral of one of the workers killed in the political disturbances after the election of the President to start anti-right wing demonstrations. Piłsudski was to allow this 'spontaneous outbursts of popular wrath' ^{to} take its course for a day, and then step in as the re-establisher of order.² However, the plan was never carried out, largely because Daszyński, informed about the scheme by Jaworowski, went to Koc's house and, 'in a pathetic speech',³ held out against violent action. He threatened the strongest measures of party discipline against

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1. M. Rataj, Pamiętniki, (Warsaw, 1965), p.126.
 2. The incident is described in Pobóg-Malinowski, op. cit., ii. 421-2.
 3. Ibid., p.422.

those members of the P.P.S. who took part in the proposed venture.

The situation was also somewhat eased when Rataj, the acting President, nominated a 'cabinet of pacification', headed by General Władysław Sikorski, on the day of the assassination. Sikorski, as a junior Austrian staff officer, had worked with Piłsudski in the Union of Active Struggle before 1914. During the War, they had disagreed strongly on several occasions, since Sikorski's support for the Austrian solution clashed with Piłsudski's belief that Poland should play a more independent role, but after the War their relations again improved for a time, and Piłsudski agreed to serve as Chief of Staff under the new Cabinet.

On 20 December 1922 the National Assembly met again to elect a new President. Agreement was reached between Witos and Thugutt, and only one candidate was proposed by the Centre and Left.¹ This candidate, Stanisław Wojciechowski, was elected on the first ballot, with 298 votes, defeating the Right-Wing nominee, Kazimierz Morawski, President of the Cracow Academy of Sciences, who had 221.

Sikorski acted swiftly to restore order. He proclaimed a state of emergency in Warsaw, and brought new army detachments into the capital. At his first meeting with the leaders of the political clubs in the Sejm, he threatened the Right that if the

1. See Thugutt, op. cit., pp.102-3; Witos, op. cit., pp.32-4.

situation did not become quiet, he would use the army, 'not distinguishing between guilty and innocent.'¹ By the New Year, the country was relatively calm.

The new Cabinet did not have firm parliamentary support, but, for the time being, the widening of the breach between the National Democrats and the Piast meant that its survival was assured. The National Democrats reproached Witos for his hesitation about forming a Government based on 'a Polish majority' and held him responsible for the election of Narutowicz. After the vote, Gazeta Warszawska had written on 15 December, 'A barrier has been thrust between the Right and the Piast.'² Witos was disquieted by the involvement of the Right in the assassination and stated 'I will not associate with people with bloodied hands.'³ Moreover, as leader of what would be the smaller partner in a coalition, he realized that the longer he resisted, the better the terms he could demand.

In his first speech to the Sejm, on 19 January, Sikorski frankly recognized the non-parliamentary character of his Government, but continued:

I cannot see a majority in Parliament which could create a long-lasting Government. From this difficult situation, I draw the moral right to make clear my readiness still to hold the position of Prime Minister.⁴

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1. Quoted in Pobóg-Malinowski, op. cit., p.423.
 2. Gazeta Warszawska, 15.XII.22.
 3. Pobóg-Malinowski, op. cit., ii. 420.
 4. S.S.S.R., 19.I.23, cols.22-3.

On 23 January he received a vote of confidence of 320 to 110, the Left, the Piast, the National Workers' Party and the Slavic minorities supporting him.

The financial situation remained pressing, and the exchange rate deteriorated rapidly. A dollar, which had bought 3,957 marks in June, bought 13,435 in October and 17,808 by December.¹ Sikorski called a conference of all former Finance Ministers on 9 January 1923. On the 13th he persuaded the highly gifted and independent Władysław Grabski to become Minister of Finance, and to carry out the reforms suggested by the conference. It was hoped that the budget could be balanced within three years. This was to be achieved by government economy and by the increased commercialization of state enterprises. The system of taxation was to be reformed, and taxes were to be based on an index which would keep pace with inflation. Loans would also be sought to make up the deficit.²

For a time this plan succeeded in halting the rise in prices, but its success was cut short by the somewhat unexpected fall of the Government on 23 May 1923. Sikorski had tried to split the Right by dislodging the large landowners and having them form a separate party, but this scheme had little

1. R.S.R.P. (1920-2), pt. II, p.248, Table XXV.

2. For this programme see Zweig, op. cit., p.36 and Próchnik, op. cit., p.163.

success, and his Government lacked firm parliamentary support.¹ When the National Democrats and the Piast finally reached agreement, he had no alternative but to resign.

From February, loose discussions had taken place between the Piast and the National Democrats. Witos had become convinced that a Government with a parliamentary majority was essential in order to resolve the serious political problems, and that such a Government could only be formed in alliance with the Right.² On 4 March, the Piast leaders decided to approach the Right, and their decision was approved, though by no means unanimously, by the executive committee of the party on 17 and 18 March. A Centre-Left Government was ruled out, and the executive committee further resolved that

attempts to form a parliamentary Government based on what is called a relative majority cannot be taken seriously, for such a Government will be based, in fact, on a minority. Moreover, it is impossible and unacceptable that a parliamentary Government dependent on the national minorities should be formed.³

The National Democrats had by this time somewhat regained their confidence, and were increasingly prepared to compromise on land reform. After prolonged negotiations, agreement was finally reached in Warsaw on 17 May. This agreement, known as

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1. The attempt is described by Rataj, op. cit., pp.145, 147 and 156.
 2. Witos, op. cit., i. 47-8.
 3. Czas, 21.III.23.

the Lanckorona Pact, from the estate where it was believed, incorrectly, to have been signed, held that 'the Polish national character must be maintained in the constitution of the state and in local Government'.¹ In the Kresy, the local inhabitants must be convinced 'that they are permanently linked to Poland',² and Polish colonization was to be fostered. A numerus clausus was implicitly proposed:

Polish youth will be ensured, in universities, institutions of higher education and trade schools, the possibility of study in accordance with the just relationship between nationalities in the state (słuszny stosunek narodowościowy).³

In foreign policy, the Versailles Treaty was to be regarded as the basis of Poland's security. Germany was seen as her principal enemy, and the improvement of relations with Czechoslovakia and increased trade with Russia were proposed.⁴ The electoral system was to be modified to ensure that it would produce a parliamentary majority.⁵ In addition, 'the exclusion of all politics from the army' was demanded, which meant, in effect the rooting out of Piłsudski-ite influence.⁶

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1. 'Układ z dnia 17 maja 1923', art. I, quoted in Witos, op. cit., iii. 36. The text of the agreement is also discussed in detail in W. Stankiewicz, 'Pakt Lanckoroński (Metodologiczne omówienie źródeł)', R.D.R.L. I (1959), pp.196-218. For the negotiations see B. Dymek, 'Z polityki Polskiego Stronnictwa Ludowego - 'Piast' (Pakt Lanckoroński z 17.V. 1923, Zeszyty Historyczne Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego (1961), ii. 143-60.
 2. 'Układ z dnia 17 Maja 1923 r.' art.5, in Witos, op.cit., p.37.
 3. Ibid., art. 1. p.37.
 4. Ibid., art. 2, p.37.
 5. Ibid., art. 3, p.37.
 6. Ibid., art. 7, p.38.

The core of the agreement was the section on land reform. It provided for the compulsory annual redistribution of 200,000 ha. for ten years. The land was to come, in the first case, from state holdings and mortmain lands, concerning which an agreement with the Church would be reached. As for privately owned land, redistribution was to begin with the largest estates. The upper limit on holdings was raised in the Kresy to 400 hectares, and even higher limits were proposed for estates with industrial plants such as sugar refineries or breweries. Full compensation was to be provided. In the case of voluntary surrender, 25% of the market value of the land was to be paid in ready cash; in the case of compulsory purchase, 10%. The rest would be in gilt-edged securities, payable over 30 years.¹

The pact was signed by the Popular National Union, the Christian Democrats, the Piast and the Catholic Peasant Party. The Christian National Party refused to sign because they disagreed with the land reform provisions, but promised to support the new Government. However, even in the parties which signed, the agreement was not universally accepted. Seventeen of the Piast members of Parliament (14 Deputies and 3 Senators), led by Jan Dąbski, left the party in protest, forming the 'Peasant Unity'² grouping, sympathetic to the Liberation party.

1. Ibid., art. 9. p.39. *Die Regierungen 1918-39*, S. 2. p. 676.

2. Jedność chłopska.

Some of the National Democratic landowners, led by Jan Stecki, president of the landowners' league, also seceded.

Nevertheless, a parliamentary majority still remained. On 26 May 1923 Sikorski resigned after losing a vote of confidence by 117 to 279, and a new Government was soon formed. Of the ministers, three were from the Piast, four from the Popular National Union, and one from the Christian Democrats. Six were non-party specialists.¹ Witos took Sikorski's place, and in a speech announcing his programme, claimed that his Government was 'the realization of the democratic principles of parliamentarianism', and that 'the negative feature of extra-parliamentary Governments, for which no-one has a clear responsibility, will be ended'.² For the time being, the political future of the Government was secure, and it won a vote of confidence by 226 votes to 171.

Army matters were not so easily settled, for the Piłsudski-ite Minister of War under Sikorski, Kazimierz Sosnkowski, refused to serve the new Government. So did Piłsudski, resigning as Chief of Staff on 29 May. A month later, on 2 July, he resigned his only remaining position in the army, the Presidency of the Inner War Council, claiming that he would not serve under the people he held morally responsible for the assassination of

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1. H. Roos, 'Die Polnische Regierungen 1916-39', O.E.H., p.676.
 2. S.S.S.R., I.VI.23, col. 5.

Narutowicz.¹ His position as Chief of Staff was taken over by Stanisław Haller, and Gen. Stanisław Szeptycki, a former Austrian officer, who had been Governor-General in the Austrian-administered part of the Congress Kingdom during the War, ultimately became Minister of War. Other Piłsudski-ites who held high positions in the army, notably General Krzemieński, head of the Military Supreme Court, Col. Ignacy Matuszewski, Col. Adam Koc and Col. Kazimierz Stamirowski, were also forced to resign.²

The economic situation, however, proved too much for the new Government. After its accession to power, the inflation accelerated, both because of the unsettled political situation and because of the effects of the German inflation, which was then reaching its peak. Władysław Grabski had continued as Minister of Finance in the new Cabinet, but resigned on 30 June on account of his general disagreement with the Cabinet's political line and the opposition within the Government to his proposed property tax.³ He was succeeded by Hubert Linde, head of the Post Office Savings Bank. The inflation had now reached fantastic proportions. On the creation of the new Government

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1. For his speech giving the reasons for his resignation, delivered at the Hotel Bristol on 3 July see P.Z., VI. 24-35.
 2. J. Krzemieński, 'Rozmowa Komendanta ze mną', Niepodległość, (New Series) v (1955), p.216.
 3. For Grabski's letter setting out the reasons for his resignation, see Czas 2.VII.23.

the zloty rate for the dollar had been 52,500; by 9 June it had reached 71,300, and by 1 August 231,260.¹

Shocked by this deterioration and by Grabski's resignation, the Government passed a law on 11 August implementing the property tax. This was to be paid between 1924 and 1926, and was to raise altogether 1,000 million gold francs. However, it was not to be applied in 1923, so that its effect in stemming the inflation was minimal.² When Linde resigned on 31 August, his successor, Władysław Kucharski, imposed further drastic cuts in expenditure and tried in vain to obtain a foreign loan to stabilize the financial situation. He proposed as well the valorization of all taxes and state credits on the basis of a zloty account unit, but the law providing for this was not passed until 6 December.³ The inflation continued. On 1 September the dollar bought 249,000 marks, on 1 October 380,000.⁴ By 20 November, one dollar was worth 2,300,000 marks.⁵

Since the effects of the inflation were only slowly passed on in wage increases, working class discontent grew. A wave of strikes spread across the country in July, and succeeded for a time in alleviating the situation by forcing the adjustment

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1. Ajnenkiel, op. cit., p.227.
 2. Zweig, op. cit., pp.36-7.
 3. Loc. cit.
 4. Ajnenkiel, op. cit., p.234.
 5. B.P.P.P. 133, p.5.

of wages. In October real wages again began to fall. The Government, anticipating trouble, made cabinet changes. At the end of October, Korfanty and Dmowski became Ministers, and their entry into the Cabinet was widely taken to indicate the adoption of a policy of strong resistance to working-class demands. Strikes broke out again, first in the coalmines in Katowice and the Zagłębie Basin, then on the railways, in the Lodz textile mills and in the Post Office. The Government responded by conscripting the strikers, threatening those who failed to appear with trial for desertion in summary courts. On 5 November the P.P.S. called a general strike. The call was fairly widely obeyed in the country as a whole, and had 100% success in Cracow. Here the Government's prohibition on public meetings led to an open clash between the army and the workers. Fourteen soldiers and eighteen workers were killed, and the workers took over the town. Piłsudski-ite influence was important in the clash: many former legionaries, from Cracow and elsewhere, took part in the fighting.¹

Already before the strike, the P.P.S. had been negotiating with the Government. By 11 November agreement was reached: the

1. For these events see Ajnenkiel, op. cit., pp.234-41; Rataj, op. cit., pp.169-73; F. Kalicka, Powstanie krakowskie (Warsaw, 1963); M. Porczak, Walka robotników z reakcją w 1923r., Cracow, 1926. For Piłsudski-ite involvement, see B. Drobner Moje cztery procesy (Warsaw, 1962) pp. 80-119; Sprawa Brzeska (London, 1941), pp.50,61,122,148,153.

militarization of the railways and the summary courts were ended, in return for the calling off of the strike.¹ Nevertheless the political atmosphere remained tense. Kurjer Warszawski, a leading right-wing paper, referred nervously to the danger of 'Kerensky-ism',² and the Government contemplated restrictions on freedom of speech and assembly to restore order. Several semi-fascist organizations, such as the National Guard³ and the Polish Patriots' Alert,⁴ promised to support the Government. Civil war threatened again.

The events in Cracow had considerably undermined the strength of the Witos Government. Opposition had arisen within the Piast over the waiving of the parliamentary immunity of two Socialist Deputies who had been involved in the Cracow violence.⁵ However, it was the old question of land reform which finally brought the Government down. The agricultural commission of the Sejm had been working on a Land Reform Bill since July. When it was completed, it embodied, to a great extent, the provisions of the Lanckorona Pact. But the seizure of mortmain lands was made conditional on Church approval, and this was criticized by the left wing of the Piast as a betrayal by the

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1. Rataj, op. cit., pp.171-3.
 2. Kurjer Warszawski 11.XI.23
 3. Straż Narodowa.
 4. Pogotowie Patriotów Polskich.
 5. Witos, op. cit., iii. 52.

Right. Fourteen deputies, led by Jan Bryl and Jakub Pawłowski, left the party.¹ Witos no longer had a parliamentary majority, and his Government resigned on 14 December.

Thugutt now attempted to form a broad Centre-Left Government, but failed because of the refusal of the Christian Democrats to participate.² As a result, a non-parliamentary Government was formed by Władysław Grabski on 19 December. It was regarded by both the Right and the Left as a provisional stop-gap, but in fact it lasted two years, longer than any other Government before the May Coup. Grabski, though not politically connected with the Right, had many contacts in the Popular National Union through his brother, Stanisław, who was a prominent member. His relations with the Left and the Piłsudskites were also satisfactory. In his first Cabinet, the Minister of War, Kazimierz Sosnkowski, was close to Piłsudski, and Ludwik Darowski, his Minister of Labour and Public Works, was generally held to be a man of the Left. Grabski showed great skill in conciliating the political parties, constantly reshuffling his Cabinet. As Feliks Perl summed up in Robotnik on 25 May 1925,

No party is particularly sympathetic to the Government of Mr. Grabski, but no party has any particular desire to overthrow it because of the lack of a majority in the Sejm and the general chaos of relations between the parties.³

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1. See Lato, op. cit., pp.81-3; B.P.P.P. 139, pp.5-6.
 2. Thugutt, op. cit., pp.108-114.
 3. Robotnik 25.V.1925.

Grabski further ensured support for his Government by granting favours, and even bribes, to individual Deputies. Marian Dąbrowski, who had strongly criticized the Government, was asked why he did not vote against it. 'Why should we overthrow Grabski' he replied, 'when we have all received money from him?'.¹

When Grabski took office, the economic situation was truly desperate. By 8 January 1925 the rate for the mark had fallen to 10,125,000 to the dollar.² Grabski demanded special powers from Parliament to enable him to issue decrees on economic and financial matters, and these privileges were granted him for six months. He decided to reject international control over the Polish economy, on the Austrian model, and hoped by vigorous action to revive domestic confidence. The first aim of his reform was to balance the budget. The receipts from the property tax increased Government income, expenditure was drastically cut, and railway tariffs raised. A domestic loan was floated. Throughout January and February the mark held steady, and in February no new marks were printed. Grabski now embarked on the second stage of his reform. A new central bank, the Bank Polski, was founded in April 1924 with a capital

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1. M. Łempicki, 'Dziennik' (unpublished diary deposited in the Ossolineum Library, Wrocław); quoted in J. Tomaszewski, Stabilizacja Waluty w Polsce 1924-5 (Warsaw, 1961), p.96.
 2. Zweig, op. cit., p.39.

of 100 million zloty. It was to be responsible for the new currency, the zloty, established at a rate of 5.18 to the dollar, and resting on a gold exchange standard. The old currency was called in at a rate of 1,800,000 marks to the zloty. In addition, the Government succeeded in obtaining some foreign loans, including an Italian loan on the security of the state tobacco monopoly, and one from the American firm Dillon, Read and Co. Confidence grew, and the reform seemed to be accomplishing its objectives.¹

The Government also managed to resolve some pressing political questions. On 17 July 1925 the Sejm adopted a Land Reform Bill which was modified in the Senate, and was finally passed on 28 December. It was a compromise between the 1920 law and the Lanckorona Pact proposals, providing for the voluntary subdivision, under government supervision, of 200,000 ha. annually.² The upper limit of landholding was fixed at 180 ha., and 300 ha. in the east. Forest land was excluded, and exceptions were to be made for highly efficient estates,

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1. On Grabski's reforms, see: W. Grabski, Dwa lata pracy u podstaw państwowości naszej (1924-25), (Warsaw, 1927); J. Tomaszewski, op. cit.; Z. Landau, 'Polityczne aspekty działalności angielskiej misji doradców finansowych E. Hiltona Younga w Polsce (1923-24)', Zeszyty Naukowe S.G.P.i S. (1958), No. 9, pp.71-112; 'Pożyczka tytoniowa', Zeszyty Naukowe S.G.P.i S. (1956), No. 3, pp.61-82; 'Pożyczka Dillonowska', K.H. lxiiv (1957) No.3, pp.79-85.
 2. 'Ustawa z dnia 28 grudnia 1925 r o wykonaniu reformy rolnej', Dz. U.R.P. (1926) No.1, art. 11, p.4.

or those with industrial plants.¹ Full compensation was to be provided, generally half in cash and half in bonds.² Land was to be distributed first to agricultural labourers and those with little land, on easy terms.³ The act left a great deal to the discretion of the authorities, and its character depended, to a considerable extent, on the way in which it was implemented.

The Government also succeeded in signing a concordat with Rome on 2 February 1925, which was ratified by the Sejm in March. It provided for the appointment of bishops and archbishops by the Pope, subject to the approval of the President. It also gave the consent of the Church to the implementation of the land reform law on Church lands, and stipulated that religion was to be taught in all state schools by teachers appointed by the Church. In addition, the Government was to provide for part of the maintenance of priests.⁴

Grabski failed, however, to secure the return of Piłsudski to the army. After the collapse of negotiations, Sosnkowski had resigned as Minister of War on 17 February 1924. He was succeeded by Władysław Sikorski, whose project for army reorganization was violently attacked by Piłsudski.⁵

1. Ibid., art.2, p.2; art.4, p.3; art.5, p.3.

2. Ibid., arts. 27-31, pp.8-9.

3. Ibid., arts. 72-6, p.16.

4. For the Concordat, see Dz. U.R.P.(1925) No.72, pp.1082-94.

5. See below, pp. 221-4.

Nevertheless it was not politics which was to bring down the Government, but the recurrence of the economic crisis. By early 1925 it was clear that the Grabski reforms were in serious difficulty. The budget had not been balanced in 1924, and the deficit now reached 190 million zloty, largely because of the disappointing returns of the property tax. Further foreign loans had proved exceedingly difficult to obtain. The harvest in 1924 had been very poor, and the situation was not much improved by the good harvest of 1925, for international prices for sugar, wheat and wood, the principal Polish exports, fell drastically. The balance of payments remained heavily passive, and control over wages and prices was not maintained. The reform was finally dealt its coup de grace by the German-Polish tariff war which began in June 1925.¹

In January 1925, the period ended in which all signatories of the Versailles Treaty (including Poland) had Most Favoured Nation privileges in Germany. In June of that year, the provisions of the Upper Silesia Convention, obliging Germany to import without tariff 6 million tons of Silesian coal annually, also lapsed. Germany proposed that in return for Most Favoured

1. See Kruszewski, 'The German-Polish Tariff War and its Aftermath', J.C.E.A. (1943), pp.294-315; J. Krasuski, Stosunki Polsko-Niemieckie 1919-25 (Poznan, 1962), Chapter V, pp.474-510; B. Rzepecki, Zatarg gospodarczy polsko-niemiecki (Warsaw, 1930); B. Ratyńska, 'Geneza wojny celnej polsko-niemieckiej', N.D.P.(1st series), VI (1963), pp.77-103.

Nation privileges in Poland, she would continue to accept without tariff 1/5th of this quantity of coal. This very disproportionate offer was intended to strengthen the already powerful hold of Germany on the Polish economy. When these terms were refused, the importation of many Polish products was prohibited: this affected 56.6% of all Polish exports to Germany, and 26.75% of Polish exports generally.¹

A run on the banks started, and the outflow of foreign currency threatened to force the amount of cover for the zloty below the legal limit. In August 1925, the Bank of Poland succeeded in stabilizing the zloty at 5.98 to the dollar. However, Grabski's proposals for new savings and for the reduction of industrial taxes and other aids to industry were only grudgingly accepted by the Sejm. When foreign currency again began to flow out, the director of the Bank of Poland stated that he could not maintain the existing exchange rate. Grabski refused to accept his judgement, and in spite of President Wojciechowski's intervention, resigned on 13 November 1925.²

After some difficulty, a new Government was formed on 20 November under Alexander Skrzyński, who had been Foreign

1. Rzepecki, op. cit., pp.7-8.

2. See Tomaszewski, op. cit., Chapter V, pp.181-223.

Minister during the greater part of the Grabski Government. Although he was generally held to be a man of the Left, Skrzyński, a former Austrian diplomat, was also acceptable to the Right. President Wojciechowski originally intended him to form a non-parliamentary Cabinet, but he insisted on obtaining parliamentary support for the Government. 'I could not head such a Government now' he declared, 'when it is essential, nay crucial (niezbędny) that a Government be formed in which the parties share responsibility...'¹ He succeeded in creating a broad coalition, including the National Democrats, the Christian Democrats, the Piast, the National Workers' Party and the P.P.S.

The participation of the P.P.S. in this undeniably bourgeois Government followed logically from the decision taken at the 19th party conference in December 1923 that the party could support cabinets 'whose activities will not be hostile to the interests of the working class.'² The P.P.S. had throughout, though more or less unwillingly, supported the Grabski Government. Moreover, this conciliatory policy, advocated by the party centre, in particular by Feliks Perl and Mieczysław Niedziałkowski, was approved at the 20th party

1. Robotnik, 20.XI.25.

2. See above, Chapter II, p.123.

conference held in Warsaw from 31 December 1925 to 3 January 1926. It did, however, arouse much opposition in the party. The Piłsudski-ites such as Moraczewski, Hołówko and Ziemięcki were uneasy about it, particularly as the Marszałek became increasingly hostile to the Government. The left, in particular Adam Kuryłowicz and, to a lesser extent, Zygmunt Zaremba also criticized it, seeing in Piłsudski the means to precipitate the revolution.¹

The Minister of War in the new Cabinet was Lucjan Żeligowski. Although he was a former Russian officer, and not a legionary, he was close to Piłsudski, with whom he had co-operated in the seizure of Wilno in October 1920, and his appointment was the result of Piłsudski's successful pressure on the president. After Grabski resigned, Piłsudski delivered a letter to Wojciechowski on 14 November warning him against 'neglecting the moral interests of the Polish Army in the discussions concerning the resolution of the present crisis'.² On 15 November, the seventh anniversary of Piłsudski's return from imprisonment in Magdeburg, more than 400 army officers, including 20 generals, gathered in a demonstration at Piłsudski's

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1. For the internal situation in the P.P.S. see: A. Pragier, op cit., pp.315-6; L. Hass, 'Kształtowanie się lewicowego nurtu w Polskiej Partii Socjalistycznej na tle sytuacji wewnętrzzopartyjnej (listopad 1923 - maj 1926)', K.H., (1961), pp.69-102, and P.P.S. Lewica 1926-31, Materiały Źródłowe (Warsaw, 1960).
 2. Piłsudski, P.Z. viii. 247.

house in Sulejówek.¹ Their spokesman, General Orlicz-Dreszer, begged the Commander 'not to be absent in this crisis'.²

Bronisław Miedziński, a prominent member of the P.O.W. and a Liberation deputy, warned Rataj on the following day of the danger of unrest in the army, and of the possibility of civil war if Sikorski were appointed Minister of War.³

The economic situation which the new Government faced was critical. By 31 December the number of registered unemployed had risen to 284,000,⁴ and the zloty rate for the dollar was 9.10.⁵ The new Minister of Finance, Jerzy Zdziechowski, criticized the over-optimism of Grabski, and attempted, in his own programme, to combine proposals of the Right with those of the Socialists. Rigid economy was to be practised. The salaries of officials were to be cut for three months, and army expenditure was to be limited by reducing the term of service. Action was to be taken against speculation, and industry was to be encouraged by tax reliefs.⁶

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1. According to the Gazeta Poranna Warszawska of 18.XI.25, there were 415 officers present. The unlikely figure of 2,000 is given in K. Wrzos, Piłsudski i Piłsudczycy (Warsaw, 1930), p.67.
 2. For the text of his speech, and Piłsudski's reply, see Piłsudski, P.Z., viii. 248-51.
 3. Rataj, op. cit., p.316.
 4. Statystyka Pracy (1926), No.2, p.43. The figures are for those registered in the state labour exchanges.
 5. Ajnenkiel, op. cit., p.285.
 6. For the details of this programme, see Landau, Tomaszewski, op. cit., pp.104-8; Zweig, op. cit., pp.41-3.

These measures did not seem at first to have any real effect. The zloty rate improved somewhat, but unemployment continued to rise, reaching 301,000 registered by the end of January.¹ Differences in economic policy began to split the Cabinet. Zdziechowski called for more deflationary measures and cuts in expenditure. The P.P.S., however, wanted the burden to be shared by all classes, and advocated an increase in the property tax together with public works for the unemployed. These differences were eventually papered over at the end of March. The reduction of the salaries of officials was extended for one month, and two million zloty were provided for public works.²

The economy now began to revive. The de facto devaluation helped exports, and the British coal strike opened up a new market for Polish coal. The inflation constituted in practice a salary cut for state officials, and the Government managed by April to balance the budget.³ Unemployment fell slightly to 272,000 registered by the end of April,⁴ though it was still high. Nonetheless the uncertainty of the political situation and the general atmosphere of crisis accelerated the fall of the zloty, which reached 9.70 to the dollar on 30 April.⁵

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1. Statystyka Pracy (1927), No.1, p.32, Table I.
 2. The conflicts in the Cabinet are described in Rataj, op. cit., pp.353-4.
 3. Landau, Tomaszewski, op. cit., pp.105-8.
 4. Statystyka Pracy (1927), p.32, Table I.
 5. Rataj, op. cit., p.360.

Zdziechowski decided on further deflationary steps. He advocated the raising of existing indirect taxes, and the creation of new ones. The wages of state officials were to be lowered until the end of the year, and pensions for retired people and invalids were to be cut. In addition, 18,000 railway workers were to be dismissed. This was too much for the P.P.S. 'This is a budget of rich people', Daszyński told Rataj. 'You want to base improvement on an injury to the poor, you want to throw 18,000 railwaymen out of work.'¹ On 20 April the two P.P.S. ministers resigned. Skrzyński himself wanted to resign, but was persuaded to stay on until the provisional budget for the next two months was passed. He waited until this was accomplished, and a new law on the organization of the army, acceptable to Piłsudski, had been adopted.² Then, somewhat unexpectedly, he resigned on 5 May.

Already before his fall, the parties of the Centre and Right had been negotiating. They now called on the President to assign to Witos the task of forming a Government. Wojciechowski would have preferred a less provocative personality, such as Jan Dębski of the Piast or Józef Chaciński of the Christian Democrats. However, after both of them refused,

1. Ibid., p.357.

2. For this, see below, pp. 225-6.

he assigned the task to Witos on 6 May 1926.¹ Witos could not succeed in forming a Government, principally because of the intransigence of the National Democrats, who insisted on Sikorski as Minister of War and Stanisław Grabski as Minister of the Interior. This would have meant an open clash with Piłsudski. Wojciechowski again turned to Chaciński, but his attempts to form a cabinet were frustrated by the hostility of Korfanty, who feared that his own position in the Christian Democratic Party would be weakened. Witos began a second attempt to form a Government on the 7th. This time he succeeded in persuading Skrzyński to take the post of Minister of Foreign affairs, in order to give the Cabinet a more liberal appearance, but after a long discussion with Niedziałkowski Skrzyński withdrew, and Witos informed the President that he could not form a Government.

Wojciechowski now called on the Socialists Marek and Niedziałkowski who, in accordance with the resolution of the executive committee of the P.P.S.,² tried to form a left-wing Government, with the support of the national minorities, in which Piłsudski would be Prime Minister. However Piłsudski

Cabinet, in which

1. For the events of the crisis, see: Rataj, op. cit., pp.360-7. Ajnenkiel, op. cit., pp.289-96; Pobóg-Malinowski, op. cit., pp.473-80; Witos, op. cit., ii. 79-91, as well as the contemporary press.
2. See above, pp. 204-205.

refused this offer, claiming that he limited his sphere of activities to the army. As a result, Marek fell back on the proposal of a centre-left Government, but because of the opposition of Witos and Chaciński the idea had to be abandoned. Finally, Marek's suggestion of a left-wing Government with national minority support was rejected by the President, because it would lack a parliamentary majority.

Desperate by this time, Wojciechowski called on Władysław Grabski to form a non-parliamentary Government. Grabski managed to persuade a number of prominent figures, including Skrzyński, to serve under him, but the announcement of his proposed premiership raised a storm among the parties of the Right and Centre. Witos attacked it particularly strongly. Grabski also failed to obtain the support of Piłsudski. On 9 May he was forced to abandon his attempt. At 11 o'clock that night Stanisław Głąbinski appeared unexpectedly at the Belvedere Palace, the President's official residence, to announce that the National Democrats, Christian Democrats, Piast and National Workers' Party were prepared to form a Government under Witos. This may have forestalled the reconstitution of the Skrzyński Cabinet, in which Wojciechowski had managed to persuade Piłsudski to accept the post of Minister of War on condition that three of his close supporters, Jędrzej Moraczewski, Bronisław Ziemięcki

5. Partia Pracy, a 5-man group, composed of those who had left the Liberation Party when it adopted a resolution on uncompensated land reform.

and Kazimierz Bartel be given Cabinet posts.¹ Against his better judgement, Wojciechowski accepted the new proposal.

The new Witos Government was formed the following day. In the Cabinet the Piast had three posts and the Christian Democrats, National Democrats and National Workers' Party two each.² The Minister of War was General Julian Małczewski, a relatively unknown figure commanding troops in the Warsaw region. His chief recommendation was his assurance to Witos that he had the situation in Warsaw under control. The formation of this Cabinet was a political mistake of the highest order. Rataj, Wojciechowski, Pragier, the Socialist leader, and several others had warned Witos against taking such a provocative step.³ It was bound to antagonize the left-wing parties. Already on 6 May the P.P.S., the Liberation Party, the Peasant Party⁴ and the Party of Labour⁵ issued a joint declaration:

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1. See W. Grzybowski, 'Spotkania i rozmowy z Józefem Piłsudskim' Niepodległość (1948), No.1, p.93, and 'Premier Kazimierz Bartel', Kultura (1948), No.13, p.104; also see J. Walewski, 'Omyłka Wincentego Witosy', Kultura (1964), No.3/ 197, p.116.
 2. H. Roos, 'Die Polnische Regierungen 1916-39', O.E.H., p.677.
 3. For Rataj's warning, see Rataj, op. cit., pp.362-3; for Pragier's, see Pragier, op. cit., p.314.
 4. Stronnictwo Chłopskie, a radical grouping with 30 seats in the Sejm, made up largely of those who had left the Piast over land reform, had joined the Liberation, and then seceded.
 5. Partia Pracy, a 6-man group, composed of those who had left the Liberation Party when it adopted a resolution on uncompensated land reform.

The representatives of the Socialist Club, the Liberation Club, the Peasant Party and the Party of Labour hold it their duty to declare with the utmost vehemence that the formation of a Government representing the social, political and economic views of reaction constitutes an open provocation to the whole of working Poland, and ought to come up against the resolute and unremitting resistance of organized democracy.¹

When the new Cabinet was formed, the same groups 'declared ... war without mercy and the most absolute opposition against the Witos Government.'²

As well as a provocation to the left, the formation of this Government was an even more open attack against the Piłsudski-ites. It meant the end of the new law for army organization. Moreover, in an interview with Nowy Kurjer Polski on 9 May, Witos went out of his way to provoke the supporters of Piłsudski: 'Let Marshal Piłsudski finally come out of his retreat', he said in reply to a question, 'let him form a Government, let him invite the co-operation of all creative forces which are interested in the good of the state. If he does not do this, it will clearly be because he is not concerned to put the affairs of the state in order.'³ Supremely overconfident, Witos was convinced that Piłsudski had lost his nerve, that he was a spent political force. In a section of the

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1. Nowy Kurjer Polski 7.V.26.
 2. Ibid., 10.V.26.
 3. Ibid., 9.V.26.

interview which some members of the Piast had managed to keep out of the press, he had stated:

They say that Piłsudski has the army behind him; if that is so, let him take power by force...I would not hesitate to do it. If Piłsudski does not do this, then it seems he does not have these forces behind him.¹

The National Democrats believed the same, and no doubt encouraged Witos to go ahead. After the formation of the new Government, the main Endecja paper, Gazeta Warszawska Poranna wrote:

The parties of the left have proved, in the course of the crisis, that they were incapable of any creative or positive work. And this not only because of their numerical weakness. Our left is totally disorganized, impotent, and is only capable of opposition. The Socialists have failed, Deputy Marek has failed. In vain have they awaited 'miracles' from Sulejówek, for from nothing, nothing can be made, and one cannot count on miracles in politics.²

It was this somewhat unexpected formation of the Witos Government which persuaded Piłsudski to act. That he was able to do so was the result of the support which he enjoyed within the army, support which he had carefully fostered, and which had increased because of the way in which army problems had

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1. The incident is described in Rataj, op.cit., p.365.
 2. Gazeta Warszawska Poranna 11.V.26.

been dealt with before 1926.¹

The officer corps in the new Polish army had come from a number of different sources. Some officers were former members of Piłsudski's legions, generally members of the P.O.W. They were, for the most part, without formal military training, but because of their past, as the first Polish army, thought of themselves as an elite group, entitled to special consideration. Unlike those 'who through passive waiting had hoped to make possible victory over the Central Powers', they had acknowledged the need for 'active struggle against Russia'.² 'The legions', wrote Wojciech Stpiczyński, a prominent Piłsudski-ite journalist,

through the genius of their creator and leader were not only the inheritors of the national chivalric spirit, but also the inheritors of the great historic mission of Poland--the Jagiellonian tradition based on modern methods of realization.³

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1. For the question of the army in politics, see J. Rothschild's pioneering and thorough, though strongly pro-Piłsudski-ite article 'The Military Background of Piłsudski's Coup d'état' Slavic Review XXI (1962), No.2. pp.241-60; In a slightly altered form, it appears as Chapter II of his Piłsudski's Coup d'état (Columbia 1966); Piłsudski, op. cit., vi and viii; B. Podoski, 'Organizacja naczelnych władz obrony państwa. Szkic historyczny', Niepodległość (N.S.) vii (1962), 181-99; F. Sławoj-Skłodkowski, 'Wspomnienie z okresu majowego' in Nie ostatnie słowo oskarżonego (London, 1964), pp.50-118.
 2. A. Uziembło, 'Przegrupowanie', Głos Prawdy, 6.IX.24.
 3. W. Stpiczyński, 'Podziesięciu latach', Głos Prawdy 9.VIII.24.

Not all former legionaries were supporters of Piłsudski, however. In the Second Brigade, supporters of the Austro-Polish solution had been fairly numerous, and many of these men continued to look on the Marshal with reserve after independence.

The legionary officers continually clashed with the officers from the Austrian Imperial Army, a tightly-knit group of which the most important members were General Stanisław Haller, General Stanisław Szeptycki and General Tadeusz Rozwadowski. The legionaries reproached them for their long servility to the Austrians, and for their hostility to the Polish national cause during the First World War. 'The Polish army' wrote Adam Uziembło in November 1924, 'will be a national army only when there does not remain in it one officer who formerly served in a foreign army.'¹

The officers grouped around Władysław Sikorski were distinct from the rest of the former Austrian officers. Sikorski had, as we have seen, collaborated closely with Piłsudski in the legionary movement before 1914. However, as head of the General National Committee he had clashed with the Marshal, who opposed his support for the Austro-Polish solution. The officers sympathetic to Sikorski were linked in a secret

1. A. Uziembło, 'Siła Narodu', Głos Prawdy, 29.XI.24.

pseudo-masonic organization, The Guard,¹ also known from its motto as 'Honour and Fatherland'.² It had been created in 1921, and had increased in importance during Sikorski's premiership when it was joined by more officers who wished to form a coherent resistance to the Right in the tense period after the assassination of Narutowicz, since Piłsudski was held by them to have acted too weakly in the crisis.³

The officers from the former Tsarist army were generally not politically committed. A number of those in the higher ranks, however, were sympathetic towards Piłsudski, with whom they shared a Kresy background. Among these were General Łucjan Żeligowski, Minister of War in the Skrzyński cabinet, and General Daniel Konarzewski, the deputy Minister of War after the Coup.

Only a small number of Polish officers had previously served in the German Army, and these tended to be hostile to Piłsudski and friendly to the National Democrats.

A final group of officers comprised those who had been members of the Polish Corps organized under General Józef Haller in France in 1918. Haller, the commander of the Second

1. Strażnica.

2. Honor i Ojczyzna.

3. On the Guard group, see Pragier (who was a member of the Sejm commission set up to investigate secret organizations in 1924), op. cit., pp.287-9; M. Lisiewicz, 'Związek wojskowy "Honor i Ojczyzna"', Bellona, XXXVI (1954) No.3, 47-53.

Brigade of legionaries, had deserted from the Austrian army at the Russian Front at Rarańcza, early in 1918, in protest against the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. He was a strong opponent of Piłsudski.

As we have seen, according to the constitution, the President was nominally head of the army, but its parliamentary dealings were conducted by the Minister of War, always an army officer, who was responsible before the Sejm for all acts of military officials in time of peace and in time of war. He was the shield for the Supreme Commander, who was not responsible to Parliament, and who was nominated by the President acting on the advice of the Minister of War.¹ Piłsudski was opposed to this degree of civilian control, which he believed would make the army the tool of politics. He held himself to be morally responsible for the army, and believed that he was entitled to speak on its behalf. In the letter which he delivered to President Wojciechowski immediately after the fall of the Grabski Cabinet on 14 November 1925 he concluded:

I was obliged to take this step, because I created the army, I fought with it in the most critical circumstances, and because I hold the highest rank in this army.²

1. See above, Chapter II, p.86.

2. Piłsudski P.Z., viii, 248.

viii, Appendix I, pp. 248-250.

2. Ibid., Section XI, pp. 248-250, p. 248.

3. Ibid., pp. iii-iv.

While still Head of State, he attempted to forestall the constitutional provisions for the army by issuing, on 7 January 1921, a decree on military organization which established for the army the independence he desired.¹ The decree provided for the management of army affairs by two bodies, the Full War Council and the Inner War Council. The Full War Council comprised the President, the Minister of War, the Deputy Minister of War, the general who was to be Commander-in-Chief, the Chief of the General Staff and two deputies, the generals designated to be field commanders of corps in wartime, and three others generally nominated annually by the Minister of War.² Its functions were purely advisory. It could discuss and give advice on questions of military training, armaments, mobilization, communications, technology, fortifications, or any other questions which the President or the Minister of War might suggest.³

The real power over the army was exercised by the Inner War Council. It was presided over by the general designated to be Commander-in-Chief in wartime, and on it sat the generals who were to be wartime field commanders of corps. The secretariat of the Council was headed by the second deputy of

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1. 'Dekret Wodza Naczelnego o organizacji naczelnych władz wojskowych z dnia 7 stycznia 1921r. Piłsudski, P.Z., viii, Appendix I, pp. iii-v.
 2. Ibid., Section A: Pełna Rada Wojenna, p.iii.
 3. Ibid., pp.iii-iv.

the designate Commander-in-Chief, who sat as a non-voting member on the Council.¹ The Minister of War could attend meetings 'according to need and to his judgement'.² He had no control over the appointment of the designate Commander-in-Chief or the designate Generals. The Council, in co-operation with the General Staff, prepared operational war plans which the Minister of War was forced to accept, and it decided on the qualifications of all unit commanders above the rank of major.³

The essence of this decree was that it left the Minister of War, who was responsible to the Sejm, with no power to affect the military operations of the army, and thus rendered nugatory the provisions of the constitution. As long as Piłsudski remained Supreme Commander and Chief of Staff, his influence prevented the introduction of a bill to give effect to these provisions, but when he resigned his positions in the army on the formation of the Chjeno-Piast Government, the new Minister of War, General Szeptycki, brought forward a bill on 27 June 1923 to enact the provisions which the Marshal detested.⁴ Under its terms, the powers of the Minister of War were to be greatly increased, the Inner War Council to be abolished, and the Full War Council to be transformed into an advisory body

1. Ibid., Section B: Ścisła Rada Wojenna, pp.iv-v.

2. Ibid., p.iv.

3. Ibid., pp.iv-v.

4. The proposed bill is printed in Piłsudski, P.Z., viii. Appendix I, pp.vi-viii as 'Projekt ustawy o organizacji naczelných władz wojskowych z dn. 27.VI.1923r.'

to the Minister, who was to sit on it as chairman. The President would no longer sit on the Council, and its membership would comprise the Chief of General Staff, the Chief of Army Administration, the designate Commander-in-Chief and the designate field commanders.¹

The bill was strongly attacked by Piłsudski, and its adoption by the Sejm was forestalled by the fall of the Witos Cabinet on 14 December 1923. From this time on, the problem of the army had a double character: firstly, how should the constitutional position of the army be regulated, and secondly, under what conditions could Piłsudski be induced to return to active service. Thugutt, in the course of his abortive attempt to form a Cabinet in December 1923, had persuaded Piłsudski to take the post of Minister of War; in return, Piłsudski demanded that the decree of January 1921 be maintained, and that the army be kept independent of parliamentary interference.²

Grabski too attempted to facilitate the return of Piłsudski, and appointed as Minister of War Kazimierz Sosnkowski, Piłsudski's Chief of Staff in the Legions. As Grabski wrote in his memoirs, Sosnkowski 'was the person who could best maintain good relations with the camp of the followers of Marshal Piłsudski and with Piłsudski himself.'³ However,

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1. Ibid., arts. 8 and 9, pp.vi-viii.
 2. Thugutt, op. cit., pp.112-14.
 3. Grabski, op. cit., p.33.

Piłsudski demanded that if he return to the army, he be given the posts of Chairman of the Inner War Council and Chief of Staff. Grabski, supported by Wojciechowski, refused, believing that this would excessively antagonize the Right.¹

Sosnkowski now attempted to secure the Marshal's return by offering him the post of General Inspector of the Army (designate Commander-in-Chief) and by offering to make this post one of Cabinet rank. However Piłsudski's opposition to the scheme and its doubtful constitutionality led to its collapse. On 17 February 1924, having failed to re-integrate the Marshal, and opposed to Grabski's cuts in the military budget, Sosnkowski resigned.²

His successor, General Sikorski, also wanted to secure Piłsudski's return to the army, but only on certain conditions. He told Rataj on 21 February that the most important matter to settle was the definition of the constitutional position of the army:

He did not want to arrange this ad personam for Piłsudski and his whim, but only as good sense should dictate. He would never agree to the independence of the Commander-in-Chief from the Minister of War. He could not co-operate with Piłsudski as Chief of Staff, but after the organization of the higher military authorities according to his own conception, he believed he could 'put up with it (wytrzymać garb)',

1. Pobóg-Malinowski, op. cit., pp.457-8.

2. Loc. cit.

3. Ibid., Chapter IV, art. 6, para. 1.

4. Ibid., Chapter IV, art. 7, para. 1.

with Piłsudski as Commander-in-Chief with limited functions--the theoretical, abstract (laboratoryjne) preparation of war plans. Of course he /Piłsudski/ might prove unwilling (bo mógłby go przecieź nie widywać).¹

Sikorski's plan for military organization was endorsed by the Cabinet on 10 March 1924, and came before the Sejm on 14 March.² It provided for two bodies to deal with military matters. The Council for the Defence of the State was to comprise the President of the Republic (as president), the Prime Minister, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, of the Treasury, of Commerce and Industry, and of the Railways, the Chief of General Staff and the Inspector-General of the Army.³ Its functions were to discuss and co-ordinate questions concerning national defence.⁴ The planning of military operations was entrusted to the Council of War,⁵ which sat under the chairmanship of the Minister of War, and included the General Inspector of the Army, the Chief of Army Administration, the designate Commanders of Field Corps, the Chief of General Staff and two generals nominated by the Minister of War.⁶ In the preparation of military plans, the General Inspector of the Army and the Chief of General Staff were subordinate to the Minister

1. Rataj, op. cit., p.187.

2. It is reprinted in Piłsudski, P.Z., viii. Appendix I, pp.ix-xiii as 'Projekt ustawy o organizacji naczelných władz wojskowych z dn. 14.III.1924 r.'

3. Ibid., Chapter II, art. 3, p.x.

4. Ibid., Chapter II, art. 2, p.x.

5. Ibid., Chapter IV, art. 8, p.xi.

6. Ibid., Chapter IV, art. 9, p.xi.

of War.¹

Piłsudski strongly opposed this arrangement. He claimed that it was a copy of French models, and not suitable for Polish conditions. It failed clearly to define the functions of the Minister of War, the Chief of General Staff and the General Inspector of the Army, whose powers were anyway too limited. In addition, it made the army vulnerable to political influence.² In an attempt to conciliate him, the Cabinet adopted on 5 December 1924 certain modifications in the proposed law.³ The General Inspector of the Army was explicitly designated as Commander-in-Chief in wartime, and was given greater authority over the Chief of General Staff, although he was still not empowered to appoint this officer.⁴ A meeting was arranged on 11 December between Sikorski, Rataj, Thugutt, Piłsudski and Stefan Dąbrowski. Piłsudski rejected the proposed compromise with extreme violence and in unmeasured language. According to Rataj, he said:

The project is either a fiction, or I must assume that the General Inspector is an ass, the Minister of War a villain, and the Chief of Staff a louse on the collar of the General Inspector.⁵

1. Ibid., Chapter III, arts. 6, 7, pp.x, xi.
2. For Piłsudski's criticisms, see 'List do Gen. Sikorskiego (29.II.24)', P.Z. vi. 209-11.
3. This is reprinted in Piłsudski, P.Z. viii, Appendix I, pp.xiii-xviii as 'Projekt ustawy o organizacji nacz. wł. wojsk. uwzględniający poprawki przyjęte przez radę ministrów w dn. 5. XII. 24.'
4. Ibid., arts. 12, 13, 14, 16.
5. Rataj, op. cit., pp.259-60.

The apparent impossibility of reaching any compromise with him led Grabski to affirm 'There can no longer be any talk either of further discussion with the Marshal or of his return to the army.'¹ Thugutt had walked out during the meeting.²

The conflict had, by now, become exceedingly bitter. Piłsudski, feeling himself unjustly excluded from the affairs of state, began to show increasing signs of a loss of emotional balance. At the Fourth Conference of Legionaries, on 8-9 August 1925, he claimed, for example, that documents in the archive of the Historical Commission of the Army had been destroyed in order to diminish his achievements in 1920.³ A commission was set up to examine the allegations; it concluded:

The Commission, in investigating these complaints, must first of all stress the deplorable reasons /the attacks on Piłsudski/ which have provoked them, but is compelled to conclude that, for the most part, they are without foundation, or inexact.⁴

On the fall of the Grabski Government, it will be remembered, Piłsudski was able to put pressure on President Wojciechowski to prevent the reappointment of Sikorski as Minister of War. The new Minister of War, Żeligowski, was a

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1. Pobóg-Malinowski, op. cit., p.462.
 2. Rataj, op. cit., p.260.
 3. For his speech, see Piłsudski, P.Z. viii. 195-208. He elaborated his accusations in a series of articles in Kurjer Poranny in Oct. and Nov. 1925. These articles are reprinted in Piłsudski, P.Z. viii. 217-44.
 4. 'Orzeczenie komisji dla zbadania stanu aktów operacyjnych z 1920 r.', reprinted in Piłsudski, P.Z. viii. Appendix II, p.xxx. For the whole report, see Ibid., pp.xxix-xxxvii.

close associate of Piłsudski's, as was Jędrzej Moraczewski, one of the Socialist ministers in the new Cabinet. On 9 January 1926 Moraczewski raised the question of Piłsudski's return to the army, but succeeded only in obtaining a Cabinet communiqué on the 12th calling on Parliament to speed up its work on the bill on army organization before it.¹ Piłsudski, in an open letter, attacked the communiqué,² and on 7 February Moraczewski resigned. Piłsudski met with Wojciechowski, and demanded that the appointment of the General Inspector of the Army be made by simple decree of the President. On the 10th, Żeligowski, who had remained in the Cabinet, moved to withdraw the army bill before the Sejm, but his motion was adjourned until the next meeting a week later.

When the Cabinet met on 19 February, it issued a communiqué stating that a reply was being prepared for the President who, interested in the possibility of regulating army matters by decree, had asked to be informed of his constitutional rights. It further stated that the Cabinet had decided to intervene in order to secure the adjournment of discussions of the Sejm Army Commission on the Army Organization Bill, but would wait for the President's reply before deciding on the abandonment of the bill itself. On 28 April the Cabinet

1. Robotnik, 10.I.26; 12.I.26.

2. The letter is reprinted in Piłsudski, P.Z. viii. 251-3.

finally withdrew the modified Sikorski Bill, and on 4 May it accepted a new proposed law suggested by a special commission composed of the Prime Minister, the Minister of War, and the Minister of Justice.¹ The new proposal increased the power of the President, who was to be Chairman of the Council for the Defence of the State.² The General Inspector of Military Forces was again explicitly designated wartime Commander-in-Chief, and the Chief of Staff was made responsible to him.³ Finally, the powers of the Minister of War were diminished.

This new arrangement accorded, approximately, with Piłsudski's views, although he did not give it his explicit approval. Żeligowski, when asked by the Nowy Kurjer Polski whether Piłsudski would now return to the army, replied

The previous plan prevented this return. Now it is a question of only a very short period before the Marshal can finally take up in the Army the position which is rightfully his.⁴

However, adoption of the new bill was forestalled by the fall of the Skrzyński Government. In any case it would probably not have obtained legislative approval, for the Right, firmly opposed to Piłsudski's return to the army, mounted a campaign

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1. For the development of the situation see: Rataj, op. cit., pp.349-61; The new proposal is reprinted in Piłsudski, P.Z. viii. Appendix I, pp.xxv-xxvii, as 'Projekt ustawy o naczelnym władzach obrony państwa z dn. 4 Maja 1926r.'
 2. Ibid., arts. 1-4, pp.xxv-xxvi.
 3. Ibid., arts. 2, 7.
 4. Nowy Kurjer Polski 5.V.26.

against him in Parliament. General Szeptycki's resignation from active service was made the focal issue: he had resigned on 29 March, incensed by Piłsudski's continual attacks on him, which he felt Żeligowski condoned. Upon his resignation, the Senators of the Popular National Union, the Christian National Party, the Piast and the Christian Democrats had put a question to the Minister about his action in the matter.¹ Żeligowski's reply was referred to a combined session of the Senate Foreign Affairs and Army Commissions, which decided, on 5 May, to refuse to accept the reply.² In the course of the discussion, Wojciech Trąpczyński, the National Democratic Marshal (Speaker) of the Senate, declared:

...I do not want to discuss the scandalous situation in the army, in which generals who have been deeply insulted cannot obtain satisfaction from Mr. Piłsudski because he regards himself as standing above the law. What I would rather point out is that, according to Minister Żeligowski's letter, the idea of appointing Mr. Piłsudski Commander-in-Chief in wartime still lingers on in his ministry. I see in that the danger of a catastrophe for the country, because I believe that Mr. Piłsudski has not the military education which such functions demand. I, like many others, have had that conviction since 1920.³

This declaration caused great anger in Piłsudski-ite circles, particularly in the army. A thousand officers went to

1. SSSeR., 31.III.26, Col.40.

2. Robotnik, 6.V.26.

3. Quoted in J. Malicki, Marszałek Piłsudski i Sejm (Warsaw, 1936), p.276.

the President to say that they wished to defend the honour of the army of which he was head, and that of Marshal Piłsudski. On 10 May, General Rydz-Śmigły wrote to the President to say that

the views which Mr. Trąpczyński has felt obliged to air, undermine and destroy, the indispensable and basic moral values of the army, its faith in its Chief, and its noble pride in the victories it has won under his leadership.¹

In a clash with Piłsudski, the Government could not depend on the army for support.

In addition, defeats in foreign policy and the failure to deal successfully with the national minorities increased the feeling of malaise, as did the widely-prevalent corruption. Disillusionment with the parliamentary system grew, and an extra-legal solution appeared increasingly attractive.

Poland's relations with almost all her neighbours remained unsatisfactory, and only on the small borders with Rumania and Latvia did she enjoy real security.² In Germany all the leading politicians continued to demand the revision of the Polish western frontier either peacefully, by international arrangement

1. Quoted in Nowy Kurjer Polski, 11.V.26.

2. For Polish foreign policy in this period, see: P. Wandycz, France and her Eastern Allies (Minneapolis, 1962); J. Korbel, Poland between East and West (Princeton, 1963); J. Krasuski, Stosunki Polsko-Niemieckie 1919-25 (Poznań, 1962) and Z. Gąsiorowski, 'Stresemann and Poland before Locarno', J.C.E.A. (1958), pp.25-47; 'Stresemann and Poland after Locarno', J.C.E.A. (1958), pp.292-317.

with the co-operation of the Western Powers, as advocated by Stresemann, or by collaboration with Russia in the event of a Polish-Soviet war. Relations were further embittered by disputes over the treatment of the German minority in Poland, who were being used by the Reich as an argument for a revisionist policy. Moreover, as we have seen, a tariff war between Germany and Poland broke out in June 1925 which greatly increased Polish economic difficulties. Stresemann, Prime Minister and Foreign Minister from August 1923, hoped to use these economic difficulties to force concessions from the Poles. From mid-1925 German diplomats in the West had done all they could to prevent Poland's floating any new international loans. In April 1926 Stresemann stated that a peaceful settlement of the border question could be achieved after Polish economic collapse; Germany must delay Poland's economic recovery 'until that country becomes ripe for the settlement of the frontier question in accordance with our wishes...'¹ Stresemann had already won British support for his aim of modifying the frontier. In March 1925 Austen Chamberlain had told the Cabinet 'The German-Polish border in its present form, particularly in connection with the corridor and Upper Silesia

1. Gąsiorowski, 'Stresemann and Poland after Locarno', loc. cit. p.299; quoting A.A. 2339/4569, 168665-71.

1. J. Korbel, op. cit., p. 100, 1923.
571579, March 23, 1923.
2. Ibid., p. 103.

[cannot] remain as it is.¹

Relations with the Soviet Union, Poland's other large neighbour, were also unsatisfactory. Soon after the signing of the Riga Treaty, the Russians began denouncing the Polish eastern border on the grounds that it did not accord with the principle of self determination.² Russia feared that these territories could be used to foster nationalist separatism in the Soviet Union, and she sponsored revolutionary terrorist movements here. The Soviet Government was also obsessed by the possibility that Poland could be used as a jumping-off point for an imperialist attack on the Soviet Union, and resented the activities of Russian emigrés in Poland.

Polish-Soviet relations improved somewhat in the second half of 1925. However, this was mainly the result of the Russian desire to use the Polish card to prevent Stresemann from abandoning Germany's close links with Russia in favour of new links with the West. After Locarno these Russian approaches to the Poles continued, but remained fruitless. The Soviets resented Poland's relations with the Baltic states and the renewal, on 26 March 1926, of the Polish-Rumanian Alliance. The Poles, for their part, remained sceptical of Russian good faith: at the Third Congress of Comintern in March 1925 Dmitri Manuilsky had stated:

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1. J. Korbel, op. cit., p.168; quoting A.A. 1425/2945, 571579, March 23, 1925.
 2. Ibid., p.105.

The true function of Poland is to form a barrier preventing the spreading of the communist idea westward. For that reason the international proletariat must consider as its task the smashing of capitalist Poland, turning it into a Soviet Republic.¹

Relations with Czechoslovakia remained cool, but correct.

The Poles still resented the Czech refusal to allow the transit of military equipment in 1920, and were bitter about what they regarded as the unjust frontier settlement between the two countries. Polish-Czech relations improved somewhat in 1924 and 1925, but became chilly again following the ready Czech response to Stresemann's approaches in October 1925.

Lithuania, unreconciled to the loss of Wilno, refused even to open diplomatic relations with Poland.

Polish foreign policy between 1921 and 1926 was based on the strict observance of the Versailles Treaty, and on Poland's alliance with France, concluded on 19 February 1921. The alliance provided for French help in the event of an unprovoked German or Russian attack, and was brought into operation by a secret military convention. The basis of Polish security was thus severely undermined by the Locarno Agreements of 16 October 1925, which seemed to consider the Polish western border a matter for negotiation. The nature of the political defeat which Poland suffered as a result of Locarno was camouflaged by

1. Quoted in R. Umiastowski, Russia and the Polish Republic 1918-41, (London, 1945), p.101.

the Franco-Polish Guarantee of 16 October, and the Warsaw press, apart from the traditionally anti-German National Democratic papers, reacted favourably to the Agreements.¹ However, by mid-December the country's new and perilous position had become evident.

The atmosphere of crisis was intensified by the Russo-German Neutrality Pact of 24 April 1926. It revived the 'Rapallo spirit', and seemed explicitly directed against Poland. In fact, the Germans had demanded from Chicherin, the Soviet Foreign Minister, an assurance that Russia would not in any way recognize Poland's boundaries.² In this situation, calls for a strong hand to deal with foreign policy fell on friendly ears. On 29 April the radical Kurjer Poranny wrote:

The critical and menacing circumstances in which we find ourselves demand that the Government of the Republic command great respect, and it will not have this until it is covered by the authority of the man around whom is concentrated the healthy part of the nation, the man who is the symbol of the struggles for Polish independence, and whose name is still capable of moving the worker and peasant masses.³

Piłsudski himself was greatly aroused by what he regarded as the misguided and excessively yielding foreign policy of Poland between 1923 and 1926. Never greatly interested in

1. Robotnik, for instance, on 12 November described Locarno as an 'important achievement in European politics'.
Robotnik 12.XI.25.
2. Korbel, op. cit., p.196.
3. Kurjer Poranny, 29.IV.26.

domestic politics, his principal concern, after the army, was foreign affairs. According to January Grzędziński, Locarno provoked him to use his most soldierly curses, and led him to call Skrzyński, among other things, 'the little bitch of Locarno'.¹ He was even more upset by the Soviet-German non-aggression pact. 'Our army', he said,

is very badly armed and poorly clad. We have lost time because of the [political] crisis, and the Germans--since Locarno--have made their second approach to the Russians since Rapallo.... Already the pincers are beginning to squeeze....²

The minorities, as we have shown, made up one third of the population of Poland, and were guaranteed the use of their languages and the preservation of their national identity both in the constitution and in the Treaty between Poland and the Allied and Associated Powers of January 1919.³ The Governments in the early years of independence had, by and large, intended to deal fairly with the minorities, but had been hampered by the pressing nature of other political problems which prevented the formulation and implementation of a long-term policy in this matter. The unimpressive quality of the lesser bureaucrats meant that the liberal intentions of ministers were often

to Poland in August 1923

1. J. Grzędziński, Maj 1926 (Paris, 1965), p.68.

2. Loc. cit.

3. On the minorities, see Ajnenkiel, op. cit., pp.161-72, 256-62. Pobóg-Malinowski, op. cit., pp.436-46; Krasuski, op. cit.; Z.W.P.O., op. cit., ii; Heike, op. cit.; L. Sorochtej, 'Sprawa ukraińska w Polsce a rząd Władysława Grabskiego'. (Unpublished. Doctoral dissertation, University of Warsaw, 1962).

frustrated by the chauvinism and incapacity of local officials, and the accession to power of the Chjeno-Piast Government, whose policy in relation to the minorities was strongly chauvinistic, greatly exacerbated the situation.

The problem was most acute in relation to the territorially compact White Russian and Ukrainian groups in eastern Poland. The Polish-Soviet War and the Polish-Ukrainian conflict had left a strong residue of bitterness here. In addition, collectivization and the purging of nationalists had not yet revealed the negative aspects of Soviet nationality policy; as a result, the White Russian and Ukrainian Soviet Republics proved extremely attractive to radical nationalists.

In East Galicia, the failure to implement the far-reaching provisions of the Law of 26 September 1922¹ caused much resentment. Territorial self-government was not granted, nor was a Ukrainian university established. Moreover the Polish Government had shown itself extremely maladroit in its dealings with the Greek Catholic Metropolitan, Archbishop Szeptycki. He had been assured, while abroad, by the Sikorski Government that he could go back to his diocese. However on his return to Poland in August 1923 the new Witos Government which hoped to have him replaced as Metropolitan by the more pliable Bishop Khomshyn of Stanisławów, went back on this promise, and insisted

1. See above, Chapter II, p.92.

that he remain in Poznań.¹

In Volynia and the White Russian areas the grievances were somewhat different. The Polish officials here were often very incompetent, and a peasant had to spend a great deal of time and effort in arranging routine matters, such as the sale of land, which had been very simple before the War. The area had been devastated by six years of war, and suffered as a result of slow reconstruction and the Government's deflationary economic policies, particularly under Grabski in 1924 and 1925. The slow implementation of land reform was resented by the land-hungry peasants, who were also highly aroused by attempts to foster Polish colonization, both civilian and military, in the region.² It is true that this colonization did not reach large proportions, for in 1923, when military colonization was stopped, only 8,732 holdings had been created, and most were not occupied by the owners. But the policy was seen by the Ukrainian and White Russian peasants as symbolic of the Government's lack of interest in their problems. The re-conversion of Catholic churches seized in the 19th century by the Orthodox Church, and the establishment, in 1925, of an autocephalous Orthodox Church

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1. See Gazeta Warszawska, 12.VI.23; 22.VII.23; 25.VIII.23; 11.IX.23. In fact, he was finally allowed to return to Lwów in November, after appealing to the President.
 2. See Madajczyk, op. cit., pp.172-6.

2. See H. Szostak, 'Kommunistyczna Partia Wschodniej Ukrainy', Wiadomości (1952), 1, 79-84.

independent of the Moscow patriarchate, all created friction. So too did the liquidation of the system of White Russian primary schools established by the Germans. The number of these schools had dropped from about 300 in 1917-18 to 23 in 1924-25.¹

In East Galicia, nationalist influences remained dominant. The anti-Polish wing of the Ukrainian National Party of Labour gained the upper hand in 1925, and this led to the formation of a new and strongly anti-Polish nationalist group, the Ukrainian National Democratic Organization (U.N.D.O.) in July 1925. The Ukrainian Military Organization had recovered by 1924 from the mass arrests of 1922, and began a new campaign of sabotage, burning Polish farms and homesteads. On 5 September 1924, one of its members made an unsuccessful attempt on the life of President Wojciechowski in Lwów.

Communist influence among the Ukrainians, with the demand for the incorporation of the West Ukraine in the Ukrainian Soviet Republic, also increased. At its second congress (August-September 1923), the Polish Communist Party set up the Communist Party of the Western Ukraine², and in February 1924

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1. J. Korus-Kabacińska, 'Położenie ludności białoruskiej w Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w latach 1924-26', Zeszyty Historyczne Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego ii. (1961), 199-201.
 2. See M. Szczyrba, 'Komunistyczna Partia Zachodniej Ukrainy', N.D. (1959), i. 79-86.

the Ukrainian Social Democratic Party announced its sympathy towards Communism.¹

Communist, which took the form of a combination of pro-Russian feeling and a desire for land reform, was even more widespread among the White Russians. By 1924 both the White Russian Independent Socialist Party and the White Russian Socialist Revolutionary Party had made clear their pro-Communist position.² The Communist Party of Western White Russia had also been set up at the second congress of the Polish Communist Party,³ and the Independent Peasant Party, a pro-Communist group created in November 1924, had much strength here.⁴ In the White Russian Hromada, founded in July 1925 and soon enjoying mass support, Communist influences were also predominant, though some nationalist elements demanding full independence for White Russia were found in its leadership.⁵

Terrorism from bases in Lithuania and, in particular, from Soviet White Russia, continued. It culminated in an attack by 100 armed men, led by a Soviet officer, on the district capital of Stolpce, in the Nowogródek province, on the night of 3-4 August 1924. The band took possession of the whole town,

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1. See above, Chapter II, p.148.
 2. See above, Chapter II, pp.152-3.
 3. See S. Bergman, F. Karwacki, W. Stankiewicz, 'Komunistyczna Partia Zachodniej Białorusi', N.D. (1959), i. 86-93.
 4. For this see S. Jarecka, Niezależna Partia Chłopska (Warsaw, 1961).
 5. A. Bergman, 'Białoruska włościańsko-robotnicza Hromada (1925-27)', Z Pola Walki (1962), pp.73-99.

pillaged shops and houses, and destroyed the police and railway stations.¹ The Government's immediate response was to set up a Border Protection Corps. General Olszewski was made Governor of Volynia, and General Januszajtis Governor of Polesia. General Rydz-Śmigły, head of the Wilno Military Region, was given full powers to deal with the situation. As a result, terrorism diminished somewhat, but it was clear that military force could not solve the political problems, and that far-reaching changes were needed in the Polish administration.

Already in April 1924 Grabski had set up a four-man commission, which included his brother Stanisław Grabski and Stanisław Thugutt, to investigate methods of improving the administrative, judicial and educational systems. In July, laws were introduced to allow Ukrainians, White Russians and Lithuanians to use their languages in the courts and in dealings with the administration in eastern Poland.² A new school law was introduced, which provided that in areas in which 25% of the population was not Polish, schools with instruction in Ukrainian, White Russian or Lithuanian should be established

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1. For a contemporary Communist account of this terrorism, see T. Dąbal, 'Ruch partyzancki w Polsce', Nowy Przegląd (Jan. 1925), i: re-edition: Warsaw, 1959, pp.291-302.
 2. 'Ustawa z dnia 31 lipca 1924 o języku państwowym i język urzędowania władz administracyjnych', Dz. U.R.P. 1924, No. 73, pp.1094-5; 'Ustawa z dnia 31 lipca 1924 o języku urzędowania sądów, urzędów prokuratorskich i notarjatu', Dz.U.R.P. 1924, No. 78, pp.1206-7.

at the request of 40 parents. However, these schools were to be bilingual, and as a result the new law failed to satisfy the minorities, who saw in it a means of polonization.¹

In August Skrzyński, the Foreign Minister, announced that a Ukrainian university was to be established as well, but because of Polish nationalist agitation it was to be set up in Cracow, and not in a Ukrainian area. It thus proved impossible to gain the support of Ukrainian academics, and the project lapsed.

The new laws were inadequate to deal with the situation. On 17 November 1924, Thugutt entered the Cabinet as Minister without Portfolio, but with special responsibility for minority affairs. He succeeded in obtaining the formation of a 'minorities section' attached to the Political Committee of the Cabinet, but he failed to achieve any real improvement in the treatment of the Slavic minorities. He resigned from the Cabinet on 28 May 1925, giving his reasons in a statement to the press:

I demanded only that one should take one's word seriously, that one should observe the laws and the Constitution. Alas! Reality has not satisfied the most modest of my demands.²

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1. 'Ustawa z dnia 31 lipca 1924 zawierająca niektóre postanowienia o organizacji szkolnictwa', Dz.U.R.P. 1924, No. 79, pp.1212-13.
 2. Robotnik, 29.V.25.

After Thugutt left the Cabinet, the situation in the eastern provinces again became extremely tense.

Relations with the German minority were also very unsatisfactory. In a sense this was inevitable, since the Germans in Poland were being used by the German Government as an excuse for demanding the revision of the Polish western frontier. Conflict was also provoked by the Polish determination to undo the effects of the policies of germanization which had been pursued in Prussian Poland. Further friction arose over the rights of Germans in Poland who had, in accordance with article 91 of the Versailles Treaty, opted for German citizenship, and over their property. The rights of German colonists brought in to increase the German element in Prussian Poland caused dispute as well. Moreover the Germans opposed the implementation of land reform in Poznan, Pomerania and Upper Silesia, where German landholding was particularly affected. The amount of land in large estates in German hands diminished from 1,535,000 ha. in 1918 to 1,000,000 ha. in 1926.¹ The Government's attempts to lessen the dependence on Berlin of the United Protestant Church in former Prussian Poland were resented, and complaints were continually raised about the number of German schools. The

1. R. Staniewicz, 'Mniejszość niemiecka w Polsce--V kolumna Hitlera?', Przegląd Zachodni (1959), i. 400.

bitterness of these conflicts was intensified by the heavy-handedness of many Polish officials. Irritating though the activities of the Deutschtumbund were, there was little justification for its being banned by administrative order in August 1923.

The Government did, however, manage to reach agreement with the Jewish Club in the Sejm. The dispute between Reich and Grünbaum over the correct tactics to use in Parliament had, by early 1925, given way to an increasing acceptance of Reich's moderate position. When Lucien Wolf, Director of the Joint Foreign Department of the British Board of Deputies, visited Poland in June, he was able to initiate negotiations between Reich and Skrzyński.¹ On 4 July the agreement was signed. Two days before, the Jewish Club issued a declaration setting out its position:

The Jewish club in the Sejm, firmly upholding the principle of the integrity of Poland, and its interests as a Great Power, and recognizing the necessity for internal consolidation, states that it will pursue a policy in the Sejm in accordance with these principles both in general matters and in those concerning the defence of the interests of the Jewish population.²

results of the mission

1. Wolf's account of his mission is to be found in the archives of the British Board of Deputies.
2. Nasz Przegląd 1.VII.25.

In return, the Government promised to introduce certain measures to alleviate the position of the Jews. Primary schools with Yiddish as the language of instruction were to be established, Jews in schools and in the army would not be placed in a position which would compel them to violate their religious beliefs, Yiddish and Hebrew could be employed at public meetings, and the Jewish Communal Organization (the Kahal) was to be extended and democratized.¹ In addition, Skrzyński wrote a letter to Naum Sokolov of the World Zionist Congress on 1 July in which he stated:

I have the pleasure to declare that the Polish Government follows with lively interest the development of the efforts of the Zionist Organization to revive Jewish national individuality and Jewish culture in the land which is its historic cradle.²

The agreement aroused much opposition in the Jewish Club, but it was finally accepted. However, when it was published by the Government on 12 July, it included only twelve points, as against the forty-two previously agreed on. This was held by many members of the Club to constitute a breach of faith. Although some of the provisions were implemented, the concrete results of the agreement were small. Still it did somewhat ease

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1. For the terms of the agreement, as published by the Government, see Robotnik, 12.VII.25.
 2. Nasz Przegląd, 2.VII.25.

See above, p. 130.

See above, p. 198, 199.

the position of the Jews, and when the Skrzyński Government was formed in November, Reich, on behalf of his Club, greeted it favourably.¹

Piłsudski had, before 1914, favoured a federal solution for Russia's nationality problems, and had attempted to foster White Russian and Ukrainian independence after 1918. Now that the Sejm had manifestly failed to reconcile the Slavic minorities to the state, Piłsudski seemed to many the man who could achieve this difficult task. He had always opposed extreme National Democratic chauvinism and the demand that Poland should be a national state, absorbing the Slavic minorities and expelling Jews and Germans.²

Finally, the extensive corruption of Deputies, ever ready to accept bribes, had led to widespread disillusionment with parliamentary institutions. We have already mentioned, in passing, the Dojlidy scandal³ and the way in which Grabski's man of affairs, Kauzik, used bribery to maintain his Government in office.⁴ There were many other examples, such as the Żyrardów scandal, in which an enormous, largely French-owned, textile firm had succeeded in evading tax for a number of years, and in which

1. See his speech in the Sejm on 26.XI.25, S.S.S.R., 26.XI.25, Cols. 5-6.

2. On Piłsudski-ite plans for resolving the problem of the minorities in Eastern Poland, see J. Lewandowski. Imperializm słabości. Warsaw 1967.

3. See above, p.180.

4. See above, p.198, 199.

Władysław Kucharski, the Finance Minister, was involved.¹ In addition, the involvement of General Zagórski in the proceedings of the Franco-Polish armaments firm, Frankopol, and the alleged complicity of the Deputy Chief of Army Administration, Michał Żymierski, in malpractices in the supply of gas masks were widely criticized. Piłsudski, scrupulously honest himself--he had donated his pension, after his withdrawal from political life, to the Stefan Batory University in Wilno--particularly resented this corruption.

Thus by 1926 in economic and political life, in the army, in foreign policy and in relation to the minorities, parliamentary Government, with its attendant ineffectiveness and corruption, seemed to have brought Poland to the edge of a precipice. The renewal of the Chjeno-Piast Government seemed to promise the intensification of all that was worst in Polish parliamentarianism; the final crisis of the Polish constitution could not long be delayed.

1. For the Żyrardów affair, see S. Nagórski, Ludzie mego czasu (Paris, 1964), pp.140-2.

CHAPTER IV.PIŁSUDSKI TAKES POWER.

Two nations speaking Polish are in conflict for power, struggle over every office, contest influence in the army, and go so far as to involve in their quarrels the symbol of the majority in the country, the President of the Republic.

Gazeta Warszawska, 25.III.1924.

If there are in Poland strong forces which could dream of a dictatorship 'of honest men', if there are strong hearts and strong fists ready to destroy the 'order' of today, one should not look for them in the ranks of reaction.... The moral leader of these people who long for honesty in the state, who understand that the misdeeds of the Sejm and Government can destroy Poland, is Józef Piłsudski.

Ignacy Daszyński, Sejm, Rząd, Król,
Dyktator, 1926.

By 1926 it was clear that parliamentary government had not been able to solve the pressing social and political problems of Poland. Criticism of this system, and in particular of the 1921 Constitution, was widespread. Ignacy Daszyński, the Socialist leader, published a pamphlet early in 1926 in which he stressed that a democratic republic was the best system of government for Poland and that most of the faults of the Sejm were the result of Polish social and political backwardness. Nevertheless these faults could not be denied. Parliamentary government had led to corruption, to excessive party spirit and to the exercising of influence (protekcja) upon the

Government and the civil service by Deputies on behalf of their clients. It had failed to provide strong and effective administration or consistent policies. Daszyński believed that increasing political experience would improve the situation, but also advocated immediate constitutional changes: he called for more frequent elections and for the strengthening of the power of the President.¹

Piłsudski, against whom the May Constitution had been expressly directed, was another strong critic of its functioning. It had led, he felt, to the excessive influence of party politics in the administration of the army and in foreign policy. No clear distinction had been drawn between executive and legislative functions; in his opinion

The basis of Parliaments, when they served mankind healthily, resided in this, that there existed an executive power which was judged by elected bodies called Parliaments or Sejms. When the sickness began, that is the disappearance of the division between the executive power and the power which judged the executive, the sense of justice had to disappear, for it cannot exist where no one is responsible for his evil actions.²

Criticism of the constitution was not the monopoly of the Left. In January 1925 Witos began a campaign for the revision of the constitution. In a speech at Łuck, in eastern Poland,

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1. See I. Daszyński, Sejm, Rząd, Król, Dyktator (Warsaw, 1926), passim.
 2. Piłsudski, 'Wywiad w Nowym Kurierze Polskim z dnia 29 kwietnia 1926 r.', P.Z., viii, 330.

he maintained that 'Our constitution has gone too far in its liberalism, farther than any other European state.'¹ Already in January of the previous year the Piast parliamentary club had adopted a programme of constitutional revision which called for the strengthening of the power of the executive and, in particular, for the granting to the President of the right to dissolve or prorogue Parliament. In addition it called for a reduction in the number of Deputies, and for a reform of the electoral system in order to introduce single member constituencies which, it was felt, would link Deputies more closely to the electorate.² In his pamphlet Czasy i Ludzie, published in February 1926, Witos extended and elaborated these views. He again called for an increase in the power of the President and proposed an electoral reform. This was to favour larger parties and increase the responsibility of the Deputies. Disputed results were to be settled by the administration, and not by Parliament. In addition, either the power of the Senate was to be strengthened or the Senate was to be abolished, and the grounds for impeaching government officials for fraud and negligence were to be widened.³ 'In the event of the Sejm's failing to carry out this programme', Witos wrote ominously,

1. Robotnik, 11.I.25.

2. Piast 27.I.24.

3. W. Witos, Czasy i Ludzie (Tarnów, 1926), p.15.

it will destroy itself, and Poland, not wanting to collapse, will be compelled to seek another way out, in order to be able to carry on her work, which may modify present conditions, but may also have unhappy results.¹

Revision of the constitution was also demanded by the National Democrats. In 1925 the parliamentary club of the Popular National Union had called for various constitutional changes. These included changes in the electoral law to end proportional representation and to raise the voting age by five years, a reduction in the number of Deputies, and the equalizing of the powers of the Sejm and Senate.²

Disillusionment with parliamentary government as such was also widespread on the Right. Dmowski saw a direct link between the political and the economic crises. The weakness of parliamentary Governments meant that large concessions had to be made to obtain support, 'And what is the shortest and easiest way to attain this? Prodigality with government money.'³ For the time being, he felt, writing in December 1925, the formation of the all-party Skrzyński coalition had shown that democracy could provide a stable and lasting Government. However, he added,

1. Loc. cit.

2. Pobóg-Malinowski, op. cit., p.451.

3. Dmowski, 'Sny a rzeczywistość, Pisma, x. 28.

the groups 100000 were sanctioned by the government
one to 2 months and one to 1 month. (Nowy Kurier Litewski, 20.V.26).

4. Robotnik, 10.V.26.

5. Robotnik, 11.I.1929.

the idea of dictatorship is not at all revolting to me.... If we had a man who had even half the worth of Mussolini, if we could create even half an organization like the Fascists...I would willingly agree to a dictatorship in Poland.¹

The trial of the fascist Polish Patriots' Alert² which began on 4 May 1926 exposed the many links existing between this organization and right-wing politicians. Those who had had contact with the Patriotic Alert included Stanisław Głąbiński, national chairman of the Popular National Union, Stanisław Kozicki, Minister Plenipotentiary in Rome and a prominent National Democratic politician, Władysław Kiernik, the former Piast Minister of the Interior, and General Szeptycki.³ 'The trial of the Polish Patriotic Alert,' wrote Robotnik on 10 May, 'cannot be considered an episode of the past. It is full of contemporary relevance....'⁴

Finally, the extensive system of welfare legislation and the eight-hour day were coming under strong criticism. 'Our social legislation,' Witos held, 'has not been able to find its proper limit. In Poland everyone works as little as possible.'⁵ The attack sometimes assumed grotesque forms: Dmowski regarded the eight-hour day as an attempt by skilled workers to exploit

1. Ibid., p.34.

2. See above, Chapter III, p.197.

3. See Nowy Kurjer Polski, 5-12.V.26. After the Coup, two of the groups leaders were sentenced to 4 months imprisonment, one to 2 months and one to 1 month. Two were acquitted. (Nowy Kurjer Polski, 20.V.26).

4. Robotnik, 10.V.26.

5. Robotnik, 11.I.1925.

the unskilled:

The mass of workers is done an injury in this, that the laws do not allow workers to work as much as they should, as they can, and even as they want to, and in this way earn more.¹

'Our social legislation,' he continued,

has not grown up from the needs of the country and of its people. It is the abortive fruit of thoughtless imitation, and must undergo fundamental revision.²

The formation of the Witos Government on 10 May was interpreted by the Left and the Piłsudski-ites as an open provocation, the beginning of a right-wing coup against the constitution. Witos was aware of this and tried, somewhat belatedly, after his initial bellicose statements, to calm the situation. He did convince Skrzyński that he was acting in good faith; after their conversation, Skrzyński told Kajetan Morawski, the Undersecretary of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'He does not want a showdown with Piłsudski, he only wants order.'³ The statement which Witos issued on 10 May was also intended to relieve domestic tension:

The Government which I have formed was the result of necessity, and not of the desire for power, which at present in Poland is neither pleasant nor attractive, and which often almost slips from one's hands into the street. This has been seen in the last crisis.

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1. R. Dmowski, 'Kwestia Robotnicza wczoraj i dziś', Pisma, ix. 223.
 2. Ibid., p.225.
 3. K. Morawski, 'Przewrót Majowy', Wiadomości, xii. No.566, (February 3, 1957), 1.

and Right Attempts have been made to represent my cabinet as a Government of provocation and a struggle. Nothing could be more false.

The Government was created for the whole country, and not for political parties. I sincerely intend to take steps to broaden the basis of the Government and to engage the co-operation of all those who can overcome pettiness and stand together for the good of the country.¹

But the Piłsudski-ites could not forget Witos' earlier fire-eating words, his interview with Nowy Kurjer Polski, his repeated calls for 'a Government of strong men, and a big programme',² and his proposals for constitutional and electoral reforms. January Grzędziński, Piłsudski's adjutant, wrote in his diary on 19 April:

The view that is dominant is that the Cabinet crisis will be exceptionally difficult, and that Witos will decide on a strong-arm Government together with the Endecja. General Sikorski or perhaps Szeptycki or Stanisław Haller will take over the army. The Sejm will be dissolved, the electoral law will ultimately be changed, and sub-prefects will conduct Galician elections and find a majority for Governments of reaction and corruption. As for us--'order' will be established.³

Piłsudski had long planned some sort of action against the Parliament and the 1921 constitution. General Sikorski had felt that a coup was imminent in November 1925, and again the following April he warned the politicians of the Centre

1. Rataj, op. cit., p.367. Rataj claims to have drafted this statement for Witos.
2. Ibid., p.358.
3. J. Grzędziński, Maj 1926 (Paris, 1965), p.16.

and Right against the danger of violent action by Piłsudski if a centre-right Government were formed and no prior arrangement made with the Marshal.¹ Unrest was expected on May Day and on 3 May, the Polish national holiday. Witos too believed that some kind of anti-parliamentary putsch was in the offing during during the second half of April.²

Fairly elaborate preparations had gone into the planning of a coup. We have already seen that members of the P.O.W. held prominent positions in many of the Left and Centre parties. In September 1925 Piłsudski had told Kazimierz Bartel, leader of the six-man Club of Labour in the Sejm, to prepare himself for the post of Prime Minister. Bartel had several meetings with Piłsudski at which political problems were discussed in some detail.³ Also present at these meetings were some members of the underground circle of Roman Knoll, a senior official in the Polish Foreign Office. Non-party radicals, they feared a coup by the Right after the creation of a right-centre Government, a development which they held would be disastrous in a multi-national state such as Poland. In their search for a military

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1. See the memorandum in the Stanisław Kauzick Collection in the AAN, 'Jak doszło do wojny domowej'. It was written by someone close to Sikorski, though not by the General himself, and has been published in the Kwartalnik Historyczny, lxvi (1959), No.I. pp.126-138, with an introduction by M. Pietrzak.
 2. Witos, Moje Wspomnienia, iii. 75-9.
 3. W. Grzybowski, 'Premier Kazimierz Bartel', Kultura No.13. (1948), 99-101.

figure to support them in forestalling the Right, they had originally settled on Sikorski; however, by the end of 1925 they had decided that Piłsudski was more likely to fall in with their schemes.¹ There existed as well other left-wing underground organizations. According to Moraczewski, the P.P.S. and the Liberation, fearing a coup by the Endecja, had created already in 1925 a secret organization modelled on the People's Militia of the Popular Governments of 1918-19. This body had made contact with another secret group led by Col. Karaszewicz-Tokarzewski which, it was believed, took orders from Piłsudski. However, attempts by Barlicki and Thugutt to use Moraczewski as an intermediary to unite the two groups failed.²

This failure probably occurred because Piłsudski, who believed that the Socialists had not shown any real desire to cooperate with him either following the assassination of Narutowicz or in the Cracow riots, was seeking new allies. As far back as the 1922 elections he had co-operated with the Conservative large landowners and supported two of their lists.³ From 1925 on he had been making approaches to them through Mackiewicz, editor of Słowo, a Wilno newspaper which represented the views of the Kresy conservatives.⁴ He also attempted to

1. See Morawski, op. cit., p.2.

2. J. Moraczewski, 'Pamiętnik' (unpublished, in AZHP), quoted in Ajnenkiel, op. cit., p.294.

3. See above, Chapter II, p. 112.

4. Mackiewicz, op. cit., p.183.

contact Prince Zdzisław Lubomirski, who refused to meet him.

Piłsudski's efforts are described by the president of the large landowners' Agricultural Credit Association, Władysław Glinka:

Chief
left
Air P
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From January 1926 on, I learned from some of my friends that Piłsudski was thinking of taking power with the support of the army, but that he intended to do so completely legally, from a formal point of view, because he was certain that Wojciechowski would do everything he demanded without the need to resort to arms. So would the Government and the Sejm. Preparing to act, and not wanting to be a slave of the Left, Piłsudski was seeking support on the Right. Not from the right-wing parties in the Sejm, but from people with conservative convictions and of irreproachable reputation.¹

both The military preparations were even more elaborate.

Following the appointment of Żeligowski as Minister of War, the punishments imposed by Sikorski for participation in the November demonstration at Sulejówek were rescinded. General Orlicz-Dreszer, who had gone on leave rather than accept his demotion to a post in Poznań, became Cavalry Inspector for the Warsaw Military District and Head of the War Ministry Cavalry Department. Together with Col. Bolesław Wienawa-Długoszewski, he supervised the military side of the preparations for the coup. To these preparations General Żeligowski either turned a blind

1. 'W rocznicę przewrotu majowego. Dokumenty', Polityka, xi (1957), p.6.

eye or, more probably, was quietly sympathetic.¹

Prominent opponents of Piłsudski in the armed forces were weeded out. As we have seen, Gen. Stanisław Haller resigned as Chief of the General Staff in December 1925, and Gen. Szeptycki left active service in March 1926. Gen. Zagórski, head of the Air Force, hounded for his part in the Frankopol scandal, resigned in April and was replaced by a Piłsudski-ite, Gen. Rayski. The head of the Army Administration Department, Gen. Stefan Majewski, and his deputy, Gen. Michał Żymierski, were replaced by Gen. Daniel Konarzewski and Gen. Norwid-Neugebauer, both supporters of Piłsudski. The same phenomenon occurred in the Second Army Department (Intelligence) where Col. Michał Bajer was replaced by Col. Ścieżyński, and in the Third Army Department (Training and Organization) where Gen. Stanisław Burhardt-Bukacki and Col. Józef Beck took charge. Attention was also devoted to the regional commands. The dominance of Piłsudski-ite officers was secured in the military divisions of Warsaw, Lublin, Grodno, Łódź, Brześć, Toruń and Wilno. Gen.

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1. For the preparations for the coup, see M. Romeyko, 'Przed i po maju 1926 r. Ze wspomnień oficera sztabu generalnego', W.P.H., vii (1962) 1: pp.274-316; 2: pp.203-38; 3: pp.262-301; 4: pp.259-94; W. Karbowski, 'Wypadki Majowe w 1926 r.', W.P.H., iv (1959), No.2, pp.328-78; H. Piątkowski, 'Wspomnienia z "wypadków majowych" z 1926 r.', Bellona, iii, iv, (1961), pp.182-213; J. Rothschild, Piłsudski's Coup d'Etat (New York, 1966), pp.75-82.

Sosnkowski, Piłsudski's closest associate in the legions, was commander in Poznań, the National Democratic stronghold.

These preparations did not go unnoticed. Captain Henryk Picheta, battalion commander of the 22nd Infantry Regiment stationed in Siedlce, writes in his memoirs

Around 20 April, I do not remember the date exactly, but I know it was a Sunday, I was summoned by the commander of the regiment (Gen. Krok-Paszkowski) to report to him in the officers' mess. He there informed us that a 'coup d'état' was being prepared by Marshal Piłsudski and asked if he could count on us.¹

Krok-Paszkowski had himself been informed of the preparations by Gen. Mieczysław Trojanowski, commander of the 9th Infantry Division and a former legionary.² Adam Pragier has described how in the autumn of 1925 Marian Malinowski, a pro-Piłsudski-ite P.P.S. Deputy, put him in touch with an army officer who under a false name (Pragier by chance knew his real identity) claimed to be helping in preparations to resist a right-wing coup. Pragier, who represented Pruszków, a constituency outside Warsaw in which there was an important railway junction, was to arrange with his party members to paralyze Government troop movements in the event of an armed clash.³ In April, Col. Wienawa-Długoszewski sounded out the officers at the Cadet School about

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1. H. Picheta, 'Przełom majowy', Tydzień Polski, 9.V.1953, p.3.
 2. Archive of the Józef Piłsudski Historical Institute (London), 'Relacja Generała Krok-Paszkowskiego' (1957).
 3. Pragier, op. cit., pp.317-8.

a proposed coup, and found the response unfavourable.¹

The most bizarre incident which occurred during preparations for the coup concerns a pro-Government general, Tadeusz Kutrzeba. Early in March 1926, having just completed a book on the 1920 War, he arranged to visit Piłsudski so that the Marshal could check the manuscript. When he arrived at Sulejówek, he found himself ushered into a study, along with Gen. Orlicz-Dreszer, by Piłsudski himself. Apparently unaware who Kutrzeba was, Piłsudski proceeded to describe in great detail his preparations for a coup. Kutrzeba afterwards gave Dreszer his word that he would repeat nothing he had heard, and although he fought on the Government side in May, he did not reveal what he had discovered.²

Yet although the preparations for the coup were elaborate, it is still not clear at what point Piłsudski finally decided to act. Unlike his supporters, he had shown great hesitation in resorting to illegal intervention against the Government. He had not, in the end, taken any serious action in the crisis following Narutowicz's assassination, during the Cracow riots or in the crisis following Grabski's resignation, when Dreszer had all but asked him to make a coup.³ His passivity in 1922

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1. J. Rzepecki, Wspomnienia i przyczynki historyczne (Warsaw, 1956), pp.13-4.
 2. Romeyko, op. cit., Part IV, pp.261-4.
 3. See above, Chapter III, pp.205-206.

and 1923 had led the radical officers in the army to look to Sikorski instead as a champion against the Right. Piłsudski's behaviour during 1925 and 1926 had convinced many politicians that he was a spent force, and this calculation had weighed heavily both with Witos and with the National Democrats in their decision to revive the Chjeno-Piast coalition. Neither Skrzyński nor Wojciechowski believed that Piłsudski was planning any action against the Government in May. When Witos told Wojciechowski during the May governmental crisis that he thought Piłsudski was plotting something, Wojciechowski

replied very strongly that this was untrue. He could guarantee that Piłsudski could not be capable of such a crime. Moreover he (Piłsudski) had visited him personally a few days before and had given him his word of honour that he was not thinking of any coup. He did not have the slightest reason not to believe his assurances because he knew that Piłsudski always kept his word.¹

In addition, there is much evidence that the final eruption of the governmental crisis in May, with the breakdown of the Skrzyński coalition, was neither expected nor welcomed by the Piłsudski-ites. Both Rataj and Pragier, who was particularly sensitive to Piłsudski-ite intrigues in the P.P.S., agree that the resignation of the Socialist ministers which precipitated

1. Witos, op. cit., iii. 83. For Skrzyński's views see ibid., p.85.

the crisis was the result of the party's unwillingness to support the strongly deflationary aspects of Zdziechowski's financial policies. Piłsudski played no part in this.¹ Grzędziński's diary too shows that many Piłsudski-ites believed that nothing would be done to prevent the Right's dealing with the constitutional crisis as it wished.²

Finally, Piłsudski's moderating position in the deteriorating situation after Skrzyński's resignation suggests that he was either playing a very elaborate double game, or, more likely, that he took his decision to move outside the constitutional framework very late. It is true that Piłsudski refused to participate in Marek's proposed Government, giving the rather lame excuse that he confined his attention to army matters. However, the explanation he privately gave to Stefan Benedykt--that the Government lacked a parliamentary majority and could not last--is convincing.³ At the beginning of the crisis (perhaps on 6 May) he sent Niedziałkowski to Kajetan Morawski to persuade him to accept the post of Foreign Minister.⁴ The evidence concerning Piłsudski's willingness to take part, as Minister of War, in a revived Skrzyński Cabinet is unclear,

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1. Pragier, op. cit., pp.312-3; Rataj, op. cit., pp.356-7.
 2. See above, pp.249-250.
 3. S. Benedykt, 'O przełomie majowym', Wiadomości, xiv. No. 667, p.1. (January 11, 1959).
 4. Morawski, op. cit., p.1.

but on balance it suggests that he made his offer in good faith.¹

On the other hand, members of the P.O.W. and other supporters of Piłsudski did much to create the political crisis. Almost from the time the Skrzyński coalition was formed, Głos Prawdy had agitated against it, and against the participation in it of the P.P.S. On 19 December 1925 Wacław Grzybowski, secretary of the Club of Labour, wrote:

The leaders of the P.P.S. are suffering from a malignant delusion which could be called 'the parliamentary delusion'. They do not realize that one cannot, from the elevated position of the parliamentary parties, look to the interests of the many million strong camp of labour. They do not realize that all the parties in Poland today are only names written on paper.²

In the final crisis, compromise at first appeared possible.

Marek and Niedziałkowski told Erdman of the Piast that the P.P.S. did not feel itself strongly linked with the bloc of left-wing parties:

They were prepared, for the time being, to make wry faces (robić miny), but later would even join the coalition if the Cabinet were not too provocative (Byrka instead of Zdziechowski, and Sikorski not a member) and if Witos decided to solve the Piłsudski question.³

However when Miedziński and Poniatowski, P.O.W. members of the Liberation, heard about this, they created a great uproar, and forced the P.P.S. leaders to withdraw their statements.

1. See above, Chapter III, p.210.

2. W. Grzybowski, 'Ataki na P.P.S.', Głos Prawdy 19.XII.25.

3. Rataj, op. cit., p.363.

On 18 April, when the crisis was just beginning, Żeligowski had, as a precautionary measure, ordered the concentration of a number of pro-Piłsudski-ite regiments for manoeuvres at the military camp at Rembertów, near Sulejówek.¹ The manoeuvres were to begin on 10 May. Sometime between 8 and 10 May, most probably on the morning of the 10th, when the formation of a new centre-right coalition under Witos was certain,² Piłsudski decided to act.

On that day the Marshal gave an interview to the radical Kurjer Poranny which was printed on the eleventh. It was also carried by Republika in Lodz, Dziennik Wileński in Wilno, Ilustrowany Kurjer Codzienny in Cracow, and the main Yiddish papers. Asked about his views on the developments of the previous few days, he replied, somewhat ominously,

I do not regard this process as ended, for on a number of occasions the attempts of Mr. Witos have not succeeded because of the inability or unwillingness of this gentleman to take into account the moral interests of the state.³

He strongly attacked the formation of the Witos Government and claimed that the army and foreign policy, which should be above politics, would now fall prey to party interests. The

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1. Archive of the Józef Piłsudski Institute (London), 'Relacja Generała Skwarczyńskiego', (n.d.).
 2. Witos had been charged at 1 A.M. by the President to form a Government. At 2.30 P.M. the President signed the decrees nominating the members of the new Cabinet.
 3. J. Piłsudski, 'Wywiad w Kurierze Porannym z dnia 11 Maja 1926 r.', P.Z., viii. 333.

Government was a revival of the Chjeno-Piast coalition, which he had refused to support:

I knew in advance that with such a Government there would be internal corruption and the misuse of governmental authority in every direction for party and private advantage.¹

This Government had, moreover, taken strong action against him personally.

I was surrounded by paid spies, everyone who betrayed me--the former Supreme Commander--was given advancement, I might even say attempts were made on my life.²

'I doubt', he remarked, 'whether anyone in the army would be prepared to die for a Government of this type.'³

Even before the Government had been fully sworn in on the morning of the eleventh, Witos ordered the confiscation of the papers which had printed the interview. However, some issues escaped and were circulated clandestinely. Demonstrations against the Government began, both spontaneous and organized (largely by Col. Wienawa-Długoszewski). Groups of students and officers went from café to café shouting 'We will not allow the bartering of the army', 'We will not let them steal Poland', 'Down with the Chjeno-Piast'. Incidents took place in several of the cafés, including the famous Blikle's on Nowy Świat, when

1. Ibid., p.334.

2. Loc. cit.

3. Ibid., p.335.

patrons refused to cheer Piłsudski.¹

Rumours circulated that the Government was about to arrest Piłsudski or certain of his associates, particularly Dreszer. Rzeczpospolita brought out a special issue on the eleventh claiming that legal action would shortly be taken against the Marshal.² In addition, Kurjer Poranny alleged that on the night of 11-12 May, an unidentified band had attacked Piłsudski's house in Sulejówek, and had fired shots.³ The paper admitted some years later that this incident had been staged by Piłsudski-ites, but at the time the news broke it raised the emotional temperature in Warsaw still higher.

On the same morning Piłsudski drove from Sulejówek to Rembertów. Żeligowski, in his last order before resigning, had handed over command of the troops here to the Marshal, and with the exception of one battalion from the Officer Cadet School, all the troops acknowledged his command. At about 11 a.m. they moved on Warsaw. By 2:30 p.m. they had reached Praga, on the right bank of the Vistula. They encountered no resistance here, and took control of the entrances to the three bridges (two road and one rail) which crossed the river to the centre of

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1. The events of the coup have given rise to a vast literature. Among the more important works, one might mention: J. Grzędziński, op. cit.; S. Haller, Wypadki Warszawskie od 12 do 15 Maja 1926 r. (Cracow, 1926); Karbowski, op. cit.; Piątkowski, op. cit.; Rzepecki, op. cit.; Rothschild, op. cit.
 2. Rzeczpospolita, 11.V.26, Dodatek nocny.
 3. Kurjer Poranny 13.V.26; Robotnik 13.V.26.

Warsaw.

Piłsudski afterwards claimed that he intended only an armed demonstration, and that he believed the Government would capitulate before his show of strength. The Press Bureau of the City Administration which Piłsudski set up during the fighting issued a statement on the night of the thirteenth:

Marshal Piłsudski, when he left Rembertów at the head of the military units under his command, intended to protest against the Government which had been formed by Mr. Witos, which the Marshal regarded as a Government of dishonesty.¹

This clearly reflects Piłsudski's desire not to be held responsible for unleashing civil war, but is it true? There is much evidence to support it. Many contemporary observers accepted Piłsudski's explanation of his intentions: Gen. Sikorski, who was not particularly sympathetic towards his aims, believed that the Marshal intended only an armed demonstration;² so did the author of the memorandum 'Jak doszło do wojny domowej'.³ An armed demonstration of much smaller dimensions had succeeded in November 1925 in preventing the nomination of Sikorski as Minister of War. Moreover Piłsudski believed that Wojciechowski shared his own negative assessment of the Witos Cabinet, and would not resist him.

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1. Dokumenty Chwili I (Warsaw, 1926), p.17.
 2. W. Sikorski, 'Kartki z dziennika', Żołnierz Polski, xiii (July 1957), p.4.
 3. 'Jak doszło do wojny domowej', op. cit., p.138.

He also believed that his military strength would ensure speedy capitulation. From Rembertów Piłsudski had brought the 7th Regiment of Uhlans, led by Col. Kazimierz Stamirowski, the 22nd Infantry Regiment, led by Col. Henryk Krok-Paszkowski, one regiment of mounted riflemen, led by Col. Stefan Hańka-Kulesza, the Rembertów manoeuvre battalion under Major Aleksander Rutkowski and the exercise division of the 28th Regiment of Light Artillery, led by Major Mieczysław Koraziewicz. In addition, some units in Warsaw had declared for Piłsudski. These included the 1st Regiment of Light Infantry and the 36th Regiment of the Academic Legion. Piłsudski-ite supporters were found in many other Warsaw units as well, and in all departments of the Ministry of War. Gen. Rayski, a Piłsudski-ite, commanded the air force in Warsaw.¹

The 11th Regiment of Uhlans and the 13th Infantry Regiment, both of which supported Piłsudski, were only a few hours from the capital. Moreover, as we have seen, Piłsudski possessed considerable strength in the various provincial garrisons. Gen. Małachowski in Lodz declared himself at once on the side of the coup, and Gen. Rydz-Smigły in Wilno sent the 1st Legionary Division to Warsaw. Piłsudski expected that Gen. Skierski in Toruń and Gen. Sosnkowski in Poznań would be able to prevent the transferring of Government reinforcements from

1. For the military situation, see: Karbowski, op. cit., pp.328-32; Piątkowski, op. cit., pp.183-5.

these National Democratic strongholds. His control of the commands in Skierniewice and Częstochowa would enable him to cut off the pro-government troops in Cracow and perhaps in Lwów, where Gen. Sikorski had been sent after he had ceased to be Minister of War.

The forces at the immediate disposal of the Government were much weaker. It could count on the Cadet School, commanded by Col. Gustaw Paszkiewicz whose one battalion at Rembertów had returned to Warsaw and placed itself under the command of the Government, on the Officers Infantry School under Major Marian Porwit and, with less certainty, on the 30th Rifleman's Regiment, under Col. Izydor Modelski, and the 21st Infantry Regiment. In addition, the Government possessed one platoon of the 1st Mounted Artillery Division and an armoured car platoon.¹

The disposition of Piłsudski's troops also lends support to the claim that he planned an armed demonstration only. If he had hoped to take Warsaw by fighting, he would not have advanced in such a way as to be compelled to attack over the river. Furthermore he lacked the heavy infantry which would have been necessary to force the bridges.

The Government realized that it was faced with a crisis when, on the night of the 11th, the 7th Regiment of Uhlans, marching from Mińsk Mazowiecki to Rembertów, disobeyed the

1. Karbowski, op. cit., pp.333-5, p.340.

orders of the new Minister of War, Gen. Malczewski, to return to base.¹ Early on the 12th the Cabinet began discussing what action it should take. It has been argued that Witos was willing to give way, but that he was prevented from doing so by pressure from the National Democratic Cabinet Ministers and especially from the Government's military advisers.² The evidence is inconclusive, however. Witos' memoirs, as one would expect, do not mention any willingness on his part to make concessions. During the last few days of the crisis, one of his main preoccupations had been the fear that he might be thought a coward.³ This suggests that he too may have favoured a hard line. So does the fact that he failed to inform Wojciechowski, who was believed to be sympathetic to Piłsudski, of the Cabinet meeting on the 12th.⁴

In this Witos misjudged the President. Wojciechowski, who had returned by 3 o'clock in the afternoon from his summer residence at Spala, argued more strongly than anyone else against compromise. His position caused some surprise, and is usually attributed to his chagrin at being deceived by Piłsudski, who had given him his word that he was not planning a coup. Yet even earlier he had shown some resentment at Piłsudski's high-handedness with him. On 5 May he told Rataj that he wanted a

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1. Grzędziński, op. cit., p.19.
 2. Pobóg-Malinowski, op. cit., pp.477-8.
 3. See, for example, Rataj, op. cit., p.363.
 4. Morawski, op. cit., p.1.

Government with a parliamentary majority, since he wished to avoid a clash with the Sejm. 'With Piłsudski', he added 'I am not going to talk, he treats me in a disrespectful way.'¹

By 2 p.m. on the 12th, the Government had determined on a military showdown, and a communiqué was issued:

The criminal agitation spread for a long time by plotters and overthrowers of order in the army has had sad results.

A number of units of the army from various regions, collected at Rembertów, incited by false rumours and deceived by false orders have allowed themselves to break discipline and renounce obedience to the Government of the Republic.

The Government of the Republic, standing guard over the constitution and maintaining law and order, has protected the capital from invasion by the rebellious leaders and the units deceived by them.

The President, as the highest military authority, orders the rebels to come to their senses and submit to the Government.

The Government calls on all citizens to remain completely calm, and to obey the legal authorities of the Republic.²

In addition, the President issued a separate appeal to the army. A state of emergency was proclaimed in the Warsaw province and in the Siedlce and Pułtusk districts of the Lublin province. Supreme command of the troops was assumed by Gen. Malczewski, the Minister of War. General Tadeusz Rozwadowski was placed in command of the defence of Warsaw, and Col.

1. Rataj, op. cit., p.361.

2. Dokumenty Chwili i. 5.

Władysław Anders was named his chief of staff. Gen. Stanisław Haller became Chief of the General Staff. There was a conspicuous predominance of former Austrian officers among those leading the Government's troops.

After all the preparations for resistance had been made, Wojciechowski went down to the Poniatowski Bridge, where Piłsudski had established himself on the Praga side. Through an adjutant he arranged a meeting with the Marshal at the centre of the bridge.¹ Wojciechowski refused Piłsudski's proffered hand, and stated at once 'I uphold the honour of the Polish army'.

Piłsudski, somewhat surprised, replied 'Well, well, but not in this way'.

'I represent Poland here,' Wojciechowski continued, 'I demand you make your protest legally, that you give a direct answer to the Government's appeal'.

'For me', countered Piłsudski, 'the legal road is closed'.² After further vain attempts to persuade Wojciechowski that he intended no action against the President, but only against the Witos Government, and that he should be allowed to pass into the city, Piłsudski turned to the Government troops. When they

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1. The course of their conversation is well documented. Wojciechowski recorded his version, which was published by S. Arski, op. cit., p.418. See also the account by the President's son-in-law: W.J. Grabski, 'Ostatnie rozmowy Piłsudskiego z Wojciechowskim', Kierunki v, 19 (15.V.1960), p.11. For Piłsudski's account, see his P.Z. ix. 15. In addition, a number of cadets from the Cadet School overheard part of the conversation; see Rzepecki, op. cit., pp.22-5; Piątkowski, op. cit., Bellona (1961), pp.186-8; the account of Józef Kuropieska, another cadet is printed in Karbowski, op. cit., W.P.H. iv. 335.
 2. Arski, op. cit., p.418.

too failed to respond to his appeals, he returned to his side of the bridge. Civil war was imminent.

Piłsudski was completely cast down by the realization that he had either to submit or to use force. He returned to the headquarters of the 36th Regiment of the Academic Legion. 'The Marshal', writes Stefan Benedykt, an eye-witness,

lay on a couch. He looked bad, was pale, exhausted and depressed.

For a long time he said nothing. Then he said 'I have come to you. The Poniatowski Bridge is lost. Do you understand, lost...lost...lost.'

When he was told that a battalion from the 36th Infantry Regiment had taken possession of the Kierbiedź Bridge, he replied 'You are wrong, boys, that is not so, there is no entry to Warsaw.'¹

In fact, the military situation was not quite as gloomy as it seemed. Following the interview on the bridge, Wojciechowski had returned to the Cabinet meeting where he again argued against any compromise, and after the meeting ended he promised Witos that he would not allow 'such an indignity to take place as to give in to rebels.'² The military advisers to the Government at first resolved to withdraw to safely loyal Poznań and to crush the revolt from there. However the

1. S. Benedykt, op. cit., Wiadomości (1959), p.1.

2. According to the report of Nowy Kurjer Polski, 13.V.1926.

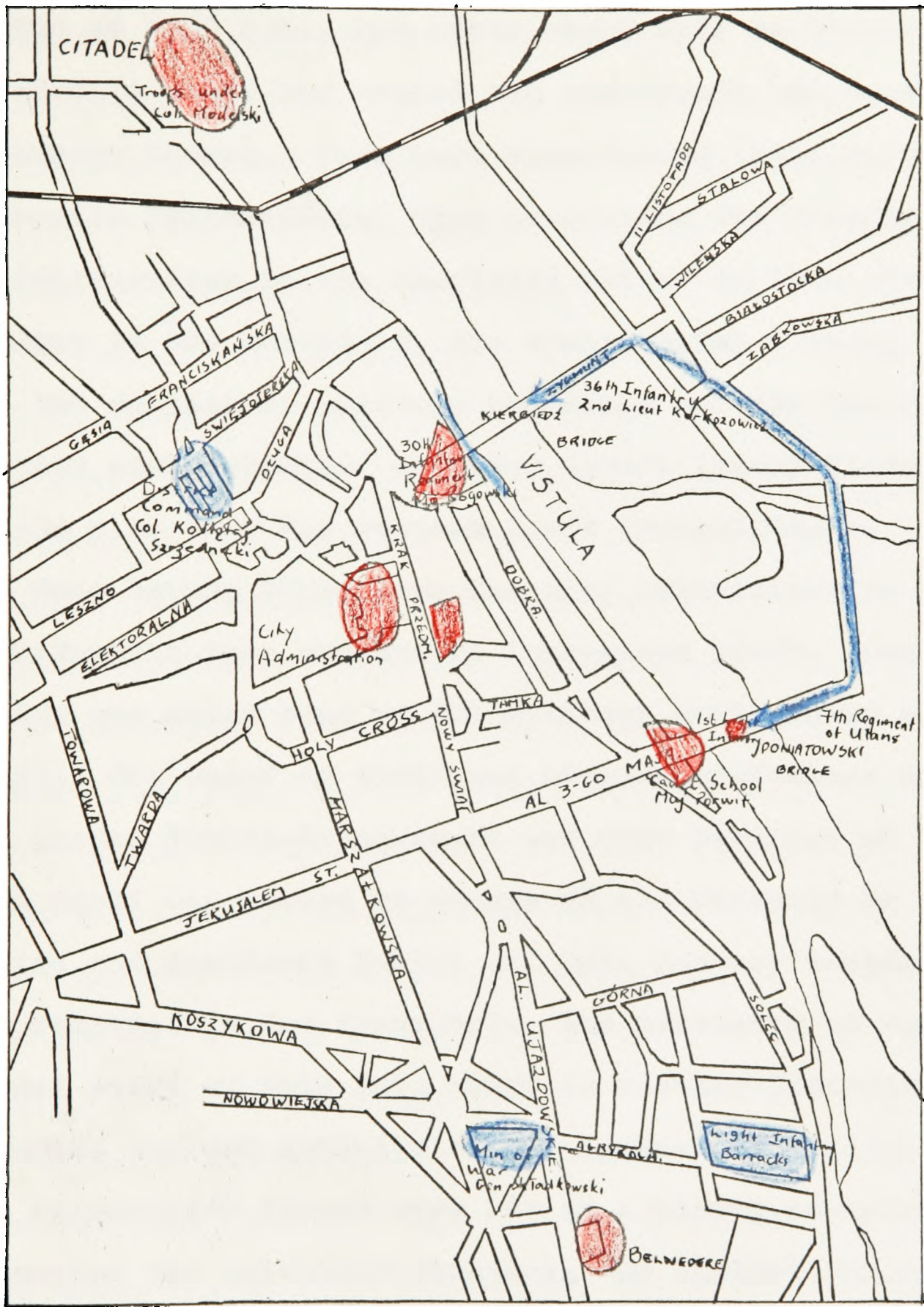
disastrous political consequences of such a plan led to its abandonment. Instead, the Government entrenched itself firmly behind the three bridges across the Vistula. They reinforced their position heavily, placing one company of the 21st Infantry Regiment, one squadron of light infantry and the regiment from the Officers Infantry School on the Poniatowski Bridge, and a police division with another company of the 21st Infantry Regiment on the Kierbedź Bridge. Nevertheless when one company of the 36th Regiment of the Academic Legion, which had declared for Piłsudski, crossed from Praga, the 21st Regiment allowed them to take possession of the exit from the Kierbedź Bridge.¹ The Piłsudski-ites now had access to Warsaw, though they would still have to fight their way up the escarpment.²

Piłsudski, thrown into confusion and despair by the unexpected resistance of Wojciechowski and the Government forces, still hesitated to take action. It was left to Gen. Orlicz-Dreszer to assume command of the rebel troops. An attack was

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1. The incident is differently described in Rothschild, op.cit., pp.63-4, where it is stated that this company of the 36th Regiment was sent by the Government to reinforce the bridge, and there went over to the rebels, thus opening Warsaw to Piłsudski. This account is contradicted by Grzędziński, by Karbowski, who is generally very reliable, and by Col. Sawicki, who commanded the 36th infantry. See Grzędziński, op. cit., p.22, Karbowski, op. cit., W.P.H. (1959), pp.336-8, and Archive of the Józef Piłsudski Historical Institute (London), 'K. Sawicki, 36pp. w przełomie majowym', (1957).
 2. Warsaw is built on two levels; the main part of the city is situated on a bluff, with the river below.

GOVERNMENT TROOPS

PIŁSUDSKI'S TROOPS



MILITARY SITUATION IN WARSAW ON 12 MAY
 BETWEEN 5 P.M. AND 7 P.M.

GOVERNMENT TROOPS.
 PIŁSUDSKI'S TROOPS.

mounted at 6:30 p.m., and after about half an hour's fighting Piłsudski's units had scaled the escarpment and taken possession of Zamkowy Square. From here they forced their opponents down Krakowskie Przedmieście, thus compelling the Government, which was deliberating in the Radziwiłł Palace on this street, to withdraw to the Belvedere, the Presidential palace. They then took the complex of military buildings and the headquarters of the city administration on Saxon Square (today Victory Square). By 8:30 p.m. they had reached Aleje Jerozolimskie.

Once having taken over the city administrative headquarters, the Piłsudski-ites created an improvised staff. Gen. Orlicz-Dreszer was named head of the military units known as the 'Warsaw Group'. His Chief of Staff was Lieutenant-Colonel Józef Beck. Gen. Lucjan Sławoj-Składkowski was made Governor of Warsaw, Roman Knoll was placed in charge of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Kazimierz Bartel and Col. January Grzędziński were made responsible for transport. The necessity of forming a General Staff at this late stage is another indication that Piłsudski had not anticipated any large-scale military action.

Piłsudski's forces were now in a strong position. They controlled the telephone exchange, the Railway Ministry and the District Headquarters of the Railways, so that the only reliable link the Government had with the rest of Poland was by air.

(The Government had succeeded in replacing Gen. Rayski, the Piłsudski-ite head of the air force, by Gen. Zagórski). They also held the Main Railway Station and the offices of the General Staff. Furthermore, Piłsudski's troops were numerically superior to those of the Government.

Nevertheless, Piłsudski decided to try to settle the conflict by negotiation. Wojciechowski had already refused to see a joint delegation of the Left parties, and he now refused to see Piłsudski's emissaries, first Rataj and then Żeligowski. Piłsudski also tried, through Stanisław Mackiewicz, to set up a conciliation committee, composed of large landowners such as Prince Lubomirski and Alexander Meysztowicz, on the 13th.¹ However all these attempts failed because of the absolute intransigence of Wojciechowski. 'This suppurating (ropiejacy) abcess must finally be cut out', he told Gen. Haller.² He had taken personal charge of military operations, as Head of the Armed Forces, and of the Cabinet he allowed only Witos to deal directly with the generals.³

He was affected too by the optimism of his military entourage, who believed that reinforcements could soon be brought in to crush Piłsudski. Already on the 12th two ministers, Stefan

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1. See W. Glinka, op. cit., Polityka, xi (1957), 6.
 2. S. Haller, op. cit., p.23.
 3. Witos, op. cit., p.105.

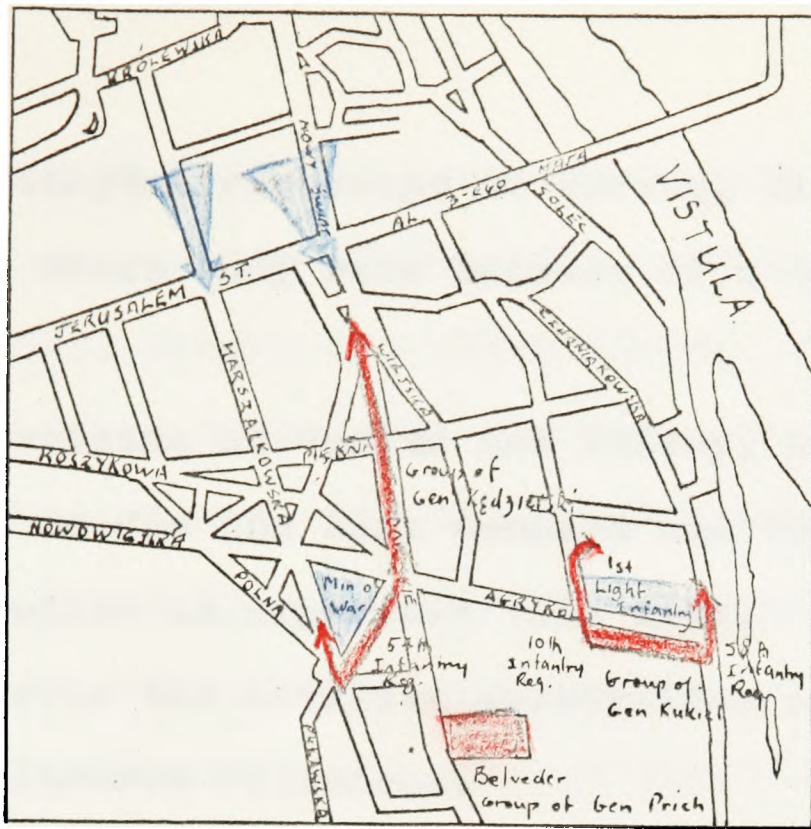
Piechocki and Stanisław Osiecki, had been sent to Poznań and their reports about the popular mood there were encouraging.¹ On the 13th the Government expected the arrival of the 10th Infantry Regiment from Łomża, the 57th and 58th Regiments from Poznań the 71st Regiment from Ostrów Łomżyński and the 26th Regiment from Lwów; the 6th Regiment from Cracow and the 3rd Regiment from Tarnowskie Góry were scheduled to arrive somewhat later. In addition the Government had ordered Gen. Rybak, Divisional Commander in Brześć, to stop any Piłsudski-ite troops coming from Wilno.²

In fact the reaction in the provincial garrisons was not quite what either side expected. Piłsudski, believing that a show of force would achieve his ends, had not devoted much time to preparation outside Warsaw. The District Command in Poznań declared for the Government after Gen. Sosnkowski, who had attempted suicide, perhaps because of the conflict of loyalties with which he found himself confronted, had been replaced.³ So did that in Toruń, where the Piłsudski-ite commander, Gen. Skierski, was arrested by his lower-ranking officers. Cracow came out for the Government, and Gen. Sikorski in Lwów did as well, though somewhat ambiguously. He refused to send more than

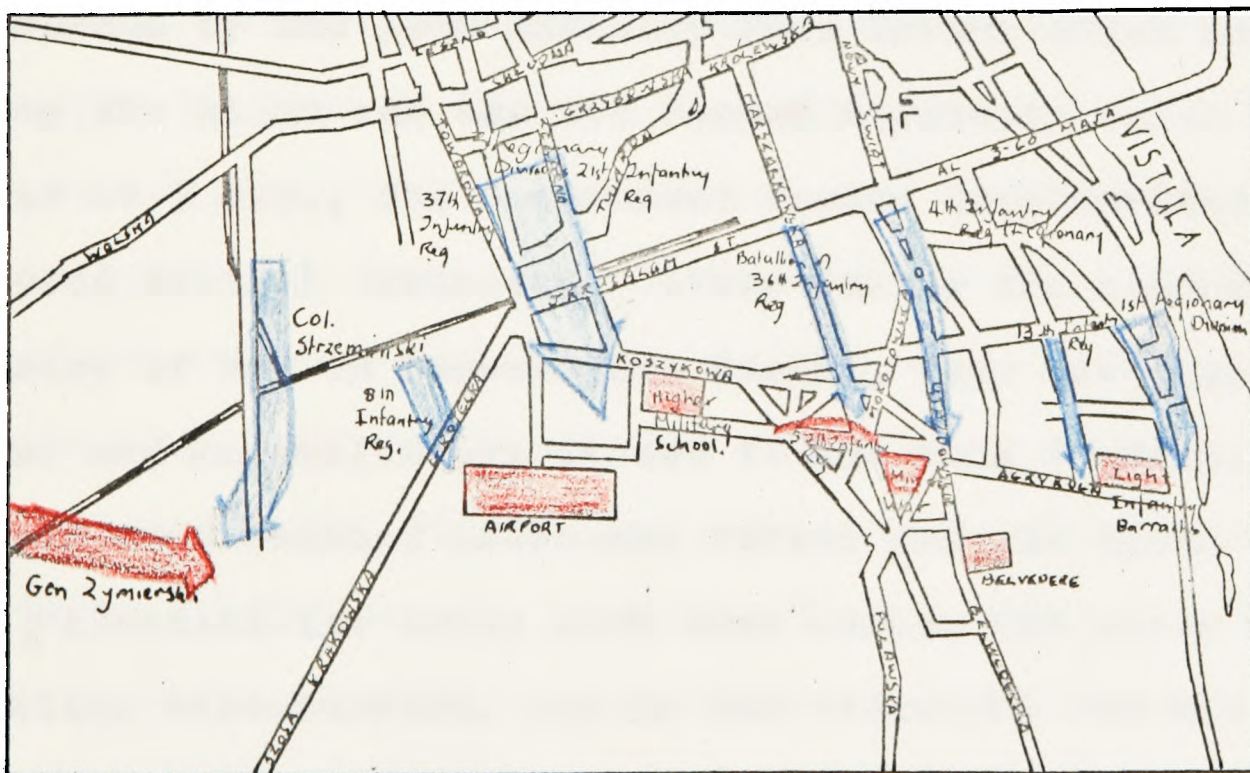
1. Loc. cit.

2. Haller, op. cit., pp.20-21, p.29.

3. The Sosnkowski affair remains somewhat mysterious, and has given rise to a large literature: see, for example, Pobóg-Malinowski, op. cit., pp.483-4; Romeyko, op. cit., VII, No.4, pp.279-83; K. Morawski, Tamten brzeg (Paris, 1962), pp.145-6.



MILITARY SITUATION IN WARSAW ON 13 MAY.



MILITARY SITUATION ON 14 MAY.

█ GOVERNMENT TROOPS.

█ PIŁSUDSKI'S TROOPS.

a token contingent of troops to Warsaw, claiming that the rest were needed where they were because of a threatened Ukrainian uprising.¹

The garrisons at Modlin and Puławy, near Warsaw, supported Piłsudski. So did the Lodz command and the Częstochowa command, which controlled an important rail link. In Wilno Gen. Rydz-Śmigły won over the civilian authorities and sent a divisional corps to reinforce Piłsudski.

The Marshal spent most of the 13th in attempts to negotiate a settlement. He limited his military operations to defending the position he already held. However in the afternoon, reinforced by the 10th Infantry from Łowicz which had arrived during the night and the two Poznań regiments which had reached Warsaw at 3 p.m., the Government forces counterattacked.² They had some initial successes. After taking the headquarters of the Ministry of War on Nowowiejska Street, they moved up Ujazdowskie Avenue and Marszałkowska Street to the Main Station. Their patrols even reached Królewska Street and the Saxon Garden. Some Piłsudski-ite units went back across the river as the situation deteriorated, and so did Piłsudski and his staff, who established themselves in the Eastern Station.

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1. For Sikorski's conduct, see Sikorski, op. cit.; Haller, op. cit., pp.27-8, 44-6.
 2. See Karbowski, op. cit., pp.356-60; Haller, op. cit., pp.31-39.

Rozwadowski intended to encircle the Piłsudski-ites who remained in the centre of the city with the help of the troops in the Citadel, behind the rebel lines. But unknown to the Government, these troops had gone over to the Marshal. Gen. Modelski was arrested, and the two regiments there placed themselves at the disposal of Gen. Burhardt-Bukacki, a supporter of Piłsudski. Then, reinforced by the arrival of troops from Kutno, the insurgents were able to force the Government troops back along Marszałkowska to Union Square.

A considerable factor in the frustration of the Government's attack was the success of the Piłsudski-ites in preventing the arrival of Government reinforcements. The 55th Infantry was persuaded to take no part in the conflict. The 71st Infantry from Ostrów was internally divided, and eventually went over to the insurgents.¹ Through their control of the telephone and telegraph systems, the Piłsudski-ites could confuse local commanders. Control of the railway network was also important.² Already on the eve of the Coup, unknown to the central committee of the P.P.S., Adam Kuryłowicz, head of the Railway Workers' Union, had been discussing ways of controlling the situation with Moraczewski and Ziemięcki, two prominent

1. Karbowski, op. cit., p.354.

2. For the situation on the railways, see Grzędziński, op. cit., pp.30-54. Grzędziński was deputed by Piłsudski to take charge of the Railway Ministry during the fighting.

supporters of Piłsudski within the party.¹ During the fighting his union members sabotaged trains bringing Government troops to Warsaw, but allowed Piłsudski-ite forces to pass. On the 13th he called a railway workers' strike without previously consulting the P.P.S. influence of the National Workers' Party was

This strike had much to do with forcing the hand of the central committee of the party, which had been discussing the situation since the Coup began. Those of its members who, like Perl and Lieberman, had reservations about the Marshal would have liked to impose some conditions before committing themselves to support him. However the news of the railway strike which Moraczewski announced at this meeting of the central committee left the P.P.S. virtually no alternative but to call a general strike for the 14th.²

It has often been argued that the general strike was decisive in ensuring Piłsudski's success.³ This is incorrect. If any strike was decisive it was the rail strike, and even had the P.P.S. not called a general strike, the members of the socialist Railway Workers' Union, who had good reason for bitterness on account of the Government's economic policy and

1. Pragier, op. cit., p.319.

2. Pragier, op. cit., pp.319-22. See also Barlicki's statement during the Brześć trial in Proces Brzeski (London, 1941), pp.39-40, and H. Lieberman 'Wspomnienia' (unpublished, in the possession of Mr. A. Ciołkosz, London), pp.286-8.

3. See, for example, Rothschild, op. cit., p.129; H. Roos, A History of Modern Poland (London, 1966), p.112.

the previous Witos Government's conscription of railway workers, would have continued to obey Kuryłowicz's orders.¹ Yet although the rail strike did help the insurgents, it was not universally supported. The railway workers in western Poland, where the influence of the National Workers' Party was predominant, did not strike. Indeed, more important than the strike was the sabotage organized by Kuryłowicz, for example at Kutno and Częstochowa, which certainly did much to delay the arrival of Government reinforcements.²

The position of the Government on the night of the 13th was bad. The Citadel had been lost, the airport was cut off, and reinforcements were not arriving. Piłsudski, on the other hand, expected substantial reinforcements, the Legionary Division from Wilno, the 3rd from Zamość, Chelm and Lublin and the 2nd from Kielce. He made a final attempt, through Żeligowski, to negotiate a settlement. This failed, and when the reinforcements he was expecting arrived at 2:30 a.m. he decided to mount a major attack on the 14th in order to settle the issue.

At 5 a.m. on the morning of the 14th, Piłsudski began his attack, covered by machine guns, artillery and tanks.³ By mid-

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1. See above, Chapter III, pp.208-209. For Kuryłowicz's contacts with the Piłsudski-ites during the Coup, see Grzędziński, op. cit., pp.26-8, p.32.
 2. Grzędziński, op. cit., pp.35, 41, 46.
 3. See Karbowski, op. cit., pp.358-66; Haller, op. cit., pp.31-47.

morning his troops had surrounded the airport and were threatening the Belvedere. The Government's reinforcements from Cracow and Poznań were still delayed by transport difficulties. By early afternoon the insurgents had taken the airport and had regained possession of the headquarters of the Ministry of War. At about 5 p.m. they took the Belvedere.

The Government had already withdrawn to Wilanów, about five miles south. Here a fierce debate was raging.¹ The Military were in favour of withdrawing to Poznań to continue the struggle, and were supported by Zdziechowski. Witos and Wojciechowski wanted to submit, arguing that a prolonged civil war would expose the country to serious internal and external dangers. At 7 p.m. the Government and the President both decided to resign. A message was sent to Rataj, the Marshal of the Sejm, who came to receive Wojciechowski's resignation at midnight. Legally, Rataj was now Acting President and could call on any one he chose to form a Government. However the contrast between the legal and the actual position emerged clearly in the communiqué issued by General Burhardt-Bukacki, Chief of Piłsudski's General Staff, early on 15 May:

The President of the Republic has abdicated his power in favour of Marshal Piłsudski, and has recognized him as the only person worthy and fit to govern Poland.... Marshal Piłsudski is working together with Marshal Rataj to create a new

1. Witos, op. cit., iii. 110-12; Haller, op. cit., pp. 47-54.

had a Government of honest men who will be worthy of office.¹

To the surprise of some members of his staff, Piłsudski decided against taking direct power, and allowed Rataj to hold the position of Acting President. The politicians of the Right hoped that Rataj would make use of the Government reinforcements which had arrived on the morning of the 15th from Poznań under General Łados to strengthen his hand against Piłsudski. The arrival of these troops had even led some of the more fire-eating generals, such as Haller and Rozwadowski, to contemplate a renewal of hostilities.² Rataj originally intended to create a 'Cabinet of national reconciliation' headed by the moderate Piast Deputy Jan Dąbski, but after a three-hour discussion with Piłsudski on the morning of the 15th, Rataj agreed to name Bartel as provisional Premier. He was to remain in office until a new President had been elected.

Rataj, as Acting Head of State,³ issued a proclamation demanding the end of all military activity and prohibiting the revival of conflict without his permission. Piłsudski, as Minister of War, was to supervise 'the winding up of this state of affairs.'⁴ The members of the Witos Cabinet, who

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1. Dokumenty Chwili i. 26.
 2. Arski, op. cit., pp.430-1.
 3. Ibid., p.431.
 4. Rataj, op. cit., p.369.

2. See above, p.246.

3. Piłsudski, Życie, 12. 7.

had been interned, were released. However four generals, Haller, Zagórski, Malczewski and Rozwadowski remained in custody. The three days of fighting had cost some 500 killed and 1,000 wounded.¹

Piłsudski had been deliberately vague, both before and during the Coup, about his aims. In his last interview before the conflict, as we have seen, he attacked corruption in the state and the subjection of the army and of foreign policy to party considerations.² During the fighting, perhaps in a bid for left-wing support, he stated

There cannot be too much injustice in a state towards those who labour for others, there cannot be too much dishonesty in a state--if it does not want to ruin itself.³

Yet he was not eager for active military support from the Left as long as there was no serious deterioration in the situation. This was in part the result of his disillusionment with the P.P.S.'s spinelessness, as he saw it, after Narutowicz's assassination and the Cracow riots, as well as his fear of fomenting a revolution. Although he had encouraged the formation of workers' militia units, he had been very unwilling to make use of them during the fighting, giving them outdated or non-

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1. The official municipal estimate was 371 killed and 918 wounded: (Kronika Warszawy 11, No. 5 (May 1926), pp.88-90. W. Górnicki, 'Ostatni rokosz w Warszawie', Świat, 13.V.1956, p.8, estimates the number of killed at 840-60 and the wounded at 1,500.
 2. See above, p.246.
 3. Piłsudski, P.Z. ix. 9.

functioning weapons, or even no weapons at all.¹ 'The army', he stated, 'will stop shooting at my command. I do not know if civilians will stop.'²

The series of press interviews he gave after the Coup did not greatly clarify his intentions.³ He declared himself against dictatorship. In Poland, he claimed, people were too ready to load all responsibility upon one individual. Moreover Poles could not be ruled 'with a whip'.⁴ He prided himself on the return to legality:

I have accomplished something unique in history....
I have made a sort of revolution without any
right revolutionary consequences.⁵

However, although constitutional form was re-established, the return to the 1921 Constitution was not complete. Piłsudski called on Parliament to reform itself, threatening that if it did not do so 'I will not hesitate to fulfil my obligation'.⁶

As regards positive political aims, he declared grandly 'My programme is the diminution of robbery and the pursuit of

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1. See Pragier, op. cit., pp.322-4; Pobóg-Malinowski, ibid., op. cit., p.482.
 2. Pobóg-Malinowski, loc. cit.
 3. For these interviews, see Piłsudski, P.Z. ix. 11-29.
 4. Piłsudski, 'Wywiad z korespondentem "Le Matin" (25.V.26)', P.Z. ix. 22.
 5. Piłsudski, 'Wywiad ogłoszony w "Kurierze Porannym" z dnia 25 maja 1926 r.', P.Z. ix. 18.
 6. Piłsudski, 'Wywiad korespondenta "Le Matin" u Piłsudskiego w Sulejówku (23.V.26)', P.Z. ix. 13.

the path of honesty.¹ When asked why he had moved against the Government, he replied that he had been particularly revolted by 'the absolute impunity with which all financial irregularities were committed in the state' and by the state's ever increasing subjection to 'nouveaux-riches'.² He linked the widely prevalent corruption with the legal immunity of Deputies.

The views he expressed on politics were vague. A strong Government was needed in Poland to unite after 130 years the different partitions. Neither the Government nor the President were sufficiently powerful. The Sejm and Senate had too many rights. Their continual intervention hampered the smooth functioning of the Government. He also attacked excessive party spirit and the multiplicity of parties. Stressing again his independence of the left-wing parties, he stated 'Personally, I have not wanted to be a member of the Polish Right or the Polish Left.'³ If 'Left' and 'Right' referred to social questions, Poland according to Piłsudski was too poor at present to embark upon social experiments. Politically speaking, the Right in Poland, unlike the Right elsewhere, was, he claimed, a firm opponent of a strong executive and had displayed anarchic

~~the Com. the P.S. still hoped that Piłsudski would initiate~~

1. Piłsudski, 'Przemówienie do przedstawicieli stronnictw sejmowych (29.V.26)', P.Z. ix. 33.
2. Piłsudski, 'Wywiad ogłoszony w "Kurierze Porannym"...', P.Z. ix. 14.
3. Piłsudski, 'Wywiad ogłoszony w "Kurierze Porannym" z dnia 27 Maja 1926 r.', P.Z. ix. 24.

tendencies, for example in the agitation which had led to the assassination of President Narutowicz.

The new Cabinet created by Bartel had no clear political tendency either. Piłsudski took the position of Minister of War. Of the other ministers one, Młodzianowski, the Minister of the Interior, was a former legionary officer and Governor of Polesia. Four were non-party specialists and five were senior civil servants.¹ 'The Government which has been created... and the revolution which has been accomplished have nothing in common,' charged Robotnik on 16 May.²

As we have seen, the parties of the left bloc (the P.P.S., Liberation, the Peasant Party and the Club of Labour) had all strongly opposed the formation of the Witos Government. They all hailed the success of the Coup, believing that it was a decisive blow against reaction, and that it would lead to radical social changes. On 20 May the left bloc issued a declaration calling for the election of Piłsudski as President and for the dissolution of Parliament 'as an indispensable condition for the reform of public life in Poland.'³

Although it had not been informed of the preparations for the Coup, the P.P.S. still hoped that Piłsudski would initiate

1. Roos, 'Die Polnischen Regierungen 1916-39', O.E.H.F., p.677.
2. Robotnik 16.V.1926.
3. Kurjer Poranny 21.V.26.

3. Dokumenty Chwila 1. 30.

the social revolution. Meeting on 15 May, the party's central committee had anticipated the joint left declaration in calling for the dissolution of Parliament and the election of Piłsudski as President. It held that a worker-peasant Government should be formed, without the participation of those groups which had formed the Witos Cabinet. A new policy towards the minorities should be adopted and corruption among politicians punished.¹ The P.P.S. continued throughout May to campaign vigorously for Piłsudski's election as President, although many leaders of the party were becoming increasingly unhappy about Piłsudski's calls for strengthening the executive and uneasy about the actions of the Government. 'The statements and first actions of our new rulers', wrote Robotnik plaintively on 30 May 'lead one to fear that they do not see, or do not want to see, the consequences which the Coup should bring.'²

The left-wing peasant parties also called for radical policies. The parliamentary club of the Liberation demanded on 15 May the immediate dissolution of the Sejm and new elections. It declared that it would only support a 'clearly left-wing and socially radical Government.'³ The Peasant Party urged the election of Piłsudski as President and the formation of a peasant-worker Government. Parliament should be dissolved

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1. Dokumenty Chwili 1. 30.
 2. Robotnik 30.V.1926.
 3. Dokumenty Chwili 1. 30.

and corruption punished.¹ Of the parties of the left bloc, only the Club of Labour, most strongly under Piłsudski-ite influence, failed to formulate definite demands.

The policies advocated by the radical Piłsudski-ite groups were somewhat different from those called for by the parties of the Left. On 15 May a group of 12 organizations including the Riflemen's Union and the Union of Polish Youth appealed to the Marshal to

dissolve Parliament immediately, take supreme power yourself and establish new constitutional principles which will separate the executive and legislature and increase the powers of the head of state.²

The Piłsudski-ites placed great stress upon the campaign against corruption and founded an occasional paper, Nakazy Chwili, edited by Adam Skwarczyński, devoted to advancing the cause. The first issue of 22 May contained a list of senior officials accused of theft, corruption or incompetence. It included the most prominent members of the Witos Cabinet as well as Stańisław Karpiński, the President of the Bank of Poland, Jan Żarnowski, head of the Main Auditing Office, and Jan Kanty-Steczkowski, President of the Bank of National Economy.³

1. Ibid., pp.30-1.

2. Quoted in Głos Prawdy 20.V.26.

3. Nakazy Chwili 22.V.26. The former were placed on a black list, while the latter who were regarded as slightly less culpable, were named in a "grey list".

The Communist Party also supported the Coup. A new, leftist leadership of Julian Leński, Leon Purman and Henryk Stein had replaced Warski and Kostrzewa, who had been accused by Stalin at the 5th Comintern Conference in 1924 of excessively favouring Trotsky. However this new leadership also fell into disfavour with Moscow for initiatives in the international field, and Warski again took over in mid-1925. Extreme leftism, and terrorism were abandoned.¹ Though some members of the party were apprehensive of the danger of a Piłsudski-ite dictatorship, the party feared much more a possible fascist coup by the Right. It thus supported Piłsudski in the armed clash, and even offered to form a militia. By the end of May, after Piłsudski's unequivocal refusal to accept any Communist aid, and under strong criticism from Stalin for its position, the party moved into somewhat reluctant opposition. Nevertheless complete rejection of the 'May error' did not come until later in 1926.²

The national minorities, though basically favourable to the Coup, adopted an attitude of reserve. The White Russian, Ukrainian and German Clubs decided only at the last minute to vote for Piłsudski if he stood for President. The Jews, relieved at the overthrow of a nationalist and potentially anti-semitic

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1. For these developments, see Dziewanowski, op. cit., pp.105-19; Reguła, op. cit., pp.89-169. For the modern communist view, see Kowalski, op. cit., Chapter II, pp.250-339.
 2. The consequences of the 'May error' hung heavily over the life of the party in the years following. See Dziewanowski, op. cit., pp.121-54; Reguła, op. cit., pp.169-288.

Cabinet, were more open in their support. Already on 27 May, the Jewish Club, after a day of deliberations, voted to support Piłsudski's candidacy.¹ The attitude of the parties of the Centre and Right to the Coup was not as hostile as might have been expected. They shared the almost universal relief that the civil war had not lasted long enough to tempt either Russia or Germany to intervene. They realized too that they had underestimated Piłsudski, that they had gambled and lost, and that for the moment there was no possibility of overthrowing the new Government. There were even many, particularly in the Centre parties, who, partly out of opportunism and partly in the belief that he could provide a better alternative than the existing parliamentary system, hoped to come to terms with Piłsudski. Most seriously divided was the Piast. Many members of the party had opposed Witos' forming a Cabinet, and at a meeting of 32 Piast Senators and Deputies in Cracow on 18 May, there was serious disagreement over what course of action should be adopted; the resolutions passed avoided any clear statement about the new Government.² The party split three ways. The pro-Piłsudski-ites included Jan Dębski, Józefat Błyskosz and Walenty Potoczek, while the

1. Nasz Przegląd 28.V.26.

2. Czas 20.V.26; 21.V.26. See also Głos Prawdy 20.V.26, 23.V.26, 27.V.26.

anti-Piłsudski-ites were led by Władysław Kiernik and Alfons Erdman. In addition, there was a large group of neutrals. In its discussions over the election of the new President, the party failed to reach a decision, but the communiqué issued on 31 May stated that

...the club of the Piast Party, placing the interest of the state above that of parties, has decided not to oppose the candidacy of Marshal Piłsudski.¹

In fact Witos himself did not oppose Piłsudski's candidacy, regarding it as the logical consequence of the Coup.

The National Workers' Party (N.P.R.) was also seriously divided. In Warsaw and former Prussian Poland its organizations strongly condemned the Coup. However elsewhere, particularly in Lodz, there was much support for Piłsudski among its members. The anti-Piłsudski line of the party was harshly criticized by Ludwik Waszkiewicz, a former president of the parliamentary club, and Antoni Ciszak, who founded a new weekly, Nowa Sprawa Robotnicza, to advance their views.²

On the Right, there was also considerable support for Piłsudski. He had, after all, shown himself victorious, and too strong an opposition might have unpleasant consequences. People were still being arrested (though most were soon released),

1. Kurjer Poranny 31.V.26.

2. Głos Prawdy 20.V.26, 23.V.26, 27.V.26; Nowa Sprawa Robotnicza proved somewhat ephemeral however, and ceased publication at the end of August.

and newspaper censorship was in full operation. Moreover, to many on the Right, Piłsudski seemed a more attractive alternative than Communism, whose strength was believed to have increased greatly as a result of the Coup. In an article headed 'Red Prelude', Kurjer Warszawski affirmed

'One cannot say of the Communists in Poland that they have let pass this suitable opportunity for increasing their agitation. On the contrary, they have exploited it in every direction and let loose a mass of pamphlets on the country...'¹

These sentiments were strongest among the conservatives.

Already on 17 May, Mackiewicz writing in Słowo in Wilno, had called on Piłsudski to be the 'Polish Bonaparte',² and by the end of the month, Czas was also calling for Piłsudski's

election. The Piłsudski-ites took considerable pains to reassure conservative opinion.³ An article in Nowy Kurjer Polski on 28 May stressed the Government's opposition to "revolutionary agrarian slogans".⁴ A well known Piłsudski-ite lawyer,

Franciszek Paschalski, wrote in Kurjer Poranny on the 26th that Piłsudski had made his Coup 'not in the name of a social programme, but in the name of public morality.'⁵

1. Kurjer Warszawski 29.V.26.
2. Słowo 17.V.26.
3. See, for example, the articles in Kurjer Poranny on 27.V.26; 29.V.26; 31.V.26.
4. Nowy Kurjer Polski, 28.V.26.
5. Kurjer Poranny, 26.V.26.

The strongest opposition to the Coup came from the parties of the Christian Alliance for National Unity. Outside former Prussian Poland, however, this opposition was largely verbal. The executive of the Popular National Union resolved on the 15th that it would take no part in the formation of a provisional Government, and it campaigned for holding outside Warsaw the meeting of the National Assembly at which the President was to be elected.¹ Nevertheless only with difficulty did it manage to hold its allies in line. Both the Christian Democrats and the Christian National party condemned the Coup, but both, particularly the Christian Nationals, were determined not to adopt a position of intransigent opposition. It was only after long drawn out discussion and bitter conflict that the three parties agreed on the night of 30-31 May to nominate Adolf Bniński, Governor of Poznań, as their presidential candidate.²

In western Poland the situation was different.³ It was to this strongly nationalist and National-Democratic region that those members of the Government who wanted to continue the

1. Dokumenty Chwili i. 31.

2. Kurjer Poranny, 31.V.26.

3. For the situation here, see A. Czubiński, 'Wielkopolska i Pomorze wobec zamachu stanu w maju 1926 r', Studia i Materiały do dziejów Wielkopolski i Pomorza, vi, No.1 (1960), pp.153-207; R. Wapiński, Działalność Narodowej Partii Robotniczej na terenie województwa pomorskiego w latach 1920-30, Gdańsk 1962 and 'Działalność Narodowej Demokracji na Pomorzu Gdańskim w latach 1920-26', Zapiski Historyczne, xxix, No.1 (1964), pp.7-37.

2. Ibid.; 17.V.26.

struggle had intended to retreat. The area was the most highly developed economically in Poland, and felt itself far superior to the rest of the country whose development, it believed, had suffered harmful effects from Austrian and Russian rule.

Hostility to the Coup was extremely strong here. On 15 May

Kurjer Poznański wrote:

All of Western Poland persists and will persist inflexibly in the belief that there has been a rebellion against the legal authorities. He who has provoked this is and will remain a rebel, with whom the country will never have anything in common. For us he has ceased to be a Pole.¹

The reaction was most violent in Poznan. Here the Governor, Bniński, proclaimed a state of siege on the 15th, and the students of the university formed a Legion of Volunteers to march on the capital. On the 16th a group of 40 Deputies, mainly from Poznan, met at the house of the National Democratic Deputy Leon Pluciński. They issued a declaration demanding that the election of the President be held outside Warsaw, and declaring that the rest of the country was under no obligation to obey orders from the capital.² While the extremists called for the resumption of military action, the moderates demanded some form of autonomy for Poznan.

In Pomerania, a state of siege was also announced and the provincial authorities refused to re-establish telephone and

1. Kurjer Poznański, 15.V.26.

2. Ibid., 17.V.26.

telegraph links with Warsaw. In Silesia the reaction was rather weaker, both because of the autonomy which the province enjoyed and because Piłsudski-ite and Socialist organizations were stronger. However on 17 May a group of 14 Deputies, led by Korfanty, issued a declaration threatening action if all political prisoners were not released.¹

The Government was understandably worried by the situation. On 16 May Bartel conferred with Trąpczyński, the Senate Marshal and National Democrat from Poznań. Trąpczyński agreed to go to the western areas in order to restore calm. He also hoped to use the strong support the Right enjoyed there as a bargaining point with the Government. At first his efforts at pacification had no real success. On 20 May an 'Organization for the Defence of the State' was created in Poznań which held that western Poland should be the base from which social revolution would be crushed. Similar organizations were set up in Pomerania and Upper Silesia. Nevertheless the proclamation which Trąpczyński issued on the 20th did have some effect.² He strongly deprecated violent action and called on Poznań to submit to the provincial (though not the national) authorities. Although the situation still remained tense, too many rash threats had been made, and people were tired of words without

them, but no party agreements could be made. His name

1. Dokumenty Chwili ii, 20.

2. The text is quoted in Kurjer Poranny 21.V.26.

2. Korawski, Instytut 1926, p. 100.

action. In spite of their statements, all the Deputies from the western regions took part in the National Assembly.

The date set for the election of the President was 31 May. Rataj failed to respond to right-wing demands, and agreed to convene the National Assembly in Warsaw holding that this 'would testify to the outside world and to the country that the situation had returned to normal.'¹ Piłsudski intended to stand for President so that by his election the Coup could be given the final stamp of legality, but he had no intention of assuming office. All his statements on the subject were deliberately vague, so as not to arouse suspicion. He devoted much time to seeking a suitable candidate actually to serve as President.

First he approached two conservatives, Zdzisław Lubomirski and Marian Zdziechowski, both of whom refused.² So did Artur Śliwiński, a dedicated follower of the Marshal who had been Prime Minister for a short time in 1922. When, just after Piłsudski's election, Bartel suggested Ignacy Mościcki, an eminent chemist who had been an obscure member of the P.P.S. before 1914, the Marshal agreed, confident (correctly, as it proved) that Mościcki would remain completely subservient to him.

Two days before the election, Piłsudski spoke to a group of Left and Centre Deputies. The election was free, he assured them, but no party agreements should be made. His speech was

1. Robotnik, 22.V.26.

2. Morawski, Tamten brzeg, p.159.

full of implied threats. 'Things have so turned out', he said,

that I need not have let you into the National Assembly, and could have mocked you all. But I would want to see if one can still rule Poland without the whip.¹

He was elected on the first ballot by 292 votes to 193 for Bniński, the candidate of the Right, and 61 blank votes. The Left, most of the Piast, some Christian Democrats, the Jews and the Germans voted for the Marshal. The Slavic minorities abstained. Immediately after the election Piłsudski wrote to Rataj declining to take office. He claimed that his personality was not suited to it, and charged that there were still many in Parliament responsible for Narutowicz's death.²

The new election took place on 1 June. The P.P.S., angered by Piłsudski's duplicity, nominated their own candidate, Marek, and the 56 votes he won made a second ballot necessary. This time Mościcki was elected by 281 votes to 200 for Bniński and 63 abstentions.

Piłsudski decided for the moment against the dissolution of Parliament, a step which had been urged by the Left and even by Bartel himself.³ He believed that the present Sejm would

1. Piłsudski, 'Przemówienie do przedstawicieli stronnictw sejmowych (29.V.1926)', *P.Z.* ix. 32.
2. Piłsudski, 'Pismo do Marszałka Sejmu o nieprzyjęciu wyboru na prezydenta Rzeczypospolitej 31.V.26.' *P.Z.*, ix. 33-4.
3. See, for example, the report of his press conference of 24.V.26 in Nowy Kurjer Polski, 25.V.26.

prove sufficiently accommodating for the needs of the Government. An election would delay the return of calm to the country and would in all probability result in a strongly left-wing Parliament, filled with a consciousness of its own rights and demanding radical change. When Baranowski asked Piłsudski in June whether there would be new elections, he replied:

What I have before me I know, and I know what I can depend on. It is not clear what tomorrow will bring, so I will not hurry....Moreover, at present they vote as I like, resolve as I command, because they are afraid.¹

After Mościcki's election, Bartel resigned, as had been agreed. He was asked by the President, after discussions with Piłsudski, again to form a Government, and after three days' reflection he consented. Although the new Cabinet, finally constituted in the second half of June, included 6 new ministers, its composition differed little from that of its predecessor. Piłsudski again held the portfolio of Minister of War and Młodzianowski that of the Interior. The rest of the posts were held in almost equal numbers by senior civil servants and non-party specialists.² Bartel tried in vain to placate the Left by inviting Juliusz Poniatowski of the Liberation and Moraczewski of the P.P.S. to take office; both refused. His approaches to

1. W. Baranowski, Rozmowy z Piłsudskim (Warsaw, 1938), p.198.
 2. Roos, 'Die Polnischen Regierungen 1916-39', O.E.H.P., p.677.

2. The Government's proposal is reported to P.P.S.N., 16.VI.26, as 'Zajęcie 20 do nr. 23'.

3. P.P.S.N., 3.VII.26, Zajęcie 14

the Right, in particular his offer of the Foreign Ministry to the former Activist, Prince Janusz Radziwiłł, were also unsuccessful. He did succeed in inducing the Christian Democrat Paweł Romocki to take the Railway Ministry, but in order to accept Romocki was forced to leave the party.

On 9 June the Cabinet began to discuss the changes in the constitution which the Government desired,¹ and on the 16th a draft bill was placed before the Sejm. It limited the period during which Parliament had to be in session to four months. If the budget was not voted during that period, the Government's proposed budget would be adopted automatically. The President was given the right to dissolve Parliament if the Council of Ministers so resolved. New elections had to be held in 120 days (instead of 90). The President was given a 30 day suspensive veto over legislation. He was also granted the power to issue proclamations with the force of law when Parliament was not sitting and, until the end of 1927, also when Parliament was sitting.² As a justification for these proposals, Wacław Makowski, the Minister of Justice, informed the Cabinet:

The...law has as its goal the satisfaction of most pressing needs, the necessity of which has become evident in the years since the adoption of the constitution of 17 March 1921.³

1. AAN, Zespół Prezydium Rady Ministrów, Protokoły Posiedzeń Rady Ministrów, 9 June 1926, item 3. (These minutes are cited below as 'P.P.R.M'.)
2. The Government's proposal is appended to P.P.R.M, 16.VI.26, as 'Załącznik 20 do nr. 23'.
3. P.P.R.M., 3.VII.26, Załącznik I.

The Centre and Right for the most part responded favourably. They had frequently demanded such changes and now felt that 'If a coup had been made in May and blood spilt, at least Poland should gain from it, and obtain a good constitution.'¹ They were also prepared for the moment to see what the Government could do. At the same time they took advantage of the opportunity to put forward a number of constitutional proposals of their own which differed from the Government's mainly in demanding a modification of the electoral system.² The Left was divided. Both the Peasant Party and the Liberation were, with some reservations, favourable to the Government's initiative. The P.P.S. was not. In two strongly-worded articles in Robotnik, 'Towards Omnipotence for the Government' and 'The Argument of the Whip',³ Daszyński criticized the proposed changes. In the parliamentary debate he declared 'Instead of one evil, omnipotence for Parliament, we do not want to introduce another, omnipotence for the Government.'⁴

On its third reading on 22 July the bill, somewhat modified by the Sejm Constitutional Committee, was finally approved by 246 votes to 95, thus achieving the two-thirds

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1. Rataj's paraphrase of their views, Rataj, op. cit., p.376.
 2. These are appended to P.P.R.M., 3.VII.26.
 3. Robotnik, 18.VI.26, 19.VI.26.
 4. S.S.S.R. 5.VII.26, Col.34.

Ibid., (1926) No. 70, p.380.

2. Ibid., art. 1, p.380.

3. Ibid., art. 1, p.380.

majority required. The Popular National Union, Christian Nationalists, Christian Democrats, Piast, N.P.R., Club of Labour and the Peasant Party voted for the Government. The P.P.S., the Communists and the Slavic minorities voted against. The rest abstained. After the Senate's modifications had been rejected, the changes to the constitution were finally adopted on 2 August. As adopted, the proposals were in two parts. The first, which was not a constitutional amendment, was the law conferring on the President the power to issue decrees with the force of law until the dissolution of the Parliament then sitting.¹ These decrees could be used to bring laws into harmony with the constitution and to implement its provisions, to reorganize and simplify the administration of the state, to regulate the exercising of justice and to deal with social and economic matters.² Specifically excluded were those matters which, according to the constitution, required legislation, such as the voting of the budget, the size of the army, the parliamentary control of state debts, the declaration of war and the constitutional responsibility of ministers. In addition, decrees could not be used to impose new taxes, create new monopolies, materially increase tariffs or to modify the electoral system,

1. 'Ustawa z dnia 2 sierpnia 1926r. o upoważnieniu Prezydenta Rzeczypospolitej do wydawania rozporządzeń z mocą ustaw', Dz.U.R.P., (1926) No. 78, p.880.

2. Ibid., art. 1, p.880.

3. Ibid., art. 4, p.878.

provincial boundaries, provincial autonomy, school and language laws or the marriage law.¹

The constitutional modifications differed little from the Cabinet proposals.² The period for which Parliament had to sit was extended to 5 months. If the Sejm did not vote a budget in this period, the Senate proposal would be adopted. If neither house voted a budget, the Government's proposal was to have the force of law. However this provision was not to be applied if Parliament had already rejected the Government's proposal as a whole. No alternative provision was made should such a situation arise, except that the budget of the previous year could be applied if Parliament was dissolved.³ The President could dissolve Parliament, but he had to give cause, and Parliament could not be dissolved twice for the same reason. The period between a dissolution and new elections was again laid down as 90 days.⁴ In revising the Senate's modifications, the Sejm discarded the existing constitutional provision which enabled the Lower House to dissolve itself by a 2/3 vote. The suspensive veto of the President was abandoned. He had, however, the right to issue decrees with the force of law when Parliament was not in session. These had to be presented to

1. Ibid., art. 2, p.880.

2. 'Ustawa z dnia 2 sierpnia 1926 r. zmieniająca i uzupełniająca Konstytucję Rzeczypospolitej z dnia 17 marca 1921 r.', Dz.U.R.P. (1926), No. 78, pp.877-9.

3. Ibid., arts. 1, 3, pp.877-8.

4. Ibid., art. 4, p.878.

The Sejm within 15 days of its reassembling.¹ Finally, provision was made for depriving a Deputy of his seat if he misused his position for financial gain.²

The Government was also strengthening its control over the civil service and the army. On 16 May the Cabinet minutes record:

The question of changes and displacements in personnel was discussed. The Government is opposed to tendencies to make a party reckoning. The necessity of removing people who do not possess the required ethical or technical qualifications was recognized.³

In fact, the changes made were not as radical as might have been expected, although the most irreconcilable opponents of Sanacja, as the Government styled itself,⁴ did lose their positions, as did some who had been blatantly guilty of improper practices. On 19 May, the Prime Minister sent a circular to all ministerial departments demanding a list of all administrative civil servants who sat on the governing bodies of financial organizations so as to facilitate the investigation of financial abuses.⁵ On the 27th Korfanty was suspended as President of the Bank of Silesia, and a Government communiqué

1. Ibid., art. 5, p.879.

2. Ibid., art. 2, p.877.

3. P.P.R.M., 16.V.26, item 4.

4. Sanacja is rather difficult to translate--it means something between 'purification' and 'reform', and was chosen in order to indicate the Government's desire to clear away the negative features of the pre-1926 political system.

5. Nowy Kurjer Polski 19.V.26.

claimed that he had misappropriated the bank's funds for his personal use.¹ The President of the Polish Mutual Assurance Company was also suspended and the entire supervisory council of the Agricultural Bank dismissed. The senior civil service was reorganized as well. The personnel of the Presidential Chancery was changed. The staff of the Prime Minister's Office was modified and the Undersecretary, Władysław Studziński, was replaced. In the Foreign Service, Stanisław Kozicki, the Ambassador to Italy, who was alleged to have asked Mussolini to intervene on Witos' behalf, was withdrawn, as was Franciszek Sokal, the Polish Delegate to the League of Nations. Kajetan Morawski, the Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs, resigned.

There were many changes in other departments too. The most important were the suspensions of Klemens Olpiński, the Undersecretary of the Ministry of the Interior, Mieczysław Rybczyński, Undersecretary and Head of the Department of Public Works and Stanisław Kauzik of the Ministry of Finance.

The provincial governorships were also reviewed and modified. Raczkiewicz took over from Rydz-Smigły in the Wilno province and the governors of the Lublin province and Polesia were suspended.

On 19 May, Piłsudski had set up a 'Committee of Liquidation'

1. Robotnik, 28.V.26. The other changes in the civil service have been taken from the contemporary press, in particular Czas, Robotnik and Nowy Kurjer Polski.

for the army, headed by Gen. Żeligowski, to 'assign all appointments, bearing in mind the latest changes caused by recent events.'¹ The officers who had been arrested after the Coup were soon released, with the exception of Rozwadowski, Zagórski, Jaźwiński and Żymierski. But the strongest opponents of the Marshal were quickly weeded out of the army. The rank of General Inspector was abolished, affecting four generals, Rozwadowski, Józef Haller, Osiński and Majewski. General Gruber was replaced as head of the Department of Military Justice at the Ministry of War by General Józef Daniec. General Kukiel, head of the Historical Department, and his adjutant received indefinite leave. General Burhardt-Bukacki became Chief of the General Staff, which was thoroughly reorganized. General Rozen replaced Col. Wieroński as head of the Police, Col. Dreszer took over the command of the Central Cavalry School from Col. Przeździecki, while command of the Cadet Corps at Modlin was conferred on Lieutenant Colonel Trzebuń in place of Col. Wiśnicki. General Mieczysław Kuliński, Commander of the Fifth Corps in Cracow, was replaced by General Stanisław Wróblewski, who had proved invaluable to the Piłsudski-ites at Częstochowa. Gen. Józef Haller and Gen. Szeptycki both resigned, while Gen. Pik, President of the Military Supreme Court was suspended. Col.

1. Nowy Kurjer Polski 20.V.26.

1. P.P.P.M., 16.VI.26, item 14.

2. Głos Prawdy 4.VIII.26. (This became a daily newspaper after the May Coup).

Rayski again took command of the air force. Sikorski was for the moment left in command of the Lwów military region, although he was forced to accept a Piłsudski-ite, Adam Koc, as his Chief of Staff.

Piłsudski was thus in a very strong position. He was in secure control of the army and the civil service. He had obtained far-reaching powers for his Government. Moreover the Right, though hostile, did not feel strong enough to challenge him. It could no longer count on its alliance with the Centre. Even in western Poland the Government felt sufficiently secure to end the state of emergency there on 16 June.¹ The Left was still basically favourable to the Marshal. Even the P.P.S., for all its opposition to the constitutional changes, was not prepared to challenge Piłsudski. The new Cabinet could now attempt to deal with those problems which had proved too much for the Governments before the Coup. 'The Government', wrote Bronisław Miedziński in Głos Prawdy on 4 August,

has before it a month and a half of free time during which it will not need to co-operate with the Sejm or enter into communication with it. The special powers, limited it is true, but corresponding as a whole to what the Government vigorously demanded, have been granted. The country, which has till now focussed its attention on the process of the struggle of the Government with the Sejm to obtain freedom of manoeuvre, now shifts its gaze, full of expectation, to the Presidential Palace and the Palace of the Cabinet.²

1. P.P.R.M., 16.VI.26, item 14.

2. Głos Prawdy 4.VIII.26. (This became a daily newspaper after the May Coup).

CHAPTER V.

'A GOVERNMENT OF LABOUR'

And now what ! What does Mr. Piłsudski want to do?... With what idea has he come? What is his programme?

Kurjer Poznański, 18.V.26.

The Government understands that it is not enough today to maintain legal order provisionally. It is further necessary to raise public life to a level of morality which will be the measure of the internal regeneration and recovery of the Republic. This moral regeneration, this development of the Republic, through respect for law and social justice and by the elimination of all party and individual egoism, the Government considers not only its future function, but also its present task.

Kazimierz Bartel, 16.V.26.

1. The New Government.

The style of the new Government in its first two years in office was set by Kazimierz Bartel, the self-educated locksmith who had become Professor of Mathematics at the Lwów Polytechnic. He held the premiership until he was replaced by Piłsudski at the beginning of October 1926, and from then until June 1928 was Vice Premier. He then became Prime Minister again, and held the office until April 1929. Piłsudski reserved for himself control over the army and questions of foreign policy, but during this period most of the day-to-day running of the Government was left to Bartel. The Marshal had already gathered around him his

inner group of advisers, drawn mainly from the P.O.W., which was to become more important as the political situation deteriorated. It included such men as Józef Beck, Bogusław Miedziński, Walery Sławek, Kazimierz Świtalski, Adam Koc, Alexander Prystor, and Janusz and Waclaw Jędrzejewicz. Many of them were already attached to Ministries as 'advisers', or held specific positions in them.¹ However, for the time being, as is abundantly clear from the Cabinet minutes, most government business went through the Cabinet. The Marshal did sometimes overrule Bartel, and force him to change his policy--in the autumn of 1926, when the Sejm voted a compromise budget in accordance with Bartel's wishes, Piłsudski insisted that the Prime Minister reject it;² similarly, he forced Bartel to accept, against his original intention, the renomination of the two Ministers, Młodzianowski and Sujkowski, against whom the Sejm had passed a vote of no confidence in September 1926³--but for the most part Piłsudski gave Bartel considerable leeway. He was even prepared to allow him a certain latitude in the selection of the Cabinet: it was not until May 1930 that he insisted upon the resignation of the able Minister of Industry and Commerce, Eugeniusz Kwiatkowski, of whom he had strongly disapproved.⁴

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1. See Rataj, op. cit., p.416.
 2. Ibid., pp.399-402.
 3. Ibid., pp.403-4.
 4. Rothschild, op. cit., p.218.

In fact Piłsudski showed little interest in the down-to-earth problems of government. Of the 92 Cabinet meetings which took place between the May Coup and the elections of March 1928, he attended only 34, and of these he remained at one for only one item.¹ Moreover, we have the testimony of Waclaw Grzybowski, head of the Prime Minister's Office at this time, that Bartel remained as fully in command in the period in which he was Vice Premier as he had been when he held the premiership.² Indeed, Piłsudski, as Prime Minister between October 1926 and March 1928, attended only 19 out of 59 Cabinet meetings.³

Piłsudski was well aware of the differences between his political technique and that of Bartel. He was prepared to wait and see whether Bartel could govern together with Parliament. 'I am showing my intention of still maintaining what is called parliamentarianism,' he told Baranowski at the end of August 1926:

It is the basis of democracy, for which there is always place in Poland, even directly in governing. I have given proof of this in forcibly keeping Bartel, whose colour and character you know, and who would like soon to resign because of his kidney complaint, which causes him continual pain. But I am determined on a final showdown, and of a brutal type, if they /the Deputies/ want to return to their former habits.⁴

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1. P.P.R.M., meetings of 1926, 1927 and 1928.
 2. Grzybowski, *op. cit.*, pp.110-11.
 3. P.P.R.M., meetings of 1926, 1927 and 1928.
 4. Baranowski, *op. cit.*, pp.205-6.

Bartel made his own political position clear in two speeches, one in the Sejm on 19 July and the other in the Senate on 30 July, outlining the policy of his Government.¹ He went out of his way to reassure the Deputies, particularly those of the Centre and Left, about the character of the 'blank cheque' they were signing in adopting the constitutional reforms demanded by the Government. He maintained that his Government was a 'Government of Labour', which needed wide powers in order to deal with the financial crisis and to reform the state administration. The Cabinet was planning no 'doctrinaire experiments in social or economic matters',² but did intend its measures to be effective. 'To govern,' stated Bartel, 'is to implement'.³ He felt that the new Government would be able to bring in a far-reaching programme of reforms because it was not paralyzed by party divisions: 'In the present Government the ministries do not constitute either "allied sovereign states" or, even more, hostile and enemy states'.⁴

The Cabinet saw as its principal task the improvement of the economic situation. Its policy did not differ radically from the earlier plans: the budget was to be balanced by cutting

1. For the Sejm speech, see S.S.S.R., 19.VII.26, cols. 13-31; for the Senate Speech, see S.S.Se.R., 30.VII.26, cols. 38-53.

2. S.S.S.R., 19.VII.26, col. 22.

3. S.S.Se.R., 30.VII.26, col. 39.

4. S.S.S.R., 19.VII.26, col. 18.

5. S.S.S.R., col. 23.

6. See, e.g., Bartel, op. cit., p. 380.

government expenditure, and the zloty stabilized; public investment would be used to revive the economy, and the importance of the agricultural sector was stressed. In addition, Bartel proposed a number of other fairly radical reforms. The state administration was to be reformed to make it more efficient and to render it readily accessible to all members of the population. The legal system was to be modernized, abolishing the differences in law between the various partitions, and a friendlier policy towards the national minorities would be adopted. The Prime Minister affirmed that

The Government will not allow the just rights of citizens who are not Poles to be endangered. It holds, moreover, that hostility towards any group of citizens because of its language or belief is contrary to the spirit of Poland.¹

In addition, the Land Reform Law was to be implemented, and servitudes were to be abolished; unemployment would be combated by extending public works; an attempt would be made to limit excessive centralization, and the provinces would not be neglected.

The two speeches were well received, particularly by the politicians of the Left and Centre,² perhaps because Bartel's concept of the limited role of Parliament did not emerge from them as clearly as it might have done. He did allow Parliament

1. Ibid., col. 23.

2. See, e.g., Rataj, op. cit., p.380.

certain functions, such as passing bills on local government and electoral reform. He was even prepared to allow Parliament to pass votes of no confidence in ministers or in policies of the Government. However, he demanded a strict separation between the executive and the legislature: the former was responsible for governing, and should not be impeded in this by the latter. He recognized that political parties had a part to play in increasing political consciousness in the country, and even in exercising some control over the activity of the Government, but felt that they should play no part in the running of the country. 'The Polish reality for which we are working,' he stated in the Sejm, 'can in no measure be grasped in a party fashion.'¹ He believed, moreover, that parties had a harmful effect on the functioning of the Government, since they isolated it from expert opinion, on which he set great store. Indeed, Bartel created a number of new institutions in order to take advantage of the advice of experts. The first of these, created by decree on 12 September 1926, was the Legal Council, which was responsible to the Minister of Justice. Its function was to give expert legal advice on proposed legislation. Three bodies were established in the Prime Minister's Office. The Economic Commission was composed of representatives of industrial, trading and banking organizations: its chairman was Andrzej

1. S.S.S.R., 19.VII.26, col. 22.

Wierzbicki, President of Lewiatan. The Agricultural Commission represented large and small agricultural producers; it was headed by Jan Stecki, a prominent landowner. The Labour Commission was to represent the interests of working people, and sat under the chairmanship of the Socialist Bronisław Ziemięcki. Bartel made a point of referring all proposed legislation to one or all of these councils. In this way he felt he upheld the principles of democracy, while at the same time avoiding the harmful effects of excessive dependence on the political parties. He also made considerable use of two bodies composed exclusively of full-time research workers which he had set up under the Ministry of Trade and Industry: the Institute for Investigating Economic Conditions and Prices, and the Commission of Enquiry into the Condition and Costs of Production and Exchange.¹

The limited role which Bartel assigned to Parliament is reflected in his attitude towards the right to question Ministers which Deputies and Senators enjoyed. Before 1926 this privilege had been much abused; many Members of Parliament had advanced the private interests of their constituents by threatening Ministers and civil servants with embarrassing questions in Parliament. It was, nevertheless, a valuable and effective means of parliamentary control over the actions of the

1. For an interesting account of the way in which Bartel conducted his Government, see Grzybowski, op. cit.

Government. Bartel considerably narrowed its scope. At the Cabinet meeting of 16 December 1926, he laid down the policy which the new Government was to follow: enquiries by clubs of Deputies to governmental authorities, even when in the form of parliamentary questions, did not have to be answered, because these clubs had no legal status; enquiries by Deputies or Senators about the private affairs of particular individuals, when not in the form of parliamentary questions, did not have to be answered; enquiries by individual Deputies or Senators on matters of public interest, or of concern to their constituencies, should be answered, although there was no constitutional obligation to do so.¹

Bartel greatly strengthened the position of the Prime Minister in relation to the other members of the Cabinet. Each Minister, on accepting Cabinet office, had to give Bartel an undated letter of resignation. Ironically, Piłsudski himself did so. The functioning of the Cabinet was modified so that the Prime Minister alone was responsible for the agenda of Cabinet meetings; only matters of which he approved could be discussed.² The only person, apart from the Prime Minister, who could affect the agenda of the Cabinet was the President. Bartel agreed with Piłsudski that the rights of the President were too

1. P.P.R.M., 16.XII.26, Item 2.

2. For these changes, see Grzybowski, op. cit., p.106.

restricted. On 9 June 1926 the Cabinet resolved that the President could hold up the discussion of any point on the agenda until the Minister concerned had explained the situation to him. He could also demand that this matter be the subject of an ad hoc Cabinet meeting called in his presence.¹ However, in practice Mościcki rarely exercised these rights. From his election at the beginning of June, 1926, until March, 1928, he attended only three Cabinet meetings.²

Parliamentary questions concerning the different departments were dealt with by the Prime Minister. The exposition of the Government's programme was reserved for the Prime Minister. In exceptional cases a Minister might make a policy speech, but it had first to be cleared with the Prime Minister.³ Bartel's authority seems to have been recognized by the Cabinet. In the 19 months between the Coup and the elections of March 1928 I have found only one occasion on which he was overruled by a majority of his Ministers: this was when he opposed the dissolution of the Warsaw City Council at the Cabinet meeting of 16 May 1927.⁴

Bartel also increased the effectiveness of the premiership by reorganizing the Prime Minister's Office by decree on 25

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1. P.P.R.M., 9.VI.26, Item 2.
 2. Ibid., meetings of 1926, 1927 and 1928.
 3. Grzybowski, op. cit., p.106.
 4. P.P.R.M., 16.V.27, Item 34.

August 1926.¹ The Office was now divided into three sections, the Prime Minister's Council, the Prime Minister's Office, and the Prime Minister's Legal Office. The head of the Council, although not responsible for the work of the other two departments, was to link and co-ordinate their activities, the Legal Office was to communicate the position of the Prime Minister to Ministries when they were drafting legislation, while the Prime Minister's Office dealt with the day-to-day business of the Premier. All three divisions were staffed with highly able people who did much to facilitate the work of government.

Bartel placed great stress on the improvement of the quality and efficiency of the Administration. On 16 June the Cabinet resolved to create a Commission for the Reorganization of the Administration, composed of the Ministers of the Treasury, of Justice, Trade and Industry, Railways, and Public Works.² By the time it was dissolved on 26 November 1926, it had held 8 ordinary and one extraordinary meetings. Its principles for reorganizing the running of ministries had been embodied in a decree on 6 September 1926, and it had also proposed a new statute improving the functioning of the Ministry of Finance.³

The Cabinet also reorganized the central administration of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and made some improvements

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1. For the decree, see Grzybowski, op. cit., p.107.
 2. P.P.R.M., 16.VI.26, Item 3.
 3. Ibid., 26.XI.26, Item 5, Appendix 4.

in local government. For the moment the centralized structure of local administration remained unchanged, but the requirement that the officials of a sub-prefecture should meet regularly, under the chairmanship of the sub-prefect, and submit reports of their meetings to the Ministry of the Interior was much more effectively implemented. Similarly, the obligation of senior provincial officials to meet periodically with the Governor in the Chair was more scrupulously fulfilled.¹

On 7 March 1927 the Government set up a State Local Government Council, composed largely of representatives of local elected bodies. It was to give its opinion on the projected laws, proclamations and policy statements placed before the Cabinet by the Minister of the Interior. It was also, on its own initiative, to suggest to the Cabinet reforms in local government and methods of implementing existing laws.² In addition, early in 1928 the Government issued a number of decrees designed to diminish the differences in the administrative systems of the former partitions. A start was

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1. This is clear from the reports of these meetings sent to the Ministry of the Interior. See AAN, Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych, Departament Organizacyjno-prawny: 'Protokoły zebrań periodycznych kierowników władz i urzędów II instancji; 'Protokoły zebrań periodycznych kierowników władz i urzędów I instancji'.
 2. 'Statut Państwowej Rady Samorządowej', appended to P.P.R.M., meeting of 7.III.27.

also made on the unification of the legal systems.¹

Not all the modifications introduced by the new Government proved successful. The abolition of the Ministry of Public Works, for example, an attempt to cut down government expenditure, proved ill-advised, and the Ministry was re-established on 16 December 1926.² However, for the most part these reforms did give the new regime more secure control over the civil service than that achieved by any of the Governments before the Coup, and ensured that its policies were more effectively carried out.

At the same time, the Government steadily decreased the power of elected local bodies, assigning wide-ranging functions to the local administration instead. Increasingly, officials came to be envisaged as a local élite. At a meeting in the Wilejka district (Wilno province), the Sub-prefect defined 'the function of a civil servant, apart from his administrative tasks, as a double one: that of an educator and an advisor'.³

Only one successful prosecution was made, however.

1. See, e.g., 'Rozporządzenie Prezydenta Rzeczypospolitej z dnia 19 stycznia 1928 r. o organizacji i zakresie działania władz administracji ogólnej', Dz.U.R.P. (1928) No. 11, pp.154-68; 'Rozporządzenie Ministra Spraw Wewnętrznych z dnia 28 marca 1928 r. w sprawie wojewódzkich i powiatowych organów kolegjalnych administracji ogólnej', Dz.U.R.P. (1928) No. 46, pp.1013-15.

2. P.P.R.M., 16.XII.26.

3. P.Z.P.K. I, Województwo Wileńskie, Powiat Wilejki, 21.XII.29.

decree setting up the Commission, see Dz.U.R.P. (1928) No. 41, pp.302-4.

In return, the State demanded far-reaching loyalty from the civil service. The minutes of a meeting of officials of the district of Słupce (Lodz province) on 21 December 1927 make this clear:

Dealing with the attitude of officials to the Government, the Sub-prefect reminded those present of the principle and necessity of absolute loyalty on which the whole governmental apparatus was based.... All present strongly supported this view of the Sub-prefect's, and assured him that no other view prevailed among them but that of citizen-officials, performing without question all that the Government intended.¹

One of the less successful of the Government's programmes was the campaign against corruption. Early in 1927 a Special Commission to Combat Financial Abuses was created. It was headed by Mieczysław Dębski, a Piłsudski-ite who before 1926 had held an important position in the Main Auditing Office, and it was directly responsible to the Prime Minister's Office. However, the Commission clashed more and more with Bartel, and the amassing of evidence of corruption proved rather difficult.² Only one successful prosecution was made, that against Gen. Żymierski, who in September 1927 was sentenced to five years' imprisonment for abuses in connection with army orders for gas

1. P.Z.P.K. I, Województwo Łódzkie, Powiat Słupckie, meeting of 21.XII.27.

2. Dębski has described the work of the Commission in his memoirs. See M. Dębski, 'Komisja Nadzwyczajna do walki z nadużyciami', N.D.P. 1st series, viii, 129-144. For the decree setting up the Commission, see Dz.U.R.P. (1927) No. 41, pp.502-4.

masks from the firm 'Protekta'.¹ Karol Popiel, the N.P.R. Deputy, was violently attacked in the Government press for his involvement in this affair; he resigned his parliamentary seat, challenging the Government to prosecute him, but the State felt its case too weak to proceed. Similarly, although a parliamentary court held that some of Wojciech Korfanty's dealings 'were not in accord with the provisions of the law and good business principles',² no prosecution was brought against him. The Commission was eventually dissolved in the autumn of 1928.

2. The Army.

One of the first acts of the Government after receiving from Parliament its power of issuing decrees was finally to settle the question of the Army. Piłsudski had been very worried by the divisive effects on the Army of the three-day civil war. In the Order of the Day of 22 May he appealed for reconciliation:³

Our blood has sunk into one common earth, an earth equally dear to, equally loved by both sides. May this warm blood, this soldiers' blood, the most precious in Poland, be, under our feet, the new seed of brotherhood, may it announce a common truth for brothers.

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1. Robotnik, 7.IX.27.
 2. Z. Landau, B. Skrzyszewska, Wojciech Korfanty przed sądem marszałkowskim (Katowice, 1964), pp.167-8.
 3. Piłsudski, P.Z. ix. 10.

In a letter to Bartel on 8 June 1926 Piłsudski laid down the conditions under which he would accept the post of Minister of War. He demanded that the Proclamation of 7 January 1921 be re-established as the basis for the constitutional position of the Army, and required an assurance from Bartel that the Army would be 'led by one individual'.¹ He felt that the legal status of the Army should be strictly defined, and the President's position as the highest military authority recognized. In addition, he acknowledged, at least in theory, the Minister of War's responsibility to the Prime Minister by offering to give Bartel a signed, undated letter of resignation on assuming office. He also agreed to uphold his constitutional obligations to the Sejm. Finally, he declared that the Army 'would only not find itself in a false position'² if it had as its internal chief and spokesman an officer who, with his staff, would be entrusted with the preparation of plans for a potential future conflict. As Minister of War, Piłsudski stated, he would represent the views of this officer on questions of defence and would be his constitutional shield. On 12 June Piłsudski was appointed by the Cabinet head of the Inner War Council established by the 1921 decree; he thus acquired the post of

1. Piłsudski, P.Z. ix. 36-7.

2. Ibid., p.38.

the 'representative officer' as well as that of Minister of War.

There were certain constitutional objections to this solution, but the matter was finally settled by two decrees decided on at a Cabinet meeting on 5 August 1926.¹ The first, suggested by Antoni Sujkowski, Minister of Religious Cults and Education, stated that in terms of Article 46 of the Constitution and the new law empowering the President to issue decrees, those aspects of army administration not reserved by law for the legislature would be dealt with by decree.² The second, on army organization, merely embodied and made more explicit the provisions of the 1921 decree. The President, it stated, exercised his power as the highest military authority through the Minister of War, on whose advice he nominated officers from the rank of divisional commander upwards. On the basis of a Cabinet resolution taken on the advice of the Minister of War, the President nominated the General Inspector of the Army, the Deputy Minister of War and the Chief of the General Staff. The Minister of War commanded the Army, and was responsible constitutionally and before Parliament for his actions.³ The

1. P.P.R.M., 5.VIII.26.

2. 'Rozporządzenie Prezydenta Rzeczypospolitej z dnia 6 sierpnia 1926 r. o wydawaniu dekretów w zakresie Najwyższego Zwierzchnictwa sił zbrojnych Państwa', Dz.U.R.P. (1926), No. 79, p.881.

3. 'Dekret Prezydenta Rzeczypospolitej z dnia 6 sierpnia 1926 r. o sprawowaniu dowództwa nad siłami zbrojnymi w czasie pokoju i o ustanowieniu Generalnego Inspektora sił zbrojnych', Dz.U.R.P. No. 79, p.882, arts. 1, 2.

General Inspector of the Army was designated in advance Commander-in-Chief in wartime. He was entrusted with control over all questions which related to the preparation of the Army and the defence of the country in case of war. The General Staff and its Chief and the Army Inspectors were subordinate to him.¹ The decree also affirmed that the Minister of War and the General Inspector would be members of the Council for the Defence of the State,² a body created by decree on 25 October 1926.³ Its functions were to discuss the general problems of national defence and work out guidelines for the mobilization and organization of the forces of the State. It was headed by the President of the Republic, and the Prime Minister, the Ministers of War, Foreign Affairs, the Treasury, and the Interior, and the General Inspector of the Army sat on it.

Finally, on 8 August, at the same Cabinet meeting at which the first decree was adopted, the decision was taken, perhaps against Bartel's wishes, certainly against the advice of the Minister of Finance, to raise the salaries of army officers.⁴

1. Ibid., arts. 3, 4.

2. Ibid., art. 6.

3. 'Rozporządzenie z dnia 25 października 1926 r. o utworzeniu Komitetu Obrony Państwa', Dz.U.R.P. (1926) No. 108, pp.1203-4.

4. P.P.R.M., meeting of 8.VIII.26, Item. 2.

The principles of army organization for which Piłsudski had fought for so long were thus finally established. For the time being, moreover, the fact that he was both Minister of War and General Inspector of the Army (he was appointed to this post by presidential decree on 27 August) made impossible any conflict between the civilian and military branches of the administration. Still it may be questioned whether, apart from its political defects, the separate and independent position of the Army was beneficial to its effectiveness as a fighting force.

Piłsudski-ite officers, particularly veterans from the Legions, came to play an ever more prominent part in the Army, although the purge of the Marshal's opponents did not go as far as some of his more zealous supporters would have liked. By 1928 the Army Inspectors (who were to be divisional commanders in wartime) were Gens. Sosnkowski, Osiński, Rydz-Smigły, Norwid-Neugebauer, Burhardt-Bukacki, Dąb-Biernacki, Orlicz-Dreszer, Skierski, Rybak and Romer. Apart from Sosnkowski and Osiński, they had all actively supported the May Coup, and six of them were former Legionaries.¹ At a lower level, it became increasingly difficult for non-Piłsudski-ites to gain advancement. Whereas in 1926 only 10% of army officers were former Legionaries, by 1939 they formed 70% of the commanders of infantry divisions and 54% of the commanders of cavalry and

1. Rothschild, op. cit., pp.190-1.

motorized armoured brigades.¹

3. Economic Policy.

A substantial improvement in economic conditions took place during the first three years of the new regime. As we have seen, this economic revival had already begun before the Coup. The number of those employed in factories with more than twenty workers had begun to rise in January 1926,² and from that month industrial production had also started to increase, though somewhat unevenly.³ The number of registered unemployed had begun to fall in March, although it remained high,⁴ and the budget deficit had begun to decrease from the first of the year as the effects of Zdziechowski's reforms were felt.⁵ From February, small increases could also be detected in monetary circulation and in the credit operations of the banks.⁶ The de facto devaluation of the zloty aided exports, which had grown in value from 68.8 million zloties in January 1926 to 118.6 million by May.⁷

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1. A. Grudziński, 'Cyfry mówią', Wiadomości, xiv (No. 675), p.6. S. Kopański, Moja służba w wojsku polskim 1917-1939 (London, 1965), pp.302-3.
 2. R.S.R.P. (1927), p.349, Table II.
 3. Bulletin Statistique du Ministère des Finances (1927) No.1, p.20, Table XXII.
 4. R.S.R.P. (1927), p.356, Table V.
 5. Ibid., p.511, Table IV.
 6. Ibid., p.269, Table IX; p.273, Table XIII.
 7. Ibid., p.231, Table Ib.

The effect of the May Coup in ending the political instability greatly increased business confidence and fostered economic recovery. By 29 May the zloty had fallen to 11 to the dollar. By 26 June it stood at 10 to the dollar, and by 7 July it reached 9.15.¹ The stockmarket also began to revive, and registered unemployment fell to 185,000 by the end of September.² The uplift in world trade which had begun in 1925 helped exports, as did the British coal strike which started in May 1926. This opened up new markets in Scandinavia which were particularly welcome since the Polish-German tariff war had closed the traditional Polish outlets.³

Piłsudski himself was not much interested in economic problems or fully aware of their importance. As he told Kurjer Warszawski on 29 November 1924,

I am never ashamed to acknowledge what I do not know. I could not, for instance, take the cabinet post of Trade and Industry, or Railways. I don't know about these matters.⁴

Świtalski, a later Prime Minister and confidant of Piłsudski's,

1. Messenger Polonais, 9.VII.26.
2. R.S.R.P. (1927), p.356, Table V.
3. W. Michowicz, 'Wpływ strajku górników angielskich z 1926 r. na przemysł węglowy w Polsce', Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, series 1, pamphlet 7, (1957), pp.209-46.
4. Quoted in M. Porczak, Rewolucja majowa i jej skutki (Cracow, 1927), pp.13-4. Rothschild claims (p.418) that Porczak was a pseudonym for Ignacy Daszyński. There is no evidence whatever for this assertion. In fact, Porczak was a well-known member of the P.P.S. and a publicist in his own right.

wrote:

I told the President that I never shared the Commander's quite blatant disregard for economic matters -- this took the form, with him, of turning the phrase 'economic committee' ('komitet ekonomiczny') into 'comic committee' ('komitet aj-komiczny'). One could observe in the Commander a concern for the State Treasury and for the scrupulous accounting of funds. At the same time, however, the Commander was very much against the preponderance of economic over political matters.¹

Indeed, people with real competence in economic matters were rare in Piłsudski-ite circles. Bartel, who placed much stress on the economy, was thus fortunate in finding two very able men, Gabriel Czechowicz and Eugeniusz Kwiatkowski, to work with him. Czechowicz, a senior civil servant, held the Ministry of Finance from the Coup until 4 June 1926. He then returned to his former post of permanent undersecretary to the Ministry, where he remained until 2 October 1926 when he again became Minister, holding the office until March 1929. Kwiatkowski, technical director of the State Nitrate Factory at Chorzów, was Minister of Commerce and Industry from 8 June 1926 until May 1930. Together with Bartel they were responsible for the formulation and implementation of the new Government's economic policy.

Although Czechowicz had, under a pseudonym, strongly criticized the deflationary aspects of Zdziechowski's measures,²

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1. AAN, Zespoły Szczątkowe, Kazimierz Świtalski sygn II/88. 'Dn 15 listopada 1935r. Rozmowa z Prezydentem'.
 2. He published in April 1926 under the name G. Leliwa a pamphlet, Problem skarbowy w świetle prawdy (Warsaw, 1926).

and although grouped around the radical Piłsudski-ite journals Głos Prawdy and Droga there were many who advocated radical land reform and wide nationalization, the economic policies of the new Government proved to be almost entirely a continuation of those of its predecessors.¹ Already on 8 June Bartel had assured Wierzbicki that

neither in social nor in economic policies will the Marshal make any experiments. The bases of the financial policies of the previous governments will be maintained.²

The continuity in economic policy is clear in the statement which Kwiatkowski presented to the Cabinet on 17 June, and which was afterwards communicated to the press.³ As his main objectives, he stressed the irreproachably orthodox principles of balancing the budget and stabilizing the zloty. He also emphasized the importance of exports, particularly coal. The only innovations in his programme were a greater stress on agriculture, and the promise that the development of Gdynia, the new Polish port on the Baltic, would be accelerated.

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- Government's obvious financial orthodoxy all increased the
1. For an account of radical Piłsudski-ite views on economic policy, see: S. Starzyński, Program rządu pracy w Polsce (Warsaw, 1926), and Rola państwa w życiu gospodarczym (Warsaw, 1929), and ed. Starzyński, Na froncie gospodarczym. W dziesiątą rocznicę odzyskania niepodległości (Warsaw, n.d.)
 2. A. Wierzbicki, 'Uwagi o przewrocie majowym', N.D.P., series 1, ix (1965), 224.
 3. P.P.R.M., 17.VI.26, Appendix I: 'Program gospodarczy Ministra Przemysłu i Handlu E. Kwiatkowskiego', Kampania, Kultura (1927) No. 2, pp. 273-84.
- See e.g. Kwiatkowski's speech in the Sejm on 13 November 1926: S.P.S.R., 13.XI.26, Col. 15.

In fact, within the framework of the economics of the time, this was the only possible programme: it did aid recovery, although Keynesian reflation might have worked faster. One source of inflation was eliminated as the connection between the salaries of government officials and the cost of living index was ended. Railway deficits were cut when the Railway Administration was set up as an independent entity. Moreover, the practice of planning monthly budgets which the new Government introduced meant that government income and expenditure did not get too radically out of balance. Whereas in the financial year 1925-6 government income had been 1,570 mill. zloties and expenditure 1,806 mill., in 1926-7 income was 2,133 mill. and expenditure 1,982 mill.¹ The revalorization of some taxes and the increased yield of others as a result of the economic revival also contributed to this improvement.

The Government underlined the importance of foreign capital to economic development.² The increased stability, the hope that an agreement could be reached with Germany and the Government's obvious financial orthodoxy all increased the

1. Zweig, op. cit., p.49; Materiały odnoszące do działalności rządu w czasie od 15 maja 1926 do 31 grudnia 1927 (Warsaw, 1928), p.215. For the economic policy of the new Government, see: Landau and Tomaszewski, op. cit.; Landau, Plan stabilizacyjny; Michowicz, op. cit.; Zweig, op. cit.; Madajczyk, op. cit.; Landau, 'Misja Kemmerera', P.H. Xiviii (1957) No.2, pp.270-84.

2. See e.g. Kwiatkowski's speech in the Sejm on 13 November 1926: S.S.S.R., 13.XI.26, Col. 15.

interest of foreign investors. Only two weeks after the Coup, the Lodz textile industry received a substantial British credit, while the projected Harriman investment in Silesian Zinc, which had been under discussion since the previous November, was agreed on by the end of June.¹ Other large inflows of foreign capital in 1926 came from the creation in July of a Franco-Polish consortium to develop the port of Gdynia and from the large timber concession granted to British interests in October.²

However, investment in Poland was small, compared with the massive investment which was taking place at the time in Germany. Most of it, moreover, was short-term. In 1927, capital movement into Poland amounted to 1,536 million zloties: 922 mill. was short-term and 614 mill. long-term, but of this only 68 mill. was invested in Polish industry. The corresponding figures for 1928 were 1,897 million zloties overall, 1,570 mill. short-term, 327 mill. long-term with 101 mill. in industrial investment.³

The culmination of the Government's stabilization plan and of its attempts to attract foreign capital was the arrangement of a loan with a group of American and European bankers, represented by the Bankers' Trust Company, the Chase National Bank of New York and Lazard Brothers and Company. This loan, concluded on somewhat unfavourable terms in October 1927,

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1. Landau, Plan stabilizacyjny, pp.48-59.
 2. Ibid., pp.45-8.
 3. M.R.S. (1931), p.88, Table XXVII.

amounted to 62 million dollars and 2 million pounds sterling, and was intended to underpin the stabilization of the zloty achieved by that date. It was closely linked with a grant of 20 million dollars to the Bank of Poland by the leading Central Banks in an effort to integrate the Polish credit system with that of the rest of the world. The plan proved successful in establishing the zloty at its new rate of 8.91 to the dollar, but the massive inflow of foreign capital which had been hoped for did not follow.¹ Nevertheless, several loans were obtained in 1928 by local government authorities, among them the province of Silesia and the municipalities of Warsaw, Poznań and Gdynia.²

These developments further stimulated the industrial revival. The reserves of the Bank of Poland rose from 203 million zloties at the end of December 1925 to 1,414.6 mill. by December 1927.³ The index of industrial production rose from 79.6 in 1926 to 116.4 in 1928.⁴ Exports increased as the new coal markets in Scandinavia were maintained, and so did imports, as much out-dated industrial equipment was replaced. In 1927 the trade balance was passive. It became active in 1928, but

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1. For the plan, see Landau, Plan stabilizacyjny, pp.121-278; Zeig, op. cit., pp.50-2.
 2. Landau, op. cit., pp.258-9; Zweig, op. cit., p.53.
 3. R.S.R.P. (1927), p.262, Table I; (1928), p.244, Table I.
 4. Taking the 1925-9 index of industrial production as 100, I. Svennilson, op. cit., pp.304-5, Table A66.

For these developments, see also Państwo Polskie (Warsaw, 1928); Państwo Polskie (Warsaw, 1928); Państwo Polskie 1918-1935 (Warsaw, 1935).

only because of the inflow of short-term capital.¹ Domestic trade also expanded rapidly.²

The position of the industrial working class improved. The number of unemployed fell from 243,000 in June 1926 to 80,000 in September 1928.³ Money wages rose, and since food prices fell slightly, real wages rose as well, passing the level of early 1925 by the end of 1927. The Government also widened the already extensive system of welfare legislation. In July 1927 the nature and aims of factory inspection were codified, and in November unemployment insurance for salaried workers was regulated, and compulsory disablement, old age and widows' and orphans' insurance was extended to all workers. In March 1928 the contractual position of workers was improved. However, these social reforms were coupled with an attack on the P.P.S. control of the social service organizations.⁴

Agriculture also benefited from the economic upturn. It is true that agricultural prices fell slightly from the high level of the beginning of 1925, when they had been inflated by a poor harvest, but they fell more slowly than industrial prices, and for once the price scissors worked in favour of the

1. M.R.S. (1931), p.88, Table XXVII.

2. Zweig, op. cit., p.52.

3. ed. M. Drozdowski, 'Bezrobocie w Polsce 1925-1936', N.D.P., series 1 (1961), p.232.

4. For these developments, see 10 lat polityki społecznej Państwa Polskiego (Warsaw, 1928); Polityka społeczna państwa polskiego 1918-1935 (Warsaw, 1935).

peasant.¹ Peasant income rose, though this was partly due to the increased opportunities for side employment outside agriculture created by the industrial revival. The return per hectare for a peasant holding of 5-10 ha. rose from 348 zł. in 1926-7 to 586 zł. in 1928-9.²

Although Piłsudski had ruled out a radical land reform, the favourable economic conditions induced large landowners to sell land voluntarily within the framework of the Land Reform Law. Between 1926 and 1928, the annual provision of 200,000 hectares to be subdivided was exceeded.³ Parcellation was most rapid in western Poland and in the Eastern Kresy, but it was also fairly important in the former Congress Kingdom. In addition, the Government placed stress on improving other aspects of the agricultural system. The liquidation of servitudes was speeded up, as well as the consolidation of holdings and the subdivision of common lands.⁴

Finally, the improvement of economic conditions in Western Europe meant that emigration, a traditional rural safety valve, was again possible on a large scale. Between 1926 and 1928, 552,000 people emigrated, and 197,000 were seasonal migrants.⁵

1. See Landau, Tomaszewski, *op. cit.*, p.135.
2. M. Dziewicka, 'Zagadnienie degradacji rolnictwa w Polsce kapitalistycznej', *Ekonomista* (1955), p.82, Table III.
3. *M.R.S.* (1931), p.16, Table III.
4. See Madajczyk, *op. cit.*, pp.232-60.
5. *Ibid.*, p.250.

Large landholders also profited from the improved conditions. The high prices paid for land meant that there was money available for the purchase of agricultural machinery and the intensification of production. The number of tractors imported, for example, rose six-fold between 1926 and 1928.¹

The economic revival provided a secure base for the activities of the Government. It is true that progress was patchy, and that the economy was excessively dependent upon short-term foreign credits and vulnerable to fluctuations of the world economy, but for the moment, the Government could claim to have dealt successfully with a problem which had been too much for all the pre-Coup Cabinets.

4. The Government and the Church.

The Government also succeeded in achieving a satisfactory modus vivendi with the Church, in spite of the strong anti-clericalism of many of the more radical Piłsudski-ites, such as those grouped round the periodicals Głos Prawdy, Droga and Epoka. As late as 22 February 1927 Głos Prawdy carried an article describing its inquiry into the state of Catholic belief in the country under the heading 'The Roman Catholic Republic of Poland', with the subheading 'The people have had enough of fattening the bellies of priests'.²

1. Ibid., p.253.

2. Głos Prawdy, 22.II.27.

The Piłsudski-ites had strongly attacked the terms of the Concordat. On 12 February 1925 Kurjer Poranny had called for a postponement of the signing of the agreement; it was held that its conclusion at this time might harm relations with France, since a conflict had broken out between the French Government and the Papacy.¹ On 21 March 1925 Głos Prawdy had censured the Polish negotiators as excessively yielding.² Moreover, many higher Church dignitaries and parish priests had been enthusiastic supporters of the Endecja, and had violently opposed the Coup. Among the unequivocal opponents of Piłsudski in the Polish hierarchy one could include Archbishops Teodorowicz and Sapieha and Bishops Łoziński and Łukomski. After the Coup, many priests refused to allow members of the Piłsudski-ite Riflemen's Association to enter churches in uniform, and refused to celebrate mass in honour of the Marshal's name-day.³

Nevertheless, the Pope, Pius XI, who had served in Poland as Apostolic Visitor (1918-19) and Papal Nuncio (1919-21), was determined not to precipitate a conflict, and sent a papal blessing to the new Government by means of Archbishop Kakowski, who happened to be in Rome at the time. Kakowski conveyed the

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1. Kurjer Poranny, 12.II.25.
 2. Głos Prawdy, 21.III.25.
 3. See J. Jurkiewicz, Watykan a Polska w okresie międzywojennym, 1918-39 (Warsaw, 1958), pp.79-80; Pobóg-Malinowski, op. cit., ii. 499-500.

Pope's message to Bartel on 28 May 1926.¹ Pius entrusted the carrying out of his conciliatory policy to August Hlond, whom he appointed to the vacant primatial see of Gniezno on 24 June 1926. Hlond, previously Bishop of Katowice, had been for many years a papal administrator in Vienna, and was not closely associated with any political party in Poland. He soon became the most powerful ecclesiastical personage in the country. On 20 June 1927 he was created Cardinal. Achille Ratti, the Papal Nuncio, was rather lukewarm about this policy of rapprochement, but his successor, Francesco Marmaggi, who arrived in March 1928, and Callori di Vignale, Sub-legate after Ratti's departure, supported it strongly.

The new Government, for its part, was determined to be on good terms with the Church. President Mościcki personally attended a Catholic conference held in Warsaw on 27-30 August 1926. This Government gesture was warmly welcomed by Archbishop Kakowski in his address:

By his presence at the Catholic Conference, the President has publicly affirmed that the highest representative of the state and lay authority in Poland links himself in thought and spirit with the Catholic population, the overwhelming majority of the nation, and has affirmed that the well-being of that population is his concern.²

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1. Czas 30.V.26. Kakowski explained on the following day that the blessing was granted to all Poland.
 2. Quoted in Jurkiewicz, op. cit., pp.84-5.

He further stated that Catholics would support the Government if it respected their rights and religious convictions. However, in spite of a Government decree on 25 November 1926 increasing the power of chaplains in the Army, an element of strain persisted. The conference of Bishops which met in Warsaw on 30 November - 1 December 1926 expressed concern at attacks on the Church in the 'anti-Catholic press'. 'All these newspapers', it alleged, 'are considered to have the support of official circles'. It complained of the slow implementation of the Concordat, and of proposals for a marriage law repugnant to Catholics.¹ Hlond himself was worried by the anti-Government tone of this communiqué, and addressed a letter to Piłsudski in which he claimed that the Church did want 'to co-operate harmoniously with the Government' but demanded in return that the Government 'extend its sincere protection to the Church... and avoid anything which could worry Catholics or cause them to become hostile to the Government.'²

The central problem was, in fact, the implementation of the Concordat. As we have seen, the Piłsudski-ites believed that the state had made excessive concessions. From 24 November representatives of the Government were negotiating with the Papal

1. The minutes of these meetings are to be found in AN, Prezydium Rady Ministrów grup 97.2, 'Sprawa Konkordatu'.

1. The Bishops' Declaration is reprinted in Gazeta Warszawsta Poranna 2.XII.1926.

2. Quoted in Jurkiewicz, op. cit., pp.85-6.

3. Loc. cit., Memorial N.V.R. i O.P., 'Sprawa Konkordatu między Polską a Rzymem 1927 r.'

Commission over disputed points.¹ On 8 and 13 January, the Ministers involved held two interim meetings to decide on policy, for which the Ministry of Religious Cults and Education prepared three undated memoranda.² The first of these stressed the far-reaching concessions which the Government felt had been made.³ The State had only a power of veto in the nomination of bishops, and had no control over the appointment of suffragan bishops, titular bishops, rectors, professors in seminaries or abbots; the lower clergy took no oath of loyalty to the State; the State had no control over the language used or the subject matter taught in seminaries; the clause giving the Government the right to demand the removal of a priest could not actually be implemented; and new benefices and monastic orders could be created without Government consent.

The second memorandum specified in some detail the points over which the Government questioned the Church's interpretation of the Concordat.⁴ These included the power of parish councils (art. 24), and the clauses relating to the property rights of the Church. The exemption from land reform of Church holdings previously seized by the partitioning powers and now in

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1. The minutes of these meetings are to be found in AAN, Prezydium Rady Ministrów grup 97.2, 'Sprawa konkordatu między Polską a Rzymem'.
 2. Loc. cit.
 3. Loc. cit., 'Notatki na sprawę konkordatu'.
 4. Loc. cit., Memoriał M.W.R. i O.P., 'Sprawa konkordatu między Polską a Rzymem 1927 r.'.

Government hands was a case in point (400,000 ha. were involved), as was the claim for the return of all Church buildings in State hands. The Government opposed Rome's demands for the return of some formerly Catholic churches which had been Greek Orthodox since the 19th century, as well as the Church's policy of extending the Greek Catholic rite. The level of priests' salaries was also disputed. Finally, the Government accused the Church of not abiding by the Concordat's provision for consultation with the Government over the creation of new monasteries (art. 10), and claimed that the article (19) stipulating that parish priests must be approved by the Government was not being enforced.

On most of these issues the Government in the end proved willing to make concessions to the Church. In a decree on 9 December 1926, and in a novella to the law on teachers of 15 July 1927, the Government fully recognized the dominant position of the Church in religious education.¹ Catholic school-children were even required to go to confession three times a year. In addition the Minister of Justice established clerical immunity in a decree of 23 February 1927,² and some concessions

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1. 'Rozporządzenie Ministra Wyznań Religijnych i Oświecenia Publicznego z 9 grudnia 1926 r. o nauce szkolnej katolickiej', Dz.U.R.P. (1927), No. 1, pp.8-9.
 2. Dziennik Urzędowy Ministerstwa Sprawiedliwości (1927), No.5.

were made concerning the Church's property in the decree of 7 February 1928.¹

The implementation of the Concordat led to the establishment of satisfactory relations with the Church. Government officials began to take part in religious ceremonies, and in June 1927 the Pope revived the right of the Polish King (in the person of the President) to confer the cardinal's biretta upon those members of the hierarchy resident in Poland who were elevated to the College of Cardinals. In July the President and Piłsudski, as Prime Minister, took part in a ceremonial adorning of the miraculous ikon of the Virgin at Wilno. In the speech he made on this occasion, Piłsudski stated, 'I want to say not only that Poland has a devoted friend in the Pope, but that this devotion has been made manifest.'²

The Church's policy of cultivating good relations with the Government was further shown in the formation in February 1927 of the Catholic League, which afterwards became a part of Catholic Action.³ The Government was at first unsympathetic to this lay organization, but soon realized that its 'apolitical' character was merely a device to cut some of the ties between

1. 'Rozporządzenie Prezydenta Rzeczypospolitej z dnia 7 lutego 1928 o wpisywaniu do ksiąg hipotecznych praw własności polskich osób prawnych kościelnych i zakonnych', Dz.U.R.P. (1928), No. 16, pp.218-9.

2. Piłsudski, P.Z. ix.77.

3. See Micewski, op. cit., Chapter III.

2. Kurjer Katoński, 25.V.26.

the Church and the Endecja. Many of its most prominent supporters were **Conservatives**, whom the Government was then wooing politically. One of them, the well-known Cracow politician, Professor Władysław Jaworski, made this anti-National Democratic tendency clear: 'The Apostolic work [of the organization]', he wrote in Czas on 23 February 1927,

will show that it is not a question of acting against this or that party, but against the tendency which, under the mask of religion, spreads principles which are in complete contradiction to religion, and which, in taking as their motto the love of one's fatherland, spread hate between citizens.¹

Nevertheless for most of the parish priests and many of the hierarchy, strongly linked emotionally and politically with the Endecja, the modus vivendi achieved with the Government was essentially a necessity imposed by the political situation, and not a matter of conviction.

5. The National Minorities.

The Government also tried to implement a new policy towards the minorities. Already on 24 May 1926 Kazimierz Młodzianowski, the Minister of the Interior, announced that 'The Government intends to follow a sincere and open policy in that which concerns the affairs and interests of the National Minorities.'² Bartel too, in his exposition of Government policy, as we have seen made a point of stressing the liberal intentions of the Cabinet

1. Czas, 23.II.27 (Italics in original).

2. Kurjer Poranny, 25.V.26.

in this sphere.

On 16 June 1926 the Cabinet set up a Committee of Experts on the Eastern Provinces and National Minorities. It was headed by Leon Wasilewski, well-known for his liberal views on questions of nationality.¹ The question of Government policy was fully discussed at the Cabinet meeting of 18 August.² Here Młodzianowski argued that the Governments before the Coup had pursued no clear policy. One had to recognize that 'the attitude of the masses [of the national minorities] towards the state is unwilling and distrustful'.³ The administration had proved inadequate, and political matters had been stressed at the expense of economic problems. Far-reaching promises had been made, but not fulfilled, which had caused great resentment. The goal of national assimilation should be renounced, and instead conditions should be created for assimilation to the state structure.

Młodzianowski's suggested outline of policy was adopted by the Cabinet.⁴ Prefaced by an extensive and highly competent survey of the problems, it laid down a number of principles to be followed, some general and some applying to particular

1. P.P.R.M., 16.VI.26, Item 4.

2. Ibid., 18.VIII.26.

3. Ibid., Młodzianowski's speech.

4. Ibid., 'Konkretnie ujęte zasady planu działania Rządu i jego organów w stosunku do mniejszości narodowej'.

minorities. The Government was to look to the real interests of the 'broad mass' of the minorities, satisfying both their economic and cultural needs, which an improvement in local administration and a revival of local self-government would reveal more clearly. Representatives of the minorities were to sit on expert bodies created by the Government, and an amnesty for political crimes committed before 1923 was called for.

In relation to the Germans, the Government would uphold its treaty obligations. The question of citizenship should be settled, and the impartiality of officials should be ensured. However, the land reform should be accelerated in Western Poland. In the eastern provinces, the Government should implement the land reform. The School Law should be amended to make it more acceptable to the minorities, and members of the minorities should be admitted to the civil service. A statute regulating the status of the Orthodox Church should be enacted. The law conferring autonomy on East Galicia should, however, be modified. As regards the Jews, the Government opposed economic anti-semitism and would ensure adequate credits for Jewish trade. The law on compulsory Sunday rest would be modified, and all still-existing laws which discriminated against Jews would be abrogated. Zionism would be favoured, and the Religious Commune (Kahal) reorganized. Yiddish-medium state primary schools were to be created, and Government aid would be furnished to Jewish private schools. Finally, pressure should be exercised on the

universities to do away with the numerus clausus.

Although Młodzianowski was replaced on 2 October 1926 by the unimaginative and far less competent Felicjan Sławoj-Składkowski, some attempt was made to implement this far-reaching policy. The importance of dealing fairly with the minorities was communicated to the local administration. On 21 December 1927 the Sub-Prefect of the district of Słupce in the Lodz province explained the need for the new policy to his officials:

Aware of the palpable and unhappy results of the activity of previous Governments in this sphere until May 1926, society ought patiently and in good faith to await, at least for a couple of years, the results of the present system.¹

Nevertheless the Government was not everywhere successful in gaining the support of the civil service for its reforms. In western Poland, in particular in Pomerania, one finds frequent references in the reports of the meetings of local officials to the need for concerted Polish action against the minorities.²

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1. P.S.P.K. I, Powiat Słupski, województwo łódzkie, 21.XII.27. Many similar statements by local officials could be cited. See, e.g., the directive of the Governor of the Stanisławów province on political problems, dated 26.XI.29, in P.Z.P.K. I, file 82; the report of the meeting of the local government officials of the Nadwórna district, Stanisławów province, on 30.VI.30, loc. cit.; that of the meeting of officials of the Hrubieszów district, Lublin province, on 13.VI.29, P.Z.P.K. I, file 74.
 2. See, e.g., P.Z.P.K. I, file 79: report of the meeting of the officials of the Grudziądz district, Pomerania, on 14.III.28, or of the officials of the Tuchola district on 17.XII.27.

In eastern Poland, the Government placed great stress on land reform and on the improvement of the economic situation through the consolidation of holdings and the abolition of servitudes. Subdivision was rapid in the White Russian areas and Volynia, where 70-80% of the land divided went to White Russian and Ukrainian peasants.¹ The economic upturn of the early years of the new regime also encouraged development. Some rather half-hearted attempts were made to improve the school system; however, in practice the liberal programme outlined by Młodzianowski proved difficult to carry out in the face of administrative inertia and the opposition of Polish chauvinists. The Government again failed to overcome the obstacles placed by nationalists, both Polish and Ukrainian, in the way of the founding of a Ukrainian university in Lwów.

Political developments also hindered an extensive change in policy. The Communist-dominated White Russian Hromada grew rapidly in size and popularity. From 569 members in July 1926 it had amassed perhaps 100,000 supporters by the time the Government banned it in January 1927.² After this, the popularity of Communism declined somewhat, and the Zmahannie, the successor

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1. Madajczyk, op. cit., p.245.
 2. For the Hromada, see Bergman, op. cit.; Reguła, op. cit., pp.143-218; G. Jackson, Comintern and Peasant in East Europe 1919-30 (New York, 1966), pp.194-214.

politicians, including members of U.S.S.R. The compromise was also alluded to during the Brezhnev trial; see Przemysław, p.140.

organization to the Hromada, never gained wide support. The underground Communist Party of Western White Russia was increasingly paralyzed by the internal conflict raging in the Polish Communist Party between the rightist leadership of Warski and the Left, led by Leszczyński, and split in September 1927. The Communist-controlled White Russian School Organization also split in 1927, and a number of its leaders, notably Anton Lutskievich and Fabian Akinchich made approaches to Government. Nevertheless the régime failed to gain any real support in this region, and was at best grudgingly accepted.

The situation was slightly better in Volynia and East Galicia. In Volynia, the new governor, Henryk Józewski, appointed in 1927, did much to win the trust of the local population. In East Galicia the Government seems to have reached some agreement with the main nationalist party, the U.N.D.O. In return for the removal of chauvinistic officials and some modification of the school system, the party was to declare itself loyal to the Polish State. Some parcellation in the area did take place through the U.N.D.O.-controlled Land Bank.¹

1. This whole matter remains somewhat obscure. Nasz Przegląd, the main Jewish daily newspaper, printed a number of articles in Dec. 1926 reporting meetings between the Government and various Ukrainian and White Russian politicians, including members of U.N.D.O. The compromise was also alluded to during the Brześć trial: see Proces Brzeski, p.140.

2. Nasz Przegląd, 10.VIII.27.

The revolutionary groups here too were greatly weakened by the struggle taking place within the Polish Communist Party and by the disputes over 'national deviationism' (Shumski-ism). Both the Communist Party of the Western Ukraine and its legal front, Sel Rob, split in 1927.

The Government had its greatest success with the Jews. On 14 October 1927 it issued a decree extending and reorganizing Jewish communal organizations, thus winning much support among the Orthodox.¹ It also took steps to aid Jewish trade, which benefited as well from the economic revival. On 20 January 1927 the new Minister of Religious Cults and Education, Gustaw Dobrucki, declared himself against the numerus clausus,² and on 18 July 1927 he reissued a circular of 1925 forbidding its application in institutions of higher learning.³ However, as so often, good intentions were not enough. The Government could do little against economic anti-semitism, and by 1928 had still not abolished all the Tsarist restrictive laws still in operation in Russian Poland. It did not provide funds for Jewish private schools, and in practice the numerus clausus was still applied. 'Our attitude to the Government,' the Jewish leader Maksimilian Hartglas had stated in the Sejm in January

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1. 'Rozporządzenie Prezydenta Rzeczypospolitej z dnia 14 października 1927 r. o uporządkowaniu stanu prawnego w organizacji gmin wyznaniowych żydowskich', Dz.U.R.P., No. 52, pp.1129-34.
 2. Robotnik, 21.I.27.
 3. Nasz Przegląd, 10.VIII.27.

1927,

no matter what Government, can be summarized in one phrase...: 'by their deeds shall ye know them'. We can wait for these deeds and we can be very patient. But even our patience has limits.¹

By October 1927 the Grünbaum group was again dominant in the Jewish parliamentary club, whose members sent a letter to the Government asking when its promises would be fulfilled.²

In Poznan and Pomerania the Government reached a satisfactory modus vivendi with the Germans. The question of citizenship had finally been settled by the Vienna Agreement of 30 August 1924, the Government stopped expropriating the property of citizens of the Reich, and although the land reform affected German landholding, the high prices paid somewhat mitigated this grievance.

However, in Upper Silesia the situation was exceedingly unsatisfactory. A new provincial governor, Michał Grażyński, a native of Gdów near Cracow, was appointed. He was an ardent Piłsudski-ite, a former member of the P.O.W. who had taken a prominent part in the Silesian risings. He saw his task as a two-fold one, to reinforce the links between Upper Silesia and the rest of Poland, and to increase the strength of the pro-Government political organizations. His activities brought him into conflict with Korfanty, the principal Polish politician in

1. S.S.S.R., 26.I.27, col. 47.

2. The letter was reprinted in Nasz Przegląd, 23.XI.27.

the area, who resisted his plans to diminish Silesian autonomy and to bring in officials from other parts of Poland, notably Galicia. His attempts to outbid Korfanty by exploiting Polish nationalism also brought him into conflict with the German minority.¹ The difficulties came to a head over the question of the desire of many Poles in the area to send their children to German schools, which were widely believed to offer a superior education. Contrary to the provisions of the Upper Silesia Convention, Grażyński instructed school inspectors to determine whether a child was German or Polish. When the International Court declared this illegal in April 1928, he retaliated by closing a number of German schools, claiming that their number was unjustified by the proportion of Germans in the local population. Conflict also arose over Grażyński's attempts to arrest Otto Ulitz, Secretary-general of the German League, whom he accused of spying. The Silesian Assembly, controlled by Korfanty, refused to waive Ulitz's parliamentary immunity, so that it was only by dissolving the Assembly in February 1929 that Grażyński was able to arrest him. He was eventually acquitted.

6. Foreign Policy.

The first years of the new Government saw an improvement in the international position of Poland, largely the result of

1. For the situation in Upper Silesia, see H. Rechowicz, Sejm Śląski 1922-39 (Katowice, 1965), pp.105-95; J. Krasuski, Stosunki polsko-niemieckie 1926-1932 (Poznań, 1964), pp.312-45.

the relaxation of tension in Europe in the period after Locarno.¹ The credit for this improvement accrued, for the most part, to the new régime. Piłsudski himself took charge of the direction of foreign policy, and the new Foreign Minister, August Zaleski, previously Ambassador in Rome, was directly responsible to him. The only aspects of foreign policy discussed in the Cabinet were economic questions connected with the trade negotiations with Germany.

Although Piłsudski had strongly criticized the foreign policy of the Governments before the Coup, he introduced no changes. Shortly after the Coup he told Beck:

Everything seems to indicate that for five years at least there will not occur in Europe upheavals in which our country could find itself involved. We have a little time for our military and internal work. It can hardly be foreseen that we will have to take any important initiatives.²

In spite of Piłsudski's great resentment of Locarno, the Treaty of Alliance with France was retained, and relations remained good, though not as close as they had been. The French desire for a rapprochement with Germany and the consequent belief in France of the need to revise Germany's eastern frontier somewhat undermined Polish faith in the usefulness of the alliance; so

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1. For the international situation, see J. Korbél, op. cit.; Z. Gąsiorowski, 'Stresemann and Poland after Locarno', loc. cit.; Krasuski, Stosunki polsko-niemieckie 1926-32.
 2. J. Beck, Dernier Rapport-Politique Polonais 1926-39 (Neuchâtel, 1951), p.3.

did the French attempts to limit the scope of the agreement in order to avoid involvement in a Polish-German conflict.¹

The Coup was welcomed in Germany, where Piłsudski was believed to be willing to reach a settlement with the Reich. The Marshal did make an effort to improve relations; however, a certain disappointment was inevitable, since Stresemann was principally interested in regaining the 1914 frontiers, while Piłsudski merely wished to establish a modus vivendi by settling a number of disputed issues. That he ever intended making territorial changes is to be doubted.² After an initial improvement, relations with Germany deteriorated somewhat in mid 1927 as a result of the Polish desire to extend the Locarno system of guarantees to Germany's eastern frontier, and because of the worsening of the position of the German minority in Upper Silesia. Nevertheless after Piłsudski's meeting with Stresemann at Geneva, a real relaxation of tension took place. In November 1927 an agreement on the position of Polish emigrants in Germany was signed, as well as one on the right of settlement of Germans in Poland. In the next year, agreement was reached on a number of matters including inheritance rights,

1. See Korbel, op. cit., pp.242-4.

2. The raising of the frontier question during Herman Diamand's mission to Stresemann in July 1926, and in Prince Michał Radziwiłł's conversations with Stresemann in March 1928 may well have been private initiatives.

in Poland a government which would...
British schemes for...
Union, see Appendix A.

customs formalities, frontier regulation, passports, and the export of timber. The vexed question of the compensation due to Germany for the taking over of the munitions factory at Chorzów was settled in November 1928, and in October 1929 an agreement on the liquidation of German property in Poland was signed. Finally, after protracted negotiations, a trade agreement (though not a treaty) was concluded in March 1930, but it was never actually ratified since the impact of the Great Depression led to a more intransigent posture in German foreign policy.

Relations between Russia and Poland after the Coup were marked by some initial tension.¹ The assassination in June 1927 of the Soviet Ambassador in Warsaw by a Russian émigré, and the threat of war between Poland and Lithuania, which diminished only after Piłsudski's dramatic intervention in Geneva in November 1927, aggravated Soviet fears that Poland would be used as the spring-board for an imperialist attack on Russia. From early 1928, however, relations improved somewhat. The Soviet Union resented the loosening of her ties with Germany now that the Reich, once more accepted as a Great Power, had less need of her. Stresemann's policy was concentrated on good

principles.

1. For a discussion of the view, held at the time by the Soviet Foreign Office and echoed in recent years by many historians in Poland, that the Coup was fomented by the British Foreign Office in order to bring to power in Poland a government which would be more sympathetic to British schemes for armed intervention against the Soviet Union, see Appendix A.

relations with the West, and from 1928 he placed less stress on links with Russia, particularly as he came to resent Communist subversion in Germany. As a result Russia, about to embark upon massive industrialization, sought to safeguard her western frontier by improving relations with Poland. In 1928 an exchange of political prisoners took place, and the two nations signed a railway convention and an agreement on the return of Polish art treasures in Russia. Finally, rather piqued by the lack of interest among the Western Powers in her schemes for outlawing war, Poland together with Rumania, Latvia and Estonia signed the Litvinoff Protocol with Russia in February 1929, implementing in Eastern Europe the principles of the Kellog-Briand Pact.

From about 1927, relations between Poland and Great Britain grew closer, the realization, in a sense, of Skrzyński's foreign policy. Poland came more and more to appear a responsible member of the European Concert, and she shared with Britain a hostility towards the Soviet Union. In October 1929, as a result of this new closeness, the consulates in London and Warsaw were elevated to embassies.¹

7. The Government and Parliament.

Both Piłsudski had come to power with no clear political principles, apart from a dislike of political parties and of the

1. On Anglo-Polish relations, see the memoirs of Skirmunt, who was Polish ambassador in London throughout this period: K. Skirmunt 'Moje wspomnienia', (unpublished. In the Jagiellonian Library, Cracow).

way in which the parliamentary system had functioned before the Coup. Yet in spite of the fact that he was much more interested in administration than in politics, and though many of his actions had no careful planning behind them, he did try in the period after the Coup to lay the basis for a broad political organization which would support his rather vague goals. In June 1926 he spoke with Baranowski 'of the necessity to create a single front, with the broadest party span, something he had not yet been able to achieve'.¹ Sławek, Piłsudski's closest associate and confidant, addressing a group of Conservative politicians at Dzików in September 1927 told them that they must

harmonize the standpoints of the Right and Left.

For it would not be a healthy situation if the Right alone was to dominate the political life of the State in spite of the existence of substantial segments of left-wing opinion, or vice versa.²

Piłsudski thus sought to widen the basis of his political support and to undercut the National Democrats by trying to win over the political organizations of the large landowners. He had cooperated with the Galician Conservatives since before the First World War, and had maintained these contacts after Independence. He had also approached some of the other Conservative groups both before and after the Coup, and his policy towards the Church

1. Baranowski, op. cit., p.198.

2. ed. K. Kersten, 'Protokół konferencji grup konserwatywnych z udziałem przedstawicieli Marszałka Piłsudskiego w Dzikowie w dniach 14-16 września 1927 r.', N.D.P. (1st series) ii, (1959), pp.209-10.

was to some extent another attempt to win their support. Sławek again gives a key to Piłsudski's thinking:

He [Sławek] regarded as an evil the lack of representation of the Conservative element in the life of the state, for the National Democratic Right was anarchistic, and while the Left which had been pro-Independence (Lewica niepodległościowa) was well disposed towards the state, it had introduced into political life an excessive demand for reform. There was thus a need for an element representing moderation and a statist point of view.¹

In mid 1926 there were three main groupings among the Conservatives.² The most pro-Government point of view was represented by the Wilno group, the Conservative Organization, led by Eustachy Sapieha and Stanisław Mackiewicz, and linked with the Wilno Słowo. The circle around Prince Lubomirski in Warsaw was similar in outlook. The former Stańcyzy in Cracow and the ideologically related Warsaw branch of the Party of the National Right, led by Prince Janusz Radziwiłł, were also pro-Government, but wanted some firm commitments from the régime before they would declare their support. This group also had some links with industry. Radziwiłł himself was as much an industrialist as a landowner, and Maurycy Poznański, the leader of the Lodz branch of the Party of the National Right, was a prominent Jewish mill-owner. The third group, the Christian National Party,

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1. Ibid., p.209.
 2. For the Conservatives, see Micewski, op. cit., Chapter III, pp.79-141; Mackiewicz, op. cit., pp.183-89; A. Czubiński, Centrolew (Poznań, 1963), pp.32-7.

was divided. While Jan Stecki wanted to support the Government, Stroński and Dubanowicz held out for the traditional party alliance with the National Democrats.

Piłsudski, as we have seen, had thought of proposing an eminent Conservative for the presidency, and had spoken of Janusz Radziwiłł, who already before 1926 had been urging his political associates to come to terms with Piłsudski as a possible Foreign Minister. The landowners were not slow to respond to these approaches. On 27 May 1926, at a meeting at Prince Lubomirski's home, a committee was set up under Janusz Radziwiłł to sound Piłsudski's intentions.¹ When the Marshal reformed the Cabinet after the fall of the Bartel Government at the end of September 1926, he included two important landowners from Eastern Poland, Aleksander Meysztowicz as Minister of Justice and Karol Niezabytowski as Minister of Agriculture. These links were sealed by Piłsudski's presence at a banquet at Nieśwież, the Radziwiłł family estate in eastern Poland, on 25 October 1926. He was there ostensibly to confer a posthumous decoration on Stanisław Radziwiłł, his aide-de-camp during the 1920 War, but the large number of prominent landowners attending made it clear that a wider significance was intended.

1. W. Glinka (ed.), 'W rocznicę przewrotu majowego. Dokumenty', Polityka, i, No.11, 6-7.

By late 1926 a certain reshaping of Conservative political organizations had occurred. In December, the Sapieha and Lubomirski groups united to form the Polish Conservative Organization of State Work.¹ In the same month, the Warsaw and Lodz branches of the Party of the National Right united with the Stańczy, and in February 1927 a Lwów branch was formed. Both these new groups declared themselves for the Government.

The Government also succeeded in winning the support of the representatives of industry. Andrzej Wierzbicki, President of Lewiatan and a National Democratic Deputy, has described how Bartel arranged a meeting with him and Ministers Zaleski, Makowski, Jurkiewicz and Klarner on 8 June 1926. There Bartel promised that there would be no radical innovations in economic policy, and stated that while he could not offer Wierzbicki a place in the Cabinet, he would set great store by his advice. In reply, Wierzbicki stressed the willingness of the economic organizations of the country to co-operate with the Government.²

The creation of the Economic Council, on which many industrialists sat, and the generally conservative character of the Government's economic policies increased the closeness of this co-operation. On 12 May 1927, the first anniversary of the

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1. Polska Organizacja Zachowawczej Pracy Państwowej.
 2. A. Wierzbicki, 'Uwagi o przewrocie majowym', N.D.P. 1st series, (1965), pp.224-5.

Coup, Kurjer Polski, which represented heavy industry, stated:

If at the outset the supporters of the May Coup encountered unrestrained and violent condemnation, there has followed swiftly - in spite of the frightful pain and suffering which claimed so many victims - a calming of public opinion and even a justification of the coup, because of the weight and seriousness of the actions which the so-called May coup has undertaken.¹

The Government also tried to avoid excessively antagonizing the Left. Piłsudski-ites were important in the Socialist Party, the Liberation, and the Peasant Party, and the Government hoped, through these supporters, to prevent the left-wing parties' moving to a position of radical opposition. When the Cabinet was reconstituted in October 1926 the Socialist Jędrzej Moraczewski became Minister of Public Works, and in January Bogusław Miedziński of the Liberation became Minister of Posts. It proved impossible, however, to prevent a split in the National Workers' Party; the Piłsudski-ites left in June 1926, and in August, led by Ludwik Waszkiewicz in Łódź and Adam Ciszak in Poznań, they formed the N.P.R.-Left-wing, which supported the Government.² The small Party of Labour, somewhat weakened by the resignation first of Thugutt and later of Ludwik Chomiński and Eugeniusz Smiarowski still remained pro-Government. A similar grouping was the League for the Reform of the Republic,³

1. Kurjer Polski 12.V.27.

2. Nowa Sprawa Robotnicza 29.VIII.26.

3. Związek Naprawy Rzeczypospolitej.

which had followed a radical Activist line during the war. It had become defunct after Independence, but was revived in May 1926 by Zdzisław Lechnicki from the amalgamation of the Association of Settlers, the Riflemen's Association and the Association of Silesian Rebels. Through its bi-weekly, Przełom, it attempted to win support for the Government and to bring the Cabinet over to its radical statist position. Its most important member was Michał Grażyński, the Governor of Silesia.¹

Finally, apart from many who now adhered to the Sanacja for opportunistic reasons (the so-called 4th Brigade), the Government had a fair amount of support among the left-wing intelligentsia, of which some of the views were very like the radical, non-racialist aspirations of Italian fascism. Representative of this group was the legionary poet, Wacław Sieroszewski, who gave a lecture in Warsaw on 24 October 1926 comparing Piłsudski and Mussolini.² There was also a group which included Tadeusz Hołówko, Adam Uziembło and Julian Smulikowski, associated with the journal Droga, which hoped that Piłsudski would adopt a radical economic policy and deal fairly with the minorities. Wojciech Stpiczyński, the gifted, though erratic, editor of Głos Prawdy, which had become a daily

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1. — On the Z.N.R., see the memoirs of the first editor of Przełom, Tadeusz Katelbach: Spowiedź pokolenia (Lippstadt, 1948), pp.135-50.
 2. Gazeta Warszawska Poranna, 25.X.26.

since the Coup, assumed a radical statist position and hoped to win the support of youth for the Sanacja.

The Pilsudski was unwilling to order the dissolution of Parliament until he felt sufficiently well-established in the country and had a sufficiently strong political basis to risk elections. Nevertheless he used the threat of dissolution to prevent the parties of the Centre and Right, which would certainly have suffered heavily in elections, from attempting seriously to disrupt the work of the Government. He wished to take advantage of the far-reaching decree powers which the Government had been granted during the existing Parliament, and he was not above violating the spirit, if not the letter, of the Constitution by 'interpretations' usually suggested by Stanisław Car. For example, when the Sejm passed a vote of no confidence in two Cabinet Ministers, Pilsudski had Bartel resign, then reassume office, reconstituting the Cabinet exactly as it had been before, on the grounds that although the Constitution made provision for votes of no confidence, it did not forbid the re-nomination of Ministers against whom such votes were directed. A desire to humiliate the Sejm and to compromise it in the eyes of the people may also have played a part in his calculations.¹

1. Pilsudski's intentions remain a matter for speculation. He confided in no-one consistently, kept no diary and often surprised even his closest associates by his actions.

When the new parliamentary session opened on 20 September 1926 conflict soon arose between the Government and the Sejm. The parties of the Right were incensed by the purges taking place in the administration and by the unresolved fate of the three generals still in custody. They were determined to show Piłsudski that they were a force to be reckoned with. The Christian Democrats were particularly aggressive, since they feared that moderation might mean a loss of support in favour of the Endecja.¹

On 23 September, the Budgetary Commission of the Sejm accepted the proposal of Zdziechowski, a National Democrat, that the Government budget for the last quarter of 1926 be cut by 34 million zloties. Though Bartel inclined towards a compromise solution, Piłsudski insisted that if Parliament accepted this proposal, the Government should take it as a vote of no confidence. As a result the Sejm, anxious to avoid a direct clash, rejected the Commission's findings, but instead passed a vote of no confidence in two Government Ministers, Młodzianowski and Sujkowski.² Bartel again advocated compromise, but as we have seen, Piłsudski insisted upon the renomination of the whole Cabinet, thus significantly widening the scope of the dispute.

1. Rataj, op. cit., p.396.

2. Ibid., pp.396-407.

In retaliation, the Senate cut the 34 million zloties from the budget, and the new Senate proposal was accepted by the Sejm on 30 September. The Government interpreted this as a vote of no confidence. Bartel resigned, and a dissolution was universally expected. Instead, Piłsudski himself formed a Government on 1 October. On 2 November Parliament was prorogued until the commencing of the normal budgetary session at the beginning of November.

In the meantime, the political atmosphere deteriorated still further when a number of Piłsudski-ite zealots broke in upon and assaulted Zdziechowski, who had played an important part in precipitating the crisis. This incident apparently took place without Piłsudski's approval, and aroused his anger, but no serious attempt was made to uncover those responsible.¹

When Parliament was reconvened, an almost farcical dispute arose over Piłsudski's demand that, as a sign of respect, Deputies should stand while the President's declaration of the opening of Parliament was read. After nearly two weeks, the question was finally resolved by having the President read the message in person in a hall in the Governmental Palace from which all the chairs had been removed.

1. Miedziński told Rataj that Piłsudski 'became mad with anger' when he heard of the attack, Rataj, op. cit., pp.418-9. The tone of some of the articles in the Piłsudski-ite press was not reassuring, however. See, e.g., Głos Prawdy, 1,2.X.26; 8.X.26.

More serious was the strong opposition aroused in all parties by a decree issued on 4 November which drastically limited the freedom of the press.¹ When the Sejm finally met on 13 November, a motion was presented calling for the abrogation of this decree. It was approved by the Juridical Committee on 15 November. Because of some uncertainty over the method of abrogating decrees, it was then sent to the Constitutional Committee. The Government let it be known that it would not yield, and a clash seemed certain. In the end, however, Piłsudski decided to draw back, and allowed the Sejm to abrogate the decree on 10 December. The situation eased, and Parliament approved the Government's provisional budget. As a sign of the relaxation of tension, Piłsudski himself appeared before the Budgetary Commission of the Sejm on 16 December and made a conciliatory speech.²

By the end of 1926, the political situation had become somewhat clearer. On the Right, the Christian National Party was seriously split by Piłsudski's approaches to the large land-

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1. 'Rozporządzenia Prezydenta Rzeczypospolitej z dnia 4 listopada 1926 r. o karach za rozpowszechnianie nieprawdziwych wiadomości oraz o karach za zniewagę władz i ich przedstawicieli', Dz.U.R.P. (1926), No.110, pp.1123-5. For the general question of the Government's treatment of the press and the nature of press censorship in this period, see M. Pietrzak, Reglamentacja wolności prasy w Polsce (1918-1939) (Warsaw, 1963).
 2. According to Rataj, op. cit., p.448, 'The fact that the Government accepted the withdrawal of the press decree without protest, where previously it was ready for extreme measures if this were done, the fact that Piłsudski took part in a normal and polite way in the sessions of the Budget Committee--these facts were universally regarded as the results of a definite change in the course of the Government, in the direction of co-operation with the Sejm.'

owners. The Coup had led to a growth of right-radicalism and anti-parliamentarianism among the National Democrats, and such support as the party still enjoyed among large landowners was threatened by Piłsudski's wooing of the Conservatives. To many the Coup seemed to illustrate the final bankruptcy of liberal constitutionalism in Poland. At a meeting of the Executive Council of the Popular National Union on 27 November 1926, Dmowski, who had not been active in politics for several years, tried to convince the leaders of the party to transform it into a new 'national movement', based to some extent on the model of similar groups elsewhere in Europe.¹ Although the party leadership did not oppose Dmowski's initiative, the view prevailed that the party in its present form still answered the needs of the political situation.² Nevertheless Dmowski decided to launch his Camp for a Great Poland³ on 4 December in Poznań. It was to be 'the organization of the conscious forces of the nation',⁴ hierarchically organized. It did not intend to engage

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1. The literature on the National Democrats between the Wars is extremely scanty, and is one of the main gaps in the historiography of prewar Poland. See Micewski, op. cit., Ch. II; A. Garlicki, 'Obóz Wielkiej Polski', Mówią Wieki (Nov. 1958), p.38; Dmowski, Pisma, vols. ix, x, A. Wapiński, 'Niektóre problemy ewolucji ideowo-politycznej Endecji w latach 1918-1939', K.H. lxxiii (1966) No.4. 861-77.
 2. The communiqué issued by the party is reprinted in Gazeta Warszawska Poranna, 28.XI.26.
 3. Obóz Wielkiej Polski (O.W.P.).
 4. Dmowski, 'Obóz Wielkiej Polski. Deklaracja Ideowa', Pisma, ix, p.95.

in day-to-day political activity, but hoped through education to unite all 'national elements' in a disciplined and organized body which would eventually take power. For the moment, outside student circles, its support was small.¹

The Centre parties too were much affected by the new situation. In spite of its apparent unity in Parliament, the Christian Democratic Party was deeply divided. Only Korfanty's group in Upper Silesia was determined to pursue intransigent opposition. By the end of 1927, its policy had diverged so far from that of the central office that Korfanty's provincial committee was suspended. The Warsaw section of the party was for moderate opposition, while the group in Lwów led by Professor Stefan Bryl inclined towards co-operation with the Government.² In the National Workers' Party the Coup led to a split, as we have seen; however, the majority of its members remained faithful to the leadership of Adam Chądzyński and moved into increasing opposition. The Piast decided not to assume a definite position for the time being, hoping that the

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1. Rothschild (op. cit., pp.242-4) fails to distinguish the O.W.P. from the National Democrats, arguing that the former replaced the latter. Moreover he confuses Dmowski's views in the 'thirties with those he held in the 'twenties. As for his assertion that at the inauguration of the O.W.P. Dmowski claimed that the May Coup was a Masonic-Jewish conspiracy, there is not one word in Dmowski's speech which refers to Jews or Masons (Pisma, ix, pp.99-108). Finally, the two pamphlets of Dmowski's he refers to, Kościół and Naród i Państwo are in fact one: Kościół, Naród i Państwo (Pisma, ix, pp.83-121.)
 2. Micewski, op. cit., Ch.III; Czubiński, Centrolew, pp.40-1.

activities of the Government and new elections would clarify the political scene. At the 5th Party Congress, held in Cracow on 28 November 1926, a resolution was passed approving the actions of the Parliamentary Club of the party 'in particular, the policy of the defence of parliamentarianism and of parliamentary governments in Poland, based on a stable majority.' At the same time 'the principle of an objective attitude towards all governments up to the present, including this one' was approved.¹

On the Left, considerable sympathy for Piłsudski survived, though opposition was growing. This process was to be seen most clearly in the P.P.S. There were many in the party, apart from the dedicated Piłsudski-ites, who hoped that Comrade Żiuk would modify his policy and move towards the Left. The party was thus unwilling to do anything which would excessively antagonize the Government. At the same time, the leadership hesitated to make too many concessions for fear of losing support to the Communists and to the P.P.S.-Left, a group which had split off from the Socialists in June 1926 and soon became a Communist front organization.² During the September budget

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1. Czas, 1.XII.26. For internal developments in the Piast, see Lato, op. cit., pp.87-152 and Witos, op. cit., iii.136-51.
 2. On the P.P.S.-Lewica, see L. Hass, 'P.P.S. Lewica 1926-31', N.D.P. series 1, iv (1961), 59-99, and P.P.S. Lewica 1926-31 Materiały Źródłowe (Warsaw, 1963). The group's name was a conscious echo of that adopted by the more socially radical part of the P.P.S. which split off from the party in 1906. See above Ch. II, pp. 106-7, 118-9.

crisis, the party had voted for the Government until the provocative renomination of the Bartel Cabinet. Disquiet was further aroused by Piłsudski's approaches to the large land-owners, although there were many in the party who justified this course as a means of 'encircling' the National Democrats.¹ When Moraczewski joined the Government, the Central Executive Committee of the P.P.S. ruled simply that he had acted on his own initiative, rejecting attempts to expel him from the party. What finally brought the P.P.S. into formal opposition was the press decree. On 11 November the Central Executive Committee resolved to adopt a policy of opposition because of the anti-democratic actions of the Government and its reactionary social and economic policy.² However, when the Government softened its course, the party retreated. On 20 December the Executive Council passed a resolution that

...the opposition of the Socialist Party does not aim at overthrowing Marshal Piłsudski, the Prime Minister, but at bringing about the reorganization of his cabinet by the exclusion of monarchist and reactionary elements and at obtaining a modification of internal policy, particularly in relation to the National Minorities.³

The move towards opposition was much slower in the radical peasant parties. On 8 December 1926 the Executive Committee of

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1. Rataj comments bitterly on this, op. cit., p.420.
 2. Robotnik, 12.XI.26.
 3. Ibid., 21.XII.26.

the Liberation passed a number of resolutions criticizing aspects of the Government's activity, but it concluded merely that the party would oppose 'those acts of the Government which it considered harmful'.¹ Pro-Piłsudski sentiment was strongest in the Peasant Party. On 19 December, Jan Dąbski, writing in the party weekly Gazeta Chłopska, stressed that the danger of a coup against democracy came from the Right, not the Sanacja, and criticized the Government only for not doing enough to crush reaction.² At the end of December 1926 the Warsaw committee resolved that the party 'has looked, and still looks, with great friendliness upon Marshal Piłsudski's Government', but that this attitude was becoming more difficult to maintain because of the neglect of peasant interests and the approaches to the magnates.³

The uneasy truce between the Government and the Sejm which had been achieved in December continued when Parliament was reconvened on 25 January 1927. The discussion of the budget for 1927-8 proceeded without difficulty, and when the question of the parliamentary immunity of the Hromada Deputies arrested in January was raised, only the P.P.S., the Communists and the Slavic minorities voted against its being waived. On 15 February the second reading of the budget was approved despite the

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1. Wyzwolenie 19.XII.26.
 2. Gazeta Chłopska, 19.XII.26.
 3. Gazeta Chłopska, 2.I.27.

4. Sanacja Warszawska 20.XII.26.

5. Kataj, pp. 512, p. 571.

opposition of the National Democrats, the Christian National Party, the P.P.S. and all the minorities except the Jews. According to Rataj, the National Democrats would have voted for the budget if the Government had not already possessed a majority.¹ When, after the final voting of the budget on 22 March, the Liberation proposed votes of no confidence in Meysztowicz and Niezabytowski, the Right refused to support them, and the motions were thus defeated. On 23 March, Gazeta Warszawska Poranna, the National Democratic daily, commented: 'The Popular National Union is a party too mature to sacrifice the fundamental interests of the state to its emotions.'²

The situation worsened when the Government suddenly and unexpectedly adjourned Parliament on 25 March. Piłsudski told Rataj that this step had been taken because the Government wanted to separate the vote on the budget from other parliamentary business,³ but it was more likely intended to prevent the passing of a bill on the right of assembly, of which the Government disapproved. The way in which the adjournment was effected was typical of the secrecy with which the Government surrounded much of its activity, and was greatly resented by all the political parties. It pushed the P.P.S. further into opposition. When, on the anniversary of the Coup, Daszyński

1. Rataj, op. cit., p.462.

2. Gazeta Warszawska Poranna, 23.III.27.

3. Rataj, op. cit., p.471.

published a pamphlet assessing developments since the previous May, Niedziałkowski commented in Robotnik 'his book is the last word of warning to those who today control the state. The last word.'¹ At the end of May, the Executive Council of the party resolved that 'Opposition is the principle of action of all organs of the party and their members.'²

The Liberation also moved more clearly into opposition. At its congress in Warsaw on 11 June 1927, it criticised the Government for not dissolving Parliament, for attacking Parliamentarianism, for not helping the peasants and for co-operating with the clergy and the large landowners. Although it recognized the beneficial effects of the Coup, the congress called on the Executive Council of its Parliamentary Club 'to intensify its critical attitude towards the Government'.³ Of the non-revolutionary parties of the Left, only the Peasant Party remained favourable to the Government. The Piast also hardened its opposition. After bitter discussions, the Parliamentary Club of the party rejected on 10 May by a decisive majority a resolution advocating co-operation with the Government. At the same time an alliance with the Right, advocated by Kiernik and Osiecki, was also rejected.⁴ In order

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1. Robotnik, 8.V.27. The pamphlet in question was W pierwszej rocznicę przewrotu majowego (Warsaw, 1927).
 2. Quoted in Próchnik, op. cit., p.259.
 3. Wyzwolenie 19.VI.27.
 4. Lato, op. cit., p.142.

dnia 10 maja 1927r. ...
 karnych o odpowiedzialności
 wniągach', Dz.V.27.

to recapture the influence which it had lost since the Coup, the party undertook an extensive campaign during the spring and summer in which the Government was strongly criticized, although Piłsudski himself was not directly attacked. The sixth congress of the party, held in Poznań on 8-10 July 1927 reaffirmed this anti-Government position and stressed the importance of defending Democracy although it also upheld the need for the modification of the 1921 Constitution.¹

When Parliament reconvened on 20 June the National Democrats and the P.P.S. co-operated in putting forward a bill which would restore to the Sejm its right of dissolution. This would make it possible to force the holding of elections and thus put an end to the existing situation which was widely felt to be compromising Parliament, in that a majority of Deputies were powerless against the Government. The bill was passed by 189 votes to 10.² The Right also proposed changes in the electoral system which would reduce the number of Members and modify the proportional system. Finally, two new and only slightly less harsh decrees on the freedom of the press which the Government had issued in May came before the Juridical Committee on 6 July, where they were violently attacked.³

1. Piast, 17.VII.27.

2. S.S.S.R., 20.VI.27, cols. 61-62.

3. 'Rozporządzenie Prezydenta Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej z dnia 10 maja 1927 r. o prawie prasowym', Dz.U.R.P.(1927) No.45, pp.549-59; 'Rozporządzenie Prezydenta Rzeczypospolitej z dnia 10 maja 1927r. zmieniające niektóre postanowienia ustaw karnych o rozpowszechnianiu nieprawdziwych wiadomości i o zniewagach', Dz.U.R.P. (1927) No. 45, pp.559-560.

All this was too much for the Government. On 13 July the session was prorogued. The Deputies of the P.P.S., Liberation, the Piast, Christian Democracy, the Christian National Party and the Popular National Union agreed to demand the convening of an extraordinary session of Parliament.¹ However, the necessary resolution was only adopted on 2 August, when it was submitted to the President.² The fate of General Zagórski, who disappeared on 6 August in rather mysterious circumstances after his alleged release from gaol, contributed to the excitement. He had almost certainly been murdered, though perhaps without direct authorization from Piłsudski.³ However, the Government adopted delaying tactics in calling this session. It should have been convened early in September, but was called only for the 22nd, nearly 10 days after it should have opened, according to the Constitution. Already before it met, a group of Deputies, which did not include the Socialists, had agreed on a proposed law restoring to the Sejm the right of dissolution by a simple

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1. Gazeta Warszawska Poranna, 15.VII.27.
 2. Gazeta Warszawska Poranna, 3.VIII.27.
 3. A large literature has grown up around this subject. See Lieberman, op. cit., p.304-12; L. Hass, 'Tajemnicze zniknięcie', Mówią Wieki, ii, (1959) No.12, pp.14-17; and 'Jeszcze raz o generale Zagórskim', Tygodnik Powszechny, xiv (1960), No.8, p.7; M. Kukiel, 'Jeszcze o majowej wognie domowej i generale Zagórskim', Wiadomości, xiv (12 July 1959) No.693, p.6. Pomorski, 'Jak zginął gen. Zagórski', Nadodrże (1959), No.7, p.6, J. Rawicz, Gen. Zagórski zginął. (Warsaw, 1963).

majority. This was considered by Głos Prawdy 'a provocation'.¹

When Parliament finally met, it debated the rejection of the press decrees which the Juridical Committee had proposed.

Lieberman, for the P.P.S., delivered a fiery speech:

For former generations and for us, a Polish constitution was to be a charter of rights and privileges, revered by all--for the present Government it is a political toy, a toy for keeping the Right and the Left at bay, nothing but a toy. ... We will abrogate the decrees of the President as the product of dictatorial ideas and as constituting a danger to the fundamental rights of the whole population. We will abrogate them, and we will abrogate them as many times as they are renewed.²

The press decrees were abrogated with only two dissenting votes (both cast by members of the Club of Labour). The Popular National Union then proposed a number of motions, the most important of which demanded the withdrawal of the special powers granted to the Government after the Coup and the limiting of the presidential right to issue decrees to cases of urgent need. The Government's response was again to prorogue Parliament. It continued to apply the press decrees, claiming that for them to be revoked a law was necessary, not simply a resolution. The question went to the Supreme Court where in February 1928 it was first decided in the Government's favour, and although the

1. Głos Prawdy, 17.IX.27.

2. S.S.S.R., 22.IX.27, col.21.

Government later allowed the decrees to be repealed, this concession had by then, as Próchnik remarks, 'only a moral significance',¹

The Government reconvened Parliament on 21 October, as it was legally obliged to do in order to present the budget. A dispute arose among the parties as to whether Parliament should agree to consider the budget or not, but this remained academic since Parliament was adjourned immediately after it had been declared in session. It remained adjourned until its five-year mandate elapsed on 28 November 1927. The Government had been unable to co-operate with the existing Parliament; the elections, which were to be held on 4 and 11 March, would show whether it could co-operate with a new one.

Stanislaw Thuratt, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

The Government saw the elections of March 1928 as a plebiscite on the May Coup and on its achievements in the following two years. Skawek made this explicit in a confidential speech on 15 September 1927 at the Dzików conference of Conservative groups: 'The elections should be conducted with the slogan "On the one side the pro-May parties, on the other everything which opposes them".' In this way, he added 'it may be possible to find a common expression for the pro-Government Right and

1. Próchnik, *op. cit.*, p. 262.

1. Kersten, *op. cit.*, p. 211.

CHAPTER VI.

A NEW PARLIAMENT.

The 'Sanacja' camp was, to speak brutally, the camp of those people who placed their money on Piłsudski. There were among them ideologues--some who believed that Piłsudski would create a monarchy in Poland, others that he would introduce a socialist system. There were careerists and speculators who bet on Piłsudski as they would on a racehorse. But the basis, the foundation of this camp was that it had no common ideology, that it was a union of people who expected something from Piłsudski.

Stanisław Mackiewicz, 1941.

Any strong man would go through this Poland like a knife through butter. But he would then fall into a void.

Stanisław Thugutt, Autumn 1925.

The Government saw the elections of March 1928 as a plebiscite on the May Coup and on its achievements in the following two years. Sławek made this explicit in a confidential speech on 15 September 1927 at the Dzików conference of Conservative groups: 'The elections should be conducted with the slogan "On the one side the pre-May parties, on the other everything which opposes them".' In this way, he added 'it may be possible to find a common expression for the pro-Government Right and Left.'¹ Yet although the Government did continue its approaches

1. Kersten, op. cit., p.211.

to both Right and Left, it hesitated for the moment to organize such an all-embracing bloc.

Much effort was devoted to cementing the alliance with the conservative Right. Sławek, together with Remigiusz Grocholski, Piłsudski's Adjutant, represented the Government at the Dzików conference, held on the estate of Zdzisław Tarnowski, near Tarnów, on 14-16 September 1927.¹ All the main Conservative groups were represented, the Party of the National Right and its autonomous Lwów branch, the Conservative Association of State Work with its autonomous Poznań branch, and the Christian National Party. Among the 36 people who attended were most of the prominent large-landowners in Poland, including Stanisław Badeni, Janusz Radziwiłł, Zdzisław Lubomirski, Eustachy Sapieha and Wojciech Gołuchowski. In his two speeches, Sławek went out of his way to win their support. He stressed that although the coming elections would be fought under the existing electoral system, the Government regarded constitutional reform, the strengthening of the executive and the modification of the electoral system, as a pressing need. He even hinted that the Government was not opposed to the restoration of the monarchy. 'The Marshal,' he stated, 'understanding that he cannot be replaced, holds that in the future only a symbol will be

1. For the minutes of this conference see Kersten, op. cit., pp.204-15.

able to replace him.¹ In a discussion which took place in Sławek's absence, a difference of opinion emerged between the Party of the National Right and the Conservative Association, which were both very eager to co-operate with the Government, and the Christian National Party which, though also sympathetic towards the Government, was unwilling to break completely its previously strong ties with the National Democrats. An attempt was made to set up a united Conservative group, and even Eustachy Sapieha, one of the most pro-Piłsudski-ite of those present, stressed that a general electoral bloc with the Sanacja was not possible, although local arrangements could be reached.

The Dzików meeting was followed by a number of smaller gatherings. On 19 October Sławek met a number of East Galician landowners at Jabłonów, the estate of Jan Choiński-Dziedzuszycki. Those present passed a resolution in support of the Government.² On 24 October the three main Conservative groups agreed to set up a Conservative Committee to co-ordinate their activity. A joint programme was issued which called for an increase in the powers of the President, the equalizing of the rights of the Sejm and Senate, a qualified franchise, and fair treatment for the minorities.³ On 2 November nearly 250 East Galician landowners

1. Messageur Polonais, 9.XI.27.

2. Czas, 18.XI.27.

1. Ibid., p.211. 22.XI.27.

2. Dzień Polski, 25.X.27.

3. Czas, 31.X.27.

met in Lwów,¹ and on 16 November a number from West Galicia and former Austrian Silesia met in Cracow.² On both occasions pro-Government resolutions were passed.

Attempts were also made to win over the landowners in western Poland, where National Democratic influences were strongest. On 20 November, Sławek and Grocholski met a number of Pomeranian landlords at Watycz, the estate of Count Dombiski³ and in the second half of December Sławek and Rydz-Smigły met those of Poznań at the estate of Count Taczanowski near Inowrocław.⁴

The Sanacja retained the support of the large industrialists. On 19 December 168 important entrepreneurs and landowners issued a long statement implicitly supporting the Government for having established increased political stability. They stressed that a constitutional system should be maintained, but that the powers of the executive should be extended, and those of Parliament limited. Among those who signed the statement were most of the leading industrialists in Poland, including Andrzej Wierzbicki, Maurycy Poznański, Henryk Grohman, Edward Natanson and Jan Goetz-Okocimski. Paul Giesenheimer was one of the three important

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1. Messageur Polonais, 3.XI.27.
 2. Czas, 18.XI.27.
 3. Kurjer Poznański 22.XI.27.
 4. Naprzód 25.XII.27.

1. Prasa Polska 22.XII.27.

2. Prasa Polska, pp. 120, pp. 10-1.

German industrialists from Upper Silesia who also signed.¹

In addition, the Government tried to maintain and extend the support it enjoyed on the Centre and Left. Here the only political groupings openly sympathetic to the regime remained the Party of Labour, the League for the Reform of the Republic, and the National Workers' Party-Left-wing. However there was still much sympathy and goodwill, some of it dictated by opportunism, in most of the Centre and Left parties. The Christian Democrats remained seriously divided, and the group led by Stefan Bryl in Lwów tended generally to support the Government.² The Piast too remained internally at odds on the question of its attitude to the Sanacja. We have seen how, early in 1927, the party had moved to a position of much stronger opposition to the Government. This aroused considerable unease among the pro-Piłsudski-ite and opportunistic members of the party, particularly after Government circles spread the suggestion that if only the most compromised members of the Piast, such as Witos, Kiernik and Osiecki, were removed from positions of power, the Government would co-operate with the party. Several unsuccessful attempts were made to induce Witos to resign as President of the party, and to let Rataj take his place. The discontent in the party came to a head in September

1. Dzień Polski 22.XII.27.

2. Czubiński, op. cit., pp.40-1.

and October 1927, when Jakub Bojko, one of its oldest and most respected members, after failing to exclude Witos from the leadership, issued a manifesto strongly attacking him and announcing his own intention to co-operate with Piłsudski. A number of others left the party with him, among whom were Senator Tadeusz Miciński, Władysław Byrka, Władysław Kosydorski and Władysław Długosz. Bojko founded a weekly, Chłop Polski, and a pro-Government peasant organization, the Association of Polish Peasants.¹

In spite of the bitter disputes which had characterized relations between the Cabinet and Parliament and the resentment this had provoked on the Left, the Government still remained hopeful that it could gain the support of the left-wing parties. Pro-Government sympathies were strongest in the Peasant Party. Świtalski, at this time Director of the Political Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, who was in charge of the attempt to form a left-wing pro-Government bloc, managed to induce the party on 4 November 1927 to propose a common electoral bloc which would include the League for the Reform of the Republic, the Bojko group, the Party of Labour, the Liberation and the P.P.S. The bloc failed to materialize, however, because of opposition to the Government's close links with the

1. See Lato, op. cit., pp.140-52; Witos, op. cit., iii. 143-68; Bojko's manifesto and Witos's reply are printed in Lato, pp.237-44.

landowners, and because the Liberation and the P.P.S. were unwilling to take part.¹ The refusal openly to commit the Peasant Party to the Government led to discontent among the most ardent pro-Piłsudski-ites, whose disruptive activity reached such proportions that their leaders, Jan Stapiński, the veteran leader of the Agricultural Workers' Union, Hipolit Śliwiński and Stanisław Wojtowicz were expelled from the party on 23 December 1927. In January 1928 they formed a new pro-Government peasant organization, the Peasant Alliance.²

Świtalski also made approaches to the Liberation to enter a pro-Government bloc, threatening the party with dire consequences if it did not. According to Alexander Bogusławski, one of its leaders,

When the representatives of the Liberation replied negatively, Świtalski began to threaten the complete destruction of the party. He said that they [the Sanacja] possessed large sums of money, nearly 28 million zloties, and they controlled the administrative apparatus, thus they could easily destroy the Liberation.³

It is not clear whether Świtalski made similar approaches to the P.P.S., but the fact that the overwhelming majority of the Piłsudski-ites, with the exception of Tadeusz Hołówko and

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1. Centralne Archiwum Ministerstwa Spraw Wewnętrznych, Akta sprawy K. Świtalskiego, quoted in Stęborowski, op. cit., p.76.
 2. Związek Chłopski. For the split, see Lato, op. cit., pp.155-7; A. Więzikowa, Stronnictwo Chłopskie (Warsaw, 1963), pp.102-5.
 3. A. Bogusławski, 'Pamiętnik', Archiwum Zakładu Historii Ruchu Ludowego, quoted in Lato, op. cit., p.158.

Moraczewski, remained in the party, suggests that he did. In January 1928, however, the party split in Upper Silesia, where a large part of the leadership, headed by Józef Biniszkiewicz, went over to the Sanacja.¹

In the first month after the proclamation of new elections the Government did not proceed to organize its disparate supporters. But from December 'non-party' committees to support the Marshal were being formed, particularly in Galicia and the Eastern Kresy. With the co-operation of the local authorities, the network of committees grew rapidly, and by January it was possible to unite them and to create a 'Non-party Bloc for the Support of the Government'.² The membership of the B.B.W.R. was extremely varied. In fact, agreement on the distribution of seats on the general and constituency lists was reached only after much conflict. The general list (i.e. the list of seats divided in proportion to the number of seats won in the country as a whole) was only published on 24 January, the last day possible.³ The core of the bloc was made up of former legionaries and members of the P.O.W. Walery Sławek was its chairman and played a large part in its organization. Other legionaries who stood on the bloc's lists included Bogusław

1. Rechowicz, op. cit., pp.125-8.

2. Bezpartyjny Blok Współpracy z Rządem, known as the B.B.W.R.

3. Głos Prawdy 25.I.28.

2. Głos Prawdy 19.I.28.

Miedziński, Adam Koc, Janusz Jędrzejewicz, Marian Kościałkowski, Marian Malinowski and Bronisław Pieracki. Ministers were also an important part of the bloc's membership. Bartel, Czechowicz and Kwiatkowski stood for the Sejm, while Niezabytowski and Zaleski stood for the Senate.¹ Sławek succeeded in inducing both the Party of the National Right and the Conservative Association to join the bloc along with the Left, in spite of their earlier unwillingness to do so. The Christian National Party split over the question of the bloc. The majority of its members, led by Stroński and Adam Żółtowski, decided to support the National Democrats. The rest seceded and, under the name of the Christian Agricultural Party, joined the bloc.² Many prominent landowners and their supporters figured in the B.B.W.R. lists, such as Janusz Radziwiłł, Eustachy Sapieha, Konstanty Dzieduszycki, Stanisław Mackiewicz and Artur Dobiecki for the Sejm, and Zdzisław Tarnowski and Franciszek Drucki-Lubecki for the Senate. The bloc also obtained the implicit support of Lewiatan, the Polish Industrialists' Association, and its director, Jan Hołyński, stood on the state list for the Sejm. A number of other leading industrialists, including Jan Goetz-Okocimski, who stood for the Senate in the Cracow province,

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1. Most of this information about Government Deputies and Senators is from T. i K. Rzepeccy, Sejm i Senat 1928-33 (Poznań, 1928) and T. Łoza, Czy wiesz kto to jest (Warsaw, 1938).
 2. Głos Prawdy 19.1.28.

supported the bloc as well.

In addition, the B.B.W.R. included the pro-Government left-wing organizations, the Party of Labour, the League for the Reform of the Republic, and the National Workers' Party Left-wing. In East Galicia the Christian Democrats joined too. A considerable attempt was made to obtain peasant support through the secessionists from the various peasant parties. Of those who had left the Piast, Bojko himself, Władysław Wojtowicz and Władysław Kosydarski stood for the Sejm, while Ignacy Miciński stood for the Senate. Józef Sanojca and Marian Cieplak, formerly of the Peasant Party, also stood for the Sejm. The small, conservative Catholic Peasant Party in Galicia entered the bloc as well.

The B.B.W.R. also included a number of pro-Government figures from the national minorities. Elias Kirszbraun, one of the leaders of the orthodox Agudas Israel and Wacław Wiślicki, director of the [Jewish] Merchant's Association, stood for the Sejm; Lazar Dal, a Jewish leader in Volynia, stood for the Senate. Several pro-Government White Russians and Ukrainians appeared on the B.B.W.R. lists in Volynia and in the Nowogródek and Wilno provinces.

However, the B.B.W.R. did not comprise all the pro-Government groups contesting the election. In Poznania and Pomerania it proved impossible for the conservative and radical supporters of the Government to reach agreement. The

Conservatives put up their own list, under the name of The Catholic Union of the Western Territories,¹ which included landowners' groups and some secessions from the Piast. It was to include the Christian Democrats, but they withdrew on orders from the Warsaw headquarters of the party. Nevertheless the Christian Democratic trade unions continued to support the list.² The Radicals - the League for the Reform of the Republic and the N.P.R.-Left - as the National-State Bloc of Labour,³ also submitted an independent list of candidates. In Silesia, the pro-Government forces assumed the name of the National-Christian Alliance of Labour⁴ because of the importance of political Catholicism in the area, and no B.B.W.R. list was nominated as such. In Galicia, the Peasant League of Jan Stapiński, although it supported the Government, also ran independently.

The aims of the bloc were very vague. Its adherents limited themselves to expressions of support for Piłsudski, to calls for a reform of the constitution which would further increase the power of the executive, and to a rather ill-defined etatism, claiming that the different social groups should subordinate their individual interests to the higher interest of

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1. Katolicka Unia Ziemi Zachodnich.
 2. Czubiński, op. cit., pp.71-2.
 3. Narodowo-Państwowy Blok Pracy.
 4. Narodowo-Chrześcijańskie Zjednoczenie Pracy. See Czubiński, op. cit., p.73.

the State. The improvement in conditions after 1926 was constantly alluded to. On 19 January 1928 the B.B.W.R. published a statement of purpose. After a bitter critique of the way in which the parliamentary system had functioned before 1926, it launched an attack against those politicians, blindly attached to parties, who had 'learned nothing', who wished to return to 'the system of a year and a half ago, a system which they embellish with the name of "Parliamentarianism" or "legality".' The results of the activity of the Piłsudski Government, the manifesto continued,

are enough to convince us that Poland has found the right path to consolidate the power of the state and achieve prosperity for its citizens. We do not want to leave this path to become bemired in the old ruts and swamps. The present reorganization must not be a passing phase in the history of reborn Poland, it must be the beginning of a long period of happiness and prosperity, resulting from the harmonious development of all the strength and resources of the state and of the whole population.¹

The list of undertakings which B.B.W.R. candidates had to sign was also vague. A Deputy was to support and respect the power of the President and to work for an increase in the power of the executive. He was to ensure that 'the needs of the State' were not subordinated to those of any group or social class, to treat other B.B.W.R. Deputies with respect, and if, after the election, more than one parliamentary group should be organized from among

1. The declaration was reprinted in Głos Prawdy 20.I.28.

those elected on list 1, he must take no action to join a new group without first consulting Piłsudski.¹

The main attack of the B.B.W.R. was directed against the National Democrats, both because they were regarded as the most irreconcilable opponents of Piłsudski, and as a means of gaining left-wing support. In turn, the National Democrats strongly criticized the Government because it did not possess a 'National and Catholic' character, and for its disregard of the constitution, though they also called for its modification and for the establishment of an equilibrium between the executive and legislative powers. This was to be maintained by a Constitutional Tribunal which would pronounce on the legality of the actions of both Executive and Legislature.² The party also attacked the Government for what it held to be excessive liberalism towards the national minorities, in particular the Jews and Ukrainians.³ In addition, its press warned the Conservatives that the Government was merely making use of them to establish what Kurjer Poznański called 'Moraczewski-ism'.⁴

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1. Gazeta Warszawska 23.II.28. (The name Gazeta Warszawska was reassumed by the paper in January 1928).
 2. The "Programme Theses" of the Z.L.N. had been adopted by the Supreme Council of the party on 16.X.27. They are reprinted in Gazeta Warszawska Poranna 17.X.27.
 3. For examples of attacks on the Government's policy on national minorities, see Kurjer Poznański, 21.XI.27; Gazeta Warszawska Poranna, 28.X.27, 29.X.27, 5.XI.27, 29.II.28.
 4. For warnings to the Conservatives, see, e.g., Gazeta Warszawska Poranna, 21.X.27, 27.X.27, 28.X.27.

The National Democrats attempted, moreover, to revive and extend the Christian Alliance for National Unity. The party leadership reached agreement with Dmowski and the O.W.P., hard-pressed by a government order of October 1927 which banned it in the Lwów, Tarnopol and Stanisławów provinces.¹ The O.W.P. pledged itself to support National Democratic candidates and to make no nominations on its own. The Endecja was also helped by a pastoral letter issued by the Polish bishops on 5 December 1927 which called for united action by Catholics in the coming elections. 'We have no need,' it continued, 'to insist on this self-evident truth: that division in circumstances such as those in which we find ourselves weakens the Catholic and national camp.'² It is not clear whether the bishops intended the declaration to have an anti-Government character, but its use of traditional National Democratic catch phrases made it seem so to the Endecja.³ On 11 December the Executive Council of the party resolved to place itself 'on the ground indicated by the bishops' pastoral letter', and declared itself 'favourable to an electoral campaign pursued by a united national camp'.⁴ On 13 December 118 leading right-wing politicians and intellectuals signed a

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1. Gazeta Warszawska Poranna, 21.X.27, 25.X.27.
 2. The letter was printed in Gazeta Warszawska Poranna 7.XI.27.
 3. Pro-Government radicals attributed the letter to the Armenian Archbishop Teodorowicz of Lwów, a strong supporter of the National Democrats.
 4. Gazeta Warszawska Poranna 12.XII.27.

public manifesto calling for the creation of a Catholic electoral bloc.¹

The letter upset the Government, and still more the pro-Government Conservatives. The Conservative Committee, the coordinating body of the three main conservative groups, sought an audience with Cardinal Kakowski. After it took place a statement was issued to the press affirming that the letter had no anti-Government intention.² When Hlond, who had sent a telegram from Rome forbidding priests to take part in the election, returned to Poland with Bishop Przeździecki of Podlasie in mid. January, rumours circulated that they had brought with them a letter from the Pope expressing his support for Piłsudski.³ On 8 February Janusz Radziwiłł claimed that when he sought Bishop Szeląg's advice about standing on the B.B.W.R. list he was told 'Not only do I authorize you to stand on List I, I urge you to do so'.⁴

Nevertheless, the National Democrats did attempt to exploit the bishops' letter. On 12 December they began negotiations with the Piast, the N.P.R.-Right-wing and the Christian Democrats, and on 23 December they announced that their electoral list would be headed 'The Catholic-National

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1. The text was reprinted in Gazeta Warszawska Poranna 13.XII.27.
 2. Czas, 19.XII.27.
 3. Głos Prawdy, 14.I.28; Czas 10.II.28.
 4. Czas, 10.II.28.

Electoral Committee'. However on 9 January, when submitting the names of their candidates, they were forced to admit that apart from a section of the Christian National Party, they had been unable to enlist the support of any other political groups.¹

The Piast, greatly disheartened by Bojko's secession, determined upon an alliance with the Christian Democrats, and rejected Witos's call to stand on the National Democratic list. The tone of the Piast-Christian Democratic programme was markedly clerical, though not strongly anti-Government: 'We will support the Government when its acts are just and conform to our views, but we will oppose, in a legal way, projects contrary to our principles.'² This alliance did not extend to Silesia, where the Christian Democrats were at odds with the Warsaw head office over the parliamentary court's verdict against Korfanty, and decided to nominate an independent list.

The N.P.R.-Right-wing stood alone, but its strength was confined mainly to Western Poland. Its once-strong Lodz organization had almost completely gone over to the Piłsudskites.

The parties of the non-revolutionary Left, the P.P.S., the

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1. The communiqué announcing this failure was reprinted in Gazeta Warszawska, 9.I.28.
 2. Rzeczpospolita, 25.I.28, (This was the main organ of the Christian Democrats.) For the Piast in this period, see Witos, op. cit., iii. 167-9, and Lato, op. cit., pp.159-61.

Liberation, and the Peasant Party, avoided directly attacking Piłsudski in their electoral campaigns. They even claimed to be truer exponents of his programme than the B.B.W.R., a claim made more plausible by the fact that Piłsudski's name did not figure on the B.B.W.R. list. A rapid move towards outright opposition to Piłsudski would have cost these parties a great deal of their support.

The Peasant Party remained the most strongly pro-Government, in spite of the bitterness engendered at the time of Stapiński's expulsion.¹ As late as 8 January, Andrzej Waleron, one of the party leaders, affirmed: 'The Peasant Party has supported and will support the Government of Marshal Piłsudski, who is an irreproachable man and has performed great services for the Nation and State.'² However, the pressure of the Government's electoral campaign provoked a more critical response. On 12 February, for example, the Executive Committee of the party issued a declaration stating that behind the screen of Piłsudski's name, the B.B.W.R. hid landlords, capitalists and officials in their service, and appealing to peasants to vote against the bloc.³

1. See above, p.380.
2. C.A.M.S.W., Urząd Wojewódzki Kraków, vol. 25-b, p.23 (speech to the provincial assembly of delegates of the Peasant Party, Cracow, 8 January 1928), quoted in Lato, p.162.
3. Gazeta Chłopska, 12.II.28.

1. A.A.N., Encyklopedia Ministerstwa Spraw Wewnętrznych, Organizacyjno-prawy, Rozwój i działalność, starostów, folio I.

In its programme, the party called for the expropriation without compensation of all land in excess of 60 hectares in large estates. It demanded the maintenance of the republican system of government, and declared 'unremitting war against all monarchist or fascist coups against the constitution.'¹

The campaigns of the P.P.S. and the Liberation had many similarities. Both called for radical social reforms and for the maintenance of democracy. Both demanded the abolition of the Senate and the granting of territorial autonomy to the Slavic minorities.² At the same time, they avoided directly attacking Piłsudski, arguing that they, and not the conservative landlords and industrialists, were his true allies, and stressing the danger from the National Democratic Right.

According to the Sub-prefect of Łuków, in the province of Lublin,

It is characteristic that opposition parties like the P.P.S. and the Liberation, which often quite passionately attack the Government, not only do not criticize the activity of Marshal Józef Piłsudski, but claim him as their man.³

An attempt was made to effect an electoral alliance between the two parties, but this was sabotaged by Świtalski. He told the P.P.S. leaders that the Government's attitude towards their

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1. The programme was reprinted in Gazeta Chłopska, 5.II.28.
 2. The P.P.S. programme was reprinted in Robotnik, 1.I.28, that of the Liberation in Wyzwolenie, the party weekly, on 22.I.28.
 3. A.A.N., Zespół Ministerstwa Spraw Wewnętrznych, Wydział Organizacyjno-prawny, Materiały na zjazdy wojewodów i starostów, folio I.

party would be much more hostile if it formed this bloc than if it fought the elections alone.¹ In discussion with the Liberation leaders, he argued that such an alliance would be directed against Piłsudski, that it would strengthen Conservative influences among the peasantry, and that the P.P.S. was trying to replace the Liberation in the countryside.² Nevertheless relations between the two groups remained close. In the course of an interview with Robotnik on 1 January 1928, for example, Jan Woźnicki, President of the Liberation, stated that in the coming Sejm, the P.P.S. and the Liberation would be the principal forces struggling to maintain democracy.³

The main Communist Party list was that of the Worker-Peasant Alliance,⁴ but a number of other lists were submitted in case this one should be declared invalid. In addition, a number of Communist-front organizations put up candidates; these included the Left Peasant Union--Self-Help,⁵ which had replaced the banned Independent Peasant Party, the Ukrainian Worker-Peasant Alliance (Sel-Rob) and the White Russian Demand,⁶ which had replaced the Hromada. The debate over the 'May error' had led to the dominance of the minority leftist group, led by

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1. Akta sprawy K. Świtalskiego, C.A.M.S.W, Quoted in Lato, p.159.
 2. Ibid., pp.158-9.
 3. Robotnik, I.I.28.
 4. Jedność Robotniczo-Chłopska.
 5. Zjednoczenie lewicy chłopskiej--Samopomoc.
 6. Zmahannie.

Leszczyński, at the 4th Congress of the Party in September 1927, a victory achieved partly as a result of Stalin's intervention on their behalf. Warski was excluded from the Central Committee, and a leftist line, afterwards confirmed at the 6th Conference of Comintern (July-September 1928), was adopted. This condemned Social Democracy as the main enemy and rejected out of hand any co-operation with other left-wing parties.¹

The principal minority list was again that of the Bloc of National Minorities. It now extended to the U.N.D.O. in East Galicia, but did not include the Agudas Israel in former Russian Poland, which had joined the Galician Zionists in rejecting Grünbaum's call for an alliance between the Jews and the other national minorities. A number of radical minority organizations also put up lists. The German Socialists reached an agreement with the P.P.S., and stood on its list. The Jewish Bund and Poalej Sion again stood independently, as did the Ukrainian Sel-Rob Left, which had broken with the Sel-Rob over nationality policy in the Soviet Ukraine, and the Ukrainian Electoral Bloc of Worker and Peasant Parties.

The Government actively intervened in the elections. As a first step, it clashed with the Supreme Court which was empowered to nominate three people from among whom the Electoral

1. For the Communist Party in this period, see Dziewanowski, op. cit., pp.120-8; Reguła, op. cit.,

Commissioner, responsible for the organization of the election, was to be chosen by the President. The Government demanded that the Court include as one of its nominees Stanisław Car, the legal expert who had suggested most of the devices for bending the constitution which the Sanacja had employed. When the Court twice refused to comply, the Government, acting alone, named him Commissioner.

The administrative apparatus was extensively used to support the Government's campaign. Sławoj-Składkowski, the Minister of the Interior, was quite open about this, stating in the course of the Sejm's debate on his ministry's budget on 5 June 1928:

I consciously took part in the elections for those parties which said they would support Marshal Piłsudski, and I say it openly. ... When I took this decision to participate in the elections, I called the provincial governors to me and orally advised them to support the B.B.W.R. The governors implemented this through the sub-prefects.¹

The documents bear this out. On 13 January, the Governor of the Lodz province urged his subordinates to support the B.B.W.R., calling on the head of his political department, Jan Dychdalewicz, to explain the situation. This he did with great directness:

Today, therefore, since the Government places such stress on the results of the elections, it is the duty of the administration in the first place to support its wants to the fullest extent of its power.²

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1. S.S.S.R., 5.VI.28, col. 116.
 2. P.Z.P.K. II, Lodz Province, 13.I.28, folio 60.

See the open letter of the ... to the Minister of Justice, ...

Many examples of the involvement of local officials in the campaign on behalf of the Sanacja could be cited. On 13 January the Sub-prefect of the Konin district in the province of Lodz instructed his officials to support the Government:

This support could take the form, during the electoral period, of settling favourably all those matters which could harmfully affect the attitude of the people to the Government or diminish their support, as, for instance, holding up for the time being distraints for taxes in arrears, allowing relief in their payment, postponing the date of their payment, allowing payment in instalments, through the swift giving of advice and the favourable settlement of matters where there is no legal objection.

He especially appealed to the School Inspector to support the B.B.W.R. campaign through the teachers subordinate to him.¹

Moreover, the police allowed election meetings of the Sanacja's opponents to be broken up by pro-Government militants, and a number of radical politicians were taken into custody or compelled to report to the police thrice daily during the electoral period.² Action was also taken against the anti-Government press by means of the press decree. Right-wing newspapers were particularly affected. Gazeta Warszawska, for example, was confiscated on 1, 10, 13, 14, 24, 27, 29 February and 3 March, Kurjer Poznański on 18, 22, 23, 29 February and

1. P.Z.P.K. I, Konin subprefecture, Lodz province, 13.I.28, folio 76. There were many such cases. See, e.g., P.Z.P.K. I, folio 76, meeting on 28.XII.27 of the officials of the Łask district, Lodz province; folio 80, meeting on 27.I.28, of the officials of the Kościan district in Poznania; folio 83, meeting on 3.II.28 of officials of the Rohatyń district in the Stanisławów province.
2. See the open letter of one of those affected, A. Kordowski, to the Minister of Justice. Robotnik 12.III.28.

1 March. Electoral pamphlets were subject to censorship too, and a fair number of those of the Right, as well as a few of those of the P.P.S. were seized.¹

The B.B.W.R. enjoyed impressive financial reserves which enabled it to undertake a campaign of almost American dimensions, and also to buy off opponents. These funds came not only from the bloc's numerous supporters among the landowners and industrialists, but from the Treasury as well. 'On the orders of Marshal Piłsudski, ' wrote Sławoj-Składkowski long afterwards, 'Minister Czechowicz gave me 8 million zloties for the elections, which I accounted for to a Citizens' Commission headed by Zawadzki and Sieroszewski.'²

In addition, through its control of the Electoral Commission, the Government was able to invalidate lists when they were submitted, a power it used principally against the Communists. In the same way it was able to assess the validity of votes cast in the election, when 320,000 ballots were declared cancelled, (i.e. 3.6%)³ as against 50,000 in 1922. A certain amount of falsification also took place during the counting of votes.

After the elections the Sejm created a Special Commission

1. B.P.P.P. 183, pp.10-12. Complaints about the Government's behaviour in the elections appeared frequently in the opposition press. See, e.g., Robotnik, 12.II.28, 15.II.28, 29.II.28, 3.III.28.
2. Letter to W. Pobóg-Malinowski, 9.X.51, quoted in Pobóg-Malinowski, op. cit., p.515.
3. Based on Rzepeccy, op. cit., p.229.

to Investigate Electoral Abuses.¹ Although a number of constituencies called for a judicial investigation, no action was taken until after Car's resignation from the Commission in December 1929. He had become Minister of Justice in December 1928. Between December and April 1930, the Supreme Court declared invalid the results in six constituencies, mostly in Eastern Poland, and in the new elections here, the B.B.W.R. lost nearly 20 seats.² When the Government's mild course was abandoned in April 1930 no further legal investigation was permitted. It should be stressed, however, that in spite of the irregularities already described, the actual voting took place without administrative interference.

The elections were a qualified success for the B.B.W.R. Whereas Ślawek had stated at Dzików that he expected the Government to win 160 seats, the bloc together with the pro-Government N.P.R.-Left and Peasant League won 130 seats (of 444) in the Sejm, and 25.2% of the vote. The results for the Senate were even better. Pro-Government organizations won 31.7% of the votes and 46 seats (of 111). The B.B.W.R. did particularly well in the Eastern Kresy, partly as a result of administrative pressure, where it took 37.3% of the Sejm vote and 35 of its seats. In Galicia as a whole it received 24.6% of the vote,

1. For this, see below, p. 414.

2. See below, Chapter VII, p.p. 491-2.

TABLE I.

RESULTS OF THE ELECTIONS TO THE SEJM, 1928 ¹

Parties	No. of votes (in 1,000's)	%age
<u>Pro-Government Lists:</u>	<u>2,874</u>	<u>25.2</u>
B.B.W.R. (incl. Silesia)	2,399	21.0
Catholic Union	193	1.7
Bloc of Labour	147	1.3
Peasant League	135	1.2
<u>Right:</u>	<u>980</u>	<u>8.6</u>
Monarchists	54	0.5
Catholic National List	926	8.1
<u>Centre:</u>	<u>1,141</u>	<u>9.9</u>
Christian Democrats and Piast	771	6.7
Silesian Christian Democrats	142	1.2
N.P.R.	228	2.0
<u>Non-Revolutionary Left:</u>	<u>3,001</u>	<u>26.3</u>
Peasant Party	619	5.4
Liberation	834	7.3
Radical Peasant Party (Fr. Okoń)	44	0.4
P.P.S.	1,481	13.0
Independent Socialist Party of Labour	22	0.2
<u>Communist & Pro-Communist:</u>	<u>768</u>	<u>6.6</u>
Communist lists	278	2.4
Peasant Self-Help	27	0.2
White Russian pro-Communist lists	140	1.2
Sel-Rob	180	1.6
Sel-Rob Left	143	1.2
<u>National Minorities:</u>	<u>2,421</u>	<u>21.3</u>
<u>Nationalist lists</u>	<u>2,041</u>	<u>17.9</u>
Bloc of National Minorities	1,439	12.6
Ukrainian Party of Labour	45	0.4
Ukrainian National Alliance	9	0.1
Ruthenian (Russian)	133	1.2
Galician Zionists	241	2.1
Orthodox Jews	175	1.5
<u>Socialist and Radical lists</u>	<u>380</u>	<u>3.4</u>
Bloc of Ukrainian Socialist and Peasant Parties	269	2.4
Bund	80	0.7
Poalej Sion	31	0.3

1. Based on Rzepeccy, op. cit., p.229.

with a slightly higher proportion in East Galicia, where it won, together with the Peasant League, 27.8%. In Central Poland (roughly the former Congress Kingdom) it gained 18.9%. It did particularly well in Warsaw, where it won 35.9% of the vote, and 6 of the 14 seats.¹

In western Poland, its results were uneven. In Silesia the National Christian Alliance of Labour did well, winning 30.6% of the votes and 7 of the 17 seats. However, in Poznan and Pomerania the existence of two separate lists hampered the Government's campaign in this still somewhat hostile area. In Pomerania the Catholic Union of the Western Territories (List 30) won 7.7% of the votes, and the State Bloc of Labour (List 21) 0.8%. Neither won any seats. In Poznan List 30 won 6.6% of the vote but no seats, List 21 16% and 4 seats.

The parties of the Left also made a good showing. The P.P.S. won 13% of the votes (as against 10.3% in 1922) and 63 seats (41 in the previous Sejm). For the first time it won 2 seats in Poznan and 1 in Pomerania. But in the industrial areas of Warsaw, Lodz and the Dąbrowa basin it found its influence challenged by the Communists. The Liberation won 7.3% of the votes and 40 seats, somewhat less than in 1922, largely because of the various splits it had suffered. The Peasant Party,

1. The election results are derived from calculations based on the figures given in Rzepeccy, op. cit., passim.

TABLE II.

COMPOSITION OF THE SEJM ¹

<u>Parties</u>	<u>No. (of 444)</u>	<u>%age</u>
<u>Pro-Government</u>	<u>130</u>	<u>29.3</u>
B.B.W.R.	122	27.6
National Workers' Party-Left	5	1.1
Peasant League	3	0.6
<u>Right</u>	<u>37</u>	<u>8.4</u>
Popular National Union	37	8.4
<u>Centre</u>	<u>54</u>	<u>12.1</u>
Silesian Christian Democrats	3	0.6
Christian Democrats	16	3.6
National Workers' Party	14	3.1
Piast	21	4.8
<u>Non-Communist Left</u>	<u>129</u>	<u>29.2</u>
Peasant Party	26	5.9
Liberation	40	9.1
P.P.S.	63	14.2
<u>Communist and Pro-Communist</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>4.1</u>
Communists	7	1.5
Peasant Self-Help	1	0.2
Sel-Rob	4	0.9
Sel-Rob Left	2	0.4
White Russian Worker-Peasant Club	5	1.1
<u>National Minorities</u>	<u>75</u>	<u>16.9</u>
Nationalist parties	<u>65</u>	<u>14.7</u>
Ukrainian White-Russian Club	30	6.8
Ukrainian Party of Labour	1	0.2
Non-Party White Russians	1	0.2
Russians	1	0.2
Germans	19	4.4
Jews	13	2.9
Socialist and Radical parties	<u>12</u>	<u>2.6</u>
Radical Ukrainians	10	2.2
German Socialists	2	0.4

1. Based on Próchnik, op. cit., p.290, Table XXII.

TABLE III.

COMPOSITION OF THE SENATE

founded late in 1925, won 5.9% of the votes and 26 seats.

The results of the Communists showed a marked increase in support. Altogether, Communist and pro-Communist lists polled 6.6% of the vote, compared with 1.5% in 1922, thus electing 7 openly Communist and 12 fellow-travelling Deputies. The number of Communist votes was very likely larger than the official figure, for the majority of the votes disqualified were almost certainly Communist. These disqualifications were most numerous in White Russian areas, where Communist sympathy was strong. In Warsaw the Communists received 14.0% of the vote, as against 9.0% for the P.P.S., in Lodz 18.7% (the P.P.S. 28.1%), and in the Dąbrowa basin 47.3% (the P.P.S. 20.1%).

The parties of the Right and Centre were badly hit by the elections. The Piast won only 21 seats as against 70 in the previous Parliament, the Christian Democrats 19 as against 44. Because of the common Christian Democratic-Piast bloc, it is not possible to compare the percentage of the vote each party obtained in the two elections. The N.P.R. maintained its influence in western Poland, where it won 9 of its 14 seats, but lost its strength in Lodz, where it received only 692 votes. Hardest hit were the National Democrats, who won 8.4% of the vote and 37 seats. In the previous Parliament, they had had 98 Deputies. Even in Poznan and Pomerania the Endecja vote declined. Whereas in 1922 the parties of the Christian Alliance for National Unity won 48.9% of the vote in Poznan and 55.7% in

TABLE III.

COMPOSITION OF THE SENATE ¹

Parties	No. (of 111)	Senators	%age
<u>Pro-Government</u>			
B.B.W.R.	46		41.5
<u>Right</u>			
Popular National Union	9		8.0
<u>Centre</u>	12		10.8
Christian Democrats	6		5.4
National Workers' Party	3		2.7
Piast	3		2.7
<u>Left</u>	20		18.0
Peasant Party	3		2.7
Liberation	7		6.3
P.P.S.	10		9.0
<u>Pro-Communist</u>			
Sel-Rob	1		0.9
<u>National Minorities</u>	23		20.8
Ukrainian-White Russian Club	12		10.9
Germans	5		4.5
Jews	6		5.4

Although the Government had failed to obtain an absolute majority in either house, it regarded the results as highly satisfactory. The election was seen primarily as a crushing defeat for the National Democrats, Pilsudski's bitterest and most irreconcilable opponents. As Wacław Makowski, who had been Minister of Justice immediately after the Coup, wrote in

ENCLOSURE on 12 March,
 1. Based on Próchnik, op. cit., p.291, Table XXIII.
 The recent elections have raised certain political parties, until now very strong, and have given birth to a great bloc, which does not correspond to previous divisions. The defeated parties are three whose public role should now fade away in the period less previous, 1941-42.

Pomerania, the Catholic National List won 17.2% in Poznan and 24.3% in Pomerania.

The Bloc of National Minorities (List 18) won 12.6% of the vote, as against 16% in 1928, largely because many Jews in former Russian Poland voted for the Orthodox list or for the B.B.W.R., and many White Russians and Ukrainians voted for radical and pro-Communist parties. In East Galicia the U.N.D.O., which stood on List 18, showed itself the strongest of the Ukrainian parties, winning 27.3% of the vote and 20 of the 55 seats. The Bloc of Ukrainian Socialist and Peasant Parties won 9.2% (6 seats) and the Galician Zionists 8.5% (5 seats). As we have seen, pro-Communist parties did relatively well in both the White Russian and Ukrainian areas. The Sel-Rob won 1.6% of the vote (4 seats), the Sel-Rob Left 1.2% (2 seats) and the various White Russian lists 1.2% (5 seats).

Although the Government had failed to obtain an absolute majority in either House, it regarded the results as highly satisfactory. The election was seen primarily as a crushing defeat for the National Democrats, Piłsudski's bitterest and most irreconcilable opponents. As Waclaw Makowski, who had been Minister of Justice immediately after the Coup, wrote in Kurjer Poranny on 11 March,

The recent elections...have ruined certain political parties, until now very strong, and have given birth to a great Bloc, which does not correspond to previous divisions. The defeated parties are those whose public role should now end; they grew up in the period

Lodz province, 19.I.28.

of our enslavement, and adapted their beliefs to those conditions of existence. What characterized them was the lack of a 'feeling for the state', the exploitation of religious and national slogans... the absence of an understanding of the need for national consolidation or any aspiration for national independence. ... The political catchwords which the absence of independence has allowed to exist until now must finally disappear....(upaść)¹

The Government believed, in spite of the clashes in the previous Parliament and in the course of the electoral campaign, that it could reach a modus vivendi with the parties of the Left. Above all, it did not regard the P.P.S., in which there was still a sizeable group of Piłsudski-ites, as hostile. During the election the Sub-prefect of Lodz, presumably under Sławoj-Skłodkowski's instructions, had explained the Government's position to his officials:

The P.P.S. had its own role, that of combating Communism in the ranks of the workers. ... The union of the P.P.S. and the Local B.B.W.R. committee was not desirable, for it would give the Communists the opportunity to claim that the P.P.S. -- a workers' party -- had betrayed the interests of the workers.²

Of the parties of the Centre, only the N.P.R. was intransigently hostile to the Government. The Christian Democrats were severely split, and in both the Warsaw and Galician sections of the party there were important groups who wished to achieve some compromise with the Cabinet. The Piast too avoided adopting a posture of rigid opposition. Its position

1. Kurjer Poranny, 11.III.28.

2. P.Z.P.K. I, meeting of officials of the Lodz subprefecture, Lodz province, 19.I.28.

was made clear by Jan Dębski, President of the Parliamentary Club of the party. Speaking in the Sejm on 31 March, he said

We will undertake our work in this Sejm in such a way as to preserve and improve, and not destroy, the parliamentary system in Poland. I affirm that the responsibility for this Sejm and its fate will fall on the Government parties and those of the Left. We, as a minority, reserve for ourselves the right of parliamentary opposition, but we inform you in advance that this opposition will not be destructive to Parliament, but will be in accordance with the interests of the state.¹

Among the National Minorities, the Jewish and German Clubs could generally be counted on to support the Government, while the U.N.D.O. adopted a waiting attitude. Only from the National Democrats, the N.P.R., the Silesian Christian Democrats and the Communists could the Government expect unremitting hostility, but in all, these groups commanded only 73 votes of the total of 444.

Piłsudski declared himself in favour of co-operation with the new Sejm; however, as so often, what he meant by co-operation had little in common with the essence of parliamentarianism. At a private meeting of leading B.B.W.R. Members of Parliament at which Bartel, Sławek, Koc, Jędrzejewicz, Pieracki, Radziwiłł, Sapieha, Makowski and others were present, he outlined his position. After stressing that the most important function of the new Parliament would be

1. S.S.S.R., 31.III.28, col. 28.

revision of the constitution,¹ he continued:

Poland must have a parliamentary constitution, it cannot be an exception in the world, like Italy or Russia. ... At the same time, the Sejm, as an institution, has lost its way. It is not the function of the Sejm to exhaust the Government. Moreover, if the Sejm does not wish to co-operate with the Government, it will be driven out.²

His public statements were more conciliatory. In the communiqué issued to the press after this meeting it was stated:

Marshal Piłsudski...after having declared that he has always been a supporter of a constitutional regime, with Parliament as an indispensable institution alongside the President and the Government, has made it clear that, for the third time, he is trying to make possible collaboration between the Government and the Sejm. Now that the number of those elected on the Government Bloc is considerable, one can hope that this collaboration will at last be achieved; he believes, moreover, that the Sejm can facilitate this by changing its method of work....³

As a pledge of the Sejm's willingness to co-operate, Piłsudski demanded that it accept his nominee for the post of Marshal, proposing Bartel when Miedziński, whom he had asked first, refused. He thus passed over Rataj, who had been Marshal of the previous Sejm, and wished to retain the office. If Piłsudski had sought their support, the parties of the Left, which owed their electoral success at least in part to their

1. For the Second Sejm to amend the constitution a 3/5 majority was required in place of the usual 2/3.
2. Piłsudski, 'Przemówienie do grupy posłów i senatorów z B.B.W.R. (13.III.28)', p.2, ix, 106.
3. Głos Prawdy, 15.III.28.

connection with him, and which believed that in the new Parliament the Government would be forced to co-operate with them, would certainly have complied.¹ But Piłsudski announced Bartel's candidacy two weeks before Parliament was to meet: he wanted his candidate to be accepted without any discussion as a sign that the new Parliament was willing to come to terms with him. This was too much for the Left. It revived all the resentment provoked by the Government's treatment of Parliament in the previous year, and by the abuses of the electoral campaign. At an angry meeting of the P.P.S. Parliamentary Club on 23 March, the anti-Piłsudski-ite Marek was elected President by 47 votes to 16 for the Piłsudski-ite Jaworowski. It was also decided to nominate Daszyński for Marshal.² Daszyński agreed to stand in spite of warnings from Sławek, Miedziński and Bartel that this would greatly antagonize Piłsudski, and his candidacy was supported by the Liberation and the Peasant Party.

Piłsudski decided to open Parliament in person on 27 March and to read the Presidential Address himself, intending in this way to underline the importance he attached to the establishment of co-operation between the Executive and the Legislature. The occasion went off badly. When Piłsudski started to read his address shouts of 'Down with the fascist Government of Piłsudski!'

1. See, e.g., Pragier, op. cit., p.349.
2. Robotnik, 24.III.28.

arose from the Communist benches. Piłsudski had expected something of this sort, and had told Sławoj-Składkowski to prepare the police for such an eventuality.¹ When the outburst persisted, police were brought in and 7 Deputies, mostly Communists, expelled. By this violation of parliamentary immunity Piłsudski may have intended to intimidate the supporters of Daszyński, but in fact it did much to strengthen the determination of the Left, and to some extent the Centre, to stand up to the Government. Daszyński was elected Marshal on the second ballot by 206 votes to 141 for Bartel, 37 for the National Democrat, Zwierzyński, and 13 for the Communist, Sypuła. Some members of the Piast, most of the Christian Democrats and some of the radical Ukrainians voted for Daszyński on the second ballot.²

In the Senate the Government's influence was greater, and here its candidate for Marshal, Julian Szymański, was elected with the help of Christian Democratic and Jewish votes.

The Government and the pro-Government press showed extreme irritation at the election of Daszyński. The B.B.W.R. Deputies stormed out of the Chamber after the vote was taken. 'The

1. This account of the events is taken from S.S.S.R., 27.III.28, cols. 1-6, and from the contemporary press. Lieberman's allegation that the cries came from the Ukrainian nationalists seems rather unlikely (Lieberman, op. cit., p.324-7). For Piłsudski's consultations with Sławoj-Składkowski, see Sławoj-Składkowski, Strzepy Meldunków, pp.23-8.

2. S.S.S.R., 27.III.28, cols. 24-5.

election of Mr. Daszyński, wrote Epoka on 28 March, 'cannot but be interpreted as a provocation against the Government.'¹ The fury of Głos Prawdy expressed itself in a rather uncharacteristic antisemitism:

The Left has, in the last months, claimed to be the champion of parliamentarianism. We radicals... declare that this was and is a lie. ... Yesterday, when the Communists, people in the pay of a foreign country, provoked incidents against the creator of Polish independence, they were applauded by our Left, appallingly corrupted, rotten with the spirit of communizing Jewry....²

Action against Parliament was widely expected. Yet, when the session commenced, the atmosphere became somewhat calmer, Daszyński paid a courtesy call on Piłsudski and, in return, received a visit from him in the Sejm. The B.B.W.R. Club resolved on 29 March to end its boycott of parliamentary proceedings. On that day the Government placed before the Sejm the budget provisions for the first quarter of the financial year 1928-29, the preliminary proposals for the budget for the entire year, and a proposed law granting special credits for investment to the sum of 88 million zloties. Bartel asked that the first and third of these matters be settled rapidly.³

Although Marek, for the Socialists, launched into an attack on

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1. Epoka, 28.III.28, (This was the name adopted by Nowy Kurjer Polski in September 1926).
 2. Głos Prawdy, 28.III.28.
 3. S.S.S.R., 29.III.28, col. 4.

the Government for its failure to use the powers it had been granted to introduce radical reforms, for its disregard of the constitution and for its abuses in the election, the course of the debate was fairly smooth. The budget provisions for the first quarter were sent without difficulty to the Budgetary Commission on the 29th, where the Government text was accepted on the same day. They were returned to the Sejm on the 30th, and were accepted without a division, the B.B.W.R., Christian Democrats, Piast, Peasant Party and Jews supporting the Government. At the same time, however, a proposal to establish a Special Committee to Investigate Electoral Abuses was sent to the Administrative Committee of the Sejm.¹ On the 31st, a motion proposed by the Ukrainian Khrutsky that the preliminary budget for 1928-29 be rejected, was defeated by 275 votes to 39. Only the Communists and the members of the Ukrainian-White Russian Club voted in its favour. The provisional budget was then sent to the Budgetary Commission. On the same day, the investment credits were also voted, and Parliament was adjourned until 4 April.²

In the intervening period the leadership of both the Liberation and the P.P.S. met to formulate policy. On 15 April

1. Ibid., 29.III.28; 30.III.28.

2. Ibid., 31.III.28.

the P.P.S. Executive Council resolved that 'fundamental opposition' remain the party's course. It declared itself against any proposed constitutional changes, whether introduced by the Endecja or the B.B.W.R., which were intended to weaken parliamentary democracy. A number of radical social reforms were demanded, and the Communists were condemned as destroyers of working class unity. Finally, the Council called upon the party's Central Committee to strengthen P.P.S. links with 'Peasant Democracy'. Nevertheless the resolutions were sufficiently vague still to allow the Piłsudski-ites to remain within the party.¹ The Executive of the Liberation met on 29 April, and resolved that the party would defend the constitution against any attempts to modify its democratic character. The Government, it further stated, had not satisfied the economic needs of small agricultural producers; this, along with the Sanacja's interference in the electoral campaign, 'force the party into an increasingly critical attitude towards the Government and push it by the logic of events in the direction of opposition.'²

When the new session opened, relations between the Government and the Sejm remained uneasy. Conflict first developed over the question which had arisen over the Press

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1. The resolutions were published in Robotnik, 17.IV.28.
 2. For the resolutions, see Wyzwolenie, 6.V.28.

Decree: whether a simple resolution by the Sejm was sufficient to annul a decree, or whether a law passed by both Houses was required. The courts had been forced to uphold convictions under the Press decree of May 1927 because the Government had not published the Sejm's resolution of abrogation in the Dziennik Ustaw. On 24 April, the Socialists proposed an amendment to the law of 27 December 1927 which prescribed the manner in which laws were to be published in the Dziennik Ustaw. Article 1 of their proposal stipulated that the Government be obliged to publish the Sejm's resolutions annulling Presidential decrees.¹

The proposal came before the Sejm Legal Committee on 27 April, and on 8 May Lieberman argued for the new law before a joint meeting of the Constitutional and Legal Committees. In spite of the Government's vigorous opposition, the Constitutional Committee approved his interpretation of the constitution by 19 votes to 12. The project then came again before the Legal Committee, where debate raged bitterly. The Committee's Chairman, Jan Piłsudski, the Marshal's brother, resigned his office in protest against the activities of the opposition.² The pro-Government press was also harshly critical. 'The

1. S.S.S.R., 24.IV.28, col. 36. For the text of the law, see Druki Sejmowe, series II, No.51.

2. The stenogram of the debates in the Sejm committees was not published. Their course can easily be followed from the summaries provided in Druki Sejmowe and the reports in the contemporary newspapers. Particular use has been made of Gazeta Warszawska, Czas and Robotnik.

resolution', wrote Czas on 12 May,

will make almost impossible collaboration between the Government and the Sejm. It must be interpreted as a sign that the majority of the Sejm does not want, and is incapable of, such collaboration and that it considers its principal task that of protesting against dictatorship.¹

Opposition also arose over a number of new taxes proposed by the Government, which included a tax on buildings in rural municipalities, and an increase in the Land Tax. Czechowicz attempted to justify them to the Sejm on 22 May as necessary to maintain a balanced budget and to make possible the increase in the salaries of officials which had been promised during the election. The proposals were attacked by the Left, and particularly by the radical peasant parties, as a concession to the large landowners by the imposition of further burdens on the peasantry. The Buildings Tax was defeated on its first reading by 189 votes to 149, the Land Tax increase by 190 to 146. The majority included all the Left groups as well as the Ukrainians and White Russians. The Jewish Club, which had always argued that the urban population was excessively taxed to spare the countryside, voted for the law. As a result of these two votes, Czechowicz withdrew a proposed Estate Tax which probably would have been passed.²

1. Czas, 12.V.28.

2. For the course of this debate, see S.S.S.R., 22.V.28, cols. 16-50, 23.V.28, cols. 7-44, 49.

However, none of the parliamentary groups was prepared to push its opposition to extremes. This became evident in the budget debate which took place on 29, 30 and 31 May.¹ For the Government, Bartel made a moderate speech, and Sławek stressed that the aim of the B.B.W.R. was to harmonize different social interests for the common good. He called for more extensive constitutional reform in order to render impossible 'a return to the methods employed before 1926'. The Government's aim, he continued, was not Fascist,

to liquidate the Sejm or to limit the franchise. No, gentlemen, our aim is that Parliament, as a necessary institution, shall learn to deal with state matters in other ways than such as we have seen recently in the speeches of many Deputies in the Committees and in the general debate. It is a question of healing Parliament, which is undergoing a serious crisis not only in Poland. There are other examples. Primo de Rivera and Mussolini are more or less models for the radical destruction of Parliament. You see and know well that that is not the aim of the Government of the B.B.W.R.²

For the Socialists, Niedziałkowski declared that the Government was powerless to deal with the pressing social and economic problems because of its heterogeneous class character. The regime stood before a crossroads, and would have to choose between democracy and some form of Fascism. The system could not be maintained as it was; it was the aim of the P.P.S. 'to see

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1. S.S.S.R., 29.V.28, cols.5-50; 30.V.28, cols.3-85;31.V.28. cols.3-49.
 2. Ibid., 30.V.28, cols. 45-6.

that its liquidation was followed by democracy and not by one or other form of Fascism.¹ The P.P.S. was thus in 'fundamental opposition' to the Government. It would, however, abstain on the budget since it did not wish to accelerate the crisis.

Niedziałkowski's speech reflected the views of those in the P.P.S. who believed that the B.B.W.R. was bound to split because of its lack of internal cohesion.² This point of view was given strength by the resistance which the radicals in the B.B.W.R. had shown to the attempt to give the Bloc a more definite programme. Indeed, the radical groups within the Sanacja had displayed an increasing solidarity. In June the League for the Reform of the Republic and the Party of Labour united, forming the Union of Labour of Town and Country, a grouping with 15 Deputies and 5 Senators.³ Moreover, there were persistent rumours that Piłsudski was in ill health, which led to the belief that he might soon die or become incapacitated, thus precipitating a split in the Government ranks.⁴ At the same time, there were

1. Ibid., 29.V.28, col. 35.

2. See Niedziałkowski's articles in Robotnik, 20.V.28; 1.VI.28; 7.VI.28.

3. T. Selimowski, Polskie legalne stronnictwa polityczne. Zarys popularny (Warsaw, 1930), p.31.

4. Piłsudski's ill health was frequently alluded to in the press. See, e.g., Kurier Poznański, 11.V.28 or the London Times, 9.V.28. These rumours were always vehemently denied by the Piłsudski-ite press, although their truth is affirmed both by Piłsudski's own statements and by those of Sławoj-Składkowski in Nie ostatnie słowo oskarżonego, p.131.

other points of view within the P.P.S. Apart from the out-and-out Piłsudski-ites, there were those who, like Daszyński, hoped that the Government would be forced to reach an agreement with the Left in order to achieve a parliamentary majority. On the Left, there were those like Pragier, Zaremba and Ciołkosz, linked in a secret organization within the party, who believed that a conflict with Piłsudski was inevitable. In such a clash the P.P.S. had a chance of success only if it enjoyed the support of all the peasant parties. For this reason they were prepared to postpone the conflict until the Piast was more willing to cooperate.¹ Thus, for the moment, the majority of the party was united behind the Niedziałkowski line.

In their speeches in the budget debate, both the Liberation and Peasant Party Deputies used stronger expressions of opposition than they had done previously. For example, Woźnicki, for the Liberation, declared:

The last Sejm resolved that Józef Piłsudski had served the Nation well. The history of Poland will not rescind this resolution if Józef Piłsudski succeeds in time in bringing to an end the present period of non-responsible Governments in favour of a democratic regime, on behalf of the hardworking, labouring majority of the Nation, on behalf of the representatives of the broad working masses.²

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1. See Pragier, op. cit., pp.353-4.
 2. S.S.S.R., 29.V.28, col. 50.

However, both parties announced that they would vote for the budget if the Government maintained the credit of 100 million zloties for small agricultural producers which they had proposed. The Piast, Christian Democrats and N.P.R. all stated that they would vote for the budget, since to do otherwise would precipitate a dangerous situation. On the other hand, the National Democratic spokesman, Roman Rybarski, criticized the Government for not providing sufficient information to make a proper discussion of the budget possible. Of the national minorities, the Jews were divided, while all the other groups declared that they would vote against the budget.

When put to the vote on 15 June, the budget was passed by 218 votes to 54, with 172 abstentions.¹ The B.B.W.R., Piast, Christian Democrats, Peasant Party and Liberation voted for the motion, the P.P.S., the National Democrats and the Galician Zionists abstained, and most of the other national minority groups and the communists voted against it. The budget of the Ministry of the Interior, which was held to be principally responsible for the Government's electoral abuses, was reduced. On the same day the Sejm Administrative Committee finally voted to set up a Committee of Enquiry into the Elections. The budget then went to the Senate, where it was passed on 22 June, although the additional credits proposed by the radical peasant parties

1. Ibid, , 15.VI.28, cols. 42-3.

were rejected. The session was now immediately closed by the Government.

During the recess, Piłsudski resigned the Premiership, handing it over to Bartel, and retained only the post of Minister of War. He took this step largely on grounds of ill-health, as he admitted at the Cabinet meeting on June 25 where he announced his resignation, much to the surprise of his Ministers.¹ But he was also not unaware that the achievement of satisfactory relations with Parliament needed the lighter touch of someone like Bartel. Still, as an indication that a hard course towards Parliament could also be adopted, Świtalski, one of the inner group of military advisers around Piłsudski, entered the Cabinet as Minister of Education.

Piłsudski could not, nevertheless, resist giving vent to his irritation with the new Parliament. In an interview published in Głos Prawdy on 1 July² he attacked the constitution for excessively limiting the powers of the President, and for imposing too heavy a load on the Prime Minister who, because of the attention he was forced to devote to matters of detail which ought to be delegated, was practically powerless. The most difficult of the Prime Minister's tasks was co-operating with

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1. For a description of this meeting, see Sławoj-Składkowski, Strzepy Meldunków, pp.28-32.
 2. Piłsudski, 'Wywiad z redaktorem Głosu Prawdy (1.VII.28)', P.S. ix. 109-19.

Parliament. 'If I had not overcome my inclinations,' he confessed 'I would have done nothing but beat and kick the gentlemen-deputies without ceasing.'¹ He criticized the very nature of parliamentarianism: 'The type of work itself, consisting of the labour of talking, is one of the most miserable ideas ever invented,'² alleging that the quality of speaking in Parliament was so low that even the flies died of boredom. In his opinion the first Sejm (1918-22) had been a 'Harlots' Sejm', and it was only after much thought that he had decided against expelling it. The second Sejm he labelled the 'Sejm of Corruption'. When it seemed to him that the new Sejm had begun to adopt the methods of the first two, he decided he had to 'choose again--either to avoid any co-operation with the Sejm and be at the disposal of the President to impose a new constitution, or to resign'.³ He had decided to resign, but in any serious crisis he would still be at the disposal of the President.

The interview provoked strong reactions in the country. The Government newspapers took the opportunity to demand the reform of the constitution, while supporters of the Right, not without an element of Schadenfreude, argued that a Government with as much power as the Sanacja should have been able to overcome constitutional obstacles, and interpreted the interview

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1. Ibid., p.116.
 2. Loc. cit.
 3. Ibid., p.119.

as a confession of failure after two years of office.¹ On the Left, opposition was vocal, resulting in the confiscation of a number of left-wing dailies and weeklies which included Robotnik's issue of 3 July. The Executive Committees of the P.P.S., the Liberation and the Peasant Party all condemned Piłsudski's attacks on Parliament. Daszyński, as Marshal of the Sejm, took pains to rebut the former Prime Minister's accusations in a statement on 3 July, making at the same time a transparent appeal to the Sanacja:

If one created a stable majority in this Parliament, Polish parliamentarianism could develop slowly but regularly as a powerful factor in the public life of the country....²

During the summer, the demand by the Government's supporters for further constitutional changes became more insistent. At the Congress of Legionaries held at Wilno on 12 August where Piłsudski, contrary to all expectations, made an entirely non-political speech,³ a resolution was adopted calling for constitutional reforms which would 'consolidate for ever the memorable achievement of Marshal Piłsudski'.⁴ Various proposals were discussed by the B.B.W.R., and many rumours circulated as to their character. According to Robotnik, what they all had

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1. For the pro-Government view, see Polska Zbrojna (the Army organ) 2.VII.28. For that of the Right, see Gazeta Warszawska, 11.VII.28, Rzeczpospolita 3.VII.28.
 2. Robotnik, 4.VII.28.
 3. Piłsudski, 'Przemówienie na zjeździe legionistów w Wilnie, 12.VIII.1928', P.Z. ix. 119-28.
 4. Polska Zbrojna. 13.VIII.28.

in common were provisions for increasing the powers of the President and the Senate and for diminishing those of the Sejm.¹ Some B.B.W.R. supporters demanded more extreme changes; in the Wilno Słowo of 28 August Mackiewicz called on Piłsudski to establish a hereditary monarchy and found a dynasty.²

The most moderate statement of the Government's case was made by Bartel in an interview with Kurjer Wileński on 4 October. He argued that there was an inherent contradiction in the principle of parliamentarianism. Since it demanded that the Government be formed with the support of a majority in Parliament, the Sejm was, in some sense, responsible for the Cabinet. Yet it was also a function of the Sejm to criticize and control the Government. Bartel felt that this dilemma could be overcome if the Government were appointed by the President, and were responsible to him. Parliament's function of control should be maintained, and should be exercised in an annual no-confidence debate as well as in the budget debate.³

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1. Robotnik, 14.IX.28.
 2. Słowo, 28.VIII.28.
 3. Kurjer Wileński, 4.X.28. The text of the interview was later published as a pamphlet: K. Bartel, Niedomagania parlamentaryzmu (Warsaw, 1928). The constitutional question during this period has given rise to an enormous literature. The widely differing views prevalent within the Sanacja are easily traced in the minutes of the conference of leading members of the B.B.W.R. held on 30-31 August 1928 with Makowski in the Chair. See ed. A. Piasecki, Sprawozdanie z ankiety przygotowawczej do reformy Konstytucji (Warsaw, 1928). The entire September issue of Droga was devoted to this question. Other interesting products of the debate were: W.Z. Jaworski, 'Ze studiów nad Konstytucją, Przegląd Współczesny No.77, (1928), pp.353-373; J. Growski, Aforyzmy polityczne nieobowiązujące (Warsaw, 1929); A. Piasecki, O kryteriach oceny projektów konstytucji (Warsaw, 1929).

Bartel's speech was interpreted by the Right as evidence of a new conciliatory disposition on the part of the Government. However, on the Centre and Left this public debate on the constitution contributed to an intensified opposition. Early in September representatives of the Christian Democrats and the Piast met; they declared themselves against any increase in the power of the President and for the maintenance of parliamentary democracy.¹ Thugutt, who had rejoined the Liberation during the electoral campaign, attacked the Government for planning to limit democracy,² while Diamand of the P.P.S. criticized Bartel's proposals in Naprzód: There were only two types of government, he argued, 'people's governments' and 'authoritarian governments'. 'According to Mr. Bartel,' he continued, 'there can also be "Authoritarian-popular" governments or "dictatorial-democratic" governments. This is not the case, and never will be.'³

At the same time, the problem of the national minorities was again becoming acute. It was given token expression during the preparations for the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of Polish Independence. All the representatives of the national minorities, with the exception of the Jews, announced that they would not participate in the celebrations.

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1. Gazeta Warszawska, 7.IX.28.
 2. Wyzwolenie 19.VIII.28.
 3. Naprzód, 11.X.28.

Discontent was strongest among the Ukrainians. Dmitri Levitsky, head of the U.N.D.O. gave an interview to Moment on 13 September in which he stated 'We Ukrainians are not loyal as regards the Polish state, and we do not want to be.' When asked if this meant that the Ukrainians wished to secede, he replied 'Certainly, and without any doubt'.¹

The increased hostility of the P.P.S. to the Government was apparent when the party Executive Committee met on 31 September. After two days of discussion, a series of resolutions was adopted which stressed the need to maintain intransigent opposition to 'the present system of government', an 'autocracy' supported by capitalists and large landowners. The Government was accused of undermining the basis of democracy and of incapacity in dealing with the economic crisis.² The Committee rejected the counter-resolutions of Jaworowski, the head of the Warsaw organization of the party and an ardent Piłsudski-ite, which had stressed the importance of parliamentary government, but had called on the party to find a basis for a compromise with the Sanacja.³ The passing of the original resolutions thus represented a victory for those in the party who believed that a

1. Moment, 13.IX.28, reprinted in Gazeta Warszawska, 14.IX.28.

2. Robotnik, 2.X.28.

3. 'Poufny komunikat Informacyjny m. st. Warszawy', Archiwum Zakładu Historii Partii, quoted in A. Tymieniecka, 'Rozłam w P.P.S. w 1928 roku,' Kwartalnik Historyczny lxxii (1965) No.4, pp.811-35.

clash with Piłsudski was inevitable and a defeat for the Piłsudski-ites and for those like Daszyński who still hoped to achieve a compromise with the Government. A confrontation between the Central Committee of the P.P.S. and Jaworowski's Warsaw branch, which had vigorously opposed the party's moving into opposition and had fought to prevent Moraczewski's expulsion, seemed inevitable. Many party members resented the tight control exercised by Jaworowski in Warsaw and deplored his questionable methods, in particular the use of his Socialist militia to provoke conflicts with political opponents and his alleged misappropriation of funds. Already a number of clashes between his organization and the Central Committee had been resolved only with difficulty.¹

On 10 October the first issue appeared of a new Socialist daily, Przedświt, edited by Bolesław Czarkowski, to which Moraczewski was a leading contributor. Although it claimed that it had been founded not to split the P.P.S. but to 'deepen the ideology of the party,'² it made very clear its pro-Government sympathies. The party suspected that Jaworowski was involved in its publication. On 11 October the Central Committee ordered him to dissolve the Trade Union Council he had set up in Warsaw to strengthen his hold there, and to deny any connection with the

1. For these developments, see Tymieniecka, op. cit.,

2. Przedświt 10.X.28.

new daily. When he refused, the Central Committee pronounced the Warsaw party organization dissolved on 17 October.¹ The next day those expelled formed a new group called the P.P.S.-Former Revolutionary Fraction,² after the organization which Piłsudski had led when he had resisted before 1914 those in the P.P.S. who wished to place more emphasis on social and less on national issues. The new party criticized the P.P.S. for its unremitting hostility to the Government, which had deprived the working class of any influence in public affairs, and stated that it would adopt an 'objective' attitude, although it would not join any bloc.³

The P.P.S.-Frak united with the rebel Silesian party organization, but outside Warsaw the split was relatively unimportant. The new group set up a committee in Lodz and gained control of a number of trade unions. Ten P.P.S. Deputies decided to join, and Przedświt became the official party organ, though Moraczewski refused to become a member. Not all the Piłsudski-ites left the P.P.S., for some still hoped to heal the split, of whom the most important was Ziemięcki. At its first conference, held at Katowice on 1 November, the new party

1. Tymieniecka, op. cit., pp.828-30.

2. P.P.S.-Dawna Frakcja Rewolucyjna, nicknamed P.P.S.-Frak or B.B.S. Both terms were derogatory: the first referred to the alleged desire of the leaders of the party for office and preferment ('frak' means 'tail coat', i.e. formal dress); the second suggested the party's close links with the B.B.W.R

3. For the party's programmatic declaration of 18.X.28, see Przedświt 19.X.28.

maintained that the Bartel-Piłsudski Government was a coalition, and demanded only the removal from it of Ministers 'representing reactionary spheres'.¹

The P.P.S. devoted a great deal of attention to limiting the extent of the split. A provisional party organization, headed by Barlicki, was set up in Warsaw. At the 21st party conference, held in Sosnowiec on 1-4 November, a resolution was adopted condemning the secessionists. Nevertheless, some attempts at reconciliation were still made, notably by Daszyński. Towards the Government, the party's attitude was understandably hostile. The feeling of weakness engendered by the split also led to the passing of resolutions which emphasized the importance of co-operation with the radical peasant parties. The left-wing Independent Socialist Party now rejoined the P.P.S.²

Parliament was reconvened on 31 October, and devoted its opening sessions to the first reading of the budget for 1929-30.³ For the Government, Czechowicz explained that expenses had increased somewhat (to 2,802 million zloties) and announced that the Government intended to introduce several new taxes and to modify others in order to prevent a deficit. The debate brought

1. Tymieniecka, *op. cit.*, p.834.

2. For the police report on the proceedings of this conference, see 'XXI Kongres P.P.S. (1-4.XI.1928)', ed. A. Tymieniecka, N.D.P. (1st series) vi (1963), 289-96.

3. *S.S.S.R.*, 31.X.28, cols. 6-13; 6.XI.28, cols. 5-43; 13.XI.28, cols. 4-52; 14.XI.28, cols. 4-51.

no political surprises. For the Socialists, Marek kept to the new hard line, criticizing the Government for looking to the interests of the rich only. When he referred to Piłsudski's July interview as 'the swan-song of the previous Government',¹ however, he came into sudden and violent conflict with Sławek, who denounced this as 'arrant villainy'.² Sławek's reaction seems rather excessive, even for so ardent a Piłsudski-ite, and it may well be that some of the Colonels hoped to accelerate the clash with Parliament by provoking the Deputies in this way. Bartel certainly thought so, for he ostentatiously refused to have any official dealings with Sławek.³ As the debate continued, Rybarski, for the National Democrats, renamed the National Club, deplored the way in which the Government had ignored the budgets in previous years by demanding supplementary credits. On 14 November the Sejm decided to send the Government's proposals to the Budgetary Committee.

The interchange between Marek and Sławek had important political consequences. On 10 November the P.P.S. Parliamentary Club voted to exclude Sławek from among those of its opponents considered 'worthy of esteem'.⁴ Sławek reacted by challenging Niedziałkowski, who had been in the Chair, to a duel, a challenge

1. Ibid., 6.XI.28, col. 13.

2. 'Bezczelne żądactwo', S.S.S.R., 6.XI.28, col. 43.

3. Lato, op. cit., p.178.

4. Robotnik, 11.XI.28.

the latter refused. At the opening of the session the moderate elements in the P.P.S. had been strong. Daszyński, as Marshal, had called together the heads of the Sejm clubs before Parliament reconvened to see whether a majority could be formed.¹ He had also made a conciliatory speech during the Sejm's celebration of the tenth anniversary of Independence.² However the obvious unwillingness of the Colonels to compromise, and the harsh language of Piłsudski himself, who on the anniversary of Independence had referred to the Deputies, somewhat portentously, as 'men without a past or a future,'³ strengthened the intransigent group in the party. Relations with the left-wing peasant parties became closer. On 14 November, the P.P.S., the Liberation and the Peasant Party set up a Consultative Committee of Left-Wing Parties for the Defence of the Republic and Democracy⁴ to facilitate co-operation in upholding the constitution. On all other matters they retained their individual freedom of action.

The question of the way in which the Government had exceeded the credits granted it by Parliament arose again during the committee stage of the budget. The National Club had proposed

1. Stęborowski, *op. cit.*, pp.145-8.
2. *S.S.S.R.*, 10.X.28, cols. 2-6.
3. Piłsudski, 'Z Przemyśleń naczelnika Państwa', *P.Z.*, ix.130.
4. Komisja Porozumiewawcza Stronnictw Lewicowych dla Obrony Republiki i Demokracji. See *Robotnik*, 15.XI.28.

No. 30, p. 313.

2. *Przegląd*, 29.XI.28.

a resolution calling on the Government to present without delay a bill to legalize the supplementary credits obtained during the financial year 1927-28.¹ When the proposal was debated in the Budget Committee on 21 November, Wróblewski, the head of the Main Auditing Office, stated that once that body had become aware of the exceeding of credits, it had called upon the Minister of Finance to regularize the position, but had not felt it necessary to inform the Sejm or the President. Nevertheless, because the parties of the Centre and Left were not yet ready for an open clash with the Government, they accepted Bartel's assurance on 28 November that the Government would soon present the supplementary credits to the Sejm for ratification.²

More conflict arose over the budget of the Ministry of the Interior when Sławoj-Skłodkowski revealed in committee that his ministry's Secret Service fund, which had been cut to 1/4 in the previous budget, had been restored to its full extent by the Cabinet. This blatant disregard of constitutional procedure infuriated the entire opposition, and on 29 November the Budget

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1. In terms of Article 6 of the Treasury Law of 2 March 1927, 'The contracting of credits not included in the budget can take place only on the resolution of the Minister of the Treasury, enacted as a law, on condition that at the same time new financial sources are created to pay for the credits. Ministers are individually responsible for the strict observance of this clause.' Dz.U.R.P. (1927), No. 30, p.313.
 2. Gazeta Warszawska, 29.XI.28.

Committee voted to cancel all credits for the Secret Service in the coming year.¹

Relations between the Government and Parliament also deteriorated as a result of a dispute over the position of the Courts. On 7 February 1928 the Government had issued a decree, to come into force on 1 January 1929, making the organization of the Courts uniform in the different partitions.² The opposition feared that one of its clauses, suspending for two years the immoveability of judges, could be used to undermine the independence of the Courts. On 18 December, after an angry debate in the Sejm during which B.B.W.R. Deputies had attempted a filibuster, a bill was passed by 162 votes to 108 delaying the application of the decree until 1 January 1930.³ The Government had no intention of accepting this rebuff, and decided to promulgate the decree in spite of the Sejm's bill. While insisting that action by both Houses was necessary to alter a decree, it held up Senate proceedings by introducing irrelevant matters so that this question could not be brought to a vote in the Upper House. Such unsavoury procedure proved so embarrassing to Meysztowicz, the conservative and legalistic Minister of

1. Ibid., 30.XI.28.

2. 'Rozporządzenie Prezydenta Rzeczypospolitej z 6 lutego 1928 r. o ustroju sądów powszechnych', Dz.U.R.P. (1928), No. 12, pp. 171-94.

3. S.S.S.R., 14.XII.28, cols. 24-48; 18.XII.28, cols. 15-74, 78-80.

Justice, that he resigned on 22 December, to be replaced by his undersecretary, Stanisław Car, the already well-known Piłsudskite constitutional lawyer. On 31 December the decree was promulgated in Dziennik Ustaw, and on 12 January 1929 the Senate finally rejected the Sejm's motion.

Car immediately proceeded to settle scores with a number of prominent opponents of the Sanacja on the bench, retiring, among others, Zygmunt Seyda, the National Democratic President of the Supreme Court.¹ On 28 January, the National Club brought a motion of no-confidence against Car, which was defeated by the narrow margin of 96 votes (the B.B.W.R., P.P.S.-Frak, N.P.R.-Left) to 84 (National Club, Christian Democrats, Peasant Party, N.P.R.-Right, Communists).² The P.P.S., Liberation and Piast abstained. Afterwards Niedziałkowski justified the Socialist abstention, arguing that the conflict was only one episode in the battle between the Government and Democracy; that the Democratic camp was far more likely to win on a more popular issue; and that the P.P.S. had no intention of helping the National Democrats. A striking feature of the division was the large number of Government abstentions. The left-wing press attributed these to the desire of the 'Colonels' group' to provoke a crisis by allowing the motion to be carried. In fact,

1. Gazeta Warszawska 19.I.29.

2. S.S.S.R., 28.I.29, cols. 7-37, 39-42.

most of the former legionaries did vote, and Government abstentions were more frequent among the Conservatives, irritated by the attacks on the independence of the judiciary and by the events which had led to Meysztowicz's resignation. The crisis over the Courts did highlight some of the internal tensions in the B.B.W.R: both Epoka and Głos Prawdy carried articles attacking Meysztowicz.¹

The political tension was heightened by the Government's desire for constitutional reform. On 31 October the B.B.W.R. Parliamentary Club had called upon the Sejm Constitutional Committee to lay down the form in which constitutional amendments should be proposed, and this was finally done on 6 December. But as Czas put it on 12 December, it was clear that while the Government counted on Parliament to modify the constitution, the majority of the Deputies were against the changes demanded by the Government:

Thus the question remains, what will the Government do if reform through the Sejm proves impossible? This question dominates the situation.²

During the debate on the second reading of the budget on 30 and 31 January, the opposition parties, both Left and Right,

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1. For the view of the Left, see Robotnik, 29.I.29. For attacks on Meysztowicz, see Głos Prawdy, 1.I.29 (the weekly supplement) and Epoka 23.XII.28. The article in Głos Prawdy was confiscated by the censor.
 2. Czas, 12.XII.28.

continued their policy of avoiding a direct confrontation with the Government.¹ They did this in spite of the resentment aroused by Piłsudski's refusal to take part personally in, or to send a deputy to, the committee stage of the discussions on the budget of the Ministry of War; he claimed that he feared incidents which might compromise relations between the Deputies and the Army.² During the general debate Rybarski, for the National Club, once again demanded the legalization of the excess credits obtained by the Government. This time he was supported both by Woźnicki of the Liberation and by Dąbski of the Peasant Party. The budget was finally adopted on 11 February without a division. The B.B.W.R., P.P.S.-Frak, Christian Democrats, N.P.R. and Liberation voted for the budget, the P.P.S., the National Club and the Piast abstained. The Budget of the Ministry of the Interior was reduced, as had been suggested in committee, by the deletion of the Secret Service fund, and that of the Ministry of War was also cut, largely in response to Piłsudski's behaviour towards the Budgetary Committee.³ A notable feature of the voting was the attempt by the 'Colonels' group' in the B.B.W.R. to persuade the opposition to reject the budget, hoping thus to precipitate the conflict between the Government and Parliament.⁴

1. S.S.S.R., 30.I.29, cols. 7-55; 31.I.29, cols. 3-100.

2. Robotnik, 16.I.29.

3. S.S.S.R., 11.II.29, cols. 14-21.

4. Próchnik, op. cit., pp.306-7.

After the vote, Niedziałkowski again felt obliged to explain why his party had abstained. The time was not yet ripe, he claimed, for a clash with the Government, since public opinion had first to be convinced of the true nature of the Sanacja:

In our opinion, the vital problem which has faced the country since the Coup is the problem of the constitution, and it is against this background and over this question that the country's choice between the so-called Sanacja camp and that of democracy must take place, a choice of the utmost importance for Poland and for her future.¹

The constitutional issue did, in fact, soon become the issue of the day. On 22 January the Sejm accepted the findings of its Constitutional Committee, and resolved that constitutional revision be undertaken by means of resolutions presented to Parliament. On 6 February the B.B.W.R. presented to the Sejm its proposal, prepared by Sławek and Professor Makowski. According to its provisions the President of the Republic was to be elected by all those with the right to vote in Sejm elections. Two candidates were to be presented, one nominated by the Sejm and Senate and one by the Government. The President would enjoy very wide powers: he was to ratify all international conventions, except those imposing financial burdens on private citizens; he was to decide disputed elections, and had a suspensive veto; he could issue decrees when Parliament was adjourned or dissolved; he would be Supreme Commander of the Army and could suspend court

1. S.S.S.R., 11.II.29. col. 15.

proceedings before a decision was given; he could not be held responsible for his constitutional acts, though he could be tried for treason, violating the constitution or for common crimes if 3/5 of the National Assembly voted to place him in a state of accusation. The voting age for the Sejm would be raised to 24, and Article 12 of the 1921 Constitution, forbidding military personnel to vote, would be abrogated. Parliamentary immunity would be curtailed, and Deputies could be deprived of their seats by the Tribunal of State at the request of the Minister of Justice. No-confidence motions could only be presented if they had 111 signatures, and required 223 votes to be passed. The number of Senators was to be increased to 150. Of these, 100 were to be elected, and 50 nominated by the President. The Sejm could only reject Senate proposals by a 3/5 majority (the 1921 Constitution demanded 11/20). The Sejm and Senate would have only one ordinary session a year, though extraordinary sessions could be summoned by the President acting on his own initiative, or at the request of 222 Deputies. These sessions could only discuss what was specified in the Presidential message invoking them.¹

Not surprisingly, this proposal provoked violent reactions.

1. 'Wniosek posła Walerego Sławka i kolegów z klubu B.B.W.R. w sprawie zmiany niektórych postanowień ustawy konstytucyjnej w trybie przewidzianym dla jej rewizji', Druki Sejmowe, 2nd series, No. 444.

On 8 February Robotnik published an article headed 'The Proposal of the Government Bloc means in practice the liquidation of Parliamentary Democracy'.¹ On 12 February it denounced the project as 'a provocation of the working masses' and as an attempt to introduce "absolutism",² On the 17th Gazeta Warszawska warned that if the proposal were adopted, it would not lead to 'harmony between the higher organs [of the state] but would place them in a state of continuous conflict.'³ The proposal came before the Sejm on 22 February, and, after an acrimonious four-day debate, was sent to the Constitutional Committee on 4 March.⁴ The debate made it abundantly clear that the B.B.W.R. did not command a majority for its proposed changes. Moreover, on the last day of the debate the P.P.S., Liberation and Peasant Party, in order to underline their opposition to the Government's plan, presented their own proposal for constitutional reform. They demanded the suppression of the Senate and the election of the President by a National Assembly elected by universal suffrage. The independence of the judiciary was to be safeguarded, and the rights of the Sejm in controlling the budget extended. Church and State were to be separated. The territorially compact national minorities were to be granted

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1. Robotnik, 8.II.29.
 2. Ibid., 12.II.29.
 3. Gazeta Warszawska, 17.II.29.
 4. S.S.S.R., 22.II.29, cols. 5-32; 27.II.29, cols. 4-37; 1.III.29, cols. 76-100; 4.III.29, cols. 10-72.

territorial autonomy, the branches of production 'ripe for this' were to be nationalized, and land ownership was to be limited to 60 hectares.¹

However the collision between Government and Parliament did not come over the constitutional issue, but over the question of the exceeding of credits. On 11 February Woźnicki of the Liberation presented to the Sejm a resolution demanding that Czechowicz, the Minister of Finance, be impeached because he had not submitted the Government's supplementary credits to Parliament for ratification.² Exceeding the provisions of the budget in this way was a fairly normal phenomenon, and although in this case the sums involved were large (about 560 million zloties - £12,700,000 at the contemporary exchange rate), there had been no apparent obstacle to the Government's legalizing its financial actions by obtaining the Sejm's approval. That Czechowicz had wanted to follow the correct procedure is obvious from the letter he wrote to Bartel on 16 November offering his resignation if no action were taken on this question.³ Bartel too, to judge from his statement to the Budgetary Committee on

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1. 'Wniosek Związku Parlamentarnego Polskich Socjalistów, Klubu Parlamentarnego P.S.L. "Wyzwolenia", Klubu Parlamentarnego Stronnictwa Chłopskiego w sprawie zmiany niektórych postanowień ustawy konstytucyjnej w trybie, przewidzianym dla jej rewizji', Druki Sejmowe, second series, No. 555.
 2. Stęborowski, op. cit., p.203.
 3. The letter is reproduced in Lieberman, op. cit., p.342.

28 November, had wanted to settle the matter legally.¹ But both ran into the inflexible opposition of Piłsudski. His attitude may have been dictated by a desire to force a clash with Parliament. It seems far more likely, however, to have been the result of his desire to conceal the fact that he had obtained from the Treasury an extraordinary credit of 8 million zloties (£180,000) for the B.B.W.R. election campaign.² He must have realized the ridiculous and compromising effect such a revelation would have after his innumerable attacks on corruption in the state, and assertions of his own financial rectitude.

The presentation of the resolution accusing Czechowicz marked the adoption by the Liberation of a more strongly anti-Government line. The P.P.S. too had moved to a more uncompromising position; at the meeting of the Executive Council of the party on 24-25 February 1929 the more radical view of Lieberman, Zaremba and Arciszewski prevailed over that of Niedziałkowski, who still wanted to postpone the confrontation with the Government. A committee was set up to activate the local party organizations, to prepare for a general strike should the Government try to impose a new constitution by decree, and to co-ordinate the tactics of the left-wing parties in the Sejm.

1. See above, pp.425-6.

2. This was afterwards revealed by the disarmingly frank Sławoj-Składkowski, see above, p.396.

A resolution was passed calling on all 'truly democratic elements' in Poland to unite with the P.P.S. in order to prevent a Government coup directed against democracy.¹

The motion against Czechowicz was formally put before the Sejm on 19 February.² In the debate, Bartel angrily attacked its presentation at this time. He announced that he would submit a law concerning the credits only after the accounts for the financial year 1927-28 had been closed, and had been confirmed by the Main Auditing Office. This would have made virtually impossible any investigation of the credits obtained. Thus on 26 February the resolution was passed by 220 votes to 132, with only the B.B.W.R. and its allies dissenting. On the 27th, a special Sejm committee, headed by Lieberman, was set up to deal with the matter of impeaching Czechowicz.³

Piłsudski's reply to the motion took the form of a speech on 28 February to the Senate Budgetary Committee which he agreed to address because it was more sympathetic to the Government than was that of the Sejm.⁴ He called upon the Senate to regrant the credits deleted by the Sejm, explaining that he had not appeared before the Sejm committee because its method of dealing

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1. Robotnik, 26.II.29. For other details of the meeting, see 'Poufny Komunikat Informacyjny' quoted in Stęborowski, op. cit., pp.210-11.
 2. S.S.S.R., 19.II.29, col. 71.
 3. Ibid., 26.II.29, cols. 4-41.
 4. Piłsudski, 'Przemówienie na komisji budżetowej Senatu (28.II.29)' P.Z. ix. 132-43.

with budgetary problems, by which a Minister could not himself present his budget, seemed to him irrational, and because he feared that his honour would be impugned. He then proceeded viciously to attack Parliament, claiming, among other things, that before 1926 the military budget had frequently been used to keep prostitutes for the Deputies. This speech aroused intense irritation among Members of Parliament. Stanisław Szeptycki, a former Minister of War, attacked Piłsudski in an open letter for failing to make his allegations more precise, and emphatically denied his accusations.¹

On 8 March Czechowicz resigned his Ministry, much against Piłsudski's will,² and appeared before the Sejm Committee. Bartel also submitted his resignation, but it was accepted only on 13 April. Before the Committee, Czechowicz criticized the Sejm for taking action against him only because it did not dare to take action against Piłsudski. He claimed that he could not present the supplementary credits for ratification before the time specified by Bartel.³ On 12 March, Wróblewski gave evidence, stating that the Main Auditing Office had been aware of the supplementary credits since November 1927. He had attempted to get the Minister to issue the necessary bill for

1. Robotnik, 3.III.29.

2. See Piłsudski, 'Dno oka', P.Z. ix. 150-1.

3. Gazeta Warszawska 13.III.29.

ratification, but had elicited only delaying tactics. He was only informed in December 1928 that the Government had decided to link the question of the supplementary credits with that of the closing of accounts. He regarded all the supplementary credits, altogether 562 million zloties as illegal.¹ On 14 March the Committee voted 18 to 9 to impeach Czechowicz for illegally surpassing the provisions of the budget. It assigned the prosecution to Lieberman, Jan Pieracki of the National Club and Henryk Wyrzykowski of the Liberation.²

On 20 March Lieberman justified the Committee's findings to the Sejm. The Government Deputies responded by calling into question the honesty and patriotism of the prosecutors. The Committee's recommendation was adopted by 240 votes to 126. On 23 March the Senate passed the budget and on the 25th, immediately after the Sejm had voted on the Senate changes and again deleted the Secret Service fund of the Ministry of the Interior, the session was closed.

It had gone very badly. There was considerable discontent in the Conservative ranks of the B.B.W.R., uneasy about Meysztowicz's resignation and about the Government's apparent unwillingness to make any concessions over the Czechowicz affair. The P.P.S.-Frak was also showing signs of dissatisfaction over

1. Ibid., 15.III.29.

2. Robotnik, 15.III.29.

3. P.P.S., 1928-29.

4. Pieracki, 'Dwa lata', Ziemia, 12, 143-54.

the constitutional proposals and over the conservative character of the Government's economic policies.¹ The economic situation was giving some cause for alarm. The Government's questionable behaviour in the Czechowicz affair brought about a waning in foreign confidence, and the value of Polish Government bonds on the world market fell. Dewey, the controller appointed to the Bank of Poland under the terms of the Stabilization Loan, had warned the Government of the danger of forcing the budget through without Parliamentary consent.²

Piłsudski's reaction to this situation was to place more weight upon the advice of the 'Colonels' group', his small clique of military advisers, mostly P.O.W. veterans. As the crisis had worsened, this inner group had tended more and more to take over from the Cabinet the formulation and discussion of policy.

Whereas between May and December 1926 there had been 44 Cabinet meetings, and in 1927 38, in 1928 there were 26, in 1929 17, and in 1930 20. Of those in 1929, Piłsudski attended only 4, and of those in 1930 5.³ He had by now clearly decided on a course of conflict with Parliament, convinced that in the long run he was bound to win. The new, unyielding course was revealed in an article he published in Głos Prawdy on 7 April.⁴ Its tone was

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1. 'Poufny Komunikat Informacyjny', quoted in Stęborowski, op. cit. p.239.
 2. Kurjer Warszawski. 7.IV.29, Dewey, of course, aware of Polish sensitivity about foreign interference, denied that he had intervened with the Cabinet.
 3. P.P.R.M., passim.
 4. Piłsudski, 'Dno oka', P.Z. ix. 143-54.

savagely hostile to Parliament. In relation to the Czechowicz affair, he declared that he alone bore responsibility for the supplementary credits: 'I have always exerted my utmost efforts to compel Mr. Czechowicz to keep all credits for investment from coming before the Sejm.'¹ He had opposed Czechowicz's desire to appear before the Sejm in order to defend his honour there for 'Where,' he asked, 'can one find honour among such apes?'² He again resorted to extremely crude language:

If, as I should like in this situation, I am called upon to be Prime Minister, I declare publicly that they will not dare to convene the Tribunal of State even once, since I will have nothing to do with such as cover themselves with their own excrement (równi z fajdanami).³

On 11 April, two days before his resignation, Bartel wrote an article in Kurjer Wileński.⁴ It seemed the final adieu to the moderate course. Although he once more declared himself a convinced parliamentarian, he criticized the 'deformations' which parliamentary government had suffered in Poland. Attempting to justify his political position, he implicitly admitted its ineffectiveness:

My way of interpreting the collaboration of Government and Parliament, has not found a strong enough echo in parliamentary circles.

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1. Ibid., p.146.
 2. Ibid., p.150.
 3. Ibid., p.153.
 4. Kurjer Wileński 11.IV.29. It was later published as a pamphlet: K. Bartel, Kilka uwag o praktyce parlamentarnej w Polsce (Warsaw, 1929).

My approach of patience aimed to free Polish parliamentarianism of its embryonic and deformed features. If certain highly influential people outside Parliament have felt that this approach was bound to fail, and that it is necessary to have recourse to somewhat different methods, I, for my part, should not have the flexibility necessary to adopt another course....

These 'highly influential people' did now in fact openly take power. The new Government was not headed by Piłsudski, who felt that his health would not allow him to undertake such a burden, but by his close collaborator, Świtalski. It included a number of other important members of the 'Colonels' group'. Col. Ignacy Matuszewski became Minister of Finance, Col. Alexander Prystor Minister of Labour and Col. Ignacy Boerner Minister of Posts, while Car continued to hold the Justice portfolio. Of the 14 members of the Cabinet, 6 were military. 'That mysterious power,' wrote Robotnik on 16 April,

which kept to the corridors, has to some extent officially taken over the Government and assumed all responsibility. Messrs. Świtalski, Matuszewski, Moraczewski, Prystor and Pieracki¹... represent the group of people who will sail the ship of state in the name of Marshal Piłsudski. ... Democratic Poland, with the P.P.S. at its head, looks to the future with complete calm. After the events of May 1926, it has for a long time foreseen the coming of the 'period of colonels'. Its response will be an increased consolidation of the democratic forces of the country.²

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1. Col. Bronisław Pieracki, deputy head of the General Staff, had been appointed Under-Secretary to the Ministry of the Interior.
 2. Robotnik, 16.IV.29.

In order to strengthen the links between the three non-revolutionary parties of the Left, a permanent Consultative Committee was set up. On it sat Niedziałkowski, Barlicki and Lieberman for the P.P.S., Woźnicki, Bagiński and Thugutt for the Liberation, and Dąbski, Roja and Waleron for the Peasant Party.¹

A collision seemed inevitable.

in the... conditions.

The new cabinet... point of view... What it represented... line' with respect to... public opinion... sees it... there existed... circles... by Mr. Barwick... by what has been... group'. The... the former... the balance... between government... practically to...

The onset of the... worsening of the... the general economic... sectors of the economy... although the... the international...

Lato, op. cit., p.181.

domestic resources... 2. ...

CHAPTER VII.THE CLASH

Until now the situation has been such that economic conditions have served the policies of the Government well. A government is in a happy position when it finds strong support in the favourable development of economic conditions.

Adam Krzyżanowski, October 1929.

The new Cabinet must be considered from the point of view...of its relations with the Sejm. What it represents is the victory of the 'hard line' with respect to Parliament. This is how public opinion sees it. This is how the opposition sees it. For a long time we have been aware that there existed two points of view in government circles, the optimistic point of view represented by Mr. Bartel, and the pessimistic view represented by what has been popularly called the 'Colonels' group'. The last session of Parliament has weakened the former, and Marshal Piłsudski's article has swung the balance. The possibility of co-operation between government circles and Parliament has fallen practically to zero.

Ilustrowany Kurjer Codzienny, 15.IV.29.

The onset of the political crisis coincided with a serious worsening of the economic situation. Poland had benefited from the general economic revival between 1925 and 1929, and many sectors of the economy had experienced a modest boom. But although the country had become even more closely linked to the international economy, it had not been able to attract much foreign capital which it needed, because of the scarcity of domestic resources, to modernize and develop its industry.

Tomaszewski, 22. 1929.

Nadajczyk, 22. 1929.

3. Wiadomości Polonajskie, 1929.

Moreover, of the foreign loans obtained, most were short-term, and increased Poland's vulnerability to international economic fluctuations. Foreign trade, another important source of development capital, remained small in scale. In 1929 the total value of Polish exports reached 2,813 million zloties, barely 1% of the national income.¹ To make matters worse, these exports had been concentrated, for the most part, in primary products which were affected by the unfavourable terms of trade of raw materials relative to manufactures. The Polish balance of payments had been negative in both 1928 and 1929. Thus the country was relatively defenceless against the effects of the downturn in international trade and investment which became obvious with the collapse of the Wall Street Stock Market in late October 1929, although it had in fact begun somewhat earlier. In Poland the first signs of the coming crisis were felt early in 1929, and were accentuated by the extremely severe winter of that year. Already in February unemployment had risen to 182,000,² while in March the prices of stocks and shares fell to their lowest level since February 1927.³ Agricultural prices

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1. M.R.S. (1931), p.59, Table I. The estimate of the Polish National Income in 1929 as 26,000 million zloties is based on The National Income of Poland, Birmingham Information Service on Slavonic Countries Monograph No.4 (Birmingham, 1937), which follows the method used in M. Kalecki, L.Landau, Szacunek dochodu społecznego w r. 1929 (Warsaw, 1934).
 2. Bezrobocie w Polsce, ed. Drozdowski, p.232. For the impact of the Great Depression on Poland, see L.Grosfeld, Polska w latach kryzysu gospodarczego 1929-33 (Warsaw, 1952); Landau, Tomaszewski, op. cit., pp.141-202; Zweig, op. cit., pp.53-66; Madajczyk, op. cit., pp.260-308.
 3. Messenger Polonais, 23.IV.29.

too, affected by the general world decline, began to fall early in the year. In industry, textiles and the processing of hides and skins were first hit, and output began to slacken from about April. Small artisan production was also among the first sectors to feel the depression, particularly in eastern Poland. The crisis then spread to mining and metallurgy, and soon affected all industrial production. From mid-1930 it began to affect banking as well.

The effects of the depression in Poland were extremely severe. According to estimates made by the University of Birmingham, the Polish National Income fell by 25% between 1929 and 1933. (In Great Britain the corresponding figure was 4%).¹ Worst hit was agriculture, since agricultural prices fell much more rapidly than those of industrial goods. If we take 100 as the index in 1928 both for articles sold by agricultural producers and for those bought by them, in 1929 the former had fallen to 76, while the latter was 101. In 1931 the respective indices were 55 and 91.² The result of this price scissors was a drastic decline in peasant income. The net return for 1 hectare of land on estates of 2 to 50 hectares fell from 214 zloties in 1927-28 to 25 zloties in 1930-31. In 1931-32, the worst year of the crisis, it was only 8 zloties.³ The peasants were also badly

1. The National Income of Poland, pp.5-7.

2. M.R.S. (1935), p.130, Table I.

3. M.R.S. (1939), p.74, Table VIII.

affected, as the depression continued, by the burden of debt they had acquired in the good years between 1926 and 1929 in order to extend and modernize their plots. Taxes too were increasingly difficult to pay. As a proportion of peasant expenditure, they rose from 12.9% in 1928-29 to 25.7% in 1932-33.¹

The impoverishment of the peasants meant that it became increasingly difficult for them to buy the land made available under the Land Reform scheme. In 1929 164,000 hectares were subdivided, in 1930 130,800, and in 1931 only 105,300.² It also made virtually impossible the purchase of agricultural machinery or fertilizer, and thus increased the relative backwardness of Polish agriculture.

Industry was more gradually affected by the depression. In 1929 the index of industrial production fell to 116.1 from 116.4 in 1928.³ In 1930 it fell to 102.4, and then declined rapidly, reaching 71.2 in 1932. This scale of decline was one of the largest in Europe, and was exceeded only in Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia, the countries most drastically affected by the crisis.

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1. Badania nad opłacalnością gospodarstw włościańskich w roku gospodarczym 1932-33 (Warsaw, 1933), quoted in Landau, Tomaszewski, p.149.
 2. M.R.S. (1938), p.65, Table III.
 3. Index for 1925-9 = 100. Svernilson, op. cit., p.305, Table A66.

4. Próchniak, op. cit., p.206

The position of those industrial workers who remained employed did not deteriorate radically, at any rate in the initial stages of the depression. The real value of wages in large and medium industry even rose somewhat as a result of the fall in the price of food. Taking 100 to represent the purchasing power of the average pay packet in 1928, the index rose in 1929 to 109. However it fell to 97 in 1930, to 85 in 1931, and reached 68 in 1932. The 1928 level was again surpassed only in 1937.¹ In addition, unemployment affected a very high percentage of working-class families; in most, probably one member at least lost his job. The number of unemployed had risen by December 1929 to 185,000, and by December of the following year to 299,000, accounting for perhaps 11.5% of the labour force. By March 1931, according to the official figures, it reached 372,000.² Unofficial estimates were even higher. According to the Institute of Social Affairs, the number of unemployed in 1931 averaged 520,000, or 25.4% of the labour force.³ The number of people on short time also rose, from 21,000 in January 1929 to 142,000 in May 1931.⁴

Members of the intelligentsia were affected as well. Their salaries remained constant, for the most part, but the number of

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1. M.R.S. (1938), p.259, Table XXXVIII.
 2. Bezrobocie w Polsce, ed. Drozdowski, p.232.
 3. Instytut Spraw Społecznych, Młodzież sięga po pracę (Warsaw, 1938), p.87.
 4. Próchnik, op. cit., p.354.

unemployed 'intellectual workers' (a census term) rose from 70,000 in 1929 to 160,000 in 1932-33.¹

The reaction of almost every government faced with the depression, from the Labour Government in Britain to that of Primo de Rivera in Spain, was to resort to orthodox deflationary economic policies. These policies were more rigidly and inflexibly pursued in Poland than anywhere else in Europe. The departure from the Cabinet first of Czechowicz, who resigned in April 1929 to appear before the Sejm Committee, and later of Kwiatkowski, whom Piłsudski forced to resign in May 1930, and Bartel, who did not hold office after March 1930, robbed the Government of its few truly able economists. Neither Col. Matuszewski, who became Minister of Finance in April 1929, nor Col. Prystor, who took the portfolio of Trade and Industry in August 1930, displayed any real competence.

After the first signs of the depression were seen, the Government responded in April 1929 by raising the bank rate and cutting state expenditure.² However it was slow to recognize the seriousness of the situation, and treated the warnings of the Opposition as merely alarmist attempts to discredit the Government. When the Cabinet met to discuss the budget on 8 May

1. Młodzież sięga po pracę, p.89.

2. Czas, 20.IV.29. The bank rate thus stood at 9%, an indication of how scarce capital was in Poland.

1929, Matuszewski argued, with Piłsudski's support, that the budget could easily be balanced provided the various ministries agreed to economies.¹ It was not until 3 April 1930 that the crisis was seriously discussed by the Cabinet.² On this occasion a difference of opinion was evident. Matuszewski advanced the orthodox position, that the Government's primary object must be the maintaining of a balanced budget. Kwiatkowski, on the other hand, stressed the need for a more reflationary policy which would set up public works and provide special credits for those industries in greatest difficulty, such as mining, textiles, timber, and hides and skins. With Kwiatkowski's departure from the Cabinet, the orthodox policy of deflation and budgetary economies was singlemindedly pursued.

The Government saw the stabilization of the zloty as its principal economic achievement since the Coup, and the maintenance of a convertible exchange rate soon became the determining factor in its financial policy. This 'struggle to maintain the zloty' was seen as a means for rallying internal support, but it was also undertaken because it would protect the savings in state credit institutions of officials and members of the intelligentsia, groups which had lost heavily in earlier

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1. P.P.R.M., 8.V.29. See also Sławoj-Składkowski, Strzepy Meldunków, pp.127-8.
 2. P.P.R.M., 3.IV.30.

inflations, and because it was believed it would induce foreign capital to move to Poland. In fact, foreign capital avoided Poland, since it was almost universally held that devaluation, or at least exchange control, would eventually have to be applied. Moreover, the doctrinaire desire to maintain the existing exchange rate meant that Polish prices were considerably higher than those of countries which had allowed their currencies to depreciate; as a consequence, it was more difficult for Polish exports to find markets.

In order to halt the decline in agricultural prices, the Government made an attempt to sponsor international co-operation and control. However the International Agricultural Conference held in Warsaw in September 1930 proved a failure. Attempts to deal with the crisis were also hampered by the impact of the depression in Germany. Because of the situation there, the Reichstag refused to ratify the Trade Treaty with Poland, concluded after arduous and protracted negotiation in April 1930.

When the Government did finally take more vigorous action, its principal objectives were to reduce prices and wages. There was some economic justification for this policy, but it was seriously undermined by the failure to diminish significantly the power of the cartels, which had multiplied greatly during the depression. In addition, although it was true that real wages had increased in the early stages of the crisis, the Government's attempts to force reductions were bound to cause

considerable resentment, particularly since they coincided with an attack on the power of the Socialist and Catholic trade unions. It was not until late in 1932 that the Government decided to relieve the heavy burden of indebtedness in the economy by rescaling debts, but even this was no longer of much help to the peasants. In fact, the result of the Government's policies, particularly the desire to maintain the convertibility of the zloty at the existing exchange rate, meant that the depression continued in Poland until late 1935, when recovery was well under way elsewhere.

The deteriorating economic situation contributed greatly to the general radicalization of politics, both on the Right and on the Left. The hostility of the peasant parties to the Government was especially intensified. Thus the crisis made much more difficult the achievement of any compromise between the Government and the Opposition.

Nevertheless the clash universally expected after the appointment of the new Cabinet did not take place immediately. In his first statement to the press on 18 April 1929, Świtalski attempted to calm public opinion, telling the assembled journalists not to expect any basic change in Government policy, and to judge the new Cabinet by its actions.¹ The tone of the

1. Głos Prawdy 19.IV.29.

pro-Government press was mild. 'The guidelines of policy,' wrote Polska Zbrojna, the Army organ, on 17 April, 'have not been modified at all, and it is of little importance that this policy will be implemented by different people.'¹

In the directing circle of the B.B.W.R., however, a much more aggressive mood prevailed. According to a confidential circular to party officials, the bloc's principal objectives during the Parliamentary recess were to be the destruction of the still important influence of the political parties and the consolidation of popular support for the Government's proposed constitutional reforms.² In a speech to party functionaries on 16 June, Sławek explained that the Government would prefer to amend the constitution by legal means, but this could only be achieved if strong pressure were brought to bear on the Deputies. 'It is sometimes better,' he added, 'to break the bones of one deputy than to be forced to resort to machine guns.'³

The opposition parties were also in a belligerent mood. This was most conspicuous on the Right. The National Party, which had incorporated the Popular National Union and the O.W.P., had

1. Polska Zbrojna, 17.IV.29.

2. Gazeta Warszawska claimed to have obtained a copy of this circular, and reprinted it on 9.V.29. The document seems to be genuine.

3. The speech was later reprinted in Przełom (20.VII.29). Its contents became public soon after it was delivered, and naturally infuriated the Opposition. See Robotnik 19.VI.29.

adopted a programme in October 1928 which was marked by its strongly anti-Government character as well as by its nationalism and anti-semitism.¹ The party affirmed its belief in constitutional democracy, although the still largely autonomous O.W.P. was now openly Fascist. At a meeting of the party's Political Committee on 28 January 1929 the Government was again attacked for its autocratic constitutional proposals, its disregard of legality, its supposed hostility to Catholicism and its alleged softness towards the national minorities. It was also decided to train people in conspiratorial techniques, though conspiratorial action was regarded as premature.²

In April and May the party made some attempts to arrange a combined anti-Government strategy with other right-wing and Centre groups. A number of meetings took place with the Christian Democracy, which had also adopted a much more hostile position, at which representatives of the Piast and the N.P.R. were sometimes present. As a result, a 'Consultative Committee for the Defence of National Interests' was set up.³ An unsuccessful attempt was even made in May to co-ordinate the activities of the National Party and the P.P.S.⁴

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1. For this programme, see Gazeta Warszawska 16.X.28.
 2. For these developments, see R. Wapiński, 'Niektóre problemy ewolucji ideowo-politycznej Endecji w latach 1919-39', K.H. lxxiii (1966), No.4, 866-8; Stęborowski, op. cit., pp.266-7.
 3. Komisja Porozumiewawcza dla Obrony Interesów Narodowych.
 4. Stęborowski, op. cit., pp.266-86.

Radical voices were often heard in the peasant movement as well. In June the Piast executive, meeting in Tarnów, called for an intensification of opposition to the Government,¹ while at the Congress of the Peasant Party (7 July), the Sanacja was attacked for behaving 'like a Government of occupation in a conquered country.'² The party's representatives in Parliament were called upon to bring a motion of no-confidence against Świtalski. The Congress of the Liberation, meeting in Warsaw on 13-14 June, also advocated 'bitter struggle against the present methods of ruling Poland,' but its tone was really rather muted, and the most radical party members, such as Thugutt and Bagiński, were not elected to the executive.³

Tentative steps were taken to bring about the union of the three peasant parties, but the old question of the Church proved a stumbling block, as did the fear of the Peasant Party and the Liberation that a united party would be dominated by the Piast. The Piast, on the other hand, criticized the Liberation for its links with the P.P.S. At any rate, a Consultative Committee of

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1. Czubiński, op. cit., pp.138-9. The issue of Gazeta Chłopska which carried the resolutions (14.VII.29) was confiscated.
 2. Lato, op. cit., p.190. The issue of Wyzwolenie (23.VI.29) which reprinted the resolutions was confiscated.
 3. Ibid., pp.184-5. The failure of Thugutt and Bagiński to be re-elected may, however, have been connected with attempts to unify the peasant parties, since they were both disliked by the other groups, particularly the Piast.

the peasant parties was set up to co-ordinate action in Parliament and in the country at large in support of a joint programme for the defence of democracy and the protection of peasant interests.¹

It was in the P.P.S. that there were most reservations about outright and intransigent opposition. At a meeting on 6 June Daszyński had tried in vain to persuade the Central Committee of the party to abandon its policy of strong hostility on the grounds that a clash between the Government and the Left was bound to have disastrous consequences.² On 24 June he paid a confidential visit to Piłsudski during which he warned the Marshal of the country's serious economic situation. At the same time, he

adjured him, by all that was holy, and with all the fervour of his oratory, to make possible a reconciliation, and to create a majority in the Sejm which could co-operate with him.³

He offered Piłsudski the support of the P.P.S. and the Liberation. The Marshal was obviously impressed by Daszyński's appeal and replied a number of times, in a subdued voice, 'It

1. Ibid., pp.187-91.

2. Czubiński, op. cit., p.136.

3. Lieberman, op. cit., p.411. Three accounts of this conversation exist. Piłsudski's is to be found in his article 'Gasnącemu Światu', P.Z. ix. 186-9, to which Daszyński replied in 'Niewczesne żale', Robotnik 24.IX.29. Both of these accounts were written after the political climate had worsened considerably. The most reliable description seems to be that of Lieberman, which is based on the account of the meeting Daszyński gave him shortly before the opening of Parliament.

all depends on what happens in the business of the Tribunal of State.¹ It was only somewhat later, just before the beginning of the parliamentary session in October, that Daszyński informed Lieberman, the prime mover in the Czechowicz affair, of the course of this conversation. This prompted Lieberman, writing in exile in 1938, to reflect that if he had been aware of Piłsudski's frame of mind, he might perhaps have acted differently:

It is difficult to judge whether the trial by the Tribunal of State could have been avoided by skilful mediation. In any event, everything possible should have been done to achieve a reasonable compromise, involving no discredit to the honour or dignity of either side.²

However, Lieberman was not informed at the time, and in any case by the end of June it was probably too late to undo the corrosive effects of the Czechowicz affair on the political situation.

Although the atmosphere was tense when the trial opened on 26 June, Piłsudski did nothing, in spite of his earlier threats, to prevent its taking its course. This may have been due to Daszyński's appeal, but was more likely the result of the Marshal's belief that if he took upon himself all responsibility for the Cabinet's failure to present the supplementary credits, the judges, the majority of whom he considered to be sympathetic towards him, would bring in a verdict favourable to the

1. Lieberman, op. cit., p.412.
2. Ibid., pp.412-13.

Government. 'I am anxious for the Tribunal of State and the Sejm to be further compromised,' he told his Ministers the day before the opening of the trial.¹ He had already on 1 June written to Stanisław Zaleski, the judge presiding over the preliminary investigation, to explain why he would not appear before him as a witness.² In his letter he maintained that he alone had been responsible for the contracting of the supplementary credits. He had been unwilling to present them to the previous 'corrupted' Sejm for ratification, and since the new Sejm had followed the worst traditions of its predecessor, he had decided to continue withholding them. He stressed once more that he had himself prevented Bartel and Czechowicz from presenting the credits at issue, and particularly attacked the calling into question of the ill-fated 5 million zloties (in fact increased to 8 million) granted to the Prime Minister which had been used, as we have seen, for B.B.W.R. campaign expenses.

On the first day of the trial Czechowicz, in his own defence, argued that the Sejm had accused him on purely technical grounds, and that he should not have been placed in a state of accusation until the credits had been examined and the report of the Main Auditing Office had been received.³

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1. Sławoj-Skłodkowski, Strzepy meldunków, p.141.
 2. The letter is printed in P.Z. ix. 158-62.
 3. The stenogram of the trial is reprinted in Landau, Skrzeszewska op. cit., pp.95-289. For Czechowicz's evidence, see pp.96-106.

Składkowski and Kwiatkowski both testified that Piłsudski had taken upon himself exclusive responsibility for relations with the Sejm, thus implying that Czechowicz had been accused because the court did not have the courage to try the Marshal.¹

Piłsudski, in giving evidence, emphasized yet again that the responsibility for contracting the supplementary credits and for failing to submit them to Parliament was his alone.² He attacked the Constitution, the Sejm and the Tribunal of State:

I declare to you that I am proud of my actions /with respect to Parliament/ and that far from considering myself at fault, I regard myself worthy of the highest praise for having curbed the Sejm and destroyed its omnipotence.³

The accusation should have been directed against him, he challenged. The trial of Czechowicz was 'a ritual murder committed against a man held responsible for deeds not his own.'⁴ He more or less openly admitted that he had taken the 8 million zloties for the elections, and, in concluding, deplored

the ridiculous situation for which you are responsible, in that a government, led by the greatest man in Poland, whose hands do not stink like yours (pointing at the prosecutors), can be impeached in the first case to come before a Tribunal of State.⁵

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1. For Sławoj-Składkowski's evidence, ibid., pp.107-9; for Kwiatkowski's, pp.109-16.
 2. For his evidence, ibid., pp.116-22.
 3. Ibid., p.119.
 4. Loc.cit.
 5. Ibid., p.121.

The next day, Lieberman argued that the 8 million zloties illegally obtained for electoral expenses was 'the central point of the trial.'¹ Czechowicz's constitutional responsibilities could not be overlooked simply because he acted upon Piłsudski's arbitrary instructions.² Paschalski, for the defence, held that the interest of the State was more important than a strict, legal interpretation of the situation. Czechowicz, he argued, could not be held responsible for Piłsudski's general policies.³ On 28 June the two other prosecutors spoke, and Lieberman replied to Paschalski.⁴

The unanimous verdict of the thirteen judges was pronounced on the 29th, after 10 hours of deliberation.⁵ They upheld the principle that, in accordance with the Constitution, budgetary control was a fundamental and basic right of the legislature, and that the Government was obliged by law to abide by the budget. Only the Sejm was entitled to approve the credits and expenses contracted by the Government, and it could act to enforce its rights, if the Government did not submit its accounts, without waiting for a proposed bill or for recommendations from the Main Auditing Office. However, the

1. Ibid., p.179.

2. For his whole speech, ibid., pp.166-86.

3. Ibid., pp.186-219.

4. For Pieracki's address, ibid., pp.220-36; for Wyrzykowski's, pp.236-47; for Lieberman's reply, pp.247-56.

5. For the verdict, ibid., pp.289-91.

Sejm's resolution of 20 March to impeach Czechowicz did not contain a judgement on the merit of the credits contracted by him. Now, in the documents at the disposal of the Tribunal of State, material providing the basis for such a judgement could be found. It was therefore the decision of the Tribunal of State to 'postpone its proceedings in this case until the Sejm should pass a resolution giving a meritorious assessment, on a formal basis, of the credits questioned by it.'¹

This verdict was basically unfavourable to the Government, since it was to be expected that when the Sejm met, it would decide against Czechowicz on at least some of the credits contracted. Lieberman was probably right in attributing the verdict to the defection of Gen. Żeligowski, believed to be one of the Government's supporters on the Tribunal, who had been so disgusted by the actions of the Sanacja since the Coup that he had gone over to the Opposition.² Nevertheless, the judgement was not a direct condemnation because the pro-Government minority on the Tribunal argued strongly for unanimity; thus its views had to be reflected in the verdict. The pro-Government press tried to claim that the Tribunal had exonerated Czechowicz,³ but in

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1. Ibid., p.290.
 2. He had recorded in his diary his distaste for the methods used in the 1928 elections. See A.A.N., 'Akta Gen. Żeligowskiego', file 48, quoted in Stęborowski, op. cit., p.81. See also Lieberman, op. cit., pp.408-9.
 3. See e.g. Głos Prawdy 1.VII.29; 2.VII.29.

fact Government circles were extremely dissatisfied with the decision since it was obvious that a severe conflict would develop as soon as Parliament met.

During the recess, relations between the Government and the P.P.S. deteriorated considerably as a result of the attack by the new Minister of Labour, Col. Prystor, on the Socialists' control of the local sick funds, through which the State medical scheme was administered.¹ These had long been the almost exclusive preserve of the P.P.S., and Prystor's replacement of the elected Socialist controlling boards in a number of towns by appointed commissioners aroused great resentment. P.P.S. supporters were also removed from their posts in other government welfare organizations. This attack constituted a serious threat to the financial position of the P.P.S., since many Socialist party officials earned their living in the State social services.

The exasperated mood of many P.P.S. members was articulated in a letter addressed by the 94 year old Socialist Bolesław Limanowski to the President. The issue of Robotnik in which the letter was published (6 August) was confiscated, but it was distributed as an internal party circular.² In it, Limanowski

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1. See Z. Zaremba, Narodziny polskiego faszyzmu (Warsaw, n.d.), pp.17-8; Stęborowski, op. cit., pp.254-6. The P.P.S. issued a leaflet on the subject; see A.Z.H.P., sygn. 114/VI-1926-30, 'Polska Partia Socjalistyczna w obronie samorządu'.
 2. A.Z.H.P., sygn. 114/VI-1926-30, okólnik no. 12 ('W sprawie konfiskaty listu tow. Senatora Bolesława Limanowskiego'), 17.VIII.29.

attacked the Government for undermining parliamentarianism, for misappropriating funds and for its 'daily breaking of the law'.¹ In closing, he reproached the President for his subservience to the Government, and called on him to uphold the law against the violators of the Constitution. His letter thus reflected the conviction of certain Opposition politicians that Mościcki did not approve of the new hard line, and could be persuaded to put pressure on the Government to adopt a more moderate course.

On 3 September, Rybarski of the National Club wrote to the presidents of the parliamentary clubs of the Centre and Left, asking them to sign a petition to the President demanding the convocation of an extraordinary session of Parliament in order to discuss 'a number of important matters', such as the Czechowicz case, the economic situation and foreign policy.² In an attempt to forestall this move Świtalski went to see Daszyński on 4 September and proposed

a conference of the representatives of parliamentary groups of both Houses to discuss budgetary affairs, in order to give the debate on the budget a rational and effective character. Previous practice had shown that the functioning of Parliament had not always possessed such a character.³

Piłsudski, he claimed, had expressed his desire to attend.

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1. Loc. cit.
 2. Gazeta Warszawska 4.IX.29.
 3. Głos Prawdy, 5.IX.29.

Piłsudski-ite historians have claimed that this approach was a genuine attempt to reach an accommodation with the Sejm, and had been planned long before¹. It is true that on 1 July, Piłsudski had told Sławek, Prystor and Switalski that he favoured the calling of a meeting of the leaders of the parties to discuss budgetary questions. His aim, he stated, was that the budget be speedily passed, so that "we can demand that the Sejm occupy itself with the constitution."²

He also explained in some detail his strategy in relation to the problem of constitutional reform.

Sławek is to approach the heads of the parties, proposing an agreement on the question of the constitution. When these discussions fail to have any result, the B.B.W.R. is to declare in the Sejm, in the most extreme (jaskrawy) fashion, that it will no longer allow the settlement of the constitutional question to be obstructed. This is the moment when one could dissolve the Sejm.³

The opposition parties, particularly those of the Right, felt that the approach was not made in good faith, and saw it also as a sign of weakness on the part of the regime.

Thus on 11 September Rybarski, on behalf of his club, refused to take part in the proposed conference on the grounds that the attitude towards Parliament of the Government, and

1. See, e.g., the note in P.Z. ix. 185.

2. A.A.N. Zespoły szczątkowe. Kazimierz Świtalski sygn. 88/II. 'Konferencja z Komendantem, min. Prystorem, płk. Sławkiem, dn. 1.VII.29.'

3. Ibid.

'in particular the Minister of War', made such a meeting impossible.¹

The parties of the Left and Centre were undecided. There were some, particularly in the P.P.S., who wished to accept the Prime Minister's invitation. However, after long discussion on 14 September, the six groups of the Centre and Left (The P.P.S., the three peasant parties, the Christian Democrats and the N.P.R.) issued a joint declaration in effect rejecting the Government's offer. It called upon the Marshal of the Sejm to speed up the calling of Parliament, and insisted that during the recess only the Presidium of the Sejm, headed by its Marshal, was empowered to discuss budgetary matters with the Government.² This was the first time all these groups had issued a joint statement, and constituted a basis for the later formation of the 'Centrolew' alliance. In addition, the Parliamentary Club of the P.P.S., anticipating the refusal to take part in the conference, resolved on 13 September that its objective was the overthrow of the 'post-May system'. The first step towards this goal was to be the passing of a vote of no-confidence in Świtalski.³

In spite of this rebuff, the Government made its other

1. Gazeta Warszawska, 12.IX.29.

2. Robotnik, 15.IX.29.

3. Robotnik, 14.IX.29. It also resolved not to take part in the conference, but this resolution was not published until the 15th in order, Robotnik claimed, not to prejudice the discussions with the other Centre and Left groups.

planned approach to the Opposition on 20 September, when Sławek proposed a conference of parliamentary groups to discuss constitutional changes.¹ However this was almost universally seen in Opposition circles as a tactical move to prevent the convening of Parliament, and it was obvious that the invitation of the B.B.W.R. president would elicit an unfavourable response.

Although Piłsudski was greatly irritated by the failure of these two moves, the tone of the article he wrote on the subject on 22 September was rather milder than some of his other pronouncements.² He claimed that the proposed budgetary meeting was the logical result of Daszyński's June approach, which he now publicly revealed in a deliberately arrogant way, hoping to embarrass Daszyński within his own party, and to divide the Opposition. Such a conference would, he alleged, have introduced a new and improved method of dealing with the budget, would have created more flexibility, for the requirement that the Government must strictly observe the terms of the budget was 'the most ridiculous barrier to all progress'.³ He attacked Parliament yet again, asserting that the Deputies were the representatives of a 'dying world' and suffered from 'parliamentary diarrhoea' ('fajdanitis poslinis').

1. Gazeta Warszawska, 21.IX.29.

2. 'Gasnącemu Światu', P.Z. ix. 185-92.

3. Ibid., p.188.

3. See, e.g. Stróżyński's article in Wprost, 27.IX.29.

The article did not have the hoped-for divisive effects on the P.P.S. Daszyński countered that after all the insults Piłsudski had heaped on the Deputies, he should not have been surprised by their refusal to attend a meeting he was to address.¹ Although Barlicki attacked Daszyński for having paid a private call upon Piłsudski, it was generally agreed at the meeting of the party's Central Committee on 25 September that Daszyński had acted in good faith. Piłsudski's revelations merely strengthened the position of the intransigent group, led by Barlicki and Arciszewski, within the P.P.S.²

However, Piłsudski did succeed in dividing the Opposition generally, for the fragile unity of the six-party bloc could not withstand the strain of his exposures. The Liberation attacked Daszyński for making unjustified statements on its behalf, and both the Piast and the Christian Democracy became much cooler towards the P.P.S. When the parties rejected Sławek's offer, only the Piast and the Christian Democrats issued a joint communiqué; the others made separate announcements. The National Party also attempted to exploit the incident. It renewed its approaches to the Centre parties, arguing that the Left could never be trusted to conduct a policy truly hostile to the Sanacja because of its previous links with Piłsudski.³

1. Robotnik, 24.IX.29.

2. Stęborowski, op. cit., p.341.

3. See, e.g. Stronński's article in Gazeta Warszawska, 27.IX.29.

The Government was uncertain as to how best to deal with the political situation. One symptom of the conflict within its ranks was Bartel's unexplained resignation of his parliamentary seat in October.¹ In the same month Eustachy Sapieha, one of the leading conservatives in the B.B.W.R., also resigned his seat.² The divisions were clearly discernible at the meeting of B.B.W.R. Deputies and Senators held on 17 October, which was attended by all members of the Cabinet.³ The case for a policy of conciliation was put by Professor Adam Krzyżanowski, Deputy for Cracow and Dean of the Law Faculty at the Jagiellonian University. He insisted that any improvement in the economic situation, whose seriousness he stressed, required an improvement in relations with Parliament. In his opinion, the authority of the Government had declined radically; the Opposition press was now even attacking Piłsudski. These moderate views were seconded by Senator Boguszewski. A middle position was advocated by Radziwiłł, leader of the B.B.W.R. Conservatives, who criticized the Government for failing in the past to inform the Bloc of its intentions. He hoped that an outright clash could be avoided, but if it must occur, he believed that the Government was bound to win. However, the mood of the majority at the meeting was

1. Naprzód, 27.IX.29.

2. Gazeta Chłopska, 17.X.29.

3. A.A.N., P.R.M. sygn. 22, file 127, 'Stenogram konferencji premiera Switalskiego z posłami i senatorami B.B., 17.X.29'.

very bellicose. Deputy Sanojca, a defector from the Liberation, held that the Sejm should be attacked 'as such'. If all the Deputies in Poland were arrested, he claimed, nobody would care. The most reliable indication of Piłsudski's own frame of mind was provided by his close associate, Miedziński. Political excitement, he asserted, was confined to the intelligentsia. The Opposition had become hysterical, and had no real support. The situation did not require haste; Piłsudski would be able to choose the right moment to act. Piłsudski had indeed expressed similar views at the meeting with Prystor, Slawek and Świtalski on 1 July 1929.¹ In opposition to his lieutenants, who believed that the position of the Government was deteriorating and that the clash with Parliament should not be postponed, he affirmed that he did not take "such a pessimistic view". The left, in particular, he claimed did not possess "very much impetus", as could be seen from Daszyński's approach to him. Finally, Świtalski himself, concluding the meeting, emphasized the importance of the issue of constitutional reform as a front means for uniting society behind the Government.

Of the Opposition groups, the Right was determined to use the new session of Parliament to attack the Government over the

1. A.A.N. Zespoły Szczątkowe. Kazimierz Świtalski. sygn. 88/II. 'Konferencja z Komendantem, min. Prystorem, płk. Sławkiem, dn. 1.VII.29.'

2. Ibid., p. 198.

Czechowicz affair. However, on the Centre and Left opinion was divided. Among the Christian Democrats the question of maintaining a political alliance with the Left was provoking dissension. The policy of Chaciński's Warsaw Central Office, that the party should co-operate with the P.P.S. just as Christian Democrats in Belgium and Germany co-operated with Socialists, aroused opposition, particularly in the Cracow District Committee. There it was held that attempts should be made to strengthen links with the N.P.R. and the Piast, and to establish contact with the National Party. The Christian Democrats were also internally at odds over the correct strategy to adopt vis-à-vis the Świtalski Cabinet. Many held that the forced resignation of this Government 'would not change the situation at all, or would in fact make it worse.'¹

As for the Piast, Witos was unhappy about too close co-operation with the Left, and entered upon a series of negotiations with the representatives of the Christian Democrats and the National Party with a view to presenting a common front in the budgetary session.² In the Liberation, the attempt of pro-Piłsudski-ite elements to moderate the party's hostile stand were defeated, and a radical position was upheld.³ Radical

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1. 'Komunikat Informacyjny' No.110. Quoted in Lato, p.198. For the situation in the Christian Democracy, see Lato, loc. cit.; Stęborowski, op. cit., pp.349-52.
 2. Lato, op. cit., pp.197-8.
 3. Ibid., p.198.

views also prevailed in the Peasant Party. On 1 October its parliamentary club resolved that

the time is absolutely ripe for the immediate resignation of the whole of the present Cabinet and the liquidation of the entire Sanacja regime....¹

The P.P.S. too was in a hostile mood. On 1 October, Niedziałkowski wrote in Robotnik that all links between the party and Piłsudski were severed. The Piłsudski of 1905, 1914, 1918 and 1920 'belongs to history'.² On 13 October, the Executive Committee of the party again resolved that its aim was the liquidation of the 'post-May system'. It declared itself willing to co-operate with any group 'which sincerely upholds the principle of Democracy'. The parliamentary activity of the party was to be combined with organized mass action: 'If any attempt at a coup is made, it will meet with the most decided resistance from the masses.'³ However the party's attempts to foster co-operation with the socialist groups among the minorities caused a cooling of its relations with the N.P.R. and the Christian Democrats.

The political differences which separated the Centre and the Left are nicely charted in the replies of the party leaders

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1. Gazeta Chłopska, 10.X.29. The issue of Gazeta Chłopska (6.X.29) in which the resolutions appeared was confiscated, but Dąbski, who edited the paper managed to get them through the censorship by printing them in an article headed "What does the semi-official Epoka say?".
 2. Robotnik, 1.X.29.
 3. Ibid., 15.X.29.

to a questionnaire issued on the eve of the new parliamentary session by Tydzień, a new democratic weekly founded by Thugutt.¹ Asked whether the conflict had reached a decisive stage, and how it could be resolved, only the leaders of the three Left parties proposed to bring a motion of no-confidence in Świtalski. Nevertheless, on 30 October, the parliamentary clubs of the Christian Democrats and the Piast both resolved to support such a motion.²

As the new session approached, it became evident that the Government had determined on a hard line. The political situation became extremely tense. 'The atmosphere', wrote Czas on 28 October 'is heavy, saturated with electricity, and it recalls the situation just before the Coup.'³ On the morning of the opening of Parliament (31 October) the new pro-Government daily, Gazeta Polska, asserted:

The country has had enough of exhibitions of unrestrained demagogy which hide behind the authority of the so-called legislative power.⁴

Before the session was to commence, a large number of officers were given verbal orders to assemble near the Sejm. The operation was entrusted to the joint command of Col. Beck, Col. Kostek-Biernacki, known for his brutality and his absolute

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1. Tydzień, 26.X.29.
 2. Gazeta Warszawska, 31.X.29.
 3. Czas, 28.X.29.
 4. Gazeta Polska, 31.X.29.

devotion to Piłsudski, and Col. Dojan-Surówka. One group (approximately 150) remained near the Ujazdowski Hospital as a reserve. The other, (100-120), went to the Sejm armed with swords and revolvers at about 4 o'clock. Since they did not possess entrance tickets, they were asked to wait; nevertheless they forced their way into the entrance hall. It had been announced that Świtalski was ill, and that Piłsudski would open the new session in person. However, when he arrived, accompanied by Beck and Sławoj-Skłodkowski, Daszyński refused to open Parliament, declaring that 'In the presence of bayonets, revolvers and swords I will not open the session.'¹ At about 5.30, after a violent interchange, Piłsudski left; at 8.00 the officers finally began to disperse. The session remained unopened.

Exactly what Piłsudski had in mind on this occasion is not clear. It is true that officers had sometimes been present in Parliament on important occasions, but never in such numbers. The precedent established at the previous opening, when parliamentary immunity had been violated to expel the Communists, was not encouraging. It may be that Piłsudski intended only to intimidate the Deputies but, at the same time, many rumours had

1. Daszyński's conversation with the Marshal is recorded by Piłsudski, P.Z. ix. 192-4. This account of the opening of Parliament is based on the report of the Sejm committee set up to investigate the incident (Druki Sejmowe, 2nd series, No. 859), and on Lieberman, op. cit., pp. 413-26.

2. Robotnik, 1.XI.37; 2.XI.37.

3. Robotnik, 5.XI.37.

circulated about the possibility of violent action. The choice of the relentless and unscrupulous Kostek-Biernacki is perhaps significant, as is Pragier's claim that the hospitals near the Sejm were told to prepare for an emergency that evening.¹

Lieberman certainly believed that the officers would have attempted to provoke the Deputies if the session had been opened.² On the other hand, it may be that Piłsudski, as on several previous occasions, shrank at the last from an act so blatantly illegal.

Piłsudski ordered the whole of his conversation with Daszyński, including his own final insults, to be published in order further to inflame the political situation.³ And indeed, tension did mount. On the evening of the ill-fated opening, the P.P.S. affirmed its 'complete solidarity' with Daszyński's stand, and on 4 November the leaders of all parliamentary groups except the B.B.W.R. and its allies informed the Sejm Marshal that he had their 'complete approval' for all his actions.⁴ When Mościcki asked Daszyński to come and explain the situation to him, Daszyński first required an assurance that Piłsudski would not be present. At the meeting, Mościcki attempted to persuade Daszyński to seek a reconciliation with Piłsudski, but Daszyński refused to meet the Marshal outside Parliament.⁵

1. Pragier, op. cit., p.364.

2. Lieberman, op. cit., pp.424-5.

3. Sławoj-Skłodkowski, Strzepy meldunków, p.157.

4. Robotnik, 1.XI.29; 5.XI.29.

5. Robotnik, 5.XI.29.

On 5 November Parliament was finally convened, and immediately prorogued for a month. At the same time, the Government, in its campaign against the Opposition, organized the public collection of one million zloties for use against 'espionage'. This was intended to demonstrate society's revulsion at the financial cuts imposed on the Ministry of the Interior.¹

During the recess, the Government pursued the policy, previously outlined by Świtalski, of attempting to rally popular support by stressing the need for constitutional reform. On 19 November, Świtalski himself addressed a crowd of more than 2,000 in the concert hall of the Warsaw Philharmonic. His speech was also broadcast by Radio Poland. In a fairly moderate manner, he emphasized the importance of the proposed reforms; Poland, he declared, could not afford the luxury of a weak government. He attempted to defend the regime against charges of autocracy and disregard for public opinion. The reforms would, he hoped, be adopted without difficulty, but 'if we encounter difficulties in our path towards constitutional reform, difficulties resulting from ill-will and systematic destructiveness, it will not be our fault if the conflict assumes a serious character.'² Similar speeches were made by

1. Gazeta Polska, 12.XI.29.

2. Gazeta Polska, 20.XI.29.

Car in Cracow on 24 November, by Sławoj-Składkowski in Lodz on the 25th, by Czerwiński in Wilno on the 28th, by Boerner in Katowice on the 30th, and by Kwiatkowski in Lwów on 1 December.

In addition, attempts were made to divide the Opposition. The Left, claimed Gazeta Polska on 8 November, was doing the Endecja's work, in its intransigent hostility to the Government.¹ The P.P.S. was accused of unpatriotically involving foreigners in Polish affairs because of the support it had received from other European Socialist parties. Late in November, a few of the remaining pro-Piłsudski-ites in the P.P.S., of whom the most notable was Emil Bobrowski in Cracow, left the Party.²

However, although both the Christian Democrats and the N.P.R. stressed that they did not envisage a lasting character for the Centrolew, the unity of the alliance, at least on the question of parliamentary tactics, was firm. On 1 December several joint public meetings were held at which it was affirmed that at the new session of Parliament, a vote of no-confidence in the Prime Minister would be passed.³ The P.P.S. again maintained that its objective was the 'total liquidation of the post-May system'. The party even formed a clandestine journal, Biuletyn Informacyjny, to circumvent the censorship.⁴ Yet even

1. Ibid., 8.XI.29.

2. Ibid., 26.XI.29.

3. Robotnik, 3.XII.29.

4. Czubiński, op. cit., pp.152-4.

among the Socialists there were doubts about the final goal. In an interview printed in Naprzód on 23 November, Diamand, for example, had transparently appealed to the Government to form a coalition with the Left.¹

Parliament was opened on 5 December. In the intervening period, the Main Auditing Office announced that it could not close the Government's accounts for the financial year 1927-28 because 579 million zloties of supplementary credits had not received legislative approval.² After Daszyński, opening the session, had implicitly criticized the Army for its role in the events of 31 October, and after the verdict in the Czechowicz case had been read,³ Matuszewski, the acting Minister of Finance, opened the debate on the budget proposals for 1930-31. His speech was quiet in tone, and he limited himself to a detailed, factual account of the financial situation, marred somewhat by its over-optimism.⁴

For the Socialists, Niedziałkowski stated that the P.P.S. intended to fight, within the bounds of legality, for democracy and socialism, and would resist any attempt at a coup. The present regime was dangerously exasperating political antagonisms, and had provided no solutions for the country's

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1. Naprzód, 23.XI.29.
 2. Robotnik, 7.XI.29.
 3. S.S.S.R., 5.XII.29, cols. 2-12.
 4. Ibid., cols. 12-32.

pressing problems; it should be liquidated as a matter of urgency. Thus, as a first step, the parties of the Centrolew had tabled a motion of no-confidence in Świtalski. The Sejm, he was sure, would support any Cabinet determined to dismantle the existing system of government.¹ His views were seconded by Róg of the Liberation.² Rybarski's speech, for the National Party, occasioned violent outbursts. When he attacked the Government for taking action against right-wing university students, one of the B.B.W.R. Deputies shouted 'Remember the assassination of President Narutowicz, and the action of the youth you led then!' Rybarski replied 'Narutowicz was assassinated by a man who has paid for it with his life, while the murder of Zagórski was committed by men who have succeeded in concealing themselves.'³ (This accusation aroused tumultuous opposition from the B.B.W.R. ranks). Finally, Rybarski stated that his party would support the no-confidence motion, in spite of the 'profound differences' which separated the National Party from some of the other groups supporting it. The remaining Centre and Left groups and the national minorities also attacked the Government.⁴

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1. Ibid., cols. 32-40.
 2. Ibid., cols. 40-6.
 3. Ibid., col. 54; for the whole speech, cols. 46-58.
 4. Ibid., cols. 58-115.

1. Ibid., col. 32.

2. The Sejm stenographic records on

occasions.

Próchnik, p. 337.

The no-confidence motion came up for debate on 6 December. Its course was stormy.¹ Świtalski accused the Opposition of 'digging the grave of parliamentarianism,'² which had no rationale in its present form because of the absolute dominance of the parties. The Opposition, he charged, was divided internally and could not form a Government. It was irresponsibly exploiting the economic situation to discredit the Government. Next, Kwiatkowski stated bluntly:

You gentlemen can vote on your resolution as you wish, as your conscience dictates. We will remain in spite of your paper resolutions.

When there were shouts of protest at the unconstitutional nature of this statement, he insisted that he had actually said

We, as an attitude to state problems, as a programme and an organization, will remain in spite of your paper resolutions.³

The Government's case was also put by Car and Sławoj-Składkowski, while Żuławski (P.P.S.), Putek (Liberation), Rybarski and Stroński (National Party) and Madejczyk (Piast) were the main Opposition speakers. The motion was carried on the same day, by 243 votes to 119, with 7 abstentions. Only the B.B.W.R. and its allies voted against.

Piłsudski hesitated for a time to decide how to deal with the situation. He had already made up his mind that it was not

1. See *ibid.*, 6.XII.29, cols. 6-112.

2. *Ibid.*, col. 32.

3. The Sejm stenogram records the latter version on both occasions. *S.S.S.R.*, 6.XII.29, col.67; this is denied by Próchnik, p.337.

possible to co-operate with the existing Sejm, but was not convinced that this was the correct time to dissolve it and call new elections, since the economic situation had deteriorated and the budget had not yet been voted.¹ Some of his entourage were rather more aggressive. On 14 December, Świtalski, in a speech broadcast from the Warsaw Philharmonic, argued that the actions of the Sejm, led in the previous session by a group of 'hysterical professional politicians' had confirmed the urgent need for constitutional reform. It would be easy, he claimed, to reach an understanding with the country over the heads of the Deputies.²

This speech may have strengthened the belief Piłsudski already held that Świtalski was an unsuitable Prime Minister.³ Among the Opposition, too, there were many who wanted to avoid an outright clash. On 9 December Daszyński told Mościcki that the majority which had defeated the Cabinet had no intention of forming a Government, and called on the President to exercise a moderating influence in the crisis.⁴ On the 17th, Mościcki summoned a number of Opposition leaders to a meeting attended by Świtalski, Sławek and Car. It was his aim, he stated, to diminish the tensions between the Sejm and the Government.

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1. Pobóg-Malinowski, op. cit., p.524.
 2. Gazeta Polska, 15.XII.29.
 3. Pobóg-Malinowski, op. cit., p.524.
 4. Polonia, 10.XII.29.

This could be achieved if agreement were reached on constitutional reform.¹ The reply of the Centrolew leaders was moderate. They affirmed that the Sejm was prepared to revise the Constitution; although the political atmosphere created by the present system of government made it difficult, reform could be achieved if there were a 'modification of the present regime'.² The National Party and the Jewish Club made similar declarations.

As a result, on 21 December, Piłsudski persuaded an unwilling Bartel, in considerable distress because of his kidney complaint, and uneasy about the political and economic situation, to form a Government. He gave him wide-ranging freedom of action, and assured him that he could resign after the adoption of the budget.³ Bartel himself was quite sincere about his desire to reach an accommodation with Parliament. As he told the Ilustrowany Kurjer Codzienny, he favoured the 'therapeutic' rather than the 'surgical' method in politics.⁴ After some initial difficulty, largely because of opposition from the 'Colonels' group', he succeeded in forming a Government on 29 December. He excluded from his Cabinet the most unpopular members of the Świtalski Government: Sławoj-Składkowski, Car,

1. Robotnik, 19.XII.29.

2. Loc. cit.

3. Pobóg-Malinowski, op. cit., p.525.

4. Ilustrowany Kurjer Codzienny, 25.XII.29.

the Minister of Justice, Niezabytowski, the Conservative Minister of Agriculture,¹ Moraczewski, who was held responsible for engineering the split in the P.P.S, and Świtalski himself. Bartel would have liked to dismiss Prystor as well, but Piłsudski refused to permit it.² The incoming ministers were much more acceptable to the Sejm, particularly the new Minister of the Interior, Józewski, who had been Governor of Volynia, and the new, liberal Minister of Justice, Feliks Dutkiewicz. Still, many of the old guard remained in the Cabinet. 'The changes,' wrote Czas on 1 January, 'must be interpreted as evidence of a willingness to conciliate the Sejm, especially the Socialists and the radical peasant groups....'³

Although the Budget Committee had been sitting since 28 December, the first full session of Parliament took place only on 10 January, 1930, when Bartel outlined his Government's policy.⁴ The Cabinet changes, he stated, did not mean the abandonment of those 'principles and postulates' which had been 'the basis of the so-called post-May regime'.⁵ Nevertheless, he claimed, he came with good will. He knew the views of the Deputies just as they knew his. 'Can one not find in both',

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1. His successor, Sławomir Czerwiński, was however replaced in January by Leon Janta-Pończyński, another Conservative.
 2. Pobóg-Malinowski, op. cit., p.525.
 3. Czas, 1.I.30.
 4. For his speech, which lasted three hours, see S.S.S.R., 10.I.30, cols. 20-52.
 5. Ibid., col. 21.

he asked, 'as much in common as is necessary for the state?'¹ He stressed the importance of constitutional reform and, in particular, the strengthening of the Executive so that the 'personal responsibility of the men whom the will of the country places over the state'² could be increased. Under his Government, he promised, the civil service and local administration would be impartial, and not favour any one party. He appealed to the Deputies to co-operate with the Government in order to overcome the economic crisis. Parliament, he affirmed, 'has a serious job to perform', and 'criticism marked by understanding of the general interest' would be listened to by the Cabinet.³

As a further sign of its desire for conciliation, the Government now placed no obstacle in the way of a resolution in the Sejm establishing the proper method of publishing Sejm resolutions. This finally made possible the abrogation of the Press Decrees of May 1927.⁴

In reply to Bartel's speech, Róg, for the Centrolew, argued that the aim of the grouping in passing a vote of no-confidence in Świtalski had been a change in the system of governing. The Centrolew, he continued, had agreed in December that this change would have to satisfy six demands, stipulating

1. Ibid., col. 22.

2. Ibid., col. 24.

3. Ibid., col. 52.

4. The resolution was adopted the same day. S.S.S.R., 10.I.30, col. 81.

1. the full application of the Constitution and the statute conferring autonomy on Silesia;
 2. the establishment of the principle that constitutional revision would only be undertaken legally;
 3. the establishment of the independence of the judiciary, army and civil service;
 4. the maintenance of the principle of popular participation in local government;
 5. the ending of administrative arbitrariness in press confiscations and political repression, and the investigation of the financial abuses of the Government;
 6. the ending of any Treasury subsidies to a political party.
- The new Government, he claimed, would be judged by whether it implemented these principles or not.¹

For the National Party, Winiarski stated that his Club would support any actions beneficial to the country. He did not believe, however, that Bartel's Government 'had the power to effect a basic improvement.'² The leaders of the minorities were also somewhat sceptical of the Government's ability drastically to modify the situation.³

Work on the budget proceeded fairly smoothly, although once again the secret service fund of the Ministry of the

1. Ibid., 15.I.30, cols. 35-6.

2. Ibid., col. 42. For the whole speech, cols. 36-43.

3. Ibid., cols. 43-57.

Interior was cut, this time by 50%. The budget debate took place between 3 and 12 February.¹ Its course was relatively calm, and the budget was adopted without a division on both the second and third readings. The National Party abstained. For the Centrolew, Niedziałkowski explained that the constituent parties would vote for the budget since it was granted 'to the State, and not to a system of government.'² However, this was not to be construed as a vote of confidence; they would not cease their struggle for the establishment of democracy. The decision to vote for the budget was strongly criticized by the left wing of the P.P.S., led by Barlicki, Pużak and Zaremba, who had already opposed the softening of opposition following the formation of the Bartel Government. They had also been very uneasy about the association of the party with 'clericalist' and 'right-wing' groups, such as the Piast and the Christian Democrats.³

The course of the session in general was not particularly easy, partly because the more zealous supporters of a hard line within the B.B.W.R. were anxious to see Bartel fail. Violent opposition was aroused in the B.B.W.R. by the bill to safeguard the freedom of elections passed on 29 January, following the

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1. For the debate, see Ibid., 3.II.30, cols.3-97; 10.II.30, cols. 87-94; 12.II.30, cols. 3-19.
 2. Ibid., 12.II.30, col. 12.
 3. Czubiński, op. cit., pp.165-6.

Supreme Court's invalidation of election results in several constituencies and the submission of the report of the Sejm committee set up to investigate electoral abuses.¹ Conflict also arose in the committee, established largely on Sławek's insistence in an attempt to discredit Daszyński, which was investigating the events in the Sejm on 31 October. It had elicited a number of quite compromising statements from army officers, and on 13 February the B.B.W.R. members sitting on it refused to participate any longer in its proceedings, claiming that it was not impartial.²

Constitutional reform, too, created problems. On 11 January the Constitutional Committee began discussing the two proposals submitted to it (one from the Government, the other from the P.P.S., Liberation, and Peasant Party). On 21 January the Centre parties submitted a draft of their own, which increased the power of the President, but did not curtail the rights of the Legislature as drastically as the B.B.W.R. plan. By the beginning of March, no real consensus had been achieved on the type of constitutional changes needed. On 6 and 13 March, the Committee rejected proposals calling for an increase in the powers of the Executive. This, according to Mackiewicz, 'emphatically ended any possibility of compromise between the

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1. For the debate on the bill, see S.S.S.R., 29.I.30, cols. 13-32. For the Report, Druki Sejmowe, series II, Druk No. 570.
 2. Gazeta Polska, 14.II.30.

Sejm and the Government of Marshal Piłsudski on the Constitution.¹

The Czechowicz affair remained a potential threat, for now that the budget had been passed, the Opposition could, in the Budget Committee, assess the merits of the credits involved in the case. In fact, the Committee met for this purpose several times in March.² In addition, Lieberman had gone to see Bartel and Józewski in order to hear their evidence concerning the matter.³ But what actually precipitated the fall of Bartel was the proposal of 8 March by the P.P.S. of a motion of no-confidence in Prystor, the Minister of Labour. This was intended principally to conciliate the party's left wing, and to demonstrate the party's disapproval of Prystor's actions in dealing with the sick funds. No serious challenge to the Government was envisaged. At the same time, the National Club submitted a motion of no-confidence in Czerwiński, the Minister of Education and Religious Cults. Piłsudski had come to the end of his patience. He decided that the time was ripe to act, since public opinion now saw 'on the one hand the conciliatory Government, on the other, the bitter, uncompromising opposition.'⁴ He therefore ordered

which reads:

1. S. Mackiewicz, 'Czterdzieści jeden posiedzeń Komisji Konstitucyjnej', Przegląd Współczesny (1931), No.108, p.79.
2. Druki Sejmowe, 2nd series, No. 861.
3. Lieberman, op. cit., pp.426-9.
4. Pobóg-Malinowski, op. cit., p.525.

Bartel to deliver a speech on 12 March, during the budget debate in the Senate, strongly attacking Parliament and the dominance of the parties.¹ When the motions of no-confidence came up on 14 March, Bartel declared that he regarded them as a test of confidence in his Government.² The motion against Prystor was passed without division. Apart from the B.B.W.R., which opposed it as a matter of course, it was supported by all groups except the Peasant Party, the Jews and the Germans, who abstained. Bartel submitted his resignation on the 15th.

Piłsudski's plan, since the budget had to all intents and purposes been passed, was now to prolong the search for a new Cabinet until the statutory five months laid down in the Constitution for the duration of the budgetary session had elapsed. In this way he hoped to prevent the Sejm from adopting the Budget Committee's report concerning the merits of the additional credits for the year 1927-28. This was a damning document which claimed that in many cases extra credits had been obtained by the Government 'without real thought or plan', and stated that 8 million zloties of these additional funds had been used for the B.B.W.R. electoral campaign. It included a draft resolution to be submitted to Parliament, which read:

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1. For the speech, S.S.Se.R., 12.III.30, cols. 37-46.
 2. S.S.S.R., 14.III.30, cols. 7-8.

The Sejm affirms that the Government, in the financial year 1927-28, committed infringements of the budget without legal ratification, unjustified either by the legal obligations of the state or by the requirements of the rise in expenses on payments and estimates of credit included in the budget, to the sum of 230,000,000 zloties.¹

Piłsudski also intended to compromise the Deputies by showing that they were incapable of forming a Government. He thus refused the President's request that he form a Cabinet himself, justifying his decision in Gazeta Polska:

My fundamental disgust for the way in which all parliaments, and, in particular, our Sejm, function is well known. ... Of all the innovations since Independence, the Deputy is perhaps the basest.²

He entrusted the task of forming a Government to the well-meaning but politically inexperienced Marshal of the Senate, Juliusz Szymański, who took his mission so seriously that he had to be enlightened by Sławek as to its true character.³

On 26 March Szymański announced Piłsudski's four conditions for effective co-operation with the Sejm, with which he identified himself: the Deputies and the parties were not to meddle in matters of the personnel or functioning of the Government; the Deputies were not to interfere with the implementation of the budget once it had been voted; article 6 of the Treasury Law

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1. For the report, see Druki Sejmowe, 2nd series, No. 861.
 2. Piłsudski, P.Z. ix. 209, 211.
 3. Pobóg-Malinowski, op. cit., p. 526.

(requiring legislative approval for supplementary credits) should be revoked; and the Sejm should sit only six months a year.¹ These were terms of capitulation, and were thus, of course, completely unacceptable to the Opposition. The formation of a Government was next entrusted to Jan Piłsudski, the Marshal's brother, who in his turn began to 'consult' the deputies.

Daszyński was infuriated by this procedure, and decided, contrary to parliamentary practice and in spite of the strong opposition of the B.B.W.R., to call Parliament into session before a Government had been formed. He wished, above all, to present to Parliament the report of the committee of enquiry into the events of 31 October and that of the Budget Committee on the supplementary credits.² When the session opened on 29 March the atmosphere was tense, and action against the Sejm seemed certain. However, the meeting passed off quietly because Daszyński backed down at the last moment and did not present the Budget Committee's report on the Czechowicz affair.³ Once it had voted on the Senate's amendments to the budget, the Sejm was immediately adjourned by the new Government, set up that very day and headed by Walery Sławek. The composition of the Cabinet was the same as that of its predecessor, except that Car again took the Justice portfolio. Sławek's appointment was universally

1. See Piłsudski, *P.Z.* ix. 214-5.

2. See Lieberman, *op. cit.*, pp.431-2.

3. *Ibid.*, pp.432-6.

regarded as signifying the absolute victory of the advocates of a hard line in relation to Parliament.

In response, on 5 April the parties of the Centrolew issued an 'Appeal to the Nation'. Poland, they claimed, was living under a disguised dictatorship, incapable of dealing with the economic crisis. The Sejm, in passing votes of no-confidence, first in Świtalski and then in Prystor, had demanded a modification of the system. The Government had refused to comply. The President should now dissolve Parliament and let the nation choose between the Sejm and Marshal Piłsudski.¹

The three peasant parties also began to co-operate more closely. Although relations between the Peasant Party and the other two groups had cooled somewhat because of the former's abstention in the no-confidence motion against Prystor, the leaders of the three parties met for an all-day conference on the political and economic situation on 15 April. There it was unanimously resolved that the economic policies of the Government had proved ruinous for the small agricultural producer, and that the Government's hostility to democracy had robbed the peasantry of any influence on the running of the State. The resolution continued:

Under the circumstances, the parliamentary clubs /of the three groups/ have decided to harmonize their activity, both in Parliament and in the

1. Robotnik, 6.IV.30.

country, in order to create a common peasant front for the threatened economic interests and political rights of rural people.¹

In May, the three parties agreed on a common electoral list for local government elections. This increased closeness was greeted with some reserve by the other parties of the Centrolew. The Christian Democrats criticized the Piast for becoming too closely associated with the anti-clerical Liberation and Peasant Party, whereas the P.P.S. remained sceptical towards the premise that all peasants, large and small, had common political and economic interests.²

Piłsudski had decided to hold new elections. On 26 May he summoned Sławoj-Składkowski and told him:

The Sejm is going to be dissolved, and you must handle (robić) the new elections together with Sławek and Świtalski. They have told me that you are indispensable to them for these elections, and you will therefore return to the Ministry of the Interior.³

When asked if he could prepare for the elections in six weeks, Sławoj-Składkowski, who became Minister of the Interior again on 3 June, said he needed three months. This was understandable, since the Government's prospects in a free election did not appear very good. In May and June elections were held in three constituencies in which the original results had been disallowed

1. Wyzwolenie, 20.IV.30.

2. Lato, op. cit., pp.212-4; Czubiński, pp.199-200.

3. Sławoj-Składkowski, Strzepy meldunków, p.193.

by the Supreme Court. In the new results, the B.B.W.R. lost 7 seats the P.P.S. 2, the Liberation 1, the Christian Democrats 1, and the Sel Rob 1. The Peasant Party gained 6, the Minority Bloc 3, the National Party 2, and the Ukrainian Socialist Radicals 1.¹ As a consequence of these changes, the Government bloc lost as well 2 more seats elected on the State list. The elections for the Silesian Sejm on 11 May also showed a lessening of support for the Government. Whereas in the 1928 General Election the Government had won 30.6% of the votes, it now won 17.1%. The Christian Democrats won 22.7%, the N.P.R. 6.9% (standing together in 1928 they had won 25.2%), the German nationalists 30% (31.1%), the P.P.S. 8.8% (13.7%), and the Communists 4.6% (3.7%). The P.P.S. Frak won only 0.8% of the vote.² In the plebiscite held among the oil workers in East Galicia to determine how the workers' building fund should be divided, the P.P.S.-Frak won only 20.9% of the votes, as against 79.1% for the P.P.S.³

In the meantime, the Centrolew demanded the calling of an extraordinary session of Parliament, presenting a petition with the necessary number of signatures to the President on 9 May. However, in order to forestall discussion of the supplementary credits, the Sejm was once again adjourned as soon as it met on

a strong radicalisation of the

1. Gazeta Warszawska, 11.VI.30.
2. Rechowicz, op. cit., p.298, Table VI.
3. Próchnik, op. cit., p.356.

23 May. Bending the Constitution still further, Car refused to summon the Senate along with the Sejm. In response, the parties of the Centrolew issued a joint declaration stating that the adjournment of the Sejm made it impossible to deal with the economic crisis. They also for the first time attacked the President, 'who has allowed himself to be used in the political trick of the camp represented by Mr. Sławek's Cabinet.' The struggle for the removal of dictatorship and the full implementation of the Constitution, concluded the statement, would be pursued 'until the final victory of organized democracy¹'.

Two days before the month's adjournment of Parliament was to elapse, the extraordinary session was declared closed on 21 June. On the 25th the National Party held a large protest meeting at which Rybarski spoke,² and the Centrolew, which had anticipated the Government's action, had already on 15 June called a mass congress for the 29th to defend 'freedom and law'. It was to be held in Cracow, an old P.P.S. stronghold surrounded by a countryside controlled by the Piast. As the economic situation had deteriorated, clashes had occurred between the police and the unemployed in a number of towns. Although there is some evidence that the reaction of the mass of the population to the depression was one of apathy and inertia, the period saw a strong radicalization of the political parties.

1. The resolution is reprinted in Wyzwolenie, 1.VI.30.
 2. Gazeta Warszawska, 26.VI.30.

The P.P.S. was in a particularly militant mood, partly because many of its meetings had been broken up, and many of its members attacked, by militants from the P.P.S.-Frak.¹ On 28 May the Party Central Committee stated in a circular to its regional committees:

We are entering a new period of political struggle which cannot be resolved by the Sejm, but which must be carried through with the greatest effort of the whole population, and, in the first place, of the working class.²

The party organized a number of mass meetings to protest against the actions of the Government. The culmination of this campaign, agreed on with the other parties of the Centrolew, was to be the Cracow Congress. On 20 June, at a meeting of all Senators and Deputies of the Centrolew, the aims of the bloc were defined in a unanimous declaration.³ It attacked the Government for its failure to deal with the economic crisis and for its hostility to democracy. The President was again criticized for helping to undermine Parliament. Finally, the Centrolew demanded:

1. The withdrawal of the Governments of the dictator, Józef Piłsudski.
2. The formation of a constitutional Government based on the confidence of society, which, together with Parliament, could struggle against the economic catastrophe and the misery of the working people of town and country.⁴

1. On this, see Próchnik, op. cit., pp.359-60.
 2. Quoted in Czubiński, op. cit., p.203.
 3. It is reprinted in Gazeta Warszawska, 21.VI.30.
 4. Loc. cit.,

The Congress took place, as planned, in Cracow on 29 June. In spite of the Government's attempts to diminish attendance by exerting administrative pressure and by sending falsified telegrams to local party organizations announcing that the Congress had been called off,¹ it was attended by perhaps 1,500 delegates and 25,000 - 30,000 supporters.² This was not in fact as many as the organizers had hoped for, but it was still a considerable number. The sessions were held in the Old Theatre, and the mood of the delegates was militant.³ The Congress was opened by Róg of the Liberation. For four years, he claimed, the country had been ruled, against its will, by a dictatorship. Moreover, the Government was responsible for the severity of the economic crisis. The six parties of the Centrolew were united in the conviction that the rule of law had to be re-established in Poland. Telegrams of sympathy to the Congress from Daszyński, Limanowski and 38 British Labour M.P.'s were then read. Next, representatives of the six parties made declarations on behalf of their groups. Barlicki spoke for the P.P.S., Malinowski for the Liberation, Waleron for the Peasant Party, Witos for the Piast, Kuśnierz for the Christian Democrats

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1. These manoeuvres were described in Robotnik on 1.VII.30; 2.VII.30.
 2. Robotnik on 1 July estimated the number as 30,000, Witos in his memoirs as 25,000 (op.cit.,iii.183). The Pro-Government Ilustrowany Kurjer Codzienny (1.VII.30) claimed that there were altogether 10,000 people present, while Gazeta Warszawska (30.VI.30) estimated attendance at 22,000.
 3. For the speeches at the Congress, see Robotnik, 30.VI.30; 1.VII.30.

and Popiel for the N.P.R. The most radical speech was made by Thugutt, as chairman of the Committee for Freedom of Speech. The Government, he claimed, was far too preoccupied in holding power to worry about the economic crisis. Foreign capital was avoiding Poland because of the unsettled internal situation. 'If the Government and the President of the Republic are not absolutely certain that they and their partisans are a feeble minority in Poland', he challenged, 'let them try to find out through free elections.'¹

The Congress then, amid loud cheering, adopted a number of resolutions.² For four years, it was stated, Poland had been ruled by the dictatorship of Piłsudski:

The will of the dictator is exercised through the changing Governments; the President is also subject to the dictator's will. The basis of society's faith in the law in its own state has been undermined, public life is continually full of rumours and threats of a new coup; the people have been deprived of all influence over the internal and foreign policy of the Republic.

It was then resolved that the struggle for the elimination (usunięcie) of Piłsudski's dictatorship would be undertaken by all six parties, and pursued to victory; only a government with the confidence of the Sejm and society would be supported by the Centrolew; any attempt at a coup by the Government would meet with

1. Ibid., 30.VI.30.

2. The censorship would not allow the resolutions to be published. They are reprinted in Lato, op.cit., pp.259-60.

3. Robotnik, 1.VI.30.

strong resistance; if such a coup were accomplished, society would be free from all obligations towards the Government, and debts incurred abroad by this illegal regime would not be honoured; any attempt at terror would be countered by physical force; the President should resign, because he had allowed himself to be used by the Government in its evasions of the Constitution.

Later, a mass meeting was held at the Kleparski Market, attended by a huge crowd. Jankowski of the N.P.R. attacked the Government for the 'unheard-of obstacles' it had placed in the way of the Congress; Żulawski, for the P.P.S. declared 'We must march together as in 1920. Our only order must be: all to the front, all to the war of liberty against dictatorship!'¹ A procession then made its way from the market to the Mickiewicz Memorial in the centre of the town, to an accompaniment of radical slogans, such as 'Down with the puppet President!', 'To the gallows with Piłsudski!'² At the Memorial, Mastek of the P.P.S. closed the meeting with the words 'Goodbye, until we meet in Warsaw for the formation of a worker-peasant government.'³

In both the mood of its participants and the tone of its resolutions, the Congress was by far the most radical step the Opposition had yet undertaken. According to Witos, the majority

1. Robotnik, 1.VII.30.
2. Witos felt this shouting may have been begun by agents provocateurs. See Witos, op. cit., iii. 183.
3. Robotnik, 1.VII.30.

of its leaders (whose optimism he did not share) believed that Mościcki would now resign. If he did not, they thought he would dismiss Sławek and create a new compromise Government, or, at the worst, call new elections. They forgot once again, as Witos comments, 'that no speeches could topple Piłsudski's Government.'¹

The Cabinet's reaction to the Congress was one of fury. On 1 July Sławek who had gone with Sławoj-Skłodkowski and Tadeusz Shaetzel on the previous day to Piłsudski's summer residence at Druskieniki, threatened to take legal action against its organizers.² The Public Prosecutor was ordered to initiate proceedings against 30 of them, in terms of article 65 of the Austrian penal code, but was forced to abandon the case on 11 July, because there was not sufficient evidence of revolutionary intent.³

The anti-Government campaign organized by the Centrolew lost some of its momentum after the Congress because the peasants were now fully occupied with the harvest, and because

1 Witos, iii, p.185.

2. Ilustrowany Kurjer Codzienny, 3.VII.30.

3. Gazeta Warszawska, 11.VII.30. Austrian criminal law remained in force in Galicia until 1932; article 65 reads: 'He is guilty of an offense against public order who publicly or before several people by printed text, written work or drawing provokes contempt for or hatred of the person of the Emperor, the integrity of the state, the form of government or the state administration.'

of the traditional suspension of politics during July and August. On 10 July the Centrolew leaders met, and, after long discussion, resolved that the bloc would submit a petition to the President calling for the convocation of an extraordinary session of the Sejm and Senate. However, they did not specify a date.¹

The pro-Government parties greatly intensified their activity during this period, and held many meetings. The development of the crisis led to an increase in right-radicalism in the Sanacja and already in March an openly pro-fascist weekly, Nowa Kadrowa, had been launched, probably by Police Headquarters. The leading article in the first issue claimed that just as the First Cadre had marched under Piłsudski's command to fight for independence, so the New Cadre would fight under his orders to create a "Great Power Poland" (Polska Mocarstwowa).

"The time has come", it affirmed, "to launch the slogan, for all citizens of good will to unite and to swell the serried and disciplined ranks of the "New Cadre" which marches today - not like the First Cadre to fight for lost independence, but to win its own society, to conquer the Bastille of opportunism, party egoism, demagoguery, ill-will, contradiction, passivity, defeatism and cowardice".²

According to the right-wing press, this journal was closely linked to a secret military society, the Union of the White Eagle,³

1. Robotnik, 12.VII.30.
2. Nowa Kadrowa, 16.III.30.
3. Związek Orła Białego.

created by Rydz-Śmigły in order to ensure that the Sanacja would retain power if Piłsudski should die. Rumours also circulated of the existence of another secret society with similar aims, the Union of Military Action.¹ These developments aroused increasing dissatisfaction among the more liberal members of the B.B.W.R. During the second half of May, Czechowicz resigned his parliamentary seat and on the 22nd told reporters that the Government was responsible for the delay in settling the matter of the supplementary credits.² On 9 July, three B.B.W.R. Deputies, led by Marjan Cieplak, announced that they were leaving the Bloc since it had become 'more and more indifferent to the peasant masses.' Shortly afterwards, they rejoined the Peasant Party.³ At the end of July, the Union of Legionaries split, and an Organizational Committee of Democratic Legionaries and P.O.W. Members was set up under Arciszewski, Bagiński, Andrzej, Strug and Thugutt. On 10 August, it held a congress in Warsaw attended by 60 delegates representing 30 local committees. The organization was renamed the Union of Democratic Legionaries.⁴

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1. Związek Żołnierskiego Czynu. For some of these speculations, see A.B.C., 11.VII.30; 12.VII.30; 16.VII.30; Polonia, 13.VII.30; 17.VII.30.
 2. Robotnik, 23.V.30.
 3. Ibid., 11.VII.30. In fact, these resignations were probably part of a Government plan to infiltrate the Peasant Party, with the object of dislodging it from the Centrolew.
 4. Robotnik, 29.VII.30; 30.VII.30; 11.VIII.30.

The Opposition was much encouraged by what it took to be the dissolution of the B.B.W.R., and also by the deterioration of Piłsudski's health, which seemed to indicate that he would soon be forced to withdraw from active politics. On 14 July the Marshal had delegated full control of the War Ministry to his deputy, General Konarzewski. 'We should not be surprised,' commented Robotnik,

if Marshal Piłsudski's holiday lasts several months, even more, we should not be at all astonished, and would even regard it as entirely to be expected if the Marshal retired completely from public life because of his health.¹

In spite of widely current rumours that he would make an important speech there, Piłsudski did not address the Congress of Legionaries held in Radom on 10 August, although he did attend, and had resumed the duties of Minister of War on the 8th. Speeches were delivered by Rydz-Śmigły, Sławek and General Górecki; nevertheless the Congress, as a demonstration of support for the Government and a rival to the Cracow Congress, proved a disappointment.²

The Government also had problems to contend with in Silesia, where the dispute between Governor Grażyński and Korfanty had reached new heights of acrimony. As we have seen, the Government had suffered a defeat in the Silesian elections

1. Ibid., 19.VII.30.

2. For the course of the Congress, see Gazeta Polska, 11.VIII.30.

of May 1930. When the new Sejm met, conflict arose over its attempts to exercise its rights of control over the provincial budget. On 1 July the Sejm was adjourned, over the strenuous objections of Korfanty and the P.P.S. Demonstrations were organized all over Silesia to protest against Grażyński's actions.¹

On 21 August the Centrolew leaders met to discuss the political situation in the country as a whole, and decided to present a petition early in September calling for the convocation of Parliament. The next day, after further debate, it was resolved to organize simultaneous protest meetings in 21 towns on 14 September. 'The moment has come,' wrote Robotnik,

to deepen and widen the action we have embarked upon. This time it will be not only in one town, but in 21 places over the whole of the Republic that the worker and peasant masses will assemble on the same day to affirm by the force of their numbers and their unbroken will, their desire to overthrow the hated dictatorship.²

However, the Opposition had underestimated Piłsudski. Already on 11 August he had instructed Sławoj-Składkowski to assemble evidence which would make it possible to prefer charges against the leaders of the Centrolew.³ On the 22nd, he informed Car, Beck and Sławoj-Składkowski that he intended to dissolve

1. Rechowicz, op. cit., pp.173-88.

2. Robotnik, 24.VIII.30.

3. Sławoj-Składkowski, Strzepy meldunków, p.205.

Parliament and arrest a number of the Deputies.¹ The next day Sławek resigned, and Piłsudski became Prime Minister. In his new Cabinet Colonel Beck, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister without Portfolio, played a key role. Because Car refused to take responsibility for the arrest of the Deputies, the Justice portfolio was conferred upon Czesław Michałowski.²

Immediately upon taking office, Piłsudski gave an interview to Gazeta Polska in which he again attacked the 1921 Constitution and the general behaviour of the Deputies.³ His words seemed to invite his supporters to take the law into their own hands against Members of Parliament, and indeed, on 29 August Jan Dąbski, the President of the Peasant Party, was severely beaten by 'unknown' army officers. The following day, Parliament was dissolved, and new elections were proclaimed, for the Sejm on 16 November, and for the Senate on 23 November. On 1 September, after reading the list of Deputies presented to him by Sławoj-Składkowski, Piłsudski marked 'with a green pencil' those who were to be arrested.⁴ He had ruled out, however, the imposition by force of a new constitution or of modifications in the electoral system.

1. Ibid., pp.205-6.

2. Pobóg-Malinowski, op. cit., pp.528-9.

3. Piłsudski, P.Z. ix. 217-24.

4. Sławoj-Składkowski, Strzepy meldunków, p.223.

The final stage of the clash between the Government and the Opposition coincided with a serious deterioration of the situation in East Galicia. In 1929 the Ukrainian Military Organization, led from Vienna by Evgeni Konovalets, was reorganized. It was given a new and more oligarchical structure and, with some financial help from Germany, began a campaign of sabotage. This was aimed, primarily, at discrediting the more moderate Ukrainian organizations, especially the right wing of the U.N.D.O., which had had some contact with the Polish Government, by provoking the authorities to make reprisals.¹ On 28 June 1930, one member of the organization was sentenced to death for sabotage and seven were given prison sentences of between 2 and 4 years' hard labour. Nine were acquitted.² In retaliation, the group intensified its campaign of sabotage. On 30 July a postal van was attacked near the station at Bóbrka Chlebowiec, and one official was killed; on the night of 6-7 August a large number of fires were set which destroyed the harvest on many Polish estates; on 16 August the telegraph lines between Lwów and Sambor, Przemyśl, and Stanisławów were cut and on 21 August an unsuccessful attempt was made to derail the

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1. For the situation in East Galicia, see Pobóg-Malinowski, op. cit., pp.537-41; W. Tarnopolsky, 'The Polish-Ukrainian Conflict in East Galicia and its Repercussions in the League of Nations' (Columbia University Master's Thesis), Columbia University, 1955.
 2. Gazeta Warszawska, 29.VI.30.

Stanisławów-Kołomyja express. The sabotage continued throughout August and September. On 10 September, official sources estimated that property worth 6,743,000 zloties had been destroyed, including 62 houses, 67 barns, 112 mills and 78 other buildings.¹

Piłsudski reacted by holding villages near places where sabotage had occurred collectively responsible.² Cavalry were billeted in them, and fines levied. No-one was killed, but those who resisted the troops or were suspected of sabotage were beaten. By the end of November this policy had succeeded in quelling the disturbances, but it left behind a legacy of bitterness. Moreover, nearly thirty Ukrainian Deputies and perhaps a hundred other Ukrainian politicians had been arrested. At the same time, however, the Government tried to make approaches to the Ukrainian moderates. Dmitri Levitsky came to Warsaw early in October to discuss the situation with officials in the Ministry of the Interior, but no agreement was reached.³ Archbishop Szeptycki also visited Warsaw twice in this period. The Government prevailed upon him to issue a pastoral letter from the Uniate bishops condemning the sabotage. However, when it appeared it also condemned the policy of holding villages

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1. Gazeta Warszawska, 10.IX.30.
 2. He gave his instructions to Sławoj-Składkowski on 1 September. Sławoj-Składkowski, Strzepy meldunków, p.223.
 3. Czubiński, op. cit., pp.217-8.

collectively responsible, to the Government's intense annoyance.¹

The proclamation of elections led the Centrolew to form a new electoral bloc, the League for the Defence of Law and the People's Freedom, on 9 September. The Christian Democrats did not join, partly because to have done so would have hampered their negotiations with Korfanty's Silesian group over reunification, and partly because it was believed that participation in the bloc would be an electoral liability in western Poland, one of the areas of Christian Democratic strength. The party therefore issued a communiqué stating that though it would continue to co-operate with the other parties of the Centrolew in their struggle against the Government, it could not join the bloc because of its failure to affirm that it would maintain the Concordat.²

The programme of the new bloc was issued on 10 September.³ It attacked the Government for failing to deal with the economic crisis and for destroying respect for the law by its attack on the Constitution. Piłsudski had undermined the legend of the Legions by his alliance with the Conservatives, his Government had no policy in relation to the national minorities, and had taken public funds for its electoral expenses, it charged.

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1. The censorship would not allow the whole message to be published. Parts were reprinted in Czas, 21.X.30.
 2. Rzeczpospolita, 10.IX.30.
 3. It is reprinted in Robotnik, 11.IX.30.

The aim of the bloc was thus 'the complete and final liquidation of the dictatorship of Józef Piłsudski'.¹ The parties of the alliance affirmed their preparedness to take power, and outlined a fairly detailed economic programme.

On the night of 9-10 September, Piłsudski had 11 of the Centrolew's leaders arrested. They were not, on the whole, its most important figures,² but were individuals either known for their radicalism or against whom Piłsudski had a personal grudge. Included among them were Barlicki, Lieberman, Pragier, Ciołkosz and Mastek of the P.P.S., Bagiński of the Liberation, Witos and Kiernik of the Piast and Karol Popiel of the N.P.R. Dąbski of the National Party and Józef Baćmaga, a B.B.W.R. Deputy accused of embezzlement, were also arrested, as well as four Ukrainian nationalists. On the following night more arrests were made. In an interview on the 13th Piłsudski made light of the political character of the arrests, claiming that they were as much the result of speculation, and again charged the Deputies with abusing their parliamentary immunity.³

The Centrolew was greatly taken aback by the arrests, so much so that its protests were somewhat halfhearted.

resort to illegal measures in its struggle against the Government.

1. Loc.cit.
2. Neither Niedziałkowski, the principal instigator of the Centrolew nor Thugutt, the founder and editor of the Centrolew's weekly, Tydzień, were arrested.
3. Piłsudski, P.Z. ix. 230-5.

Nevertheless meetings were held, as planned, all over the country on the 14th, and in some places reached large proportions, notably in Lublin. In Warsaw, during the procession after the meeting someone threw a bomb, as a result of which 300 persons were taken into custody.¹ Large numbers of arrests continued to be made during September and October, further contributing to the disarray of the Opposition. On 25 September the Silesian Sejm was dissolved and Korfanty was arrested. By the middle of October, several thousand people were in custody, including 64 former Deputies, many of whom were confined in the military fortress in Brześć and were not allowed any contact with the outside world.² On the night of 12-13 October the police arrested 8 members of the P.P.S. militia and charged them with planning an attempt on the life of Piłsudski.³ Their leader, Piotr Jagodziński, who had been involved in an assassination attempt against the Russian Governor-General in 1906, claimed that the plot was only a subterfuge to uncover police spies.

The Centrolew retained to the last its belief that the electoral confrontation would prove decisive, and refused to resort to illegal measures in its struggle against the Government.

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1. Gazeta Warszawska, 16.IX.30.
 2. Gazeta Warszawska, 20.X.30.
 3. Kurjer Poranny, 14.X.30, Robotnik, 14.X.30.

When a partial strike broke out in Warsaw on 16 September in protest against the arrests, it was disavowed by the P.P.S. and condemned as a possible provocation.¹ The Executive Council of the party, meeting on the 28th, resolved that only legal means of protest should be employed.² As late as 1 October Robotnik wrote:

We should not worry ourselves with the question: What will happen after the elections: Today we have in the ballot³ powerful weapon to struggle with the system. They have tried and will try to tear these ballots from our hands in a number of ways. But those hands number millions, and if the millions fulfil their obligation - the victory of the working masses is certain.³

This 'electoral illusion' was the result partly of the shock induced by the scale of Government repression, partly of an awareness that strike action had little hope of success in conditions of mass unemployment. Its principle cause, however, was a pathetic though perhaps commendable faith that once the Centrolew could demonstrate that it had the support of the legionaries, Conservatives, pro-Piłsudski-its country the Government would voluntarily abdicate.

The strength of the Centrolew alliance was put to a harsh test as the Government's repression was intensified, and of the power of the 'Colonels' group' within the party, with differences of personality and programme became more conspicuous.

Jan Szecki, the first of the Conservatives to figure on the

1. Czubiński, op. cit., pp.226-7.
2. Robotnik, 29.IX.30, 30.IX.30.
3. Robotnik, 1.X.30. (Italics in original).

1. Gazeta Polska, 7.X.30, Robotnik, 8.X.30, 14.X.30.

2. Kurjer Poranny, 9.X.30.

The greatest reserve was shown by the Peasant Party. It had not taken part in the protest meetings of 14 September, and in early October a group of pro-Government members, led by Tadeusz Rożański and Antoni Hańko tried to take over the party and force it to leave the bloc. A fairly important part in this crisis was played by Piotr Targoński and Piotr Kosiba, the 'defectors' from the B.B.W.R. who had joined the Peasant Party in July. Although the attempt was defeated, and its protagonists were expelled, the internal dissension hampered the party's campaign.¹ The Government also organized a small split in the Piast, and tried to do the same in the Liberation.² The P.P.S., too, lost a few more members to the Sanacja. In addition, in parts of Poznań the Piast refused to stand on the Centrolew list.

The B.B.W.R. issued no electoral programme, but in its campaign laid most stress on the need for constitutional reform. It continued, as before, to be a loose alliance of former legionaries, Conservatives, pro-Piłsudski-ite radicals and pro-Government representatives of the national minorities. However, the worsening of the political climate led to a consolidation of the power of the 'Colonels' group' within the Bloc, with a corresponding diminution in importance of its other components. Jan Stecki, the first of the Conservatives to figure on the

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1. Gazeta Polska, 7.X.30, Robotnik, 8.X.30, 11.X.30.
 2. Kurjer Poranny, 9.X.30.

B.B.W.R. state list, occupied the 10th place.¹ Unlike 1928, Piłsudski himself occupied first place on the list. He played an active part in the electoral campaign, repeating, in a number of interviews with Miedziński, his by now well-worn criticisms of the Deputies and of parliamentary government.² As in the previous election, the B.B.W.R. possessed large financial resources, and its campaign was conducted on a massive scale. Politically, it derived considerable support from Germany's increased demands for the revision of Poland's western frontier. It accused the Centrolew of seeking support abroad, and the P.P.S. of excessive sympathy for the German Social Democrats. The Opposition bloc's victory, it was claimed, would benefit only the Reich. The Centrolew was also accused of encouraging the unrest in East Galicia. In addition, the B.B.W.R. made serious attempts to win over Catholic support. On 14 October, Janta-Półczyński, the Conservative Minister of Agriculture, met the Pope in Rome, and conveyed His Holiness's blessing to Piłsudski as well as to the President and 'the whole Polish nation'.³ Apart from its attempts to split the rival bloc, the main burden of the Government's attack on the

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1. If we exclude the Minister of Agriculture, Leon Janta-Półczyński, who occupied 4th place. Gazeta Polska, 8.X.30.
 2. Altogether, between 26 August and the elections, he gave 7 interviews. For these, see Piłsudski, P.Z. ix. 217-57.
 3. Czas, 16.X.30.

Centrolew stressed its disparate character and its political irresponsibility in fomenting a political crisis at the height of the Depression.

The National Party entered the elections on its own, with a strongly anti-Government programme. Although the Centrolew's approaches to the party had proved unsuccessful, the two groups agreed not to attack each other. This truce was exploited by the Government, which attacked the left-wing parties for making common cause with their worst enemies. It also made relations between the Centrolew and the national minorities, already uneasy about the chauvinism of such groups as the N.P.R. and, to a lesser extent, the Piast, rather cool.¹

The Communist Party took an active part in the electoral campaign, centring its attack on the 'social fascists' and 'populist-fascists' of the Centrolew whom it accused of deluding the masses, since only revolution could resolve the struggle against the Sanacja.² The Government succeeded in preventing the formation of a minorities bloc, but a Ukrainian-White Russian Electoral Bloc and a German Electoral Bloc were set up. It proved impossible to unite the different Jewish groups,

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1. There were also other reasons for this coolness. When the Centrolew approached the U.N.D.O., Levitsky refused to stand on a common list claiming that the bloc was a 'living corpse', Czubiński, op. cit., p.223.
 2. See 'W sprawie akcji wyborczej do sejm i senatu', K.P.P. Uchwały i Rezolucje, iii. 156-8.

however, and the Galician Zionists, the Grünbaum Zionists and the Orthodox all presented separate lists. The Bund put up a common list with the largely Jewish left-wing Independent Socialist Party of Labour.

The Government again intervened actively in the elections. On 10 September, Piłsudski told Sławoj-Składkowski to make sure that the attitude of officials to the election was 'as it ought to be.'¹ And indeed, on 29 October we find the Sub-prefect of the Chodzież district in Poznań instructing a meeting of civil servants:

State officials should support the B.B.W.R. list, the more because the Head of the Government has taken the first place on it. It is not enough to be loyal, it is not enough only to give one's vote. The moral obligation of officials is to support the state-consolidating action of the Head of the Government most vigorously.²

Administrative obstacles were placed in the way of the Opposition parties. They had difficulty in obtaining permission to call meetings or hire halls, and the police refused to stop pro-Government hooligans from breaking up their rallies.³

The Government also made use of its control of the electoral machinery. Altogether, the electoral commissioners invalidated 214 lists before the voting commenced. Of these,

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1. Sławoj-Składkowski, Strzepy meldunków, p.229.
 2. P.Z.P.K. II, 'Powiat Chodzieża (Województwo Poznańskie) meeting of 29.X.30'.
 3. See Robotnik, 16.X.30; 19.X.30; 22.X.30, to cite only a few instances.

14 were submitted by the Centrolew, most of them in areas in which its influence was strongest. The constituencies in which it was forbidden to stand included Nos. 6 (Grodno), 15 (Konin), 26 (Lublin), 42 (the area around Cracow) and 47 (Rzeszów).¹ The number of votes invalidated was also considerably higher than in 1928, accounting for 4% of those cast. Most of the invalidations took place in central and southern Poland, and affected the Centrolew particularly.² In many places the Government called upon the people to cast their votes openly, as a sign of loyalty.³ In addition, a certain amount of direct falsification took place, especially in the Kresy.

The elections proved a triumph for the Government, not only because of its repressive measures and its attempts to influence the voting, but also because the feeling developed that it was bound to win, legally or illegally, and that it would therefore be best to give this victory a legal stamp. Moreover the Opposition had underestimated Piłsudski's personal popularity and had failed to realize that the appeal of their sophisticated demands for the maintenance of parliamentary control over the budget was relatively limited.

1. The electoral results given here are based on the figures in 'Statystyka wyborów do Sejmu i Senatu'.

1. Based on Statystyka Polski, series C, iv. 'Statystyka wyborów do Sejmu i Senatu'. The figures given in Czubiński, op. cit., p.232, are incorrect.
2. 'Statystyka wyborów do Sejmu i Senatu', p.xxi, Table VIII.
3. Kurjer Warszawski, 17.XI.30; Czas, 18.XI.30.

The B.B.W.R. and the P.P.S.-Frak won 47.4% of the votes for the Sejm and 247 of the 444 seats.¹ This was not, however, the two-thirds majority needed for constitutional revision. The Bloc did even better in the Senate elections, winning 54.7% of the votes and 75 (of 111) seats. In the elections for the Upper Silesian Sejm, the Sanacja also improved on its previous performance, emerging as the largest group, with 19 of the 48 seats (35.7% of the votes), compared with 17 seats (37.2% of the votes) for the Christian Democrats and 7 (13.4%) for the Germans.²

In the Sejm elections, the B.B.W.R. did particularly well in the Eastern Kresy, where, with some administrative pressure, it won 81.1% of the vote. In Galicia, where most Centrolew invalidations took place, it won 53.4%, and in East Galicia 51.2%. In central Poland it received 39.0% and in Warsaw 40.4%. It remained weakest in western Poland, in spite of the fact that in this election it had succeeded in uniting its supporters here and had presented one joint list. It received 31.9% of the vote in Silesia, 24.1% in Poznanian and 21.2% in Pomerania.

1. The electoral results given here are based on the figures in 'Statystyka wyborów do Sejmu i Senatowi'. For the results in the Silesian elections, see Rechowicz, p.320, Table X; p.303, Table X.

2. The drastic fall in the size of the German vote was brought about by the invalidation of the German list in one of the three Silesian constituencies.

The results were a disappointment for the Centrolew, which won only 17.7% of the votes (if we include the P.P.S. list in Upper Silesia, where no Centrolew list was presented) and 82 seats. At the beginning of the campaign, its leaders had expected to win 150-180 seats. The urban parties, particularly the P.P.S., did very badly. In Warsaw, the Opposition bloc won only 7.1% of the vote, in Lodz 9.5%, and in the Dąbrowa basin 13.5%. Altogether the bloc won only 9.5% of the urban vote. It did much better in the countryside, where it won 20.7%.

The Centrolew's results were best in western Poland, where administrative pressure was weakest. It won 29.9% of the vote in Poznan and 32.7% in Pomerania. In Upper Silesia the P.P.S. won 8.6% of the vote and the Christian Democrats 34.0%. In central Poland the Centrolew won 22.9%, in Galicia 12.9% and in the Kresy only 3.2%.

The National Party regained some of the ground it had lost in 1928, winning 12.7% of the vote and 62 seats. Nevertheless, this was somewhat less than the expected total of 80. In Poznan the party won 32.0% of the vote, in Pomerania 37.9% and in Warsaw 17.9%. In central Poland it won 16.7%, in Galicia 4.0% and in the Kresy only 2.6%.

The Communist vote dropped sharply from its 1928 level to 2.5%, and the party won only 5 seats. This was partly the result of administrative pressure, especially in the Kresy, but more the effect of the bitter disputes within the party

and the small appeal of its intransigent leftist slogans. In Warsaw the party won 8.8% of the vote, in Lodz 19.6%, in the Dąbrowa basin 13.5% and in Silesia 4.1%.

The minorities too did rather badly. The Ukrainian-White Russian bloc won 6.4% of the vote and 21 seats. In East Galicia it won 31.0% of the vote, but in the Kresy only 4.6%. The German bloc won 2.7% of the vote and 5 seats. In Poznania it won 12.0%, in Pomerania 7.8% and in Upper Silesia 34.0%. The division among the Jews, and the fact that many Jews voted for the Sanacja, reduced the Jewish Club in the Sejm to 7.

At last Piłsudski had a Parliament with which he should find it easy to co-operate. In an interview with Miedziński on 26 November, the Marshal stated that the President, the Sejm and the Government ought now to be able to reach some accommodation. The most important task before the new Parliament, he claimed, was the revision of the Constitution.¹ On 29 November, as a sign that the crisis was over, Piłsudski resigned, and Sławek again became Prime Minister. Piłsudski's victory, though gained at some cost, was a very conclusive one, and as long as he lived, the Opposition was unable to offer any sort of challenge to the Sanacja. Świtalski, describing the Marshal's remarks at a meeting with himself, Mościcki, Sławek and Beck after the elections, recounts:

1. Piłsudski, P.Z., ix. 257-63.

TABLE I

RESULTS OF ELECTIONS

"The Commander, on the first occasion he met us after the elections, stopped us, with a school-masterish gesture, from giving way to joy at the victory, and told us that we ought immediately to proceed to our next stage of work, the nature of which was already clear. In general terms, he merely stated that we had five years of the most perfect quiet and that we must know how to make use of it."¹

The next years would show whether this opportunity could, in fact, be grasped.

Centre and Left:

Centrolew	17.7
Christian Democrats	3.8
Socialist Bloc (i.e., P.P.S. in alliance)	3.4
Left Socialist Bloc (Bund and Independent Socialist Party of Labour)	7.6

Communist and Pro-Communist:

Communist lists	2.1
Peasant Self-Help	2.2
Pol Rob	2.1

Minorities:

Ukrainian and White Russian Communist Electoral Bloc	2.8
Armenian Peasant Organization	2.1
German Electoral Bloc	2.2
Grünbaum Zionists	2.1
Galician Zionists	2.1
Orthodox	2.1
Polesi Bloc	2.1

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1. A.A.N. Zespoły Szczątkowe. Kazimierz Świtalski, sygn. 11/88. 'Konferencja u Pana Prezydenta w składzie: Prezydent, Komendant, Sławek i Beck w dniu 18 listopada 1930r.'

TABLE I
RESULTS OF ELECTIONS TO THE SEJM, 1930¹

<u>Parties</u>	<u>No. of votes</u> (in 1,000's)	<u>%age</u>
<u>Pro-Government:</u>	<u>5,377</u>	<u>47.4</u>
B.B.W.R.	5,293	46.7
P.P.S.-Frak	74	0.7
<u>Right:</u>	<u>1,445</u>	<u>12.7</u>
National List	1,443	12.7
Monarchists	2	--
<u>Centre and Left:</u>	<u>2,489</u>	<u>22.1</u>
Centrolew	1,966	17.3
Christian Democrats	430	3.8
Socialist Bloc (i.e.P.P.S. in Silesia)	52	0.4
Left Socialist Bloc (Bund and Independent Socialist Party of Labour)	71	0.6
<u>Communist and Pro-Communist:</u>	<u>283</u>	<u>2.5</u>
Communist lists	236	2.1
Peasant Self-Help	23	0.2
Sel Rob	24	0.2
<u>Minorities:</u>	<u>1,648</u>	<u>14.5</u>
Ukrainian and White Russian Communists Electoral Bloc	726	6.4
Ruthenian Peasant Organization	11	0.1
German Electoral Bloc	310	2.7
Grünbaum Zionists	247	2.2
Galician Zionists	185	1.6
Orthodox	150	1.3
Poalei Sion	19	0.2

1. Based on Statystyka Polski, series C, No.4, 'Statystyka wyborów do Sejmu i Senatu z dnia 16 i 23 listopada 1930 roku'.

1. Based on Przebieg, No. 21, p. 273.

TABLE II

COMPOSITION OF THE NEW SEJM, 1930¹

<u>Parties</u>	<u>Deputies</u>	
	<u>No.</u>	<u>Age</u>
<u>Pro-Government:</u>	<u>444</u>	<u>100</u>
B.B.W.R.	<u>247</u>	<u>55.6</u>
<u>Right:</u>		
National Party	<u>62</u>	<u>14.0</u>
<u>Centre:</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>9.0</u>
Christian Democrats	15	3.4
N.P.R.	10	2.2
Piast	15	3.4
<u>Left:</u>	<u>57</u>	<u>12.9</u>
Peasant Party	18	4.0
Liberation	15	3.4
P.P.S.	24	5.5
<u>Communist and Pro-Communist:</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>1.1</u>
Peasant Self-Help	1	0.2
Communists	4	0.9
<u>Minorities:</u>	<u>32</u>	<u>7.4</u>
Ukrainian-White Russian Club	18	4.0
Radical Ukrainians	3	0.6
Germans	5	1.2
Jews	6	1.4
Orthodox Jews	1	0.2

1. Based on Próchnik, op. cit., p.395.

TABLE III

COMPOSITION OF THE NEW SENATE, 1930¹

<u>Parties</u>	<u>Senators</u>	
	<u>No.</u>	<u>%age</u>
Eastern Army with the support of the Government and the temporary of a course, at the same time	111	100
<u>Pro-Government:</u>		
B.B.W.R.	75	67.6
<u>Right:</u>		
National Party	12	10.8
<u>Centre:</u>		
Christian Democrats	3	2.7
N.P.R.	3	2.7
Piast	2	1.8
<u>Left:</u>		
Liberation	4	3.6
P.P.S.	5	4.5
<u>Minorities:</u>		
Ukrainians and White Russians	4	3.6
Germans	3	2.7

On 21 January the Budget Committee of the Sejm voted to legalize the supplementary credits of the 1930 budget and on the 27th its recommendations were approved by the Sejm.

1. Based on Próchnik, op. cit., p.398.

EPILOGUE

There was no post-May system. There was only at first Piłsudski, minor noble of genius from the Eastern Kresy with the intuition of a statesman and the temperament of a revolutionary, lordly and coarse, at the same time near to triviality-- Piłsudski, for whom Poland was a great estate, a Zułów or a Piekiliszki, in which he walked around grumbling and playing a part, encouraging and browbeating bailiffs and managers. With his renaissance largesse, the broadness of his conceptions and the smallness of his vindictiveness, he surrounded his person with legend and dominated a whole period of Polish history. ... And then there was Piłsudski old and sick, and then the struggle among his successors.

Kajetan Morawski, Tamten Brzeg.

1. The Sanacja after Brześć.

In the new Parliament the B.B.W.R. possessed a secure majority. The Czechowicz affair was thus quietly buried. Already on 10 October 1930 Stanisław Wróblewski resigned as President of the Main Auditing Office and was replaced on the 20th by General Jakub Krzemieński, an ardent legionary and Piłsudski-ite who had been President of the Supreme Military Court since the Coup. On 21 January the Budget Committee of the Sejm voted to legalize the supplementary credits of the 1927-28 budget, and on the 27th its recommendations were accepted by the Sejm.¹

1.S.S.S.R., 26, 27.I.31, cols. 142-57.

Although the Government now enjoyed firm control in the legislature, Parliament's role remained small. The 'Colonels group' continued dominant in the Sanacja, and its interest in co-operating with Parliament, even with a docile and compliant Parliament, was minimal. In Sławek's Cabinet nine Ministers were military men, and only six civilians; in those of his successors, Prystor, who was Prime Minister from 27 May 1931 to 9 May 1933, and Janusz Jędrzejewicz, Premier from 10 May 1933 to 13 May 1934, the proportion was in each case eight to four.

Parliament met only to adopt the budget and to pass laws submitted to it by the Cabinet. Moreover, the Government was granted far-reaching decree powers. On 15 March 1932 the Sejm passed a law which gave the President the right to issue decrees during the period between the end of one parliamentary session and the commencement of the next session the following autumn.¹ These decrees could deal with economic and financial matters, the unification of the legal system, the administration of justice and, until the end of 1934, with the reorganization of public administration. The Government took considerable advantage of this power. Between 18 March and 3 November 1932, for example, 106 decrees were issued.² The power to issue

1. Dz. U.R.P. (1932), No.22, pp.319-20.

2. Gazeta Polska, 9.XI.32.

decrees was renewed by the Sejm on 14 March 1934 and again on 22 March 1935.¹

The Government made use of its control of Parliament and its right to issue decrees to entrench still further its position.

On 7 November 1931 the Sejm passed a law providing for the military conscription of railway workers should they strike during a war or a time of 'insecurity threatening the State'.²

On 11 March 1932 a law was passed requiring administrative approval for all meetings held out of doors.³ Meetings held indoors had only to be announced in advance, but could be forbidden by administrative order. Since September 1931

summary courts had been in existence to deal with some political offences (mainly Ukrainian sabotage), and they were done away

with only on 6 March 1934.⁴ The immovability of judges was suspended by decree on 23 August 1932,⁵ and a decree of 27

October 1932 limited the right to form associations.⁶ In addition,

anti-semitic excesses by right-wing students led the Government to curtail the autonomy of the universities in a law of 1 March 1932.⁷

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1. Dz. U.R.P. (1934), No.28, p.462; (1935), No.28, p.479.
 2. Ibid., (1931), No.109, pp.1765-6.
 3. Ibid., (1932), No.48, pp.815-18.
 4. Ibid., (1932), No.20, p.319.
 5. Ibid., (1932), No.73, pp.1445-51.
 6. Ibid., (1932), No.94, pp.1947-53.
 7. Ibid., (1932), No.38, pp.639-45.

There was little to show in the way of achievements to justify the Government's extensive powers. Piłsudski, old and sick, became ever more inaccessible, even to his closest associates. After a meeting with the Marshal and Sławek on 2 May 1933, Świtalski noted:

My impression is that the Commander is a solitary individual. He cuts himself off from people and is thus the prisoner of the opinions and even the chance intrigues of those with whom he speaks, and who give him a distorted picture of the internal political situation.¹

The Government lacked directing force, and the individual ministries frequently functioned without any real co-ordination of policy. Its attempts to deal with the economic crisis were hesitant and fumbling. It did, it is true, unify the criminal codes of the former partitions by decree on 11 July 1932,² but its new Local Government Law (23 March 1933) was severely criticized by the Opposition for increasing the powers of officials and diminishing those of elected bodies.³ There was much to be said for the law reforming the organization of schools (11 March 1932), but it almost certainly made access to higher education more difficult for poorer children.⁴

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1. A.A.N., Zespoły szczątkowe, Kazimierz Świtalski, sygn.II/88, 'Rozmowa z Komendantem dnia 2/5 33 r. w Belwederze o godz. 4 pop. Obecni: Sławek i ja'.
 2. Dz. U.R.P., (1932), No.60, pp.1153-81.
 3. Ibid., (1933), No.35, pp.693-723.
 4. Dz. U.R.P., (1932), No.38, pp.639-45.

1. For this session see A.A.N., 26.1.33, vol. 1, p. 22.

The Sanacja did succeed in forcing the adoption of a new constitution, though it achieved this by a manoeuvre which was without doubt illegal. As we have seen, the B.B.W.R. lacked the two-thirds majority in the Sejm necessary for constitutional revision. The 1929 constitutional proposal of the Bloc had been presented to the new Sejm on 2 February 1931, and discussion on it had been resumed in the Constitutional Committee on 5 March. However progress was slow, because the members of the Bloc knew they could not command the required majority. The conclusions of the Committee were finally submitted to the Sejm on 26 January 1934.¹ The Opposition groups, declaring that they would give the Government no help in modifying the Constitution, boycotted the debate.

The 63 'constitutional theses' submitted by the Committee were arranged in such a way that, if all were accepted, they would form a new constitution. The B.B.W.R., at the instigation of Car and over the strong protests of Stroński, the sole remaining representative of the Opposition, thus rapidly voted in the new constitution, article by article, obtaining the necessary two-thirds majority before the Opposition Deputies could return. This procedure certainly contravened the provision of the 1921 Constitution (article 125) that two weeks' notice had to be given for the presentation of constitutional

1. For this session see S.S.S.R., 26.I.34, cols. 3-56.

amendments. The new constitution obtained the required two-thirds majority in the Senate on 16 January 1935, and on 23 March it was finally approved by the Sejm. Since on this occasion it was only a question of voting on the Senate changes, it was held that a majority of eleven-twentieths (article 35) was sufficient.

The new constitution was intended to give lasting form to the principles of government for which Piłsudski had fought for so long, and which he believed he had implemented since the Coup.¹ The key position was held by the President, who was to exercise those functions of supervision and control over the whole governmental apparatus which had in fact been performed by Piłsudski since 1926. 'The President of the Republic', stated article 11, 'being the highest authority in the state, coordinates the activity of the superior organs of the state.'² He was to appoint the Prime Minister, and, on the latter's advice, the other Ministers. He was also empowered to appoint, without the counter-signature of the Prime Minister, the President of the Supreme Court, the President of the Main Auditing Office, the General Inspector of the Armed Forces, the Supreme Commander, the members of the Tribunal of State, and one

1. For the Constitution, see Sejm Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej Kadencja IV, Druk No.2, 'Ustawa Konstytucyjna z dnia 23.IV.1935 r.', (Warsaw, n.d.).

2. Ibid., p.4.

third of the members of the Senate. He could, on his own initiative, dissolve Parliament, he was the highest military authority, and represented the State in its dealings with foreign powers. He could not be held personally responsible for his official acts.¹

The President was to be elected for seven years by universal suffrage from two candidates. Of these, one was to be nominated by the retiring President (who in time of war could in fact name his successor), the other by an Electoral Assembly composed of the Marshals of the Sejm and Senate, the Prime Minister, the President of the Supreme Court, the General Inspector of the Armed Forces, and 75 electors, two-thirds of whom would be chosen by the Sejm and one-third by the Senate. If the outgoing President did not present a nominee, the candidate of the Electoral Assembly was held to be elected.²

The Government, composed of the Prime Minister and his Cabinet, was to 'direct those affairs of the state which do not fall to the competence of the other organs of authority'.³ Its members were politically responsible to the President, who could demand their resignation at any time. The Sejm could pass a vote of no-confidence in the Government or in an individual Minister,

1. Ibid., arts. 12-15, pp.4-6.

2. Ibid., art. 16, pp.6-7.

3. Ibid., art. 25, pp.10-11.

4. Ibid., arts. 58-60, pp.25-8.

but such a proposal could not be voted on at the same session at which it was presented, and had subsequently to be approved by the Senate. If it was adopted, the President had to dismiss the Government or the Minister concerned, or dissolve Parliament.¹

The functions of legislation were to be exercised by the Sejm and Senate, although the number of matters which could be dealt with by decree was increased. The right of initiating legislation was restricted to the Government and the Sejm. A law rejected by the Senate required a three-fifths majority in the Sejm to be passed. The President possessed a suspensive veto for one month.²

The Sejm Deputies were to be elected by universal, secret, equal and direct (though not proportional) suffrage. The Sejm was to sit for five years, but could be dissolved before that date by the President.³ Every year it was to hold an ordinary session lasting four months to vote on the budget. If the Sejm did not adopt a budget, the Senate proposal was accepted. If neither adopted a budget, the Government's proposal automatically gained the force of law.⁴ Half the members of the Sejm could demand an extraordinary session, but this could

1. Ibid., arts. 25, 26, 28, 29, pp.11-13.

2. Ibid., arts. 49-57, pp.22-5.

3. Ibid., art. 32, p.14.

4. Ibid., arts. 58-60, pp.25-8.

only discuss the matters listed in the Presidential decree convoking it. The scope of parliamentary immunity was greatly narrowed.¹

The Senate was to be two-thirds elected and one-third nominated by the President. The method of election was to be established subsequently.²

The military aspects of the Constitution also embodied Piłsudski's long-fought-for principles. The President was empowered to issue decrees dealing with the organization of the Supreme Command, and was given the right to nominate the Supreme Commander, who had full power over the army and was responsible to the President.³

In the abstract, there was something to be said for this Constitution by which Piłsudski 'sought to ensure the permanence of his life's work',⁴ in particular for its attempt to combine popular control with firm government. However, in practice, after his death on 12 May 1935, the Constitution functioned very badly for a number of reasons. To begin with the most obvious, there was no personality among the Piłsudski-ites strong enough to exercise satisfactorily the powers of the President.

Piłsudski had intended that Mościcki should resign the Presidency

1. Ibid., arts. 36, 41, pp.16, 17-18.

2. Ibid., art. 47, p.21.

3. Ibid., art. 63, pp.28-9.

4. Roos, op. cit., p.141.

3. On this, see Nicewski, op. cit., pp.240-1.

after his death, and that Sławek should replace him.¹ However, Mościcki, who showed after 1935 a political ability which surprised those who had observed his almost mindless compliance with Piłsudski's demands, refused to give way. Sławek, though personally admirable, had neither the personal force nor the political intelligence to displace him, and would indeed have been a disastrous President. Asked later by Mackiewicz why he had not forced Mościcki to resign, he replied, 'How could I do it! You know that then I would have had to take his place.'² Yet this was the man Piłsudski had chosen as his successor.

Mościcki and his more or less liberal supporters (the so-called Palace group) proved incapable of withstanding the growing influence of the incompetent but ambitious Rydz-Śmigły, who had emerged as the dominating force in the Army after Piłsudski's death. Rydz forced the resignation of the relatively liberal Cabinet of Marian Zyndram-Kościałkowski in May 1936, and his position was further strengthened by a circular issued by the new Prime Minister, Sławoj-Skłodkowski, in June 1936, which declared him, as General Inspector of the Armed Forces, the 'first person in the state after the President'.³ All Ministers were to be subordinate to him. Piłsudski's ideal of the parallel obedience of the Prime Minister and the General

1. Pobóg-Malinowski, op. cit., p.578.

2. Quoted in Mackiewicz, op. cit., p.362.

3. On this, see Micewski, op. cit., pp.240-1.

Inspector to the President was thus deformed by making the General Inspector second in power to the President, and in fact the possessor of greater authority in relation to the Cabinet than the Prime Minister.

A further break with the residual parliamentarianism of the new Constitution was the electoral law introduced by Sławek on 8 July 1935.¹ It was intended both to break the power of the parties and to reinforce the Sanacja, which felt itself much weaker after Piłsudski's death. Proportional representation was abandoned, and the country was divided into 104 two-member constituencies. Candidates had to be nominated by a special assembly in each constituency composed of local officials and representatives of elected local government bodies, economic organizations, such as chambers of commerce, industry and agriculture, organizations of lawyers, doctors, teachers and university professors and other professional associations. In addition, any group of 500 persons was entitled to one representative on the assembly. If only four candidates were presented by the assembly, all could stand in the election. If more than four were nominated, only those who obtained more than one quarter of the votes of the Assembly in a single ballot (each member having the right to vote for four persons) could stand. The Opposition claimed that this system made impossible

1. Dz. U.R.P., (1935), No.47, pp.795-810.

Moreover, the dissolution of the Sejm by Piłsudski in 1926, and the subsequent free election, and boycotted the elections of September 1935 and November 1938, the first rather more successfully than the second. The electoral law was not modified by 1939, although promises were made on several occasions to conciliate the Opposition, and would perhaps have been fulfilled eventually.

The Senate electoral law of 8 July 1935 also embodied élitist conceptions.¹ It conferred the right to vote upon those who had received certain decorations, those who had completed secondary education, on elected members of local government bodies, persons holding elective office in local economic organizations, presidents of professional organizations and persons holding high office in the administration of any of these bodies.

A final reason for the malfunctioning of the Piłsudski system after the Marshal's death was the dissolution of the B.B.W.R. by Sławek in October 1935. This followed logically from the adoption of the new electoral system, which was principally intended to destroy the political parties. In taking this step Sławek again gave evidence of his political incapacity, for although Piłsudski had often attacked partisanship and had resented parliamentary attempts to control his actions, he did realize the need for an organization such as the B.B.W.R. to uphold the Government's case in Parliament.

1. Dz. U.R.P., (1935), No.47, pp.810-15.

Moreover, the dissolution of the Bloc intensified the conflicts between the liberal and authoritarian elements in the Sanacja.

The main attempt to fill the gap created by the Bloc's disappearance was the formation of a new political organization by Colonel Koc in 1936, which became known as the Camp of National Unity.¹ Unlike the B.B.W.R., this group shared many of the ideas of certain of the younger National Democrats, both in its openly avowed anti-semitism and in its semi-fascist ideology. Co-operation between the Government and the more disreputable of the nationalist extremists was also seen in the contacts between Bolesław Piasecki, the leader of the Falanga, an extreme fascist group, and O.Z.O.N. In February 1937 a party programme was published which combined laissez-faire liberalism in economics with corporative political ideas. This provoked the question of how far the Government was committed to the policies of O.Z.O.N. The actions of the Ministers of Land Reform, Finance, and Education all conflicted with the programme, and by January 1938 Mościcki felt strong enough to force Koc to relinquish the leadership of the group. Nevertheless, O.Z.O.N. remained a force and, in alliance with Rydz-Śmigły, won a decisive victory in the elections of November 1938, finally destroying Sławek's power.

still attempted to deal fairly with the Jews.

1. Obóz Zjednoczenia Narodowego, usually referred to as OZON. On its development, see T. Jędruszczak, Piłsudczycy bez Piłsudskiego (Warsaw, 1963); Micewski, op. cit., Chapter IV.

2. See, e.g., M. Drobowski, Polityka Republiki Polskiej 1926-29, (Warsaw, 1963).

It is fairly certain that had the Constitution lasted, Rydz-Smigły would have been elected President in 1940. In an attempt to widen the basis of his political support, he had made unsuccessful approaches to the Peasant Party early in 1937; this had led Mościcki in November to try, equally unsuccessfully, to persuade Arciszewski and Niedziałkowski of the P.P.S. to cooperate with him. By the outbreak of the War, the struggle between the liberal and authoritarian groups within the Sanacja had still not been resolved. Although Poland was not fascist, the danger of some sort of fascist takeover, with the aid of certain Government circles, could not be overlooked.

In the economic field, the Government had more success after 1935, for the abandonment of orthodox deflationary measures by Kwiatkowski, after his return to the Ministry of Trade and Industry in October 1935, led to a real economic upsurge between 1936 and 1939.¹ In relation to the minorities, the Government did reach an agreement with the U.N.D.O. in East Galicia in 1935. However, it broke down in 1938 when the dissolution of the status quo in Eastern Europe made it seem to the Ukrainians that they would soon, with German aid, be able fully to realize their ambitions. Until Piłsudski's death, the Government had still attempted to deal fairly with the Jews, but after 1935 some Government factions, worried by the Sanacja's unpopularity,

1. See, e.g., M. Drozdowski, Polityka gospodarcza rządu polskiego 1936-39, (Warsaw, 1963).

began to make concessions to increasing anti-semitism. Sławoj-Skłodkowski, for example, stated in Parliament on 4 June 1936 that while he opposed violence against Jews, he saw nothing wrong with an 'economic fight'.¹ A return to a more friendly policy took place in 1938. Sławoj-Skłodkowski declared in Parliament on 24 June that Poles should realize that 'the destiny of the Republic depends in large part on the attitude it adopts towards the minorities'.² But once again, little was done to implement these fine sentiments.

In foreign policy, the rigid adherence after 1935 to the Piłsudski-ite principle of maintaining correct but reserved relations with Poland's two powerful neighbours, without making any concession to the altered situation created by the rise to power of Nazism in Germany, made Poland seem to the rest of Europe, between 1934 and 1938, almost an ally of Hitler. The refusal to believe that Hitler could have any aggressive designs on Poland certainly betrays a woeful lack of political understanding on the part of those who claimed the right to govern on the grounds that they alone in Poland had a grasp of the realities of politics. Although the outbreak of the War cut short the further internal development of the Sanacja, enough had happened seriously to challenge Piłsudski's claim that he had

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1. S.S.S.R., 4.VI.36, col. 7.
 2. Quoted in Buell, op. cit., p.319.

laid the basis for the harmonious political development of the country, and had established a system which could survive him.

2. The Opposition after Brześć.

The more unfortunate, then, was Piłsudski's success in destroying the power of the Centre and Left parties, thus eliminating the possibility of a potential alternative government. The Brześć arrests and the elections of November 1930 had effectively removed any real threat posed by the Opposition. Nevertheless, these groups remained significant, and still retained the support of considerable sections of public opinion, this in spite of -- perhaps too because of -- the Sanacja's attempt finally to discredit the Centrolew by prosecuting a number of the political figures who had been arrested in September 1930, and did not include Kowalczyk or Popiel. It did not include the leaders of the parties which had made up the Centrolew, the members of the Deputacyja Konwokacyjna in the Warsaw District Court. In the charge, it was alleged that

...in the period from 1928 on, after common agreement and conscious of what they were doing, they had together prepared a coup ('zamach'), the aim of which was the removal by force of the members of the Government holding power in Poland, and their replacement by other persons, without intending any basic change in the constitution of the State.¹

1. Sprawa Brzeska, p.27. Principal force behind the Centrolew, was neither imprisoned nor accused.

Their 'revolutionary' activity was alleged to have consisted of inciting hatred towards the Government among the masses, calling on them to overthrow the regime by force, of 'organizing, schooling and arming revolutionary cadres, and of forming a central revolutionary organization under the name of the "Centrolew".¹ The indictment further charged that this body had adopted revolutionary resolutions at the Cracow Congress, and had planned an armed 'March on Warsaw' for 14 September, but that its plans had been frustrated by the Government. Those accused included six members of the P.P.S., Lieberman, Barlicki, Pragier, Ciołkosz, Dubois and Mastek, two from the Piast, Witos and Kiernik, two from the Liberation, Bagiński and Putek, and Sawicki of the Peasant Party. The list was significant for its omissions. It included only eleven of the twenty-seven people arrested in September 1930, and did not include Korfanty or Popiel. It did not include the leaders of the parties which had made up the Centrolew, the members of the Centrolew Consultative Committee or the most prominent members of the proposed Centrolew Government.² The trial was intended, above all, to offer a justification for the Brześć arrests.

The Court gave its verdict on 13 January 1932. Sawicki was found not guilty, Witos was sentenced to eight months'

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1. Loc. cit.
 2. Niedziałkowski, the principal force behind the Centrolew, was neither imprisoned nor accused.

imprisonment, Bagiński to two years, Barlicki, Lieberman and Kiernik to two and a half years, and the rest to three years. One of the three judges submitted a dissenting opinion, calling for the acquittal of all the accused. The case came before the Court of Appeal on 7 February 1933. Its verdict increased the sentences of Witos, Bagiński, Lieberman, Barlicki and Kiernik to three years, and those of the rest to five years (Sawicki's acquittal had been upheld previously). This decision was rejected by the Court of Cassation on 9 May 1933, but was upheld by the Court of Appeal on 20 July and confirmed in the Court of Cassation on 5 October. Rather than face imprisonment, Witos, Kiernik, Bagiński, Lieberman and Pragier went into exile. The others were pardoned and released on 29 September 1934, having spent less than a year in prison.

The course of the trial made it quite clear that although some radical statements had been made, the Centrolew had never intended to go beyond the framework of the Constitution in its attempts^{to} dislodge the Government. As Lieberman declared in his statement to the Court,

It is not true that I planned a coup, that I planned a revolution, that I wanted to overthrow the Government of Marshal Piłsudski. The truth is, however, that I wanted to remove this Government, and want now to remove it, only, as an old parliamentarian, I want to do this in a democratic, parliamentary manner, and since in a parliamentary struggle the President always has the final word, I wanted to overthrow this government through the calling of new elections which would convince Marshal Piłsudski that the majority of society supported

the Opposition.¹ Moreover, the maltreatment and indignities to which the accused had been subjected earlier in the military fortress of Brześć won them the sympathy of many who were by no means supporters of their aims.² This was eloquently expressed in the open letter which forty-five professors at the Jagiellonian University addressed to Professor Adam Krzyżanowski, one of their colleagues and a B.B.W.R. Deputy. 'Many occurrences in the past few years,' they wrote,

are undermining --according to our deepest belief-- the moral basis of social and political life in Poland, and by so doing threaten the development and even, in the long term, the existence of the Polish State. Among these matters the most alarming is the question of the prisoners in Brześć. This matter cannot be sanctioned by the silence of the thinking elements of society.³

Similar protests were made by academics at Warsaw University, the Warsaw Polytechnic, the Free Polish University and the Universities of Poznań, Lwów and Wilno. Many prominent writers also protested, among them Andrzej Strug, Maria Dąbrowska, Antoni Słonimski, Julian Tuwim and Tadeusz Boj-Żeleński. The Government ranks were also shaken by the Brześć revelations.

1. Sprawa Brzeska, p.31.

2. The prisoners had been beaten and forced to perform humiliating tasks, such as cleaning the lavatories. Mock executions were even organized in an attempt to break their spirit. See the parliamentary question put by the Centrolew on 16.XII.1930 reprinted in Robotnik, 18.XII.1930.

3. Loc. cit.

Bartel made a personal protest to Mościcki, three B.B.W.R. Deputies, Adam Krzyżanowski, Zdzisław Lechnicki and Ignacy Nowak, resigned their seats, and Witold Stakiewicz, a former Minister, left the B.B.W.R. Even Mościcki was upset. 'I must confess,' he wrote later, 'that I myself was left with a disagreeable impression.'¹

However, Piłsudski was determined not to give way, and pushed on with the trial. On 26 January 1931 Sławek stated in the Sejm:

I have investigated the matter, and have confirmed that there was no sadism and torture, although, as in every prison, obedience had to be obtained by force in the case of resistance.²

In fact, those principally responsible for the maltreatment of the Brześć prisoners were rewarded. Michałowski, who had organized the arrests, remained Minister of Justice, while Kostek-Biernacki, who had been in charge of the Brześć prison, was afterwards made Governor of Polesia.

The problem of the Brześć prisoners, especially those in exile, hung over the politics of the '30's. The popularity of Witos, in particular, who was living in Czechoslovakia, rose to almost legendary proportions, and the failure of the Government to issue an amnesty prevented any real rapprochement with the parties of the Centre and Left. As Maria Dąbrowska wrote,

1. Quoted in Pobóg-Malinowski, op. cit., p.532.
2. S.S.S.R., 26, 27.I.31, col. 139.

The moral links between the Government and the majority of the population were shattered. From now on, all attempts to restore them, however well-intentioned, proved to be vain.¹

Indeed, the Erzeńc trial was not the only political trial in this period. Already before the elections of 1930 the Socialist Jan Kwapiński had been sentenced to one year's imprisonment for making a speech at a meeting, although the verdict was afterwards overturned on appeal. Irena Kosmowska of the Liberation had been sentenced to six months for a similar offence. On 1 December 1930, eight members of the P.P.S. were convicted of being involved in incidents connected with the demonstrations of 14 September. Two were condemned to four years' hard labour for allegedly shooting at the police, a sentence afterwards reduced in severity, two received two years, and the rest six to nine months. On 16 February 1931, three of those involved in the alleged plot on Piłsudski's life received a year's imprisonment; on the 11th, three members of the P.P.S. had been sentenced to four years and two to two years in prison for their part in the demonstrations of 14 September in Warsaw. In July 1934 the Government set up a concentration camp for political offenders at Bereza Kartuska in eastern Poland. Most of the prisoners there were right-wing extremists, Communists and Ukrainian nationalists. Altogether about 500 people were held in the camp, which remained in existence until 1939.

1. Quoted by Roos, op. cit., p.122.

The Centrolew did not survive the 1930 elections. In the new Parliament, the Deputies of its constituent parties were too few to make possible effective co-operation against the Government. Voices critical of the alliance were raised in all the parties, but were strongest in the P.P.S. which, as we have seen, had suffered worst in the elections. The dispute within the party over political tactics emerged clearly at its 22nd Congress (23-25 May 1931).¹ Here three groups could be distinguished. The first, the so-called 'Old Comrades', the party hierarchy led by Niedziałkowski and Żarnowski, had 79 delegates. It supported the Centrolew and the policy of alliance with other groups in defence of democracy. The Centre, with 71 delegates led by Zaremba and Dubois, attacked the alliance with 'bourgeois' parties, and called for joint action with the socialist parties of the national minorities. The Left, led by Drobner, with 50 delegates, wanted a revolutionary policy and proposed talks with the Communists. However, the leadership, in spite of its minority position, secured the adoption of resolutions upholding its past actions and calling on the party to 'co-operate with the democratic peasant movement and to unite all democratic forces in the country'.²

1. See 'XXII Kongres P.P.S. (23-25.V.1931 r.) w relacji Komunikatu Informacyjnego Komisariatu Rządu w Warszawie', N.D.P., 1st series, ii, (1959), 217-44.
2. Robotnik, 28.V.31.

During the 'thirties, the party moved to a more radical position. At the 23rd Congress (2-4 February 1934) the resolution adopted stressed the importance of non-parliamentary forms of struggle and stated that a dictatorship of the proletariat might be necessary as a provisional stage after the overthrow of the bourgeoisie.¹ With the increased radicalization of the party, the question of relations with the Communists again became a live issue. Immediately after the Nazi seizure of power in Germany, the Communist Party adopted a united front policy, and this change in position was confirmed at the 7th Congress of Comintern (July-August 1935). The new line led to increased contact between the K.P.P. and the P.P.S., although there were still many among the Socialists who regarded the Communists with extreme distrust. In July 1935 a 'pact of non-aggression' between the two parties was signed.² 'The differences dividing the workers' class movement internally have diminished enormously,' wrote Niedziałkowski.³ The popular front had some enthusiastic supporters in the left wing of the P.P.S., notably Barlicki and Dubois. In 1936 a popular front newspaper, Dziennik Popularny, was founded, and Socialists

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1. See 'XXIII Kongres P.P.S. (1934 r.) w materiałach i relacjach agenturalnych Komisariatu Rządu na m. st. Warszawę', ed. H. Marek, Z.P.W.I (1958) No.1, 159-202.
 2. M. Drozdowski, A Tymieniecka, 'Mieczysław Niedziałkowski', N.D.P., 1st series, ix (1965), 64.
 3. Robotnik, 2.VIII.35.

collaborated closely with the Communists in the Lodz municipal elections of that year. However, relations cooled somewhat as a result of the beginning of the purges in Russia and the execution of Kamenev and Zinoviev in October 1936. At the 24th Congress of the P.P.S. (21 January - 2 February 1937) a popular front was specifically rejected. Special permission from the party authorities was now required to work on newspapers not under party control.¹ Nevertheless, the radical tone of the resolutions at the 23rd Conference was maintained.

The demand for a popular front soon became anachronistic, with the dissolution of the K.P.P. by Stalin in August 1938. The party, it was claimed, had been penetrated by Polish agents, but the real reasons for this move were probably the party's Luxemburgist past, its links with Trotsky, and perhaps a belief that its continued existence would hinder a rapprochement between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. Nearly all the leaders of the party, including Warski, Kostrzewa, Walecki, Leszczyński, Ryng and Henrykowski, were executed in the Soviet Union, or died in camps there.²

At the outbreak of the War, the P.P.S. still had the support of a large section of the Polish working class. In the municipal elections held in December 1938 in towns with more than 25,000

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1. See J. Żarnowski, Polska Partia Socjalistyczna w latach 1935-39 (Warsaw 1965), pp.167-80.
 2. Dziewanowski, op. cit., pp.146-54.

inhabitants, during which there was relatively little Government pressure, the party won 26.8% of the vote. This compares with 29.0% for O.Z.O.N., 18.8% for the National Party, 9.5% for the Bund and 1.2% for the openly fascist National Radical Camp.¹

The P.P.S. continued to uphold its policy of an alliance with the now united Peasant party, although differences in programme and political tradition hindered co-operation. In the Parliament of 1930, the members of the three peasant parties formed a single club, and on 15 March 1931, at a special congress, the three parties were formally united under the name of the Peasant Party.² Each of the three constituent groups had an equal number of representatives on the Executive Committee of the new party. The programme adopted³ was essentially moderate: the party claimed to be the 'political organization of the rural population...the most numerous stratum (warstwa) of the nation', (article 1). It affirmed its support for a democratic constitution, rejecting dictatorship or extraparliamentary means of struggle (articles 2 and 3). An ambiguous compromise was reached on the status of the Church. 'The Peasant Party,' read article 6, 'aims at a regulation of the relations of religious cults to the state which will ensure the independence of both in fulfilling their functions.' The national minorities life (article 4).

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1. Żarnowski, Polska Partia Socjalistyczna, p.331.
 2. Stronnictwo Ludowe.
 3. For the programme, see Materiały źródłowe do historii polskiego ruchu ludowego (Warsaw, 1966), iii. 13-23.

were to be guaranteed their rights, although at the same time the party advocated that the towns become 'real centres of Polish culture and Polish economic life' (articles 9 and 10). It also affirmed the necessity of combating the excessive development of intermediary trade. The 'just demands of the mass of the workers' were supported (article 19), and the development of industry, but only such branches as were not artificially propped up by tariffs, was called for (article 24). All land in large estates was to be redistributed, with compensation to the owners (article 21).

As the Depression wore on, the party became more radical. In May 1933, it called for the uncompensated expropriation of the large estates and demanded 'the removal of dictatorship and the creation of a Government representing the will of society.'¹ The new party programme, adopted on 7-8 December 1935, was far-reaching in its claims.² 'The rural population,' stated article 1,

because of its numbers, its physical and moral vigour resulting from its link with the land, as well as its national and state values, is justified in regarding itself as the natural ruler (gospodarz) of Poland.

The party also became more clerical, calling for 'unconditional observance' of the principles of Christian morality in public life (article 4). Capitalism was condemned as incapable of

1. Ibid., pp.94-6.

2. For the new programme, see ibid., pp.249-54.

solving the economic problems of the country, and a planned economy was demanded (article 5). The insistence upon uncompensated expropriation of the large estates was reiterated, and the 'individual, self-sufficient plot' was to be the basis of the agricultural system (article 6). In addition, the new programme was more anti-semitic. The presence of the Jews, it claimed, made impossible the development of a native Polish middle class; the Jewish problem should be resolved by encouraging Jewish emigration, although Jews in Poland should not be deprived of their civil rights (article 7).

The party's new radicalism made itself felt in August 1937, when, in protest against the low price of agricultural produce, it called a ten-day strike during which members refused to supply the towns.¹ The strike was relatively successful, but the Government's attempts to break down the barricades which the peasants had erected on the roads led to considerable violence. Altogether, perhaps 40 people were killed.

The party leadership continued divided between those like Rataj and Józef Grudziński, who wanted to co-operate with the P.P.S., and those like Witos, who favoured close links with the Right. This question had not been resolved by the outbreak of the War, although the party generally inclined more to the

1. See Strajk Chłopski w 1937 r. Dokumenty Archiwalne (Warsaw, 1960), ii. vols.

Socialists. By this time, it was undoubtedly the most powerful political organization in the Polish countryside.

The Christian Democrats and the National Workers' Party maintained their opposition to the Government during the 1930's, although they struck off on their own, away from the other parties of the Centrolew. In October 1930, the Warsaw and Silesian organizations of the Christian Democrats reunited, and in June 1931 Korfanty was elected President of the party. After 1930 the party continued to oppose the Government, resolving in July 1931 that it would fight against 'all manifestations of dictatorship', although it would not use extraparliamentary means of struggle.¹ It singled out as its principal allies the N.P.R. and the National Party. At the same time, the most pro-Government elements left the party. An even larger split took place early in 1934 when a pro-Government Catholic organization, the Christian Social Alliance, was formed.²

The Christian Democracy played an important part in the Front Morges, an attempt by Paderewski, Sikorski, Haller and Witos to unite the Centre and Right in opposition to the Government.³ The Front was opposed by Dmowski because of its francophilia and its liberal character, which he believed made

1. Micewski, op. cit., pp.170-1.

2. Zjednoczenie Chrześcijańsko-Społeczne.

3. It took its name from Morges, in Switzerland, where Paderewski was living.

supported by Dmowski, whose articles... it susceptible to 'Masonic and Jewish' influences. The leadership of the Peasant Party within Poland was also somewhat hesitant about it, but it was strongly supported by the Christian Democrats and the N.P.R. As a result, these two parties united in November 1937 to form the Party of Labour, headed by Korfanty and Popiel. Sikorski was important in the achievement of this union, and Generals Haller and Marian Kukiel also joined the new party, which upheld a liberal Catholic point of view. However, its strength was not great outside Upper Silesia, for its general anti-Government position meant that it was opposed by many powerful members of the Church hierarchy, and by Catholic Action.

As a result, the principal political force on the Right remained the National Democrats. But in spite of the reunification of the O.W.P. and the Popular National Union in October 1928, and the formation of the National Party, the division between the older parliamentary politicians and the young near-fascist members of the O.W.P., whose influence grew as the economic crisis dragged on and the Government became more authoritarian, continued to plague the Endecja.¹ The party fell more and more under the control of the young right-radicals,

1. For the development of the party in this period, see R. Wapiński, 'Niektóre problemy ewolucji ideowo-politycznej Endecji w latach 1919-39', K.H. (1966), pp.861-77; Micewski, op. cit., pp.261-88.

supported by Dmowski, whose articles arguing that liberal democracy were merely a shield for 'Jewish-Masonic dominance', and that a 'national revolution' on the Italian pattern was necessary, gained increasing support.¹ The view became widely held that the real enemy was not the Sanacja, but the 'Popular Front', generally referred to as the 'Folks Front' in order to underline its alleged Jewish character. Membership of the O.W.P. rose from 35,000 in January 1930 to 120,000 in May 1932, and its influence was widespread at the universities.² This rapid rate of growth worried the Government, and led it to dissolve the organization in March 1933, thereby intensifying the hostility of its leadership to the 'weak and legalistic' activity of the older parliamentarians of the National Party. In April 1934, some of them founded the openly fascist and violent National Radical Camp,³ separate from the party. After two months it too was dissolved by the Government, and most of its leaders were confined in Bereza Kartuska. Some of the other former members of the O.W.P., now in the League of Young Nationalists,⁴ attempted to come to terms with the Government, and participated in the formation of O.Z.O.N.

1. Dmowski published the articles he wrote during these years in Przewrót (Warsaw, 1934).

2. Wapiński, p.811.

3. Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny.

4. Związek Młodych Narodowców.

The underground remnants of the National Radical Camp split in 1936. One section, led by Piasecki, approached the Government, while the other, led by Henryk Rossman, tried to reach an agreement with the National Party leadership. The party itself was concerned over its disputes with the young extremists, and in 1934 some of the leaders of this group, notably Tadeusz Bielecki, Jędrzej Giertych and Jan Matkuchowski, were able to force their co-optation to the party executive. The party drew increasingly close to fascism, though it rejected the Führerprinzip and the anti-religious character of Nazism. From the spring of 1936, some attempts were made to come to terms with the Sanacja, particularly since O.Z.O.N. embodied many traditional Endecja positions. However, no agreement was reached.

The National Radicals and similar fascist groups never gained widespread support in the country as a whole. Nevertheless, the development of the National Party in a fascist and anti-parliamentary direction, in spite of the fact that there were still some within it who upheld a relatively liberal point of view, was a phenomenon pregnant with danger for the future.

3. General Conclusion.

The period surveyed in this thesis saw the failure of two constitutional experiments in Poland. It is easy to see why the

highly democratic Constitution of 1921 worked so badly and, looking back, it seems clear that its failure was almost inevitable. But in the optimistic years after the First World War, the Wilsonian heresy, the view that liberal parliamentary democracy was the only defensible political system and was exportable to any country, held virtually universal sway. The situation in Poland was not analogous to that of the states in Asia and Africa which have obtained their independence since the Second World War. Poland was a part of Europe, a poor and backward part, it is true, but it had shared in many of the developments of European civilization since the Middle Ages. However, in the precedence which the national problem assumed in its politics, in the pressing nature of its social and political problems and in the prestige and importance which the army enjoyed in its political life, it does suggest some similarities in political development to countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The course of the constitutional experience in Poland is thus not without wider relevance.

The malfunctioning of the 1921 Constitution was evident almost from its adoption. The differences between the former partitions, combined with a high degree of proportional representation, led to the fragmentation of political parties. The lack of political experience and the weakness of the Cabinet in relation to the Sejm made for governmental instability. The temptation to indulge in demagoguery, and the political patterns

developed under foreign rule, particularly in Germany and Russia, where Polish national survival had been the vital issue, obscured for many the necessity to accord fair treatment to Poland's own national minorities, who made up a third of her population and who were bound, in a democratic system with universal suffrage, to be a force in politics. Moreover, the Polish parties in the Reichsrat, the Reichstag and the Duma had been small groups, concerned almost exclusively with Polish problems and with attempts to gain redress for political grievances. This was a training singularly unsuited to assuming the responsibilities of a national parliament, with real control over the course of policy in the new country, confronted from its inception with daunting problems. War destruction had been devastating, and the difficulties involved in integrating areas which had long been intimately linked economically with Russia, Germany and Austro-Hungary were enormous. Then, the perilous international position of Poland, exposed to demands for the revision of her frontiers from both Germany and Russia, and determined to defend her newly regained independence, lent substance to proposals for a stronger Executive on the grounds that only a firm and stable Government could guarantee the country's existence. This feeling was reinforced by a widespread belief that Poland owed her decline and partition to the weakness of her monarchy. Finally, the scale of corruption in public life, partly the result of

political inexperience, partly inherited from Russia and Austria, resulted in a disillusionment with parliamentary government, and did much to discredit the 1921 Constitution.

However, the Constitution's greatest failing was its specific aim of excluding Piłsudski from political life. All historical speculation is idle, but it seems likely that had a Presidency with rather more power been established, Piłsudski might have been integrated into the political system. His principal interest was not politics, but the army and foreign policy, and, as we have seen, it was only with extreme reluctance that he was able to bring himself to make the Coup. But the bitterness of the conflict between Piłsudski and the National Democrats before and during the First World War, largely anachronistic once independence had been achieved, made any solution of this type impossible. The National Democrats, adopting the extreme and rather bloodless rationalism of Dmowski, never really understood the emotional appeal which Piłsudski communicated to large numbers of his countrymen. They had campaigned so long against what they regarded as the suicidal and criminal tradition of 'gentry revolutionaries' that they failed to realize that the Marshal's gestures, such as his formation of the Legions, or his refusal to take the oath of allegiance to the German Emperor, futile though they seemed in practical terms, struck a sympathetic chord, and gave him an authority not easily overthrown. The 1920 War, rash folly

though it seemed to the National Democrats, appeared to many others a glorious and noble attempt to safeguard Poland's national existence. It is true that the attempt to dislodge the Ukraine and White Russia from the Soviet Union had failed, but, as they saw it, the war had culminated in a great victory over Poland's hereditary enemy, soothing balm for more than a century of national humiliation. There was no other individual in Poland who could command Piłsudski's charismatic power.

It would have been more difficult to predict the failure of the semi-parliamentary form of government adopted by the Marshal after the May Coup. Attempts have been made to claim for Piłsudski some conscious attempt to develop a political system. However, his actions show that although he did have some long-term aims, he generally worked from day to day in politics, and his acts are marked by an absence of any real ideological foundation. It was this which led him to eschew any attempt to set up a totalitarian or fascist system, and induced him to attempt to work within the 1921 Constitution, making only moderate changes in it after the Coup.

His alternative to undiluted parliamentary democracy failed partly because of its anachronistic character. The methods of parliamentary control which Giolitti had employed in Italy before 1914, or which Badeni had used in Austria, could no longer easily be applied after the revolutionary upheavals of the First World War. Moreover, Piłsudski and his associates had little

idea of what is meant to co-operate with even a weak and subservient Parliament. Their political training had been concentrated in conspiratorial techniques, and they had little understanding of the nature of parliamentary debate, or of the function of parliamentary criticism of the Government. In addition, the contempt which Piłsudski came to hold for all politicians made difficult the achievement of smooth relations with the Sejm. The parties of the Centre and Left were only too willing, after the Coup, to accept a strong Government, headed by the Marshal. All that would have been required to gain their support were a few sympathetic words from Piłsudski, but these were never forthcoming. Piłsudski also never fully comprehended that the parliamentarians were bound to resent his illegalities. The 1928 election is an interesting case in point, for it is clear that neither Piłsudski nor Sławoj-Składkowski saw anything fundamentally wrong in the misappropriation of state funds to help pay for the B.B.W.R. campaign. Yet it was over this issue that the decisive clash between the Government and Parliament arose. It must also be remembered that in the years after 1926 Piłsudski's health deteriorated seriously. This certainly impaired the quality of his leadership, and may have been one of the reasons for the crudity of the language with which he attacked the Deputies.

Another source of difficulty was Piłsudski's extreme isolation. There was no one among his lieutenants, not even

Sławek, with whom he felt he could talk on any sort of equal footing. His understanding of the political situation was therefore dependent upon the often distorted information which he gleaned from his few close associates, not all of whom were distinguished by their intelligence or discernment. To them he remained, not a political leader, but the Commander of legionary days, to whom unquestioning obedience was owed. Within the Government, the interchange of opinion and the discussion of alternative political possibilities atrophied almost completely. It is for this reason that although Piłsudski played little formal role in the Government during the last three or four years of his life, his mere existence was crucial to the stability of his 'system', which evinced so little substance or cohesion after his death. Once the Marshal was no longer there to pronounce on any important proposal, the Sanacja's ideological content was seen to be almost nil. What Piłsudski had provided was an almost mystical, cohesive presence which proved irreplaceable. His chosen successor, Sławek, meant well, but was totally incapable of performing such a role, and Rydz-Śmigły's attempt to replace him was also a failure.

Finally, the severe impact of the Great Depression in Poland increased the intransigence of both the Government and the Opposition, and made more difficult the achievement of any kind of compromise.

In the three-week campaign in September 1939 which crucially

The clash between the Government and the parties had extremely harmful effects on Polish political development. It is undeniable that the Constitution had functioned badly before 1926, and that the activity of the parties was open to strong criticism. There was much to be said for some sort of 'guided democracy' in Poland, providing a strong Government, which yet allowed a relatively free press and parliamentary criticism. Neither can the achievements of Piłsudski's regime be denied. The political stability which followed the Coup certainly aided economic recovery; improvement took place in Poland's international position and, to some extent, in her treatment of her minorities. But after 1930, the Government became increasingly isolated from society. It is true that Poland never became a totalitarian state. Parties survived, the press was fairly free, criticism was allowed. Yet, after the death of Piłsudski exposed its lack of programme, the Sanacja was divided between those who favoured a return to a constitutional system and those who favoured open authoritarianism. As we have seen, this conflict had not been decided by 1939, and it would be rash to predict what might have happened had the War not broken out. Nevertheless, a striking feature of the 'thirties was the increased maturity and responsibility of the democratic parties of the Centre and Left. Their victory, a brief and perhaps inconclusive one, came after the catastrophic defeat of Poland in the three-week campaign in September 1939 which cruelly

exposed the emptiness of the Piłsudski-ites' pretentious insistence that they had created a 'Great Power Poland.' The Government formed in France and headed by General Sikorski was composed of the adherents of the Front Morges, the P.P.S., the Peasant Party and the liberal elements of the National Party. Its politics were unquestionably democratic in the Western sense. But the subsequent development of the international situation and the victory of the U.S.S.R. over Germany in Eastern Europe meant that the democratic experiment was not given a second chance in Poland.

relations. There one Stein, head of the department dealing with Poland and the Baltic States, told him that

In spite of the failure of Beckin, Wengel and other 'White' generals, England has not abandoned the idea of overthrowing the government in Poland through external military intervention. England is aware that, in the present political conjuncture, only Poland can be a jumping-off point for military intervention. England could not reach agreement with any of the successive Polish governments because no Polish government wanted to take part in the realization of an interventionist scheme. The last White government would certainly not have agreed to take part in such a venture. England had then sought an arrangement with Piłsudski, and he has approved their plans for intervention...

This interpretation has been adopted by many Polish historians in recent years, sometimes with the justification that it was an attempt to bring Germany and Poland closer together in

1. See, for example, Wojna 1939-1945, 17-18.
2. K. Pomorski, 'Wypadek wojny w latach 1939-1945', Wiadomości, XII, No. 300, (June 23, 1957), p. 3.

APPENDIX A

The Polish Right, which was addicted to conspiracy theories of politics, held the view that the Piłsudski Coup was the work of the British Foreign Office.¹ This was also the contemporary Soviet opinion, as described by Karol Poznański, a member of the Polish Foreign Office who was in Moscow during the May Coup to see to the implementation of a Consular Convention he had signed. The Polish Embassy in Moscow sent him to Narkomindel to reassure Soviet officials that the Coup would not affect Polish-Soviet relations. There one Stein, head of the department dealing with Poland and the Baltic States, told him that

In spite of the failure of Denikin, Wrangel and other 'White' generals, England has not renounced the idea of overthrowing the government in Russia through external military intervention. England is aware that, in the present political configuration, only Poland can be a jumping-off point for military intervention. England could not reach agreement with any of the successive Polish governments because no Polish government wanted to take part in the realization of an interventionist scheme. The new Witos government would certainly not have agreed to take part in such a venture. England has thus sought an arrangement with Piłsudski, and he has approved their plans for intervention....²

This interpretation has been adopted by many Polish historians in recent years, sometimes with the modification that Locarno was an attempt to bring Germany and Poland closer together in

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1. See, for example, Kurjer Poznański, 17.V.26.
 2. K. Poznański, 'Wypadki majowe widziane od strony Moskwy', Wiadomości XII, No. 586, (June 23.57), p.3.

order to facilitate intervention in Russia.¹ Support is drawn from visits made by Sir William Max-Müller, the British Ambassador, and by the British Military Attaché to Sulejówiek. But these may have been no more than courtesy visits to one of the undoubtedly important political figures in Poland. One of the first duties carried out by the new French Ambassador to Poland, Jules Laroche, (appointed in April 1926) was to pay a visit to the 'Recluse of Sulejówiek'.²

The only documentary evidence adduced is a cable which Kajetan Morawski, writing thirty years after the events he describes, claims to have seen after the Coup. A British diplomat in the Middle East is supposed to have shown it to a Polish official there nearly 2 weeks before the Coup occurred. The telegram stated that the Witos government then being formed would be overthrown by violence, and that this turn of events served British interests.³ The reliability of this evidence is very doubtful. It is strange that the telegram should have been shown to a Polish official, and its contents argue a rather exceptional, perhaps incredible, foresight on the part

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1. For some proponents of this view, see K. Lapter, 'Międzynarodowe tło przewrotu majowego', Sprawy Międzynarodowe ix, (1956), No.5, pp.43-60; No.6., pp.54-71; S. Arski, My pierwsza brygada (Warsaw, 1963), pp.435-43; A. Ajnenkiel, op. cit., p.293; S. Stęborowski, Geneza Centrolewu (Warsaw, 1963), p.22.
 2. J. Laroche, La Pologne de Piłsudski (Paris, 1953), pp.25-9.
 3. Morawski, op. cit., p.2.

of the British Foreign Office. It certainly cannot be taken as proof of British complicity in the Coup.

In fact, the theory rests on a number of misconceptions. In the first place, the aims of the Locarno Treaty were not anti-Soviet. Its intention was to reconcile France and Germany, while at the same time reaffirming the British guarantee of France's eastern frontier. It was essentially a political gesture intended to reassure France while Germany was again being eased into the European state system.¹

Austen Chamberlain, the British Foreign Secretary, described the Soviet misinterpretation in a cable to Sir Ralph Hodgson, the British Ambassador in Moscow, on 26 April 1926:

...2. It is useless to argue with Soviet authorities upon supposed anti-Soviet object of Locarno treaties. They have been told in every capital of Europe that these treaties had no such object and that His Majesty's Government have never sought to form any kind of anti-Soviet bloc. They are really suffering from swollen head. They are of less consequence to us than they suppose, and they grossly flatter themselves when they suppose that British policy is dictated by them.²

The Foreign Office knew, moreover, that Stresemann had no intention of breaking Weimar Germany's strong ties with the Soviet Union. Thus it did not oppose the concluding of the

1. See A.J.P. Taylor, The Origins of the Second World War (London, 1961), pp.40-60; F. Northedge, Britain, The Troubled Giant (London, 1966).

2. Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-39, ed. W. Medlicott, D. Dakin, M. Lambert (London, 1966), Series 1A, i. 671.

German-Soviet neutrality pact of April 1926. On 6 April 1926 Sir William Tyrell minuted a dispatch concerning this pact from Viscount D'Abernon, British Ambassador in Berlin:

Whatever the motives may be, it would be a mistake on our part not to accept this as a fait accompli and make the best of it, as Mr. Gregory suggests, by intensifying our present policy of encouraging Germany to look West and not East.¹

Austen Chamberlain minuted his agreement.

Although British relations with the Soviet Union were strained, the Foreign Office hoped that Russia could eventually be reintegrated into the Concert of Europe. It did not believe that the Soviet government was weak or that it could be overthrown by military intervention. On 6 May Sir Ralph Hodgson wrote to Austen Chamberlain

2. ...It is a truism that the process of pacification in Europe cannot be regarded as complete as long as Soviet Russia remains outside the scope of those agreements by which it is sought to attain that consummation....

7. It stands to reason that all this would be of no account if the Soviet government is tottering towards its fall. It is not--on the contrary, it is, in spite of many troubles, gaining ground, winning through to solidity.²

To this last statement Austen Chamberlain minuted 'I have throughout held this opinion'.³

1. Ibid., pp.567-8.

2. Ibid., pp.724, 726.

3. Ibid., p.726.

In relation to Poland, British policy was principally concerned with achieving a German-Polish rapprochement and, if possible, some frontier modifications. It was for this reason that the Foreign Office liked Skrzyński as Foreign Minister, since he had signed the Locarno agreements and had secured their ratification by the Polish parliament. When Konstanty Skirmunt, Polish Ambassador in London, told Donald Gregory, head of the Northern Department of the Foreign Office, that Polish foreign policy would not be modified by the Coup, Gregory replied 'The best guarantee of this policy would be the return of Skrzyński to the Foreign Ministry'.¹ Piłsudski's opposition to Locarno was well known, and it is a priori unlikely that the British should have engineered his return.

The absence of British involvement in the Coup emerges clearly in Donald Gregory's memorandum on the Polish situation, dated 17 May, to which Austen Chamberlain minuted his general agreement. Its tone is one of relief, relief that Piłsudski did not appear to intend to overthrow the constitution, relief (unjustified) that Skrzyński would return to the Foreign Ministry, relief that Britain would not be faced with the dilemma of whether to recognize a revolutionary government or not:

1. 'Raport polityczny nr 16/26 w związku z kryzysem państwowym w Polsce 20.V.1926 r.', published by Z. Landau in K.H. lxvi (1959), No. I, p.155.

There seems, in other words, no reason to take tragically what has happened, but to regard it not so much as a national crime but as a national disaster, such as an earthquake or some uncontrollable upheaval.... German and Russian propaganda, particularly the former, will utilise this incident to demonstrate once again the historical instability of Poland and to spread the usual gloomy rumours about a future partition. Our way of countering that is by an indulgent attitude in regard to the political lapse of last week and continued benevolence towards the Polish state. The worst that we could do would be to return to the schoolmastering attitude, to put it at its mildest, that characterised our relations with Poland from 1919 to 1923. As this synchronised with almost the whole of the last Pilsudski regime, it is astonishing that he should preserve any regard for us at all.¹

Hardly the words of a man whose department had just successfully engineered a coup.

Julian Nowak (non-party)

Władysław Sikorski (non-party)

Wincenty Witos (Piast)

Władysław Grabski (non-party)

Aleksander Skrzyński (non-party)

Wincenty Witos (Piast)

Polish Prime Ministers May 1926

1. 'Memorandum by Mr. Gregory respecting the Polish situation,' May 17, 1926, Documents on British Foreign Policy, pp.757-8.

APPENDIX B

Polish Prime Ministers November 1918 - May 1926

Jędrzej Moraczewski (PPS)	18 Nov. 1918 - 16 Jan. 1919
Ignacy Paderewski (non-party)	16 Jan. 1919 - 9 Dec. 1919
Leopold Skulski (non-party)	13 Dec. 1919 - 9 June 1920
Władysław Grabski (non-party)	23 June 1920 - 24 July 1920
Wincenty Witos (Piast)	24 July 1920 - 13 Sept. 1921
Antoni Ponikowski (non-party)	19 Sept. 1921 - 5 March 1922
Valery Maslowski	10 March 1922 - 6 June 1922
Artur Śliwiński (non-party)	28 June 1922 - 7 July 1922
Julian Nowak (non-party)	31 July 1922 - 14 Dec. 1922
Władysław Sikorski (non-party)	16 Dec. 1922 - 26 May 1923
Wincenty Witos (Piast)	28 May 1923 - 14 Dec. 1923
Władysław Grabski (non-party)	19 Dec. 1923 - 14 Nov. 1925
Aleksander Skrzyński (non-party)	20 Nov. 1925 - 5 May 1926
Wincenty Witos (Piast)	10 - 15 May 1926

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Polish Prime Ministers May 1926 - September 1939

Kazimierz Bartel	15 May 1926 - 4 June 1926
	8 June - 24 Sept. 1926
	27 - 30 Sept. 1926
Józef Piłsudski	2 Oct. 1926 - 27 June 1928

Kazimierz Bartel	27 June 1928 - 13 April 1929
Kazimierz Świtalski	14 April 1929 - 7 Dec. 1929
Kazimierz Bartel	29 Dec. 1929 - 15 March 1930
Walery Sławek	29 March 1930 - 23 Aug. 1930
Józef Piłsudski	25 Aug. 1930 - 4 Dec. 1930
Walery Sławek	4 Dec. 1930 - 26 May 1931
Aleksander Prystor	27 May 1931 - 9 May 1933
Janusz Jędrzejewicz	10 May 1933 - 13 May 1934
Leon Kozłowski	15 May 1934 - 28 March 1935
Walery Sławek	28 March - 12 Oct. 1935
Marian Zyndram-Kościałkowski	13 Oct. 1935 - 15 May 1936
Felicjan Sławoj-Składkowski	15 May 1936 - 30 Sept. 1939

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Ministrów,

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36: Depesze i listy do premiera K. Bartla
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38: Depesze i listy gratulacyjne do
premiera K. Świtalskiego oraz reso-
lucje (1929);

41: Pisma skierowane do premiera W. Sław-
ka (1930-31);

55: Referat dotyczący analizy sytuacji
polityki rolnej, budżetowej, podat-
kowej, zagranicznej, społecznej i
kolejowej 1930r.)

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they were published in Warsaw):

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A.B.C.

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Czas (Cracow)

Conservative.

Dzień Polski

Conservative.

Gazeta Polska

Sanacja. Formed in October 1929 by the merger of Epoka and Głos Prawdy.

Gazeta Poranna

National Democrat. United in October 1925 with Gazeta Warszawska.

Gazeta Warszawska

National Democrat.

Głos Prawdy

Radical Piłsudski-ite; a weekly until May, 1926.

Ilustrowany Kurjer Codzienny (Cracow)

Popular; before the Coup close to the Piast, afterwards pro-Sanacja.

Kurjer Polski

Non-party right-wing; represented business interests.

Kurjer Poranny

Radical pro-Piłsudski-ite.

Kurjer Poznański (Poznań)

National Democrat.

Kurjer Warszawski

Non-party right-wing.

Kurjer Wileński (Wilno)

Radical pro-Piłsudski-ite.

Le Messenger Polonais

Founded January, 1925; semi-official.

Naprzód (Cracow)

Socialist.

Nasz Przegląd

Jewish, general Zionist.

Nowy Kurjer Polski

Radical pro-Piłsudski-ite; founded January 1926; renamed Epoka in September 1926.

<u>Polonia</u> (Katowice)	Christian Democrat.
<u>Polska Zbrojna</u>	The Army organ; after the Coup, Piłsudski-ite.
<u>Robotnik</u>	Socialist.
<u>Rzeczpospolita</u>	Christian Democrat.
<u>Słowo</u> (Wilno)	Conservative.
Use has also been made of the semi-weekly journal published by the French Foreign Office, <u>Polonia</u> .	
Weeklies:	
<u>Gazeta Chłopska</u>	Peasant Party.
<u>Głos Prawdy</u>	Radical Piłsudski-ite; became a daily after the Coup.
<u>Nowa Kadrowa</u>	Pro-Government, near fascist; founded March, 1930, became defunct after two issues in 1931.
<u>Nowa Sprawa Robotnicza</u>	N.P.R.-left (i.e. pro-Sanacja); appeared between 29 May 1926 and 29 August 1926.
<u>Piast</u>	Piast.
<u>Tydzień</u>	<u>Centrolew</u> ; founded October 1929.
<u>Wyzwolenie</u>	Liberation.
Bi-weeklies:	
<u>Przełom</u>	Radical Piłsudski-ite; founded May 1926.
Monthlies:	
<u>Droga</u>	Radical Piłsudski-ite.
<u>Przegląd Współczesny</u>	Independent.

IV. Occasional:

Nakazy Chwili

Pro-Sanacja; nine issues appeared after the Coup.

Nowy Przegląd

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