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MEMORANDUM
ON THE NORTH AND SOUTH EASTERN
FRONTIERS OF RESTORED POLAND

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In order to deal correctly with the question of the north and south-eastern frontiers of Poland — and this is equally important on all the frontiers — it is indispensable to consider the important fact, that to day it is necessary not only to create a Poland, but also to restore to the Polish nation its status and its territory which had been taken from it, destroyed and dismembered at the close of the eighteenth century.

The crime of the partitions of Poland must necessarily be atoned, for otherwise it would be impossible to find a good foundation for the renewal of the world according to the sacred principles of right and justice.

It is therefore necessary to go back to the state of things before the partitions, when we deal with the question of the territories and frontiers of future Poland. This is certainly history. But Poland possesses a great history which has existed already for a thousand years, and she cannot but feel this at the moment of her reconstitution.

Therefore the historic territory of Poland is always the basis of the actual territorial problem, and we must go back to the frontiers of 1772, when we propose the delimitation of restored Poland.

It is evident that the frontiers of 1772, which could be claimed as a reparation, can not be considered as immovable. Nearly one hundred and fifty years separate us from that period. History has progressed and has left her mark on the soul of the nations, as well as on the external character of the country. New events have happened and new ideas have come to light. We must take these changes into account. But in order to understand them, to draw from them the

appropriate conclusions and come to satisfactory results, in short, in view of correctly grasping the Polish problem, which is now to be solved, it is not only to statistics or to ethnography that we should refer for information and advice, but also chiefly, to history.

Therefore, in order to arrive at a satisfactory result, we must first take as a basis and a starting point the territorial condition of Poland before the first partition, in 1772, then, see if any corrections should be made or not.

The elements which will have to bear upon the decision are various.

It will be necessary to consider the rights of Poland on a given territory, either in respect to history and the present condition of things, or in respect to principles of public right, as universally admitted nowadays, and of the requirements of justice, and also in respect to necessary conditions of life of the Polish State, which is to be restored.

We must now consider the problem of the north-eastern and south-eastern frontiers of future Poland.

FRONTIERS IN 1772

We shall not here draw up in detail the frontiers which in 1772, divided Poland from the Russian Empire of Catherine II.

It is known that the north eastern frontier of Poland extended beyond the Dwina and the Dnieper, following the course of the middle Dnieper, southwards; the town of Kieff, on the right bank of the Dnieper, with adjacent territory, was outside the Polish border.

At that time, the whole of ethnographic Lithuania, part of Livonia (called Polish Livonia), as well as the whole White Ruthenia and the whole of Ruthenian territory along the course of middle Dnieper, belonged to the Great Republic of Poland.

That vast country, including the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Wolhynia, Podolia, Ukraine, had not been conquered by Poland. As a safeguard against German danger, it had voluntarily united itself with Poland as early as the end of the 14th century. Originally a personal union, it became, from

the year 1569 an actual union, in which only the Grand Duchy of Lithuania kept its nominal autonomy until 1791. The provinces of Red Ruthenia (the eastern part of present Galicia) were merely Polish "palatinates", since the 15th century, as was also the case, since the 16th century, with the provinces of Wolhynia, Podolia and Ukraine.

Politically, the whole of that country was Polish. It was actually Polish history that was being enacted in those vast Lithuanian, Livonian and Ruthenian lands, where, for centuries, race, language, religion and culture had been moulded together. Under the sovereignty of the Polish State, and the rule of western civilization did the White Ruthenians and the Ruthenians, constituting the western branch of the Ruthenian people, live together for centuries.

And when the Moscovites, in justification of their conquering march towards the west, assumed the name of Russian Empire, they had, to acknowledge the secular rights of Poland on the land of Western Ruthenia.

As for instance, in the 4th article of the treaty of Polanow, concluded in 1634 between Ladislas IV, King of Poland, and the Tsar Michael Fedorowich, it is said: "The King of Poland acknowledges the grand duke Michael Feodorowich, as autocratic Tsar of all Moscowite Russias, it being understood that he will not derive from the said title any right on the Ruthenias, which *ab antiquo* belong to Poland. Catherine II, when she took up the title of Empress of all Russias, found it necessary to declare the following through her ambassador in Warsaw: "Her Imperial Majesty our August Sovereign, in taking up the title of Empress of all Russias does not mean to assume for herself, or for her successors, or for her empire, any rights on the lands and countries which, under the name of Russia or Ruthenia, belong to Poland and to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania; and by acknowledging their domination, she rather grants to the Serenissime Republic of Poland a guarantee for the preservation of their rights and privileges, as well as of the lands and countries belonging to it, or which it actually possesses, promising to uphold and protect it for ever against any one who would attempt to disturb them."

Following the second division of Poland in 1793 the same

territories " russes ou ruthènes " were taken by Russia as " provinces polonaises " (official term); and it was for this reason that Tsar Alexander I promised to reunite the Poles with the Kingdom of Poland created by the Congress of Vienna. As we know this promise proved but a dream and the Polish provinces of Lithuania, White Ruthenia, Wolhynia, Podolia and Ukraine manifested on numerous occasions and especially during the national revolutions of 1830-31 and 1863, their wish to form a common cause with Poland, for which they were subjected to a long and terrible reign of terror and russification.

ACTUAL CLAIMS

History provides us with sufficient facts proving the right of Poland to the old Duchy of Lithuania, Wolhynia, Podolia and Ukraine, and to the boundary line which separated her in 1772 from the Russian Empire.

If however, for various reasons it were impossible to join all these vast territories to the Polish State, which must be a well consolidated National State, an equitable line of demarcation must be found as a base for its frontiers. In these transitional lands between the East and the West it is not easy to establish an exact limit between the countries which are more or less under the influence of Polish civilisation or which have more or less a Polish population.

Therefore Poland can only consent to a narrowing of her eastern frontiers on condition that the Polish or other populations inhabiting the territories outside her State have guaranteed liberty and security in their national and economic life. The creation of a League of Nations could render real help in this instance by organising in the contested countries an administration emanating from a mandate of the said League. To form a boundary line between the Polish State and the transitional lands under the League of Nations, a distinction must be made between the various groups of the respective territories.

LITHUANIAN QUESTION

Commencing by the North we must first examine the Lithuanian question. Here we are dealing with ethnographical

Lithuania, that is to say territories inhabited by a majority of Lithuanians. These territories form the north-western part of the ancient Duchy of Lithuania and comprise nearly the whole of the government of Kovno with the Baltic coast line as far north as Libau (a natural port of Lithuania), a stretch of land bordering on the government of Vilno, the northern part of the government of Suwalki (Kingdom of Poland) and of eastern districts of Eastern Prussia with Memel and Tilsit. It is inhabited by about one million and a half of Lithuanians, the exact number being difficult to ascertain owing to the inaccuracy of official statistics. The Russian statistics of 1909 state the number of Lithuanians in the governments of Kovno and Vilno to be 1,390,000, whereas the German statistics of 1916 only give us 1,089,776. Ethnographical Lithuania having formed part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, has joined her history to that of Poland since the 14th century. At the moment of the partition the union was real and complete. Lithuania was an integral part of the Polish Republic and the Lithuanians considered themselves politically as Polish. But after the dismemberment of Poland the traditions of the union were gradually effaced, separatist tendencies, imported and seconded from without, appeared among the Lithuanians. These tendencies did not lead to a union of the Lithuanian people with either Russia or Prussia, but they aroused in them national sentiments and the desire of Lithuanian autonomy. Although the Poles cannot and will not forget their traditional union with Lithuania and consider this union desirable and even necessary for the good and security of two friendly nations, nevertheless, they do not refuse to recognize that the principle of nationality can be justly applied in this case. United to Poland Lithuania could receive a distinct organization, which would guarantee the rights and free development of the Lithuanian nation.

THE RUTHENIAS

WHITE RUTHENIA, WOLHYNIA, PODOLIA, UKRAINE.

There is no reason to invoke the principle of nationalities in the question of Ruthenian territories through which the eastern and south-eastern frontiers of reconstructed Poland must pass.

If we speak here of Ruthenian territories in general, it is not to affirm their homogeneousness. A similar homogeneousness does not exist. We must first distinguish White Ruthenia from Ruthenia proper, which is again divided into Red Ruthenia (eastern part of Galicia), Wolhynia, Podolia and Ukraine. Neither White Ruthenia nor Ruthenia proper have ever formed independant national states. This is a fact which in spite of its notoriety must be emphasized, as of late an amount of false and purposely inaccurate literature has been trying to prove the contrary.

White Ruthenia with Lithuania formed the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, and Ruthenian territories, since the 14th and definitely since the 16th century, were, by their own free will incorporated with Poland. There exists a history of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, which since 1569 forms a part of the history of the Republic of Poland, but a political history of White Ruthenia does not exist at all.

The same with Ruthenia. It is true, that two independant, political formations can be found on Ruthenian territory: the Grand Duchy of Kieff quite powerful in the 10th and 11th centuries — but which lost its importance after the mongolian invasion in the 13th century—and the Duchy of Włodzimierz and of Halicz in the 13th and 14th centuries. These two Ruthenian duchies which offer a great analogy with other duchies of Poland, so numerous at the time of its division (XII-XIV centuries) did not last, and since the 14th century it is Polish history, which has been enacted on the vast plains of Ruthenian territory. The Ukraine, spoken of so much by the Germans of late, has never existed as a national or independent state. The claims of the Ukrainian leaders to extend the country of Ukraine from the San in Galicia to the Don in Southern Russia are not based on history, geography nor on the ethnographical character of the Ruthenian population. And even the language, which is everywhere Ruthenian is quite different in the west and east.

RED RUTHENIA IS NOT THE UKRAINE

The peasants in Wolhynia and Podolia do not call themselves Ukrainians. The Ukraine to them, as in history, is an inde-

finite country without precise limits, which borders on the eastern frontier of Wolhynia and west of Podolia and extends from the Don towards the Dnieper and far beyond this river.

This Ukraine has never known how to attain the realization of political independence. Even under Bogdan Chmielnicki she made no efforts to become independent. She wavered between Poland and Russia and finished by being divided into Polish Ukraine on the right bank of the Dnieper, and Russian Ukraine beyond it.

These things have not perceptibly changed since the time of Chmielnicki. In Ukraine, in other Ruthenian territories and in White Ruthenia the sentiments and will of the people have not yet attained the level of a national feeling, which is the only creative factor of a real independence.

The Ruthenian population only possessed a social class feeling and they still possess it in a negative sense. As in the time of Chmielnicki, they are fighting today for reasons of social and economic order and not for any national feelings, pillaging and ravaging their own country.

This want of real national sentiment in the Ruthenian people renders a useful application of national principles impossible. The Ruthenian people are not yet a nation in the political sense of the word, and therefore not ripe enough for independence.

The principle of nationalities not being applicable to White Ruthenian and Ruthenian territory, there is no legal motive against a delimitation made for other reasons. If the frontiers of 1772 could not be kept, what would be the guiding reason of their modification?

The vast territories of White Ruthenia and Ruthenia constitute a land of transition between the West and the East. The transition is a mild one, without violence nor contrasts. The demarcation line is difficult to find. The penetration of Polish civilising influence has scattered centres of activity all over the country into its utmost eastern boundaries. Ethnography cannot afford us any serious help. The population of this country presents a very complicated ethnical mixture, due to intense colonisation, which took place for many centuries and came from different parts. However,

if one takes into consideration the historical, geographical, ethnographical and even psychological data, it becomes possible to establish a sufficiently marked distinction between the western regions of White Ruthenia and Ruthenia on one hand and the eastern part of these territories on the other. An intermediary region formed by the former Polish Ukraine might be established in Ruthenia between the two aforesaid regions.

The western region of White Ruthenia and Ruthenia comprises : the governments of Grodno, Wilno, Mińsk excepting the district of Rzeżyca in the latter ; the districts of Dryssa, Lepel, Polock and the southern part of the district of Dynaburg in the government of Witebsk ; the western part of the district of Sienno in the government of Mohylów ; further Wolhynia excepting the district of Żytomierz, part of Owrócz and the greater part of that of Zwiabel ; lastly the districts of Kamieniec Podolski, Płoskirów and half of that Uszyca in Podolia. The whole of Red Ruthenia which is the eastern part of what is now Galicia, belongs of course to this western region.

The entire territory described above is under the influence of Polish civilisation, which prevails all over, and attracts it both physically and morally towards the West instead of the East. That is the reason for which Poland claims the territories of the Western Ruthenias as an integrant part of the reconstituted Polish State.

We have given the reasons provided by history, right and justice, but there are still other considerations in favour of our claims.

PRESENT SITUATION FROM THE STANDPOINT OF ETHNOGRAPHY AND STATISTICS

In the Ruthenian territories in which the Poles wish the local national characteristics to be maintained, the language spoken by the Ruthenian population, although it theoretically belongs to the group of Russian languages, has been much influenced by Polish civilisation and language. Many Polish words are in common use and in these western regions the Ruthenian language seems nearer to the Polish than to

Russian. Besides, the fact that a considerable part of the population use the Ruthenian and not the Polish language, cannot in itself be an obstacle to this population becoming part of a national Polish State. There are national states, such as France or Belgium, in which the citizens, although they talk different languages, still remain loyal Frenchmen and Belgians. This is even more so in Ruthenia, where the difference of languages is not necessarily an indication of a difference of race or nationality. We have mentioned above, that in these transitory Ruthenian lands the ethnographical mixture is so complete, that it would hardly be possible to clearly define the nationality of a Ruthenian peasant. It should be added, that most Ruthenians speak Polish fluently and that they all understand it perfectly. The Roman Catholic White Ruthenians use Polish in their prayers; all efforts made to introduce the White Ruthenian language in religious ceremonies always met with a strong opposition. White Ruthenian books and newspapers are printed in Latin letters.

The Poles inhabiting the country are autochtones as much as the Ruthenians. They settled there in the remotest times. After the first mongolian invasion, which turned the country into a desert, the Poles, together with other colonists (Ruthenians, Lithuanians, Moscovites, Valaques, etc.) settled there, populating its vast and fertile plains. Later, every time the country was devastated and pillaged by the Tartars or the Ukrainian Cosacks, the Poles came to restore order and agriculture. For these reasons the Poles have a right to consider themselves at home in the Ruthenian lands. Although the intellectual, moral and national standard of the Poles places them far above their Ruthenian speaking compatriots, it would be a mistake to believe, that they almost exclusively belong to the class of big landowners and manufacturers; there are merely a few thousand such families, while the bulk of the Polish population belongs to the working masses.

It is impossible to state the exact number of Poles in White Ruthenia and Ruthenia: Russian official statistics, as a rule most unreliable, methodically endeavoured to weaken the number of Poles in the so-called „Western country”. Conse-

quently, the official Russian figure of 1,25 million Poles for the entire territory of Lithuania, White Ruthenia and Ruthenia must be considered inaccurate and below the real number. The German professor Hoetsch, who was no friend of the Poles, gave their number for the "Western country" as 3 1/2 to 4 million. This number, though approximate, must be considered nearer the mark. The difficulties of determining an exact figure are still more increased by the fact, that in Ruthenia questions of nationality are confused with questions of creed. Russian official statistics give a far larger number of Roman Catholics than of Poles. In White Ruthenia there certainly is a fairly large number of Roman Catholic White Ruthenians, but in Ruthenia (Wolhynia, Podolia and Polish Ukraine) all Roman Catholics can be considered as Poles, almost without exception.

Mr. Stolypine, Russian Minister of Interior, in a speech to the Council of Ministers in the year 1906, admitted that the number of Roman Catholics in the "Western country" amounted to 35,39 % of the total population.

If these figures are correct, and Mr. Stolypine was in a position to know them exactly, we might, on strength of the official Russian data of the year 1909, assume, that the total number of Roman Catholics (Poles, White Ruthenians, Ruthenians) in the entire "Western country" was about 8 million. If from these we deduct the Lithuanians (1.390,000) and the Lettgallians in the government of Witebsk (302.821), there remain 6.307.000 Roman Catholics in the "Western country", excepting ethnographical Lithuania and Polish Livonia.

These Roman Catholics are either Poles or White Ruthenians; the latter make use of the Polish language in their churches and schools and consider themselves Poles.

PRESENT SITUATION AS A RESULT OF A REGIME OF OPPRESSION

If the White Ruthenian and Ruthenian countries, actually claimed by Poland, can, in the face of official statistics, be considered a country with a minority of Poles, the given statistics must be appreciated not only on account of their

intrinsic value, but also according to the history of the last 150 years. We already know the value of the Russian statistics. A characteristic example will suffice. The census of the population in the "Western countries" made by the Home Office in 1909 gave the number of the population as 22,633,807 and on the same date the annual statistics drawn up by the Committee of Statistics at the Home Office gave the number of the population as 24,189,000. Such a contradiction between two official sources is striking enough and comments are not necessary. The official Russian statistics undervalues the percentage of Poles far beneath their real proportions. The corrections which could be made and the census lately taken by the Germans in Lithuania, White Ruthenia and in the occupied parts of Wolhynia shows us quite a different state of affairs from a numerical point of view. The result is that we find, in many parts of the country a majority and not a minority of Poles, as for instance the northern part of the district of Włodimierz Wołyński.

But besides these corrections in the calculation, there are other things to be considered if we wish to appreciate the actual state of the claimed territory. It is quite impossible not to take into consideration the cruel oppression to which this country has been subjected since the partition of Poland, that is for about 150 years. This system of violence and cruel oppression necessarily changes the normal course of life in the country. Inaugurated on the first partition of Poland and getting worse from year to year, this system lasted until quite lately. It is impossible to give a detailed historic account of the anti-Polish policy carried out by Russian despotism. Let us briefly recall the most prominent facts. Under Catherine II 1,665,714 uniats were forced to become orthodox, and at the moment of the partition, in the Polish provinces of Lithuania, White Ruthenia and Ruthenia, there were but half a million of people who were orthodox. On the 5th of June 1796 the Empress approved the project of Zubov ordering the deportation of 100,000 of the small nobility (one half of the total) to the steppes of New Russia and the Crimea. Numerous confiscations were carried out, property taken from Polish patriots, the State and the Catholic Church were given to the favourites of Catherine II, generals and

Moscovite officials. After a relative rest under the emperors Paul and Alexander I, the bloody reign of Nicolas I began.

It is known that the Polish provinces of Lithuania, White Ruthania, Wolhynia, Podolia and Ukraine took an active part in the Polish revolution of 1830-31. They paid a heavy price for this patriotic attitude. New confiscations deprived the Poles of an immense territory of a value of 800.000.000 roubles; 45.000 families of Polish small nobility were deported from Wolhynia, Podolia and Ukraine, to the steppes of "New Russia". By a decree of 19 december 1831 5.000 Polish families from Podolia were exiled to the Caucasus. The celebrated university of Vilno and the famous college of Krzemieniec in Volhynia were closed, as well as nearly all the Polish schools, of which there were hundreds in Lithuania and Ruthenia, and in which number of Polish scholars by far surpassed that of Russian scholars in the whole of the Russian Empire. The country was submitted to a regime of drastic russification.

Military service, which lasted 25 years for peasants and small Polish nobility, tended to denationalise the Polish popular masses; besides which the proportion of recruits taken from the Polish small nobility was three times more than in the other circles of the rural population.

In 1839, the Uniat Church was abolished and the Uniats, who, in 1825, represented 16,8 % of the population, were forcibly brought back to orthodoxy. The number of these new orthodox can be estimated at 1 1/2 million. In 1863, the Poles from all the provinces of Lithuania and Ruthenia, took an active part in the Polish revolution. Fighting took place in Wolhynia as well as in Lithuania. The declaration of adherence to the national Government of Warsaw was signed by thousands of people; for instance 89.315 inhabitants of the Government of Vilno, 49.289 inhabitants of Grodno. Then, new repressions took place, more methodical but not less horrible. Blood was shed abundantly in Lithuania under the Mourawief regime. Again, more than 150.000 hectares of Polish land were confiscated. Over 100.000 Poles were deported to Siberia. A whole system of laws of exception and repression was inaugurated in view of taking the land from the Poles, so as to ruin them economically and to make to Russian elements attractive what was formerly purely Polish

land. This policy of oppression and violence led to results pleasant to Russian official statistics, and to the detriment of Poland purposely proved a wrong state of affairs. The losses sustained by national Polish spirit since 1772 are enormous. Those losses brought about a serious decline in the whole culture of the country. The obstinate struggle against the Poles, who in that country had always represented and still represent the element of order, civilisation and intellectual culture, was bound to exercise the most deplorable influence on the well being and moral condition of the whole population. Public instruction, particularly among the lower classes, is at present in a deplorable condition; the proportion of illiterate people is enormous; the peasants are coarse and barbarous. However, at the end of the XVIII century (before 1793) and at the beginning of the XIX century, thanks to the efforts of the Poles, under the leadership of Prince Adam Czartoryski and count Thadée Czacki, the Polish schools in Lithuania and Ruthenia gave the popular masses the treasures of western civilisation. Russia did not understand how to make a country flourishing or happy. In spite of its relentless struggle, it did not succeed in destroying the Polish spirit, the country has not lost its occidental and Polish character. And the Poles have remained what they have always been, a factor of progress and culture. Weakened and ruined, threatened from all sides, they continue to fulfill their mission of civilisation. To that end they avail themselves of every occasion, every truce in the struggle, every relaxation of oppression. After the revolution of 1917, when the despotic system collapsed and gave way to chaotic liberty, the Poles found sufficient means and strength to build up again their mission of civilisation, which had been so long prohibited. Under fire and sword, amidst bloody anarchy, the Poles in Lithuania and in Ruthenia succeeded in accomplishing an enormous work of reorganisation; Polish popular masses, peasants and small nobility suddenly arose from their forced retirement and became prominent in the plans of Polish activity. Hundreds and hundreds of Polish schools were founded; for instance in the provinces of Wolhynia, Podolia and Ukraine, where not one single Polish school had existed in 1916, we find in 1918 more than one thousand secondary

and primary schools, and a Polish university at Kiefl. All this immense work was done in spite of difficulties of all kinds and of the ill will of the Ukrainian authorities.

The evils from which the vast country of Lithuania, White Ruthenia and Ruthenia have long suffered and still suffer demand reparation. The best reparation would be for them not to be separated from the territories of renewed Poland and to grant them the new regime of Polish liberty and occidental civilisation.