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Kazimierz Sosnkowski, the Polish army, and Polish state-building, 1905–1944

Schwonek, Matthew Raymond, Ph.D.

The Ohio State University, 1994

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KAZIMIERZ SOSNIEWSKI, THE POLISH ARMY, AND
POLISH STATE-BUILDING
1905-1944

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By

Matthew R. Schwonek, Ph.D.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University
1994
To my parents, for supporting me, and to my brother and sister, for tolerating me
VITA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>March 23, 1963</td>
<td>Born - Cleveland, Ohio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>B.A., <em>cum laude</em>, University of Dayton, Dayton, Ohio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>East European Summer Language Institute, University of California at Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Summer School of Polish Language and Culture, Jagiellonian University, Cracow, Poland</td>
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<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>M.A., The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio</td>
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<tr>
<td>1990-1992</td>
<td>Fulbright Researcher, University of Warsaw, Warsaw, Poland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993-present</td>
<td>Assistant Director, Center for Slavic and East European Studies, The Ohio State University</td>
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PUBLICATIONS


"Plumbing the Holocaust." Review of *Schindler's List* by Steven Spielberg and Korczak by


FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: History

Studies in

- East Central European History, Carole R. Rogel
- Russian and Soviet History, Allan K. Wildman
- European Military History, Williamson K. Murray
- Modern Middle Eastern History, Carter V. Findley
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<td>sz</td>
<td>sh as in shirt</td>
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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>AAGND</td>
<td>Akta Adiutantury Generalnej Naczelnego Dowództwa</td>
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<td>AAN</td>
<td>Archiwum Akt Nowych (Archive of Modern Documents), Warsaw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAN VI</td>
<td>Archiwum Akt Nowych, Oddział VI (Archive of Modern Documents, VI Department, Archive of the Leftist Parties), Warsaw, formerly Archiwum Komitetu Centralnego Polskiej Zjednoczonej Partii Robotniczej (Archive of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers’ Party)</td>
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<tr>
<td>AK</td>
<td>Armia Krajowa (Home Army)</td>
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<td>AGAD</td>
<td>Archiwum Główny Akt Dawnych (Main Archive of Earlier Documents), Warsaw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APAN</td>
<td>Archiwum Polskiej Akademii Nauk (Archive of the Polish Academy of Sciences) Warsaw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMSW</td>
<td>Archiwum miasta stolecznej Warszawy (Archive of the Capital City of Warsaw)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BDFA</td>
<td>British Documents on Foreign Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BN</td>
<td>Biblioteka Narodowa (National Library), Warsaw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAW</td>
<td>Centralne Archiwum Wojskowe (Central Military Archive), Warsaw</td>
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<tr>
<td>DBFP</td>
<td>Documents on British Foreign Policy</td>
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<tr>
<td>DPSR</td>
<td>Documents on Polish-Soviet Relations, 1939-1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRUS</td>
<td>Foreign Relations of the United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GISZ</td>
<td>Generalny Inspektorat Sił Zbrojnych (General Inspectorate of the Armed Forces)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JPI</td>
<td>Józef Piłsudski Institute for Research in Modern Polish History, New York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KTSSN</td>
<td>Komisja Tymczasowa Skonfederowanych Stronnictw Niepodległościowych (Provisional Committee of Confederated Independence Parties)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NKN</td>
<td>Naczelny Komitet Narodowy (Supreme National Committee)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
OB  Organizacja Bojowa (Combat Organization)
OSS  Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich (Ossoliński National Archive), Wrocław
PDS  Polskie Drużyny Strzeleckie (Polish Rifle Detachments)
PON  Polska Organizacja Narodowa (Polish National Organization)
PPS  Polska Partia Socjalistyczna (Polish Socialist Party)
PPS-FR  Polska Partia Socjalistyczna-Frakcja Rewolucyjna (Polish Socialist Party-Revolutionary Fraction)
PSL  Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe (Polish Peasant Party)
PSZ  Polskie Sił Zbrojnych w Drugiej Wojny Światowej (The Polish Armed Forces in the Second World War)
WIH  Wojskowy Instytut Historyczny (Military History Institute), Warsaw
ZWC  Związek Walki Czynnej (Union of Active Struggle)
ZWZ  Związek Walki Zbrojnej (Union of Armed Struggle)
ZS  Związek Strzelecki (Riflemen's Union)
INTRODUCTION

Early on a rainy morning on 10 November 1918 a squat, battered man in a simple officer’s tunic mounted the platform of Warsaw’s Vienna Station. Józef Piłsudski, a former Socialist revolutionary and until recently brigadier general in the army of the emperor-king of Austria-Hungary, arrived from Berlin on a special (although not sealed) train. The next day he became independent Poland’s first chief executive and warlord, taking in hand the work of building a new Polish state. Often it is forgotten that accompanying Piłsudski was another who, though he sported a pince-nez, seemed uncomfortable in ill-fitting civilian clothes, revealing that he also was a soldier. The second man to mount the platform was Kazimierz Sosnkowski. He joined Piłsudski in the work of state building.

The relationship between the army and state is fundamental to understanding the political dynamics of modern Polish history. During periods of national revolution and national consolidation in East Central Europe, Sosnkowski was concerned with the task of building and organizing the Polish armed forces. Brigadier General, later Marshal, Piłsudski was passionately committed to state building, first to the establishment of a Polish state where none had existed since the Partitions of Poland and, then, to the construction of state institutions. State building was a substitute for political philosophy in Piłsudski’s mind. Sosnkowski shared this passion and its drawbacks with Piłsudski, under whose influence his own thought was shaped.

Sosnkowski's forte was military affairs, and as the executor of Piłsudski's grand but never fully articulated designs in this sphere, Sosnkowski was associated with Polish arms from their rebirth in underground military organizations before the First World War through the first years of independence. He was one of the creators of the underground independence organizations, the Union of Active Struggle (Związek Walki Czynnej) and the Riflemen's Union (Związek Strzelcecki). Originally intended to lead a national uprising, these groups were reorganized as the Polish Legions and fought alongside the Central powers during the First World War. These forces constituted the dynamic core and the spearhead of the military arm of the Polish independence movement, often called the Military Movement. They furnished Piłsudski with a symbolic trump card as he waited and worked to turn political circumstances to his advantage. The Polish Legions also constituted the nucleus of future Polish Army. As deputy minister and then minister of military affairs between 1918 and 1924 Sosnkowski laid the foundations of Poland's national defense during the new state's traumatic first years. During the Polish-Soviet War, 1919-1920, he built a mass national army. Sosnkowski's immense feats of organization entitle him to stand beside Lazare Carnot among outstanding military organizers. Furthermore, long after 1920 he remained an influential leader. After the debacle of the September 1939 campaign, Sosnkowski was called on to "organize victory" again, but he ultimately presided over Poland's defeat in Allied victory.

Sosnkowski was a revolutionary military intellectual. His origins were in the collection of doctors, lawyers, poets, and ne'er-do-wells, descended from declassé gentry families, who constituted the old Polish intelligentsia. Sosnkowski came to the craft of arms out of a neo-romantic "dream of the sword" and from the Polish Socialist Party (Polska Partia Socjalistyczna

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2 The only Western military historian to take note of Sosnkowski's work, John Gooch, readily linked Sosnkowski to Carnot. See John Gooch, *Armies in Europe* (London, 1980), 34.
or PPS). Sosnkowski's military thought hearkened to the tradition of People's War of the insurrections of the Romantic Era in Poland, and not the grand tactical formulas of an Antoine-Henri Jomini or Heinrich von Bülow. His work reveals a profound understanding of the principle of the nation-in-arms. Sosnkowski regarded the army as much a school to prepare the nation to defend itself as an instrument for its defense, and his work placed a premium on national consciousness and national involvement. He is, therefore, entitled also to stand beside Gerhard Scharnhorst among great military reformers. In addition, Sosnkowski had a strong grasp of modern warfare and strategy, which allowed him to transcend the revolutionary birth of national states in East Central Europe and to play a role in the period of consolidation that followed. Among the intellectuals-turned-soldier who dominated the interwar Polish Army he was the most professional. He strove to create a modern army by giving it a structure and doctrine which corresponded to the conditions of modern warfare. He also strove to base Poland’s defense on alliance with France and the states of East Central Europe. The army departed from his policies at its peril.

In politics the substitution of state building for political philosophy led Sosnkowski to place a premium on cooperation and unity. Essentially, Sosnkowski had a strong aversion to party politics, although as an important military leader he was never far from the center of most political controversies. The study of Sosnkowski’s life and work sheds light not only on his politics, but on others’s as well. In particular, Sosnkowski stands as a counterpoint to the figures of Piłsudski; the trio of his successors Ignacy Mościcki, Józef Beck, and Edward Rydz-Śmigły; and Poland’s leaders during the Second World War, Władysław Sikorski and Stanisław Mikołajczyk. Sosnkowski’s politics during the First World War, in the Polish Republic’s first years, and in the

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Republic’s last years, contrast with and cast into relief the various courses charted by other leaders.

Sosnkowski is like Ion Florescu, another military organizer and his Romanian counterpart, "the forgotten man of history." There exists no scholarly biography of Sosnkowski. But for a flattering, but inaccurate sketch to familiarize Allied peoples with the Polish commander-in-chief and a *paean* by Stanisław Babiński, the brother of Sosnkowski’s wartime aide and a devoted friend, there would be no record of his life and work at all. Two reasons for this comes to mind. First, in the official Marxist historiography in Poland there was no room for objective study of pre-Communist leaders. In Communist historiography Pilsudski and his followers were reduced to caricatures. Second, Sosnkowski had the misfortune of working in the shadow of Pilsudski, who dominated the political life of interwar Poland and whose complex legacy embraces Poland even today. Western historians, although not bound by similar constraints, have nevertheless also ignored Sosnkowski. Sosnkowski, along with Polish and East Central European military leaders in general, have been neglected out of a belief that the historical evolution of East Central Europe was determined primarily by the military actions and political decisions of the Great Powers. This belief is confirmed by the course and outcome of the Second World War. And it is only Sosnkowski’s role in the Second World War which has received any significant scholarly

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attention. However, Sosnkowski's part is poorly understood. Historians fault him for indecision and lack of realism. The commander-in-chief of the armed forces of the London-based government-in-exile in 1943 and 1944, he is held accountable for the circumstances and the decisions that led to the debacle of the Warsaw Rising of 1944 and the failure to prevent the Communist takeover of Poland, although at the same time, scholars point out, he held out for better circumstances and opposed the policies that led to the rising and that failed prevent Communist subversion.8

There is a vast corpus of scholarship on the Polish Army, in which Sosnkowski necessarily figures prominently. Commendably, Polish historians have focused on military institutions rather than the course of campaigns and individual genius, and legions of Polish historians have assiduously combed historical sources to construct an intricately detailed picture of the Polish Army and the workings of its constituent organs. Nevertheless this scholarship sheds little light on Sosnkowski and his contributions and their impact on the army, being afflicted with the same problems as the field of biography as well as a predilection to write history in a Rankean fashion, "wie es eigentlich gewehten war." The results have been weighty tomes on army organization, which entirely omit discussion of the motivations and aims behind policies and programs.9 A number rely on analyses of Poland's economic and human potential, the problems of defense against Germany and the U.S.S.R., and geography or Poland's lack of defensible frontiers, a judicious approach. Even the best, however, do not delve into Polish leaders' approaches to these


9 See, for example, Bolesław Woszczyński, *Ministerstwo Spraw Wojskowych: zarys organizacji i działalności* (Warsaw, 1971); Edward Krawczyk, *Demobilizacja i organizacja pokojoowa Wojska Polskiego w latach 1920-1921* (Warsaw, 1971); and Mikołaj J. Szczepkowski, "Zarys organizacji Wojska Polskiego w latach 1918-1920," *Wojskowy przegląd historyczny* 35(1990), nos. 3-4:3-36.
problems, being content to repeat unfounded and frequently incorrect generalizations. Piotr Stawecki in his study of Polish military politics between 1921 and 1926 merely mentions the guiding role of Pilsudski, before plunging into a detailed explication of peacetime reconstruction plans. Western historians studying the Polish military have done only marginally better, focussing on campaigns and genius. Norman Davies’ history of the Polish-Soviet War is exceptional for its breadth, although organization is given short shrift, being secondary to Polish and Soviet grand strategy in his study.

This is beginning to change. Already in 1985 Andrzej Rzepniewski of the of the Polish Army’s Military History Institute (Wojskowy Instytut Historyczny) challenged the prevailing historiography with a short article calling scholars’ attention to Sosnkowski and his contributions. The revival of critical and divergent approaches to history since the Revolutions of 1989 has allowed for the publication of critical treatments of several of Pilsudski’s military-political collaborators by a cadre of historians trained at the University of Warsaw by Andrzej Garlicki, the leading biographer of Pilsudski. Sosnkowski is certain now to get his due, and several short studies have appeared and more are in preparation.

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13 Jacek M. Majchrowski, Uluhieniec cesara: Bolesław Wieniawa-Długoszowski, zarys biographii (Wrocław, 1990) and Jerzy Kochanowski, Zapomniany prezydent: Życie i działalność Ignacego Boernera, 1875-1933 (Warsaw, 1994).

The body of archival and other sources relating to Sosnkowski and the Polish Army is vast despite the ravages and dislocation of the Second World War and the German and Soviet occupations. Perhaps the most valuable are to be found in the collections of the Central Military Archive (Centralny Archiwum Wojskowe, abbreviated CAW). In the underused records of the deputy minister, minister and I Mobilization-Organization Bureau (Oddzial I) can be found the keys to Polish military policy in the 1920s. The CAW also is the repository of materials recently released by the Polish Interior Ministry, including intelligence records and protocols of the Polish Superior War Council. Also in Warsaw the VI Bureau of the Archive of Modern Documents (Archiwum Akt Nowych), the former archive of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers Party, contains records pertaining to the PPS terrorist organizations and Pilsudski-ite underground military organizations. Sosnkowski's personal papers, mostly relating to the Second World War, the remainder being lost in 1939, are deposited in the Ossoliński National Archive in Wroclaw. The main division of the Archive of Modern Documents and National Library in Warsaw and the Józef Pilsudski Institute in New York also contain valuable collections.

Memoirs and published writings, underused only by Western scholars, contain many valuable insights into events, personalities and the age. The Poles have a fascination with documents, the legacy of the Nineteenth Century effort to salvage Poland's national past after the state had been dismembered by partitioning neighbors. They also have a passion for memoirs. Nearly every important political and military leader--Pilsudski, Lieutenant General Tadeusz Rozwadowski, Prime Ministers Wincenty Witos, Władysław Grabski, Julian Nowak--and a host politics after the Second World War is forthcoming.

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of minor figures have left behind memoirs or published writings. Uneven at times and always requiring caution, they are nevertheless indispensable sources for an age when transactions were often undocumented. Despite a taciturn nature and an aversion to memoir writing Sosnkowski left several volumes of reminiscences and writings. The most important is his *Historical Materials (Materiały historyczne)*, which contains selected orders, speeches, and writings from all periods. His experience in 1939 is recorded in *To the Shadows of September (Cieniom Wrześni)*. Although scrupulously honest, they contain several important lapses, including the coup d'etat of May 1926 and the Warsaw Rising of 1944. These events were particularly painful for Sosnkowski, and he rarely spoke of them afterward.

In this study Polish ranks are rendered in American or British equivalents rather than in literal translation for the sake of clarity and ease of understanding. Polish titles were awkward and can be misleading to the American reader. For example, the Polish brigadier general, *general podporucznik*, is literally "second lieutenant general." Although *general porucznik* is translated as "lieutenant general," this rank's responsibilities, command of a division, corresponded to those of an American major general. Major general or *general broni*, on the other hand, corresponded to lieutenant general. There was no equivalent to the simple American general. The highest rank was marshal, which only Piłsudski, French military leader Ferdinand Foch, and Edward Rydza-Śmigły attained.

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Army units are also rendered in American or British equivalents. The heart of the Polish Army was the regiment (pulk). An infantry regiment was composed of three battalions. A cavalry regiment, equivalent in establishment to an infantry battalion, was composed of three squadrons. An artillery regiment was composed of three divisions (dywizjony) or batteries. As in other armies the smallest self-contained strategic force was the division, for the cavalry, the brigade. In some instances equivalents derived from the French are used. Instead of "Higher War School," Wyższa Szkola Wojenna is here the Superior War College after the body on which it was modelled.

Few Polish leaders are well known enough to have had their names corrupted by Western writers. For this reason and because there are often no English equivalents, all Polish personal names are rendered in unanglicized form. This is not the case with East Central European place names, for which not only English but other foreign language equivalents exist. English forms are used whenever possible. Where none exist or where there is a multiplicity of names for a single locale, the best known is used. This is often the current form. Hence, Vilnius rather than Wilno or Vilna is used. However, the capital of eastern Małopolska or Galicia here is Lvov rather than Lwów, Lemberg, Leopol, or L'viv, and Gdańsk is Danzig.

Although any flaws in this study must be laid at the author's doorstep, its virtues can be credited the numerous individuals who have contributed to it. I express sincere appreciation to my adviser, Dr. Carole R. Rogel, for her guidance throughout research and her patience during writing. For their insights, thanks go to the other members of my advisory committee Drs. Allan K. Wildman and Williamson K. Murray. Gratitude is expressed to Drs. Andrzej Garlicki and Jerzy Kochanowski of Warsaw University and Piotr Stawecki of the Polish Army's Military History Institute for their friendship and aid during my stay in Warsaw. A similar debt of gratitude is owed to Dr. Janusz Cisek of the Józef Piłsudski Institute in New York. Drs. Kurt Schultz of The
Russian Review, Richard Muller of the U.S. Air Force Command and Staff College, and Mr. William Wolf of the Ohio State University read sections of this manuscript and kindly offered their suggestions. No thanks are due to Yale and Indiana Universities, whose libraries refused to loan materials. To my parents, I offer sincere thanks for your faith in me and your support. To my dearest friend and Russian teacher, Adonica Sendelbach, I offer my thanks for your willingness to endure the more difficult moments of this endeavor with patience and love.
CHAPTER I
FORMATIVE YEARS AND REVOLUTION, 1885-1905

Gendarmes, railway tracks, gas lamps, Jargon, and old-fashioned side curls How all that was, and all that is Is inflated by a vengeful chimera Even Copernicus, clutching a hollow globe Cries vengeance from his pedestal Revenge! Revenge! It echoes 'Round Warsaw with the ring of cold iron

Aleksander Blok, "Retribution"

Little is known of Kazimierz Sosnkowski's youth and formative experiences. There are too few sources to speculate in detail on the development of individual features of his personality in his youth. However, enough materials are available to offer general observations. These materials paint a picture of the development of a fin-de-siècle intellectual (inteligent)—descended from the gentry, inculcated in its patriotism and insurrectionist tradition, well educated and politically active.¹ Six feet two inches tall, of athletic build and an outdoorsman, yet sporting a pince nez, chain smoking and with sophisticated tastes in art and music, Sosnkowski was perhaps the personification of the old Polish intelligentsia.

Sosnkowski's roots were in the gentry (szlachta). The Sosnkowski family was ennobled in 1500, and was bestowed the Godziemba coat of arms. (During the Second World War Sosnkowski used as his pseudonym Godziemba.) The fortunes and fate of its earliest members are unknown. Ignacy Sosnkowski, a grand uncle, was well-born enough to command in the armed forces of the Duchy of Warsaw and the Congress Kingdom. Sosnkowski's paternal grandfather was a landowner in Płdlasie in eastern Poland. For his part in the 1863 Insurrection he was sentenced to a term of exile in Siberia, and much of his estate was confiscated. As a result Kazimierz's father, Józef Sosnkowski, was forced to settle in Warsaw, while his older brother remained on the much reduced family estate at Wisznica. Kazimierz's mother Zofia Sosnkowska was of the House of Drabiński, a szlachta family with an estate at Gintowice in Samogitia in Lithuania. Sosnkowski was especially proud of his ties to the heroic szlachta of Lithuania, considering himself "half Samogitian."\(^3\)

Sosnkowski was born in Warsaw on 19 November 1885, the first of three progeny. The arrival of the couple's first son was followed at lengthy intervals by the birth of a daughter, Stanisława, and another son, Jerzy. In Sosnkowski's early years the family's home life was presumably contented, certainly comfortable. Józef Śosnkowski, a lawyer, was a good provider for his family. The family rented an apartment on Rymarska Street on fashionable Bankowy Square not far from the Saxon Gardens. This contentment and comfort was short-lived, however. In 1895 when Sosnkowski was only ten years old, his father died. His wife Zofia never remarried and raised the couple's children on her own. The death of its provider caused the family some

\(^2\) Rocznik Wojskowy Królestwa Polskiego na rok 1825 (1825; reprint, Cracow, 1990), 120.

\(^3\) Letter to P. Demidowicz-Demidecki, 7 Nov. 1946, Kazimierz Sosnkowski Materialy historyczne (London, 1966), 52.
hardship. Not long after his death his widow moved the family to more modest surroundings, an apartment at 33 Zlota Street in a working class district of Warsaw.

At home Sosnkowski was inculcated in the values of the Polish gentry and intelligentsia. These values included a sense of noblesse oblige or duty to the nation, love of individual freedom, fidelity, patriotism and more.¹ Sosnkowski was raised in an atmosphere thick with Polish patriotism. He wrote: "Like many youths of my generation, I grew up in the traditions of the Polish Army and national uprisings, in an atmosphere of stories of deportation, of Siberia, [and] of the secrets of the Warsaw Citadel."⁵ Undoubtedly figuring in many stories were family members, who had taken part in the Insurrections of 1831 and 1863. His parents’ home was filled with objects exuding patriotic symbolism. The most prominent icon and that which the youth regarded with awe was the uniform of his grand uncle. He had taken part in the 1831 November Uprising and before that in Napoleon’s campaigns, for which he had won the French Legion of Honor. (The uniform was later displayed in the Polish Army Museum.) Sosnkowski’s literary diet included the works of the national bards, the Romantic messianists Adam Mickiewicz, Juliusz Słowacki and Zygmunt Krasicki. He was especially fond of Nobel-laureate, historical novelist Henryk Sienkiewicz’s patriotic Trilogy, which glorified the szlachta and its heroic defense of the Polish nation in the 17th century. "The Trilogy," Sosnkowski wrote, "was for us [our] daily bread...

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¹ Gella, "Old Polish Intelligentsia," 18-19.

⁵ Sosnkowski, Materiały, 565.

Not long after his father's death Sosnkowski began his gymnasium studies. A gymnasium education was expensive. It cost 70 rubles for yearly fees alone, a month's salary for a worker. Within the intelligentsia, however, great emphasis was placed upon a humanistic gymnasium education. Therefore, although of modest means, his mother secured the young Sosnkowski a classical education, first, at the Fifth State Gymnasium in Warsaw and, later, the Twelfth Classical Gymnasium in St. Petersburg. The gymnasium curriculum included instruction in Russian, Greek, Latin and Mathematics. At the Fifth Gymnasium the course of study was rigorous, perhaps doubly so as all instruction in Warsaw's schools was conducted in a foreign language, Russian. Taciturn and distant in his relations with others, Sosnkowski nonetheless proved himself a gifted student, winning the gold medal for highest marks in the final year of his studies.

It is likely that at this time Sosnkowski developed his love of the arts--literature and music. Sosnkowski read a great deal. This trait stayed with him throughout his life. Among his favorite writers were the Romantics Mikhail Lermontov, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Heinrich Heine. In particular he had a passion for the decadent poetry of Charles Baudelaire. Presumably piano lessons were arranged for Sosnkowski at this time, and he applied himself to them with great vigor, for in later years he showed himself a polished pianist. He preferred the

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8 If any element was considered a sine qua non of membership in the intelligentsia, it was possession of a gymnasium diploma. Chałasiński, Przeszłość i przyszłość, 77.


compositions of Robert Schuman and Frederick Chopin, which he played with great feeling. He had a great liking for the piano, which he played whenever he could.11

While a gymnasium student Sosnkowski became politically active, taking up resistance to Russian rule. This was perhaps a matter of course. The old Polish intelligentsia had a proclivity to political activism. It led all of the insurrections of the second half of the nineteenth century. The intelligentsia’s activism derived in part from its cultivation and maintenance of gentry patriotism and duty as well as an insurrectionist tradition, whose origins lay in the struggle to stave off partition in the 1790s. Also, in the Kingdom of Poland, the lands under Russian overlordship, this stratum was politically and economically discriminated against. Russification of the civil administration of the Kingdom, proceeding throughout the nineteenth century and culminating in its last decades, deprived intellectuals of influence and a traditional avenue of advancement.

In keeping with his intelligentsia background it is no surprise that Sosnkowski became politically active as early as 1901 at the age of 16. What transformed a simple proclivity to activism into real resistance to Russian rule were St. Petersburg’s policies of Russification of the Kingdom of Poland after the failed 1863 Insurrection. Poland became the Kraj Privislanskii or "Vistula Land." Poles were excluded from its civil administration, whose business as well as that of the courts was conducted in Russian. These policies of Russification, the British consul in Warsaw wrote: "... have not only utterly failed, but, by persecution, have had the opposite effect..."

11 Even at the front during the First World War, as Julian Kaden-Bandrowski observed, Sosnkowski was given to seeking out a piano and playing. Piłsudczycy (Oświęcim, 1915), 10. Seweryn Romin, a noncommissioned officer in the Polish Legions, too, recalled hearing strains of Chopin emanating from the Sosnkowski’s headquarters. Z notatek Legionisty (Chicago, 1919), 30-1.
of rendering the population more nationalistic as Poles and more anti-Russian than they would otherwise have been.12 Other foreign observers concurred in this view.13

No field escaped Russification. In education the "Apukhtin Night" fell on the Kingdom. Aleksander Apukhtin, curator of the Warsaw Educational District between 1879 and 1903 and known in the Socialist press as an "archdog" and "tyrant of youth,"14 pursued a thoroughgoing policy of Russification of Polish youths. Russian became the language of instruction, and Polish was regarded as a foreign language. Russian literature and history replaced Polish literature and history. Numerous schools were reserved for Russians only, and a large number were closed outright. Russian faculty members were hired over Poles and given preference in advancement. Also, Apukhtin's policies included curtailing instruction in the social and natural sciences. Finally, it was common practice to encourage students to inform on colleagues, who were anti-Russian.

Apukhtin's program could not have better created a resistance movement had it been calculated to do so. For many daily instruction became an indignity and humiliation. Józef Piłsudski wrote of his years at gymnasium: "A leather skin would not be enough to [allow me] to describe the degrading remarks of the instructors, the dishonoring of everything, which I had come to respect and to love. . . My years at the gymnasium number among the sorriest of my life."15 It too was a source of rebellion. It was Apukhtin's policies that triggered the first

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14 *Robotnik*, 14 December 1903.

political demonstration in Poland since the Uprising of 1863: the student demonstrations of 18
and 19 April 1883. These onerous policies drove Polish students to activism and resistance or
self-defense. They turned to Positivism and participation in student self-education circles and
underground schools such as the Flying University established in 1882-1883.\textsuperscript{16} Many of the
interwar Polish Republic’s civil and military leaders--Stanisław and Władysław Grabski, Gustaw
Danilowski, Bogusław Miedziński--as well as cultural and scientific lights like Marie Curie joined
secret circles as a result of such policies.\textsuperscript{17}

Positivism emerged in the 1870s and 1880s in the aftermath of the failed 1863
Insurrection, when opportunities for national action were circumscribed and armed struggle seemed
folly. It was more a \textit{Weltanschaung} than a coherent ideology. It prized above all progress and
material well-being. The movement’s spokesmen, the foremost being Aleksander Świętochowski,
advocated "work at the foundations" or Organic Work--labors to strengthen the nation’s economic,
social and cultural bases. Organic Work was not to challenge the strictures placed upon the nation
by the Russian overlords, but to work within them. It advocates urged the nation be strengthened
economically and welcomed efforts furthering industrialization. They also urged that the peasantry
be integrated into the social organism. Education, particularly in the social and natural sciences,
was given great emphasis. It was seen as improving material well-being as well as protecting the
national culture in the face of Russification. As state schools offered little opportunity to advance
their program, Positivists urged self-education. Self-education circles at gymnasia were formed
by the students themselves without outside influence. They had an improvised character and their

\textsuperscript{16} Kieniewicz, Stefan, "Warszawska młodzież szkolna w okresie niewoli," \textit{Szkolnictwo i oświata

\textsuperscript{17} Bogusław Miedziński, "Wspomnienia," \textit{Zeszyty historyczne} 33(1975):9-10; Aleksandra
programs routinely changed. Their goal was to supplement or remedy the deficiencies of classroom instruction. During breaks or after class members read and discussed banned books, Polish literature and histories of Poland, and books on forbidden subjects, such as political economy, the social and natural sciences. All this had to be done in secret, because such activity had been forbidden by the Tsar's Ministry of Education in 1872.

In 1901 Sosnkowski joined a self-education circle at the Fifth Gymnasium. The nature and activities of this circle are unknown. A. Dobrowolski and Stanislaw Grabski, both students and members of a secret student circle at the Fifth Gymnasium in the early 1890s, described their circle there as probing political economy. Students read the works of Henry Buckle, Herbert Spencer, Hippolyte Taine, German Socialists and Karl Marx. On occasion lectures and discussions on other subjects such as biology were conducted. Sosnkowski spent three years, in all likelihood, in a circle like that described above.

Participation in student circles was difficult. Preparing for discussions outside of class placed burdens upon Sosnkowski over and above those imposed by his teachers. Membership in self-education circles also was dangerous. School inspectors and even agents of the Okhrana, the Tsar's Sections to Guard Public Security and Order, continually strove to uncover circles and punish members. In the final year of his studies Sosnkowski's circle was uncovered by the Okhrana. Warsaw school authorities barred him from completing his schooling and taking the matura final examination in Warsaw. This suspension might have ruined the budding inteligent, but for the inefficiency of the Russian autocracy. A loophole was found, allowing Sosnkowski

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to complete his studies and obtain the all-important diploma. He travelled to the Russian capital and completed the final year of his studies at the Twelfth Classical Gymnasium there in 1904.\(^{20}\)

The Revolution of 1905-1907 in the Russian Empire was a turning point for Sosnkowski just as it was for many others of his generation. Revolution propelled Sosnkowski from the passive resistance of Positivism to active struggle and the independence movement. During the Revolution of 1905 Sosnkowski joined the Polish Socialist Party (Polska Partia Socjalistyczna or PPS) and took up the struggle for Polish independence. Revolution also brought Sosnkowski and Piłsudski together, linking their fortunes.

In the summer of 1904 Sosnkowski returned to Warsaw from St. Petersburg. Warsaw was then in ferment. The Russo-Japanese War, underway since February, had shaken the Russian Empire to its very foundations. Few Poles supported the war, which not only threatened to take the lives of Polish reservists and conscripts, but brought economic hardship at home as well. Reverses in the war with Japan revealed the weakness of the Russian Empire. After demonstrations on May Day, 1 May, Warsaw became the scene of ever growing unrest. Sosnkowski had intended to return to St. Petersburg and take up university studies there. In this atmosphere, "like that which usually proceeds 'a Springtime of Peoples'," and with perhaps a little prodding from a friend, Kazimierz Mayzner, he changed his plans. He took the entrance exam and enrolled in the Engineering School of Emperor Nicholas II Warsaw Polytechnic Institute for the 1904-1905 school year.\(^{21}\)

In this charged atmosphere of Warsaw of summer 1904 Sosnkowski resumed his political activity. He began visiting the salon of Aleksander Świętochowski, one of Positivism and Organic


\(^{21}\) "W 30-lecie współpracy z Marszałkiem Piłsudskim," Sosnkowski, Materiały, 565.
Work's foremost theorists and publicists. Mayzner, whose parents were friends of Świętochowski's and spent the summer at his estate at Brzezine outside of Warsaw, introduced Sosnkowski to the company. Evenings at Brzezine were spent listening to music and in conversation. The discussion often degenerated into monologues delivered by Świętochowski, however. Sosnkowski recalled that these discussions were fascinating.21

Whatever attachment Sosnkowski had to Positivism and Organic Work, his flirtation with them did not outlast the year. In autumn and winter of 1904 Sosnkowski began to drift toward Socialism. Before the year’s end he had joined the Polish Socialist Party. It is unclear quite when and how Sosnkowski first encountered Socialist ideas. Probably he encountered them in the course of his involvement in clandestine student organizations. The works of Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels and various Polish socialists were avidly read in self-education circles. Further exposure to socialism came perhaps during Sosnkowski’s sojourn in St. Petersburg. Sosnkowski was in the Russian capital during the tumultuous winter and Spring 1905. The violence, organization and prosletization carried out by Socialist Revolutionaries and Social Democrats—both Mensheviks and Bolsheviks—could not easily have been ignored. More importantly, the PPS had built a large organization among Poles studying in St. Petersburg. It published its own paper, Freedom (Wolność), and undertook considerable organizational work.23

More direct encounters with Socialism came in 1904 through participation in the student movement at Warsaw Polytechnic Institute. At Warsaw Polytechnic he encountered the Students’ Society (Zjednoczenia Studentów). This organization was established in 1898, the year that the Polytechnic opened. It functioned like the Polish student associations at other universities, the Brotherly Aid (Bratnia Pomoc) and Cooperative (Spojnia) student societies, upon which it was

22 Ibid.

modelled. Its chief aim was to offer aid to new students. However, it also functioned as the political organization of the polytechnic students. At Warsaw Polytechnic two ideological currents prevailed among students. The first was nationalist and was centered upon the Zet (Związek Młodzieży Polskiej) youth organization of the National League (Liga Narodowa), the forerunner of the National Democratic Party. The second current was radical and under the influence of parties of the Left, especially the PPS. Both had perhaps 100 adherents at the Polytechnic. The Students' Society united both trends in its membership.24

Within the Warsaw Polytechnic student movement Sosnkowski leaned toward its Socialist wing, taking part in the activities it sponsored. The first of these was participation in the demonstration at Grzybowski Square on 13 November. The PPS organized the demonstration to protest the mobilization of Polish reservists for service in Manchuria. The Party mobilized several thousands of workers for this demonstration, as well as members of its Combat Organization. The demonstrators assembled in front of All Saints' Church. Police and soldiers attempted to disperse the crowd, but were driven back in a hail of gunfire from PPS agents. The demonstration degenerated into a melee between workers and soldiers of the St. Petersburg Regiment of Guards, and a number of workers were killed. The memory of PPS agents fending off police on the steps of the church and workers falling under the blows and bayonets of soldiers stayed with Sosnkowski. He later claimed that it was an important factor in his joining the PPS.25

Sosnkowski took part in another demonstration a month later, when Polytechnic students organized a protest in a show of solidarity with the assassin, who killed Interior Minister Vyacheslav Plehve, whose trial was then underway in St. Petersburg. On 30 November


25 Sosnkowski, Materiały, 595.
approximately 200 students met at the Polytechnic and resolved to reassemble and make a demonstration the next day. This demonstration was to be an expression of solidarity undertaken in answer to an appeal made by the students of Kiev Polytechnic Institute, where Plehve’s assailant had been a student. Informed of the students’ plans school authorities moved to head them off. On the evening of 31 November they decided to move forward the start of the Christmas recess to 1 December and close the university until the start of the second semester of the 1904-1905 academic year.26

On the morning of 1 December students arrived at the polytechnic’s main building to find that classes had been cancelled and the institute closed. Some students returned home, but others, including Sosnkowski and his friend Mayzner, remained to take part in the demonstration. A procession was formed and made its way from the Polytechnic to Marszalkowska Street, one of the city’s major thoroughfares. The marchers proceeded along Marszalkowska shouting slogans and singing the revolutionary “The Red Flag.” At the corner of Marszalkowska and Żurawia Streets, not far from the city’s center, police broke up the demonstration. A group of 49 students, among them Sosnkowski and Mayzner, was driven into a courtyard, where they were placed under arrest.27

Authorities regarded the affair as of little consequence. Those arrested were released immediately after they had been identified. They were given a day to prepare an explanation of their actions. They were questioned on 2 and 3 December at the headquarters of the Warsaw Ober-Polizeimeister. All of those arrested, including Sosnkowski, claimed to have been about on

26 Director of Emperor Nicholas II Warsaw Polytechnic Institute Lagorio to Minister of Finance, Warsaw, 2 Dec. 1904, Archiwum państwowoe miasta stołecznego Warszawy, Zespół Instytutu Politechnicznego Warszawskiego, cont. 50, fols. 294-5.

business or on their way to the institute, then carried away by the demonstrators. Authorities did not see sufficient evidence that the demonstration was of a revolutionary character to prosecute the students for violation of the prohibition on meetings and undertakings disturbing prevailing order and peace. As a result they were turned over to Polytechnic authorities for disciplinary action.

A few weeks later Sosnkowski, along with a number of his friends, joined the Polish Socialist Party. He did not join the Party out of an infatuation with Karl Marx’s abstract Dialectic Materialism. However, there was a good deal within the Party’s program, which was attractive to him. In an interview in 1935 Sosnkowski explained his choice of Socialism in the following terms:

One evening’s discussion Świętochowski devoted to Józef Piłsudski, sketching as usual with his command of language his [Piłsudski’s] figure, foretelling his important role on coming events. . . Świętochowski spoke of the life and work of Piłsudski, of his strength of will, his nobility and disinterestedness, fiery patriotism. . . Świętochowski’s works inspired in me a subconscious longing; I felt an internal compulsion--I told myself, that I must seek out Piłsudski, come to know him, place myself at his command.

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29 Nolken to Lagorio, Warsaw, 26 December 1904, Archiwum państwowe miasta stolecznego Warszawy, Zespół Instytutu Politechnicznego Warszawskiego, cont. 50, fol. 298r. The punishment administered is unknown.

30 Rosemond Rolle, who presumably dealt with Sosnkowski himself, asserts that he joined the P.P.S. in 1904. Rolle, Kazimerz Sosnkowski: Servant of the White Eagle (London 1944), 14. Sosnkowski confessed that the Grzybowski Square battle influenced his decision to join the P.P.S., and therefore was not yet a member in mid-November. It seems unlikely that he was a member at the time of the demonstration on 1 December.

31 The interview was broadcast by Polish Radio on 14 and 15 September 1935 after the death of Piłsudski, in an attempt to claim the mantle of succession. Sosnkowski, Materiały, 566.
This explanation is unlikely. Above and beyond being an overly melodramatic account, such encouragement cannot have come from Świętochowski, for he was an opponent of Socialism and despised Piłsudski.\footnote{C. Baudoin de Courteney-Jędrzejewicz, "Patriotyzm Piłsudskiego," \textit{Niezpodległość}, n.s. 60(1958):50.}

Socialism and the Polish Socialist Party held numerous appeals for Sosnkowski. The Socialists’ response to the problems of industrialization, then in full swing, was quite appealing. Industrialization or its byproducts, as historian Stanislaw Blejwas points out, caused widespread revulsion in Polish youth and caused an exodus from older creeds to more radical ones, especially to Social Democracy and Polish Socialism.\footnote{Stanislaw Blejwas, \textit{Realism in Polish Politics: Warsaw Positivism and National Survival in Nineteenth Century Poland} (New Haven, 1984), 180.} Positivism, which had dominated Polish political thought since the mid-1860s, proclaimed that industrialization would enrich ordinary Poles. However, in 40 years the opposite had occurred. The PPS as well as the Social Democratic Party of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania (Socjaldemokracja Królestwa Polskiego i Litwy or SDKPiL) championed the economic and political rights of workers. They proposed to right the economic wrongs of the preceding years and obtain for workers real political power directly and immediately. They proposed to do this through revolution—the violent overthrow of Tsarist autocracy and capitalism by the masses.\footnote{Szkic programu PPS, \textit{Powstanie II Rzeczypospolitej: wybór dokumentów, 1866-1925}, Halina Janowska and Tadeusz Jędruszczak, eds. (Warsaw, 1981), 68-74.}

More importantly, the PPS’s socialism was liberally laced with Polish patriotism. Polish independence was the party’s most prominent and immediate goal. The Socialists had championed Polish independence from its foundation in 1892. Its leading theorist at the turn of the century, Kazimierz Kelles-Krauz asserted in his \textit{Polish Independence and the Materialistic Appreciation}
of History that socialism was an evolutionary process. Independence was an essential step in this process, for only independence could make socialization of the means of production possible in Poland. Piłsudski, a member of the Party’s Executive Committee and its most ardent advocate of independence, claimed that Russian rule retarded economic development of the Kingdom by placing extraordinary burdens upon the working class. Independence was essential to the development of capitalism and socialism, and had to be achieved immediately. The slogan of The Worker (Robotnik), the PPS’s official organ, was "Through Polish independence to the liberation of the people." Independence to the PPS’s leaders also meant freedom from Russian socialism and the Russian revolutionary movement.

Polish Socialism, too, was militant. At the turn of the century the PPS, perhaps alone among Polish mass political parties, was committed to action, especially with regard to independence. The Party published not only leaflets but several newspapers, including several wide-circulation, clandestine weeklies such as The Worker and Dawn (Przedszwi). The Party was deeply involved in agitation among workers and organized a number of strikes and marches. Finally, the PPS, especially the elements under Piłsudski’s direction, utilized armed action in the service of the workers’ and Polish cause. Polish Socialists considered the problem of making a revolution as early as 1900. By May 1904 it had organized a Secret Combat Organization (Organizacja Spiskowo-Bojowa or OB). The Fighting Organization was charged with creating a cadre of professional revolutionaries, defending worker demonstrations and executing spies and traitors. The PPS gunmen at Grzybowski Square had been members of the Combat

35 Kazimierz Kelles-Krauz, Historia i rewolucja, ed. Stanisław Fillipowicz (Warsaw, 1983), 138-56 and 175-7 and Józef Piłsudski, "Rusyfikacja," Robotnik, 3 July 1895.

Organization. Socialism offered to intellectuals and students rewards that corresponded to their insurrectionist heritage and that brought immediate releases from the frustrations brought by Russian oppression. Positivism, whose results would accrue over a great period of time, on the other hand held out only abstract satisfaction and long deferred rewards.

It was the patriotic and militant elements of Socialism that appealed most to Sosnkowski. He wrote:

Sincerely speaking, the social and philosophical ideas of socialism were alien to me. Marxism, historical materialism, [and] the theory of surplus value did not appeal to my imagination. To be sure, the humanitarian basis of socialist slogans strongly appealed to my youthful sensibilities, however in fact socialism, [and] the Party struck me as the only force, which organized with arms in hand the struggle for independence.37

This awkward adherence to socialism was not uncommon. Miedzinski, once a Socialist, writes: "I am sure that a thousand times more people were drawn to the revolutionary and socialist ranks by the readings of [patriotic] poets than by the lectures of Karl Marx."38 Historians have gone even further than this. M.K. Dziewanowski writes: "In the PPS leadership the dominant type was a man to whom Marxism was primarily a rationalization of his moral revolt against social as well as national injustice."39 The party's commitment to action, too, guided many in their selection of political affiliation in the ferment before and during the 1905 Revolution. Miedzinski recalled: "Socialism at that time did not come to me solely with the slogan of independence, but with


accomplished deeds, in an atmosphere of secret legends surrounding the accomplishments of the PPS Combat Organization.\textsuperscript{40}

In January 1905 revolution overtook the Kingdom of Poland and Sosnkowski. Revolution engulfed Warsaw and the Kingdom not long after it struck the Russian capital. A general strike, protesting the shooting of workers in St. Petersburg in a peaceful procession on Sunday 22 January 1905, "Bloody Sunday," swept Poland and signalled revolution. Through the spring and Summer of 1905 strike followed strike, and there were numerous demonstrations. Tsarist authorities lost control of the Kingdom of Poland. The prisons were filled beyond their capacity. Between 21 and 23 August 1905 800 members of the Bund Jewish Socialist Party and 500 other socialists were arrested. The Warsaw prisons could not hold such numbers, and those arrested were dispatched to the Novo-Georgevsk Fortress. Unrest continued nevertheless.\textsuperscript{41} Vague concessions for constitutional government offered by the Tsar's Interior Minister A.G. Bulygin as well as the bayonets of the more than 300,000 soldiers in Poland failed to curb disobedience. The PPS was active throughout the winter, spring and Summer months organizing strikes and demonstrations. Its Combat Organization made numerous attempts on the lives of tsarist officials and their stooges. These included attempts on the Governors-General Gen. Konstantin Maximovich and Georgii Skallon and Oberpolizeimeister Aleksander Nolken. To finance its operations the OB raided government treasuries and liquor stores.

In this period Sosnkowski was at work in the party's Warsaw organization. It is not clear what tasks he performed. Later he recalled enigmatically, that he performed "various functions."\textsuperscript{42} However, it is likely that he devoted most of his energies to them. He certainly did not devote

\textsuperscript{40} Miedzinski, "Wspomnienia," 33:16.

\textsuperscript{41} BDFA, 3:180-2.

\textsuperscript{42} "W 30-lecie współpracy z Piłsudskim," Sosnkowski, \textit{Materiały}, 566.
them to his studies or the student movement. After demonstrations at Warsaw Polytechnic, calling for the overthrow of the Russian monarchy, took place on 28 January 1905, authorities closed the institute for the remainder of the academic year. Students in their final year were ordered to take their final exams immediately. The rest were to resume their studies, where they had left off the next year. When Warsaw Polytechnic reopened in the fall of 1905 for the new academic year, student demonstrations too resumed. Events followed the pattern established the previous year. On 26 September days after the school year began a large demonstration led officials to close the Polytechnic.\(^{43}\) On this occasion closing was accompanied by action aimed at punishing the students. All first year students were expelled. Sosnkowski's name was struck from the Warsaw Polytechnic rolls with the others'.\(^{44}\)

Although the nature of Sosnkowski's duties in the PPS is unknown, he apparently executed them in an exemplary fashion. Sosnkowski was a tireless worker, often driving himself beyond the limits of physical endurance. Also, he had a talent for organization. For perhaps these reasons he came to the attention of Party leaders. Before the end of 1905 they sent him abroad to tour the Party's organization in the Polish lands under Prussian and Austrian rule and to organize fund-raising for the Party organization in the Kingdom.\(^{45}\) In the last days of 1905 after completing his mission Sosnkowski found himself in Cracow in Galicia, the Polish lands under enlightened Austrian rule. He remained in Galicia for several months. On 12-23 February the

\(^{43}\) *Wspomnienia byłych studentów*, 55ff.

\(^{44}\) *Spisok "studentov" Varshavskago Politechnicheskago Instituta Imperatora Nikolaya II na 1904-1905 uched. god. Part II: Alfabetnyi ukazatel' k "spisku studentov"*, Archiwum państwowy miasta stołecznego Warszawy, Zespół Instytut Politechnicznego Warszawskiego, cont. 513, p. 111.

\(^{45}\) Ibid.
PPS's Eighth Congress took place in Lvov. Sosnkowski travelled there to take part. He attended as an observer, probably on his own initiative, perhaps out of curiosity.

At the Lvov Congress Right and Left factions within the Party, long at odds over goals, tactics and organization, grappled in the most heated battle to date. The crucial differences between the two factions were over independence—both the independence of Poland and the PPS's independence from the Russian revolutionary movement—and tactics. Even before 1904 divisions over these questions had emerged. The Party had become divided into two factions: the "Young" (Młodzi) and the "Old" (Starzy).

The "Old", led by Pilsudski, were so called, because in their ranks could be found many members of the old guard, like Tytus Filipowicz, Witold Jodko-Narkiewicz and Walery Sławek. Their greatest source of strength was control of the Combat Organization, which they had recently secured. Polish independence was their immediate, for some perhaps their sole aim. Only after independence was won could the political and social reforms enumerated in the party's program be implemented. The "Old", too, eschewed cooperation with Russian revolutionaries. The "Old" leaders conceived of revolution as being an organized and disciplined process. They envisioned the working class under the leadership of the PPS using force of arms to drive Russian forces from Poland. The Party's military arm was to prepare workers beforehand and to provide technical support during the uprising. Until all preparations had been completed and a favorable moment had arrived the revolution was not to go forward. In February 1906 these conditions in the minds of "Old" leaders like Pilsudski had yet to be met, and the only actions authorized were Combat Organization raids on payrolls and liquor stores to obtain money for arms purchases.

46 "W 30-LECIE WSPÓŁPRACY Z PILSUDSKIM," SOSNIEWSKI, MATERIAŁY, 566 AND LIST OF NAMES ATTENDING VIII PPS CONGRESS, ND, ARCHIWUM AKT NOWYCH, ODDZIAŁ VI (HEREAFTER AAN VI), ARCHIWUM PPS, CONT. 305/III/1, FOLDER 4, FOLDS. 44-6.
The "Young", many but by no means all of whom were newcomers to the PPS, placed much less emphasis on independence and favored cooperation and even subordination to the Russian revolutionary movement. Their immediate aim was the overthrow of Tsardom and the establishment of a democratic federative state in its place. Afterward socialism would be implemented. The "Young" concept of revolution was one of a mass upheaval by unarmed workers. Strikes and boycotts were their preferred weapons. Force of arms was to be employed as well, but in the form of terror to disorganize and demoralize the revolution's foes. They favored immediate action to seize the unprecedented opportunities now before them.

The "Young" went over to the attack at the Eighth Congress. They launched an assault on the "Old's" independence program. Pilsudski was called upon to defend the "Old's" independence plank repeatedly, but to no avail. In Lvov the "Young" were more numerous and in control of many local workers' committees thanks to an influx of new, more radical members. They were able to impose a new course on the party. Although the goal of an independent Polish republic, itself, was reaffirmed, its realization was postponed. The toppling of Tsarist autocracy and the establishment of a federation with Russia was put in its place. Cooperation and solidarity with the Russian revolutionary movement was affirmed. The general strike was given pride of place among the party's weapons. Further strengthening their control over the party, the "Young" succeeded in winning a majority in the election of a new Central Workers Committee. Although the "Young" were able to alter the party program, the "Old" successfully defended their position and even obtained for it practical advantage in the sphere of organization. A new statute for the OB was passed at the Congress. It centralized training, direction and support of the party's military arm in the hands of Pilsudski's Secret Combat Department (Wydzial Spiskowo-Bojowy). Its affairs were to be conducted in secret, even from other party organs. A congress of the
Combat Organization was given a decisive voice in the military arm's affairs. Although ostensibly subordinate to the Central Committee and obliged to observe party directives, the Combat Organization was in effect autonomous.

The Eighth Party Congress greatly influenced Sosnkowski. There he encountered for the first time the man with whom his fortunes would be linked for the next thirty years, Piłsudski. Although he knew of Piłsudski, his ideas and his feats, the encounter had a profound effect on Sosnkowski. Piłsudski was very charismatic; he possessed great intelligence, had a swashbuckling persona, a forceful personality and outspoken devotion to the cause of independence. At the Eighth Congress Sosnkowski came under Piłsudski's spell. He heard Piłsudski address the Party Congress on several occasions. Piłsudski's speeches made a deep impression on Sosnkowski. He recalled: "The spirit of his speeches enraptured me. Their charm lay in the uncommon suggestiveness of [his] words; his speeches were fabulous improvisations, thinking out loud." Also, at the Eighth Congress Sosnkowski's views on disputes within the party may have crystallized. If he was still uncommitted to any faction in February 1906, Piłsudski's words won Sosnkowski over to the "Old's" position. Shortly he made common cause with them in the Combat Organization.

After the congress Sosnkowski returned to Cracow. A short time afterward, a matter of days, he volunteered for the Party's Combat Organization. In connection with his joining the Organization he then met with Piłsudski for the first time. In the course of the interview Piłsudski apprised the new recruit of his goals, his views on the Combat Organization, and the nature of the


48 "W 30-lecie współpracy z Piłsudskim," Sosnkowski, Materialy, 566.
struggle that lay ahead. He placed great emphasis on moral and spiritual characteristics. At the end of the interview Sosnkowski told Piłsudski that he understood him, understood what he was to do and what was expected of him. To emphasize that he understood that the Party must steel itself for the coming struggle, he added, citing Pushkin: "... thus the weight of the hammer, crushing brittle glass, forges tempered steel." This pleased Piłsudski, according to Sosnkowski.49 The anecdote may be apocryphal. However, there can be no doubt that Piłsudski was very pleased that Sosnkowski seemed to see eye to eye with him. He admitted Sosnkowski, a novice at Party politics and the deadly work of the Combat Organization, to its Combat School (Szkola Bojowa), which trained instructors.

The Combat School had only just been established, and Sosnkowski was a member of the first class. It was located in Cracow on Karmelicka Street. Its director was Władysław Jaxa-Różeń, an old party hand and later director of the Polish Republic’s State Police. Direction of the school, however, was actually in Piłsudski’s hands. The goal of the school was to train instructors, who would upon completion of the course returned to their local organizations to carry out instruction of rank and file members. The course utilized both lectures and practical exercises. Lectures embraced military theory and history, the use of firearms, street fighting, map reading and the handling of explosives. The course lasted six weeks.50

It does not appear that the close friendship that was to become the hallmark of Piłsudski’s and Sosnkowski’s relationship had yet developed. However, during the spring of 1906 Sosnkowski was able to win Piłsudski’s confidence. The first group of the School’s students was divided into three groups of five, each of which was commanded by a student. Despite his

49 Ibid., 567.

inexperience, Sosnkowski was selected to lead one squad.\footnote{Hempel, "Wspomnienia," 147.} Also, once the course was completed, Sosnkowski was chosen to stay on as an instructor. During the next course he lectured on explosives.\footnote{Kalabiński and Tych, \textit{Czwarte Powstanie}, 309.} In June 1906 after the second course ended Sosnkowski, "Comrade Ryszard," as he was known, was made deputy commander of the Combat Organization’s Warsaw district. Shortly afterward Sosnkowski became chief of the Warsaw organization.\footnote{"W 30-lecie współpracy z Piłsudskim," Sosnkowski, \textit{Materiały}, 567-8 and Ignacy Daszynski, \textit{Pamiętniki}, 2 vols. (Cracow, 1926), 1:233.}

Sosnkowski’s first months in Warsaw were spent revamping the district’s organization and expanding its membership. Sosnkowski like Piłsudski believed that there could be no thought of open battle with Tsarist forces without sufficient numbers of trained insurrectionists.\footnote{Sosnkowski, \textit{Materiały}, 567-8.} In early Summer the Warsaw organization was far from possessing sufficient trained insurrectionists, and was even in some disarray. And, on Piłsudski’s orders actions were restricted to robberies to obtain monies to purchase arms. Since its inception in 1904 the Combat Organization developed in an improvised fashion. Throughout 1904 and 1905 the basic unit was the combat squad (bojówka) of ten men. Three squads constituted a detachment. This organization was unwieldy. As such it, too, held a great risk of discovery. In February 1906 the Combat Organization was given a new disposition, which called for five-man squads (piątki).\footnote{Janusz Wojtasik, \textit{Walka Zbrojna o niepodległość, 1864-1907} (Warsaw, 1987), 190. Sosnkowski mentions six-man squads (szóstki), \textit{Materiały}, 568.} In June and July Sosnkowski implemented this new scheme in Warsaw. In the last half of 1905 the Warsaw Combat Organization had been nearly crippled by arrests. The Okhrana had even succeeded in decapitating it, capturing its leaders—Józef Montwiłł-Mirecki and Sławek. Great efforts were made...
at this time to make good these losses and further expand the Warsaw organization's membership as well. Sosnkowski's work produced results almost immediately. Membership rose rapidly during the mid-summer months. Ultimately during Sosnkowski's tenure 1,122 served in the Combat Organization in Warsaw.56

In the first half of 1906 in keeping with Piłsudski's and his lieutenants' views, operations were restricted. However, in late summer the Combat Organization changed course. In June Piłsudski's Combat Department came under attack from both the party leadership and the rank and file of the military arm. Throughout 1905 and the first half of 1906 the Combat Organization was in ferment. Its rank and file chafed under the command's restrictions against attacks. Tsar Nicholas II's October Manifesto, which promised only modest constitutional reforms, and elections in May 1906 triggered increasing agitation by the radical parties and new rounds of protests and strikes by workers. Members wanted to join in the battles then underway with Tsarist forces. Often members took matters into their own hands, taking action without commanders' permission.57 Also, the Wydzial Bojowy came under attack from the PPS leadership, dominated by the "Young". At a Party Council in June resolutions were passed, calling for Combat Organization units to be released from the direct control of the Party's Combat Department and placed under the direction of District Workers' Committees and bringing the Combat Department in line with the party's Central Committee's directives. Both attacks threatened not only to upset Piłsudski's plans, but deprive him of a base within the Party as well. However, a new compromise tactical course adopted in mid-summer, which saved Piłsudski's position.


The compromise was worked out at the First Combat Organization Conference. The conference was convened by Piłsudski in response to the assaults on his leadership. Once it had convened it resolved that it constituted a congress of the Combat Organization, and therefore that it alone had the authority to decide the course of the organization. Sixty-six commanders, instructors, and rank and file members took part in the conference, which convened in Cracow on 5 July. In the course of its deliberations the Conference was moved to the mountain resort of Zakopane. It ended on 12 July. Debate at the Conference was heated and acrimonious. At the conference Piłsudski and his lieutenants were forced to give in to calls for action from within and without, authorizing OB commanders to undertake immediately attacks on Tsarist institutions, police, gendarmes; jail breaks, robberies and reprisals for Russian excesses. At the conference a new Combat Department leadership was elected. The Piłsudski camp here was forced to accept the election of two proponents of immediate action to the Department’s five-man governing committee. However, they were able to secure the ratification of a new statute for the Combat Organization, which though it subordinated the Combat Organization to the Central Committee reaffirmed its independence of local Party bodies and the direction of the Combat Department.58

The part Sosnkowski played at the conference was of great importance. During the second day of deliberation a commission was constituted to investigate the activities of opposition leaders, Franciszek Smolka, Tynus Bobrowski and others. Sosnkowski was elected to the five-man commission. No transcripts of the commission’s deliberations were made, but much suggests that Sosnkowski played a key role. Stanisław Hempel, who attended the conference in his capacity as head of the Dąbrowa Basin OB, recalled that Sosnkowski figured prominently in the inves-

58 Wnioski z I Ogólnobojowej Konferencji P.P.S., AAN VI, Archiwum PPS, cont. 305/III/4, folder 1, fols. 38-41.
Also, Sosnkowski prepared the commission's final report, which included recommendations on actions to be taken against Smolka and the others. The commission found that Smolka, the most vocal opponent of Pilsudski's line and champion of the Central Committee's resolutions, had acted without the Combat Department's approval, when he had organized opposition meetings aimed at pressuring the Department to take the OB over to the offensive. The commission's report painted these actions in the darkest terms, suggesting that Smolka and his confederates conspired to circumvent the Combat Department's authority. In its report the commission recommended that Smolka and the rest be suspended for six and four weeks. Ultimately Smolka and one other were suspended for six months, another for three months. The rest received severe reprimands. The work of the commission discredited opposition leaders. It secured for Piłsudski and his followers important advantage in dealing with the more numerous opposition, allowing them to salvage control over the Combat Organization.

In the months preceding and during the Cracow conference Sosnkowski's stock rose greatly in Piłsudski's estimation. At the conference Piłsudski acknowledged that he saw in him a most trustworthy and capable subordinate. As noted above, at the conference a new leadership for Combat Department was elected. Piłsudski, who was not returned to the leadership and had to content himself with behind-the-scenes control through command of the Combat Department's staff, put forward candidates, who could be trusted to pursue his policies. Among them was Sosnkowski. Sosnkowski recalled: "Clearly the direction of my work corresponded to the intentions and desires of Piłsudski, since at the combatants' conference, I was his candidate for

59 Hempel, "Wspomnienia," 151.

60 The report bears only the signature of "Henryk," chairman of the conference with his notes. However, it is written in Sosnkowski's hand. Report, AAN VI, Archiwum PPS, cont. 305/III/4, folder 1, fols. 52-3.

61 Ibid.
the Combat Department." Sosnkowski was not elected. However, it is clear that Piłsudski was coming to rely more and more upon Sosnkowski.

After the OB Conference and in keeping with its resolutions a large-scale terror campaign was launched. Attacks began almost immediately. On 27 July 1906 OB members robbed a train near Herby. The next day a postal service wagon was robbed by a combat squad near Pruszków. The raid netted 172,000 rubles. These were followed by even more spectacular raids. On 2 August the Kingdom’s chief police official, General A.N. Markgrafski was assassinated. Theses attacks, regardless of how spectacular they were, were but a prelude to those to come, however. The high point of the summer campaign was the so-called "Bloody Wednesday" attacks of 15 August. This was a nation-wide one-day offensive, in which the whole of the Combat Organization took part. The decision for the Bloody Wednesday attacks was made at a meeting of OB leaders in July. The meeting was held at Gustaw Danitowski’s retreat at Falenica outside of Warsaw. Piłsudski, Sosnkowski and 50 others took part. At the meeting Combat Organization leaders resolved to launch attacks throughout the kingdom, set the date for attack and coordinated and planned the attacks themselves. The attacks were aimed at striking as many targets as possible and therefore forcing Tsarist authorities to disperse the forces at their disposal, mounting guards at public places and government buildings. There was to be no follow-up to the attacks. Hempel describes the decision as a compromise. At the meeting Piłsudski, who was far from reconciled to the new OB line, assented only grudgingly. His acceptance perhaps came at the price of a follow-up to the action. Given his optimism in summer, it is possible that Sosnkowski may have been among the proponents of a large-scale coordinated offensive and not in Piłsudski’s

62 Piłsudski later claimed that he did not assent to the Bloody Wednesday attacks. Piłsudski, *Pisma*, 9:280. Sosnkowski, however, claimed he did. Sosnkowski to Miedzinski, Arundal, Canada, 8 April 1959, Biblioteka P.A.N. Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich (hereafter OSS), Archiwum Kazimierza Sosnkowskiego, cont. 16578/II, fol. 34. This is confirmed by Hempel, who added that Piłsudski did so "without entusiasm." Hempel, "Wspomnienia," 152.
corner. However, in the absence of a detailed account of the meeting, this can only be speculation.

When the appointed day came, bojkówka throughout the Kingdom took to the streets at dawn. PPS agents gunned down Tsarist officials, police, soldiers and agents provocateurs. Patrols were attacked, and police stations bombed. Throughout the day bojkówka made one sortie after another. PPS terrorists killed 67 gendarmes and soldiers throughout the kingdom. Thanks to Sosnkowski's labors over the preceding months, the Warsaw Organization did particularly well against the enemy. In Warsaw the Combat Organization compelled the gendarmerie and garrison to abandoned the streets to the PPS for days after the attack. Miedziński, who visited Warsaw a week after the attacks, recalled that soldiers stood guard at all police buildings, post offices and stores. So great was the strain on government forces that Skallon reported to St. Petersburg: "... Warsaw, and with it the entire country, soon [will be] without a police force."

Although Bloody Wednesday was not followed by a coup de grâce, the summer campaign continued with further attacks. An attempt was made on Skallon's life. It miscarried, for one of the bombs thrown by a trio of femmes fatale failed to explode. Polish revolutionaries made good this failure with the assassinations of the governor of Warsaw Nikolai Vonlarlarskii and the gendarmerie commander Colonel Count Essen-Stenbock-Fermora.

Although the summer campaign was his baptism of fire, Sosnkowski showed exceptional mettle. As commander of the most important and strongest OB command Sosnkowski orchestrated a great part of the terror campaign of summer. It was his men, who assassinated

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63 Robotnik, 22 September 1906.

64 Miedziński, "Wspomnienia," 33:18.

65 Quoted in Babinski, Sosnkowski, 22. On the effect of the Fighting Organization's attacks in Warsaw, the British consul in Warsaw reported: "The police are paralyzed and the soldiers not sufficiently mobile to deal with this plague." BDFA, 3:104.
Markgrafskii and Vonlartarskii. In the "Bloody Wednesday" attacks the Warsaw organization chalked up 16 Russian gendarmes and soldiers killed and 17 wounded. He later remembered the attacks of 15 August with pride. Bloody Wednesday would be very difficult to forget, he thought. However, any euphoria that the success of summer may have brought Sosnkowski and other members of the Combat Organization rapidly disappeared in autumn. In autumn forces from within and without brought about the collapse of the revolutionary movement. First, the "Young"-"Old" conflict reemerged, this time to cast asunder the Polish Socialist Party. Second, Tsarist forces were able to break the revolutionary movement.

In the first days of September as a response to the "Bloody Wednesday" attacks Russian armed forces led a four-day pogrom against the Jewish population of Siedlce. As a result the PPS Central Committee shrank from authorizing further attacks. However, the Combat Organization undertook a number of robberies to obtain monies to support its operations without the Committee's approval. On 20 October the post office at Wloclawek was attacked. Three days later bojówki struck the railway cashier's office at Radom. Finally on 8 November the Railway station at Rogów was raided. The Rogów heist netted for the OB 30,155 rubles. It, however, had been undertaken against the express wishes of the Central Committee.

Pilsudski complicated matters when he published an attack on the "Young" Central Committee line, which appeared in the 1 November Tribune (Trybuna), a Cracow-based journal controlled by the "Old." The article, "The Politics of Active Struggle" ("Polityka Walki Czynnej"), attacked the "Young's" faith in strikes and mass action by unarmed workers. They

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66 Tych and Kalabinski, Czwarte powstanie, 320-3.

67 "W 30-lecie współpracy z Pilsudskim," Sosnkowski, Materiały, 565 and 568.

could not possibly topple Tsardom. He warned that weakness of government forces was only temporary and that a sharp reaction was in the offing. Only revolutionary soldiers in an armed uprising could take on the soldiers of the Tsar, and he argued that the role of the Party was to prepare such soldiers. Pitsudski wrote: "... only one path remains open to the liberation movement—the creation of a force, a brutal physical force, which could attempt to break the power of the government." Pitsudski's broadside was the opening shot in new duel over tactics, and it was a direct hit. The article and Combat Organization operations infuriated the "Young", and the Central Committee ordered the dissolution of the Combat Department. However, the battle had yet to run its full course. The struggle moved toward a showdown at the upcoming the Ninth Party Congress.

Before the start of the Ninth Congress another conference of the Combat Organization was convoked by Pilsudski. The Second Conference of the Combat Organization took place in mid-November in Zakopane, and 43 OB members participated. At the meeting representatives voiced their approval for the Rogów raid and solidarity with the Combat Department in its latest wrangle with the Central Committee. Also, the conference lent its support to the "Old" program of independence and insurrection. The conference rejected federation with the Russian revolutionary movement. It called for the militarization of the party—in preparation for a war of national liberation—through the formation of workers' militia. This militia was to be directed by the Combat Department. Lastly, the conference selected a four-man delegation to represent it at the Ninth Congress. The delegation was headed by Pilsudski. A number of "Young" supporters attended

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70 Deklaracja złożona przez delegatów Konferencji Bojowej na dziewiątym Zjeździe P.P.S., AAN VI, Archiwum PPS, cont.305/III/1, folder 5, fol. 2.
the Zakopane conclave. In spite of this the Conference appears to have been a carefully orchestrated affair, calculated both to strengthen Piłsudski's hand in dealing with the "Young" majority and to secure the secession of the Combat Organization in the event of a split.

The Ninth Congress of the Polish Socialist Party convened in Vienna on 19 November 1906. It is perhaps most notable not for what occurred, but what did not take place during its deliberations. At the Ninth Congress the "Young" and "Old" did not face off in a final battle royal. On the first day of the Congress the mandates of the four Combat Organization delegates were called into question. Two were accepted. Two—including Piłsudski's—were rejected, because the two were members of the now defunct Combat Department. Piłsudski and his followers then left the hall. The next day Piłsudski was allowed to address the Congress. Despite the conciliatory nature of his address, the Congress that day passed a resolution, which expelled from the Party the former members of the Combat Department and all those, who were in solidarity with them.

After their expulsion Piłsudski and his followers decamped to Cracow, summoned other supporters and convened their own Party congress. At this Congress the "Old" constituted their own Party: the PPS—Revolutionary Fraction (Frakcja Rewolucyjna). A Central Committee was elected—Jodko, Stanisław Tor and Franciszek Turowicz. A military arm was constituted on the basis of the old PPS Combat Organization, most of whose members went over to Revolutionary Fraction. It was organized upon the same lines as the "Old" organization. It was autonomous and under the centralized direction of a Combat Department. The only innovation was the creation of a Workers' Militia, whose task was to be the militarization of the party rank and file. The Fraction Party's program maintained the PPS's commitment to democracy and socialism. However, within the program independence was restored to primacy, the immediate aim. The

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71 Hempel was one. Hempel, "Wspomnienia," 224.
Party's tactics changed accordingly. Independence was to be attained through an armed uprising, carried out by a proletariat trained beforehand by the Combat Organization. The Fraction later regained the mantle of the PPS and much of its rank and file, but only after 1909.72

The PPS split dealt the forces of revolution a terrible blow. The Revolutionary Fraction was a mere shadow of the old PPS. Most of the Combat Organization went over to the Revolutionary Fraction. The Revolutionary Fraction, too, secured the service of the The Worker. Only the Częstochowa party organization went over to the Revolutionary Fraction, however. The PPS faction led by the "Young", which took the name PPS--Left (Lewica) after the split, although it retained the majority of Party workers, too was crippled by the split. It was without a military arm, having not only lost cadres of terrorists, but equipment, instructors and commanders as well. The party, too, suffered from the loss of capable and popular figures like Piłsudski, Jodko, Feliks Perl, Tomasz Arciszewski and others. In some instances it lost the support of considerable segments of the population, when they went over to the Revolutionary Fraction.73

Sosnkowski had only a minor role in the party councils of autumn 1906. There exists no transcript of the November Combat Organization Conference. His attendance, not to mention his role therefore is uncertain. However, it is highly likely that he took part. He was entitled to, for he was commander of the important Warsaw district. Also, as one of Piłsudski's most reliable subordinates, it is unlikely that Piłsudski would have excluded him. Sosnkowski's presence at the Ninth Congress is more problematic. As only four delegates of the military arm attended, it is


73 Stanisław Nowosiński recalled that the overwhelming majority of workers in the Dąbrowa Basin transferred their allegiance to the PPS--Revolutionary Fraction, "Z czasów Rewolucji 1905 roku i późniejszych walk o niepodległość Polski," Niepodległość, o.s. 2(1932):395. Kwapiszki that more than a third of Łódź workers' gave their support to the PPS-FR. Kwapiszki, Wspomnienia, 41.
even likely he did not attend. Sosnkowski, however, did take part in the congress constituting the Revolutionary Fraction. His role there was small. He spoke on only one occasion, and on a matter of little consequence. Sosnkowski's most important action with regard to the party split was to go over to the Revolutionary Fraction and to command in the new Party's military arm.

Autumn 1906 saw other, graver reverses for the revolutionary movement. In autumn Tsarist forces went over to the attack and shortly succeeded in breaking the revolutionary movement. The tide had begun to turn against the revolutionaries in October 1905. In October Tsar Nicholas II issued a Manifesto, which provided for a legislative assembly. Numerous Polish parties accepted this concession. In December a call was issued by the revolutionary parties for a general strike, but it elicited a feeble response. The convening of the promised legislative assembly, the Duma, in April 1906 further weakened the forces of revolution in Poland. In August the Russian government introduced a program of field general courts-martial, which permitted authorities to carry out summary executions upon the slightest suspicion. These allowed authorities to quell unrest swiftly and in a decisive fashion. In the cities the lockout was used to quell worker disturbances. In the case of the Łódź general strike, which began on 10 October 1906, even more despicable means were used. Employers with the support of authorities and the nationalist labor union, The National Workers' Union (Narodowy Związek Robotników), resorted to the assassination of the most troublesome workers. More than 300 workers were assassinated in the course of the four-month strike.

74 Protokół I Konferencji PPS-FR, AAN VI, Archiwum PPS, cont. 305/III/4, folder 2, fols. 6v.

Revolutionaries fared as poorly as workers and peasants in autumn and then winter 1906. The military arms of the PPS and then its successors were hounded by the Okhrana, which disposed of 40 investigators and 300-400 undercover agents, provocateurs and informers. The summer attacks, in fact, triggered a great round of arrests and executions. Several hundreds were arrested; they were incarcerated 20 to 30 in a cell in the Warsaw Citadel. In autumn the Okhrana broke Sosnkowski's command. An informer betrayed many members of the rank and file, and numerous arrests were made. Arrest followed arrest; denunciation begot denunciation. Police thus unravelled the Warsaw Combat Organization. Known to a number of traitors and spies, Sosnkowski was forced to flee Warsaw in late September. His successor, Franciszek Lipiński, was less fortunate. He was betrayed and arrested not long after assuming command. After fleeing Warsaw Sosnkowski took command of the depleted Radom organization. He remained there only a short time, being forced to move on again, this time to the Dąbrowa Basin arm of the Combat Organization.76 Arrests continued throughout 1907. Between November 1907 and September 1908, 913 individuals were tried in courts-martial. Over 75 percent of the defendants were PPS members. The trials produced 686 convictions and 258 death sentences.77 The ranks of the PPS were further depleted when many of those, who evaded arrest, fled the Kingdom for the relative safety of Galicia in the Habsburg Empire. The Combat Organization was in its "death agony." One year later the British consul reported: "Both the Polish Party of Socialists and the Bund have practically ceased to exist . . ."78

76 Sosnkowski, Materiały, 568, Franciszek Lipiński, Relacja z pracy w O.B. P.P.S., AAN, VI, Archiwum PPS, cont. 305/III/20, folder 2, no. 3, fols. 1-1 and Hempel, "Wspomnienia," 219ff.


The effects of the internal divisions and the defeat of revolutionary forces in 1906 and 1907 were magnified by the utter failure of the revolution to achieve anything of lasting value. The balance sheet of the revolution was poor. In the course of 1906 the PPS, at the height of its strength, killed 462 Russian soldiers and gendarmes.\textsuperscript{79} However, this had little appreciable effect on the 300,000-man army in the Kingdom. Socialist bojówki on occasion were able to drive Russian forces from the streets, but they could not keep them away for long. The concession of constitutional government was a dubious victory. Even before the revolution gave up its ghost, two legislatures, Dumas, had been called and dismissed. Russian rule was as strongly entrenched in Poland as it was before the revolution, and Russification proceeded as it had before.

The reverses of fall and winter crushed individual party members. The revival of Russian fortunes engendered a sense of hopelessness and despair. By 1907 all realized that the battle was over and that they had lost. Activist Michal Sokolnicki remembered: "The conditions of the existence of the nation . . . at the start of 1907 did not give room for an optimistic view or bold hopes."\textsuperscript{80} The Party split had just as devastating an effect on revolutionaries as their defeat at the hands of the Russians. Many were embittered by the split. Some like Piłsudski underwent a deep spiritual or psychological crisis as a result. "In a sense," writes historian Andrzej Garlicki, "it undermined nearly 15 years of his life. All plans and expectations came crashing down."\textsuperscript{81}

At the end of 1906 and start of 1907 Sosnkowski underwent a crisis perhaps deeper than his comrades'. Although he shared the "Old's" belief in the need for preparation, in summer he felt that the moment for an insurrection at hand and was quite optimistic as to its chances.\textsuperscript{82}

\textsuperscript{79} Figures compiled by the British consul in Warsaw. BDFA, 4:235.

\textsuperscript{80} Michał Sokolnicki, 
\textit{Czternaście lat} (Warsaw, 1936), 266.

\textsuperscript{81} Andrzej Garlicki, 

\textsuperscript{82} "W 30-lecie współpracy z Piłsudskim," Sosnkowski, 
\textit{Materiały}, 568.
Also, Piłsudski, Sławek, Jodko and others had already endured defeat, imprisonment and even exile to Siberia. One of the "Old", the revolution was for Sosnkowski a formative experience. This experience left no room for 'bold hopes.' As early as autumn he had come to believe that rebellion's chances had melted away. As he watched the tide of revolution ebb from his post in the dreary coal fields of the Dąbrowa Basin in the winter of 1906-1907 Sosnkowski fell into a deep depression. He recalled: "I continued to work [driven by] the force of momentum [gained earlier], without conviction; the revolution was dead."\(^3\)

For a time Sosnkowski carried on in his work in Dąbrowa. Winter 1907 was for the PPS-Revolutionary Fraction there a period of rebuilding, as activists strove to reconstruct a party with the odds and ends they inherited.\(^4\) Sosnkowski presumably took up such work, to make up for losses due to defections and arrests and to prepare the cadres of the Party's program called for. Before long, however, he could no longer continue and decided to quit the Kingdom. Given his propensity to drive himself beyond the limits of physical endurance, Comrade Ryszard's depression was perhaps compounded by exhaustion. In February then Comrade Ryszard, at age 22, joined the flood of revolutionaries-turned-refugees, making for the safe haven of Galicia. Once in Cracow he obtained a leave of absence from the Combat Department. To obtain the leave he proposed to travel to Italy to resume his studies, but in fact travelled there on holiday.\(^5\) Leaving

\(^3\) Ibid., 568.

\(^4\) Nowosiński, "Z czasów," 395ff.

\(^5\) The date and reason for Sosnkowski's departure are problematic. He claimed that he left the Kingdom at the start of 1907 and travelled to Italy in order to resume his studies. "W 30-lecie współpracy z Piłsudskim," Sosnkowski, Materiały, 568. Like many revolutionaries leaving the Kingdom, he first travelled to Cracow. Receipts for a daily allowance paid out by the PPS Foreign Committee place him there only mid-February. He left for Italy only in late February, long after the school year began. It is most likely that he travelled to Italy on holiday, to rest and recover. Receipts, 13-16 February 1907, AAN VI, Archiwum PPS, cont. 305/IV/24, folder 7, fols. 12, 16, 20, 32.
the Kingdom and departing for Italy in 1907, Sosnkowski did not know that he was going into exile. He was not to return to his home and family in the Russian lands of partitioned Poland for ten years.
The collapse of the Revolution of 1905 profoundly shook the revolutionary movement led by the Polish Socialist Party. It caused leaders to reexamine their strategies and to recast the movement. Sosnkowski played an important part founding the Union of Active Struggle (Związek Walki Czynnej or ZWC), a non-partisan military training organization. The Union of Active Struggle and its offspring, the Riflemen’s Union (Związek Strzelecki), served as vehicles for conventional preparations and for uniting patriots all stripes. Out of these evolved the Military Movement, whose aim was a war of national liberation and which pinned its hopes on the coming European war.

The origins of the Military Movement lie in the conclusions the men and women of the Revolutionary Fraction drew from the experience of the Revolution of 1905. In 1907 those who had evaded arrest and imprisonment and who had not given up on the goal of revolution huddled in exile in Galicia. Gradually they shook off the despair that had overtaken them at the end of the struggle and began to piece together their movement from the flotsam and jetsam of revolution’s aftermath. As they did this they began to evaluate their experience. This they did with great gusto. In his memoirs Sławek wrote: “Revolution opened up new horizons. Previously
revolution had appeared to be an abstract idea. It was [now] reality, its forms and conditions we knew."

Quickly opinions emerged as to the causes of their failure and what must be done to succeed, when next revolution convulsed the Russian Empire.

In 1907 and 1908 the men and women of the PPS-FR came to regard as one of their chief failures insufficient preparation. Revolution's outbreak had caught the leadership of the PPS unawares and unprepared. The Party's military arm had been constituted only in 1904, and work within it had an improvised character until 1906. After the Eighth Congress work progressed by leaps and bounds, but even during this peak period of preparation the Organization disposed of little more than 4,330 men, most of whom were untrained and without arms. All believed that revolution would again visit the Russian Empire, and therefore to avoid failure the next time greater preparation was in order. Sławek wrote: "The solution was simple--the next wave of revolution had to find us better prepared."

At the close of 1907 and the start of 1908 there also emerged the view that the revolutionary movement must be broader. Many in the PPS-FR believed that even a party restored to its former fighting strength was not strong enough to make a successful insurrection. At the start of 1908 in an article in the theoretical organ of the Revolutionary Fraction Przedświt(Predawn) Bolesław Jędrzejowski, a close collaborator of Piłsudski's, pointed out the need for allies. He proposed forging an alliance with non-proletarian parties, citing as an the example the National Democratic Party. In the next number the newspaper's more doctrinaire editors challenged, but did not repudiate Jędrzejowski's proposal. They argued that alliances were

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2 Pająk, Organizacja bojowa, table 1.

necessary, but ought only be made when no time remained to convince others of the superiority of the Party’s program.4

The conclusions, which most of the men and women of the PPS-FR derived from the experience of 1905 were limited. They continued to posit the struggle was to take the form of a revolution made by the proletariat aided by the Combat Organization and directed by the Party. In evaluating the experience of the 1905 Revolution their perspective was circumscribed by their adherence to Socialism. Although the Revolutionary Fraction championed independence, its commitment to Socialism and the cause of the working man was nevertheless great. The program adopted at the Tenth Party Congress in March 19075 began by affirming the Party’s character: "The Polish Socialist Party is the expression of the needs and ideals of the working class in Poland and the political organization of that class. The Polish Socialist Party desires the liberation of the entire people from the economic, political and national slavery."6 More far-reaching views regarding the nature of the struggle and movement were out of the question.

Pilsudski was bound by no such considerations in evaluating the experience of 1905, and as a result arrived at different conclusions. Entering the Revolution of 1905 Pilsudski’s attachment to Socialism was already questionable. Garlicki writes: "Legend attributes to Pilsudski the saying, that he left the red streetcar at the stop marked independence. This aphorism is not in keeping with the truth, because Pilsudski left the red streetcar in the first years of the twentieth century and he travelled on it for reasons other than the remaining passengers." Pilsudski had

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5 Party congresses were numbered consecutively with those preceding the split at the Ninth Congress to suggest continuity and strengthen the Revolutionary Fraction’s claim upon the PPS mantle.

rung down the curtain on PPS-led revolution perhaps even as the tide of revolution ebbed in 1906.\(^7\)

In evaluating the successes and failures of 1905 Piłsudski judged that the revolutionary movement must be recast and given a new form. Piłsudski had long viewed the struggle with Tsardom as an insurrection or war of national liberation with the proletariat and Party cast in the role of a rebel army. He now concluded that the Polish workers aided by a corps of trained terrorists did not constitute a force strong enough to prosecute this war of liberation. In an insurrection they would do battle with the Russian army, and he believed, "Against an army must fight an army."\(^8\) Piłsudski judged that the movement's chief task now was to build that army. Piłsudski too concluded that the revolutionary movement was too narrow. He believed that in order to win independence the movement must be as broad as possible. All who desired independence regardless of political creed must join with the PPS-FR in the service of this cause, and in an article in *The Worker* on 4 February 1908 he voiced this proposition.\(^9\) Already in 1906 Piłsudski had been moving toward such views. Their outlines are clearly distinguishable in his inflammatory "Politics of Active Struggle."

Comrade Mieczysław, as Piłsudski was known, immediately embarked on a broad effort to give the movement the form he thought appropriate. His efforts here followed two tacks, one secret and the other open. First, Piłsudski began to cast about, with little success, for a vehicle to effect this transformation. Long the *spiritus movens* of the Party's military arm he believed the Combat Organization was unsuited for the task that now seemed clear and had given up on it. Piłsudski kept this conclusion to himself, confiding it only to his most trusted collaborator Jodko-


\(^8\) Wacław Lipiński, *Historia Związku Strzeleckiego* (Warsaw, 1930), 18.

Narkiewicz. In a letter to Jodko on 1 December 1907 he wrote: "I would like to peacefully work on the creation of something more suitable to our aims than the present Combat Organization."\textsuperscript{10} Second, he embarked upon an open program of what he called "military agitation." Piłsudski attempted to win over his lieutenants and others in the Party to his views on the struggle and a program of conventional military preparations aimed at creating an army.\textsuperscript{11} Among those whom he approached was Sosnkowski, recently returned from his sojourn in Italy and Switzerland.

In September 1907 Sosnkowski had returned to Galicia and settled in Lvov, where he enrolled in the School of Architecture of Lvov Polytechnic Institute. Not long after his arrival in Lvov Sosnkowski married Stefania Wiktoria Sobańska. Shortly the couple conceived a child and a daughter was born the following summer, though little is known of this union.\textsuperscript{12} Also, shortly after his arrival in Galicia Sosnkowski returned to the Party fold. Sosnkowski had never really left the Party, registering with its Foreign Committee (Komitet Zagraniczny), when he left the Kingdom for Galicia in February 1907. Galicia lay in the sphere of the Foreign Committee, for the PPS writ ran only to the Kingdom's borders. Galicia was the province of the allied Polish Social Democratic Party of Galicia and Teschen Silesia (Polska Partia Socjalno-Demokratyczna

\textsuperscript{10} Piłsudski to Jodko-Narkiewcz, Zakopane, 1 Dec. 1907, Ibid., 2:286.

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{12} Some details of the marriage, which was annulled in 1921, are recorded in the documents relating to Sosnkowski's second marriage. Kościół św. Jana Chrzciciela, Warsaw, Księga zaślubionych, 1921, poz. 127. Sosnkowski rarely divulged details of his private life to friends as well as outsiders, and he was careful to keep details of the union, which was annulled in 1921, from friends and collaborators. Of Sosnkowski closest friends and coworkers only Sławek made mention of Sosnkowski's marriage. Sławek, "Wspomnienia," 22(1989):144. Zofia Stulgńska, a family friend claims that Sosnkowski kept details of the marriage from his second wife, Jadwiga Żukowska, for years after they were married. Zofia Stulgńska, Gruszki na wierzbie (Warsaw, 1972), 361-2.
Galicyi i Śląska Cieszyńskiego or PPSD). Only in September, however, did Sosnkowski resume an active role in the Party.\textsuperscript{13}

Not long after his return to the Party fold Sosnkowski renewed his association with Piłsudski. In autumn 1907 a series of meetings between the two took place. At these meetings Piłsudski asked Sosnkowski to take command of the Party’s military organization in Lvov, which Sosnkowski accepted.\textsuperscript{14} Also, in the course of these meetings it is likely that Piłsudski presented his views on the struggle ahead and his case for conventional military preparations. Sosnkowski was a likely target for his "military agitation." He was a trusted lieutenant and favored Piłsudski in the past. Piłsudski found Sosnkowski receptive. He perhaps had Sosnkowski in mind, when in his 1 December letter to Jodko he wrote: "I feared that it [the response to calls for conventional military preparations] would be laughable, but to my great surprise I have found people, who gladly listen to such things."\textsuperscript{15} In order to bring Sosnkowski around fully to his ideas Piłsudski urged that he take up the study of military affairs.\textsuperscript{16} These seeds found in Sosnkowski fertile soil and soon yielded uncommon bounty.

Shortly after his meetings with Piłsudski Sosnkowski assumed his duties as commander of the Party’s military organizations in Lvov. Sosnkowski’s Lvov command included a new Combat School and a small number of newly formed Militia units. The Lvov Combat School was similar to the one in Cracow, upon which it was modelled. As the PPS-FR’s commander in Lvov Sosnkowski also disposed of three six-man Militia squads. Two were composed of workers, one

\textsuperscript{13} "W 30-lecie współpracy z marszałkiem Piłsudskim," Sosnkowski, \textit{Materiały}, 569.

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 569.

\textsuperscript{15} Piłsudski to Jodko-Narkiewicz, 7 Dec. 1907, Piłsudski, \textit{Pisma}, 2:286.

\textsuperscript{16} "W 30-lecie współpracy z Piłsudskim," Sosnkowski, \textit{Materiały}, 569.
of Lvov Polytechnic students.\(^\text{17}\) The Party's Galician Militia units were almost exclusively occupied with training. Training in these circles proceeded along lines somewhat different than in previous years. As in past years would-be terrorists received training in the use of fire arms, the handling of explosives, street fighting and similar subjects. A number of new elements had been introduced, however. In addition to the above, members now received instruction in military organization, signals, demolitions, drill and infantry tactics.\(^\text{18}\)

At the close of 1907 and the start of 1908 Sosnkowski became involved in efforts to enlist non-Socialists in PPS-FR preparations for revolution. His efforts naturally centered upon the students of Lvov Polytechnic. The student body was highly politicized, and a number of patriotic and self-help societies existed among the students.\(^\text{19}\) In late 1907 Sławek assigned Sosnkowski with making contact with patriotic student organizations at Lvov Polytechnic, in particular the Unreconcilables Organization (Organizacja Nieprzejednanych) and the Union of Renewal (Związek Odrodzenia). Sosnkowski was assisted here by Marian Kukiel, a gifted student of history at Lvov University and local PPS activists. Kukiel, who had numerous contacts throughout the student community, introduced Sosnkowski to Władysław Sikorski and Stanisław Downarowicz. Sikorski, a former subaltern in the Austro-Hungarian Army, was the founder of the Society of Renewal and a leading figure in patriotic student circles. Sikorski long had been interested in the struggle against Tsardom. When Sosnkowski extended an invitation to join in the work of PPS-FR's military arm in Lvov, Sikorski accepted and members of the Renewal Society joined Lvov Militia

\(^{17}\) Julian Stachiewicz, "Początki Związku Walki Czynnej," Niepodległość, o.s. 2(1930):43.


\(^{19}\) Stanisław Barzykowski, Releacja, n.d., Centralne Archiwum Wojskowe (hereafter CAW), Warsaw, Akta Generalnego Inspektoratu Sił Zbrojnych, cont. I.302.2.4, fol. 172.
units shortly after Christmas.\(^{20}\) Their entry only led to the formation of a single Militia squad. An attempt by Sosnkowski and Kukiel to win new collaborators at the Congress of Polish Progressive Youth Abroad in Zurich at Easter 1908 failed to yield even this return.\(^{21}\)

Sosnkowski's work in the Party's military arm in late 1907 and early 1908 gave rise to many doubts concerning the revolutionary movement. These doubts centered on the Revolutionary Fraction's Combat Organization and Militia. Although a number of new elements had been introduced to training in the military arm, preparations were not far removed from those of 1906 which ultimately had failed. Consequently he came to believe that a new course was necessary. He later recalled: "I directed work in these circles according to old models, but I had the unclear feeling that they belonged to the past."\(^{22}\) In all likelihood further doubts arose as a result of his disappointing attempts to secure non-Socialist collaborators. These cast the inability of the sectarian and exclusivist Revolutionary Fraction to attract support beyond its traditional constituency in sharp relief for Sosnkowski.

These doubts were perhaps reinforced by Sosnkowski's study of military affairs. In the months after his return to the Party Sosnkowski devoted some time to the study of military thought and strategy. Sosnkowski's first forays into military affairs had a great effect on him. It, he recalled years later, "gave me much to think about."\(^{23}\) It is unclear precisely what works and subjects he probed. Piłsudski and his collaborators, however, cast a broad net in the study of military affairs, delving into a wide variety of subjects and reading diverse authors. They

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\(^{20}\) Letter of Walery Sławek, Cracow, AAN VI, Akta Walerego Sławka, cont. 73/1, fols. 19-20.


\(^{23}\) Ibid.
studied European wars, devoting special attention to Napoleon’s Campaigns, which especially interested Piłsudski. Much attention was given to Polish insurrections of the Nineteenth Century. They too probed contemporary conflicts such as the Boer War and the Russo-Japanese War. Piłsudski and his followers read the works of contemporary theorists such as Jan Bloch as well as venerable figures like Carl von Clausewitz. They did not overlook the writing of Polish theorists. Polish writers in the Nineteenth century applied themselves to People’s War (*wojna ludowa*), a war of national liberation against Russia. In doing so they grappled with the problems of assembling an army in an occupied land and realizing the concept of the nation-in-arms.

Doubts about the Party’s military arm continued to trouble Sosnkowski until early Summer 1908, when they gave way to a new conception—a nonpartisan military training organization. The moment that this idea crystallized in Sosnkowski’s mind came during a conversation in early summer 1908 with Piłsudski. Piłsudski, on one of his periodic visits to Lvov, met Sosnkowski at the Café American there. Piłsudski confided to Sosnkowski his great doubts about the current form of the revolutionary movement. In the course of the discussion Piłsudski told his lieutenant that he had given up entirely on the Party’s military arm, that it was “a closed and failed page of history.” He told Sosnkowski that he was preparing a train robbery, to take place at Bezdany near Vilnius, and that he would use the proceeds from this heist to move on to a “new stage in the struggle.” Sosnkowski recalled that Piłsudski was visibly agitated. He was deeply troubled; he was as yet unsure as to what this new stage was. Unsure of the new course, himself, Piłsudski

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offered Sosnkowski no details or instructions. Pilsudski, who was also uneasy about the upcoming Bezdany raid, his first terrorist operation, simply wished to unburden himself.

The conversation in the Cafe American left a deep impression on Sosnkowski. He was shaken by Piłsudski’s troubled state. What most deeply affected him was Piłsudski’s writing off the Combat Organization and Militia. This led Sosnkowski to conclude that the movement must have a new organizational basis. He also came to see clearly the form this new organizational basis should take. Sosnkowski, who believed that the Party’s preparations for revolution were inadequate and that the Party had too narrow a following, envisioned an organization exclusively devoted to conventional military preparations and non-partisan in character. What is more Sosnkowski decided to create this organization himself.

After his meeting Sosnkowski set about organizing this non-partisan military organization. The work of calling into being this organization took place between July and November 1908 in strict secrecy. Even Piłsudski was not informed, since Sosnkowski did not wish to burden him, while he was immersed in preparations for the Bezdany raid. In establishing this organization Sosnkowski too did not wish to chance encountering the opposition of Party leaders, and sought to create a fait accompli. He later remembered: "Knowing the relations prevailing in the Party, I was convinced, that if the matter came before a party forum it would inspire a whole series of doubts and prohibitions and probably would have been buried in the course of prolonged debates and discussions." To aid him in establishing this new organization Sosnkowski called on Kukiel, Sikorski, PPS subordinates and student sympathizers in Lvov. They greeted Sosnkowski’s

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27 Ibid. Piłsudski confirmed this in 1931, when wrote that the inspiration for the Union of Active Struggle lay solely with Sosnkowski. In his view the new organization had numerous flaws. "Poprawki historyczne," Piłsudski, Pisma, 9:281.

28 "W 30-lecie współpracy z Piłsudskim," Sosnkowski, Materiały, 570.

29 Ibid., 570.
proposal to create a non-partisan organization with enthusiasm, and they went to work immediately. They threw themselves into organizational work and recruiting members. Sosnkowski prepared a draft Statute for the organization. Before the end of June work had advanced sufficiently to allow the new organization to be constituted formally.

The new organization was formally launched at a meeting held at Sosnkowski's apartment in late June. According to Julian Stachiewicz, who assembled the only account of this meeting using interviews with participants, Sosnkowski, Kukiel, Jaxa-Różen, Mieczysław Trojanowski, Kazimierz Fabrycy and ten or more others took part. All were students and members of either the PPS-FR Workers' Militia or non-Socialist patriotic student groups. Sikorski, then studying for his final exams, did not attend, although he had been invited. Sikorski was to regret not attending the meeting. After it ended in the small hours of the next day the participants moved to the street in front of Sikorski's apartment, where they taunted and hurled abuse at him.30

At the meeting Sosnkowski put forward the program of the new organization: to train a cadre of revolutionary soldiers. These cadres would assemble and train mass popular armies, when the banner of rebellion was raised. In his opening remarks he told the group task of the organization was to assemble and train "the revolutionary element with the aim of facilitating a mass armed uprising." He posited a truly military character for the instructional work of the new enterprise. Preparations were to be governed by two conditions: that they be continuous and have a permanent character. Preparations were not to be broken by intermittent offensives as in the PPS military arm. The revolutionary army was to take the field only, when it was ready "in order not to waste the strength of the people."31


31 Ibid., 47-8.
Kukiel, who spoke next, further elaborated on the program put forward by Sosnkowski. The chief aim of the new organization was the establishment of an independent democratic republic. The only road to this goal, Kukiel proposed, was people’s war, a popular insurrection. To succeed this struggle must realize the concept of the nation-in-arms, have the support of the “mass of the people.” To win worker and peasant support for the insurrection Kukiel proposed that the organization embrace social reform. He proposed the organization espouse legislation protecting workers from the worst excesses of Capitalism and that agricultural lands be turned over to the people that work them. Kukiel did not advocate Socialism, in order not to repel the middle class, whose cooperation was desired as well. Kukiel’s formulas were accepted as an ideological statement to be incorporated in the organization’s Statute without discussion.

Those assembled in Sosnkowski’s apartment next turned to the organization of the new body. The basis for discussion were proposals incorporated in the draft Statute for the organization prepared by Sosnkowski. In the course of the discussion those assembled resolved that the highest authority in the organization was a Congress of the organization. The day to day operation of the organization was to be directed by a five-member Executive Committee or Department (Wydział). One of the members of the Executive was to be a representative of the Revolutionary Fraction’s Combat Department. This proposal caused heated discussion, but was in the end accepted by a majority of those assembled. The four elected Executive members were then chosen. Sosnkowski, Różen, Mieczysław Dąbkowski and Zygmunt Bohusiewicz constituted the organization’s first Executive. Next a four-man commission—led by Sosnkowski, Kukiel—was elected to prepare a final version of the Statute. The Executive was to confirm this version of the

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32 Ibid., 48-9.

33 Ibid.
statute. Finally, those assembled accepted for the organization's name Kukiel's proposal---"The Union of Active Struggle."34

After the organizational meeting in June the participants departed Lvov, dispersing for the summer holidays. Further organizational labors were left to Sosnkowski, Kukiel and a small number of others who remained in Lvov. These included establishing branches of the organization at centers outside of Lvov. These efforts again focused on students and embraced even small market towns with gymnasia, such as Brzezane.35 However, the most important step taken was the preparation of the statute's final version. It was drawn up in summer and fall. The document's primary author was Sosnkowski.36 It incorporated the resolutions made at the meeting in June: Kukiel's ideological proposals and the arrangements on authority within the organization agreed upon. Sosnkowski too included in the final version of the statute a number of his own additions. Chief among these was a formula appended to Kukiel's programmatic formulas according the PPS-FR's Combat Organization a leading role in preparing for and leading a revolutionary war. It asserted: "With this organization [the Combat Organization] the ZWC enters . . . into the closest coordination; at the moment of uprising's outbreak it will recognize it as director of armed operations and will place itself under its orders."37 Sosnkowski probably added this formula after an encounter with Sławek. In September Sosnkowski, in the process of preparing the final version of the Statute, revealed the existence of the ZWC to Sławek, who was

34 Ibid.

35 Barzykowski, Relacja, CAW, Akta GISZ, cont. 1.302.2.41, fol. 172-3.

36 Ibid., 55.

37 Regulamin Związku Walki Czynnej, Akta Jędrzeja i Zofii Moraczewskich, AAN, VI, cont. 71/1-7, fol. 1v.
visiting Lvov. He requested Sławek's support for the organization in Party counsels, when it was unveiled after preparatory work had been completed. In return for his support Sławek insisted Sosnkowski concede that the Party's Combat Department have a determining voice in ZWC affairs.

In addition to these the ZWC Statute established the basic organization of the ZWC and regulations for members. The basic unit of organization was a six-man squad (szóstka). Each was to be led by a "senior man" (stary). Six squads constituted a district (dzielnica). A number of districts, then undetermined, constituted a region (okreg). The regulations for members commanded them to carry out agitation aimed at raising consciousness and recruiting new members. Others enjoined members to observe a strict military discipline: to obey superiors' orders without exception, to execute them precisely and be punctual always. Concurrently, Sosnkowski prepared a project for a Basic Course of military training. Sosnkowski's project was presented and accepted at a second meeting held in November 1908 after the organization's members returned to Lvov for the start of the school year. This program established the direction the work of the ZWC was to take. The Basic Course's aim was to prepare a cadre of non-commissioned officers, who at insurrection's outbreak were to raise an army and train its rank and file. The program of study included instruction in a series of general and specialized subjects. The most important of the general subjects was the history of the revolutionary movement and the

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39 Ibid.

40 Regulamin ZWC, Akta Moraczewskich, AAN VI, cont. 71/1-7, fol. 1-3.

Combat Organization. The aim of these lectures was to explain the evolution of the tactics used by revolutionaries in the fight against the Tsars and to impart "a revolutionary consciousness." Instruction in specialized subjects was aimed at giving the candidates knowledge and skills that would be helpful in making an insurrection. Lectures included the organization of and service in the Russian army; the use of fire arms, especially the Browning and Mauser automatic pistols, the favorites of revolutionaries; ballistics; fortification; explosives and military geography. Classroom instruction on specialized subjects was combined with practical exercises.

The Union of Active Struggle, as an organization solely devoted to military training and welcoming individuals regardless of political belief, was a departure from the PPS military arm. However, it was neither as purely military nor as nonpartisan an organization as its founders perhaps had hoped. The ZWC organization and its training program were similar to the Combat Organization's. Moreover, the ZWC preserved very strong links with the PPS-FR. The ZWC's founders had all either served in the Combat Organization or collaborated with it. They valued its work, and none seemed to think it necessary to do away with it at least for the time being. Once the ZWC had been established, none saw any reason to sever their ties with the PPS. Also, this link with the Party's military arm was seen as necessary from a practical standpoint. Sosnkowski later explained: "I myself came from the Combat Organization, organizing the ZWC I had to rely on above all the help of people, who came from the PPS." To break with the PPS would perhaps have doomed the organization.

It was not until October 1908 that the existence of the ZWC was revealed. The first to learn of the existence of the new organization after Stawek was probably Piłsudski. Upon his return from the Bezdany raid in October Piłsudski was made a present of the new organization by Sosnkowski. The ZWC, at least in Sosnkowski's mind, had been created with an eye toward

42 "W 30-lecie współpracy z Piłsudskim," Sosnkowski, Materiały, 571.
putting it at the disposal of the champion of independence. Piłsudski had some misgivings about
the new organization. He thought it had several flaws. However, according to Sosnkowski,
Piłsudski was nevertheless pleased and accepted the direction of the new organization. The
ZWC was a vehicle that could undertake the military preparations he desired. Also, it promised
to unite members of the PPS-FR and other Parties in the service of these preparations, broadening
the movement in a way that the efforts of the PPS-FR towards this end could not.

Piłsudski did not immediately take up an active role in the ZWC. He instead concentrated
upon work within the Party. In particular he strove to effect the adoption by the Party of his view
of the struggle and program for raising a revolutionary army. He pursued such a course perhaps
for two reasons. First, the nascent ZWC with only slim resources depended on the Party for just
about everything—money, recruits and technical expertise. Second, the support of a mass political
party like the PPS would give him a commanding position in negotiations to cobble together a
broad coalition to support his programs.

The existence of the Union of Active Struggle became known to Party leaders in
November 1908. It was met with hostility in Revolutionary Fraction circles. As Sosnkowski
remembered: "As a military and nonpartisan organization, the Union in the view of some circles
was a heresy." Militarism, which the ZWC seemed to represent, was strongly opposed by
Polish Socialism. Also, many Socialists had misgivings about Party workers cooperating with
members of the bourgeoisie. This, they felt, would make it appear that the Party had departed
from its program of class struggle and goal of bringing Socialism to Poland. Opposition to the


Sosnkowski, Materiały, 570-1.

45 "W 30-lecie współpracy z Piłsudskim," Sosnkowski, Materiały, 571.
ZWC came from nearly all corners of the Party. Even close collaborators of Piłsudski's such as Jodko voiced misgivings about it. The most determined opposition came from a faction of more doctrinaire Socialists led by Feliks Perl, the Party's chief theoretician. This faction included a segment of the Combat Organization's members.

The opponents of the ZWC lost little time in attacking Sosnkowski's creation. On 15 December Perl, standing in for Jędrzejewski as head of the Foreign Committee, sent a letter to the Lvov section of the Party, stating that the Committee had learned of the existence of the Union of Active Struggle and that some comrades were members. The letter too ordered Party members to end their involvement in the ZWC, because too little was known of this organization to grant permission to members to join. On 16 December Kukiel, the head of the Lvov section, wrote to Jędrzejewski. He explained that "the ZWC is an expansion of the work of the Militia." He reported that few members of the Lvov organization were members of the ZWC. He added that the Combat Department could provide information on the ZWC. He then requested that the decision barring participation in the ZWC be reversed. Kukiel's appeal worked. As a result of his intervention the Central Committee overturned the resolution of the Foreign Committee.

Kukiel alone fended off these attacks on the ZWC. Nothing suggests that Sosnkowski took part in this conflict. As head of the Lvov party organization, the matter was largely Kukiel's responsibility. Also, Sosnkowski, who initiated the ZWC, was probably the butt of attacks. Perhaps in order to avoid a confrontation that would jeopardize cooperation with the Combat

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Organization, he kept out of the fray and awaited the outcome of Kukiel’s defense. Only in December 1909 did Sosnkowski actively take a hand in defending the ZWC in Party counsels.49

The reversal of the Foreign Committee’s decision did not put the matter to rest. It continued to smolder, catching fire again at a conference of Party leaders on 18 January 1909 at Zakopane. At this meeting Piłsudski rose to the defense of the ZWC. He demanded the party support the ZWC, and thus the new course he had embarked upon. Opponents of the ZWC balked at this. Piłsudski then made the matter one of personal trust, demanding they accept his proposal as a sign of confidence in his judgement.50 Władysław Studnicki, a progressive activist who took an interest in the ZWC, claims that Piłsudski threatened to resign, if the Party did not approve.51 The opposition retreated in the face his demands. They, however, pressed for and obtained the creation of a commission to prepare guidelines for members of the PPS belonging to the ZWC. These guidelines commanded PPS members to work to bring the ZWC closer to the Party and ordered members to continue to adhere to the decisions of the Central Committee.52

Aiding Piłsudski in overcoming the resistance of Party leaders were international events. On 6 October 1908 Austria-Hungary annexed the Balkan territories of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The two had been placed under Austrian administration by the Congress of Berlin in 1878. They had not been awarded to Austria outright, in order placate Russia, whose ambitions there were immense. The annexation of Bosnia triggered a crisis that nearly led to war between the two empires. The emergence of an Austrian-Russian conflict shattered the unity of the partitioning


50 Teodor Ładyka, Polska Partia Socjalistyczna (Frakcja Rewolucyjna) w latach 1906-1914, 153ff and Leon Wasilewski, Piłsudski jakim go znałem (Warsaw, 1935), 120.

51 Władysław Studnicki, Z przeżyć i walk (Warsaw, 1928), 266-7.

powers, upon which the continued subjugation of Poland rested. All within the movement realized this. Moreover, they believed that war between Austria, Germany and Russia would afford the forces of revolution an opportunity for insurrection or to join the battle on the Austrians' side in return for political concessions. Military preparations on the order of those advocated by Piłsudski and to be undertaken by the ZWC seemed warranted, even urgent.

The Bosnian Crisis and the resulting deterioration of relations among the partitioning powers not only helped Piłsudski persuade PPS leaders to accept his proposals, but added to the ideology of the nascent Military Movement as well. Until then PPS revolutionaries believed an internal crisis or the outbreak of revolution in the Russian Empire would create circumstances that would lead to independence. After the Bosnian Crisis Piłsudski and his lieutenants linked the insurrection they planned to make with the outbreak of war rather than revolution.53

As it was established the Union of Active Struggle was neither a truly military nor a truly nonpartisan organization. However, as it began to function and to grow, it gradually assumed these characteristics. Responsible for giving it this form was Piłsudski. Piłsudski believed that the Union of Active Struggle as it existed had several flaws. In 1931 he wrote: "... the form, organization given [it], as well as the program of training, in my opinion, had many problems, and I had to make great efforts, in order to eliminate these flaws."54 Among the chief problems was that the ZWC was not truly military, and Piłsudski wished to give it an organization and character that would make it so. Also, he believed that the organization was too close to the PPS and he sought to make it independent.55 Close links to the party would allow his opponents in the PPS


to interfere in his program of military preparations. Close ties to the party also were an obstacle to enlisting non-Socialists' support.

Sosnkowski was instrumental in helping Piłsudski shape the ZWC into the organization he desired. Piłsudski continued to remain aloof from the ZWC in the years following its establishment. Consuming most of his time were PPS-FR matters. Also, throughout this period Piłsudski devoted great energies to the study of military thought and strategy. In addition, Piłsudski was engaged in efforts to obtain the support of the Austro-Hungarian Army’s Intelligence Service for his schemes.36 As a result the day-to-day direction as well as reshaping the ZWC fell to Sosnkowski. Sosnkowski was, in Kukiel’s words, "the spirit of the ZWC."57 Although he did not actively assume the direction of the activities of the ZWC, Piłsudski's presence nevertheless made itself felt. Piłsudski communicated to Sosnkowski and others his views and instructions, which they then implemented. Piłsudski was in constant contact with Sosnkowski. The two corresponded frequently. Also, the two presumably met frequently, when the one visited Cracow and the other Lvov.58 Sosnkowski himself maintained that the changes made in the ZWC in the years after it was established were effected under Piłsudski's guidance.59

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56 Piłsudski had approached Austrian military intelligence service officers with requests for support as early as 1906. Nothing appears to have come of this overture, however. Max Ronge, Zwölf Jahre Kundesschafdsdienst Kriegs- und Industriespionage (Zurich, 1930), 23. In 1908 not long after the establishment of the ZWC Piłsudski and Sławek approached intelligence officers in Cracow and Lvov once again. On this occasion Piłsudski was able to forge a relationship with the head of military intelligence in Cracow, Józef Rybak. In exchange for information on the movement of Russian troops in the Kingdom, Rybak ensured that police did not interfere with the activities of the ZWC and later the Rifleman's Union. Józef Rybak, Pamiętniki Generała Rybaka (Warsaw, 1954), 28ff.


58 "W 30-lecie współpracy z Piłsudskim," Sosnkowski, Materiały, 575.

59 Ibid., 571.
Work in the ZWC began in earnest at the start of 1909. By that time members had returned from the summer holidays and the preparatory work had been finished. The focus of ZWC activities was the Basic Course, implemented in Lvov. Sosnkowski, who used the pseudonym Józef for work in the ZWC, was the course’s director. Lectures were held evenings at a private residence. They were supplemented by exercises in the countryside outside Lvov on weekends. Instructors were Sosnkowski, Kukiel, Sikorski, Mieczysław Trojanowski, and three others. Sosnkowski lectured on explosives. Sosnkowski, despite being of an artistic bent, had an aptitude for the study of the physical sciences. This he developed into a broad knowledge on his own and at Lvov Polytechnic. This faculty readily lent itself to the subject of explosives. In December of 1909 he prepared a design for a new explosive device, which was more stable and safer to use than the pattern of homemade bomb then in use.

In July 1909 the First Congress of the Union of Active Struggle convened in Lvov. At this meeting important steps were taken by Sosnkowski to give the ZWC a more military character and to differentiate it from the PPS-FR. At the Congress the radical formula calling for land to be turned over to the peasants was struck from the programmatic statement in the ZWC Statute at the suggestion of the Executive. The Executive claimed that the formula caused much dissension within the ranks of the organization and that the right to work and bread and the promise of social reform was a satisfactory expression of the organization’s intentions. Also, to distinguish the ZWC from the PPS the programmatic statement was altered to emphasize the organization’s intentions.

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60 Obywatel "Ostoja" [Tadeusz Dręgiewicz], "Notatki: Wspomnienia z pierwszych lat Związku Walki Czynnej," Panteon Polski, 1931, no. 77, 14-15.


undertaking "military-insurrectionist preparations." The most important changes made at the Congress were in the sphere of organization. The Congress passed a resolution introducing an organization of sections, platoons and companies. Each section was composed of ten men. Four companies constituted a "legion." In addition the old hierarchy, which distinguished between instructors, senior men and ordinary members, was done away with, and military ranks were introduced. In this fashion a unified, hierarchical chain of command was grafted onto the organization. The highest bodies of authority retained their collegial organization, although the Congress was renamed "Council" (Rada).

When work in the ZWC resumed at the start of the 1909-1910 academic year the threat of war had subsided and with it the urgency of military preparations. However, the ZWC made great strides in this period. In addition to the Basic Courses, an Intermediate Course was implemented. The Intermediate Course was to train junior officers. In April 1910 an Upper Course to train senior officers was added. The greatest advance in this period, however, came with the establishment of a legal arm for the ZWC. In April 1910 the Riflemen's Union in Lvov and Brzeżane and the "Rifleman" Sport and Gymnastic Society (Towarzystwo Sportowo-Gimnastyczne "Strzelec") in Cracow were created. The president of the Riflemen's Union in Lvov was Sikorski, and the president of the Rileman Society in Cracow was the painter and populist deputy in the Austrian Reichsrat Włodzimierz Tetmajer. The legal basis for the establishment of these organizations was an 1864 Tyrolean statute on shooting clubs. Austrian authorities utilized this ordonnance to sponsor groups, which offered military training to youths before they were conscripted. Using this as a precedent viceregal authorities legalized shooting and military

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63 Kukiel to PPS-FR Foreign Committee, Lvov, 17 July 1909, AAN VI, Archiwum PPS, Cont. 305/VII/21, fol. 310v.

64 Ibid., 311.
training organizations in Galicia.\textsuperscript{65} The two rifleman's organizations were established as independent societies. Both, however, were secretly subordinate to Sosnkowski's ZWC Executive, which oversaw the activities of the two organizations. The two were organized in a fashion identical to the ZWC. Members were assigned military ranks and organized in sections, platoons and companies. The chief focus of work of these organizations, like the ZWC, was military training. The creation of the Riflemen's Unions was a great boon to the work of preparing for an insurrection. This work could now be conducted openly and with few constraints. Also, as the two organizations were conducting peacetime military training and thus rendering the Austro-Hungarian Army a service, they were able to avail themselves of Army Reserve (Landwehr) installations, rifle ranges for example, and rifles and other equipment.\textsuperscript{66}

Throughout the first years of the ZWC's existence Sosnkowski lavished time and energy on efforts to expand its following. His first efforts centered upon winning over more Party members, primarily members of the Militia. In January 1909 Sosnkowski authorized Lipiński, who had taken over the Cracow Militia organization after his release from prison, to form a ZWC branch in Cracow.\textsuperscript{67} Sosnkowski attended the meeting at which this branch of the organization was constituted. A short time later a branch of the ZWC was founded in the petroleum producing center of Borysław, west of Lvov.

Attempts were made to win over non-Socialists in these early days as well. Efforts here focussed upon coopting student organizations. In spring 1909 Sosnkowski strove to enlist the

\textsuperscript{65} Mieczysław Wrzosek, \textit{Polski czyn zbrojny podczas Pierwszej Wojny Światowej, 1914-1918} (Warsaw, 1990), 30, 506n.

\textsuperscript{66} Towarzystwo Związek Strzelecki to k.u.k. Landwehrkommando, Lvov, 8 Dec. 1912, AAN VI, Archiwum PPS, cont. 305/VII/55, fol. 6 and Rybak, \textit{Pamiętniki}, 28ff.

\textsuperscript{67} Lipiński, "Relacja z pracy w O.B.," AAN VI, Archiwum PPS, cont. 305/III/20, folder 2, fol. 2.
cooperation of the gymnasium student organizations loosely linked with the newspaper The Sun Beam (Promień), which was sympathetic to the PPS-FR. The Seventh Congress of these groups was held in Lvov on 30-31 May 1909. Sosnkowski attended as a guest. At the Congress he was able to make contacts with the members of various groups. Also, he managed to persuade those assembled to pass a series of patriotic resolutions, including one urging that groups prepare for an insurrection to take place at the outbreak of an Austro-Russian conflict. These efforts brought about a modest boost in membership. By summer 1909 membership had more than doubled to 147.

In 1910 efforts centered upon hijacking the Filaret movement, a loose collection of liberal democratic student groups at foreign universities. In April 1910 in Louvain Filaret representatives gathered at a congress that was to give the movement a proper organization and platform. At the Congress the Union of Progressive-Patriotic Polish Youth Organizations was founded. Sosnkowski attended the congress as a guest and represented the ZWC. In the congress' sessions Sosnkowski argued that military preparations must be undertaken, if the Union's independence plank was to be more than "an empty phrase." Sosnkowski's serious manner and his ability to clearly and eloquently convey his message impressed many delegates. Resolutions enjoining the Union to undertake military preparations were passed over the opposition of individuals sympathetic to Social Democracy Party, SDKPiL, and favoring cooperation with the Russian revolutionary movement. This success was followed by the establishment of ZWC and Riflemen's

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Union chapters at Louvain, and other academic centers in Germany, France, Switzerland and Austria.  

When the Louvain congress ended much business had yet to be concluded and as a result another was held at Christmas 1910, this time in Geneva. Sosnkowski, hoping to follow up the victory of April, again attended as the ZWC representative. On this occasion students sympathetic to the SDKPiL were in the majority. In Geneva they were able to defeat resolutions on independence and military preparations. In protest those favoring independence walked out of the congress. They then decamped to Paris, where they convened a new congress. A decision to force a split in the Union of Polish Progressive Patriotic Youth had been made in advance of the congress. Sokolnicki had been dispatched there by Jodko, probably on Pilsudski's behest, for this very reason. Sosnkowski perhaps had similar instructions. The aim of the Pilsudski camp in splitting the Union had been to free members who sympathized with the PPS and ZWC from the Filaret movement for direct participation in the movement centered on the PPS and ZWC. In this respect the move was a success, for the majority of Filaret groups went over to the independence camp.

In the early years of the ZWC and Riflemen's Unions Sosnkowski, in addition to his responsibilities in the ZWC, continued to play an active role in the Fraction Party, heading its military arm in Lvov. Sosnkowski was not remiss in his performing his duties, devoting perhaps as much effort to them as to the ZWC. Sosnkowski's work within the Party closely paralleled that in the ZWC. In early 1909 Sosnkowski prepared a scheme for the reorganization of the PPS

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70 Sokolnicki, Czternaście lat, 396-7.

71 Ibid.
combat schools. This he presented to Pilsudski in a memorandum on 20 January 1909. In the introduction to his memorandum he stated that the nature of the struggle with Tsardom had changed, and for this reason the training of instructors must change. He proposed that the PPS move from "factory to laboratory production of instructors," in order to create a body of highly trained military professionals. The structure and content of the course of instruction was almost identical to that of the Basic Course of the ZWC. Candidates were to be instructed in a variety of general subjects such as the history of the Combat Organization and revolutionary movement in order to raise consciousness, instill discipline and build character. This was to be combined with instruction in specialized subjects such as the use of firearms, Russian field service regulations, reconnaissance, and the use of explosives. Training in these areas was to give instructors the skills they and others would need for an uprising.\(^2\)

Between 1909 and 1911 Pilsudski's views and military preparations and the ZWC continued to be a source of friction within the Party. Although Sosnkowski led the ZWC and had a high position in the Party, he was rarely drawn into Party battles and intrigues. Pilsudski, displaying a tendency that would assert itself more clearly in later years, kept his leading military light out of politics, using instead Sławek, Sokolnicki or Jodko for these tasks. One of the few battles, in which Sosnkowski took part, was that which took place at the Eleventh Party Congress. The Congress took place in Vienna between 25 and 28 August 1909. At this Congress Pilsudski's proposal that the chief task of the Party was the creation of a military force to fight Russia in an Austro-Russian war was formally accepted. To wait for the class struggle to end Russian rule in Poland was seen as fruitless. War was regarded as most likely to bring about the end of Tsardom. The road for acceptance of this plank in the Party platform had been smoothed by a series of

articles in *Predawn*, which offered a theoretical basis for such a program. In the debate over these resolutions Pilsudski was supported by Sosnkowski.\(^7^3\)

In 1910 Sosnkowski was drawn into intrigues that would lead to the final defeat of Pilsudski's opponents in the Party. This battle came as a result of Pilsudski's and his efforts to sever the ZWC's last links with the Socialist Party. This could be done now that the ZWC's survival was assured and that most of the Party had been brought round to Pilsudski's views. The only organizational link with the Party that remained in 1910 was the presence of a Combat Department delegate on the ZWC's Executive board. Efforts then focussed on removing him. In the second half of 1910 the ZWC Executive adopted an attitude of hostility to the representative of the Combat Organization Mieczysław Dąbkowski. Also, they blocked all his attempts to exert an influence on ZWC decisions. As a result Dąbkowski tendered his resignation before the year's end. At the start of 1911 a the Combat Department chose a new delegate—Józef Froelich. The choice of Froelich was fortuitous. Froelich with Perl had been among the chief opponents of the recognition of the ZWC and afterward remained one of its chief critics. Sosnkowski and the other Executive members simply refused to accept Froelich's nomination, pointing out quite rightly that they could not work with him. The Central Committee, dominated by supporters of Pilsudski, then withdrew Froelich's nomination and declined to put forward a new nomination. The committee justified this decision stating that formulas acknowledging the leading role of the PPS in the ZWC Statute, which were shortly to be struck, were a sufficient guarantee of the organization's loyalty.\(^7^4\) Afterwards Perl and a small following left the Party and established their own: the Polish Socialist Party-Opposition (Opozycja)

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\(^7^3\) Ładyka, *Polska Partia Socjalistyczna*, 163ff.

\(^7^4\) Ibid., 228-9.
Not long after these events Sosnkowski relinquished command of the Lvov military organization and withdrew from Party work.\textsuperscript{75} Hereafter he devoted himself to the ZWC and Riflemen’s Union. He remained in contact with Party leaders and took part in important Party conferences, but in the capacity of representative of the ZWC and only insofar as the business of the movement dictated. The reasons for Sosnkowski’s decision remain obscure. The great burdens imposed by full-time participation in both party work and the ZWC may have become too much even for a man of such great energy. Also, he may have wished to devote more time to his studies. At the same time that he was busy with the work of the ZWC and PPS-FR Sosnkowski continued his studies at Lvov Polytechnic. He received high marks from professors. But his work suffered as he rarely took the examinations necessary to advance.\textsuperscript{76}

By the start of 1911 the transformation of the Polish revolutionary movement was complete. It had become a Military Movement. As a result the character of work within the movement changed. From 1911 Piłsudski, Sosnkowski and their collaborators within the movement fixed their gaze on the war and insurrection on the horizon. Other developments further altered the character of work in this Military Movement between 1911 and 1914. Piłsudski assumed a more active role in the ZWC and Rifleman’s associations. This was heralded by his investiture with absolute authority. In June 1912 at the yearly congress, the Council of the ZWC, a new command structure was introduced. The collegial Executive was replaced by a High Command (Komenda Główna) headed by a single individual—the commandant of the Riflemen’s Unions (Komendant Główny Związków Strzeleckich). The commandant, to be elected at the

\textsuperscript{75} Sosnkowski’s Party correspondence trails off precipitously after 1909. No trace of his involvement in strictly Party work after 1910 can be found as well. An unsigned note, probably from 1910, lists Sosnkowski as well as Fabrycy and Trojanowski delinquent in Party dues. AAN, VI, Archiwum PPS, cont. 305/IV/8, folder 27, no nos.

\textsuperscript{76} “W 30-lecie współpracy z Piłsudskim,” Sosnkowski, \textit{Materiały}, 578-9.
annual Council, was vested with near absolute authority. At the June meeting Piłsudski was unanimously elected "Citizen Commandant" and was reelected each year afterward.

At the July 1912 meeting Sosnkowski was given a new role in the movement as well. The congress created an executive organ for the commandant—the High Command Staff, responsible for the whole of work within the ZWC, ZS and Strzelec. The chief-of-staff was named by the commandant and acted as his second-in-command. Piłsudski chose Sosnkowski as his chief of Staff Piłsudski. The institutionalization of Sosnkowski's position as second-in-command brought other benefits. As "Citizen Chief-of-Staff" he received a monthly salary of 44 crowns. Piłsudski, however, continued to be preoccupied with the direction of the whole of the movement—broadening it to include other parties and groups and formulating plans and strategies for an insurrection. Nevertheless he did not relinquish his direction of the PPS Central Committee. Finally, he devoted some time to more or less fruitless efforts to interest the Austrian High Command and ruling circles in the Military Movement. Consequently he continued to rely on Sosnkowski, on whose shoulder once again fell the burden of day-to-day direction of the ZWC and Riflemen's Unions.

In 1911 and 1912 work in the Military Movement again acquired the urgency that had characterized work in 1908 and 1909, as the specter of war returned as well. In the summer of 1911 the Agadir Crisis nearly provoked a general European war. The crisis was defused, but gave


78 In Summer 1912 Kukiel under Piłsudski's supervision prepared a series of memoranda extolling the value to the Dual Monarchy of the military movement and its plans for insurrection in Poland in the event of war with Russia. Memorandum, to K.u.K. Ministerium für Landesverteidigungs, Lwów, 5 July 1912, AAN, VI, Archiwum PPS, Cont. 305/VII/55, folder 12, fols. 2-3 and Memorandum, Bedeutung der Russisch-polien vom Standpunkt der Militärischen Interessen Österreichs, to K.u.K. Ministerium für Landesverteidigungs, AAN, Akta KSSN, folder 58, fols. 42-57. Austrian officials seem to have taken little interest in the matter.
rise to conflict between Italy and the Ottoman Empire over Tripoli. In October 1912 the Balkan states joined the fray. The ensuing Balkan Wars threatened to trigger an Austrian and Russian conflict. The two backed opposing parties in the conflicts. Military preparations intensified among all the great powers. On more than one occasion, the moment for an insurrection seemed at hand to Polish revolutionary leaders.

In autumn and winter 1912 a political framework was grafted onto the movement. This was largely the work of Piłsudski. Once he had secured the Party's complete support for his program of conventional military preparations, he pressed for acceptance of a plan of cooperation with other political parties. This he secured at a Party Council meeting on 31 May-1 June 1912. Piłsudski next established the Polish Military Treasury (Polski Skarb Wojskowy) and the Provisional, later simply, the Commission of Confederated Independence Parties (Komisja Skonfederowanych Stronnictw Niepodległościowych or KSSN). Piłsudski's efforts here had been aided by the *deus ex machina* of the outbreak of the First Balkan War. The specter of war between the partitioning powers led Galician political leaders to scramble headlong to embrace Piłsudski's programs. The KSSN was constituted at a meeting in Vienna on 11 November 1912. Present at this meeting were representatives of the PPS, the Galician Social Democrats, Polish Progressive Party, the Polish Peasant Party, the Polish Intellectuals' Union and the Peasant Union, a party only in name established by Piłsudski's supporters. Joining them were representatives of the National Democratic *Fronde*, three small parties which had left the nationalist camp, because of its strategy of cooperation with Poland's Russian overlords. The KSSN constituted itself

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79 Protokół posiedzenia VII Rady partyjnej P.P.S. z dnia 31 Maja 1912 roku, AAN, IV, Archiwum PPS, cont. 305/IV/4, fols. 3ff.

80 The three were: the National Workers Union (Narodowy Związek Robotniczy), National Peasants' Union (Narodowy Związek Chłopski) and Independence Union (Związek Niepodległościowy).
as a sort of government-in-exile. At war's outbreak the KSSN was to declare itself a national government to direct an insurrection in Poland. In the meantime it was to oversee the Polish Military Treasury, which collected and disbursed monies for preparations for the uprising that lay ahead. The creation of the KSSN opened new horizons for the leaders of Pilsudski's Military Movement, providing the movement with greater support and greater opportunities for cooperation with other groups.

Between 1911 and 1914 Sosnkowski devoted most of his energies to preparations for a revolutionary war. After 1910 the focus of work within the Military Movement shifted away from the Union of Active Struggle to the Riflemen's Union and "Rifleman" Society. The ZWC now became an organ of command. The only work it itself undertook was that of a covert nature. In summer 1912 the ZWC dispatched Stachiewicz and other volunteers to the Kingdom to establish branches of the organization there. This work continued through 1913 and 1914, and before long ZWC organizations were functioning in most Polish cities as well as in Russian centers with large Polish communities. Also, individuals were dispatched to the Kingdom to observe and report on Russian troop movements. Within the Military Movement the Rifleman's organizations took over the training of cadres for a rebel army, which remained the primary task of the movement.

Between the summer of 1911 and the summer of 1914 the work of training a cadre of revolutionary soldiers intensified. When the 1911-1912 academic year began, the Basic, Intermediate and Advanced Course were conducted simultaneously in Lvov, Rzeszow, Cracow, Brzezany and a number of academic centers abroad. In the following years more and more individuals participated, and training went on in an ever increasing number of locales. The


82 "W 30-lecie współpracy z Piłsudskim," Sosnkowski, Materiały, 574.
international crises and war scares of 1911 and 1912 led to the great increase in membership. In 1912 the Riflemen's Unions had only 600 members. By 1913 this number had grown to nearly 6,000. By 1 June 1914 membership reached 8,290. In the words of one Rifleman, "Organizations sprang up like mushrooms after rain." Instructors fanned out from the centers on weekends and holidays to conduct training. An organization for women was established as well.

Complete responsibility for training in the Riflemen's Unions fell to Sosnkowski as Chief-of-Staff. Sosnkowski continued to lecture on occasion. However, he could not but delegate immediate direction of the numerous courses to subordinates—recent graduates of the officers' courses, who commanded three districts, Lvov, Rzeszów and Cracow, which had been established at the June 1912 annual meeting. Sosnkowski directed training as a whole through inspections, monitoring the progress of recruits and officer candidates and administering examinations. Throughout the period he crisscrossed Galicia on inspection tours. He also travelled abroad for inspections and examinations. In winter and spring 1913 he toured Western Europe and the Kingdom inspecting branches of the Riflemen's Union.

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To further the work of training a cadre of revolutionary soldiers a number of innovations were introduced. In May 1913 Sosnkowski introduced an intensive summer course to train instructors to lead a greater number of Rifleman's courses. The course was conducted at rundown manor house near Stróża, a small town in the mountainous Podhale region. Ninety-six non-commissioned officers and officers took part. Those, who attended, received advance instruction in a variety of technical subjects as well as military history. The course was followed by maneuvers in the Nowy Targ area. Piłsudski was the director of the course, but appears to have only given the final lecture. The tireless Sosnkowski, who lectured on tactics, topography and map reading, with Trojanowski did most of the work. 

Sosnkowski also initiated large scale maneuvers in late 1912 and early 1913. Field training exercises were nothing new in the ZWC and Rifleman's associations. Indeed, they took place regularly in the course of training. However, they were usually small affairs with only the pupils of a single course taking part. In late 1912 and early 1913 whole companies and battalions began to conduct exercises. At first these exercises involved only 80 or 100 individuals. Soon 400 and 500 Riflemen were taking part. The largest took place at Mogilane in February and at Tyniec on the site of the Bar Confederacy battlefield in May 1913. At these exercises more than 800 took part. Participants were divided into two opposing forces and fought a series of mock encounter battles. Exercises were also staged in spring and early summer 1914. At the Czemichów exercises in June 1914 500 took part.


89 Józef [Sosnkowski] to Selim, Lwow, 8 July 1913, AAN, VI, Akta Moraczewskich, folder 71/1-7, fol. 9 and Bogusław Kunc, "Od Związku Walki Czynnej do Strzelca," 123-5.
In an effort to provide supplementary materials for training as well as advance it to a higher plane Sosnkowski founded in autumn 1913 a journal of military studies. At a conference of Party leaders in October 1913 Sosnkowski convinced Party leaders that a military quarterly published by the Riflemen’s Union High Command was the proper forum for such articles. To cover the cost of its publication he secured a subvention from the PPS. The journal was to be, in Sosnkowski’s words, "a military connection for various organizations." Entitled *The Rifleman* (*Strzelec*), the journal first appeared in April 1914. It was published monthly until the outbreak of the First World War. The new commander of the Lvov Riflemen’s Union an art student and poet Edward Rydz, who used the pseudonym "Śmigly," edited the journal. All commands were to subscribe to it. 

Sosnkowski himself used *The Rifleman* to direct the attention of Riflemen to the deficiencies he saw in training. He wrote an article on the subject entitled "Our Military Education," which appeared in the May 1914 issue of *The Rifleman*. In the article Sosnkowski probed the attributes a revolutionary army needed, in order to be victorious. Sosnkowski began positing that although recent advances in technology had made material factors predominant on the battlefield, moral forces continued to be very important. He wrote: "The best weapon is useless in the hands of a soldier, whose spirit breaks down under the influence of the deprivation and disintegrating forces of modern battle." He appears to have been influenced by the writings of contemporary theorists such as Ardant du Picq, Polish theorists like Jarosław Dąbrowski as

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90 Protokół posiedzenia IX Rady Partyjnej P.P.S., October 1913, AAN, VI, Archiwum PPS, cont. 305/IV/4, fols. 49-50.

91 Komenda Główna Związków Strzeleckich, Rozkaz Ogólny Nr. 79, 4 March 1914, AAN, VI, Akta Moraczewskich, folder 71/1-7, fol. 20.

well as Piłsudski, whose emphasized the socio-political value of an army. He argued that moral superiority could tip the scales against a demoralized foe, such as the Russian army, which he described in most disparaging terms.

Sosnkowski proceeded to identify elements of moral strength. Among the most important elements that constituted moral force or moral factors was self-discipline, in particular the ability to obey without question. Also important was will and endurance. He wrote: "The psychology of war knows nothing more fatal than short-lived, tepid enthusiasm . . ." These qualities he singled out, because he claimed that they were entirely absent in the Polish national character. The Polish character, he believed, was fractious and undisciplined. One to the tasks of the cadre of officers and noncommissioned officers the Riflemen's Union was training was to efface these elements from the Polish character. Therefore he urged that greater attention be given to moral training.

In building cadres for a revolutionary army in the years before the First World War Sosnkowski himself strove to inculcate the discipline and resilience that the great enterprise ahead would require. He did this by insisting on rigorous adherence to the code of the Rifleman—Precision, Responsibility and Punctuality. Sosnkowski, who was something of a perfectionist as

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95 Ibid., 525-6.
well, thus became a hard taskmaster. Under his direction examinations as well as field training exercises were gruelling affairs.

Between 1911 and 1914 Sosnkowski continued to dedicate time and energy to broadening the Military Movement. In contrast to the efforts of past years, however, Sosnkowski no longer set his sights on minor student groups. These efforts now focussed on more substantive targets, the youth and paramilitary organizations of various political camps. Attempts were made to win over the military arm of the Peasant Party, the Bartosz Squads (Drużyny Bartoszowe), and the Falcon scouting societies paramilitary Falcon Field Squads (Polowe Drużyny Sokole). Military Movement leaders concentrated on the Firebrand (Zarzewie) youth organization of the National Democratic Fronde. Combining many of the elements of National Democracy with a liberal dose of insurrection and independence, this organization had a large following. Moreover, the Firebrand organization possessed its own military arm. In 1908 Firebrand leaders Henryk Bagiński and Mieczysław Norwid-Neugebauer founded a secret organization, the Polish Army (Armia Polska), in emulation of the ZWC. In 1911 a legal organization, the Polish Rifle Detachments (Polskie Drużyny Strzeleckie, known by the acronym PDS) was constituted on the same basis as the Riflemen's Unions. In 1911 the Firebrands' military organization had more than 400 members. Membership grew by the 1913-1914 academic year to over 5,000.

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96 At Lwów Polytechnic Sosnkowski had a "mania for excellent marks," often retaking exams in order to obtain higher marks. "W 30-lecie współpracy z Piłsudskim," Sosnkowski, Materiały, 578.

97 Piskor, "Moje zetknięcie," 193 and Sokolnicki, Rok czternasty, 88.

98 Protokół posiedzenia VII Rady partyjnej P.P.S. z dnia 31 Maja 1912 roku, AAN IV, Archiwum PPS, cont. 305/IV/4, fol. 3.

99 Henryk Bagiński, U podstaw organizacji Wojska Polskiego (Warsaw, 1935), 735.
Detachments were the Riflemen's Unions' chief competitor in winning the hearts and minds of Polish youths.

Sosnkowski had approached Polish Army leaders with proposals on a number of occasions. All failed because a great ideological gulf separated the two camps. Sosnkowski's first overtures came in June 1909. Then Polish Army leaders refused, because they had strong misgivings about the relationship between the PPS and the ZWC. Overtures were made once again in spring 1911. In the interval the ZWC's assertion of its independence of the PPS and informal contacts between members greatly eased leaders' doubts. Sentiment in favor of cooperation had grown as well. As a result Kukiel was able to arrange talks between leaders of the ZWC and the Polish Army, which took place on 4 April 1911. The matter was of such importance that both Piłsudski and Sosnkowski took part in discussions. These talks also came to naught. The two camps agreed to limited cooperation. The participants agreed to form common commissions on regulations, arms and equipment and training to coordinate the activities of the two military arms. However, close cooperation was rejected. The two groups held widely divergent political views, and could not arrive at an understanding. Until a political understanding could be arrived at greater cooperation would have to wait.

The establishment of the KSSN in November 1912 effected a modus vivendi between the Piłsudski camp and Fronde political leaders as both put aside momentarily their differences to
better serve the cause of independence. This afforded an opportunity to cooperate with and coopt the Polish Army and Rifle Detachments, for at a stroke it removed the obstacle of divergent political ideologies. The establishment of the KSSN too afforded the leadership of the Riflemen's Union some leverage over the Rifle Detachments. On 1 December Piłsudski was named the KSSN's commander-in-chief, Sosnkowski, his chief-of-staff. The armed forces of the KSSN constituted the Riflemen's Union and Rifle Detachments. Piłsudski's powers as the KSSN's commander-in-chief were few and ill defined. He told the Party leaders at a meeting of the Presidium convened two days after his elevation to commander-in-chief that: "he was their [the Polish Rifle Detachments'] leader in matters relating to war. In daily affairs he cannot interfere." Piłsudski understood this and used the powers he had to launch a further number of common enterprises that he hoped would bring PDS commanders as well as rank and file members closer to the Riflemen's Union. Here he counted on his men's "greater capacity for assimilation."\(^{104}\) A great number of common ventures were launched in the following weeks. Chief among these were common field training exercises. The large-scale maneuvers at Mogilane in February 1913 and at Tyńc in May were both cooperative ventures of the Riflemen's Unions and the PDS.

Piłsudski's efforts to coopt the PDS suffered several setbacks in spring 1913. As the threat of war between the Dual Monarchy and Russia receded in 1913 so too did the willingness of Fronde leaders to put aside their differences with the Piłsudski camp. Many in the Fronde camp, especially Feliks Młynarski, disliked Piłsudski intensely.\(^{105}\) As a result they began to challenge Piłsudski's leadership. Some came to believe that under Piłsudski's command their own

\(^{104}\) Protokół posiedzenia VIII Rady Partyjnej P.P.S. z dnia 3 grudnia 1912 r., AAN VI, Archiwum PPS, 305/IV/4, fol. 109.

PDS was being marginalized. In order to save the links that had been forged between them and the Riflemen's Unions, Piłsudski beat a hasty retreat and resigned as the KSSN's commander-in-chief on 16 April 1913. The commander-in-chief was replaced by a collegial Military Department (Wydział Wojskowy) at the 8 May 1913 sitting of the KSSN. The Military Department was composed of three representatives of each organization and two controllers named by the KSSN.

After the setbacks of spring Piłsudski did not give up on coopting the Rifle Detachments. Piłsudski, perhaps because he was the focus, even personification, of Fronde misgivings, left to Sosnkowski the task of effecting closer ties that would allow one to coopt the other. In attempting to do this Sosnkowski circumvented the organization's political leadership and turned to Polish Rifle Detachment commanders. Many of these men continued to favor some form of cooperation for technical and military reasons. On 30 September he wrote the commander of the Rifle Detachments Marian Januszajtis and proposed that the two groups enter into an arrangement that would allow very close cooperation. His proposal was rejected on 1-2 November by the Polish Army National Congress, which resolved "that unification is not possible today or in the near future." Undeterred, Sosnkowski continued to press his counterparts on cooperation between two organizations. He did so during discussions on the creation of a common staff for the KSSN Military Department on 24 November. At the meeting Stanislaw Bauer of the Rifle Detachments forward a plan for a staff with a collegial organization. Sosnkowski rejected this proposal, arguing that a common staff for two independent organizations would be a "fiction" and would not provide for real coordination. Only strong ties between the two could achieve this.

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107 Stenogram II wywiadu z Neugebauerem, BN, Materiały Neugebauera, folder 7917, fol. 67.

His arguments fell on deaf ears. Through spring 1914 Sosnkowski continued to attempt to create circumstances that would allow the Riflemen’s Union to coopt the Rifle detachments, but failed.

In spring 1914 relations between the Fronde parties and the Pilsudski camp in the KSSN worsened. The two sides clashed over the division of funds between the Riflemen’s Unions and the Rifle Detachments. The Riflemen’s Unions with not many more members than the PDS received twice the sum that was paid out monthly to its partner. On 10 May Fronde delegates demanded that a more equitable distribution be implemented. Pilsudski’s refused to accede as long as the PDS refused closer cooperation with the Riflemen’s Unions. This caused the National Democratic groups to secede. With them seceded the Rifle Detachments.

The failure of efforts to bring about a union between the PDS and Riflemen’s Unions and the withdrawal of the Fronde parties from the KSSN did not signal the end of Pilsudski’s designs here as some historians suggest. Although the leaders of the PDS had rejected unification, by early summer 1914 the two organizations were then closer than ever and growing ever closer. Cooperative ventures launched under the aegis of the KSSN had a lasting effect on the Rifle

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109 Stenogram II wywiadu z Neugebauerem, BN, Materialy Neugebauera, folder 7917, fols. 67.

110 Armed with the statute governing the KSSN Military Department, which stated that “the Military Department is the highest authority in common matters of the military organizations,” Sosnkowski attempted to invest the controllers--Sokolnicki and Sikorski--with greater authority. As Pilsudski’s supporters in the KSSN outnumbered his detractors, this would give him a measure of control over the Rifle Detachments. During a meeting of the KSSN Military Department on 1 March 1914 he proposed that the controllers take charge of some of the responsibilities of the Riflemen’s Union and PDS representatives. Bauer, again representing the Rifle Detachments, rejected Sosnkowski’s proposal. Although Sosnkowski’s plan was clever, it was transparent. The histories of two controllers, the first, long one of Pilsudski’s hatchet-men, and the second, a founder of the ZWC, were well known to all. Ibid., fol. 78.

111 Protokół XIX posiedzenia KSSN z 10 maja 1914 r., AAN, Akta KSSN, folder 9, fol. 48.

112 Jan Molenda, Piłsudczycy a Narodowi Demokraci, 1908-1918 (Warsaw, 1980), 147.
Detachments. As a result of them sentiment in favor of cooperation remained strong in many individuals, especially leaders such as Neugebauer. Some officer's like Tadeusz Alf-Tarczyński had even developed a strong allegiance to the charismatic Piłsudski.\textsuperscript{113} The Riflemen seized upon these and sought to further cultivate them. Piłsudski and Sosnkowski ordered the Riflemen to continue to regard their counterparts as members of an allied organization, to cultivate personal contacts with them and win them over to unification of the two groups.\textsuperscript{114}

The departure of the \textit{Fronde} parties from the KSSN, moreover, did not lead to a suspension of cooperation between the two groups. On 31 May Riflemen and Rifle Detachment members in Lvov held joint maneuvers. Also, The Rifle Detachments' Cracow commander Waclaw Tokarz invited Sławek and Sokolnicki to observe the group's June maneuvers.\textsuperscript{115} Not long after this Rifle Squad and Union leaders agreed to expand their cooperation. On 8 July leaders of the two groups, among them Piłsudski and Sosnkowski, along with Bartosz and Falcon Squad commanders met. The meeting, which both Piłsudski and Sosnkowski attended, was brokered by Bartosz Squad leaders. In the course of the meeting all four groups accepted Piłsudski's proposals to establish common regulations, to form a common committee on publications, conduct combined exercises, exchanges of members and uniform ranks.\textsuperscript{116} Shortly after this the four entered into another joint venture: the publication of a common journal of military af-

\textsuperscript{113} Tadeusz Alf-Tarczyński, \textit{Wspomnienia oficera Pierwszej Brygady} (London, 1979), 23.

\textsuperscript{114} Komenda Główna ZS, Rozkaz Ogólny Nr. 75, AAN, VI, Akta Moraczewskich, folder 71/I-7, fol. 13.

\textsuperscript{115} Zygmunt Zygmuntowicz, \textit{Józef Piłsudski we Lwowie} (Warsaw, 1934), 18 and Sokolnicki, \textit{Rok czternasty}, 155.

\textsuperscript{116} Bagiński, \textit{U podstaw}, 725.
fairs.117 Amidst these endeavors the assassination of Archduke Francis Ferdinand in Sarajevo on 28 June did not draw much attention.

Between 1908 and 1914 not only did the revolutionary movement change, but Sosnkowski changed as well. In this period Sosnkowski grew to full maturity. He came to exhibit a number of personality traits that would remain with him for the rest of his life. He became outwardly distant and cold; he acquired a dour and stern visage. In dealing with others, in particular subordinates, he was often brusk. Sokolnicki, a close friend, noticed this change in Sosnkowski, and suggested it was the result of the exercise of command.118 Sosnkowski also acquired at this time a love of outdoor sports, such as hiking and mountain climbing. Also, Sosnkowski developed a high degree of self-confidence. The future prime minister Kazimierz Bartel, then a graduate teaching associate at Lvov Polytechnic, recalled that Sosnkowski was by no means afraid to tell professors that their explanations were wrong and insist on the highest marks.119 Finally, Sosnkowski became a polished public speaker. Sokolnicki observed at the Filaret Congress in Geneva that: "He was distinguished by calm, he had a pleasant at times resounding voice, above all his speeches were characterized by a logical simplicity and complete clarity. As through a crystal lens one could see in him understanding as he spoke."120

Sosnkowski, then only in his mid-20s, acquired much recognition, even renown within and without the revolutionary movement. When Miedziński joined the ZWC in 1910, Sosnkowski's career was already well known to him and he was regarded as a leader second only to

117 Kurjer Lwowski, 31 July 1914.

118 Sokolnicki, Rok czternasty, 80.

119 Babiński, Sosnkowski, 43.

120 Sokolnicki, Czternaście lat, 396.
Pilsudski. Sosnkowski cut a gallant figure. Moreover, his intellect and sophistication impressed many. Although he was a hard task-master, the rigor with which Sosnkowski executed his duties, won the respect of his subordinates. In bivouac during the Sroza Summer Course the Riflemen sang Sosnkowski’s praises. A verse in a ditty exclaimed:

There’s no one better than Józef
Let’s drink to the health of the Chief

Sosnkowski was devoid of ambitions of personal advancement. He appears not to have developed a following of his own within the movement.

The years between 1908 and 1914 also saw a very close friendship grow up between Piłsudski and Sosnkowski. The affairs of the Military Movement brought the two into very close contact. In addition the two often spent their holidays together at the resort of Zakopane, where the haute bourgeoisie, great writers and revolutionaries hiked and hobnobbed. The “Commandant” and the “Chief” were seemingly inseparable. They became so close that Sosnkowski told an interviewer: "In many years of working with the Commandant came to understand and to grasp his thoughts [when he uttered] half a word." Piłsudski, 22 years older than Sosnkowski, charismatic and strong willed, was the senior partner in this relationship. Kukiel thought the relationship one of teacher and student.

Piłsudski and Sosnkowski were alike in many respects. Both were devoted to the cause of independence, and the two had very similar ideas on how to achieve it. The two had many

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124 "W 30-lecie współpracy z Piłsudskim," Sosnkowski, Materiały, 575.

other shared interests, including a passion for chess. In this period they spent many long evenings drinking innumerable glasses of tea, smoking endlessly and playing chess in the Cafe Sans Soucci in Lvov or Michalik’s Den in Cracow. Sosnkowski and Piłsudski in many respects were very different. However, their differences did not drive them apart. The crude Piłsudski given to monologues was perhaps complemented by the silent, aesthetic Sosnkowski. The strength of Piłsudski's affection for Sosnkowski is unknown. Sonkowski, however, clearly loved Piłsudski: he revered him and saw in him greatness and genius. His reminiscences of this period are filled with great emotion and reverence for Piłsudski.\footnote{\textit{W 30-lecie współpracy z Piłsudskim}, Sosnkowski, \textit{Materiały}, 570 passim.}

\footnote{\textit{W 30-lecie współpracy z Piłsudskim}, Sosnkowski, \textit{Materiały}, 570 passim.}
CHAPTER III
THE FIRST WORLD WAR, 1914-1918

We beseech You, God of miracles
For a war, a war of peoples

Stanisław Wyspiański, "Legion"

With the outbreak of the First World War Pilsudski hastened to make the insurrection he had long
planned. The insurrection failed, setting him on a four-year military and political odyssey. His
travels through the trenches and imprisonment only ended when Poland became independent in
1918. In the course of this odyssey Piłsudski endeavored to keep the Polish cause alive and to
influence the policies of the Central Powers. Sosnkowski, who by war's outbreak had become
Piłsudski’s right hand, was his key collaborator. He exerted a great influence on events, helping
Piłsudski craft and execute his most important designs. On occasion Sosnkowski, whom Piłsudski
in this period dubbed "my consciousness,"1 sought to moderate the Commandant’s policies.
However, throughout he served him loyally and well.

The outbreak of the First World War came as a surprise to Piłsudski.2 However, he

1 Józef Piłsudski, Moje pierwsze boje (1925; reprint, Łódź, 1988), 161.

2 The assassination of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand in Sarjevo on 28 June 1914 does not
appear to have caused concern in the Piłsudski camp. The absence of an immediate response on
part of the Austrian government probably led them to believe that war was not imminent. The
Riflemen dispersed then for the Summer holidays. Only Piłsudski, Sosnkowski and his staff
remained at their posts. The dispatch of an ultimatum on 25 July and the Serbian government’s
response on 26 July too did not cause alarm. At a conference of PPS leaders on 26 July not even
Piłsudski suspected that war was imminent. The prospect of war received little discussion. No
reacted swiftly. On July 28, the day that hostilities between Austria and Serbia began, he divined that the hour of uprising was at hand and immediately began to implement his plans for an insurrection. Since the first dim visions had formed in his mind in 1906 and 1907, these plans had evolved considerably. The old canard that Piłsudski predicted the outcome of the First World War and thus charted a course based on this forecast has been laid to rest. Nevertheless Piłsudski's aims were firmly fixed. A pragmatist, he did not believe that his modest force alone could win independence. To vanquish Russia he counted on the armies of Austria and Germany. The aim of his insurrection was rather to liberate some territory and raise a small army. This, he hoped, would give the Poles a voice in the resolution of the Polish Question at the end of the conflict.

Piłsudski's aims were broad and general, deliberately so. "The future," as Piłsudski told journalist Józef Hlaszko in 1913, "is reckoning with many unknowns, which it is impossible therefore to resolve."

Although Piłsudski's strategy was broad, his plan of action was quite specific. His plans first called for the mobilization and concentration at Cracow of a revolutionary force—perhaps

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decision was made on action to be taken in the event of war. Protokół posiedzenia Rady Partyjnej P.P.S. z dnia 26 lipca 1914 roku, AAN VI, Archiwum PPS, cont. 305/IV/4, fols. 7-10.


4 In 1915 Piłsudski wrote of his aims at war's outbreak: "I did not want to permit a situation in which, as new borders of states and nations were carved out with swords on the live body of our country, only Polish sabres would be absent. I did not want to permit a situation where on the scales of fate trembling over our heads on which swords have been thrown, Polish sabres would be missing." Rozkaz, Lubartów, 5 Aug. 1915, Piłsudski, Pisma, 4:40.

3,000 Riflemen--before war's outbreak.6 They then called for the Riflemen to march into the Kingdom before the advancing German and Austrian armies and raise the standard of rebellion. The Riflemen were to march first on the industrial Dąbrowa Basin, just across the border from Cracow in the western-most corner of the Kingdom. There Piłsudski hoped to establish his base. In the Dąbrowa Basin Piłsudski hoped to win the support of workers in mill towns like Sosnowiec and Częstochowa. This support Piłsudski hoped to translate into volunteers, which Sosnkowski’s trained cadres would absorb to form genuine armies. Piłsudski hoped to win workers’ and others’ support through ‘agitation by means of war.’ Piłsudski, much like Che Guevara and Regis Debray after him,7 believed that feats of arms would draw others into the struggle.8 Once the Dąbrowa Basin was secure his armies would carry rebellion to other regions. Piłsudski expected that he would have a more or less free hand, for he believed that at war’s outbreak Russian armies would retire behind the barrier of the Vistula River, thus abandoning the western regions of the Kingdom.9

Once Piłsudski made his decision to launch the insurrection, he assigned his chief-of-staff Sosnkowski, fortuitously in Cracow at war’s outbreak, to ready the invasion force. Sosnkowski was aided by the members of his staff, Kukiel, Stachiewicz, and Tadeusz Piskor and worked out of the Esplanade Cafe, which was his and Piłsudski’s headquarters. On 30 July members of the

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6 Piłsudski’s insurrection plans can be found in a draft memorandum prepared in September 1912. See Memorandum, AAN, VI Akta Kazimierza Świtalskiego, file 9, fols. 29-51. Stachiewicz, who was a member of Sosnkowski’s Staff and aided in the preparation of plans, provides further description of Piłsudski’s aims and plans. See Julian Stachiewicz, "Polskie plany mobilizacyjne przed wojną światową," Niepodległość, o.s. 7(1933):3-56.


Cracow Rifleman Association were called to the colors, initiating a mobilization program, which Sosnkowski and his staff had prepared in 1912. On 2 August orders were sent to Lvov calling the Riflemen there to arms. Four days later on 6 August the mobilization of all remaining Riflemen was ordered. As Riflemen arrived in Cracow they were organized in 158-man Cadre Companies, which were to be the building blocks of revolutionary armies. The troops were billeted in the hall of the Oleandry Sports Club adjacent to the Błonia Park, which served as a drill ground. Also, Sosnkowski and his staff set about organizing an Intendanture or quartermaster department to supply the force. Sosnkowski, too, began assembling intelligence to guide upcoming operations, dispatching on 2 August a cavalry patrol across the frontier to gather information on Russian dispositions.

Joining the Riflemen in Cracow to take part in the invasion were men of the Polish Rifle Detachments. In discussions with Rifle, Bartosz and Falcon Detachment leaders on 29 and 30 July, Piłsudski persuaded Rifle Detachment leaders, but not the others, to join him and place their units under his command. Garlicki speculates that Piłsudski won them over using chicanery. It is more likely that, aware Piłsudski was going forward with plans for an uprising, Rifle Detachment leaders did not wish this enterprise, for which they too had long prepared, to pass them by. According to Neugebauer some did not wish to risk their organization being only a "witness" to

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12 Garlicki suggests Piłsudski claimed he had the backing of the Austrian government. On the day that war was declared a KSSN delegation led by Hipolit Śliwiński happened to be in Vienna on a mission to win Austrian support. In an interview at the Foreign Ministry officials expressed interest, but offered no support for the KSSN and its plans. Piłsudski may have misrepresented the results of this meeting in discussions with Rifle Detachment leaders. Garlicki, Piłsudski, 161.
these events.\textsuperscript{13} Grabski remembered that in their commander Januszajtis "all ideological considerations were put aside in the face of the possibility of 'having a go at the Muscovites.'"\textsuperscript{14} The close relations forged by Sosnkowski in preceding months may have facilitated their decisions. On 30 July Rifle Detachments leaders voted to place their forces at Piłsudski’s disposal. (They did so apparently without consulting \textit{Fronde} leaders. \textit{Fronde} leaders did not return to the KSSN and formed their own confederation the Central National Committee on 5 August.) The Rifle Detachments and Riflemen’s Unions were at once integrated. On 1 August their leaders joined Sosnkowski’s staff. The next day Piłsudski ordered that the First and Second Cadre Companies be formed from officers and men of both the Rifle Detachments and Riflemen’s Unions. On 3 August in a dramatic ceremony before the First Cadre Company he proclaimed: "From this day there are no longer Riflemen and Detachment men." He then ordered both groups to exchange cap badges.\textsuperscript{15} Piłsudski symbolically and in reality united the two groups, and the Rifle Detachments ceased to exist as an independent organization.

Piłsudski and his lieutenants also made a last bid for Austrian support before embarking on their uprising. Upon learning of war’s outbreak Piłsudski and Sławek met with the chief of Army Intelligence in Cracow Captain Józef Rybak, with whom they had collaborated since 1908. In the next days the three were joined by Sosnkowski and Sikorski.\textsuperscript{16} What transpired in these meeting is unclear. It is likely that Piłsudski and his lieutenants sought to use this channel to obtain a political agreement and guarantees of support from the Austrian government or High

\textsuperscript{13} Mieczysław Norwed-Neugebauer, "Wspomnienia 6-go sierpnia 1914 r.,” JPI, Akta ZS, file 3, fols. 3-4.

\textsuperscript{14} Grabski, \textit{Pamiętniki}, 1:248.

\textsuperscript{15} "Przemówienie do złączonych w Kompanię Kadrową oddziałów związków i rużyn Strzeleckich 3 sierpnia 1914 r w Oleandrach w Krakowie," Piłsudski, \textit{Pisma}, 4:7.

\textsuperscript{16} Rybak, \textit{Pamiętniki}, 77ff.
Command (Armeeoberkommando or AOK). Sosnkowski provided Rybak with what intelligence he had probably in an effort to impress the Austrians. Their requests for guarantees were rebuffed. The mission, however, was not entirely unsuccessful. Rybak, who was charged with creating a diversion in the Kingdom at war's outbreak, appears to have provided some aid. On 4 August Neugebauer and a party of Riflemen drew 2,000 old single-action model 1878 Werndl rifles, ammunition and rations from the stores of the Austrian Seventh Division at Krzeszowice.

Despite the labors of Sosnkowski and his staff preparations for the uprising, in particular mobilization, proceeded poorly. Plans called for mobilization to be completed within hours of commanders' receipt of orders. However, a week after mobilization had begun not much more than three companies with 500 out of the more than 12,000 ZWC, Riflemen's Union and Rifle Detachment members available had gathered in Cracow. With many dispersed for the holidays, notification was problematic. Austrian mobilization also interfered with the call-up of Riflemen. Partial mobilization was announced on 27 July. On 1 August general mobilization began. Many Riflemen became caught up in Austrian mobilization before they knew that the Riflemen's Unions were being called up. The Riflemens' Union's Lvov commander, Rydz was on his way to report to his reserve unit, when he received Sosnkowski's mobilization orders.

Nevertheless late on 5 August Pilsudski decided to begin the insurrection. Events appear to have driven Pilsudski to take this gamble. The German declaration of war on Russia on 1 August upset Pilsudski's plans. German forces immediately invaded the Kingdom. On 2 August

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17 Tadeusz Pelczarski, Kommisarjaty Wojskowe Rządu Narodowego w Królestwie Polskim, 6 VIII-5 IX 1914 (Warsaw, 1939), 78.

18 Pilsudski later claimed that he rebuffed the Austrians. Appendix to letter to Count Zdzisław Lubomierski, Pilsudski, Pisma, 4:215.


20 Sokolnicki, Rok czternasty, 179ff.
German forces advancing from Silesia captured Sosnowiec. On 5 August Galician newspapers announced that Częstochowa was in German hands.21 That same day Piłsudski met with Rybak, who informed him that an advance into the Dąbrowa Basin was no longer possible. Rybak told him that his forces would have to strike out for Kielce and Radom on the main road between Cracow and Warsaw.22 This was bad news for Piłsudski, for his camp made little effort to cultivate the support of the poor peasants of the region. The German advance proceeding in the direction of Radom, may have led Piłsudski to believe that, if he were to delay further, the opportunity for insurrection might soon pass. Furthermore, the speed and seeming effortlessness of these early advances may have suggested to Piłsudski that Russian forces were quitting the West to shelter behind the Vistula as predicted and therefore that it was safe to begin the rising with only the small force on hand.

The uprising began on 6 August. All went well at first both politically and militarily. In a bid to win greater support for the rising Piłsudski created the ruse of a non-existent clandestine National Government in Warsaw, which appointed him supreme commander. On 6 August he revealed the National Government's existence to members of the KSSN and demanded the Commission's subordination to it. Such a stratagem would reduce the role of the now leftist-dominated Commission of Confederated Parties and represent the rising as non-sectarian in character. It would thus facilitate the participation of Conservatives and nationalist parties, which had formed their own coordinating body--the Central National Committee--on 5 August. The move, too, would strengthen Piłsudski's authority.23 Piłsudski, who spent the first days of the rising in Cracow overseeing its political direction, easily secured the submission of the KSSN to

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21 Kurjer Lwowski, 5 Aug. 1914.
22 Rybak, Pamiętniki, 84.
23 Garlicki, Piłsudski, 166-7.
the National Government and its commander-in-chief. The KSSN’s political and propaganda resources and the financial resources of the Polish Military Treasury were mobilized to support the rising.

The insurrection also began well militarily. The invasion of the Kingdom, whose direction was largely left to Sosnkowski, began on 6 August. That morning the fabled First Cadre Company, in whose ranks were one future chief of the Polish general staff, eight future generals and twice as many colonels, crossed into the Kingdom. Later in the day after collecting Neugebauer and his rifles two more companies and the staff under Sosnkowski’s command crossed the frontier. The Riflemen encountered little resistance in their advance on Kielce. They quickly attained their objectives, capturing the small town of Jędrzejów on 9 August and Kielce on 12 August. As Sosnkowski’s force advanced it was joined by additional units of Riflemen as mobilization orders at last began reaching those on holiday at war’s outbreak. When it reached Kielce the force had grown to 17 companies with 2,460 men.24 During the advance Sosnkowski, at Piłsudski’s direction, put in place a military government to administer the liberated areas. Sosnkowski installed a series of Military Commissariats, which administered liberated territory for the "National Government". The Commissar for Kielce was Sokolnicki. The tasks of these commissars also included political agitation and recruiting.25

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25 Sokolnicki, Rok Czternasty, 210-12 and Pelczarski, Komisarjaty, 125..
These were heady days for Sosnkowski and the Riflemen, most of whom were students. The commander of the First Company Tadeusz Kasprzycki, later chief of the Polish Army General Staff, felt that he and his men were making history. The image of the first Polish force in a generation to take the field stayed with Sosnkowski for the rest of his life. The first days of the insurrection whetted a romantic appetite for glory. The invasion of the Kingdom caused a sensation. The capture of even the smallest villages were hailed by Galician newspapers with banner headlines. Also, the insurrection fulfilled szlachta patriotism. What the writer Stefan Żeromski called "the ennobling dream of the sword"--to regain Polish independence by force of arms--had come true for the Riflemen. All were full of enthusiasm. The writer Andrzej Strug, who was a member of the Riflemen's Union, was overjoyed at his company's baptism of fire.

The jubilation of the Riflemen was short-lived. Not long after the capture of Kielce the insurrection collapsed. First, the Russian armies in the Kingdom did not behave as anticipated. Late on 12 and early on 13 August a large force of Russian cavalry attacked the Riflemen in Kielce. Under pressure of heavy bombardment Sosnkowski was compelled to quit the town.

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26 The Riflemen's Union was in June 1914 composed of 2,886 intellectuals and students, 1,403 workers, and 4,001 peasants. Komenda Główna ZS, Sprawozdanie, 1 June 1914, Janik, W służbie idei niepodległości, 55. Worker and peasant members were largely citizens of the Dual Monarchy and were reservists or subject to conscription. Many intellectuals and students were from the Kingdom and free to answer the call to arms. Sosnkowski recalled that his force was composed mostly of youths. Materiały, 648.

27 Tadeusz Kasprzycki, Kartki z dziennika oficera Pierwszej Brygady (Warsaw, 1934), 33


29 Kurjer Lwowski, 8 Aug. 1914.

Also, the response to the insurrection except in leftist and literary circles was poor. The gay march of the Riflemen did not evoke an outpouring of patriotic furor among the inhabitants of the Kielce region. Peasants watched the passing grey columns in the stony silence, which they had not broken in 500 years. Sosnkowski recalled:

Not only was there not the slightest trace of enthusiasm, but on the contrary they greeted us with an air of unconcealed dislike, frequently even hostility. Peasants, in general with little national consciousness, feared for their livestock and crops: here and there they raised a note of sorrow for the flight of the Russians.31

Requisitioning by the Riflemen, whose supply system was only recently called into being, may have made matters worse. Sosnkowski thought so and issued orders curtailing requisitioning supplies among the populace.32 The most devastating blow was dealt the insurrection by the Austrian High Command. Perhaps aware and alarmed that Piłsudski's action was more than a diversion AOK sent Piłsudski an ultimatum on 13 August. The ultimatum, which required that Piłsudski respond within 24 hours, demanded that he disband his force or submit to AOK and enter the ranks of the Imperial and Royal Landsturm.

After receiving the ultimatum Piłsudski consulted with Sosnkowski, Sikorski, head of the KSSN's Military Department, and Neugebauer, hoping that an escape could be found.33 They could find none, but an escape was at hand nevertheless. A *deus ex machina* appeared in the form of the Supreme National Committee (Naczelny Komitet Narodowy, abbreviated to NKN). As the Riflemen were marching on Kielce Galician Conservatives pressed Austrian authorities to take up the Polish Question. Their solution entailed a union of Poland with the Austrian crown. Leading this effort were Juliusz Leo, head of the caucus of Polish deputies to the Reichsrat, the Austrian

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parliament, and Leon Biliński, Austrian Minister of Finance. First failing to move Austrian officials to address the problem directly, they proposed the creation, using Pilsudski's forces, of independent Polish Legions under AOK's command. On 12 August the two took their proposal to Austrian Commander-in-Chief Conrad von Hützendorff. Conrad was happy to have more cannon fodder, and told the two, according to the reliable account of Konstanty Srokowski: "The more bayonets, the better." Conservatives were soon joined by the National Democrats and the KSSN parties. On 16 August the three camps formed the NKN, which was to provide political direction and financial support for the Legions.

Pilsudski's did not embrace the NKN immediately. Only after some soul searching and the urging of Sosnkowski did he accept it. Although the formation of the NKN and the Polish Legions gave his force a reprieve, they bound his movement to an Austrian solution. He temporized, hoping another escape would present itself. On 20 August Pilsudski again consulted his lieutenants. At the meeting, according to Neugebauer a majority urged they fight on, as guerrillas, if necessary. Although Neugebauer did not state what Sosnkowski counselled, the Chief-of-Staff, possessing a cool, reasoning intellect and not prone to rash decisions, probably urged acceptance of the NKN. Pilsudski, who reserved the decision for himself, shortly chose this course. On 22 August Pilsudski embraced the NKN. That day he issued an order informing the Riflemen of the decision. The order was drafted by Sosnkowski. It put a bold face on the defeat,


stating: "In understanding with the Secret National Government in Warsaw, I have announced in
my and your name joining the broader organization, ensuring the Polish Army greater means and
stronger actions." Two days later Piłsudski and Sosnkowski consummated the union in talks
in Cracow with leaders of the NKN and representatives of AOK.

The Polish Legions were constituted before the end of August. On 5 September the
Riflemen, now Legionnaires, swore allegiance to the Austrian crown. The forces under Piłsudski
and Sosnkowski’s command in the Kingdom became the First Regiment, later the First Brigade
of the Polish Legions. Piłsudski, given the rank of brigadier general of Landsturm, commanded
the force. Sosnkowski, made a lieutenant colonel, became chief of staff. The First Brigade
formally constituted the Western Legion. An Eastern Legion was formed from the National-
Democrat-dominated Falcon Field Detachments and the Peasant Bartosz Detachments, which
joined the fray after the formation of the NKN. They became the Second and Third Regiments,
later Brigades. Commanded by Austrian officers, they were employed in 1914 in the battles for
the Carpathian passes. The division between Western and Eastern Legions was abolished after
the Russian invasion of East Galicia, after which the three brigades were subordinated to a unified
Legion Command. Commanding the Western Legion was a Polish officer of the Imperial and
Royal Army General Rajmund Baczyński, shortly replaced by another Pole General Karol
Trzaska-Durski. The Legions wore Polish national insignia and used Polish as the language of
command. Overseeing the Legion militarily on behalf of the NKN was its Military Department,
headed by Sikorski. Sikorski’s Military Department was also entrusted with recruiting for the Le-
gions. Recruiting was restricted to the Kingdom’s residents. Political oversight of the Western
Legion was entrusted to a Western Department under Conservative politician Władysław Jaworski.

38 Ibid.

39 Sokolnicki, Rok czternasty, 218.
The formation of the Polish Legions reduced Pilsudski's movement to a force of volunteers fighting alongside Austrian armies and binding it to an Austrian solution to the Polish Question. It dashed Pilsudski's and his followers vision of an independent Polish force that might lead the Central Powers to grant Poland independence. This vision died hard and in the last months of 1914 and early 1915 Pilsudski strove to recoup a measure of independence and greater influence for his movement. Circumstances did not allow for this. Ultimately he had to bide his time in the trenches until circumstances arose, which would allow them to strengthen him hand. Throughout Pilsudski relied heavily on Sosnkowski. Sosnkowski as a result became his right hand in political as well military matters.

The formation of the Polish Legions was followed closely by attempts to extricate Pilsudski and his movement from the NKN's clutches. Pilsudski attempted to do this by striking a better deal with the German government. In early September on Pilsudski's orders his collaborators founded the Polish National Organization to undertake negotiations with the German government. In mid-September the first overtures were made. Talks between Jodko and Sokolnicki and a Captain Lüders of the German Ninth Army, which was then marching on Warsaw, took place on 30 September. On 4 October Pilsudski and Jodko met with Lüders. In the course of the discussions Pilsudski proposed that his force be transferred to German command and take part in the capture of Warsaw. Pilsudski argued that his Legionnaires would be of great service here, because in their ranks were "a significant number of political activists, writers, instructors and others in a position to directly influence Polish public opinion." In return Pilsudski's force would be given material support and a free hand recruiting and agitating in liberated

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40 Sokolnicki, *Rok Czternasty*, 235.
Quartermaster General of the Ninth Army General Traugott von Sauberzweig accepted Piłsudski's proposal in talks with Jodko and Sokolnicki on 9 October. The next day an agreement was signed.

The agreement concluded by Jodko and Sokolnicki did not please Piłsudski, however. It promised the Polish National Organization a free hand in German-occupied regions of the Kingdom, but provided for only one infantry battalion and a small cavalry force joining the German march on Warsaw. Piłsudski immediately directed Sosnkowski with Sokolnicki to negotiate a new agreement with the Ninth Army. On 13 October the two met Lüders in Radom. Sosnkowski at once pressed Lüders to agree to the whole of Piłsudski's force joining the German advance. Lüders then told Sosnkowski that the capture of Warsaw was off, for a strong Russian force was now concentrating there. Sosnkowski still pressed him on the transfer of Piłsudski's force. He argued that the Legions were "the only force capable of keeping the country in hand and ensuring the security of German operations [in the Kingdom] against Russia." Lüders refused to give way, however. Sosnkowski and Sokolnicki came away from the meeting empty handed.

Not long after the meeting between Sosnkowski and Lüders, Piłsudski abandoned his German scheme. The German advance on Warsaw became stalled; the Ninth Army was eventually thrown back by a Russian counteroffensive. Also, it is likely that Sosnkowski convinced Piłsudski that there was no chance of securing a favorable arrangement with the Germans. Sosnkowski strongly believed that the Germans were dealing in bad faith and unwilling to grant

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41 Michal Sokolnicki, Relacja w sprawie stosunków Piłsudskiego i P.O.N. z wojskiem Niemieckim w okresie 27.IX.-3.XI.1914., ND, AAN, Akta Polskiej Organizacji Narodowej, cont. 11, fol. 7.

42 Ibid., Załącznik 12, fols. 57-8.

43 Ibid., Załącznik 14, fols. 60-61.
concessions. Sokolnicki wrote to Jodko on 14 October: "Józef [Sosnkowski] is of the opinion that they are being deceitful with us, they will take Warsaw but without us, since Berlin is against this."44

Pilsudski's bid for German backing, was followed by other enterprises, which also failed.45 Pilsudski and Sosnkowski thus had to bide their time until new opportunities for political action arose. From the autumn of 1914 through autumn 1915 the two devoted most of their energies to the battles of the Legions. In autumn and winter 1914 the First Brigade took part in the Austrian armies' evacuation of the Kingdom in the face of a Russian counteroffensive. The offensive carried Russian forces deep into Galicia and the brigade took part in the bloody battles around Tarłów in December in an effort to halt it. In late January 1915 the First Regiment was withdrawn from frontline service and allowed to rest and reorganize. At this time the Regiment was reorganized as a three-regiment brigade and was given modern weapons. On 27 February the First Brigade returned to front-line service. The brigade was transferred to General Viktor Dankl's Fourth Army and spent the remainder of winter in the trenches along the Nida River. The Battle of Gorlice, which led to an Austrian breakthrough and invasion of the Kingdom, began on 2 May. The First Brigade was utilized in the pursuit of the retreating Russian armies. In the course of the advance it became embroiled in heavy fighting at Konary between 16-24 May. In June the brigade crossed the Vistula in the van of the Dankl's army and joined in the drive, which

44 Sokolnicki to Jodko, Częstochowa, 14 Oct. 1914, AAN, Akta PON, fol. 8v.

45 In April 1915 Pilsudski in another bid to strengthen his hand dispatched Sosnkowski to Cracow to press the NKN to unite the three brigades. Sosnkowski's arguments impressed the NKN, but did not secure the union of the Legions. Diariusz Władysława Leopolda Jaworskiego, Archiwum Polskiej Akademii Nauk (hereafter APAN), Akta Władysława Leopolda Jaworskiego, cont. III-84, D.20, fol. 115.
captured Lublin on 30 July. Autumn found it fighting in Podolia and Volhynia in eastern Poland. The First Brigade distinguished itself many times, receiving numerous commendations.

Pilsudski and Sosnkowski as well distinguished themselves in the battles of the Legions. Both showed themselves commanders of high caliber, even brilliance. In autumn 1914 Piłsudski conducted a series of brilliant rear-guard actions. In engagements at Ulina Mała, Limanowa and Nowy Korczyn Piłsudski displayed the Napoleonic proclivity for bold maneuvers deep into an opponent's flank and rear, which later became his trademark. Piłsudski's brilliance as a commander shone even more brightly, because it was supplemented by Sosnkowski's brilliant staff work. Not only did the personalities of Piłsudski and Sosnkowski complement each other, but their various abilities did so as well. Piłsudski's vision and talent for conceptualizing was complemented by Sosnkowski's attention to detail and knack for organization. Miedziński noticed this and pronounced Sosnkowski "the perfect complement" to Piłsudski. He also wrote: "The title of chief-of-staff, which he had already in the Rifleman's Union and later in the First Brigade, was really incorrect, for he was more than a chief-of-staff, [he] was Piłsudski's second. He took his place in his absence, and complemented him--both in command and in organizational work--always."

To Sosnkowski as chief-of-staff fell the task of translating Piłsudski's designs into dispositions, instructions for patrols and marching orders. He also ensured that they were properly

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46 For a summary of First Brigade operations in Spring and Summer 1915 see Mieczysław Wzorek, Posłki czyn zbrojny podczas Pierwszej Wojny Światowej, 1914-1918 (Warsaw, 1990), 131, 152-8. See also Austria, Bundesministerium für Heereswesen, Österreich-Ungarns Letzter Krieg 1914-1918 (1930-38), 2:387ff, 426ff, 632.

47 Dokumenty Naczelnego Komitetu Narodowego, 1914-1917 (Cracow, 1917), 41 passim.

executed. Sosnkowski brought to staff work great precision and thoroughness. He possessed an eye for detail and great patience. Sosnkowski too executed his duties tirelessly. He was up well before dawn and worked late into the night. The writer Juliusz Kaden-Bandrowski, assigned to the First Brigade’s staff, wrote of Sosnkowski: “He knows neither rest nor repose.” Also, Sosnkowski again displayed his talent for organization. He was entrusted with expanding the brigade, which entered the war with almost no support services and despite successive reorganizations remained incomplete. In late 1914 Sosnkowski organized a transport service. In 1915 he organized a signals service.*1 Sosnkowski combined energy and a knack for organization with courage. In battle he displayed a disregard of personal safety. In the bloody fighting around Konary in spring 1915 he often carried out his duties on the front line.31 Sosnkowski distinguished himself in numerous other engagements, being awarded the Austrian Iron Crown (third class) on 8 September 1915.52

Sosnkowski, who frequently commanded the brigade in Pilsudski’s absence, also showed himself an excellent commander. As a commander Sosnkowski displayed great determination, coolness and decisiveness. It was Sosnkowski, who led the brigade in the fighting around Tarnów between 22 and 25 December 1914. This engagement is known as the Battle of Łowczówek. At Łowczówek the intellectuals cum soldiers of the First Brigade underwent for the first time the ordeal of modern warfare. On 21 December the brigade, attached to the Austrian Fourth Army,

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49 Kaden-Bandrowski, Pilsudczycy, 10.
51 Hugo Zielinski, Konary 16-25. V. 1915 (Warsaw, 1935), 40 passim.
was committed with other forces at Łowczówek near Tamów. Tamów in late December had become the fulcrum of the Russian offensive. At Łowczówek the brigade was exposed to the full fury of the Russian attack. In the course of four days of fighting the brigade was subjected to murderous bombardment and 16 assaults. Ammunition ran short and the Legionnaires had recourse only to their bayonets. Several times neighboring units broke and fled. On these occasions Sosnkowski refused to quit the field and launched the brigade on desperate counterattacks, which redeemed the Austrian forces. In the fight the regiment suffered 128 killed and 342 wounded, but inflicted a far greater number of casualties. Throughout the battle, Sikorski reported to the NKN, Sosnkowski displayed "talent and coolness." The brigade was praised for its conduct at Łowczówek by Austrian commanders.

The struggle of the Legions in 1914 and 1915 was a bitter and solitary one. The formation of the Polish Legions robbed Piłsudski’s movement of its original aims and its sense of purpose. The Legionnaires in 1914 and 1915 found themselves serving the Kaisertreu cause, which was alien to them. Their struggle was a solitary one as well. The Legionnaires received little popular support. Often the Legionnaires met with hostility. When the Legions paraded through Warsaw in 1915, Sławek had to endure overhearing a Polish mother pointing him out to

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53 The First Brigade was the last unit to quit the position at Łowczówek. On 24 Dec. the Brigade was ordered to withdraw. The order was countermanded and Sosnkowski returned the Brigade to the battlefield. In the course of the next day neighboring units were driven from the field. Sosnkowski decided to quit the position, when his was the only unit remaining. Kasprzycki, Kartki z Dziennika, 229-31. See also Kazimierz Sosnkowski, Bericht über das Gefecht bei Łowczówek am 22, 23, 24, 25 December 1914, Lipnica Murowana, 28 Dec. 1914, CAW, Akta Legionów, cont. 1.120.24.167.


55 Legiony Polskie 16 sierpnia 1914-16 sierpnia 1915 (Dokumenty) (Piotrków, 1915), 52.
her little girl as "one of those men, who wants to kill your daddy." The lack of a sense of purpose and popular support had a profound effect on the men of the First Brigade. The two gave rise to messianic sentiments among the Legionnaires. The Legionnaires saw themselves as unique and morally superior for waging their lone struggle on behalf of the Polish nation. Piłsudski and Sosnkowski no less than their comrades and arms succumbed to such sentiments.

These circumstances as well as the nature of command in wartime, as historian Tomasz Nałęcz points out, led to the growth of Piłsudski’s cult of personality. The lack of popular support and sense of purpose created a psychic void, which was filled by Piłsudski’s cult of personality. In the dark days of 1914 and 1915 the Legionnaires looked to Piłsudski not only to see them through the storm of battle, but to the goal of independence as well. Piłsudski, possessing great charisma and strength of personality, for his part eagerly courted the affection of the men of the First Brigade. As a result the officers and men of the First Brigade developed an unbounded faith in Piłsudski, which manifested itself in unswerving and unquestioning acceptance of his views and commands. This cult of personality was particularly strong among the young and impressionable intellectuals who officered the Legions. Bolesław Wieniawa-Długoszewski gave ample testament to the power of this cult, when he coined the motto of the brigade’s officers: "To the deuce! Why should we worry. Let the Commandant worry for us." From

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56 Quoted in Joseph Rothschild, "Piłsudski’s Concept of State vis-à-vis Society in Interwar Poland," in East Central European War Leaders: Civilian and Military, edited by Béla K. Király and Albert A Nofi (Boulder, 1988), 301n.


58 Ibid., 94-5.

among these officers Piłsudski assembled a new group of collaborators. Among the most
important here were Rydz, Długoszewski, Miedziński, Kasprzycki, and Kazimierz Świtalski.

Sosnkowski did not succumb to Piłsudski’s cult of personality. Piłsudski evoked love and
loyalty in Sosnkowski, but never sycophancy. Colonel. Bolesław Roja of the Legions observed:

The young chief-of-staff of the First Brigade, of distinguished culture and spirit,
maintained an independence of judgement with regard to the moves and spiritual
energy, [and] I would say, the power of Piłsudski. This was an independence of
judgement based on his own high spiritual culture, although in action he was
subject completely to Piłsudski and was subordinate to him. Few officers in the
Legions especially in difficult moments and [moments] of the intensive psychic
energy of Piłsudski maintained an independence of spirit and their own
judgement.  

Sosnkowski’s independence of judgement was perhaps a function of his maturity. Although he
was the same age as the neophytes who fell at Piłsudski’s feet, Sosnkowski possessed a broad
experience and no small personal fame.

Sosnkowski did not build his own cult or following among the Legionnaires as Piłsudski
did. His coolness and distance did not win him great popularity among the men of the First Bri-
gade. However, Sosnkowski’s talents inspired respect, and he had the confidence of the
Legionnaires. A non-commissioned officer admiringly wrote of him:

Colonel Sosnkowski listens to reports, from time to time makes some sort of
comment, and I have the impression that he is thinking simultaneously of a
thousand things. He is one of those people, who possess the power to give orders
and innate leadership. He is a man who unites strange creativity with the hard
facts of the soldier’s lot. I heard once . . . the Chief play Chopin with great feel-

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60 Bolesław Roja, Legendy i fakty (Warsaw, 1932), 38-9.

61 Historian Waclaw Lipiński, who served in the First Brigade, described Sosnkowski as a cold
and distant staff officer. Waclaw Lipiński, Szlakiem I Brygady: Dziennik żołnierski (Warsaw,
1928), 286.
ing, and I know as well [that] he directed the Battle of Łowczówek with inaudible intuition with understanding of the most intricate tactical problems.62

Nevertheless among the officers of the First Brigade Sosnkowski was very popular. With the officers of the brigade Sosnkowski's distance and coolness disappeared on occasion. He greatly enjoyed the company of officers, most of whom were intellectuals like himself and many of whom possessed great learning and sophistication. He joined in the officers' fêtes, often riotous affairs, with great gusto. Often he and the staff officers went hunting.63 All may not have been pleasure, for as Miedziński remembered:

We talked openly with the Chief, he took part in our daily routines, translated and explained things unclear to us, spending with us many merry evenings with us in our cups and [in our] entertainments, which undoubtedly aided him in evaluating individual qualities and the character of certain officers; [but] this never, to my knowledge, harmed his authority.64

Sosnkowski used his relationship with the officers of the brigade to ensure that it functioned well and to communicate to his fellows Piłsudski's designs.

On 5 July German armies entered Warsaw. Five days later the fortress of Modlin, north of the city and the gateway to eastern Poland, too was in German hands. By the start of autumn 1915 most of the Kingdom was in the possession of the Central Powers. The victories of summer brought political change. Piłsudski sought to use the changed circumstances to recoup some independence for his camp and to strengthen it as well. Piłsudski believed that the Central Powers soon would be compelled to resolve the Polish Question, if only for the reason that they would need Polish manpower to sustain their war efforts. It was imperative that his camp be put in a


position to treat with them, when this occurred. Also, he understood that there was little popular enthusiasm for the Austrian-sponsored NKN and Polish Legions and the Central Powers.

To strengthen his position vis à vis the Central Powers as well as win popular support Piłsudski decided to dramatically distance himself from the NKN and the Legions Command by provoking a conflict over unification of the three Legion brigades, giving them a Polish command and in particular recruiting. The NKN was eager to begin large-scale recruiting for the Legions even before the Central Powers addressed the Polish Question, and Sikorski’s Military Department had constructed a large administration to accomplish this. In this conflict Piłsudski was prepared to go so far as to disband the Legions, which he believed had outlived their usefulness. In this event he would move the focus of the independence camp to the Polish Military Organization (Polska Organizacja Wojskowa, abbreviated to POW), a clandestine military organization created in autumn 1914 from ZWC elements in the Kingdom until then little used. The first salvo in this battle was fired by Piłsudski. On 1 September he wrote Jaworski, sharply criticizing the Military Department’s recruiting plans and Durski’s Legions Command. He told Jaworski: "There is no alternative; there remains only a clear break with such a system, [it is] with a feeling of great sadness that I and my subordinates will probably be driven . . . to leave the ranks."

Piłsudski’s new course triggered a succession of battles with the NKN and Legions Command. Sosnkowski was immediately draw into the fray. In a recent study Krzysztof Jaszczuk asserts Piłsudski’s new course led to a sharp dispute with his chief-of-staff and led Sosnkowski to flirt with Piłsudski’s enemies. Little suggests this, and no evidence sustains such

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66 Piłsudski to Jaworski, Otwock, 1 September 1915, APAN, Akta Jaworskiego, cont. III-84 D.42, fol. 15-19.
an analysis. Sosnkowski rather was at times an object of these battles. Also, Sosnkowski's active role in these battles was much more complex. He had misgivings regarding Piłsudski's plan of action. He sought to broker a compromise between the warring parties. However, there was no falling out between the two and Sosnkowski faithfully executed Piłsudski's orders.

Piłsudski's first shot was soon returned by the NKN and Legions Command. The NKN responded by dispatching a pair of emissaries to dissuade Piłsudski from the course he had chosen. Also, Jaworski attempted to persuade Sosnkowski to intercede with Piłsudski on behalf of the NKN. Jaworski as a result of previous dealings with Sosnkowski had come to see him as reasonable and sympathetic. He now believed that Sosnkowski might be able to moderate Piłsudski's new course. Jaworski may also have tried to deal the Piłsudski camp a serious blow, by winning over for the NKN the most important leader after Piłsudski. On 7 September he dispatched Count Ludwik Morstin of the Military Department to Sosnkowski to request that he interceded on the NKN's behalf.

One week later Piłsudski's plan elicited a response from Durski's Legions Command. The Legions Command, in particular its chief-of-staff Captain Włodzimierz Zagórski, held Piłsudski in contempt. It took a dim view of his latest stunt. It responded on 14 September, ordering a portion of the brigade, which was then at Kowel in Volhynia, removed from Piłsudski's command, placed under Sosnkowski and dispatched to a different sector of the front. This was a two-fold


68 Diariusz Jaworskiego, APAN, Akta Jaworskiego, cont. III-84 D.20, fol. 115.

69 The content and outcome of this effort are unknown. Diariusz Jaworskiego, ibid., cont. III-84 D.20, fol. 226.

70 Kasprzycki, Karty z dziennika, 459.
assault on Piłsudski. First, it threatened to destroy the unity of the First Brigade, which recently found itself fighting alongside the Third Brigade. Second, it was an attempt to drive a wedge between him and Sosnkowski. At least Piłsudski saw it as such. 71 This assault was followed by others. 72

Piłsudski did not use this opportunity to make good his threat to resign. When Piłsudski polled his lieutenants at a meeting of the senior officers of the First Brigade on 14 September, those assembled resolved to resign *en masse*. This was a vote of confidence in his new course. The decision of the meeting, however, was not implemented. "The decision," Stachiewicz wrote in his account of the meeting, "was not in keeping with the Commandant’s plans." 73 Piłsudski had not yet had time to prepare for the contingency of a move to the POW. Piłsudski did, however, take steps to thwart the NKN and Legions Command and register his displeasure. He immediately moved to end the "haggling over his [Sosnkowski’s] soul." Piłsudski "ordered [Sosnkowski] to be sick" and absent himself from the front. 74 He refused to implement the order dividing his force and compounded this insubordination by ordering the brigade to the front line in another unit’s place.

Sosnkowski was not simply an object in these battles. Sosnkowski agreed with Piłsudski that the camp must shake itself free of the Central Powers. Piłsudski therefore entrusted him with realizing his plans. Sosnkowski, however, harbored misgivings regarding Piłsudski’s new course.

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At the 14 September meeting Sosnkowski had voted against the officers' mass resignation. He did not wish to see the First Brigade, the core of the movement he had helped craft, disbanded, or did not think the time was right for such a measure. Sosnkowski's doubts did not lead to a falling out with Piłsudski; no echo of outward disagreement between the two can be found. On the contrary Roja noted that when Piłsudski and Sosnkowski did not see eye to eye, Sosnkowski did not press his objections and became silent. Sosnkowski's doubts, however, led him to cast about on his own for a solution that would both advance Piłsudski's plans and save the Legions.

Sosnkowski was dispatched immediately after the 14 September meeting to Cracow with Kasprzycki, the new commander of the POW, to aid in revamping that organization. In Cracow Sosnkowski assembled a team of officers, who would undertake the actual work of reorganization. He briefed them on Piłsudski's new course, telling them: "The Legions as an anti-Russian demonstration have fulfilled their function, and their numerical strength ought not be increased. In conjunction with this it is necessary to establish in the lands abandoned by the Russian armies an organized force not bound to the Central Powers and exclusively at Polish disposal." Sosnkowski next, on 19 September, met with a broad group of political leaders and attempted to persuade them to form a National Council (Rada Narodowa), that would serve as political vehicle to achieve Piłsudski's goals.

In the formation of a National Council he saw an opportunity to save the First Brigade as well as advance Piłsudski's plans. During talks Sosnkowski intoned that if a National Council

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75 Fragmenty z dziennika Artura Śliwińskiego, APAN, Akta Artura Śliwińskiego, cont. III-59 187, fol. 6.

76 Roja, Legendy i fakty, 38.

77 Alf-Tarczyński, Wspomnienia, 28.
were established quickly, it might save the Legions, which he believed were close to disbanding.\textsuperscript{78} Nothing came of this. The activists present at this meeting only formed a committee to undertake preparations for the creation of a National Council.

Having failed to find redemption in a National Council Sosnkowski, on his own initiative, turned to Jaworski to save the Legions. After travelling to Warsaw to install the new command of the POW there he proceeded to Cracow, where on 26 September he met with Jaworski. In a conversation with Jaworski he told him that Zagórski was bent on destroying the brigade. He tried to convince him that Piłsudski's recent actions were done to save the Legions.\textsuperscript{79} Sosnkowski returned several days later, meeting with Jaworski on 2 October. In this conversation he proposed a compromise solution. If the Command of the Legions was turned over to Legion officers, Sosnkowski pledged the loyalty of the Legions to the NKN. He told Jaworski that Legion officers "will not polemicize, [but] accept the hand stretched out in agreement."\textsuperscript{80}

Sosnkowski does not appear to have pursued the matter. He allowed it to drop perhaps out of discouragement. The Legions Command continued its attacks breaking up the First Brigade and constituting a number of independent combat groups. Compromise was ruled out when Piłsudski directed harsh criticisms of the Legions Command to AOK.\textsuperscript{81} This may have brought him round to Piłsudski's view. Sosnkowski returned to the front then and assumed command of an independent group, which under Rydz's command had been committed to fighting on the Styr

\textsuperscript{78} Dziennik Śliwińskiego, APAN, Akta Śliwińskiego, cont. III-59 187, fol. 6.

\textsuperscript{79} Diariusz Jaworskiego, APAN, Akta Jaworskiego III-84 D. 20, fol. 238.

\textsuperscript{80} Ibid., fol. 240.

River in eastern Volhynia. The group took part in the advance to the Stochód River, spending the remainder of the year and the start of 1916 in positional battles in the area.

In January 1916 Durski was removed. He was replaced as the Legions’ commander on 4 February by the more sympathetic General Stanisław Puchalski. At the same time the first Brigade was withdrawn from the front line and reconstituted. Moreover, for this rest period it was quartered with Colonel Ferdinand Küttner’s Third and Colonel Wiktor Grzeszycki’s Second Brigade, which now found themselves in Volhynia. These new circumstances allowed Pilsudski to resume implementing his plans, which had lapsed in the months when the brigade was in the front line. They also afforded Pilsudski an opportunity to strengthen his hand as never before by winning over the other Brigades to his program.

To Sosnkowski fell the task of bringing the officers of the Second and Third Brigades in line with the First. The venue, which Sosnkowski chose to accomplish this, was the Colonels’ Council (Rada Pułkowników). The Colonels’ Council was an ad hoc institution, established by Roja in February to serve as a vehicle for cooperation between the three brigades’ regimental commanders, whose paths until then had never crossed. The council met infrequently, only as circumstances demanded. Sosnkowski led council meetings and submitted plans and resolutions the body discussed. The council in and of itself constituted a vote of no confidence for the Legions Command. It is a measure of the political naivete of Puchalski, that he on occasion took part in the body’s deliberations. Sosnkowski’s aims in his dealings with the council were clearly spelled out in a letter from Pilsudski. On 19 March 1916 he wrote: "Henceforward our demands

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must be 1.) all Austrian officers will depart, 2.) command of the Legions--naturally will be given to me, 3.) the hinderance of the [NKN] Military Department will withdraw from the Kingdom."83

The task ahead of Sosnkowski was a difficult one. The officers of the Third and in particular the Second Brigade, who came out of the National Democratic Falcon Field Detachments and who looked to their own Colonel Józef Haller for leadership, were markedly hostile to the First Brigade's commanding officer and its brand of politicking. Roja of the Third Brigade wrote in his journal: "What is the First Brigade? It is against free thought. It is a collection of voluntarily inflamed heads."84 Sosnkowski proceeded slowly therefore. As in his dealings with the Polish Rifle Detachments in 1913 and 1914 he sought agreement on smaller issues, to build trust. For instance, at a meeting of the Colonels' Council on 29 March he secured agreement on the introduction of uniform organization, insignia and badges of rank for all three brigades.85

Little is known of the meetings of next months. However, it is likely that careful work on the part of Sosnkowski enabled him to build further concensus and win the confidence of even the likes of Haller, for in difficult circumstances the Council rallied behind Pilsudski.

The first important test and an important episode creating greater solidarity among the Legions' commanders came in late June 1916 over an incident relating to insignia. At Pilsudski's direction Neugebauer, now commanding the Sixth Regiment of the Third Brigade, ordered his men on 26 June to begin wearing the insignia of the First Brigade. New insignia had been approved by the Colonels' Council in March, but had yet to be approved by the Puchalski. Puchalski ordered the men to remove the new insignia. Neugebauer refused to execute the order and was arrested. On 1 July the Council met to discuss the matter. At the meeting Sosnkowski succeeded

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83 Pilsudski to Sosnkowski, Lvov, 19 March 1916, Pilsudski: Korespondencja, 135

84 Dziennik Bolesława Roji, Wojskowy Institut Historyczny (Hereafter WIH), fol. 82.

In confirming the new insignia. What is more he convinced the colonels to introduce the insignia to all units on 5 July, defying Puchalski.⁶⁶

In the following days Piłsudski's machinations and events at the front further heightened the charged atmosphere. On 4 July Piłsudski engineered the resignation of four of his adherents, officers assigned to Sikorski's Military Department, as a form of protest. Events at the front increased the sense of grievance of officers of the three brigades. On 4 July the three brigades were rushed to the front as AOK endeavored to halt Russian General Alexei Brusilov's offensive. In four days of fighting in the Styr River marshes near Kostiuchnówka the First and Third Brigades (the Second was in reserve) suffered over 2,000 casualties. The Legions were very nearly ruined as fighting formations at the Battle of Kościuchnówka, but were nevertheless employed in positional battles on the Stochód River for the remainder of July through September.

Piłsudski used the charged atmosphere here to move the Colonel's council to even more daring measures. In a meeting on 11 July he persuaded the colonels to dispatch a memorandum to AOK, spelling out their grievances and demanding a number of reforms. At the meeting, according to Roja, all were deeply depressed and unable or unwilling to resist Piłsudski, who had resolved to disband the Legions. Sosnkowski had misgiving about this drastic step. Far from leading the deliberations as he usually did, Roja recalled, "Sosnkowski was mostly silent. It did not happen often that I saw, whenever one of the important colleagues of Piłsudski was of a different opinion on fundamental questions."⁷⁷

The final version of the memorandum was approved at a meeting on 15 July, which Piłsudski attended. The document criticized as "a fundamental error" the arrangement by which


⁷⁷ Roja, Legendy i fakty, 38.
the Legions were treated as a *Landsturm* formation. It, too, criticized recruiting. The colonels then demanded that the Legions be constituted as a truly independent formation and that all Austrian officers be removed and replaced by Legionnaires. The memorandum threatened: "If [AOK responds] negatively—in their [the colonels'] view the only just solution to this burning question is disbanding the Legions." Senior officers of all three brigades, chief among them Pilsudski, Sosnkowski, Roja and Haller, signed the memorandum. Pilsudski followed this with still stronger measures. On 29 July he tendered his resignation as commander of the First Brigade.

Sosnkowski now put aside his misgivings. The die had been cast, and there was nothing to be done, but see Pilsudski's program through to the finish. He then launched his own attack on Sikorski's Military Department and the NKN. On 24 August he dispatched an inflammatory letter on behalf of the Colonels' Council to one of the Military Department's recruiting bureaus. This action was done on his own initiative; it was not sanctioned by the cCouncil. Haller, for one, was not in favor of taking action against Sikorski. In it he stated: "The Colonels' Council will never permit the hegemony of the rear echelons." He demanded that the bureau observe the resolutions of the Council and cease recruiting.

On 30 August Pilsudski and Sosnkowski convinced the Colonels' Council to put forward their demands in another memorandum, this time directed to the NKN. The memorandum echoed the demands and threats of that of 15 July. In addition the memorandum urged the NKN to press

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88 Rada Pułkowników to NKA [AOK], In the Field, 15 July 1916, CAW, Akta Legionów, cont. I.120.1.1.


the Central Powers for a solution to the Polish Question. At the start of September Piłsudski was summoned to AOK Headquarters at Teschen. AOK then sent Piłsudski on leave. Command of the First Brigade and implementation of Piłsudski's line among the Legionnaires was entrusted to Sosnkowski. Sosnkowski continued to be visited by doubts over Piłsudski's policy. He told Świtalski in a conversation that he felt such a policy would weaken Piłsudski's hand in the event the Central Powers were to resolve the Polish Question. Nevertheless he put these doubts aside and implemented Piłsudski's policy. Sosnkowski successfully defended Piłsudski's program in meetings of the Colonel's Council. Not long after Piłsudski's departure he was called on to defend his note of 24 August to the Military Department, which only then had come to light. Sosnkowski fended off criticisms and "calmed the storm." Sosnkowski not only defended but furthered Piłsudski's program, persuading the Colonels to attack the NKN yet again.

Throughout summer 1916 the Legionnaires had politicked largely without reprisal. This ended in late September, when AOK retaliated. On 26 September Piłsudski was relieved of his

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91 Rada Pułkowników to NKN, In the Field, 20 August 1916, CAW, Akta Legionów, cont. I.120.1.1.

92 Diariusz Świtalskiego, CAW, Akta Wojskowego Biura Historycznego, cont. 566(3), fol. 50.

93 A copy of the note was directed to Sikorski by the Pinczów Recruiting Officer Ensign Tadeusz Hartlieb only on 30 August. Hartlieb to Department Wojskowy, Pinczów, 30 August 1916, Listy Sikorskiego do Jaworskiego, 179.

94 Diariusz Świtalskiego, CAW, Akta Wojskowego Biura Historycznego, cont. 566(3), fol. 52.

95 The occasion for this attack was a letter of 11 September 1916 from the Lvov Delegation of the NKN, which queried the Colonels' Council on its intentions. The reply drafted by Sosnkowski stated that the Council was not interested in politics, but only defending itself, in particular, from the Military Department, which the letter called a "political" institution. Rada Pułkowników to Delegatura N.K.N. w Lwowie, In the Field, 17 Sept. 1916, AAN VI, Akta Moraczewskich, cont. 71/1-8, fol. 20-2.
command. Three days later AOK summoned Sosnkowski to Teschen and dismissed him as well.\footnote{Telegram, AOK to Stanislaw Puchalski, Teschen, 28 Sept. 1916, CAW, Akta Legionów, cont. I.120.1.2.} Also, a reorganization of the Legions was begun. They were transformed into the Polish Auxiliary Corps (Polnische Hilfskorps). Although in this new formation German officers were replaced by Polish officers, only those, who had shown themselves loyal to the Austrian crown, were promoted. Januszajtis and Haller, whose loyalty revived after Piłsudski and Sosnkowski departed, were given command of the First and Second Brigades respectively. Colonel Zygmunt Zieliński was made commander of the Third.

In October 1916 it may have appeared to Sosnkowski that Piłsudski's strategy had been a horrible miscalculation. In November, however, Piłsudski was vindicated. On 5 November German and Austrian occupation authorities in Poland on behalf of their emperors issued a manifesto to the Poles announcing a self-governing Polish Kingdom, carved from the former Russian territories. A short time later the German General-Governor of Warsaw Hans von Beseler announced the creation of the Provisional State Council (Tymczasowa Rada Stanu). The council began its sessions in mid-January 1917. With purely advisory functions, it comprised departments of Finance, Political Affairs, Interior, Education and Religion and a Military Commission. Responsibility for this measure lay largely with the Germans. Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg and General Erich Ludendorff, directing the war effort after the debacle of Verdun, joined by von Beseler pressed for a solution to the Polish Question in order to obtain access to Poland's manpower. Within days of the Manifesto's promulgation recruiting began for a German-officered army for the Kingdom, the Polish Army (Polnische Wehrmacht or Wojsko Polskie).

The Provisional State Council was vested with no real powers. The Kingdom's frontiers were not even established. The two were sops thrown to the Poles by von Beseler, von
Hindenburg and Ludendorff, who only desired access to Polish manpower and materials. Pilsudski understood this, but nevertheless welcomed these measures. Pilsudski believed that the creation of this puppet state afforded an opportunity to begin building the pillars of the modern state and to bring the Central Powers to grant real statehood. In particular Pilsudski, who believed the armed forces the most important pillar of the state, sought to use this opportunity to create an army, which would become the armed forces of a future independent Poland and a lever in dealing with the Central Powers. In December 1916 he sent to von Beseler a memorandum, which put forward a program for constructing the new Kingdom’s armed forces. Pilsudski’s program called for the Kingdom’s army to be organized and trained as though it were a standing army. The work of raising this army was to be carried out exclusively by Poles. The basis of this army was to be the Polish Legions and the POW. The latter Pilsudski offered to put at the State Council’s disposal.

In January 1917 Pilsudski joined the State Council and headed its Military Commission. It had not been the intention of von Beseler originally to include Pilsudski. However, the recruiting drive launched by von Beseler already in November failed miserably, and it was hoped that Pilsudski would lend the efforts legitimacy and popularity. Pilsudski at once sought to realize his plans. To help him he called on Sosnkowski, whose organizational talents were well suited to the task ahead. Pilsudski wrote Sosnkowski on 11 January 1917: “I am counting on giving you the position of vice director of military affairs. There is much work, and you will help me


with various political matters . . ." He added: "I suppose that this will happen in week from
Sunday at most."\(^9\)

A week from Sunday became three months. It was not until April that Sosnkowski joined
Pilsudski in Warsaw. His travelling there was blocked by German authorities. German leaders,
who thought Pilsudski a "dilettante" and "demagogue," had never warmed to his participation in
the State Council and sought to keep him in tight rein. Perhaps for this reason they sought to
deny him his right hand. Sosnkowski at his home in Lvov did not suffer the delay well. The
company of his wife and child, with whom he had been reunited after an absence of three years,
did not bring him great comfort. He complained to Pilsudski, who tried to cheer him: "Don't
lose your humor to the devil, as you write."\(^10\) For so energetic a man the inactivity of these
months was a great burden.

Perhaps to help pass the time as he waited for permission to travel to Warsaw,
Sosnkowski turned to the study of military theory. In early 1917 he wrote two articles, which
were published in the April-May issue of The Rifleman, which had resumed publication in 1916.
One was a study of the use of artillery in defense against air attacks and in cooperation with the
operations of friendly aircraft.\(^10\) The other, entitled "The Problem of an Army," addressed the
problem of building a Polish army. In it he put forward his views on how a Polish Army was to
be created. Sosnkowski argued that an army must be created utilizing universal military service.
He wrote: "Only the principle of universal military service, a cadre system, placing the entire
nation under arms (Volk under den Waffen, nation armee) can be the foundation for creating a

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\(^9\) Pilsudski to Sosnkowski, Warsaw, 11 Jan. 1917, Pilsudski: Korespondencja, 244.

\(^10\) Pilsudski to Sosnkowski, 6 March 1917, Ibid., 255.

\(^10\) J[ózef] [Kazimierz Sosnkowski], "Lotnictwo i artyleria," Strzelec, o.s, April-May 1917, 41-9.
modern army." In coming to this conclusion Sosnkowski was influenced by the experience of the ongoing war. Only the resources of an entire nation, he concluded, could hope to satisfy modern war's appetite for men. Also, Sosnkowski proposed that the Legions be used as the basis of a Polish Army. He went so far as to state that an army could be created only if the Legions were utilized. He believed that the Legions possessed a military tradition—a history and consciousness—which was absent in Poles since the failed 1863 Rising, but which was essential to an army.  

Sosnkowski meant to follow "The Problem of an Army" with further discussion of the problem of creating an army. However, before he could, he joined Piłsudski in Warsaw. When on 10 April 1917 Sosnkowski assumed the position of deputy chairman of the Military Commission, he found that the order of the day had changed. Piłsudski no longer saw the State Council as an opportunity to realize his plans. He now was bent on distancing himself from, even provoking a conflict with the Central Powers and moving the center of his activities to the underground POW. Although the Austrian government had placed the Legions at von Beseler's disposal as the cadre of the Kingdom's army, few of Piłsudski's projects had come to fruition largely due to German obstructionism. Also, since the issuance of the Two Emperors Manifesto of 5 November and especially after the February Revolution in Russia, the Polish Question received growing attention in Western capitals. This too may have factored into Piłsudski's decision.

Upon assuming his duties as deputy chairman of the Military Commission Sosnkowski was drawn into Piłsudski's plans. While the latter set about provoking a conflict in the Legions, Sosnkowski was entrusted with preparing the new base. A division appears to have been adopted

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103 The article ends "to be continued" ("c.d.n.; ciąg dalszy nastąpi"). Ibid., 8. A second installment was never published.
here, in order to ensure that if one's work led to his arrest, the other might remain at large and his work suffer only limited disruption. Pilsudski was charting dangerous waters and perhaps realized this. Already in May a meeting of Legionnaires, at which they demanded the State Council usurp command of the Kingdom's army, resulted in the arrest of many of Pilsudski's followers, POW activists, in reprisal.

Sosnkowski's labors in late spring and early summer 1917 centered on the POW, whose strength was then reckoned at 15,000 members. The center of Sosnkowski's activities was the Military Commission, which was staffed by POW members. Under cover of Military Commission activities POW leaders were able to travel freely. At Pilsudski's instructions work was undertaken to restore and improve security within the organization, which since January had operated openly. This was done by decentralizing its command. Also, presumably at Sosnkowski's direction POW leaders undertook to expand the organization. Efforts here focussed on capturing various youth organizations.

In addition to readying the POW Sosnkowski oversaw the creation of a new underground organization, this one a political organization to direct the camp's activities. The new organization was in fact two. The first known as "A," was to unite the parties of the Left. It was to be headed by an organ known as Council A (Konwent A). The second organization, "B," was to unite Nationalist and Conservative Parties and was directed by Council B. Miedziński assisted Sosnkowski in calling to life organization A. Miedziński remembered: "I had a long talk with the

104 The Military Commission's Department heads and their aides, Kasprzycki, Miedziński, Hempel, Janusz Jędrejewicz, Marian Zyndram-Kościelkowski, were all members of the POW. Even the Commission's typists were drawn from the POW Women's Detachment. Tymczasowa Rada Stanu i jej Departamenty, "Skład osobisty w zestawieniu na dzień 1 Maja 1917 roku," AAN, Akta Tymczasowej Rady Stanu, cont. 1/II-83, fol. 10


Chief [Sosnkowski] on the subject of which groups and which individuals within these must be considered for members of organization A as well as candidates for [its] Council.” He was shortly dispatched to Lublin for discussions with prospective collaborators there.\footnote{Miedziński, "Wspomnienia," 36: 177.} By the end of July Miedziński had completed his task and established Council A. In the event of both Sosnkowski’s and Piłsudski’s arrest Council A was to direct the movement.\footnote{Ibid., 182-3.}

Sosnkowski was unable to call organization B and its Council into being as well as oversee further reorganization of the POW as he was drawn into Piłsudski’s final confrontation with the Kingdom’s German masters. The Legionnaires swearing an oath to the Kingdom and its German and Austrian allies was the pretext, which Piłsudski chose for this confrontation. Piłsudski worked to engineer the Legionnaires’ refusal to take this oath, which was to be administered on 9 and 11 July. Sosnkowski attempted to further this plan by introducing a resolution at the 26 June sitting of the State Council calling for it to request that the Austrian government release Legionnaires, who were Austrian subjects, from their oath to the monarchy.\footnote{Council A was composed of Rydz, Kaspryzcki, Miedziński, Sokolnicki, Wasilewski, Jędrzej Moraczewski, Medard Downarowicz, Waclaw Sierosiewski, Andrzej Strug, Juliusz Poniatowski, Mieczyslaw Wojtek-Malinowski, Boleslaw Ziemiański, Janusz Zdanowicz-Opieliński. Ibid., 182-3.} Sosnkowski, who attended the meeting in Piłsudski’s place, apparently took this step on his own initiative. Only those Legionnaires, who were subjects of the Tsar, were to take the oath. By releasing Austrian subjects from their oath in order to take that to the Kingdom Sosnkowski perhaps hoped to give the protest greater weight.\footnote{The resolution was accepted, but its implementation was postponed until after the occupying powers had provided an explanation of their views. Protokół 29-go posiedzenia Wydziału Wykonawczego T.R.S. w dniu 26 czerwca 1917 roku, CAW, Akta Tymczasowej Rady Stanu, cont. I.160.1/3.}
On 2 July Piłsudski and Sosnkowski resigned from their positions on the Provisional State Council ostensibly to protest the Legionnaires’ swearing an oath to the Kingdom. Their personal protest was followed a week later by the refusal of the overwhelming majority to take the oath. Altogether 199 officers and 4,524 men refused. Fewer than 1,500 Legionnaires pledged their loyalty to the Kingdom.

If the consternation Piłsudski’s measure caused German authorities is a measure of its success, then it must be regarded a triumph. Shortly after the refusal of the Legionnaires to take the oath to the Kingdom, a number of Piłsudski’s followers, including Stawek, were arrested in retaliation. Those officers and men, who refused to take the oath were interned at camps at Szczypiorna and Benjaminów. On 16 July German authorities searched Sosnkowski’s rooms at a pension on Moniuszko Street. Afterwards Sosnkowski believed that his arrest was imminent. Most, however, believed that the two would not be arrested.110 Perhaps it was for this reason that no preparations were made for the two to evade escape, although their days were clearly numbered. On 21 July the two were invited to play cards at Sokolnicki’s. "The Commandant," Sokolnicki wrote, "half jokingly and half seriously said: ‘Chief, I told you, don’t go to Leszek’s [Sokolnicki’s] to pay cards, for they’ll catch us [both].’" Sosnkowski bid farewell to Sokolnicki that night saying: "Michal, take care, until we meet again in independent Poland."111 The next morning Piłsudski and Sosnkowski were arrested by German authorities.

One of the most curious episodes of these days is Sosnkowski’s involvement in the Legal-Military Commission of the State Council. At its 26 June sitting in conjunction with the proposal that Austrian Legionnaires be released from their oath Sosnkowski proposed to the State Council

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111 Ibid., 6-7.
that a uniform articles of war be adopted for the Kingdom’s armed forces and the Legions. The
former observed the German disciplinary and criminal code, the latter the Austrian. The State
Council accepted the resolution and created a Legal-Military Commission, headed by Sosnkowski,
to produce a set of articles of war for its armed forces. Sosnkowski directed the work of this
commission, preparing articles of war based on the German 1872 Disciplinary and Criminal Code,
even after his resignation as deputy chairman of the Military Commission. The last sitting he
attended was that of 20 July.

Sosnkowski’s reasons for launching this initiative and attempting to see it through are
unknown. An answer is not to be found in the commission’s minutes, which show the meetings
were given over exclusively to military-legal matters. It is possible that the measure was
introduced to obscure the intentions behind the resolution releasing the Legionnaires from their
oath to the Austrian crown and to smooth its passage. Sosnkowski may have continued to take
part in the commission’s deliberations to pass the time previously consumed by the military
department matters.

After their arrest on 22 July Piłsudski and Sosnkowski were imprisoned without trial. The
two were taken first to the military jail in Danzig and shortly to Spandau prison. There the two
were separated and dispatched immediately to different prisons. Piłsudski was sent to the prison
of the High Military Court (Oberkriegsgerichtsgefängnis) at the fortress at Magdeburg and
Sosnkowski to the prison at Wesel. In September 1917 Sosnkowski, too, was sent to Magdeburg,
where he remained until November 1918.

112 Protokół 29-go posiedzenia Wydziału Wykonawczego TRS, CAW, Akta Tymczasowej
Rady Stanu, cont. I.160.1/3.

113 Protokół z 10-go posiedzenia [Komisji Prawno-Wojskowej TRS] z dn. 20. VII. 1917, Ibid.,
cont. I.160.1.12.
The conditions of his imprisonment, Sosnkowski recalled in 1930,\textsuperscript{114} were not intolerable. As an officer and a prisoner of some importance he was accorded a number of privileges, even being permitted to subscribe to newspapers. However, the isolation of imprisonment, which he sought to combat with a regimen of gymnastics, improving his command of German and the study of mechanics, was burdensome.\textsuperscript{115} This burden was lifted in summer 1918, when Sosnkowski was moved to Pilsudski's spacious rooms in the Magdeburg Citadel. For the remainder of their imprisonment each had the company of the other to sustain him. Also, the two were permitted to take walks on the Citadel grounds and on occasion to tour of the town. The common confinement strengthened the bonds of friendship between the two, as they followed the progress of the war, discussed their plans for the future and indulged their passion for chess.\textsuperscript{116}

In autumn 1918 events worked to bring about the release of Pilsudski and Sosnkowski. The failure of the German offensive of summer propelled the moderate government of Prince Max of Baden to power and even led Ludendorff to demand that peace be sought. Already in October the Hapsburg Empire was convulsed by strikes and mutinies and began to disintegrate. On 3 November the Austrian government sued for peace. Even before this occurred on 28 October Galician political leaders established the Polish Liquidation Commission and began severing the province's ties with the Empire. Poland too was visited by strikes and unrest. These compelled the Regency Council, which had replaced the State Council in October 1917, to declare itself "supreme authority" in the Kingdom and assume command of its armed forces. At the same time

\textsuperscript{114} Sosnkowski wrote an account of his imprisonment in 1930. It was published in Stachiewicz, ed., \textit{Za kratami więzień}, 1. It is reprinted in "Z Legionów do Magdeburga," Sosnkowski, \textit{Materiały}, 527-54.

\textsuperscript{115} Ibid., 538.

\textsuperscript{116} Ibid., 544.
in order to placate the Polish Left the Conservative- and National-Democrat-dominated Council named the imprisoned Piłsudski, whose defiance of German authority and arrest led to a tremendous increase in his popularity, commander of the Polish Army and requested his release. In Lublin Organization A declared the formation of a People’s Republic and formed a government headed by Daszyński. The Commander of the Republic’s forces was Rydz. Piłsudski was named his deputy.

Piłsudski’s and Sosnkowski’s release must be viewed against the background of these events. In these circumstances Prince Max’s government began to consider Piłsudski’s release. It was hoped that Piłsudski might cooperate with German authorities to restore order and ensure the security of German forces remaining in Russia and in Poland. Already on 31 October Piłsudski and Sosnkowski were visited by Count Harry Kessler, an acquaintance from the 1915 campaign in Volhynia, who sounded out Piłsudski on the subject of his cooperation.\footnote{\cite{conze1958}} Piłsudski, who was well informed of current political developments, refused. On 6 November, the eve of the German Revolution, the government ordered Piłsudski’s and Sosnkowski’s release without having obtained a pledge of loyalty.\footnote{\cite{koschany1988}} On 8 November Kessler fetched the two from Magdeburg and brought them to Berlin. Late the next day they travelled on a special train to Warsaw. In the early hours of 10 November the odyssey of the two men ended, when they stepped onto the platform of Warsaw’s Vienna Station.

\footnote{\cite{conze1958}} Werner Conze, \textit{Polnische Nation und Deutsche Politik im Ersten Weltkrieg} (Cologne, 1958), 396.

CHAPTER IV
INDEPENDENCE AND WAR, 1918-1920

Ceasar crossed the Rubicon and took Rome. Did he do it all by himself?

Bertold Brecht, Winter’s Tale

The Polish Republic emerged not as a consequence of the 1919 Paris Peace Settlement, as the authors of some texts assert, but from the collapse of the Central Powers in November 1918. This development is closely associated with Piłsudski who, in the space of a few days in November, came to play the leading role in its affairs. When Piłsudski mounted the platform at Warsaw’s Vienna Station on 10 November, he stepped into a political vacuum. When the Central Powers collapsed, Piłsudski, in contrast to his rivals, had the great advantage of being in Poland. The National Democrats during the Great War had looked to the Allied powers—Russia first and France after 1917—to support Polish independence. The National Democrats’ Polish National Committee (Komitet Narodowy Polski), under the leadership of their eminence grise, Dmowski, had its own army and the support of the Western Allies, but was unable to put this advantage to use, being stranded in France at war’s end. Moreover, Piłsudski had won great popularity because of the break with the German and Austrian governments and imprisonment. Many began to demand that the Regency Council, upon which sovereignty had devolved after the Central Powers’ collapse, turn power over to him. The council was happy to oblige, as Garticki points out: “Compromised in public opinion and terrified by the specter of revolution the Regency Council
thought only of one thing—to hand over power to Piłsudski as quickly as possible.”

The day after he arrived in Warsaw the regents named Piłsudski commander-in-chief (Naczelny Wódz) of the Polish Army. On 12 November the regents asked him to form a government, to which they could surrender power, and he became *de facto* head-of-state (Naczelnik Państwa). This position was formally conferred on him on 22 November and he held it until the presidential election in 1922.

The accession of Piłsudski marked the rebirth of an independent Polish state. A holiday mood settled on Warsaw as crowds celebrated Polish independence. Poland at that time, however, was the picture of chaos and burdened with problems that threatened its very existence. It had no national government. It had neither a civil administration nor armed forces. The new state occupied only the territories of the former Russian Kingdom and western Galicia and had no recognized frontiers. Poland had been ravaged by the war—the land ruined and people impoverished. Also, Poland was on the brink of revolution. The revolutionary Left—the Polish Communist Workers Party (Komunistyczna Partia Robotnicza Polski)—agitated for workers revolution and against Polish statehood. Additionally, more than 80,000 German soldiers of the former army of occupation remained in Poland, 30,000 in the capital Warsaw alone. To these must be added the forces of General Max Hoffman, Oberbefehlshaber-Ostfront or Ober-Ost, still occupying the Kresy, Poland’s eastern borderlands. Finally, Poland was at war with all of its neighbors. On 1 November Poles and Ukrainians clashed over Lvov. In December Polish and Czech forces clashed over Teschen. Also in December Poles in Wielkopolska (Great Poland, sometimes simply Poznań) launched an uprising to win that province’s independence from Germany. Insurgent units dueled with the Red Army in the borderlands of Lithuania and Byelorussia. The forces of Polish and the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republics were for the

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time being separated by the forces of Ober-Ost, but when the latter withdrew in February 1919, the former two clashed.

To ensure that it was not stillborn, the establishment of a state began at once. In a proclamation on 12 November Pilsudski announced: "The entire nation now stands before tasks, which can only be accomplished through extraordinary effort and exertion of its strength and will." Pilsudski, himself, supervised the creation of a national government. He set about securing the recognition of Poland and his rule over the Cracow Liquidation Commission, the Lublin People’s Republic and other bodies and groups, which filled the void created by the Central Powers’ collapse. He relied heavily on the Left here. To diffuse the growing radicalism and avert revolution, Pilsudski entrusted first his comrade Daszyński, and then the moderate Galician Social Democrat and Organization A leader Jędrzej Moraczewski with the task of forming a government. This was perhaps the only rational option. Even his bête noire Dmowski acknowledged its wisdom, writing: "It is certain that if we formed a government—let us assume with me at its head—we should well and truly have cut the throat of Poland." However, Pilsudski as the story goes had ‘alighted from the Red tram at the stop marked independence’, and he desired the integration of all political camps and constituencies. He tried to establish contact and reach a compromise with the Polish National Committee and with the Right in general, but at the time was unable to achieve it. Although they acknowledged the wisdom of Pilsudski’s reliance on the Left, National

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2 Pierwszy rozkaz do Wojska Polskiego, 12 Nov. 1918, Piłsudski, Pisma, 5:16.

Democrats nevertheless bitterly opposed it. Pilsudski then called elections to a Constituent Sejm or Assembly (Sejm Ustawodawczy).

Almost from the moment of his arrival in Warsaw Sosnkowski became involved in the reconstruction of the Polish state and the building of the Polish Army. In the first days of independence he functioned as Pilsudski's deputy for military affairs. On 16 November Pilsudski promoted Sosnkowski to Brigadier General and named him Commander of the Warsaw Military District (Dowódca Okręgu Generalnego Warszawy), a crucial organ in the state's nascent military command and administrative structure. On Pilsudski's behalf Sosnkowski conferred with the military leaders then in Poland. Also, he negotiated the agreement governing the repatriation the German forces, which was of enormous benefit to the new state. It secured a prompt departure of german forces, whose arms left behind according to the agreement's provisions were sufficient to equip a small army. More importantly, Sosnkowski began to create the Polish Army itself.

As Commander of the Warsaw Military District Sosnkowski took the lead in the early work of building the Polish Army. The process, as historian Piotr Stawiecki demonstrates, was

4 For an overview of the creation of a national government see Andrzej Ajzenkilel, "The Establishment of a National Government in Poland, 1918," in Reconstruction, edited by Latawski, 133-143.

5 Stenogram z relacji z p. Prezesem Kazimierzem Stamirowskim z dnia 23 listopada 1938 r., AAN VI, Akta Instytutu Badania Najnowszej Historii Polskiej (Hereafter Akta IBNHP), cont. 357/4, fol. 12.

6 For Sosnkowski's role in disarming and repatriating German forces see Ignacy Boemer, "Rozbrojenie Niemców w Warszawie," P.O.W.: Szkice i Wspomnienia, (Warsaw, 1930), 152-65. See also Stenogram z relacji z Stamirowskim z dnia 30. XI. 1938, AAN VI, Akta IBNHP, cont. 357/4, fol. 13.

7 Historian Mieczysław Wrzosek estimates that they left behind between 30,000 and 50,000 rifles and other small arms. Mieczysław Wrzosek, Wojny o granice Polski Odrodzonej, 1918-1921 (Warsaw, 1992), 99.
largely decentralized. In November 1918 the army had no fully elaborated central organs, which were capable of undertaking this task. The new republic inherited a Ministry of Military Affairs, which had been created by the Regency Council in October 1918. Headed by Colonel Jan Wro- 

czyński, an engineer officer kept on after the council disbanded, the ministry existed only in name. A General Staff, created a month before the ministry and headed first by Major General Tadeusz Rozwadowski, then Lieutenant General Count Stanisław Szeptycki, was similarly incapable of undertaking this task. The work of building a Polish army therefore devolved upon a military district organization. In October 1918 Chief of the Staff Rozwadowski had created 17 military districts. Not operational commands, their task was to oversee the creation of units and supply them with men and materials. On 17 November Piłsudski reorganized the system reducing the number of districts to five—Cracow, Kielce, Łódź, Lublin and Warsaw, the largest and most important being Warsaw. These districts were little better prepared than the War Ministry or General Staff to begin building the Polish Army. Sosnkowski found, for instance, that his first task was to make the Warsaw Military District a center that could induct, train and organize soldiers for the army.

As Sosnkowski took up building the Polish Army, he had a clear vision of what it should be: the nation-in-arms. In form this meant a vast national army founded upon universal military service. In 1917 he wrote: "Only the principle of universal military service, a cadre system,"
maintaining the entire nation under arms, can be the basis for the creation of a modern army."¹¹

The force Sosnkowski envisioned was more than simply a conscript army, however. The nation-in-arms meant more. The force was also an army of virtù, a revolutionary army. "Revolutionary" was often applied in discussions of the Polish army and nation-in-arms in the first years of independence.¹² The force was to be revolutionary in the same sense that the independence movement's Legions were—intelligent and spirited or idealistic. Sosnkowski was not the only leader influenced by Cantal's 1917 Studies on the Revolutionary Army, which in 1918 appeared in Polish translation. Sosnkowski, like Gerhard von Schamhorst and military reformers of the age of democratic revolutions, to whose thought his own hearkened, believed that the nation in arms rested upon an intelligent soldiery. Intelligence would see the soldier through the maelstrom of modern war. Drill and discipline were insufficient, the soldier must be able to think for himself.¹³ Also, the army was to be spirited, or idealistic, and patriotic. These attributes were regarded as central to the concept of the nation-in-arms and was believed to be decisive in battle. The Legionnaire was the ideal soldier in Sosnkowski's mind. Of the Legionnaires he wrote: "They were a group of young men, passionate, noble, rarely seen in history, unlimited in their love of an ideal; ready for every devotion and sacrifice, thoroughly disinterested, deprived of every thought of advancing their station, fortunes and personal career."¹⁴

The nation-in-arms had been the touchstone of Sosnkowski's pre-war military thought, indeed of all Polish revolutionary military thought. The First World War, in which the clash of mass armies brought to life the nightmare visions of Jan Bloch, only served to reinforce


¹³ Sosnkowski, "Zagadnienie armji," 5.

¹⁴ Sosnkowski, Legiony Piłsudskiego, 15.
Sosnkowski’s commitment to the nation-in-arms. No other system provided the vast numbers of trained soldiers now necessary to wage war. Polish military leaders also learned that the modern state apparatus could realize the nation in arms to a degree never before dreamt of. In the war the Legions carried the day on more than one occasion thanks to their mettle. From this conflict, though they fought alongside the losers, the Legionnaires emerged victorious, winning everything that they had hoped for and more. Moral strength and daring do, which caused disaster everywhere else, apparently led to victory.

In 1918 and the first years of Polish independence there was little debate over the form the army should take. Sosnkowski’s views on the nation-in-arms were shared by the Legionaries. These views were echoed in the pages of the Pilsudskiite Government and Army (Rząd i Wojsko). Pilsudski, himself, came down decisively in favor of such an army and in an order of 5 December made it clear that this was the sort of army Poland was to have. Few outside the Pilsudski camp can be said to have shared completely the Legionnaires’ enthusiasm for the nation-in-arms. Nevertheless there was a broad consensus that both for the moment and the future

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16 Sosnkowski, “W 30-lecie współpracy z Marszałkiem Piłsudskim,” Materiały, 575. See also Stanisław Laudafinski, “Kierunki polityczne w dziejach powstania Wojska Polskiego,” MS, AAN VI, fol. 92v.


18 Naczelný Wódz, Rozkaz, Warsaw, 5 Dec. 1918, Dziennik rozkazów wojskowych, 1918, no. 12, item 314.
a large conscript army was in order. Professional military men as well as political leaders of all stripes agreed.\textsuperscript{19}

In the last months of 1918 and early 1919 the work of building the Polish Army entailed constructing a modest force, which could serve as the basis for a mass national army and which just as importantly the new state could field quickly. The republic did not inherit anything resembling such a force, although at war's end over one million Poles had seen military service and thousands remained under arms. Of the three quarters of a million Poles who had served in the Russian Army and the three Polish corps raised by Alexander Kerensky's government in 1917 most were demobilized and had returned home. In France there was the National Committee's "Polish Army," often called "Haller's Army," after its commander, Józef Haller, Piłsudski's comrade from the Legions. Haller had fled to Russia, then, to France after the signing of the Peace of Brest-Litovsk in February 1918. Under French command in Russia were an additional two rifle divisions. Closer to home, but out of reach all the same was the 30,000-man army of the Wielkopolska insurgents, which Lieutenant General Józef Dowbór-Muśnicki commanded. Dowbór's force was subordinate to the province's provisional government, which only submitted to Warsaw, when the Treaty of Versailles, signed on 28 June 1919, formally ceded Wielkopolska along with Pomerania to Poland. The Polish Legions had been disbanded after Piłsudski and Sosnkowski's arrest and were only in the process of reconstituting themselves. In November 1918 the most important force in Poland was the Regency Council's German-trained "Polish Army" (Polnische Wehrmacht or Polskie Sily Zbrojne), which numbered 10,000 men. The Lublin government and the Cracow Liquidation Commission bequeathed the new state some meager forces: the Polish rumps of Austrian regiments, remnants of the Legions and POW detachments.

\textsuperscript{19} General Rozwadowski (Cracow, 1929), 47. A lone exception was Major General Eugeniusz de Henning-Michaelis, yet his views were roundly rebutted. See "W sprawie organizacji armji," \textit{Rząd i wojsko}, 1 Jan. 1919.
Also, a panoply of volunteer and insurgent formations were on hand. They ranged from the
cavalry regiment raised by Kalisz landowners and commanded by the painter Tadeusz Kossak to
the Academic Legion formed by Warsaw students.

The force that Sosnkowski strove to build was assembled therefore in part from the
flotsam and jetsam of the Great War. The spare ranks of the forces on hand were augmented and
new formations raised by mobilizing individuals who had served in First World War armies. The
Regency Council introduced this policy, when, as the war’s end drew near, it moved to create an
army. The council obligated all men to military service, when it promulgated the Provisional Law
on Universal Military Service of 27 October 1918. However, the council decided against
implementing conscription right away, because no machinery to carry it out and no organized
cadres to absorb untrained recruits existed. Instead it adopted a policy of drafting former officers
and seeking volunteers from among those who had served in the ranks of armies of the former
partitioning powers. Sosnkowski appropriated the council’s policy. In December Piłsudski
endorsed this course. Then Sosnkowski mobilized the POW. On 29 November he activated
POW forces in the Warsaw Military District and incorporated them into army units. Piłsudski
expanded this policy also, ordering Legion formations to be reconstituted and assigning this task
priority. The POW and to a lesser extent the Legions were ready forces, fresh and in good order.
The POW remained concealed until November 1918. Moreover, Sosnkowski and Piłsudski saw

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20 Tymczasowa ustawa o obowiązku służby wojskowej, 27 Warsaw, October 1919, Dziennik praw Królestwa Polskiego, 1918, no. 13, item 28, 65-81 and Dekret, Warsaw, 4 Nov. 1918, Dziennik praw państwa Polskiego, 1918, no. 15, item 34, 89.

21 Naczelny Wódz, Rozkaz, Warsaw, 5 Dec. 1918, Dziennik Rozkazów Wojskowych, 1918, no. 12, item 314.

in the students and intellectuals of the POW and Legions, men of the same mold as they, a patriotic cadre, with which to inject the army with the proper spirit.23

Volunteers soon streamed into recruiting centers. One observer recorded: "The impetus [to enlist in] the army was unheard of." Nearly 5,500 of officers, among them many general officers, from the armies of the former partitioning powers reported for duty as well. These officers were stigmatized as having served Poland's oppressors, and many held Poland's new master in reserve. However, Pilsudski, who adopted what Garlicki calls "an open door policy," allowed them to serve without discrimination regardless of their background.25 From these volunteers and the forces on hand were organized, according to Pilsudski's orders, meaningful operational formations—battalions, batteries and squadrons. Regiments were created, but front-line units were often organized in ad hoc operational groups.26 The creation of larger formations—divisions—was put off until after the foundations of an army had been first laid. Only in early 1919 were the first three divisions constituted. These included the illustrious First and Second Legion Divisions and the Lithuanian-Byelorussian Division of Kresy volunteers.

Pilsudski's opponents, the National Democrats, harshly criticized this early work of building a Polish Army. The National Democratic press complained that the army was too small and that the influx of POW members was destabilizing. Sosnkowski was called "an amateur."27


26 Typical was Col. Leon Berbecki's Combat Group: two infantry battalions, half a squadron of cavalry and a battery of artillery. Mitkiewicz, W Wojsku Polskim, 101.

27 Stanislaw Giejsztor, Rząd, skarb i wojsko (Warsaw, 1918), 15. National Democratic criticism were discussed in "Dziwne wojsko," Robotnik, 9 Feb. 1919, 1.
Sosnkowski's labors, however, bore fruit quickly. By the start of the new year Poland had acquired a not inconsequential force that was both spirited and effective. The Polish Army numbered more than 100,000 men, organized in 36 2,000-man infantry regiments, 10 cavalry regiments and 36 artillery batteries. Sosnkowski's command raised 14 infantry and 4 cavalry regiments. Incorporating the remains of historic Austrian regiments, the Legions and POW detachments, which would have constituted strong cores or primary groups, it is likely that the new formations were very cohesive. Moreover, prominent among officers and men were gentlemen, intellectuals and students, whose patriotism knew few bounds. Moraczewski recalled: "Despite [shortages of arms and equipment] the spirit of the army was excellent, as one would expect of the idealistic soldier." Historian Mieczyslaw Wrzosek goes so far as to call this force "elite." With these forces Polish military leaders were able to gain Lvov and drive Ukrainian forces from much of eastern Galicia.

At Christmas 1918 Sosnkowski contracted Spanish Influenza. The illness forced him to relinquish his duties as commander of the Warsaw Military District, and he spent the next weeks convalescing at the mountain resort of Zakopane. In his absence new military challenges developed. In February 1919 Hoffman's German forces withdrew from the East. Polish and Soviet forces racing to claim the territories abandoned by the Germans, immediately clashed, thus beginning the Polish-Soviet War. Piłsudski then took up ambitious foreign policy goals, fated to

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29 Mitkiewicz, W Wojsku Polskim, 67.

30 E.K. [Jędrzej Moraczewski], Przewrot Polski (Cracow, nd.), 1:70 and Wrzosek, Wojny o granice, 37.

31 Spiritual pain compounded physical agony, when the virus took the life of his daughter Zofia, his only child. This tragedy led to another, as the child's death caused his wife Stefania to become mentally ill. She was committed to an insane asylum. Babiński, Sosnkowski, 279.
deepen the conflict. Pilsudski hoped to undo the work of the partitions and make Poland a large and powerful state by embarking on an ambitious Eastern program. Pilsudski envisioned a new order in Eastern Europe which included a federation of the states bordering Russia led by Poland. This federation of Baltic peoples, Byelorussians, and Ukrainians was intended to guarantee the security of the region and protect it against Russian expansion.\textsuperscript{32}

Much work had to be done to ready Poland politically and militarily for what lay ahead. The large and powerful National Democratic camp agreed that between Germany and Russia there was "no place for a small and weak state."\textsuperscript{33} However, it opposed federalist schemes and favored a centralized state. In early 1919 Pilsudski moved to gain the recognition and cooperation of the National Democratic camp. By the close of 1918 the Socialist Moraczewski government had outlived its usefulness and now was only an obstacle to the further work of reconstruction. It was opposed by the parties of the Center and Right and nearly succumbed to a National Democratic coup on 4-5 January. Pilsudski appointed the pianist-turned-statesman Ignacy Paderewski premier on 16 January 1919. The popular Paderewski formed a government, which though based on a modest Centrist coalition enjoyed support across the political spectrum. At the same time a Constituent Sejm was elected. The elections of 26 January 1919 returned 340 delegates from 10 parties. The National Democrats won 116 seats. Shortly the Polish National Committee recognized the Pilsudski regime and in turn became the Polish delegation at the Paris peace conference.

In the last days of 1918 and early 1919 Pilsudski also moved to ready the army for the undertakings that lay ahead. In a conversation in January 1919 he told Władysław Baranowski:

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"All my efforts must be focused on the army." In December 1918 Piłsudski moved to begin building the vast national army he wanted. Piłsudski introduced conscription on 24 December 1918, when he called up the classes of 1896, 1897, 1898 and 1899 in the Cracow Military District. This and a number of additional small-scale call-ups were followed by the passage of a National Democratic sponsored law on 7 March 1919 authorizing the conscription of the classes of 1896, 1897, 1898, 1899, 1900 and 1901. Piłsudski also moved to begin uniting the forces at home and those abroad. In particular Piłsudski was interested in bringing home the Polish Army in France. French-trained and equipped, it numbered over 70,000 officers and men in five divisions and even boasted several air units and a regiment of tanks. The rapprochement with the Polish National Committee was intended as much to bring Haller's Army home as to complete the political integration of Poland. Also, before spring he ordered the creation of two more infantry divisions and two cavalry brigades. In moving to expand the army, Piłsudski acted without a plan or design. He had neither the skills nor the temperament for this task and needed Sosnkowski's assistance here. Piłsudski told Miedziński: "Without the Chief it is as though I am without a right hand."

Sosnkowski returned to active service in February 1919 and was quickly drawn into Piłsudski's Eastern designs. He became involved in nearly all aspects of the program. Piłsudski even used him in talks with prospective partners in the Eastern federation. Moreover, Piłsudski

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34 Władysław Baranowski, Rozmowy z Piłsudskim, Ryszard Świętek ed. (Warsaw, 1990), 58.


36 Baranowski, Rozmowy z Piłsudskim, 58.

turned to Sosnkowski to transform the Polish Republic’s modest forces into a real army. Throughout 1919 and into 1920 he labored to construct a mass national army and to realize the ideal of the nation-in-arms.

Sosnkowski carried out the work of expanding the Polish Army from the Ministry of Military Affairs, to which he was sent upon returning to duty. In the Paderewski government a former Russian officer, Major General Józef Leśniewski, was war minister. On 3 March Major General Stefan Majewski and Sosnkowski were appointed first and second vice ministers. The Ministry of Military Affairs, hierarchically organized and staffed by military personnel, had the character of a command and staff organ and not a department of civil government. Although responsible to the sovereign Sejm, it was only the army’s chief organizational and administrative organ and entrusted with direction of services and command of forces at home. Within a command structure, introduced by Piłsudski in an order of 2 March 1919, the ministry was subordinated to the commander-in-chief and his High Command (Naczelne Dowództwo). Operations and matters concerning troops at the front fell to the High Command’s executive organ the General Staff, now headed by Colonel Stanisław Haller.

As second vice minister Sosnkowski was charged with overseeing the work of the Mobilization-Organization (Departament later Oddział I), Information (II), Scientific-Schools (III), Technical-Communication (IV), Personnel Affairs (V) and Military-Legal Departments (VI).

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38 Miedziński, "Wspomnienia" 37:202-3.


40 Minister Spraw Wojskowych, Rozkaz tajny nr. 2, Warsaw, 10 March 1919, CAW, Akta Oddział I M.S.Wojsk., cont. I.300.7.1. To these were added the Inspectorates of Engineers, Schools, Air Forces, Signals, Motor Vehicles, Railways, Transport, Gendarmes, Border Guards and Prisoners of War. Przepisy służbowe dla Ministerstwa Spraw Wojskowych, Warsaw, 10 Dec. 1919, CAW, Akta Gabinetu M.S.Wojsk., cont. I.300.1.437.
However, he dominated the ministry and was virtually minister. Maciej Rataj, a Peasant Party delegate and member of the Sejm Military Affairs Commission, wrote: "... Sosnkowski governed the whole [of the ministry] behind Leśniewski's back." Leśniewski performed only the representative functions of minister, while having little independence. His decisions were subject to Sosnkowski's approval. Sosnkowski's sphere and powers were all the greater, for Piłsudski gave him a free hand in managing the ministry and the work of army organization. There are various explanations for why the top post in the War Ministry was given to Leśniewski instead of Sosnkowski. It is most likely that Piłsudski appointed Sosnkowski to the subordinate post, in order to shield him and his work from the storms of politics. A well-informed official, Michał Kossakowski, reflected on the arrangement at the War Ministry: "It [Leśniewski's appointment] is not strange, for the minister is not certain of his seat, any old crisis will turn him out, but Sosnkowski, he's a real force."

Sosnkowski applied himself to the work of the ministry with great vigor and energy. Rataj, who observed Sosnkowski at work, commented: "He knew how to work like no other."

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41 Maciej Rataj, *Pamiętniki*, 1918-1927 (Warsaw, 1963), 75. See also Miedziński, "Wspomnienia," 37:205-6. Others in their memoirs and writings frequently refer to Sosnkowski as Minister of Military Affairs at a time, when he was only vice minister. See Grabski, *Pamiętniki*, 2:143 and Mitkiewicz, *W Wojsku Polskim*, 171.

42 Sosnkowski, who called his superior "that rascal Leśniewski" in correspondence with Piłsudski, on occasion even forced Leśniewski to reverse decisions made without his approval. Sosnkowski to Piłsudski, Warsaw, 20 April 1919, OSS, Archiwum Kazimierza Sosnkowskiego, cont. 211/84/4, fol. 4.

43 Miedziński asserts that Piłsudski proposed to Sosnkowski that he become minister, but the latter refused. Miedziński, "Piłsudski and Sosnkowski," 180. On the other hand after the Paderewski government's fall Sosnkowski's nomination as war minister in a new government was batted about, but Piłsudski rejected this. Rataj, *Pamiętniki*, 63.

44 Diariusz Michała Kossakowskiego, APAN, Akta Michała Stanisława Kossakowskiego, cont. 4, fol. 287.

Within the ministry Sosnkowski embraced Piłsudski's "open door policy." Heading the Organization-Mobilization Department was Rybak, the former Cracow intelligence chief and the Schools Department, Jan Jacyna, a former Tsarist officer. Jacyna's deputy was the Legionnaire Kukiel. Room was even found for Trzaska-Durski and Puchalski, Piłsudski's former foils from the Legions' Command. Sosnkowski collaborated with all sincerely and harmoniously. The high regard of these officers for Sosnkowski testifies to this.46

The work of building a mass national army was carried out against the backdrop of broadening conflict with the Soviets, while the conflicts with the Germans, Czechs and Ukrainians were minor and soon subsided. Not long after Sosnkowski was installed at the War Ministry Piłsudski took the first steps toward implementing his Eastern design. In April he launched an offensive that had as its objective incorporating Vilnius, the beloved city of his youth. In the South, forces under Rozwadowski struck out to drive Ukrainian armies from Galicia. Large-scale operations continued through winter and saw the Polish Army reach Mińsk. In spring Sosnkowski and ministry officials called up the classes of 1896, 1897 and 1898, feverishly assembled drafts of recruits and dispatched them pell-mell to the front. Members of an Allied mission visiting Poland reported that organization and training were in a deplorable state.47 Nevertheless, at this time Sosnkowski did take action that was to be of great benefit, when he negotiated an agreement, which brought to Poland a large French Military Mission. In summer, after meeting the most pressing needs of the army, creating the nation-in-arms began in earnest.

46 Jan Romer, Pamiętniki (Lvov, 1938), 272-3 and Jan Jacyna, 1918-1923 w wolnej Polsce: Przeżycie (Warsaw, 1927) 22. Rybak alone harbored ill-will toward Sosnkowski, although he collaborated with him smoothly. Rybak, Pamiętniki, 156-60.

The dispatch of a French Military Mission to Poland was incorporated in agreements of 15 January and 15 February, providing for the repatriation of Haller’s army. Allied leaders favored the establishment of a "barrier against Bolshevism." The government of Georges Clemenceau was especially committed to a program of anti-Bolshevik intervention in the East. French leaders, in particular Allied Supreme Commander Field Marshal Ferdinand Foch, pinned their hopes on coordinated action by Polish and other forces and General Anton Denikin's Volunteer Army in South Russia. The French Mission was to direct Polish forces in the anti-Bolshevik crusade. French leaders intended that the mission be organized like that sent to Czechoslovakia, where its head was chief of the General Staff. The Allied Supreme Council approved. Apprised that the situation in Poland was grave, it resolved on 11 March to send a French general to take the situation in hand. Named to head the mission was Major General Paul Henrys, a corps commander in Field Marshal Franchet D'Espry's Balkan expeditionary force. Henrys departed at once to Poland to negotiate agreements governing the mission's relationship to the Polish High Command, its role and complement.

Polish leaders, including Pilsudski, wanted Allied aid and welcomed the dispatch of a Military Mission. However, none, above all Pilsudski, wished to relinquish command or to be encumbered by a French chief-of-staff. Writing in 1924 Pilsudski related: "As regards military questions and the decisions, which such problems involve, I was not disposed to submit to any dictation." In the Mission he wanted not commanders but instructors, advisors and administrators to aid in training and organizing the Polish Army. Pilsudski's stance was supported by Sejm


49 Notes of a Conversation, 11 March 1919, FRUS:PPC, 4:316.

leaders, who opposed arrangements that would entrust the command of Polish soldiers to a foreign general.

Negotiation of agreements concerning the French Mission was entrusted to Sosnkowski. Henrys arrived in Warsaw on 12 April. After an interview, in which Piłsudski communicated his views to the Frenchman, he departed for the front to direct the Vilnius operation.\(^{51}\) Talks began on 14 April and lasted five days. In these talks Sosnkowski with Majewski and Stanisław Haller represented the Polish government, and Henrys and Colonel Gaston Billote, the French. They considered draft agreements prepared by Sosnkowski in consultation with representatives of the General Staff and Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The agreements included proposals on the role of the French Military Mission, on the assignment of French officers to Polish Army units and institutions, on the maintenance of Mission members and on transportation. The agreements utilized the framework of Poland's relations with France and as a co-belligerent in the war with Germany and were framed as a Franco-Polish military convention.\(^{52}\) On 26 March the Sejm had resolved that a Franco-Polish alliance be concluded. The convention, however, did not figure in talks. Henrys was not authorized to negotiate so far-reaching an agreement.\(^{53}\)

In talks with the French Sosnkowski doggedly pressed for acceptance of the Polish position that the head of the mission was not to command in the Polish Army and that the mission was to have an advisory role only. Henrys acquiesced. The agreement governing the mission's

\(^{51}\) Schramm, *Francuskie Misje*, 20, 23.

\(^{52}\) Projekt konwencji wojskowej. AAN, Archiwum Paderewskiego, cont. 810, fol. 2-3.

\(^{53}\) Henrys orders were "...to study there in understanding with Gen. Piłsudski the conditions for the organization of the mission, which you must command." Quoted in Schramm, *Francuskie Misje*, 22. He told Sosnkowski that the convention ought to be negotiated in Paris, where all the powers could take part. Sosnkowski to Piłsudski, Warsaw, 20 April 1919, Ossolineum, Archiwum Sosnkowskiego, cont. 211/84/2, fol. 4. Paderewski brought the matter before Clemenceau in June 1919. The two signed a convention on 14 June 1919 in Paris. Józef Kukulka, *Francja a Polska po Traktacie Wersalskim*, 1919-1922 (Warsaw, 1970), 64.
role and authority assigned the chief of the mission to the High Command, but he was not to be chief of the General Staff. He was to be "aided by the Chief of the General Staff of the Polish Army"--by inference a Pole. The agreement gave the Mission the role: "cooperation with the Commander in Chief of the Polish Army in the fields of the organization, training and command." Historian Piotr Wandycz asserts that Henrys had the choice of securing the most advantageous agreement or provoking a conflict; he chose the former. French negotiators nevertheless drove a hard bargain, insisting that the right to give orders on the part of officers entrusted with the command of Polish formations not be impaired. Also, Sosnkowski had to accept French proposals regarding the complement and maintenance of mission personnel, of which the agreements of 15 January and 15 February pledged the Poles to bear the full cost. Sosnkowski agreed to the complement the French insisted on--95 officers including 5 generals--and wages and allowances meeting French norms. The Council of Ministers approved these agreements on 23 April. Sosnkowski and Henrys signed two days later.

These agreements brought to Poland a military mission, which was to play an instrumental role in building the Polish Army. It grew rapidly. With the incorporation of French officers, 

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56 The Council of Ministers had rejected clauses allowing French officers to give orders to Poles, but Sosnkowski acquiesced. Sosnkowski to Piłsudski, Warsaw, 20 April 1919, Ossolineum, Archiwum Sosnkowskiego, cont. 211/84/2, fol. 4.

57 Protokół 57-go posiedzenia Rady Ministrów R.P., 23 April 1919; Accord entre les Gouvernement Français et Polonais au sujet du Haut-Commandement français auprès de l'Armée Polonaise and Contrat relatif a l'envoi d'une Mission Militaire Française en Pologne, AAN, Akta PRM, part I, vol. 6, fols. 128-9, 153-4 and 155-60. Wandycz mistakenly asserts the agreements were signed on 27 April. Wandycz, "Henrys i Niessel," 54.
attached to Haller’s Army, its complement came to over 1,000 officers and men, although in November Sosnkowski insisted on a ceiling of from 600 to 700. French officers were assigned to individual units, where they advised commanders or trained officers and men in battlefield tactics, operations and in the use of French military manuals. French officers were also assigned to both officers’ and noncommissioned officers’ schools. In addition, members of the mission worked in offices of the War Ministry and General Staff. Sosnkowski, himself, worked closely with Henrys, seeking his advice and offering his plans for the latter’s comment. Henrys was sympathetic to the Polish cause and perhaps infatuated with Piłsudski. Sosnkowski enjoyed warm relations with the Frenchman. He found Hemys a "really very fine and cultured fellow."

In summer 1919 Sosnkowski turned to expanding the Polish Army. In spring and summer that year Sosnkowski formulated a program, which was to govern this. He submitted a ‘minimum’ plan for the reorganization of the forces on hand to Commander-in-Chief Piłsudski on 7 May. In summer a more ambitious ‘maximum’ plan was ready, and he submitted it to

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58 Protokół posiedzenia [konferencji] w sprawie konwencji wojskowej z Francja, Warsaw, 1 November 1919, CAW, Kolekcja materiałów drukowanych, cont. I.440.3/1-4. See also Sosnkowski to Naczelné Dowództwo, Warsaw, 17 Dec. 1919, CAW, Akta Oddz. I N.D., cont I.301.7.35.


60 Sosnkowski to Piłsudski, Warsaw, 20 April 1919, Ossolineum, Archiwum Sosnkowskiego, cont. 211/84/2, fol. 4.

61 There is some confusion among scholars regarding the program governing the expansion of the Polish Army. Bolesław Woszczyński identifies no plan governing the growth of the Polish Army. See Bolesław Woszczyński, *Ministerstwo Spraw Wojskowych, 1918-1921* (Warsaw, 1972). Stawecki, citing a guide for researchers, writes of a program to create twelve divisions, governing the Ministry’s labors between February and April. Stawecki, "Narodziny," 325. No trace of such a plan can be found.

62 The outlines of this plan are visible in a memorandum of Sosnkowski’s of 28 April 1919 on the material needs of the Army. M.S.Wojsk., Dept. I, Memorandum, Warsaw, 28 April 1919, CAW, Akta Oddz. I N.D., cont. I.301.1.3. For the plan itself see M.S.Wojsk., Dept. I to Naczelné
the commander-in-chief on 31 July. These proposals were supplemented by a draft proposal on universal military service, prepared in June by Rybak. The chief of the Mobilization Department throughout assisted Sosnkowski in formulating and executing this design.

The design that emerged from the preceding plans was far reaching. Sosnkowski's plans did not merely propose to expand the army. They also proposed to give it a permanent form and structure. Sosnkowski's plans called for organizing the Polish Army in a very large first line of active duty or regular army, a second line or army reserve and a third line of militia or "general levy" (pospolite ruszenia) troops. The first line, or regular army, constituted the backbone and the overwhelming bulk of the army. It would be supported by the army reserve and militia. The army's peace-time complement—the active duty first line—was projected at 200,000. The size of the armed forces in war time—the fully mobilized first, second and third lines—was not projected at this time. However, Sosnkowski's plans suggest a complement of 1 million. In Sosnkowski's plans the chief combat arm was a heavily armed infantry. Its primary operational organization was a large division of two two-regiment brigades, one regiment each of field and heavy artillery and complements of cavalry. (No intermediate organization was interposed

Dowództwo, Warsaw, 7 May 1919, CAW, Akta Oddz. I N.D., cont. 1.301.7.1 and Rybak, Pamiętniki, 155-6.


64 M.S.Wojsk., Dept. I, Sekcja Poborowa i Uzupełnien, Projekt ustawy o służbie wojskowej, Warsaw, 12 June 1919, CAW, Akta Oddz. 1 M.S.Wojsk., cont. 1.301.7.4.


66 The call ups authorized under the law of 7 March with the unification of the Army at home and Haller's and Dowbór's forces brought the Army to over 700,000 officers and men. Sosnkowski judged this number sufficient for the first-line forces and proposed that further call ups be utilized to form reserve units. M.S.Wojsk., Dept. I to Nacz. Dow., Warsaw, 31 July 1919, CAW, Akta Oddz. I N.D., cont. 1.301.7.12.
between the division and the army; in its twenty-year existence the army of the interwar Republic never adopted a corps organization.) Sosnkowski's scheme called first for the organization of ten or eleven first-line infantry divisions utilizing the forces on hand and conscripts. Next the maximum plan was to be implemented. It called for the creation of another eight divisions through the incorporation of Haller's and the Wielkopolska forces. Sosnkowski's designs also embraced the creation of three divisions of volunteers. They also called for creation of six to nine infantry brigades of the second-line reserve. In Sosnkowski's scheme the cavalry did not figure prominently. His plans called for the creation of only five or so brigades.

Sosnkowski's plans proposed to alter the character of the army, transforming an elite force into a mass national army. This was to be accomplished immediately through the call-ups authorized by the law of 7 March. Already with the initial call-ups the army's ranks were swollen by conscripts. However, Sosnkowski further proposed to institutionalize and make permanent conscription. He sought to replace the arrangement instituted by the regents with a permanent universal military service obligation. The bill on universal military service proposed that all males serve two years in the first-line active-duty forces, then until they were 40 in the second line and, until 50, in the militia. Conscription and the army were to be wedded by placing all save volunteer units on a territorial basis. Two rifle divisions and one cavalry brigade would be assigned to each of the five military districts. Additional divisions would be assigned to new districts in the kresy, Wielkopolska and Pomerania, when these territories were joined to the Republic. The

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constituent units of each division were to be assigned a County Replacement Command (Powiatowa Komenda Uzupełnień), a canton, from which to draw recruits.\(^7^0\)

Sosnkowski began to implement his scheme for expanding the army even as it was evolving. In May Sosnkowski, arguing that the time was right to create larger formations, proposed the implementation of the 'minimum plan.'\(^7^1\) On 10 June the War Ministry ordered the call-up of the class of 1899. Shortly work was underway that led to the formation of six infantry divisions, which brought the total number to ten standing and one volunteer large unit. In summer three cavalry brigades were organized, bringing the cavalry arm to five. As work progressed Sosnkowski moved to place the army on a territorial basis. On 6 July he ordered that each regiment of infantry or artillery be assigned a County Replacement Command.\(^7^2\) At this time a sixth military district—Lvov—was added to the existing five. Work proceeded rapidly; the 'minimum plan' was completed by August.\(^7^3\)

In summer, the arrival of Haller's army and the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, which brought the Wielkopolska Army to Poland, ushered in the next stage in the expansion and reorganization of the Polish Army. Sosnkowski began integrating the army at home and Haller's Army the last units of which made the journey home in June. The force was joined by Major General Lucjan Żeligowski's division, which had left Russia and most recently served with the forces under French command in Bukovina. (The Siberian Division or what remained of it after its arduous journey did not reach Poland until July 1920.) On 10 July Sosnkowski ordered the

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\(^7^0\) M.S.Wojsk. Dept. I, Projekt ustawy o służbie wojskowej, 12 June 1919, CAW, Akta I.301.7.4.

\(^7^1\) M.S.Wojsk., Dept. I to Naczelne Dowództwo, Warsaw, 7 May 1919, CAW, Akta Oddz. I N.D., cont. I.301.7.1.

\(^7^2\) M.S.Wojsk., Dept. I, Order, Warsaw, 6 July, 1919, CAW, Akta Oddz. I, cont. I.301.7.3.

\(^7^3\) Rybak, Pamiętniki, 156-7.
establishment of a commission to prepare a program to govern the integration of Haller’s Army and the forces at home.\textsuperscript{74} The commission, headed by Rybak, only considered integrating the forces from France. Żeligowski’s force, which shared with the forces raised in France only French command, was reorganized separately. Before the end of summer Rybak’s commission produced a program, which was then adopted and implemented by Sosnkowski in an order of 1 September. Sosnkowski’s order discharged soldiers, who belonged to classes not yet called to the colors and who were not Polish citizens. The force’s three-regiment-division organization was discarded in favor of the four-regiment scheme used at home. Also, Haller’s Army was reduced from five divisions to three. Finally, the reorganized force was put on a territorial basis. The work of unifying the two forces was completed by the start of 1920.\textsuperscript{75} Within the Polish Army, however, Haller’s forces maintained a unique character with their French equipment and uniforms. They also continued to use French field service regulations.

At nearly the same time the work of joining the Wielkopolska forces with the Polish Army began. The incorporation of Dowbór’s forces into the Polish Army followed the same pattern as Haller’s. The commission which Rybak headed considered this matter also. Sosnkowski then implemented the program produced by the commission in an order of 10 December. Sosnkowski’s order called for units to be given an organization matching the forces’ at home. The force’s three infantry divisions were reorganized as two. Remaining units were used as cadres for two new divisions. All units were assigned a County Replacement Command.

\textsuperscript{74} M.S.Wojsk., Dept. I, “Komisja przygotowawcza dla Zjednoczenia Wojsk Polskich, sformowanych we Francji z Armją sformowaną w kraju,” CAW, Akta Oddz. I, cont. I.300.7.92.

\textsuperscript{75} M.S.Wojsk., Dept. I, Sekcja Zjednoczenia, Order, ”Zjednoczenia Armii Gen. Haller z Armją Krajową i związana z nim reorganizacja,” JPI, Archiwum Józefa Piłsudskiego, cont. 29. See also Rybak, \textit{Pamiętniki}, 158.
Also, a Poznań Military District was created. This was followed by the creation of a Pomeranian Military District. The incorporation and reorganization of Haller’s and Dowbór’s forces, which proceeded through autumn and winter, provided 18 divisions.

Historians have without substantiation claimed that the unification was guided by a desire on the part of Piłsudski and his lieutenants to break up Haller’s and Dowbór’s forces, where National Democratic sentiment was strong, in order to prevent their becoming an obstacle to his domination of the army. However, the primary concern in integrating Haller’s Army with the forces at home was to give the Polish army a uniform organization. This concern guided the work of Rybak’s commission, and it is embodied in the programs accepted and implemented by the Ministry of Military Affairs. In the case of Haller’s force Piłsudski was eager to add five combat-ready divisions to the army. Nevertheless, the ministry dictated that the force be reduced. The vice minister and his lieutenants felt that there were insufficient replacements to maintain the whole of Haller’s force. Also, the Polish Army’s new cantonal organization contained too few berths for all the units of Haller’s Army.

The work of organizing the Polish Army continued through the end of 1919 and into the first months of 1920. The last days of 1919 and early 1920 saw the final call ups authorized the

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77 Schramm, Francuskie Misje, 33.

78 M.S.Wojsk. to Naczelne Dowództwo, Warsaw, 24 May 1919, CAW, Akta Oddz. I ND, cont. 1.301.7.2.


80 Komisja przygotowawcza dla zjednoczenia Wojsk Polskich sformowanych we Francji z Armią sformowaną w kraju, memorandum, Warsaw, 15 July 1919, CAW, Akta Oddz. I N.D., cont. 1.301.7.17.
To replace the demobilized older classes of Haller’s army now that the call-ups of the law of 7 March 1919 were complete. In February 1920 Sosnkowski set the cumbersome legislative machinery of the Sejm to work on a new law providing for the conscription of the class of 1902. Also, winter saw the formation of three more divisions. One was created using Polish forces recruited by Italy from among Austrian prisoners of war during the First World War. The ministry formed the second by dividing in two the Lithuanian-Byelorussian Division, which had an establishment larger than the rest. Also, an alpine or mountain infantry division was organized in February 1920. To accommodate these forces in the army’s territorial scheme two more military districts—Brest and Przemysl—were carved out of newly liberated Kresy territories.

Training and education complemented the work of expanding and reorganizing the army in 1919 and early 1920. Sosnkowski, who first came to the Polish cause in student self-education circles, devoted considerable attention to training and education, himself, oversaw work in this field, according to Jacyna, head of the Schools Department. In this sphere General Henri Spire’s Training Section of the French Mission assisted the ministry. French officers, including Captain Charles de Gaulle, assisted in establishing schools and curricula, and also served as instructors. Boot camps and a regular program of training were created for enlisted men at this time. Also, in winter 1919-1920 Sosnkowski placed the army at home and at the front on a

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81 M.S.Wojsk, Dept. I, memorandum, Przydział rekruta 1900 i 1901, Warsaw, 10 Jan. 1920, CAW, Akta Oddz. I M.S.Wojsk., cont. 1.300.7.268.

82 Sosnkowski to Rada Min., Warsaw, 4 Feb. 1920, CAW, Akta Gab. M.S.Wojsk., cont. 1.300.1.221.

83 Jacyna, 1918-1923, 49-50.
regimen of intensive training. Instruction had a provisional character; courses lasted only a few months and provided only the most essential skills. Nevertheless Sosnkowski and other military leaders attached great importance to training and education and insisted they be carried out rigorously. Moreover, attempts were made to begin regularizing work in this field. A fact-finding mission headed by Jacyna was sent to France to study military schooling there, and a commission was established to develop a permanent scheme for training and education.

Under Sosnkowski, training and education were made to serve purposes other than preparing soldiers for combat and officers for command. To Sosnkowski an intelligent and spirited soldiery was nearly as important as one well versed in the military art. Jacyna recalled: "The national anxiety was the struggle with illiteracy in the army." Many Polish soldiers were illiterate or only semi-literate. Also, in the view of many, the population was indifferent to the war with the Bolsheviks and lacked a national consciousness. It is likely Sosnkowski shared this view. To combat ignorance and raise national consciousness—which were linked in the minds of many—the General Staff initiated, in December 1918, a campaign of remedial instruction in the

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85 In Winter in response to reports that schools were poorly maintained Sosnkowski issued orders threatening commanders of military districts with dismissal, if training and education did not receive appropriate material support. Sosnkowski to D.O.G. Warszawa, Dept. Gospodarczy, Warsaw, 17 Jan. 1920, CAW, Akta Wicemin., cont. I.300.3.3.


87 Jacyna, 1918-1923, 28.

88 The number of illiterates in the army in 1919 is not known, but in 1920 it was 40 percent. Wiktor Brummer, "Na czasie: Praca oświatowa w wojsku," Bellona 4(1921):617.

89 Jan z Marnowa, "Wojsko, rząd i społeczeństwo," Tygodnik Ilustrowany, No. 34, 23 August 1919.
three "r's": reading, writing and arithmetic for illiterate and semi-literate soldiers. Soldiers also received instruction in Polish literature, history and geography. Efforts were made to improve them culturally and spiritually by providing libraries, canteens, recreational facilities as well as patriotic talks and readings.

Early programs, which were administered by the Soldiers' University (Uniwersytet Żołnierski), were modest and restricted to off-duty hours. The educational campaign received added impetus, when the Sejm passed the Law on Compulsory Education in the Army on 21 July 1919 and commanded the army provide elementary schooling for illiterates. In summer 1919 educational work and the Soldiers' University were transferred to the Schools Department of the Ministry of Military Affairs. Under Sosnkowski the ministry embraced the campaign and stepped up educational work and made remedial schooling an important part of soldiers' training. On 6 August Sosnkowski issued comprehensive guidelines governing educational work. These expanded the program, commanding that at least one hour of schooling be conducted daily during duty hours. Sosnkowski directed the Schools Department to provide vocational training as well.90 Finally, believing that a healthy body brings a healthy mind, Sosnkowski encouraged sport and ordered annual games "to build love of sport."91

To provide the growing army with leaders, the officer corps was expanded. In 1919 15,268 former officers including 72 generals volunteered for service or were conscripted. Still, this great influx of officers was insufficient to meet the armies needs. The army's appetite for officers, indeed, was so great that nearly 1,000 men possessing higher education but no military

90 Przepisy i regulaminy służby oświatowej: rozkazy, rozporządzenia, instrukcje, programy itd. ogłoszone do 23 grudnia 1920 (Warsaw, 1921), 11-14.

91 The games' crowning event was the Polish Army Pentathlon: standing long jump, grenade throw for distance, Vistula River swim, 200-meter run, and 1,500 meter run in full field pack. M.S.Wojsk., II Wiceminister, order, O dorocznych igrzyskach sportowych, 4 Nov. 1919, Dziennik rozkazów M.S.Wojsk., 1920, no. 97, item 4094.
training or experience were commissioned. More importantly, in 1919 a network of schools to
train for Poland its own officers was established. New academies ranged from officer candidate
schools to a General Staff College. Also established were specialized programs, such as courses
to train battery, company, and battalion commanders. The army's education policy aimed at
creating officers with broad education and great moral strength. Sosnkowski believed that an
officer must have an advanced education, preferably a broad gymnasium or university education.
"The Polish Army ought to depend on having the most officers of broad education, and not back­
ward [officers]," he wrote in an order, "because as the soldiers' teachers they nurture the Polish
citizen . . . [and] require a deep intellect and uncommon knowledge."92  He also believed that
an officer must possess great moral strength, and virtues such as altruism and patriotism. The
character of an officer, he felt, was decisive on the battlefield.93  Sosnkowski's ideal officer, was
an intellectual with advanced education and gentry virtues. In particular he resembled the intel­
lectuals-cum-soldiers of the Polish Legions. Training and education, especially of new officers, who
would one day replace the holdovers from the partitioning powers, strove to fashion just such
men. Education was so important that students serving in the army were given leave to complete
their studies in October 1919. Sosnkowski even ordered Military District commanders to establish
canteens and provide lodgings for students.94 Also, officers' training, itself, strove to do more
than impart technical or professional expertise and attempted to form renaissance men. Officers

92 M.S.Wojsk., Dept. I, Sekcja Org., order, Udzielenie urlopów ofic. zawodowym, Warsaw,
17 Nov. 1919, CAW, Akta Oddz. I N.D., cont. I.301.7.52.

93 Sosnkowski, "W 30-lecie współpracy," Materiały, 575.

94 M.S.Wojsk., II Wiceminister, order, Warsaw, 24 October 1919, AAN, Akta Rady Min., part
III, cont. 412/20, fol. 11 and "Dział nieurzędowy: Z Ministerstwa Spraw Wojsk," Monitor Polski,
10 Nov. 1919.
were trained above all to think and be creative. Sport and participation in the life of the non-
military community were also emphasized.

Sosnkowski's broad and general scheme did not embrace arms other than infantry, calvary
and artillery and technical and logistics services. These, however, were not forgotten and grew
pace. Aviation deserves special attention here, for the development of this service sheds light
on the character of the evolving army. Sosnkowski had a keen interest in military aviation that
dated to his service in the First World War. He saw air forces as a combat arm of great im-
portance. In 1917 he wrote: "At this time the development of technology has made possible in the
present war such use of aircraft, which one could not have dreamed of and [which] has created
from aviation a new, entirely unique means of war, having a bright future before it." He believed
air forces could assume the role of cavalry in reconnaissance and raiding. In particular he valued
cooperation between aircraft and artillery and other arms. Sosnkowski singled out the air
service for special attention. He dispatched a special mission to France to study the organiz-
tion, training and employment of that country's air forces and established special purchasing missions
for aviation. He worked to build a separate and strong air arm. On 10 March 1919 shortly
after becoming vice minister he gave the army's air forces their own command, establishing the
Air Forces Command (Szefostwo Wojsk Lotniczych). Throughout 1919 and 1920 he worked to
expand the air service. When he became vice minister the Polish Army's air forces had only 45
operational machines. Parks, balloons and other services were lacking. With the incorporation

95 For a survey of the growth of other arms and technical and logistic services in 1919 and
1920 see Wrzosek, Wojny o granice, 135-48.

96 Józef [Kazimierz Sosnkowski], "Lotnictwo i artylerja," Strzelec, o.s., April-May 1917,
41, 45-8.

97 Sosnkowski to Clemenceau, Warsaw, 18 Dec. 1919 and Sosnkowski to Szef Misji Wojsk.
Zakup. w Paryżu Stefan Pomianowski, Warsaw, 2 April 1920, CAW, Akta Wicemin., cont.
1.300.2.2.
of the air units from Haller's and Dowbór's armies and the creation of new units, the air service reached a strength of nine groups or divisions with 21 squadrons by summer 1920.98

Although operational doctrine was not addressed in his plans, it also received much attention. At this time were planted the first seeds of a doctrine to provide common tactical concepts ensuring that various formations and arms worked together effectively. The Polish Army was born without a doctrine of its own. Initially Polish commanders and instructors quite literally fell back on the methods and practices of the German, Austrian and Russian armies, relying on these armies' old manuals. However, French ideas disseminated by mission instructors quickly came to the fore. These included ideas on planning and above all innovations on combined arms operations. They emphasized the role of infantry as the chief combat arm. Its success in battle was seen as dependent on cooperation with the other arms and services, especially the artillery. These ideas received a wide hearing, especially in commanders' courses and the General Staff College, where instruction was dominated by French officers. French ideas, also, had a powerful proponent in Sosnkowski. In mid-1919 work on new regulations was begun. French ideas were immediately injected into the army in training. The winter training program instituted by Sosnkowski ordered: "Special emphasis ought to be placed on the contemporary method of using infantry with the rational direction of fire and in cooperation with other arms."99 He ordered that commanders' courses "make the fullest use of the experience of the French Army in the course of the [last] war."100  


The winter of 1919 and 1920 saw the completion of the works begun in summer. By January 1920 the Polish Army had 740,000 officers and men. At the front alone were 315,000 officers and men, nearly 1,000 cannon, 140 aircraft and 146 tanks. The force, undergoing intensive training, appeared in fine fettle. Foreign observers were impressed. One British official reported: "The Polish Army is reported in fine condition and difficult to hold back." The U.S. ambassador in Warsaw wrote: "The one hopeful element in the situation is the remarkably good spirit of the Polish Army." There was, however, some cause for alarm. The force, now truly a conscript army, showed signs that the spirit and idealism forced on it had not taken firm root.

In the first days of 1920 the organization of second-line or reserve formations was begun. Also, Sosnkowski prepared to introduce to the Sejm the bill on universal military service. To these he added new projects. Belatedly, a cavalry division was formed. One of the most important new projects Sosnkowski undertook in early 1920 was the reorganization of the Ministry of Military Affairs, which had grown with the army, but haphazardly. The new organization, which borrowed heavily from French models and practices, among other things eliminated one

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101 Ordre de bataille, 20 Jan. 1920, JPI, AAGND, cont. 89/117/1-44.


103 Sławek to Piłsudski, Vilnius, 2 Nov. 1919, Dokumenty i materiały, 2:423. Polish officers decried a shortage of intellectuals in the ranks, blaming it on the policy of granting them leave to complete their studies. Wyciąg z raportu Dywa. gr. oper. gen. Rządowskiego, n.d. CAW, Akta Oddz. I N.D., I.301.7., cont. 56.

of the two vice ministers. Sosnkowski became the sole vice minister. However, in February and March 1920 work on Sosnkowski's plans halted. Only two reserve infantry brigades were created, and the law on universal military service was held back from the legislature. These and other projects were put aside and a new course adopted as Pilsudski embarked on a bold enterprise, which was to breathe life into his Eastern policy and bring victory in the war with the Soviets. Despite many victories, a decision in the Soviet War had eluded the Polish Army. Pilsudski's federalist plans had not been realized. This weighed heavily on Pilsudski in the winter of 1919 and 1920. He believed that the Soviets intended to invade Poland despite peace overtures of 22 December 1919 and 28 January 1920. Aware that the Bolsheviks were making short work of the White armies, he felt that after their defeat all the might of the Red Army would be brought to bear against Poland. Pilsudski therefore considered a pre-emptive strike: a campaign to smash Red forces in the West and snatch the Ukraine before the Bolsheviks were able to attack Poland. In February after much soul searching, Pilsudski settled on a spring offensive with Kiev as its objective. Pilsudski kept the plan to himself. Political leaders as well as some senior commanders including Józef Haller were kept in the dark.

Among the few aware of Pilsudski's intentions was Sosnkowski, and in February Sosnkowski began to ready the army for the coming enterprise. He set the ministry and the French Military Mission as well to work shaping up the evolving army. Forces were moved from the West and interior to the eastern front. To bring units up to strength for the offensive enlisted

105 The new scheme reorganized the Mobilization, Information, Schools, Communications, Personnel and Legal Departments as bureaus of a consultative ministerial staff. Execution of programs produced by the staff were to be implemented by departments--Combat Arms and Trains, Horses, Armaments, Air, Medicine--fashioned from inspectorates, which heretofore had overseen the individual branches of the armed services. M.S.Wojsk., Dept. I, order, Reorganizacja M.S.Wojsk., Warsaw, 20 Feb. 1920, CAW, Akta Gab. M.S.Wojsk., cont. I.300.I.437.

106 Haller to Pilsudski, 10 March 1920, JPI, AAGND, cont. VII/2790.
men’s basic training was shortened by half. Draft after draft of replacements was sent to the front. A
acute shortage of officers at the front. In response to appeals by the General Staff Sosnkowski established on 16 March a commission to review rear-echelon units’ comple­ments and direct nonessential officers and noncommissioned officers to the front. On 14 April on the eve of the spring offensive Sosnkowski suspended instruction at the General Staff College, the Infantry Officers’ School and 41 other academies and then dispatched students to the front.

Early in 1920 Sosnkowski also ventured into the republic’s political life for the first time. In subsequent months his involvement deepened and he became an important political figure. As vice minister he had little cause to deal with the Council of Ministers or Sejm Military Affairs Committee; this was Leśniewski’s sphere. This changed with the fall of the Paderewski government in December 1919 and the coming of much partisan strife to politics. Paderewski was replaced by Leonard Skulski. Skulski’s government was based on the same coalition of Center and Peasant parties and pursued the same pro-federalist and therefore pro-war policies as Paderewski’s. It, however, did not enjoy the good will of Dmowski or the Popular-National Union. National Democrats attacked Piłsudski and Skulski, chiefly for their federalist policies and the continued prosecution of the war. In addition, the Bolshevik peace proposals deprived the government of the support of the Left, for they led the Socialists to stridently demand an end to the war.

Dismayed at the new turn politics had taken, Sosnkowski sallied forth on a lone mission to create cooperation and unity between warring political camps. He sought to effect an


accommodation between the Piłsudski and Dmowski camps. Although Sosnkowski’s views on Piłsudski’s federalist designs are unclear, he, like Piłsudski, believed that despite talk of peace, the war with the Soviets would continue. He strongly felt that prosecution of the war demanded the cooperation and support of as many camps as possible. Also, rebuilding the Polish state, he believed, no less demanded this. Sosnkowski, who shared his friend’s willingness to collaborate with all who wished, settled on an accommodation with the National Democrats, probably because they were the government’s most powerful opponents. The National Democrats, although opposed to Piłsudski’s handling of the war, were nevertheless reluctant to treat with the Reds, too. In the very last days of 1919 Sosnkowski proposed to Piłsudski that he treat with the National Democrats and the latter agreed. Next he sought out Dmowski. In early January 1920 Sosnkowski met with the him in the apartment of Sejm deputy Marcelli Nowakowski. However, the National Democratic doyen could not be brought to any agreement.

Having failed to reach an accommodation with the Right, Sosnkowski was left to build cooperation on individual issues, and in preparing for the spring campaign he was once again drawn into politics. On 5 and then again on 23 and 24 February joint sessions of the Sejm’s Military and Foreign Affairs Committees considered Bolshevik peace proposals. The ministers and vice ministers of both bodies, including Sosnkowski, took part. In these deliberations Sosnkowski sought to assuage any doubts representatives of both the Right and Left had regarding further prosecution of the conflict. Sosnkowski sought to convince committee members that peace was unattainable. He argued that the Soviets were not dealing in good faith. Also, he told them that

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110 Jaszczuk proposes that Sosnkowski sought out the National Democrats, because that is where his sentiments lay. Jaszczuk, "Koniec współpracy," 455. Little suggests this.

111 "List na obchód," Sosnkowski, Materialy, 664.
the Polish Army was equal, even superior to the Bolshevik hordes. He painted a rosy picture of Poland's military effectiveness, and glossed over the consequences of the recent defeat of Denikin's forces. At the 5 February session he pronounced: "Our general circumstances are more fortuitous than ever before. The defeat of the Red Army is possible." He also argued that ending the conflict would not bring an end to Poland's economic difficulties, while victory's fruits might pay for the conflict and bring additional revenues. His arguments influenced all. Socialist Hermann Liebermann, leader of the peace faction, complained bitterly of "the dialectic knife, which Sosnkowski wielded as well as any other weapon." The Polish response to the Bolshevik proposals was tepid. An almost farcical round of peace talks at Borisov followed. Piłsudski was given a free hand to continue the war as well as advance his Eastern policy.

On 25 April Piłsudski began the bold move, which he gambeled was to breathe life into his Eastern program and bring victory in the war with the Soviets. On that day three Polish armies advanced into the Ukraine. With the signing at the eleventh hour—on 21 and 24 April—of political and military conventions the Ukraine had become a Polish ally. In a proclamation to the Ukrainian people Piłsudski affirmed his intention to aid the establishment of a Ukrainian state. Led personally by Piłsudski, who now was "First Marshal of Poland," the Polish forces swept all before them. On 7 May the Polish juggernaut reached Kiev and came to a halt only after establishing a bridgehead on the Dniepr River.

As Polish armies raced for Kiev Sosnkowski's labors did not slacken. The army's appetite for men and materials grew with the victories of April and May. In those months the ministry

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112 Streszczenie przebiegu posiedzeń Komisji Wojskowej- Sejmowej w 1919 i 1920 r., Laudanski, "Kierunki polityczne," fol. 126.

113 Rataj, Pamiętniki, 79. For a full account of the proceedings see Sprawozdania z posiedzenia Komisji Spraw Zagranicznych, 23 and 24 Feb. 1920, JPI, AAGND, cont. 102, items 17 and 18.
sent 1,334 officers and 99,066 men to the front. The drain on reserves of men under arms was great. To replenish these Sosnkowski put forward another conscription bill, the second in as many months. In the meantime Sosnkowski ordered commanders of military districts to reduce the complements of units and services at home and send redundant personnel to the front. Also, Sosnkowski, promoted to major general on 21 April, served as Piłsudski’s deputy in Warsaw, while the commander-in-chief was at the front. He functioned as Piłsudski’s eyes and ears in the capital and reported goings on in the capital. He also supervised efforts to broaden and solidify the Eastern federation that Polish victories seemed to be on the verge of creating. Sosnkowski oversaw an abortive attempt to win Romanian support for Piłsudski’s federalist schemes. He, moreover, led negotiations for a Polish-Ukrainian economic convention to complement the political and military agreements already signed. Pressed by French leaders, he sought important concessions from the Ukrainians. He was, however, chastised by Piłsudski, who did not wish to exploit the Ukraine. Military developments prevented an agreement.

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116 For the text of the agreement see Dokumenty i materiały, 3:26-9. Sosnkowski reported that the French ambassador Hector de Panafieu and Henrys pressed him to seek generous concessions in the Ukraine and that the French Mission communicated a decision by the Chief of the French General Staff Buat to provide war materials only in exchange for hard currency or deliveries of wheat, petroleum, beet sugar and other items produced by the Ukraine. Sosnkowski to Piłsudski, 12 May 1920, JPI, AAGND, cont. VII/3698. For Sosnkowski’s views see Sosnkowski to Piłsudski, 14 May 1920, cont. IX/4329.
Significantly, Sosnkowski defended Piłsudski’s policies and strove to build support for them at home. The invasion of the Ukraine and Piłsudski’s declaration to the Ukrainian people led to new attacks by National Democrats. The day after the offensive began, the National Democrat Stanisław Grabski in protest resigned as chairman of the Sejm Foreign Affairs Committee in protest. The Socialists also attacked the invasion. In Foreign Affairs Committee meetings both the Right and Left questioned the wisdom of continuing the war. Sosnkowski appeared before the committee on 29 April and persuaded members to postpone discussion of the war until Piłsudski’s return.\footnote{Sosnkowski to Piłsudski, Warsaw, 29 April 1920, JPI, AAGND, cont. VIII/3657/8.} It is likely that the popularity of Polish victories helped temporarily to silence the opposition. At Piłsudski’s instruction Sosnkowski also took part in attempts to shore up the Skulski government. Sosnkowski was instructed to negotiate with the PPS. In doing so he cooperated with members of the "Piast" Peasant Party, who hoped to form a Center-Left bloc and make it the basis of the coalition.\footnote{Sosnkowski to Piłsudski, Warsaw, 3 May 1920, JPI, AAGND, cont. VIII/3697 and Rataj, \textit{Pamiętniki}, 85.} Military developments prevented any agreement between the parties. However, for a short time it appeared as though the Socialists would join the government, leading National Democrats, fearing isolation, to near panic. Sosnkowski reported what he considered a hair-brained scheme of National Democratic leaders for the creation of a Piłsudski-Dmowski-Sosnkowski troika. Piłsudski would become "king" or president and Sosnkowski, war minister, if Dmowski became premier. Having failed earlier to secure accommodation with Dmowski, Sosnkowski gave rapprochement with the National Democrats little thought, putting his faith in Peasant-Socialist talks.\footnote{Sosnkowski to Piłsudski, 14 May 1920, JPI, AAGND, cont. IX/4329.}
After the capture of Kiev, Piłsudski returned to Warsaw, on 18 May to a hero's welcome. A *te deum* mass was celebrated. At a special sitting of the Sejm the speaker, National Democrat Wojciech Trąpczyński, praised Piłsudski: "Not since the days of Chocim has the Polish nation seen such a triumph. The victorious march on Kiev has given the nation a feeling of strength, strengthened its belief in a free future... Hail to the commander-in-chief!"\(^{120}\) Sosnkowski was recognized as well. On 23 May *Government and Army* published a laudatory sketch of Sosnkowski. By now Sosnkowski's talents has won him high regard and much affection throughout the army.\(^{121}\) Moreover, he was now not only among the chief military figures, but one of the Republic's most important leaders.

The celebration of Polish victories was short lived. In May Soviet forces, which had been employed against Denikin in southern Russia, were brought to bear against the Poles. The Red Army went on the offensive. On 15 May, in the northeast, the Soviet XV Army under General Mikhail Tukhachevsky struck out toward Minsk and Molodeczno. At the end of May Piłsudski sent Sosnkowski to the Lithuanian-Byelorussian front to lead the Reserve Army in a counteroffensive on the Berezyna River. Piłsudski, who had grown frustrated with his commanders, taunted Szeptycki, the front commander: "Sending Sosnkowski, I intend to use him for a short time, since I need him at the ministry. I give him to you, since he is the only person, whom I have for a play *va banque*."\(^{122}\) The Battle of the Berezyna, fought between 1 and 12 June was a dazzling success thanks to Sosnkowski's skill as a commander. However, this limited offensive


\(^{122}\) Szeptycki, *Front*, 24. To Prime Minister Skulski he complained that the former Russian generals were "complete idiots." Piłsudski to Skulski, 6 May, 1920, "Listy Piłsudskiego," 112.
checked the Bolshevik advance only temporarily. Summer saw the Soviets go over to the attack again. Red forces—General Semen Budenny’s fabled host, I Cavalry Army (Konarmiya)—attacked in the Ukraine and on 10 June wrested Kiev from the Poles. In Byelorussia Tukhachevsky, now leading III, XV and XVI Armies and General Ghaia Ghaï’s Corps of Cavalry attacked again. In July Poland itself was invaded. Outnumbered and outmaneuvered by the fleet Red forces—for the cavalry Sosnkowski’s single division was no match—the Poles were time and again driven from their defenses. Casualties were great. In June there were 33,000 wounded and 200,000 sick. Morale plummeted. Not yet inured to the changeable fortunes of war, exhausted, and suffering from ‘a cavalry psychosis,’ new conscripts bolted when they saw the enemy. De Gaulle noted in exasperation: "But this is not war—there are no corpses. The divisions advance and retreat without anyone knowing why.”

Defeat on the battlefield brought turmoil at home. The defeats caused by Piłudski’s schemes led to renewed attacks by National Democrats. The Skulski government resigned on 9 June. Warring parties delayed the formation of a new administration. Poland was without a government for two weeks. A non-parliamentary government was then formed by the National Democrat economist Władysław Grabski. The Grabski government, however, was a stop-gap, in Rataj’s words, "weak in terms of its members, without support in society [and] hardly tolerated by the Sejm.”

On 1 July the Sejm constituted the State Defense Council (Rada Obrony Państwa). The council united members of the government, War Ministry, High Command and

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125 Rataj, Pamiętniki, 92.
representatives of the major parties, including Dmowski, although he shortly withdrew from the body. The council was entrusted with the highest decisions of war and peace. Political infighting continued, however.

The reverses of summer and then the invasion of Poland dictated extraordinary measures to stave off defeat. Returning to the ministry after his short stint at the front, Sosnkowski quickly took stock of the situation and set the entire machinery of the ministry to work on measures to mobilize more and more men and to improve morale. Sosnkowski summoned the men and women of the War Ministry to exacting labors; working hours were lengthened. The vice minister set a personal example of energy and tirelessness, working from dawn until after midnight each day.

Sosnkowski, who welcomed its creation, worked closely with the State Defense Council. The minutes of its meetings present a detailed picture of his work. They show that he believed political divisions at home, in part, caused the sagging morale at the front. The council suggested solidarity and determination. Sosnkowski said he hoped Poland's leaders would go even further. At the Council's second sitting on 5 July he urged that a broad coalition government—a government of national unity—be formed: "We must unite at the top, that is [through] the creation of a coalition government, to which we must agree, for we only have five minutes, for this is our last chance." He proposed that such a government be lead by the Left or at least have its approval.126 Sosnkowski also embraced the Council, because it was empowered to formulate and implement policy without recourse to the "legislative golgotha," the Council of Ministers and

Council meetings were often stormy, the scene of bitter recriminations over recent reverses, and Sosnkowski’s work at the ministry was frequently criticized. Yet, he guided the most important measures through the council with little difficulty. The gravity of the moment led to occasions of genuine cooperation. Also, the vice minister’s eloquence, intelligence and energy enabled him even to win over National Democrats. Prime Minister Grabski "was convinced, that he [Sosnkowski] was entirely the equal of the task [before him]."

In June and July Sosnkowski was chiefly concerned with meeting the needs of front-line forces for new formations and drafts of replacements. In June, Sosnkowski took in hand expanding and reorganizing the cavalry. He began to fashion a two-division cavalry corps, with which the High Command might challenge Budenny. At a conference of ministry department chiefs on 2 July he Sosnkowski said: "The moment, when we have this corps, all phantoms and mirages will disappear." Also, in June the ministry dispatched nearly 50,000 officers and men to the front.

To meet military needs Sosnkowski accelerated mobilization efforts. In June the High Command had deluged the War Ministry with demands for 160,000 men. However, Poland’s trained reserves, which had dwindled under the heavy demands of April and May, were exhausted.

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130 In April and May the Ministry provided the High Command with nearly 100,000 men, before the end of June this number had risen to 150,000. Compare Nacz. Dow., Sztab Gen., 2 zastęp. Szefa Sztabu, Mieczysław Norwid Neugebauer, memorandum, Wzrost i straty armii na froncie w okresie 6 miesiączny I/XII.19r. do I/VII.20r., Warsaw, 24 September 1920, CAW, Akta Rada M.S.Wojsk., cont. I.300.6.4. and Brulion [protokół drugiego posiedzenia Rady Obrony Państwa] Wiadysława Studzińskiego, Warsaw, 5 July 1920, "Protokoły R.O.P.,” 154.
by June. The War Ministry even scoured hospitals for men fit enough for frontline service.¹³¹ These reserves had been allowed to dwindle without replenishment, because the Sejm delayed acting upon conscription bills, which Sosnkowski submitted earlier. In addition, Sosnkowski proposed to bring the army to 1 million officers and men.¹³² The mobilization began only, when at last on 15 June the Sejm passed, in one omnibus act, all of Sosnkowski’s conscription bills. The law called for the conscription of 18- and 25-year-olds along with former non-commissioned officers born between 1890 and 1894 and cavalry veterans born between 1885 and 1894. Only two days after the law was passed all those summoned were ordered to report for duty.¹³³ A month later Sosnkowski convinced the State Defense Council to promulgate a decree, conscripting men born between 1890 and 1894.¹³⁴


¹³³ Ustaw w przedmiocie powszechnego poboru roczników 1895 i 1902 r., poboru byłych podoficerów, urodzonych w latach od 1890 do 1894 włącznie, i poboru byłych szeregowców, urodzonych w latach od 1885 do 1894 włącznie, którzy w armiach obcych, względnie w wojsku lub formacjach polskich służyli, w oddziałach jazdy, konnej artylerii i konnej straży granicznej, Warsaw, 15 June 1920; Rozporządzenie Ministrem Spraw Wewnętrznych i Ministrem b. Dzielnic Pruskiej w sprawie połowania b. podoficerów, urodzonych w latach 1890, 1891, 1892, 1893, 1894 i 1895, oraz wszystkich byłych szeregowców, którzy służyli w oddziałach jazdy, konnej artylerii i straży granicznej, urodzonych w latach 1885-1895, Warsaw, 17 June 1920, Dziennik ustaw R.P., 1920, no. 48, item. 298, 838 and no. 50, item 312, 884-5 and Rozporządzenie Ministra Spraw Wojskowych w porozumieniu z Ministrem Spraw Wewnętrznych i Ministrem b. Dzielnic Pruskiej w sprawie połowania roczników 1895 i 1902 do służby wojsk., Monitor Polski, 24 June 1920.

¹³⁴ Rozporządzenie Rady Obrony Państwa w przedmiocie poboru roczników 1894, 1893, 1892, 1891 and 1890, Warsaw, 14 July 1920, Monitor Polski, 21 July 1920. The bill was enacted a few days later. M.S.Wojsk., Oddz. I, Pobór roczników 1890, 1891, 1892, 1893 i 1894 i byłych wojskowych, Warsaw, 26 July 1920, CAW, Akta Oddz. I N.D., cont. I.301.7.94.
Conscription, however, promised to provide only a portion of the manpower that the Polish Army needed. It was estimated that the call-ups under the law of 15 June would add 60,000 to 70,000 men. Conscription, moreover, was a slow and cumbersome process. It would be weeks before recruits reported for duty, let alone readied for battle. In the last days of June Sosnkowski therefore turned to a program of voluntary recruitment. A call for volunteers, he reasoned would provide additional troops and more quickly. Sosnkowski brought the matter before the State Defense Council at its first meeting. His proposal was accepted unanimously.\footnote{Notatka Kazimierza Świtalskiego [z pierwszego posiedzenia Rady Obrony Państwa], Warsaw, 1 July 1920, "Protokoły R.O.P.," 149.}

Two days later Piłsudski issued the call. Sosnkowski then quickly constituted a series of volunteer organizations, chief among which was the Volunteer Army under its General Inspector Józef Haller. The Volunteer Army was not an army as such, but an autonomous organization charged with recruiting and training volunteers, including a Women’s Volunteer Legion. Units were to be no larger than a regiment, although a volunteer division was later constituted. The call for volunteers met with an enthusiastic response. In the first week of recruiting 30,423 men, many of them intellectuals, volunteered.\footnote{Władysław Ścibor-Ryłski ed., Obrona państwa w 1920 roku: Księga sprawozdawczo-pamiątkowa Generalnego Inspektoratu Armii Ochotniczej i Obywatelskich Komitetów Obrony Państwa (Warsaw, nd.), 39.}

The creation of the Volunteer Army was followed by a host of other volunteer organizations. Guerilla outfits were created from among refugees from the kresy. In Lvov, Lublin, and other regions in danger of being overrun Home Guard units were also formed.\footnote{M.S.Wojsk., Oddz. I, order, Ochotnicza służba z obszarów ZCZW, Warsaw, 30 July, CAW, Akta Rada M.S.Wojsk., cont. I.300.6.1 and Instrukcja organizacyjna Straży Obywatelskiej i Oddziałów Samoobrony, Warsaw, 9 July 1920, CAW, Akta Oddz. I N.D., cont. I.301.7.88.}
At the same time that mobilization went forward Sosnkowski launched a broad assault on the army's flagging morale. Sosnkowski believed restoring the army's spirit was one of the most important tasks before him. Since the invasion of the Ukraine, the war, he believed, had become a great national struggle. He found the Poles wanting in patriotism, and he believed that it was the Russian nation and not the Polish that rose to the challenge. Sosnkowski linked the lack of enthusiasm for the Polish cause to the backwardness of conscripts and railed at the high rate of illiteracy. Sosnkowski therefore set out to fight ignorance and raise Polish spirits. Already in May, when troops began to showed a lack of enthusiasm, he ordered that soldiers of above average intelligence be sent to the front. Also, Sonskowski ordered that intellectuals in the army be identified, in order to make the best use of them. In his order Sosnkowski evoked the feat of 1918:

> It is only necessary to remember the turning point, when Poland seized from the partitioning powers the state apparatus . . . At that time students, leaving behind their classes, entered the ranks. They, with their intelligence and influence on soldiers, contributed in no small part to our ability to meet the demands of the moment."

Although training was accelerated, the minister urged that attention be paid to developing national consciousness. Also, Sosnkowski stepped up educational work. The Schools Department was charged with strengthening work at the front. Mobile Education Columns, each with a canteen and field theater, were created to agitate, propagandize, and otherwise raise spirits. In addition, over two hundred instructors were sent to reinforce education officers in front-line units.140

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139 M.S.Wojsk., Oddz. I, order, Brak inteligentów na froncie. Środki zaradze, CAW, Akta Oddz. I N.D., cont. I.301.7.73.

In July Sosnkowski introduced other legislative measures calculated to inspire love of the Polish cause and to lead soldiers to do their duty. At the vice minister's urging the State Defense Council introduced new decorations--for frontline service and wounds--to recognize and stimulate patriotism. More far-reaching measures followed. Anticipating the passage by the Sejm of a long-awaited land reform bill Sosnkowski persuaded the State Defense Council to issue a proclamation, declaring that the state would care for the troops at the front and their families at home. The document, which he authored, declared: "After this victorious war no soldier returning home will want for work, in the country or in the city." The land reform bill itself was passed on 15 July. It gave priority to veterans in the distribution of land and provided invalided and decorated veterans free 15 hectare plots and others were guaranteed long term credits at low rates. The War Ministry lost no time in touting the law, issuing a proclamation on the subject on 20 July. Sosnkowski, himself, guided measures providing relief for soldiers' families through the council.

Where exhortations and incentives failed to put victory in soldiers' hearts, Sosnkowski resorted to other measures, which earned him the moniker "the Iron Minister." In July a draconian discipline was introduced. Drum-head courts martial were introduced in a decree of 23 July for a variety of transgressions, among them desertion, cowardice, insubordination, robbery, and

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143 Rozporządzenie Rady Obrony Państwa w przedmiocie ustanowienia odznaki honorowej dla oficerów i szeregowych za czas pobytu na froncie and Rozporządzenie Rady Obrony Państwa w przedmiocie ustanowienie odznaki honorowej dla oficerów i szeregowych za rany i kontuzje, Warsaw, 14 July 1920, Poland, Ministerstwo Sprawiedliwości, Ustawy i rozporządzenia z lat 1918-1936, 8 vols. (Warsaw, 1936), 1:109 and Rozporządzenie Rady Obrony Państwa o zasiłkach dla rodzin osób pełniących służbę w Wojsku Polskim z poboru i ochotniczo, Warsaw, 20 July 1920, Dziennik ustaw R.P., 1920, no. 63, 1092-96.
murder. The decree authorized death sentences for the guilty. This was accompanied by other measures, which under certain circumstances subjected civilians to military justice and entrusted the administration of regions threatened by invasion to the military. In an order Sosnkowski ordered military courts and commanders to enforce these measures rigorously. "For a morally healthy army," he wrote, "the physical superiority of the enemy is nothing terrible. Battles are lost, not by numerical weakness but by internal disease." Military courts meted out 349 death sentences.  

In the last days of July the summer campaign and the war, itself, entered its critical stage. The Konarmiya menaced Lvov. Advancing along the Niemen and Narew, the route followed by Russian invaders for centuries, Tuchachevsky's forces marched on Warsaw. On 4 August Tuchachevsky's armies, which constituted the chief invasion force, reached Ostrołęka, a few days march from Warsaw. In the capital the Grabski government fell. Grabski had sought Allied intervention, but failed, for the Allies now retreated from intervention in the East. The government strove to make peace with the Bolsheviks and to turn back the Red Army with equally disastrous results. On 20 July the State Defense Council began to discuss forming a coalition government. Grabski's was replaced on 24 July by a government formed by Wincenty Witos of the "Piast" Party.

The formation of a new government was accompanied by changes in the High Command. At this critical juncture France's General Maxime Weygand, Foch's chief-of-staff, appeared on the scene as a member of a special Interallied Mission sent to Poland, the only tangible fruit of Grabski's efforts to obtain Allied aid. Weygand became 'advisor to the General Staff.' More

144 Rozporządzenie Ministra Spraw Wojskowych, Monitor Polski, 24 July 1920, 4 and M.S.Wojsk., Oddz. II, Rozkaz oficerski, Warsaw, 24 July 1920, CAW, Akta Wicemin., cont. 1.300.2.7.

importantly, the energetic and optimistic Rozwadowski replaced Stanisław Haller as chief of the General Staff, for the latter had grown deeply depressed. Finally, Sosnkowski replaced Leśniewski as war minister. In the Witos government Sosnkowski was kept on initially as vice minister. However, he soon became minister, when Leśniewski resigned. Leśniewski had long suffered the arrangement, by which he performed only representative functions while Sosnkowski was the real master of the ministry. By summer 1920 he could no longer. In June and July, National Democrats harshly criticized Leśniewski for failing to control the ministry and shielding those responsible for recent debacles. At a Council of Ministers meeting Grabski bluntly told him: "General, you are not fit for your position."\textsuperscript{146} This criticism was a thinly veiled attack on Sosnkowski, whom National Democrats wished to remove to weaken Piłsudski's grip on the army.\textsuperscript{147} Thus goaded, Leśniewski moved to rein in his vice minister. He seized upon accusations of wrong-doing by intelligence officers and, without consulting beforehand Sosnkowski, on 23 July ordered him to sack the second-in-command of the Information Bureau. The move backfired; the same day Sosnkowski as well as Miedziński, the bureau's head, resigned.\textsuperscript{148} Piłsudski refused to accept his first lieutenant's resignation. This flap had barely died down, when Witos pressed for an end to the arrangement of the past year and for the appointment of Sosnkowski, for whom he had a high regard, to the position of minister.\textsuperscript{149} Humiliated and pressed to step down, Leśniewski had no choice but to resign, which he did on 8 August. Piłsudski...\textsuperscript{146} Juliusz Zdanowski, I VIII 1920, Dziennik, Akta Juliusza Zdanowskiego, cont. 14023/II/3, fol. 173.

\textsuperscript{147} Fr. Kazimierz Lutosławski of the Populist-National Union confided that his Party was planning to oust Sosnkowski in a conversation with the British Ambassador Horace Rumbold in early August. Rumbold to Curzon, Warsaw, 15 Sept. 1920, BDFA, II, a, 3:396.

\textsuperscript{148} Sosnkowski to Leśniewski, Warsaw, 23 July 1920 and Miedziński to Sosnkowski, report, Warsaw, 23 July 1920, JPI, AAGND, cont. IX/4218.

\textsuperscript{149} Rataj, Pamiętniki, 110.
ski swiftly appointed Sosnkowski minister, a post he held except for a short interval until April 1924.

With the formation of the Witos government, the prosecution of the war acquired a determination and purpose, which had heretofore been lacking. Witos' was a "government of national defense." It was based on a Peasant-Socialist coalition with broad support in the Sejm. It even included the unfortunate Grabski, representing the National Democrats. The new premier himself brought resolve and vigor to the conduct of the war. In his inaugural address he told the Sejm:

> With peace on our banner, we shall not yield before any threat of violence to the right of the Polish nation to freedom and unity. . . . United in each beat of the heart with our heroic army, we command and defy it to hold fast. Placing our profound trust in the Commander-in-Chief behind whom we close ranks and united in the great task for Poland and peace, we shall overcome.¹³⁰

In the following days he and members of the government stumped across the country, seeking the support of citizens. He deluged the army, town and country with proclamations, exhorting Poles to ever greater sacrifices and feats of patriotism. Witos was able to mobilize great support for the war. At the start of August a wave of patriotism swept the nation. The energetic action of the government, recalled Żeligowski, heartened soldiers at the front as well.¹³¹ Long desirous of political unity, Sosnkowski embraced the Witos government. He did not shrink from his responsibilities as a member of the government and cooperated loyally throughout the administration's tenure.¹³²

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¹³⁰ Witos, speech, 24 July 1920, Sprawozdanie stenograficzne Sejmu Ustawodawczego, CLXVI/9.

¹³¹ Mitkiewicz, W Wojsku Polskim, 216-7 and Lucjan Żeligowski, Wojna w roku 1920: Wspomnienia i rozważania (Warsaw, 1990), 80.

In this climate Sosnkowski redoubled his efforts to reinforce and rejuvenate the army. New call-ups were made. At Sosnkowski's urging the classes of 1885 to 1889 were called to the colors. More volunteers were sought as well. In the first two weeks of August 20,385 men volunteered for service. Boy scouts also volunteered and stood guard over railways or performed clerical, messenger and telephone services in the west. The Union of War Invalids offered its services and members were put to work in offices on army posts all around the country.\textsuperscript{153} Discipline was further tightened. On 6 August the State Defense Council introduced martial law in areas, which the War Ministry declared threatened by invasion. Five days later it issued decrees, which deprived individuals of their citizenship for leaving the country to avoid military service. It also created a State Defense Tribunal to hear crimes against the state.\textsuperscript{154}

In late July and early August Sosnkowski set the ministry to work making preparations for a final battle before Warsaw that was then taking shape. Sosnkowski, himself, took over the work of fortifying the approaches to Warsaw and the Vistula bridgeheads, transforming the capital and its environs into an armed camp. On 29 July he approved and set the military governor of Warsaw to work erecting strong defenses—triple lines of barbed wire and a double trench system—in a triangle, whose corners were Warsaw's east-bank suburbs, Zegrze on the Bug River northeast of the city and Modlin on the Vistula northwest of the capital.\textsuperscript{155} Sosnkowski envisioned the


\textsuperscript{154} Rozporządzenia Rady Obrony Państwa w przedmiocie ustanowienia stanu oblężenia, Warsaw, 6 August; w przedmiocie utraty obywatelstwa wskutek niespełnienia obowiązku służby wojskowej, 11 August and o utworzeniu Trybunału Obrony Państwa, 11 August, Dziennik ustaw, 1920, no. 69, item, 460, 1219-20, Ustawy i rozporządzenia, vol. 1, 108-9 and Dziennik ustaw, 1920, no. 81, item 538, 1470-2.

\textsuperscript{155} M.S.Wojsk., Oddz. 1, order, Trójkąt: Modlin-Zegrze-Warszawa, Warsaw, 29 July 1920, CAW, Akta Oddz. I N.D., cont. 1.301.7.95.
coming battle as a repetition of the 1914 Battle of Marne: Polish forces would undertake a stout defense of the Vistula bridgeheads, in order to allow the army to regroup behind the river for a counterstroke north of the capital. He, Rozwadowski and Weygand advanced this or similar views in discussions with Pilsudski in early August.\textsuperscript{156} Pilsudski rejected this advice, adopting a plan of his own. Pilsudski's envisioned a defense of Warsaw by a greater part of the army with a simultaneous advance by a striking group of armies from the south from behind the Wieprz River into a void that had lately appeared between Tukhachevsky's and Budenny's forces. Pilsudski's plan was incorporated in operational orders issued on 6 August. The Commander-in-Chief charged Sosnkowski, Rozwadowski, and Weygand with implementing his plan.

Pilsudski charged Sosnkowski principally with preparing Warsaw's defenses. In the second week of August Sosnkowski hastened to reorganize I, II and V Armies, the forces assigned to defend Warsaw. These had fallen into disorder during the retreat, and there emerged, as Pilsudski put it, "groups, sub-groups, super-groups, fore groups, rear groups . . . present in numbers as many as there were army chiefs and staffs, but without troops: so much so that at certain points a hundred soldiers would be divided into three groups each commanded by a general."\textsuperscript{157} Sosnkowski also reinforced Warsaw's defenders. Recruits went from Warsaw directly to the front line. Kossakowski described the scene:

\begin{quote}
The units march out; one of them composed of a thousand women, and all are young, many with handsome, distinguished faces, the crowd throws flowers and old men raise their hats high above their heads, from misty eyes many tears fall. Leaving are units, which according to height, start with tall youths running to ranks of pygmies who cannot be more than 12.\textsuperscript{158}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{156} Pilsudski, \textit{Year 1920}, 158.


\textsuperscript{158} Diariusz Kossakowskiego, 12 sierpnia 1920 r., APAN, Akta Kossakowskiego, cont. 5, part 2, fol. 97.
For the defense of Warsaw an enormous amount of artillery as well as complements of tanks were found. The forces crowded into the capital's defenses thus acquired a great advantage over Tuchachevsky's--the Polish concentration of men and weapons there corresponded to First World War norms.\textsuperscript{159}

The Battle of Warsaw began on 12 August. Before Warsaw the Polish Army at last stood its ground and fought tenaciously. For four days bitter close-quarters fighting raged at the defenses at Radzymin and on the Wkra River. Distinguishing themselves in the fighting on the Wkra were the intellectuals of the Volunteer Division, which Sikorski the officer commanding in that sector called "the terror of the Russians."\textsuperscript{160} Polish forces were much heartened by Sosnkowski's opposition to the evacuation of Warsaw and the subsequent decision of the government to remain in Warsaw as the battle raged in the suburbs.\textsuperscript{161} On 16 July with Tukhachevsky's entire force heavily engaged before Warsaw, Pilsudski launched the attack from the Wieprz. The attacking armies swept away all before them, driving Bolshevik forces into internment in East Prussia or far to the East in a matter of days. The Poles then turned on Budenny's Konarmiya in the South. After a month of fighting the enemy force was wrecked and driven beyond the Zbrucz River. Operations against what remained of Tukhachevsky's armies resumed in the second half of September. By the start of October the Polish Army had regained the Niemen and for good measure had seized Vilnius from the Lithuanians, to whom the city had been handed over after its capture by the Red Army in summer.


\textsuperscript{160} Quoted in Davies, \textit{White Eagle}, 202.

\textsuperscript{161} Żeligowski, \textit{Wojna w roku 1920}, 80.
Sosnkowski’s labors of summer, especially those of August, contributed signally to the war-winning and war-ending victories of August and September. Polish leaders and foreign observers recognized his role. In a few short months he had clearly restored the Polish Army, reeling from defeat on all fronts. In summer the Ministry of Military Affairs provided the army at the front with a new calvary division, an infantry division, 172,000 officers and men, 70 batteries of artillery, 200 replacement cannon, 1,000 machine guns, 124 aircraft and 97 million rifle rounds. At the same time about 140,000 conscripts were mobilized and 80,000 volunteers inducted. At the high point of the Polish-Soviet War nearly 1,000,000 Poles were under arms. What is more the Polish Army that stood its ground before Warsaw was once again a spirited and cohesive fighting force. The volunteer units sent to the front contributed substantially to this psychological turnaround. Sikorski recalled that they "constituted an unfailing moral cement for the regiments [which defended Warsaw]."

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CHAPTER V

PEACE AND POLITICS, 1920-1926

One thing is enough to make Poland impossible to subjugate, namely, love of the fatherland and liberty . . . To work, then, with all your zeal and with never a moment's pause, to raise each Polish heart to the highest level of patriotism!

Jean-Jacques Rousseau
Considerations on the Government of Poland

Although at the high point of the Polish-Soviet War the Polish Army numbered nearly 1.1 million officers and men and showed itself a formidable fighting force, the work of building the army was far from complete. The force had no permanent structure, no recruitment mechanism, no regulations governing the life and work of its officers and men, and insufficient arms and equipment.

The end of the war ushered in a new period, which Government and Army described as a "new period of work on the construction of the foundations of the state," one of the most important being the army.1 The work of building the Polish Army coincided with its transition to a peacetime footing. Under Sosnkowski this transition was both the occasion for and took the form of a broad effort to establish a lasting system of national defense based upon the twin pillars of

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1 "Nowy Rok," Rzęd i wojsko, 2 Jan. 1921, 1 and 4.

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a modern army embodying the philosophy of the nation-in-arms and now of a system of foreign alliances.

Economic crisis and international uncertainty both served as brakes to Sosnkowski’s work building a lasting system of national defense, in the years after the Polish-Soviet War. Nevertheless great strides were made toward the Polish Army’s organizational and doctrinal development and toward the creation of a system of foreign alliances. Having a much more harmful impact, however, was internal political strife. Although Sosnkowski tirelessly strove to keep the army safe from politics and even to build unity among warring parties, he along with the army was a prominent casualty of political battles between Pilsudski and the National Democrats.

The end of the Polish-Soviet War was as abrupt as its beginning was subtle. Talks with the Bolsheviks, broken off during the Polish counter-offensive, resumed on 21 September in Riga, Latvia. Polish and Bolshevik negotiators, eager for peace, signed an armistice on 12 October and a final settlement, the Treaty of Riga, on 18 March 1921. The transition to a peacetime organization began just as suddenly as the Polish-Soviet war ended. Even as the Polish Army raced victorious across the Kresy, Poland’s eastern borderlands, Sosnkowski initiated demobilization. His abrupt, even hasty decision owed more to circumstances than a desire to get on with the work of state building. By the start of September 1920, Sosnkowski had become convinced that further prosecution of the war was impossible and that the behemoth war machine must be immediately dismantled. While motivated in part by the prevalent war-weariness and political strife, Sosnkowski was most mindful of the state’s economic and financial straits. At the end of the Polish-Soviet War Poland was on the verge of economic and financial ruin. In 1920 and for much of the 1920s the Polish economy was in a deep depression. State revenues never matched spending. In 1920 spending outpaced revenues by 500 percent, and the state had budget deficit of 54 billion Polish marks. It also had an enormous external debt; to France alone it owed 800
million francs. The state’s efforts to finance this debt by increasing the circulation of currency caused runaway inflation. In 1920 the value of the Polish mark fell from 110 to the U.S. dollar to 590. In these circumstances the chief concern of political leaders was putting the republic’s house in order financially. As early as August 1920 finance ministers sought to impose economies on the armed forces. The economic crisis was further brought home to Sosnkowski by the state’s inability to provision the army in autumn. On 16, 17, and 18 September he sponsored a conference of ministry officials to consider savings in army finances, in order to rescue the country from “financial ruin,” and in November he reduced purchases abroad, despite considerable need and the availability of credits.

Demobilization was first considered on 30 August at a conference of War Ministry and High Command representatives sponsored by the Organization-Mobilization Department. Although the conference reached no decision, setting out only guidelines and competencies, Sosnkowski nevertheless began to send troops home. Students and volunteers were the first to go in September and early October. On 13 October another conference on demobilization attended by all cabinet ministers as well as military leaders produced a preliminary plan for demobilization, which Sosnkowski presented to the Council of Ministers on 27 November. Eager to reduce the burden to the treasury, the council ratified it on 9 December. The scheme sanctioned the discharge of students and volunteers and called for the demobilization of the oldest

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4 M.S.Wojsk., Oddz. IV, Protokół z konferencji w sprawie obecnego stanu gospodarki wojskowej, [Warsaw], 16, 17 and 18 Sept. 1920, and M.S.Wojsk., memorandum, Warsaw, 21 Nov. 1920, CAW, Akta Wicemin., I.300.2., conts. 11 and 20. Of 425 million francs in French credits made available to the Polish Army during the war only 410 were utilized. Zbigniew Landau, Polskie zagraniczne pożyczki państwowe, 1918-1926 (Warsaw, 1961), 50.
and youngest men under arms, the classes of or those born between 1890 and 1895 and in 1902. For the time being the classes of 1896 and 1901 were to remain in the ranks. Although the plan stipulated that the army was not to fall below 400,000 officers and men, a ministry report of 7 December indicates that the interim complement was set at 500,000.\footnote{For demobilization plans see "Z Ministerstwa Spraw Wojskowych," \textit{Monitor Polski}, 15 October 1920; Protokóły 107-go i 114-go posiedzenia Rady Ministrów R.P., 27 Nov. and 9 Dec. 1920, AAN, Akta Rady Min., part I, vol. 12, fol. 359-60 and 430-1; and M.S.Wojsk., Dept. II, report, Demobilizacja rezerwowa, Warsaw, 7 Dec. 1920, CAW, Akta Oddz. IV N.D., cont. I.301.11.25.}

This complement was necessary because the threat of renewed fighting never appeared far off. The first complete drafts, those born in 1901 and 1902, were sent home on 29 October. By 14 December nearly 250,000 men had been discharged, and by 1 March 1921 the number approached half a million. After the signing of the Riga Treaty demobilization was pursued to is completion: in the course of 1921 the ministry discharged the classes of 1896, 1897, 1898 and 1899 one by one; recruits born in 1900 and 1901 were retained for the army's initial peacetime cadre. Through the end of November, 317,813 officers and men were demobilized. By 1 December the army numbered only 259,445.\footnote{M.S.Wojsk., Oddz. I, report, Warsaw, 14 Dec. 1920, CAW, Akta Oddz. I M.S.Wojsk., I.300.7., cont. 113 and Przesłanie zestawień cyfrowych beztermin. urlop., Warsaw, 19 April 1921, CAW, Akta Oddz. I N.D., I.301.7., cont. 149. See also Woszczyski, \textit{Ministerstwo}, 227-8.}

Demobilization was such a pressing need that it began without the existence of any scheme for the army's peacetime organization. Only in early 1921 did such a scheme emerge. Polish scholars led by Edward Krawczyk have asserted that the army's peacetime organization initially grew out of plans, which were formulated by a special commission established in late 1920 by Piłsudski.\footnote{Edward Krawczyk, \textit{Demobilizacja i pokojowa organizacja Wojska Polskiego} (Warsaw, 1971), 141-2. See also Stawecki, \textit{Polityka wojskowa}, 64.}
existed. Documents released by the Polish Interior Ministry in 1989 reveal that the army's War Council (Rada Wojenna) was created in October 1920 rather than early the next year with the Piłsudski’s decree of 7 January, as is commonly held, and Krawczyk appears to have taken the council for a more specialized body considering the peacetime organization. Although within its purview, the council produced no organizational or other plans and only commented on ministry projects. Authorship of the plans governing the transition to a peacetime footing, rather, must be ascribed to Sosnkowski. In November and December 1920 Sosnkowski turned to this question and by February and early March of the following year, a design had crystallized. It was enshrined in the *Programmatic Expose of the Minister of Military Affairs (Ekspose programowe Ministra Spraw Wojskowych)*, presented to the Sejm on 8 March 1921.8

Sosnkowski’s plans were sweeping. They did not simply attempt to fix a complement and operational organization commensurate with the needs of a state in peacetime, but put forward a permanent, integrated system of national defense. This was his intention as he declared in December 1920: "Before the army there opens a period of intense organizational work, having as [its] aim establishing a lasting system of state defense."9 Broadly speaking, Sosnkowski proposed to found Poland’s defenses on two pillars: a large army resting on the philosophy of the nation-in-arms, and alliances with France and the states of East Central Europe.

The chief pillar--"a wall of bayonets"--was the more important of the two. Sosnkowski favored first a force of 24 four-regiment infantry divisions, then chose one of 30 three-regiment

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8 M.S.Wojsk., Biuro Prezydjalne, *Ekspose programowe Ministra Spraw Wojskowych*, Warsaw, 8 March 1921, CAW, Akta Oddz. I, 1.301.7, cont. 146. Also reflecting military leaders’ plans, but a document of an altogether character, was a mobilization report drafted later, in 1921. Ogólne dane o mobilizacji Armii Polskiej w roku 1922 art. rozkazu Szefa Sztabu Generalnego, nd., JPI, AAGNW, cont. 108/44-51.

divisions, with nine cavalry brigades. Sosnkowski proposed that combat forces be divided into ten corps of three infantry divisions and one cavalry brigade. The force's peacetime or standing complement was to be 17,000 officers and 275,000 men. France, with twice the population and resources of Poland, had an army of 419,000. The German Reichswehr was limited by the 1919 Versailles settlement to 100,000. The wartime establishment of the army was not fixed in the Expose, but mobilization plans from 1921 projected a strength of 1.2 million. Sosnkowski's plans called for a three-fold personnel organization. It was to consist of standing or active-duty forces, a reserve and militia. The peacetime, active-duty forces were to consist of professional officers and noncommissioned officers and two classes of conscripts, a new one enrolled each year. The standing force would lead the defense of the state in time of war. In peacetime it was to be a school to instruct the nation in its defense, one class at a time, passing them to the reserve at regular intervals. The reserve and militia were to support the first-line forces. The Expose did not treat the organization of reserve and militia forces. Mobilization plans reveal that they were not to be organized in discreet units; only in wartime were they to be fed into first-line units or organized into additional formations. Sosnkowski posited a two-year universal military service obligation. He also called for 27 years' service in the reserve and militia.

In November 1920 Sosnkowski ordered the formation of a Twenty-Third Division (the twenty-second was the Volunteer Division created in Summer) from reserve formations, and in mid-December a Twenty-Fourth from the Siberian Brigade, the last unit formed abroad to be repatriated. The latter was given a three-regiment organization. M.S.Wojsk., Oddz. I, order, Sformowanie 23 rezerwowej dyw. piech., Warsaw, 30 Nov. 1920 and Sformowanie syb. dyw. piech., 20 December 1920, CAW, Akta Oddz. IV N.D., I.301.12., cont. 25 and 29. A draft military convention with France, prepared in early 1921 by the Polish War Ministry, put forward 30 divisions. Projet d'une Convention Militaire entre la Polongne et la France, nd., AAN, Akta Ambasady R.P. w Paryżu, cont. 109, fols. 77-9. See also M.S.Wojsk., Ekspose programowe, 8 March 1921, CAW, Akta Oddz. I, I.301.7, cont. 146.

Ibid and Ogólne dane o mobilizacji, JPI, AAGNW, cont. 108/44-51.
At this juncture there were other options open to the minister. He had the opportunity to depart from what had gone before and was free to chose to found the nation's defense on a small, professional force, as the United States and United Kingdom did and contemporary theorists such as de Gaulle and J.F.C. Fuller urged. However, the philosophy of the nation-in-arms continued to be the chief factor shaping Sosnkowski's plans. The experience of the Polish-Soviet War like that of the First World War heightened Polish military men's zeal for the nation-in-arms. "The history of recent world events," one theorist wrote in 1921, "shows that war is not prosecuted by an army alone, but that the whole nation takes part in."12 Poland's geopolitical position also influenced Sosnkowski. The Versailles and impending Riga Treaties illuminated, perhaps for the first time, the unchanged historic position of the country. The Polish Republic was sandwiched between the colossi of Germany and Russia, both of which Sosnkowski recognized were bent on revising the settlements, governing Poland's place in Europe. Their capacity to threaten Poland was great; the republic shared with them 3,385 km. of frontiers, most of which were not defensible. In light of this reality, Sosnkowski told the Sejm: "In wanting to maintain its independence . . . [Poland] must stand with arms at the ready, taking on in the transitional period burdens in relation to its economic and financial strength perhaps above normal."13

If the choice of a large force resting on the philosophy of the nation-in-arms was foreordained, the form it was to take was not. Many commentators favored a militia organization with a short-term or no active-service requirement like the Swiss'.14 Such a system had the

12 Waclaw Stachiewicz, "Kilka uwag o przygotowaniu narodu do wojny," Bellona, o.s. 5(1921):83. See also Franciszek Kleeberg, "Organizacja obrony państwa," Bellona, o.s. 7(1922):113-119.

13 M.S.Wojsk., Ekspose programowe, 8 March 1921, CAW, Akta Oddz. 1, I.301.7, cont. 146.

14 See for example, Korczak, "Żołnierz Polski: Wymaganie przyszłości," Rząd i wojsko, 20 June 1920, 7-8.
virtue of training more men, more quickly than others. States like France and Belgium, which also based their defenses on the nation-in-arms, were moving toward such an arrangement. France, in 1920, required only 18 months' active service and before the end of the decade, 12. The Netherlands required five. However, Polish recruits possessed little, if any education. Sosnkowski felt two years was the minimum necessary to train such conscripts and inculcate in them a national consciousness.13

The war minister did not merely propose to create a mighty and spirited steamroller. Sosnkowski and the Polish military leaders who were then engaged in building the army—Sikorski, Stanislaw Haller, Kukiel—placed great faith in firepower and material, which they hailed as decisive factors in battle. Several theorists prophesied a great role for artillery. They also foresaw the great role to be played in future wars by tanks and aircraft, aircraft especially. Polish leaders did not envision an independent role for military aviation in the style of Italian airpower theorist Guilo Douhet, however, they accorded it an integral role in combat, supporting ground troops. New ideas suffused these leaders thinking as well. The most important was an emphasis on maneuver and mobility. Polish military leaders, especially former Legionnaires schooled in the campaigns of Napoleon Bonaparte at Pilsudski's direction, were adherents of the attack and believers in spirit. Their belief in the importance of movement over positional warfare was reinforced by the experience of the Polish-Soviet War.16

Contemporary views on firepower, aircraft and maneuver were reflected in the projected army's force structure and doctrine. The primary arm was to be a heavily armed infantry. Second

13 M.S.Wojsk., Ekspose programowe, 8 March 1921, CAW, Akta Oddz. I, 1.301.7, cont. 146.
in importance and size was the artillery, which was to support the combat forces at the regiment, division and corps level. Cavalry was accorded only third place. Also, Sosnkowski's plans called for an air corps of 24 to 27 (14 reconnaissance, 8 interceptor and 2 to 5 bomber) squadrons. They also called for the expansion of armored forces, a heretofore ignored arm of one regiment and a collection of armored trains.\(^7\) Doctrine deeply concerned Sosnkowski as it did many other leaders. After the war the need for a doctrine to provide common tactical concepts, ensuring that various formations and arms worked together efficiently, became apparent. As early as December 1920, Sosnkowski turned to this problem, establishing an independent Regulation Commission to prepare and codify in field service regulations a unified doctrine.\(^8\) His *Exposé* proposed to give the army regulations to guide it in combats of all sorts. They were to be prepared "in general in the spirit of French regulations, with full cognizance of the experience of the First World War." He called upon the French Military Mission to assist in its formulation and nominated Spire for membership in the Regulations Commission. The experience of the Polish-Soviet War was to be embodied in the doctrine also.\(^9\)

Sosnkowski's plans devoted considerable attention to the Polish Army's officer corps. His designs proposed to create officers, who were capable of leading the army both morally and technically. A professional officer had to "possess a high spiritual culture and broad, deep and professional education," "know and understand all arms," and "be a specialist in a given area."\(^{10}\) The first order of business for Sosnkowski was to retain the officers with such qualifications who

\(^{17}\) M.S. Wojsk., *Ekspose programowe*, 8 March 1921, CAW, Atka Oddz. 1, I.301.7, cont. 146.


\(^{19}\) M.S. Wojsk., *Ekspose programowe*, 8 March 1921, CAW, Akta Oddz. I N.D., I.301.7., cont. 146.

were fleeing the army at the end of the war, mainly, he thought, because of their low standard of living and low social status. Assuring the army a pool of talent required an appropriate level of material well-being and some enhanced social standing. Sosnkowski, however, rejected giving officers a privileged status, believing it inimicable to democracy.

The second pillar of Poland's defenses was alliance with France and the states of East Central Europe. Although the insurrectionist's belief that the Poles alone had to bear the burden of Poland's defense lay at the heart of Sosnkowski's plans, he still recognized the importance of foreign help. This was brought home by the experience of the Polish-Soviet war, which Poland fought on its own and victory as a result was a near run thing. And victory did not bring security. The Treaty of Riga left many questions of Polish security unresolved. Few states, for example, rushed to recognize the agreement and Poland's eastern frontiers. Poland's isolation had to end.

As Sosnkowski put it:

One of the fundamental historical mistakes Poland [has made] has been its near eternal isolation; while other nations concluded offensive and defensive leagues, alliances and treaties, the old Respublica, fighting constantly for its existence, remained isolated and alone always. The mistakes of the past cost us too dearly to repeat them. Today, in a political situation uncertain and difficult in every way, Poland must weigh every threat and as well as every opportunity for effective resistance, reckoning with its own strength and the strength of its natural allies.

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21 Ibid. In this period the existence of officers was fragile. An army captain received 41,480 Polish marks monthly, but the cost of living approached 57,000 marks. Sosnkowski, speech, 21 Feb. 1922, Sprawozdanie Stenograficzne Sejmu Ustawodawczego, CCLXXXVII/42. The low status, on the other hand, was largely perceived. Officers' social standing was on the whole favorable. Jerzy Wiatr, The Soldier and the Nation: The Role of the Military in Polish Politics, 1918-1985 (Boulder, 1988) 22.

22 M.S.Wojsk., Ekspose programowe, 8 March 1921, CAW, Akta Oddz. I, I.301.7, cont. 146. See also Romer, Pamiętniki, 277.

23 M.S.Wojsk., Ekspose programowe, Warsaw, 8 March 1921, CAW, Akta Oddz. I, I.301.7, cont. 146.
Most important in Sosnkowski's plans was alliance with France. Polish military leaders began
to advocate alliance with France in late 1920, and by the time Sosnkowski's plans were fully
articulated the French alliance was almost a reality. Other possible allies were not ignored, either.
Concerned chiefly with the security of Poland's eastern frontier, Sosnkowski called for the
conclusion of political alliances and military conventions with Romania, Finland, Latvia and
Estonia.24 He omitted Czechoslovakia from his list, most likely because Poland's southern
neighbor did not share a border with the Soviet Union, and also much ill will, especially in the
Pilsudski camp, lingered in the aftermath of the Teschen dispute.

Sosnkowski moved to realize his plans at once, in some cases even before he fully
articulated his plans. Continuing to assist Sosnkowski and ministry officials were members of the
French Military Mission, now under the command of General Alfred Niessel who replaced Henrys
in late 1920. Also playing an important role in the work of building the Polish Army were the
chiefs of the General Staff: Sikorski, who replaced Rozwadowski in April 1921, and Stanisław
Haller, who returned to this post in in June 1923. Sikorski was one of the most progressive
officers of the day, and his views closely matched those of Sosnkowski. Haller, too, shared
Sosnkowski's views on the nation-in-arms and foreign alliance.25 The General Staff was subordi­
nated to the War Ministry after the High Command was dismantled in the course of demobiliza­
tion. The ministry itself was reorganized in July 1921. Based on French models and formulated
with input from the French Mission, the new ministry structure divided its executive and
programmatic tasks between the General Staff, a new Administration Command (Szefostwo

24 M.S.Wojsk., Ekspose programowe, 8 March 1921, CAW, Akta Oddz. I N.D., l.301.7., cont.
146.

25 For Sikorski's views see Władysław Sikorski, Przyszła wojna, jej możliwości i charakter
oraz związane z nią zagadnienia obrony kraju (Warsaw, 1934), in English Modern Warfare (New
York, 1943). Haller's views on Poland's defenses are contained in Stanisław Haller, Naród i
armia (Cracow, 1926).
Administracji) that managed supply and armaments, a Military Controller, and departments corresponding to individual arms and services.\textsuperscript{26}

In the first years of peace Sonkowski devoted the greater part of his attention to attaining the army that was the cornerstone of his plans. In part this effort required a thorough reorganization and expansion of existing forces, an effort that commenced on 22 August 1921 and was completed, in phases, by 30 November.\textsuperscript{27} In essence existing formations were broken up, their constituent units being used as the basis for new units. Because the forces on hand fell short of those projected, several units had to be created, among them three mounted rifle, seven field artillery and three engineer regiments, several heavy artillery batteries, a number of aero squadrons and 10 tank battalions.\textsuperscript{28} In 1921 and 1922 the ministry worked to make good these deficiencies.

The reorganization of 1921 created an army of thirty infantry divisions and ten cavalry brigades, instead of the nine proposed earlier. They were distributed evenly among ten military districts (the tenth, Przemyśl was created on 22 August 1921) organized as Corps Command Districts (Dowództwa Okręgu Korpusu). (The corps organization, however, was more apparent than real. Only at war's outbreak were these to be constituted, and no provision was made for this.) The clumsy four-regiment infantry division was discarded for a fleet three-regiment unit. Operational formations remained powerful, however. Each regiment counted 1,600 officers and


\textsuperscript{27} Only a portion of the order, which included 37 appendices, exists. M.S.Wojsk., Sztab Gen., Oddz. I, Przejście Sił Zbrojnych na organizację pokojową, Warsaw, 1921, CAW, Akta Dowództwa Okręgu Korpusu VIII (Poznań), I.371.8, cont. 82. A summary can be found in D.O.G. Pomorze, Ogólne zasady pokojowe organizacji siły zbrojnej, Grudziądz, 15 October 1921, CAW, Akta P.K.U. Lipno, I.374.19., cont. 1.

men. Also, they were well supported. One field artillery regiment was assigned to each division. The three divisions and one brigade of each corps were assigned mounted rifle, heavy artillery and sapper regiments, one or more aero squadrons, and a tank battalion. The infantry was the chief arm of this force. It was 45 percent of the army's strength and was not to fall below 100,425 officers and men. The artillery establishment, 48,332, was second only to the infantry. Cavalry took third place, its establishment governed by a three-to-one ratio of infantrymen to cavalrymen.29 This structure was close to that of Western armies of the First World War.

Although the new organization created a force closely resembling the one in Sosnkowski's plans, it fell short of the force he wanted in several respects. In 1921 the ministry was able to bring the cavalry arm up to strength, but could not do the same for the artillery, especially in regard to heavy artillery, of which the Poles possessed little. Moreover, existing artillery units and the few created in 1921 and 1922 were poorly equipped, so much so that Brigadier General Leon Berbecki later recalled that at this time "the Polish Army did not possess modern tanks, artillery, anti-tank and anti-aircraft guns at all."30 The situation in the air and tank services was worse. In mid-1921 existing air units were given a new operational organization, grouped in battalions in three regiments. At this time tank forces were reorganized and poised for expansion, also. The tank corps, in addition, received its own inspectorate, Sosnkowski noted, "because of the importance of tanks in contemporary military tactics, and especially with regard to the necessity of guaranteeing the proper growth of tank formations."31 However, little was

29 Stawecki, Polityka wojskowa, 68.
30 Leon Berbecki, Pamiętniki (Katowice, 1959), 185.
31 M.S.Wojsk., order, "Stanowisko Inspektora Czołgów w Dept. 1," Warsaw, 11 October 1921, Dziennik rozkazów M.S.Wojsk., 1921, no. 21, dotatek tajny, item 178, 228.
accomplished beyond this. The tank corps, in fact, saw the establishment of its three battalions reduced as a result of attrition.

Sosnkowski's ambitious reorganization plan could be carried out fully if the army received vast appropriations, but the reality of 1921 and 1922 was a drastic reduction in the army's share of the budget with outlays falling more than half to 36 percent of state expenditures.\textsuperscript{32} In this time of economic crisis finance ministers eclipsed the war minister in government counsels. Finance ministers sought to order state finances in great measure by reducing spending, and the chief target of cuts was the army.\textsuperscript{33} In July 1921 the Council of Ministers resolved that hard-currency purchases be reduced to a minimum, and in November Finance Minister Jerzy Michalski conducted a thoroughgoing review of army finances. Sosnkowski understood the importance of ordering the republic's finances. At a ministry conference devoted to savings, he said: "The army is a consumer and recipient of three quarters of the state's means and revenues, and there can be no doubt, that if we do not add to military victory, an economic victory, the first will be a victory only in name." Even before the ministerial review, in early 1921, Sosnkowski ordered war ministry officials and commanders to find ways to economize, threatening to suggest cuts to the finance minister himself if they were unable to do so. He reiterated this order in the fall of 1922.\textsuperscript{34} Sosnkowski perhaps had little choice. Had he pressed for substantial increases in outlays, it is likely that inflation would have rendered them useless, as it did the few appropriations for equipment that he did secure. In 1921 the entire sum voted for the purchase of uniforms

\textsuperscript{32} Krzyzanowski, \textit{Wydatki wojskowe}, 69-9.

\textsuperscript{33} Aleksander Litwinowicz, "Przemysł wojenny w okresie dwudziestolecia," \textit{Niepodległość}, n.s. 6(1958):152.

\textsuperscript{34} "Z Ministra Spraw Wojskowych," \textit{Monitor Polski}, 4 Nov. 1921, 2-3 and Minister Spraw Wojsk., order, Warsaw, 23 April 1921, Akta Wicemin., 1.300.2., cont. 18.
and other equipment, 1.7 billion Polish marks, was used to supplement ordinary outlays before the year’s end.35

Reorganization and expansion were but one facet of the larger effort Sosnkowski undertook in order to realize his goals; one other aspect of his drive to create a lasting system of defense was implementing a legislative program to breathe life into the concept of the nation-in-arms. The linchpin of this program was a law on universal military service. In late 1920 or early 1921 the ministry prepared a draft law on universal military service. The bill was presented to the War Council and then the Council of Ministers, winning approval on 8 March and 3 November respectively. Sosnkowski himself presented the bill to the Sejm, calling it "the first foundation of the edifice of a national army."36 The bill aroused much controversy. Article 61 of the Constitution of 17 March 1922, which was then still under discussion, provided for universal military service, but the term of service and the size of the force the bill dictated caused much concern. The Socialist Liebermann denounced Sosnkowski’s bill the day it was introduced, charging it might foster militarism. Others followed, asserting the bill might create too large and costly an army. They denounced as well "the militarist, the terrible Sosnkowski." Socialists in the thrall of Jean Jaures’ militia Armée Nouvelle wanted the term of active service reduced to one year of training or less.37 The bill’s progress was slow and it did not come up for a vote before the Constituent Sejm dissolved to make way for a new legislature provided for by the 17 March Constitution. The bill had to be reintroduced in 1923 and the process begun anew.

36 Sosnkowski, speech, 10 January 1922, Sprawozdanie stenograficzne Sejmu Ust., CCLXXVI/12.
When it finally passed in 1924 the universal military service law gave the army the form
and structure Sosnkowski proposed. Sejm Military Affairs Commission Chairman Antoni Anusz
called it "an army constitution." The law made the Polish Army a truly national force which
rested on the philosophy of the nation-in-arms. The law provided for two years of active service,
17 years in the reserves and 10 years in the militia. The bill, however, provided for a shortened
active-duty stint if a recruit possessed a complete secondary education. Service was truly
universal. All male citizens, regardless of nationality, station or creed, were obligated to serve.
Under this law conscription was extended to Poland's minorities. The law assigned the
responsibility for conscription to the Interior Ministry. Each year a single class was drafted. The
law allowed for service by women, but in the interwar period no women actually served in the
Polish Army.

Sosnkowski intended to complement a law on universal military service with one on the
army's complement. Such a law was to fix the army's strength, and Sosnkowski placed great
importance on this bill. Work on it began in spring 1921, and in summer the minister promised
the Sejm that the bill was forthcoming. However, it did not make its way to the Council of
Ministers or Sejm. The bill was referred to the Treasury Ministry in January 1922, and there
it languished, for reasons that are unclear. It is likely that treasury ministers refused to sanction
so great a force, while the republic's fortunes were as yet clouded. The absence of a law on the
army's complement meant that the army did not attain the 275,000-man complement projected.

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39 M.S.Wojsk., Ustawa o powszechnym obowiązku służby wojskowej, Warsaw, 26 Nov. 1921,
CAW, Akta Wicemin., I.300.2., cont. 29.
40 "Sejm Ustawodawczy," Monitor Polski, 7 June 1921, 3.
41 "Z Ministra Spraw Wojskowych," Monitor Polski, 7 March 1922, 2.
However, the law on universal military service ensured that the army's strength approached this. After its passage the army's establishment never fell below 260,700 officers and men.\footnote{Stawecki, \textit{Polityka wojskowa}, 69.}

Complementing reorganization efforts and legislation were training and education. With peace the army's role as a school for the nation came to the fore. In a speech to the Sejm Sosnkowski said: "the whole of my efforts are that the Polish Army always be trained for war, that it does not descend into the bureaucratic passivity of peacetime [and] that it never forget the real aim of its existence." On 16 February 1921, Sosnkowski ordered all units at the front and at home to take up their peacetime instructional tasks, and later that spring he initiated an army-wide program of intensive remedial instruction to make good the deficiencies in soldiers' preparation. More importantly, in September the ministry introduced a permanent peacetime training program for enlisted men.\footnote{M.S.Wojsk., Oddz. III, Unormowanie toku służby w wojsku, Warsaw, 16 Feb. 1921, CAW, Akta Oddz. III M.S.Wojsk., 1.300.8., cont. 9; M.S.Wojsk., Sztab, Oddz. I., order, Warsaw, 5 April 1921, Akta Oddz. I Nacz. Dow., 1.301.7., cont. 146; and M.S.Wojsk., Sztab Gen., Oddz. III, Rozkaz o programach wyszkolenia broni głównych i wojsk taborowych na czas 1921/1922, Warsaw, 19 Sept. 1921, CAW, Akta Dept. Piechoty, 1.300.28., cont. 58.}

As in previous years training and education served not merely to raise effectiveness but also to form an intelligent and spirited soldiery. And, as in the past, the focus was combatting illiteracy, which was estimated to affect an alarmingly high 40 percent of enlisted men.\footnote{Some units reported 80 percent were illiterate. M.S.Wojsk., Sztab, Oddz. III, Meldunek w sprawie pracy kulturalno-oświatowej, Warsaw, 6 May 1921, JPI, AAGNW, cont. XIII/8022.} Educational programs were revamped and strengthened. On 14 March 1922 the war minister issued comprehensive guidelines for education in the army.\footnote{M.S.Wojsk., \textit{Instrukcja o przymusowem nauczaniu żołnierzy} (Warsaw, 1922), 3 ff.} Combatting
illiteracy permeated all training. In an order on combat training Sosnkowski stated: "The ambition of each unit must be that no soldier leaves the ranks illiterate."46

The peacetime training program introduced in September 1921 established a two-year cycle of training. It called for basic training and beginning instruction in the ways of a particular arm in the first year, and in the second soldiers received specialized training.47 Many soldiers received substantial additional schooling. The 1922 educational guidelines created a year-long course for illiterate and semi-literate recruits that was coordinated with the public schools' calendar and began in November. For the first five months student recruits received ten hours of weekly instruction and for the second seven months two to three hours. The program embraced Polish (380 hours), mathematics (290), Polish History (165) and geography (75). It also included "the study of contemporary Poland" in order to assist in preparing students for active public life in society and the state." Recruits from Poland's minorities not knowing Polish were treated as illiterates and completed the entire course. Educational work was carried out by specially trained personnel. New pedagogical courses were created and soldier-teachers recruited from the educated in the ranks.48

In 1921 and 1922, Sosnkowski gave the army an operational doctrine. By early 1921 the Regulations Commission had produced guidelines governing operations of the army as a whole and of various combat arms. On 3 February, Sosnkowski introduced these to "fix for the armed forces of the republic a uniform tactical doctrine, unifying the principles, methods and guidelines,

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48 M.S.Wojsk., Instrukcja o przymusowem nauczaniu, 3 ff.
according to which they will live, march and fight. The most important were the *Field Service Regulations* (*Regulamin służby polowej*). The 1921 *Regulations*, which remained in effect until 1930, was the fundamental document—the "Bible"—governing operations. In March 1921 special informational courses staffed by French officers were established to familiarize officers and noncommissioned officers with the new doctrine. By autumn nearly 6,000 officers had completed these and others. Officers were tested on the *Field Service Regulations* as well as those of the arm, in which they served. The introduction of the new regulations was complemented by the work of French Colonel Louis Faury, director of instruction at the War College. Faury produced an instructional program, the *General Tactical Principles* (*Zasady taktyki ogólnej*), incorporating the new doctrine.

The 1921 *Field Service Regulations* and Faury’s *General Tactical Principles* fused French and Polish ideas. This fusion is clearly seen in the relationship between their twin themes: firepower and movement. Like French doctrine, the Polish accorded firepower preponderance. Artillery was given a role second only to the infantry. The *Regulations* posited a battle similar to the *Materielschlacht* of the Western Front. Combat was to be preceded by artillery bombardment. The battle itself was to see the firepower of the units of all arms cooperate to obliterate opposing forces. The 1921 *Regulations*, however, departed from French doctrine. Few Polish officers were enamored of the positional battles the French favored, and Sosnkowski and Polish leader were adherents of the offensive and of maneuver. In contrast to the French, the Polish was an offensive doctrine. The *Regulations* stated, “Only the forward advance leads to

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49 M.S.Wojsk., Sztab, Oddz. III, Rozkaz o wprowadzenie w życie podstawowych regulaminów broni i służb, Warsaw, 3 Feb. 1921, CAW, Akta Oddz. III M.S.Wojsk., 1.300.8., cont. 9.


victory." These two themes were wedded by cooperation between the combat arms. Infantry, artillery, cavalry, air units and tank units, infantry and artillery in particular, were to cooperate in battle: "Close cooperation of infantry either with artillery alone, tanks alone or tanks and artillery [together] is the fundamental condition of victory." The slogan of the army at this time was: "Cooperation, cooperation and cooperation!"

The immensely difficult task of moving and coordinating heavy weapons and large units created an extremely complex problem of command and control. The primary method for enabling the commander to coordinate developments on the battlefield was seen as planning just as in France. The new Regulations posited a deployment in depth and a step-by-step movement of men and material forward before, during and after the battle. The instructions indicated the flow of battle by describing it as series of successive, discrete phases beginning with preparation, the combat itself and pursuit or retreat.

The 1921 Regulations called on aircraft and tanks to play an important, but still auxiliary role. Aircraft were tasked with reconnoitering, monitoring the effects of artillery bombardment and defending the ground forces from enemy aircraft. Tanks were called upon to support infantry in the attack, assisting in the reduction of the enemy with their firepower. Tanks were to be utilized only en masse and in the company of infantry. No armored spearhead was envisioned; the limited range and fragility of the models then in service precluded this. The Regulations noted in regard to defense against tanks: "Retreat before tanks spells doom." Cavalry also had a


53 M.S.Wojsk., Regulamin służby polowej, 184 and "Łączność, łączność i łączność," Polska zbrojna, 13 Sept. 1922.

54 M.S.Wojsk., Regulamin służby polowej, 192ff. The emphasis on planning is evident throughout.
circumscribed role. The 1921 Regulations treated it as glorified infantry: "Cavalry must reckon with modern firepower and learn to fight on foot in cooperation with artillery."\textsuperscript{55}

In the first years of peace Sosnkowski fashioned a corps of officers of broad outlook and education and superior professional preparation. Work here began in late 1920. To obtain the officer corps he desired Sosnkowski relied in part on demobilization. On his orders in December 1920 and again in spring 1921 elderly officers, officers too long in junior grades and "weak" elements were weeded out.\textsuperscript{56} Training and education, however, were the most important elements in fashioning the officer corps Sosnkowski desired. The first years of peace saw training for new officers revamped and supplementary training programs introduced to recast the existing corps.

In late October 1920 officers' training was regularized by the introduction of new, permanent training scheme. The scheme was prepared by the commission, headed by Jacyna and established in 1919 to produce such a project after studying training in France. The scheme established several prerequisites for officers' training. Although the chief quality of an officer, according to the order, was completion of high school education, Sosnkowski believed in "an open road for the talented," so the scheme allowed men of intelligence and ability without a high school education to enter the officer corps by completing a remedial course or passing an equivalency exam.\textsuperscript{57} A permanent General Education School for Noncommissioned Officers was founded

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., 186-90.


\textsuperscript{57} Action here was in part motivated by the need to make good losses the officer corps suffered as a result of demobilization and flight to civilian professions. Before the end of 1921 11,170 officers had been demobilized. Bolesław Woszczyński, "Kadra zawodowa oficerów w pierwszych latach niepodległości," MśW wojenkowa, 1968, no. 9, 83. In subsequent years a high proportion of Polish officers came from the ranks. In 1926 of 91 newly promoted subalterns 41 came from the ranks. Franciszek Kusiak, Życie codzienne oficerów Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej
offering remedial or equivalency high school courses so noncommissioned officers and enlisted men could qualify for Officer Candidates School. The new training scheme dictated that all officer candidates complete a common one-year course at the army’s Officer Candidates School, which embraced basic and infantry subaltern training. After completing it candidates proceeded to the officers’ school of a particular arm or service for specialized training. The scheme called for further training throughout an officers’ career at the General Staff Academy which was renamed the Superior War College (Wyższa Szkoła Wojenna) and given a two-year program in 1922; schools for brigade and division commanders; and specialized technical courses. It also provided for study at Polish universities as well as foreign institutions such as the Ecole Supérieure de guerre, France’s War College.

A broad program of supplemental training for the officers the army already possessed accompanied the introduction of a new training scheme. One focus of this program was raising junior and field grade officers to the very high standards, which the minister established. High school equivalency courses were established for officers, which met part time at night or in some cases full time. In addition, basic and specialized military training courses were established to augment the slim professional preparation of some. The program embraced field grade and general officers as well. In April 1921 Sosnkowski introduced a three-year round of intensive

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training courses for commanders, the first of which began in late May. Three-month-long Permanent Informational Courses for Senior Commanders were set up and made obligatory for division and brigade commanders, colonels marked for high command, and promising lieutenant colonels. Courses consisted of lectures, wargames, and terrain and gunnery exercises, and concluded with a tour of the kresy.61

Legislation complemented training and education. Sosnkowski was to enshrine in law the qualities of an officer as well as a standard of living and social status commensurate with his role in society. Sosnkowski put before the Sejm a variety of bills—on the fundamental obligations and rights of officers, on seniority, and on officers’ salaries. The most important was the bill on the obligations and rights of officers. It was among the first of Sosnkowski’s legislative initiatives, and a bill was readied in spring 1921. It rapidly traversed the Council of Ministers and the Sejm Military Affairs Commission, reaching the floor of the assembly in summer 1921, at which time its progress slowed. The reason was the bill’s controversial nature. Some argued it would turn the officer corps into a privileged caste. Far more divisive, however, was who was permitted to be an officer. Sosnkowski’s proposal dictated that an officer be a Polish citizen. The Military Affairs Commission, however, changed Polish citizen to "Pole." This triggered a debate between Socialist and Jewish deputies, on the one hand, and right-wing representatives, on the other. With Sosnkowski’s support, the former were able to reinstate the original wording.62 Despite the controversy, the bill enjoyed broad support. It was passed before the dissolution of the Constituent Sejm, becoming law on 23 March 1922.

61 Sosnkowski to de Henning-Michaelis, memorandum, Warsaw, 18 April 1921, CAW, Akta Wicemin., I.300.2., cont 19.

The Officers Law of 23 March 1922 made a high school education the prerequisite for entry into the corps. However, it allowed promotion from the ranks. It also established guidelines for promotion. Advancement was accorded in general on the basis of both seniority and merit. Promotion to colonel and higher, however, was only by merit. Provisions on advancement placed a premium on youthfulness. (This, in fact, led to the retirement of many senior commanders although they were not yet advanced in years.\(^6^3\)) Moreover, the law enhanced officers' standing in a number of ways. An officer's rank became his property, of which he could not be stripped except by a court martial or honor court. Officers were to marry only with ministry permission and were not to marry out of their station. Finally, the law provided officers with numerous allowances and benefits to supplement wages, which was in keeping with its stipulation that "officers are to be provided for such that they may fulfill their duties of their profession, devoting themselves exclusively to them, without worry for their daily existence."\(^6^4\)

Sosnkowski's determination to provide officers with a material well-being in keeping with their role in society, which found expression in the Officers Law, led to numerous clashes with treasury ministers in 1921 and 1922. Although the war minister was resigned to spending cuts, he drew the line, when these threatened the material well-being of officers. The chief threat to officers' living standards was inflation. Time and again it devalued officers' pay. Officers' suffered so badly in 1921 that Government and Army pronounced them "second-class citizens."\(^6^5\)


\(^6^4\) Ustawa o podstawowych obowiązkach i prawach oficerów Wojsk Polskich, 23 March 1923, Ustawy i rozporządzenia R.P., 1:284-93.

\(^6^5\) Roman Umiastowski, "Oficer--Obywatelem drugiej klasy w chwili obecnej," Rząd i wojsko, 5 June 1921, 12-14. Jacyna, now head of the Polish Military Mission in Paris, recalled that his lieutenant general's pay was not enough to allow him to buy a tuxedo for state occasions. Jacyna, 1918, 91.
Each time inflation ruined wages Sosnkowski moved to raise them or provide cost-of-living adjustments. Treasury Minister Michalski was not unsympathetic to the plight of officers, but he felt officers’ were coddled, questioned their many allowances and urged that their wages be brought into line with civilian functionaries. When Sosnkowski proposed a raise in pay or an adjustment, Michalski sought to block or scale it back. The two then clashed, often heatedly. On one occasion, in April 1992, Sosnkowski threatened and then submitted his resignation, if a cost of living adjustment was not approved. In this, as in other instances, it fell to the Council of Ministers to resolve the matter. The council sided with Sosnkowski and prevailed upon him to withdraw his resignation. Council members ordinarily sided with Sosnkowski, for they shrank from the harsh medicine Michalski doled out.

Work on the Polish Army was accompanied by labors to construct a system of alliances. Although diplomacy was the province of the foreign minister, Polish military leaders, especially Sosnkowski, actively pursued alliances with France and the states of East Central Europe and played an important role in foreign affairs. Due to their work, in 1921 and 1922, an impressive system of alliances took shape. At the heart of this system was alliance with France.

Polish military leaders approached the French with a proposal for an alliance already in late 1920. According to French diplomat Jules Laroche, on 25 November the vice minister of military affairs, Major General Edward de Henning-Michaelis, sent Niessel a proposal for a military convention. On 1 January 1921 Sosnkowski himself took the matter up with the Frenchman. The War Ministry’s overtures were seconded by those of Foreign Minister

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Eustachy Sapieha. The Quai d’Orsay initially responded to Polish overtures with reserve, but French leaders soon showed themselves eager to conclude an alliance. In an order of 15 December Sosnkowski revealed: "For both states, France and Poland, there approaches a period of close cooperation in the form of a mutual agreement on military-political relations." In part the change of attitude stemmed from the British government’s increasingly pro-German stance. Also, supporters of a barrier to restrain German militarism and Bolshevism were among the most important leaders. Foch and Weygand were cool toward Poland, but President Millerand, War Minister Louis Barthou, Chief of the General Staff General Edmond Buat and Foreign Minister Aristide Briand favored alliance. On 28 December Pilsudski was invited to Paris to exchange views and negotiate political and economic agreements.

Accompanied by Sapieha and Sosnkowski, the Polish head of state visited Paris in February 1921, and quickly arrived at a modus vivendi with French leaders. In conversations between Polish and French leaders on the evening of 5 February, conversations which excluded Foch and Weygand, they agreed that the two governments should immediately conclude political, military and economic conventions. Two days later Pilsudski departed, leaving Sapieha and Sosnkowski to negotiate, respectively, the political and the military agreements. Many details remained to be worked out. Polish leaders sought recognition of Poland’s eastern frontiers, which then were still being negotiated in Riga. They also wanted concrete commitments for Poland’s defense in the event of war with Germany and the Soviet Union. A draft military convention, which Sosnkowski prepared, called for a declaration of war from one if the other was attacked by

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Germany. In the event of war with the Soviet Union, France was obliged to protect Poland from Germany and enter the conflict on the Polish side later. France also was to ensure that Poland's maritime communications remained secure. Finally, France was to provide a loan sufficient to purchase of arms and equipment for 30 divisions and a six-month reserve of ammunition.\footnote{Projet d'une Convention Militaire entre la Pologne et la France, nd., AAN, Akta Ambasady R.P. w Paryżu, cont. 109, fols. 77-9.}

French leaders, although desirous of an alliance directed at Germany and a barrier against Bolshevism, sought to preserve as much freedom as possible, especially in regard to involvement in the East. Foch, who now came to play a role, opposed any commitment until Poland's frontiers were established, internal stability prevailed and army reorganized. Also, the French wanted important economic concessions.

In negotiations Sapieha was singularly unsuccessful in advancing Polish policy having to settle on 19 February for an agreement that allowed both sides a broad measure of freedom in interpreting its provisions and that neither contained concrete provisions for mutual defense nor recognized Poland's eastern borders. The agreement provided only for "an engagement to concert" on questions of international policy, economic cooperation, concerted action in the event of unprovoked aggression against one or the other, and consultation before the conclusion of agreements relating to Eastern Europe.\footnote{Political Agreement Between France and Poland Signed in Paris on February 19, 1921, \textit{League of Nations Treaty Series}, 18(1923), 12.}

Sosnkowski fared much better in negotiating the military convention. His proposal pledged Poland to maintain in peacetime an army of 30 divisions and to deploy 20 against Germany in wartime. This went far to assuage French doubts about French partnership with
Poland. Sosnkowski, businesslike and fluent in French, impressed Foch; more important, he impressed those who favored alliance. Foch was not so enamored of Sosnkowski that he did not tender proposals, which limited France’s obligations, but Briand overruled him. The military convention signed in tandem with the political agreement pledged each party to aid the other in the event of war with Germany (art. 1). France promised to provide aid and secure Polish communications in a conflict with Germany or the Soviet Union (art. 2 and 3); but its was not bound to join a war with Russia or send troops. "The wording of 1921 was the very maximum," wrote Sosnkowski later, "which one could stipulate in those fluid conditions." An annex to the convention agreed upon two days later, provided for a loan to arm and equip Polish forces. Sosnkowski requested 685 million francs, but in talks with French Treasury Minister Paul Doumer and political and financial leaders 400 million francs was agreed upon.

The Polish Army was unable to immediately taste the fruits of Sosnkowski’s last accomplishment, due to clauses in both the political and military agreements which made them binding only after the conclusion of economic treaties. The French were interested in bilateral commercial and oil conventions. Proposals put forward by the French called for granting France most favored nation status, additional special tariff reductions, free export of East Galician oil and more. Although Polish leaders were dismayed by the one-sided nature of the French proposals,

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74 In the event of war with both Germany and the Soviet Union the bulk of Polish forces were to be deployed in the East, however. Projet d’une Convention Militaire, nd., AAN, Akta Ambasady w Paryżu, cont. 109, fol. 77-9.

75 Sapieha to Witos, 13 Feb. 1921, AAN, Akta Ambasady w Paryżu, cont. 109, fol. 34.


77 Francesco Tommasini, Odrodzenie Polski (Warsaw, 1928) and Sosnkowski to Piotr Wandycz, Arundal, 15 Nov. 1958, letter in the possession of Professor Piotr Wandycz, New Haven, Conn.
Warsaw eventually acceded to them. Sosnkowski was eager to lay his hands on French aid, and pressed the government to accept French demands. His ministrations plus the overall desire to achieve an alliance led the government to sign the economic agreements on 6 February 1922. The Sejm promptly approved, ratifying the economic accords along with the political agreement on 11 May 1922.

Even with the economic agreements signed, however, Sosnkowski was unable to make use of the French loan, for in early 1922 the French government demanded a guarantee for repayment. This demand which was not included in the convention nor brought up during negotiations, aggrieved Sosnkowski deeply. He wrote both Foch and Buat in March, railing at it and hinting that it would cause Poland to be unable to fulfill her treaty obligations. His appeals did not move the French. Nor did the Polish government’s offer in June of revenues of state forests in East Galicia as a guarantee, which the French rejected, because of the unclear status of East Galicia (technically it was a mandate awarded by the Paris peace conference). The Poles then offered Toruń, Gdańsk and Bydgoszcz forest revenues and a Silesian coal mine as security. The French approved, but the loan was still not made available, perhaps because agreement came too late for it to come up for a vote in French legislature before the end of 1922.

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78 Sosnkowski to Sapieha, Warsaw, 4 June 1921, AAN, Akta Ambasady w Paryżu, cont. 109, fol. 40.

79 Sosnkowski to Sapieha, Warsaw, 6 March 1922; Sosnkowski to Foch, Warsaw, 23 March 1923 and Sosnkowski to Buat, 24 March 1922, AAN, Akta Piłsudskich, 106/1, part 4, file 13, fols. 115, 118 and 120.

Despite the disappointment caused by the loan, the Polish and French armies grew closer. In mid-1922 high-level staff talks took place and the French and Poles coordinated their war plans. The 1921 Military Convention had called for such talks, but it is likely that the signing of the German-Soviet Treaty of Rapallo, on 16 April 1922, provided the real impetus. The treaty, which called for closer economic and political ties between the two signatories and raised the specter of a German-Russian combination. The treaty deeply worried Polish leaders, including Piłsudski, and caused a government crisis in June.\

In May, Major Józef Beck, the military attache, was instructed to propose to French leaders high-level staff talks to coordinate war plans. French leaders agreed. Buat, Weygand and Foch were deeply concerned by the Soviet-German accord and its implications for French security, Beck reported. Talks took place in September in Paris, and Chief of Staff Sikorski represented Poland. The result was an operational agreement concerning war with Germany; a Soviet conflict was not discussed. Both sides believed that Poland would be attacked first in a war with Germany. It was therefore agreed that the Polish Army was to remain on the defensive, if attacked, while France would relieve the pressure on Poland by launching an offensive within 30 days of war's outbreak.

The French alliance was closely followed by a pact with Romania and the growth of cooperation with the Baltic states. Sosnkowski's role here was small. The initiative for an

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81 On 2 July Piłsudski summoned the Council of Ministers to the Belvedere Palace, his residence, and put to it the question, did Rapallo endanger Poland. The council resolved that it did not and Polish diplomacy should remain pacific. Piłsudski was not satisfied. Later that day the Ponikowski government moved to resign. Protokół tajny posiedzenia Rady Min., Warsaw, 2 June 1922. AAN, part I, vol. 18, fol. 864-5.


alliance with Romania came from Piłsudski and the General Staff in December 1920. Talks with the Romanians began in January 1921, when a Polish delegation headed by Stanislaw Haller visited Bucharest. Romanian leaders were initially hesitant, but the signing of the Franco-Polish alliance changed their minds, and they agreed to a series of political and military agreements. The initial pact, signed in early March, stipulated only that one party mobilize if the other were attacked. A visit by Piłsudski to Romania led to a new agreement, signed on 16 September 1922, which obligated one to enter the war if the other was attacked. Directed against the U.S.S.R., it committed Poland to field 17 divisions and Romania, 14 in a war in the East. Alliances with Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Finland, were sought in 1921 by soldiers and diplomats, but close alliance proved unattainable. However, an agreement was signed in March 1922 by the five recognizing the treaties they had respectively concluded with the Soviets and calling for the conclusion of commercial, consular and other treaties.

One unexpected international development was the rapprochement with the Czechoslovak Republic, which came in 1921. Czech-Polish rapprochement was the function of two developments. The first was an about-face in the Polish policy of Czech Foreign Minister Eduard Beneš. In an attempt to undermine Polish economic claims to Teschen, Beneš adopted a pro-Polish stance, supporting Polish demands in industrial Upper Silesia, where fraud and German-sponsored terror led to Polish defeat in a plebiscite in March and then armed uprising in May. He also sought to engage the Magyarophile Polish government in order to isolate Hungary, where revisionism and attempts to restore the Habsburgs threatened Czech security. The second development was the appointment of career diplomat Konstanty Skirmunt as Polish foreign minister in June and the dispatch of Erazm Piltz, the leading foreign ministry Czechophile, to

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84 On Polish relations with Romania and the Baltic states see Stawecki, Polityka wojskowa, 248-82.
Prague as ambassador a month later. Skirmunt and Piltz favored close relations with Czechoslovakia. Warsaw made the first overtures, and Prague responded favorably. Talks between Piltz and Beneš, begun in July, led to the signing of economic and political agreements in October and November. Despite howls from both Left and Right that Poland had renounced Teschen and gotten nothing in return, the Polish Council of Ministers accepted the agreements in June 1922.

The political rapprochement between Beneš and Skirmunt had its parallel in the military sphere: a sea change in the attitudes of Polish military leaders. This change came under gentle prodding from Czech military leaders, who were convinced that the defense of Czechoslovakia demanded cooperation with its northern neighbor. Starting in 1921 they began to court Polish military leaders, many of whom, perhaps including Sosnkowski, doubted the Czechs' military capacity. By late 1921 the Czechs had made considerable progress. On the occasion of the signing of the Polish-Czech political agreement the army's daily newspaper *Poland Armed* (*Polska zbrojna*) hailed the improved relations between the two states. After Rapallo Polish military leaders' attitudes became even more positive. In autumn 1922 both Sosnkowski and Sikorski spoke out in favor of alliance with Czechoslovakia. At a *fête* on 19 October in the Czech legation in Warsaw, where the two were decorated by military representative General Camille Holy with the Czechoslovak Republic's Cross of Valor, Sosnkowski expounded on the benefits of close relations. He said: "Polish-Czech military relations . . . must become the best for the good of

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87 "Nasi sąsiedzi Czesi," *Polska zbrojna*, 14 Nov. 1921, 1.
both nations. By the end of 1922 Poland and Czechoslovakia appeared on a course for alliance.

In 1923, the work of building a lasting system of national defense entered a new phase. Projects that had been postponed in 1921 and 1922, especially those postponed for lack of resources, were now initiated. Moreover, now that the foundations of the force that Sosnkowski desired had been laid, work on new portions of the rapidly rising structure commenced. New projects appear to have been stimulated by French acceptance of Polish guarantees for the loan Sosnkowski had secured in Paris, even though the first installment was nowhere in sight. Also, 1923 and 1924 saw Sosnkowski and Polish military leaders moved to strengthen and extend the new alliance system.

In 1923 efforts were made to bring up to strength the air arm, which in 1921 and 1922 lagged far behind the rest of the army. On 1 January, Sosnkowski appointed French aviation expert Brigadier General Armand Lévêque head of the Ministry’s Aviation Department. Lévêque shortly formulated a four-year program to raise the air arm’s strength to 50 squadrons—32 army cooperation, 16 fighter and 2 heavy bomber. To accomplish this program two private aviation concerns, the Podlasie Aircraft Works in Biała Podlaska and "Aircraft" Works in Poznań, were established. They were to be tooled using French monies, for a portion of the French loan was earmarked for investment in Polish war industry. Lévêque payed particularly close attention to standardizing and upgrading the equipment in use. During the war Polish squadrons were outfitted with a variety of obsolete Austrian, English, German, French and Italian craft, so in 1923 Lévêque moved to replace them with with new French models. The two new works and the E.

"Dekoracja generała ministra Sosnkowskiego," Polska zbrojna, 20 October 1922, 3.
Plage and T. Laskiewicz concern, which produced Italian Balilla "flying coffins" under license, were to manufacture aircraft of French design.\(^9\)

The ministry now turned to putting the army reserve and militia in order also. Although formally constituted in 1920, neither in fact existed when Sosnkowski began to reorganize the army in mid-1921. The veteran classes, which in theory were to constitute the reserve, had been demobilized without any effort to enroll them in a reserve, organize them for mobilization or ensure that peace did not dull their effectiveness. To remedy this demobilized classes were to be called to active duty for retraining and only afterward enrolled in the reserve. Sosnkowski called up the first class, that of 1896, and put it through its paces in April 1923.\(^9\) Within a year the army boasted a reserve of 163,000 officers and men.

The ministry also moved to give the reserve and militia a fixed operational organization. In early 1923 the Mobilization and Organization Department or now Bureau (as the unit was renamed in the ministry reorganization in 1921) formulated a plan to organize 30 divisions, two or three each year, to thus raise the army's wartime order of battle by 1935 to 60 divisions. Units were to be created entirely from reserve cadres. The Inner War Council approved the plan in short order.\(^9\) The motivation behind this new plan is not known. Sosnkowski’s Exposé made no provision for organizing reserve formations in advance, but an influential 1920 treatise by Tadeusz Kutrzeba of the General Staff College posited that a 60-division army was both necessary

\(^9\) Cieplewicz, Zarys dziejów wojskowości, 472.


\(^9\) According to the head of the Organization Bureau, Józef Zajac, the plan was returned without Piłsudski’s signature, but with that of Rybak, head of the Inner War Council Bureau. Zajac and his staff took this as signifying the Council’s approval. Józef Zajac, "Nasze przygotowanie do wojny,” Kultura, 1961, no. 1/159-2/160: 161ff.
for Poland’s defense and sustainable in regard to the country’s resources. It is possible that the Rapallo Treaty, which forced Polish military leaders to seriously consider the specter of a two-front war with Germany and the Soviet Union, also played a role. Whatever the impetus, by 1924 new divisions were being organized, and two years later Polish leaders counted on fielding 39 divisions in the event of war.

The progress in building the Polish Army in 1923 was facilitated by an easing of the economic and financial crisis. Władysław Grabski was treasury minister in the Sikorski government. What Grabski lacked in political savvy, he made up for in economic and financial expertise. In early 1923 he introduced a program of austerity, privatization of state enterprises and new taxes, which temporarily curbed the growth of inflation. Grabski’s reforms spared officers and men the privations of the previous years and Sosnkowski, clashes with the treasury minister, but they did not allow for great investment. Without access to the French loan the army had great difficulty equipping reservists. Żeligowski described the reservists, who now descended on training centers, as "hungry, ragged [and] without bullets." Nevertheless great strides were made in the first half of 1923; they represent the first flowering of the labors of 1921 and 1922. Foreign observers were impressed. Foch, who visited Poland in May for staff talks, was among them. He praised Polish achievements, singling out training and doctrine.

Progress in the organizational and doctrinal growth of the army was matched by strides in other areas, as Sosnkowski and Polish military leaders further strengthened Poland’s ties with

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93 Żeligowski, note, Sprawy wojskowe, 10 April 1923, AAN, Akta Lucjana Żeligowskiego, file 48, fols. 40-1.

94 Foch to Sosnkowski, Cracow, 13 May 1923, Dziennik rozkazów dziennych M.S.Wojsk., 1923, no. 78, dodatek. The chief of English General Staff, Lord Cavan, who visited Poland shortly after Foch, was also struck by Polish advances. "Gen. Cavan o Wojsku Polskim," Polska zbrojna, 19 May 1923, 2.
the French. In 1923 this continued to be an urgent task. On 11 January, after the Allied Reparations Commission declared Germany in default, French armies occupied the Ruhr. The Ruhr Crisis, like Rapallo, raised the specter of war with Germany and the Soviet Union. On 24 January Izvestia’s editorialist wrote that a "Polish attack on Germany at the present moment is a direct blow at the Soviet Union."95 The French also wanted closer relations. The Ruhr occupation took place without English participation and even over English opposition. Fearing isolation, the French sought strong support from Poland and Czechoslovakia. In order to curry favor, in March French leaders secured the recognition of the Riga frontiers by the Western powers, long a goal of Polish diplomats. In May none other than Foch himself was sent to Warsaw for staff talks.96

Talks took place on 4 May after Foch had been feted; awarded the Virtuti Militari, Poland’s highest decoration; and given the rank of marshal in the Polish Army. The last was Sosnkowski’s idea, and he went to great lengths to win over Foch. Both Sosnkowski and Piłsudski joined Polish staff officers, Foch and General Emile Hergault in discussions. The Polish goal continued to be securing a strong commitment in French operational plans for the defense of Poland both against Germany and the Soviet Union. The French, on the other hand, viewed strengthening the alliance as matter of the Poles’ adoption of French views on the conduct of war and a Polish-Czech pact.97 Foch and Piłsudski got on poorly, but the talks were not the failure that historians such as Wandycz suggest.98 Discussions were wide-ranging. Foch told the

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95 Quoted in Wandycz, France and Her Allies, 271.
96 Tommasini, Odrodzenie Polski, 298-300.
97 Tomassini, Odrodzenie Polski, 301 and Pobóg-Malinowski, Najnowsza historia Polski, 2:429.
98 Wandycz, France and Her Allies, 278-9.
Associated Press that they touched on the army's material needs, but the real focus was on war plans. The two sides agreed upon a common plan of operations: Poland was to commit at least 20 divisions to operations in the West in a war with Germany; in the event of war with Germany and the Soviet Union, these forces were to remain on the defensive and await a French attack.99

In the first half of 1923 the Polish army moved closer to cooperation with the Czechs. Military leaders' attempts to forge a close relationship with the Czechs now took place against a backdrop of poor official relations. Skirmunt left the Foreign Ministry in June 1922. Foreign Minister in the Sikorski government was Aleksander Skrzyński, who was much less eager for close relations with Czechoslovakia than Skirmunt. Moreover, a dispute over the border hamlet of Javořina revived animosity on both sides. Javořina was promised to Poland in the course of delimiting the Polish-Czech frontier, in exchange for border modifications favoring the Czechs in the Orava region, but the Czech government failed to make good its promise. Nevertheless in early 1923 the Czechs made a number of overtures to Polish military leaders. Talks on the transport of war materials via Czechoslovakia took place. During these talks Czech officials again voiced a desire for military contacts. These were received with greater sympathy than ever before. Before year's end the Polish General Staff responded with a proposal for an intelligence exchange.100

In mid-January 1924 Beneš communicated to the Polish government his desire for "a systematic understanding."101 Czech military leaders Generals František Určíčka and Jan Syrový

99 No minutes of the discussion have come to light. The Associate Press report can be found in "Marszałek Foch o Polsce i Wojsku," Polska zbrojna, 9 May 1923, 2. The best analysis is Bulhak's. See Bulhak, "Polsko-Francuskie koncepcje wojny," 78ff.


communicated similar views to Polish leaders. Under Sosnkowski's guidance Polish military leaders acted to use this opportunity to strengthen ties with the Czechs. Chief of the General Staff Haller, an out-and-out Czechophile, played an important role as well.\textsuperscript{102} Polish military leaders proposed to cooperate with the French and Czech general staffs to coordinate the war plans of the three states. In late January, Haller pressed the Foreign Ministry to obtain information on Franco-Czechoslovak planning arrangements. In February, the Czech high command consented to the Polish proposal to exchange intelligence, and one month later Beneš approved the Polish right to transport war materials through Czechoslovakia.\textsuperscript{103}

Politics complicated Sosnkowski's labors to build a lasting system of defense. After the Polish-Soviet War the never wholly stable Polish political scene became more turbulent. The end of the war released political parties from the cooperation, forged in the dark days of summer 1920. It also compelled political leaders to address fundamental issues, and Left, Right, and Center became deeply divided and clashed over economic policy, land reform and more. The resumption of debate on the new constitution, which occurred on 24 September, was attended by great controversy. In the course of balloting on the question of a unicameral or bicameral legislature the marshal of the Sejm was driven from the chamber. Debate on the constitution continued to rock the Constituent Sejm until its passage on 17 March 1922. Strife between parties and the great economic difficulties sapped the foundations of the Witos government until it fell in November 1921. A succession of governments under Antoni Ponikowski, Artur Śliwiński and Julian Nowak, met the same fate.

\textsuperscript{102} On Ahller's views of the Czech alliance, see Stanisław Haller, \textit{Naród i armia} (Cracow, 1926).

\textsuperscript{103} Haller to Ministerstwo Spraw Zagraniczych, Warsaw, 24 January 1924, AAN, Akta M.S.Z., file 3677, fols. 81-2 and Buhák, "Z dziejów," 122-24
The chief fault line in politics was whether the state was to be centralized and Polish-dominated, which the Right favored, or decentralized and equalitarian, for which the Piłsudski camp aimed. The National Democrat-Piłsudski-ite conflict was not merely ideological; it revolved around the personal matter of Piłsudski's role in the republic's political life. On 7 October 1920 Stanisław Głąbiński of the Popular-National Union rose in the Sejm to attack Piłsudski's direction of the armed forces: "We demanded and demand still that the causes of the debacles [of summer] be studied and the guilty be held responsible." The National Democrats' purpose was to remove Piłsudski from political life, and the Sejm's Constitutional Commission headed by National Democrat Edward Dubanowicz, deliberately fashioned a constitution to proscribe Piłsudski's role. The Constitution of 17 March 1921 vested the presidency, the most likely candidate for which was Piłsudski, with few powers, especially with regard to the army. Although titular commander-in-chief, in wartime the president was not to exercise command (art. 46), while in peacetime the army was to answer to the war minister, who in turn answered to the Sejm (art. 56). Despite assertions to the contrary Piłsudski was as willful as his foes from the very start. In the first years of peace Piłsudski gave up on cooperation and chose conflict. "[Piłsudski] had tasted power," writes Garlicki, "and he was not able give it up." He adopted a policy calculated to provoke a confrontation and decisive showdown with his opponents. In 1921 and 1922, Piłsudski began to prepare the ground for such a stratagem, filling important General Staff posts with his henchmen among the former Legionnaires.

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104 Głąbiński, speech, 7 October 1920, Sprawozdania stenograficzne z Sejmu Ustawodawczego, 1920, CLXX, col. 15.

105 Garlicki, Piłsudski, 249. Joseph Rothschild asserts Piłsudski's aim was to give the army a degree of independence and safeguard it from the storms of politics. Joseph Rothschild, Piłsudski's Coup d'Etat (New York, 1966), 28-9.

106 Garlicki, Piłsudski, 239. Legionaries already dominated the War Ministry Personnel (V) and Information (II) Bureaus.
Political conflict was attended, ominously, by diquiet in the army. Strife spilled over into the army. After the war Piłsudski quarrelled with his generals. "Piłsudski wanted to dictate like Napoleon," Sosnkowski later recalled, "often not reckoning with any, save those who did not break ranks, [who] continued to believe in his leadership."\(^{107}\) He sacked Szeptycki and Stanisław Haller abruptly during the summer campaign. The former was forced to demanded a court martial to redeem his name. Although reinstated both bore the commander-in-chief much ill will.\(^{108}\) National Democratic disciples in the army, in particular Józef Haller and his followers, as well as others attacked Piłsudski, sometimes publicly, starting in 1921.

Sosnkowski did not share Piłsudski's capacity to dramatically change course, and he continued to pursue a policy of accommodation and cooperation. The wellspring of this policy was, as in past years, concern for state-building and erecting a lasting system of national defense. Sosnkowski's stance was sustained by a misreading of Piłsudski's intentions. It does not appear that Piłsudski, whose penchant for conspiratorial methods is well documented, apprised Sosnkowski of them. Sosnkowski ever thought his friend stood for political unity and viewed the chief task before them as state-building.\(^{109}\) In line with this, he declined to associate himself with any group or faction. While Piłsudski moved his own men into the General Staff, Sosnkowski presided over a ministry in which Legionnaires were in the minority. He also ordered


generals and unit commanders to refrain from public political utterances and from politicking in general. "Politics," he wrote in August 1921, "belongs in the Sejm and cabinet. The task of the army is not only formally, but also with great loyalty, to obey orders coming from state authorities." More importantly, Sosnkowski sought to build unity through accommodation and compromise. He maintained cordial relations with all groups and parties. In 1921 he attempted to win over Conservative notables and allay the fears of National Democrats. In the army he tried to patch up differences between Pilsudski and his generals. When Haller tendered his resignation in October 1921, claiming he was the victim of discrimination by Pilsudski, Sosnkowski convinced him that he was mistaken and to withdraw it.

Sosnkowski's policy failed. Officers continued to actively participate in politics, despite his repeated orders forbidding this. His efforts to build unity foundered on the rocks of suspicion from both the Right and Left. Because of his past, the Right regarded him as Pilsudski's man and held him at arms length. In November 1922, for example, Józef Haller told Juliusz Zdanowski, a National Democratic leader, in November 1922 that Sosnkowski was "a most...
dishonest and dangerous man.” In addition, the Left and even Piłsudski’s followers began to distrust him. Sosnkowski only succeeded in interposing himself between warring factions. In December 1921, Popular-National Union deputies accused him of sponsoring left-wing paramilitary organizations. Not long after, National Labor Party deputies accused the army of sponsoring National Democratic combat squads. Sosnkowski told the Sejm in reply: “I, myself, gentlemen, have the impression that I am a ball, tossed from the right hand to the left hand.”

In February 1922 in the course of discussion of the officers’ obligations and rights bill Aleksander Skarbek of the Popular-National Union decried the domination of army leadership by former Legionaries. He railed at discrimination against officers from Haller’s Army and armies of the partitioning powers. Sosnkowski dispassionately pointed out that only one of six army inspectors was a former Legioinaire, none were among corps district commanders, only 10 commanded divisions and eleven, brigades. However, no one listened. Witos, Liebermann then led the charge for the Legionaries and attacked officers from the armies of the former partitioning powers.

Sosnkowski’s politics, more importantly, brought him into conflict with Piłsudski. The first clash came during War Council discussions over the organization of the high command in November and December 1920. Sosnkowski had proposed an arrangement, which he hoped might satisfy both the Right and Piłsudski. Sosnkowski, sought on the one hand, to observe the prescriptions of the constitution soon to be approved, namely that the president be commander-in-chief (art. 46) and that the war minister be responsible for the army (art. 56). On the other hand,

114 18 April and 18 Nov. 1922, Dziennik Zdanowskiego, Ossolineum, 14023/II, vol. 4, 12 and 339.

115 Sosnkowski, speech, 10 Dec. 1921, Stenograficzne sprawozdania Sejmu Ust., CCLXX/105.

116 Skarbek, speech and Sosnkowski, speech, 21 Feb. 1922, Sprawozdania stenograficzne Sejmu Ust., 1922, CCLXXXVII/22-34 and 35-7. For Witos’ and Liebermann’s speeches of 28 February see Sprawozdania stenograficzne Sejmu Ust., CCLXXXIX/12-20 and 24-38.
he sought to safeguard the army from the storms of politics. Sosnkowski prepared a draft law after considering the organization of the high command of various countries. He paid particular attention to French arrangements, for of all fundamental laws the evolving constitution most resembled the French. Sosnkowski’s project made the president, the elected official least effected by political storms, the highest authority in military matters. The minister in peace was to command the army and in war to oversee administration, organization and supply. The chief of the General Staff was to be subordinate to the minister in peacetime, but become commander-in-chief of the armies in the field in wartime. The project united the three with army inspectors in an Inner War Council, chaired by the president.117

Pilsudski strongly criticized and then rejected Sosnkowski’s proposal. During the War Council’s discussion of high command arrangements on 30 November 1920, Pilsudski argued that Sosnkowski’s plan would subject the high command to Sejm interference. He also accused Sosnkowski of departing from the principle of unity of command, but then disingenuously argued that exercising supreme executive and military authority required a Napoleon Bonaparte or Frederick the Great.118 Only an arrangement completely divorced from civilian constitutional authorities satisfied him.

Pilsudski was less concerned with safeguarding the army from politics, his avowed aim, than maintaining his grip on it. He therefore issued the 7 January decree giving the army a high command organization that would do just that. The decree of 7 January did not incorporate the views of Sosnkowski or War Council members. It was issued without the council’s blessing, or even its knowledge. Pilsudski issued the decree even as the council prepared for further

117 [Minister Spraw Wojsk.] Projekt ujęcia ustawy o organizacji najwyższych władz wojskowych w Polsce, CAW, Akta Szefa Sztabu, I.303.1., cont. 31.

118 Protokół z trzeciego zebrania [Rady Wojennej], Warsaw, 30 Nov. 1920, CAW, Kolekcja 1773/89, cont. 1483, fols. 44ff.
deliberations, which he had ordered. The decree divided competence for Poland’s defense
between the minister on the one hand and a restructured War Council and commander-in-chief
designate, on the other. The decree created a two-level War Council. The Full War Council
(Petna Rada Wojenna) under the chairmanship of the president was an advisory body, which
reviewed military legislation, arms and organization. Its resolutions were not binding. The heart
of the council was the Inner War Council (Ścista Rada Wojenna). Six new inspector generals,
generals designated to command armies in wartime, and the chief of the General Staff were
council members. It was chaired by a general designated commander-in-chief in wartime. The
Inner War Council was also an advisory body, but its competence was sweeping and resolutions
binding.119 With the passage of the constitution the decree ultimately meant that the army had
three masters: the president, minister, and commander-in-chief designate. Also the establishment
of the Inner War Council undermined the Sosnkowski’s authority and plans as commanders often
referred to the council leaving the minister out of decision-making.120 But the new command
organization would preserve for Piłsudski, who was commander-in-chief designate, domination
of the army.

After the decree of 7 January was issued Sosnkowski and Piłsudski clashed again over the
organization of the high command. The decree was intended only as a temporary measure, and
Sosnkowski was tasked with drafting and enacting a law to supplant it. The Mobilization-
Organization Bureau was set to work preparing such a law, and two projects were prepared in
early 1921. The two cannot be found. However, a draft of a memorandum from the commander-
in-chief's adjutant general sent to the war minister castigated Sosnkowski for failing to include

119 Nacz. Wódz, Dekret o organizacji najwyższych władz wojskowych, [Warsaw,] 7 Jan. 1921,
in Piłsudski, Pisma zbiorowe, 8:iii-vi.

120 M.S.Wojsk., Order L. 15460/21B.P., Warsaw, 5 July 1921, CAW, Akta Gab. M.S.Wojsk.,
I.300.1., cont. 477.
safeguards against political interference and railed at the "fatal products" the two projects might produce.\textsuperscript{121}

After this clash Sosnkowski avoided the issue entirely, mainly to avoid another run-in with Piłsudski. Unable and unwilling to send to the Sejm a bill on the organization of the high command that was both unconstitutional and unpopular, he shelved the matter. Although Sosnkowski promised to submit a high command law and the Organization Bureau produced several bills in 1921 and 1922, the minister ignored the matter after early 1921. In a letter of 17 November 1921 to Prime Minister Ponikowski Sosnkowski ranked in order of importance his legislative initiatives. The high command law was ranked with laws on inland waterways and on quartering.\textsuperscript{122}

As the matter of the high command’s organization languished, relations between Sosnkowski and Piłsudski appeared to improve. In spring 1921 observers reported harmony prevailed in the Piłsudski camp. Also, after having secured an annulment of his union with Stefania Sobańska, Sosnkowski married socialite Jadwiga Żukowska, a distant cousin of Piłsudski’s.\textsuperscript{123} However, relations between Sosnkowski and Piłsudski were in fact deteriorating. The latter’s trust in Sosnkowski faltered, for he saw Sosnkowski’s policy of compromise and accommodation as duplicity and careerism. His attitude toward Sosnkowski changed from regarding Sosnkowski as a collaborator toward considering him a pawn to be used and sacrificed.


\textsuperscript{122} Sosnkowski to Ponikowski, 17 November 1921, CAW, Gab. M.S.Wojsk., I.300.1., cont. 228.

\textsuperscript{123} 18 April 1921, Dziennik Zdanowskiego, Ossolineum, 14023/II, vol. 4, 12. The sensation of 1921, Sosnkowski’s marriage took place in St. John’s Cathedral in Warsaw on 30 April 1921. The couple were married by Cardinal Aleksander Kakowski. Piłsudski gave the bride away. Akt ślubu, Kancelaria katedry Świętego Jana, Warsaw, Księga ślubów na rok 1921, item no. 127.
No longer able to rely on Sosnkowski to do his bidding, Piłsudski only counted on him not to oppose him. In early July 1922, when Wojciech Korfanty, one of the most radical of rightist politicians, attempted to form a government, Piłsudski used Sosnkowski to ensure that the armed forces remained out of his opponents' hands. Sosnkowski had refused to join the new government, drawing the line at cooperating with the unsavory Korfanty, but Piłsudski bullied him into accepting a cabinet post. "I know people like Sosnkowski." Piłsudski is reported to have said, "He weeps and gnashes his teeth over joining the Korfanty government, but when I told him to, he went."\(^{124}\)

Neither the suspicions of leaders nor mistreatment by Piłsudski altered Sosnkowski's conviction that Poland's leaders must cooperate or prevented him from seeking to effect a fundamental accommodation. He appealed to the Piłsudski camp for compromise. At a convention of Polish Legion veterans on 6 August 1922, the anniversary of the Cadre Company's invasion of the Kingdom, he called for reason and reasonableness. In his address he recalled the answer to a question he put to Piłsudski in Magdeburg: What will become of Poland? Poland, said Sosnkowski, "will be victorious, if it endeavors to pursue a 'reasonable normality.'"\(^{125}\)

Political strife took a heavy toll on Sosnkowski. Piłsudski thought Sosnkowski inclined to despair in difficult times.\(^{126}\) In winter 1922 he fell into deep depression. The strain of politics had become so great by December that he requested Piłsudski relieve him. Sosnkowski proposed that he become vice minister again, so that he could concentrate on military matters.


\(^{125}\) *Pierwszy Zjazd Legionistów: Pamiętnik zjazdu w Krakowie w dniach 5,6 i 7 sierpnia 1922 w ósmą rocznicę wymarszu Strzelców na bój o niepodległość Ojczyzny* (Cracow, 1922), 5.

exclusively. Sosnkowski’s request was ill-timed, but prescient. In a matter of days and all at once the political life of the republic dramatically deteriorated. General elections in November for a new Sejm under the 17 March Constitution caused the struggle to intensify. The elections saw the Right increase its representation in the Sejm, garnering 169 or 38 percent of seats. The PPS and other left-wing parties gained also. Both gained, moreover, at the expense of the Center parties, such as the pivotal Piast. Electoral gains emboldened the Right both to adopt a more militant stance, while eliminating alternate political combinations. The presidential elections of 9 December demonstrate just how unstable the political scene had become. Five ballots were required before the Left and national minorities parties succeeded in electing Gabriel Narutowicz, a collaborator of Piłsudski’s.

Soon after his election Narutowicz was assassinated by a National Democratic fanatic, Eligiusz Niewiadomski. Niewiadomski had intended to murder Piłsudski, but had settled for Narutowicz. National Democrats hailed him as the "first idealist of independent Poland." Anti-right-wing demonstrations ensued, and constitutional crisis arose as there was question whether Piłsudski remained head-of-state or the onerous honor fell to the new speaker of the Sejm, Rataj, as the constitution commanded. Narutowicz’s assassination lead to a hardening of views in the Piłsudski camp. Piłsudski, whom Sosnkowski appointed chief of the General Staff to replace Sikorski, was deeply shaken by the events of December. He compiled an evaluation of his generals, in which he identified possible successors should a fanatic take his life.

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Moreover, he finally gave up, if at this late date he had not given up already, on a moderate course and decided on decisive confrontation, armed if necessary, with his foes.130

In the first half of 1923 peace outwardly prevailed. Poland's leaders extricated the state from the crisis by pulling together. At Piłsudski's suggestion Rataj nominated Sikorski prime minister on the day of the assassination and tasked him with forming a broad non-parliamentary government. The Sikorski government, one of the ablest thus far, applied itself to the nation's most pressing problems. The Right, smarting from the backlash that followed Narutowicz's murder, caused it little trouble. On 20 December the Sejm elected a new president, Stanisław Wojciechowski, another collaborator of Piłsudski's. Yet, this calm masked deepening conflict. Starting in the first days of 1923 the National Democrats stepped up their war against Piłsudski. They sought to use their enhanced position in the Sejm to put a government of its own in place and drive Piłsudski from politics. To this end they began negotiations with Witos and other Piast Party leaders. Nor was Piłsudski inactive in the fight. For the first time he struck at his enemies. On 3 and 9 January in interviews carried by The Polish Courier (Kurjer Polski) Piłsudski railed at the climate of lies and swindles and immaturity of Polish politics. Piłsudski, in addition, gathered his followers to himself. Within the army a conspiratorial network of Piłsudski-ite officers formed around Brigadier General Gustaw Orlicz-Dreszer. Piłsudski's political operatives organized at this time as well.131

Despite the deepening conflict Sosnkowski clung to his belief in compromise and accommodation. He continued to clamp down on politicking by officers. In the wake of


131 Wywiady z redaktorem Kurjera Polskiego, in Pisma zbiorowe, 6:5-14 and Rataj, Pamiętniki, 151. The start of conspiratorial activity is noted in Felicjan Sławoj-Skladkowski, Strzępy meldunków (Warsaw, 1988), 28. See also Garlicki, Piłsudski, 256.
Narutowicz's assassination he told officers and men: "The army is an organ of the government. Not acting independently, it is ready to answer any summons by the legitimate authorities."\textsuperscript{132} He also maintained his policy of friendly relations with all groups, and tried to coax the parties into accommodation and compromise. For example, as talks between the Right and Piast in April and May and raised the prospect that the two would drive Piłsudski from the army, causing great disruption if not worse, Sosnkowski attempted to win the confidence of right-wing leaders and bring them together with Piłsudski.\textsuperscript{133}

Thoughtful leaders saw wisdom in Sosnkowski's efforts.\textsuperscript{134} Whatever satisfaction they derived from his exertions, however, was not borne out by results, for the National Democrats held Sosnkowski in contempt, regrading him as a careerist, and rebuffed his overtures for cooperation. Led by Michalski, in the Sejm they attacked army spending and subjected Sosnkowski to vicious attacks. In February Brigadier General Marian Żegota-Januszajtis relayed to Michalski a ditty then making the rounds:

There on the Blonia flowers glisten
I am in every cabinet
And Jacyna, Mr. Strawberry
Carries a basket of roses
Moraczewski was good to me
Paderewski was good to me
In Nowak I had a real beast of burden

\textsuperscript{132} M.S.Wojsk., Zakaz brania czynnego udziału w życiu politycznym, zachowanie się oficerów i wojska w wypadkach eksesów ulicznych, Warsaw, 15 Dec. 1922, Dziennik rozkazów dziennych M.S.Wojsk., 1922, no. 215, dodatek tajny, item 1.

\textsuperscript{133} 3 May 1923, Dziennik Zdanowskiego, Ossolineum, 14023/II, vol. 4, part 3, fol. 20.

\textsuperscript{134} Disheartened by the involvement of Piłsudski and others in partisan strife, Żeligowski noted: "I believe that Sosnkowski is still a general." Żeligowski, note, Sprawy wojskowy, 10 April 1923, AAN, Akta Żeligowskiego, file. 48, fol. 40.
And now I'm back again

Sosnkowski’s stance also led to a further drastic deterioration in his relations with Pilsudski. Now that Pilsudski had joined the fray, his first lieutenant’s behavior appeared traitorous. He lost all faith in him. Having established a network of conspirators in and outside of the army and scraping for a showdown, Pilsudski no longer needed his friend to keep the army safe from opponents. By early April he had severed all relations with Sosnkowski. Żeligowski observed at this time that, "Sosnkowski with the circle of his followers works in isolation."

The breakdown of political life cost the army dearly. "Work within the entire army is uncoordinated," Żeligowski observed, "Neither the Full nor the Inner War Council do anything . . . There are no meetings or discussion at all. [There is] no communication, intellectual or spiritual, no cooperation, no responsibility and no work." At the end of May strife deprived the army of its leaders. On 17 May leaders of the Popular-National Union, Christian Democratic, Piast and Catholic Peasant Parties signed the Lanckorona Pact. Named for the estate where it was believed, incorrectly, to have been signed, the pact created a majority Center-Right coalition. On 23 May Sikorski was toppled in a confidence vote. A National Democrat-dominated government headed by Witos then took office. The next day Pilsudski resigned as chief of the General Staff. On 2 July he relinquished the chairmanship of the Inner War Council and retired to his villa at Sulejówek near Warsaw. And Sosnkowski, who had served six premiers, left the government as well. Unlike his partners Witos did not want to break with Pilsudski and and sought to retain

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135 Tam na Błoniu błyszczy kwiecień/Jestem w każdym gabinecie/ A Jacyna, pan Malina/Niesie koszyk róż/Miłym był mi Moraczewski/Miłym był mi Paderewski/Ale Nowaka mam burtaka/I powracam już! The Blonia is a Cracow park, the site of army reviews. Jacyna was the chief-of-state’s, then the president’s adjutant. Sosnkowski served in neither the Moraczewski nor Paderewski governments. Januszajtis to Michalski, Warsaw, 25 Feb. 1923, BN, Fragment Korespondencji Jerzego Michalskiego, IV 10350, file 1, fol. 70r.

136 Żeligowski, note, 10 April 1923, AAN, Akta Żeligowskiego, file 48, fol. 41.
Sosnkowski as war minister so he could maintain some ties with Piłsudski. But Sosnkowski refused. Seeing no opportunity to bring Piłsudski and the Right together, Sosnkowski had no reason to remain in government. Moreover, the labors of the past years had left Sosnkowski physically and spiritually exhausted.\(^{137}\)

Relieved of his duties as minister Sosnkowski travelled to Poznań, and spent his leave at the modest estate he and his wife had purchased there. When he departed Warsaw, he was bid farewell by a host of generals—Jacyna, Kajetan Olszewski, Alexander Pik, Edward Szpakowski and others—and 2,000 officers and men. Sosnkowski's leave was cut short in August, when the new chief of the General Staff, Stanisław Haller, sent him to France on a two-month tour of French military schools. Sosnkowski was to attend various exercises and observe army maneuvers as well.\(^{138}\)

Sosnkowski was not away from the ministry for long. The new war minister, Szeptycki, caused strife in and outside of the army to intensify. He declared war on Piłsudski-ites in the army and dismissed several of Piłsudski's henchmen. He also revived the debate over the organization of the high command. At the behest of the government he drafted a high command organization plan to replace the decree of 7 January, which the Right viewed as an attempt to render the army Piłsudski's *imperium in imperio*. The cabinet approved the plan on 18 June and sent it to the legislature on 27 June. It transformed the War Council, into an advisory body subject to the minister. It created the position of Inspector General of Armies, presumably designated the commander-in-chief in wartime, but he had few prerogatives and was responsible

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\(^{137}\) Upon leaving the Ministry he was granted a three-month medical leave. M.S.Wojsk., Dept. VIII, Orzeczenie lekarskie, [Warsaw], 1 June 1923 and M.S.Wojsk, order, Warsaw, 1 June 1923, CAW, Akta Gab. M.S.Wojsk., I.300.1., cont. 576.

to the minister. Pilsudski at once attacked the command project and its author, but his was just one assault in a political offensive on a much broader front. The Witos government, reviled by the opposition, was condemned for its friendly policy toward Czechoslovakia, for its land reform program, and for nearly every other policy it pursued. The opposition directed its heaviest fire at the government’s financial policy. A succession of treasury ministers did not have the will to continue, the harsh, but successful measures Grabski had instituted. They resorted to printing money and inflation again spiralled out of control. The Witos government fell on 14 December. On 19 December, Wojciechowski asked Grabski to form a non-parliamentary government. Grabski called on Sosnkowski to join his government as minister of military affairs, for like Witos before him Grabski wished to have the cooperation of Pilsudski and hoped that Sosnkowski’s appointment would secure it. Seeing an opportunity to attain an accommodation between Pilsudski and a broad spectrum of parties, Sosnkowski accepted.

As the conditions of his nomination Sosnkowski demanded Pilsudski return as chair of the Inner War Council, the withdrawal of the Szeptycki project (thus the reinstatement of the decree of 7 January) and a law governing the high command acceptable to Pilsudski. Wojciechowski and Grabski agreed. On 20 December, Sosnkowski took his gains to Pilsudski, but instead of seeing Sosnkowski’s actions as a means to reach a political compromise, he used them to deepen the political crisis. Pilsudski rejected Sosnkowski’s arrangements as unsatisfactory, and he proposed that he become chief of the General Staff as well. Sosnkowski bridled at this. Grabski’s financial reforms, which were the government’s most important tasks,

139 Ustawa o organizacji najwyższych władz wojskowych, n.d., CAW, Akta Biura Administracji, I.300.54., cont. 7.

140 Władysław Grabski, Dwa lata pracy u podstaw państwowości naszej, 1924-1925 (Warsaw, 1927), 33-4 and 4 January 1924, Diariusz Kazimierza Świtalskiego, Ryszard Świętek, ed. (forthcoming).
required the good will of all the parties, and giving Piłsudski complete control of the army he was as likely to jeopardize that. After failing to dissuade Piłsudski Sosnkowski took the new demand to Wojciechowski and Grabski. The president declared that "hair will grow on the palms of my hands before I sign that appointment." When Sosnkowski returned to Piłsudski, the latter demanded that he resign.\(^{141}\)

Sosnkowski refused. He took up his appointment out of loyalty to the president and prime minister, especially the latter, and in order not to disrupt the introduction of a reformed currency, the złoty.\(^{142}\) Sosnkowski's decision to take up his appointment also stemmed from a desire to see several important projects through to completion. In December 1923 the all-important universal military service bill reached the floor of the Sejm. Sosnkowski energetically worked to secure its passage, hammering home his view that no less than two years' service was required to train a soldier, given the prevailing illiteracy and arguing that the uncertain international climate justified the large force that the bill was to create.\(^{143}\) His eloquent, precise arguments found resonance among deputies. And the bill had support from the chairman of the Military Affairs Commission, Antoni Anusz, as well as from among deputies on the Right. The National Democrat Stefan Dąbrowski published a popular pamphlet defending the law.\(^{144}\) The Sejm embraced the bill on 8 February and the Senate on 20 February; it became law on 24 May. Also, in late 1923 and early 1923 a Soviet campaign to improve relations with Romania and Italian...

\(^{141}\) Sosnkowski's account retold to Witold Babiński is found in Witold Babiński, "Fragmenty rozmów z gen. Sosnkowskim," Zeszyty historyczne 29(1974):119-20. It closely matches the observations of Świtalski, then Piłsudski's chief political operative. See 4 Jan. 1924, Diariusz Świtalskiego.

\(^{142}\) Katelbach, "Piłsudski i Sosnkowski," 39.

\(^{143}\) Sosnkowski, speech, 28 Jan. 1924, Stenograficzne sprowadzania Sejmu R.P., XCIII/24ff.

\(^{144}\) Antoni Anusz, "O zadaniach Komisji Wojskowej Sejmu," Droga, 1923, no. 4, 9 and Stefan Dąbrowski, Obrona państwa (Warsaw, 1924).
intrigues there threatened to weaken Poland’s ties with its southern ally, and energetic action was required to keep the Romanians in line.

Despite Piłsudski’s unwillingness to cooperate, Sosnkowski still hoped to bring about a compromise: this time, since Piłsudski refused to reach an accommodation with his opponents, he sought to bring the latter to an accommodation with the former. Through his wealthy and well-connected mother-in-law he arranged a meeting with none other than Dmowski. After fall of the Witos government sentiment for a compromise had emerged from the National Democrats, and it is likely that Sosnkowski believed they need only a shove in that direction. In his meeting with Dmowski on 18 January 1924 he underscored that "he was no longer able to withstand the assaults of the Piłsudski-ites." The National Democrat was not moved, and nothing came of Sosnkowski’s efforts.

Sosnkowski did not linger long after seeing the universal service bill through the Sejm and failing to win over Dmowski. When he and Grabski clashed over army appropriations, the war minister resigned, on 17 February. Upon taking office Grabski initiated far-reaching financial and economic reforms in an attempt to achieve stability, introducing a new currency (the złoty), new taxes, as well as new austerity measures. Sosnkowski was deeply concerned by cuts in army spending, especially their effect on the material well-being of officers and men, but he no longer had the heart for battles over appropriations, especially with Grabski, a tougher opponent than Michalski. When Grabski was unwilling to provide the sums Sosnkowski wanted in a supplementary appropriations bill, he abruptly resigned. Attacks by the Piłsudski camp also played a part in Sosnkowski’s decision. Attempting to force the minister to resign, Piłsudski’s


\[146\] Sosnkowski to Grabski, Warsaw, 11 and 15 Feb. 1924, CAW, Akta personalne Kazimierza Sosnkowskiego, file. 17463 and Grabski, Dwa lata, 33-4.
followers conducted a smear campaign in which the war minister was called a "petty bourgeois," accused of malfeasance and careerism, and charged with defecting to the National Democrats.147 Sosnkowski’s concern for economic reform and the abruptness of his resignation—-it came just as the battle with Grabski was joined—suggests that he used the clash as an exit.148 “Sosnkowski has broken with the Pilsudski-ites in spirit,” wrote Rataj on the occasion of Sosnkowski’s resignation.149 This is too strong an assertion. Sosnkowski always thought of himself as a Pilsudski-ite and saw Pilsudski as his friend and guide.150 Yet, a break of sorts did occur. Seeing no chance to bring Pilsudski and the National Democrats together, Sosnkowski gave up attempting to achieve accommodation and withdrew from politics entirely.

After leaving the ministry Sosnkowski was without a command for a long time. This occurred, because he had antagonized Sikorski, who succeeded him as war minister in the Grabski government. In his drive to keep the army from politics had disbanded the military masonic organization Honor and Fatherland (Honor i Ojczyzna), whose spiritual leader was Sikorski.151 Having passed spring and summer without a command, Sosnkowski and his wife travelled in Western Europe in autumn. In late 1924 and early 1925, Sikorski’s displeasure subsided and he gave Sosnkowski a command. On 23 January 1925 he was assigned to the Foreign Ministry to

147 Rataj, Pamiętniki, 273.

148 Other circumstances suggest this also. Two weeks before his resignation, on 24 January, Sosnkowski had proposed resurrecting the practice of installing a civilian undersecretary of state from the Treasury Ministry in the Military Controller’s Command to review army finances. Protokół 8-go posiedzenia Rady Min., 24 Jan. 1924, AAN, Akta Rady Min., part I, vol. 25, fol. 245v.

149 Rataj, Pamiętniki, 251.

150 W. Babiriski, "Fragmenty rozmów," 118, 120.

fill the Polish seat on the League of Nations' Permanent Advisory Committee on Aviation, Naval and Military Affairs and to represent Poland at the Conference on the Supervision of the International Trade in Arms and Ammunition and Implements of War in May. On 14 April 1925, Sikorski named Sosnkowski commander of Corps District VII, the Poznań military district. Sosnkowski held the League and Poznań posts simultaneously and shuttled between Geneva, Warsaw and Poznań.

Under Sikorski the work of building a lasting system of national defense went on. In 1924 and 1925 French credits were at last made available to the Polish Army and large orders were placed, utilizing the first two 100 million franc installments. Work on the air arm benefitted most dramatically from the infusion of French cash. Under Sikorski 1,100 aircraft and 1,900 spare engines were ordered. Also, relations with the Czechs improved. In December 1924 and January 1925 Sikorski and Haller entertained initiating high-level talks with Czech military leaders. To represent Poland in such discussions they considered Sosnkowski. But these strides were overshadowed by politics. All this while partisan strife continued to gnaw away at the army. Sikorski withdrew the Szeptycki command project and introduced his own, which was sent to the Sejm on 14 March 1925. His plan called for a war council and inspector general of armies, but the council was to be chaired by a civilian minister and the commander-in-chief designate was unable to issue orders, only directives. In the Sejm the Right altered the project to make it even more unpallatable to Piłsudski, in order to ensure that he did not return to active service. Through an intermediary Sikorski sent the project to Piłsudski for his comments. He received


153 Project ustawy o organizacji naczelnych władz wojskowych, 14 March 1924, Pisma zbiorowe, 8:ix-xiii
only calumnies instead. For the army, meanwhile, the results were more tangible, for the political strife prevented the completion of many programs. Sikorski was unable to pass a law on the army's complement. Strife caused disquiet among officers and tension between officers who found themselves on various sides of the political divide. The factional lines were drawn especially clearly within ministry and staff organs.154

In Summer 1925 partisan strife grew as Piłsudski inaugurated a campaign aimed at deepening the crisis and provoking confrontation. In interviews and articles and on speaking tours Piłsudski attacked his foes and galvanized support for himself. Political life was further destabilized by worsening economic conditions. The new złoty plummeted and a burst of inflation followed. On 12 November the Grabski government fell. Piłsudski used Grabski's fall to make a demonstration. On 14 November he called on President Wojciechowski and warned against entrusting the War Ministry to Sikorski, Szeptycki or any other, of whom he disapproved. The next day Piłsudski-ite officers staged a rally at Sulejówek. During the demonstration Brigadier General Orlicz-Dreszer gave a speech begging Piłsudski to return to public life and pledging to him "the sure, battle-tested swords" of the officers present.155 The demonstration, a transparent invitation to a coup, led Aleksander Skrzyński to form a broad coalition government, but this did not deter Piłsudski from preparing the final showdown, an armed demonstration or even a coup. Preparations included conspiratorial organizational work and now a disinformation campaign to obscure Piłsudski's intentions, carried out by Miedziński and Wojciech Stpiczyński.156


155 Piłsudski, Pisma zbiorowe, 8:248.

Hardly in the eye of the storm, Sosnkowski was nevertheless buffeted by it. On 16 November after the demonstration organized by Orlicz-Dreszer, Haller relieved Orlicz-Dreszer from his command in Warsaw and assigned him to the Third Cavalry Division, stationed far away from the capital and where a former Legionnaire might cause little trouble, in Poznań. Orlicz-Dreszer, rather than accept punishment, requested a leave of absence from his new commander. In what may have been an attempt to mend fences with Pilsudski, Sosnkowski granted Orlicz-Dreszer’s request.\footnote{Sosnkowski claimed that he was not informed of the reasons for the transfer and therefore had no cause to deny Orlicz-Dreszer leave. Sosnkowski to M.S.Wojsk. Żeligowski, Warsaw, 1 Dec. 1925, AAN, Archiwum Żeligowskiego, file. 28, fols. 11-2, 19-20.} The latter quickly returned to Warsaw to oversee the activities of conspirators.

Poor relations with Pilsudski pained Sosnkowski, but they were not sufficient to lead him to return to politics. On 20 November, Pilsudski again called on Wojciechowski, this time to present his recommendations for war minister. He proposed Żeligowski, Brigadier General Leon Berbecki, Brigadier General Michal Tokarzewski or Major General Leonard Skierski. The stolid Żeligowski, not one of Pilsudski’s men but nonetheless sympathetic to him, was chosen. Asked about Sosnkowski, Pilsudski said: "perhaps as chief of staff, not as minister."\footnote{21 Nov. 1925, Dziennik Zdanowskiego, Ossolineum, 14023, part II, vol. 5, fol. 303.} Pilsudski now had need of Sosnkowski. He wished to elevate Sosnkowski, who was still unaware Pilsudski’s intentions, to this post in order to ensure that it did not fall to someone who might actively counter his plans for a \textit{coup}. On 27 November he and Żeligowski met with Sosnkowski and asked him to become chief of the General Staff. After lengthy and heated discussion Sosnkowski refused.\footnote{Żeligowski, "Czy można było uniknąć przewrotu majowego," nd., AAN, Archiwum Żeligowskiego, file 32, fol. 14. For a more melodramatic account see Jadwiga Sosnkowska, Maj 1926 r., Warsaw, 4 Nov. 1976, Wojskowy Instytut Historyczny, Warsaw.} Pilsudski’s followers continued to enjoin Sosnkowski to become chief of the General
Staff. Room was made for him, when Haller, incensed over Żeligowski's restoring Orlicz-Dreszer to his old command, resigned on 15 December. However, each time Sosnkowski refused. It is likely that he saw no opportunity for an accommodation between warring camps.

As Piłsudski's showdown drew near, Miedziński mounted a determined effort to keep Sosnkowski out of politics by informing him that Piłsudski was close to compromise with his opponents. Sosnkowski only returned to the fray in April 1926 when Piłsudski's showdown was at hand. In January and February the Socialists led by former premier Moraczewski, who was labor minister in the Skrzyński government, pushed to have Piłsudski returned to active service and for a law on the organization of the high command that was to his liking. Right members of the government blocked this, and on 7 February, Moraczewski resigned. Soon the remaining Socialist ministers grew dissatisfied, now with economic policy, and on 20 April the Socialists withdrew from the coalition. Skrzyński submitted his government's resignation the next day. Piłsudski decided to make a coup now. Ominous goings on were reported in garrisons, where Piłsudski-ites were in the majority.

Moderate political leaders rushed to rescue the situation and prevent civil war. On the eve of the Socialists' withdrawal Rataj moved to form a government of respected leaders, able to summon broad support and diffuse the situation. At the same time Grabski prevailed on Skrzyński not to resign and to reorganize the government along these lines. Both Rataj and Grabski called on Sosnkowski to return to the Ministry of Military Affairs to take the army in hand and effect an accommodation with Piłsudski. Rataj met with Sosnkowski on 14 April and presented his views. Sosnkowski's response was positive. "He shared in principle Marshal


Rataj's point of view," reported Henryk Dzendzel, a Piast leader. However, Sosnkowski insisted that obtaining compromise required giving Piłsudski the chief role in the life of the army and a command organization in accordance with his views. On 20 April Skrzyński put to Sosnkowski a similar proposition. His response was the same.162

Moderates' attempts to prevent a coup by Piłsudski were overtaken by events. On 5 May the Skrzyński government fell. On 9 May Witos, who had succeeded in reconstituting the Right-Center coalition, was named prime minister. The reconstituted coalition was as bloody-minded as the Piłsudski-ites. Witos promised to rule with a strong hand. He threatened Piłsudski and appointed a fierce opponent of his, Major General Juliusz Malczewski, to replace Żeligowski as war minister. On 12 May The Morning Courier published an interview with Piłsudski. In it he denounced the new government. He prophesied that the crisis was not over and warned: "I stand ready for the struggle, as before, with the chief evil of the state: the rule of Poland by unbridled parties, which ignore the great issues, and think only of gain and influence."163 On 11 May forces sworn to Piłsudski, marched on the capital. Fighting began the next day.

Sosnkowski made one last attempt to stave off civil war. On 11 May Foreign Minister Kajetan Morawski summoned Sosnkowski to Warsaw, claiming he had important information regarding League of Nations disarmament discussions, which were to shortly take place and in which Sosnkowski was to represent Poland. This was only a pretext, as Sosnkowski perhaps realized. When the two met the next morning, Morawski asked the general to stop Piłsudski. "I was sure," Morawski recalled.


that only he [Sosnkowski], ever at Pilsudski’s side in the Legions, Chief of Staff of the Legions, the long-time war minister known to all soldiers, might be able to keep the army from politics. The General was not put off by my request. He hurried [to Sulejówek], [and] promised to [return to Warsaw] in afternoon.¹⁶⁴

Sosnkowski hurried to meet with Pilsudski. "I asked to see the Commandant. Instead of the Commandant . . . I spoke with Miedziński," he told author Tadeusz Katelbach years later. Miedziński assured him no coup was planned and urged him to return to Poznań.¹⁶³ Sosnkowski quit Warsaw that evening. As the train left the Vienna Station, at which he had arrived seven years earlier to begin the work of state building, gunfire was heard in the streets of the capital.

Sosnkowski arrived in Poznań early in morning of 13 May. When Sosnkowski arrived at his headquarters around 10 a.m., he found dispatches from both sides requesting support. Also, he found that his second-in-command, a former Austrian officer, Major General Edmund de Hauser, who did not expect his superior to return, had already acted, aligning the Poznań District with the government. The previous day he had sent two regiments of the 14th Infantry Division to Warsaw to reinforce government units. Now he was mobilizing all the forces in the district, three divisions, to send them to Warsaw. Sosnkowski received de Hauser’s report. He then retreated to his office. At noon, without leaving a note, he shot himself. He was rushed to Transfiguration Hospital in Poznań. There the ministrations of a University of Poznań surgeon saved his life.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁴ Kajetan Morawski, Tamten brzeg (Paris, nd.), 145n.


Sosnkowski never explained his actions and was loathe to recount the matter. Some, including Pilsudski-ites, speculate that he intended only to render himself *hors de combat*, in order to avoid joining the fray, but there is no doubt that he intended to take his life.  

Most explanations suppose Sosnkowski, Hamlet-like, was torn between siding with the government and Pilsudski. This drove him to attempt to take his life. Anguish, certainly, led him to suicide, and Sosnkowski was deeply disturbed. The decision, made without premeditation and preparation, was fundamentally irrational. The sources of his anguish lie elsewhere, however. The Iron Minister was a man of decision. He demonstrated this many times—at Kościuchnówka in 1915, on the Berezyna in 1920. Also, Sosnkowski viewed politics not in terms of struggle between Pilsudski versus the Right, but of unity versus fraction. He always pursued the former and eschewed the latter, and therefore was hardly able to join the partisan strife, to side with the government or Pilsudski. The crisis, rather, stemmed from despair over the demise of compromise and accommodation. Unity was the underpinning of all of his endeavors from the days of the Union of Active Struggle to state building in the 1920s. Strife threatened these. Also, being kept in the dark concerning Pilsudski’s intentions he interpreted as a renunciation. For Sosnkowski, who ever thought of himself as Pilsudskist, this, too, was a terrible blow.

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167 This speculation is contained in Rothschild, *Pilsudski’s Coup*, 112n. Its source is perhaps Sosnkowski’s wounds. The bullet pierced his right breast near the sternum and existed his back on the right also. The strange wound is easily explained. Sosnkowski attempted to shoot himself through the heart. In order to bring his revolver to bear, Sosnkowski, who was left handed, had to grasp the weapon, a heavy caliber automatic pistol, awkwardly. As he pulled the trigger, he jerked the weapon as many shootists do. The aim of the pistol moved right, sending the bullet off course. Although the bullet missed his heart, he nearly died. The bullet pierced and collapsed a lung. Several operations were required to save his life. Prokurator Wojskowy przy Sądzie Okręgowym Nr. VII, Protokół przesłuchania świadka Antoniego Jurasza, Poznań, 23 May 1926. Sosnkowski testified that his intention was to kill himself. Protokół przesłuchania świadka Kazimierza Sosnkowskiego, Poznań, 23 May 1926, JPI, Akta Komisji Żeligowskiego, cont. XVI/24.

168 Sosnkowska, Maj 1926, WIH, 1/2/66, fol. 3.
CHAPTER VI

THE POLAND OF PIŁSUDSKI AND THE COLONELS, 1926-1939

Regardless of the difficulties and the obstacles Poland must be united . . . Poland's security, its future, [our] responsibility before future generations demand this . . . Time is running out--the clock of history strikes the eleventh hour.

Kazimierz Sosnkowski
Speech, 8 October 1938

The May coup ended quickly. A strike by Socialist railway workers on the second day of fighting prevented troops loyal to the government stationed in the provinces from reaching Warsaw. The president and prime minister capitulated and resigned on 14 May. For the next nine years Piłsudski ruled Poland directly, leaving an indelible stamp on politics, diplomacy, and military affairs, one quite distinct from that left by Sosnkowski and other leaders.

There was no revolutionary overhaul of the Polish political system. As Morawski put it: "There was no post-May system. There was only Piłsudski, the gentleman genius from the Eastern borderlands with the intuition of a statesman and temperament of a revolutionary, lordly and coarse, verging on obscurity and legend at the same time, the Piłsudski for whom Poland was some kind of [great estate like] Zulów or Piekilszike."\(^1\) The regime which emerged strove to

\(^1\) Morawski, *Tamten brzeg*, 177.
preserve a pseudo-parliamentary charade. After the coup the apolitical Ignacy Mościcki became president and Kazimierz Bartel, who once taught Sosnkowski mathematics at Lvov Polytechnic, became premier in the first of many short-lived governments. Pilsudski only reserved for himself the position of minister of military affairs, although he held it until his death in May 1935. The instrument of the regime was the Non-Partisan Bloc for Cooperation with the Government (Bezpartyjny Bloc Współpracy z Rządem or BBWR). Founded by Slawek, the BBWR was tasked with securing for the regime a parliamentary majority. However, after it failed to get a majority in elections in 1928 and the Sejm grew obdurate, the regime resorted to intimidation and, in 1930, to imprisoning its opponents in the fortress at Brest-Litovsk. The new regime took its name from the slogan of Sanacja, translated as "[moral] cleansing." It was guided by a barrack-room ideology that held, in Davies words, "the sin in men's souls could be scrubbed clean by spit and polish." The regime served the will of Pilsudski. Between 1926 and 1935 the regime strove to strengthen the powers of the executive branch of government, although a new constitution giving the president wide powers was not introduced until April 1935, shortly before Pilsudski's death. The regime was also characterized by monopolization of important government posts by Pilsudski's followers from the army, former Legionaries known as the "Colonels." Pilsudski here was especially reliant on the younger members of the group, whose loyalty was unquestioning.

In foreign affairs the effects of Pilsudski's return to power were profound. To allay the

2 Davies, God's Playground, 2:422.

3 Paradoxically, Pilsudski simultaneously strove to depoliticize the army. He appears to have made a distinction among his officers between political operatives and others whom he thought of as proper military men, keeping the latter and the majority of military personnel out of politics. Janusz Jędzejewicz, W służbie idei (London, 1972), 248. On the Sanacja regime see Rothschild, Pilsudski's Coup, and Garlicki, Pilsudski.

4 The best survey of Polish as well as French and Czech policy between 1926 and 1935 is Piotr Wandycz's magisterial, The Twilight of French Eastern Alliances, 1926-35: French-Czechoslovak-Polish Relations from Locarno to the Remilitarization of the Rhineland (Princeton,
doubts the Western powers as well as the Soviet Union might have had about his regime, in June 
1926 Pilsudski appointed as foreign minister the highly regarded diplomat August Zaleski who 
pursued the policies of the preceding governments. Upon his accession Pilsudski was satisfied 
that relations between European states would see no major changes or developments, requiring 
determined action for the remainder of the decade. Nevertheless, with time a new policy gained 
ascendance. Although he was not responsible for it, the change coincided with the rise of Colonel 
Józef Beck, a former aide de camp of Pilsudski's and military attache in Paris. The young, and 
intelligent Beck was Pilsudski's hand-picked man at the foreign ministry. After he was installed 
as Zaleski's deputy in 1930, he established a firm grip on the ministry. In 1932 he replaced 
Zaleski as minister. The new course featured a tougher policy toward France. This policy was 
prompted on the one hand by dissatisfaction with France as an ally. French governments now 
sought to reduce their obligations under the alliance of 1921. On the other hand, Pilsudski 
perceived the current relationship as one-sided and sought a true partnership. He endeavored to 
do this, as Wandycz observes, by "showing the French through a determined course that they 
needed Poland just as much as Poland needed them." Military cooperation slackened: staff talks 
ceased, French instructors were removed from the Superior War College, and the contract of the 
French Military Mission was not renewed. The new foreign policy was also characterized by 
ambivalance and at times hostility toward Czechoslovakia. More importantly, a new canon, 
neutrality and normal relations with Germany and the Soviet Union, was added to Polish policy. 
This policy strove to compensate for the lack of Western support, "to redress the equilibrium."

1988). Also noteworthy is Ciałowicz's, Polsko-francuski sojusz.

5 Pobóg-Malinowski, Najnowsza historia, 2:504.

6 Wandycz, Twilight, 469.
Polish foreign policy was driven by events, beginning with the signing on 1 December 1925 of the treaties negotiated at Locarno, Switzerland in October 1925. The Locarno agreements guaranteed the frontiers established by the 1919 Paris peace settlement in the West and bound the Western powers to defend the victim of aggression. These agreements, however, placed East Central Europe under a question mark, offering no guarantees for eastern frontiers and even including provisions on outside arbitration of disputes which tacitly inviting revision of borders. The Western Powers led by the United Kingdom had no interest in East Central Europe and said so openly; the British statesman Sir Austen Chamberlain remarked in 1925 that "for the Polish corridor, no British government will or ever can risk the bones of a British grenadier."7 The rise of Adolf Hitler to the position of chancellor in January 1933 radicalized European foreign affairs. The accession of the National Socialist German Workers' Party was followed by withdrawal from the League of Nations; the expansion of the army, the Reichswehr; the start of motorization of the cavalry; and the establishment of an air force. However, Conservative British governments responded to this revolution in diplomacy as though it was a matter of revision of supposed inquiries in the 1919 peace settlements. But for the tenure of Louis Barthou when the Quai d'Orsay pursued an "Eastern Locarno," French leaders were unwilling act resolutely as well. The establishment of a terroristic state in Russia under Joseph Stalin exacerbated the problems of Polish diplomacy. Pilsudski thus hewed more closely to the policy of "equilibrium," signing a Polish-Soviet Treaty of Non-Aggression on 25 July 1932 and a German-Polish Declaration of Non-Aggression on 26 January 1934.

As great as the consequences of the coup for Poland's foreign relations were, its most profound effects lay in military affairs. One of the first acts of the new regime was to regulate

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once and for all the organization of the army high command. On 6 August 1926 decrees were issued which expanded and defined the president's powers. More importantly, a new office was created—the General Inspectorate of the Armed Forces (Generalny Inspektorat Sił Zbrojnych better known by its Polish acronym GISZ). The general inspector of the army was the designate wartime commander-in-chief. He oversaw all preparations and planning for the defense of the nation in war. The General Staff and army inspectors, designate army commanders, were directly subordinate to him. Although the Inner War Council was restored for a short time, the new organization did not provide for a war council. Planning along with matters of organization, tactics, and armaments were given a hearing at counsels of army inspectors which Pilsudski convened. But these briefings were given over to monologues by Pilsudski. And as the general inspector grew old and infirm they took place only infrequently, ceasing entirely after 1932. The coup was also followed by a purge of the officer corps despite talk of brotherhood and the conspicuous retention of a few officers who had stood by the government, like Colonel Władysław Anders. In the aftermath of the coup, 30 generals and 235 colonels and lieutenant colonels were retired. Few resisted as doggedly as Sikorski, who hung on without command for eleven years until his fortunes changed in 1939. Former Legionaires were promoted in the place of these officers. In 1924 Legionaires were only 21 percent of all generals, by 1932 they were 74 percent.

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8 Dekret Prezydenta Rzeczypospolitej o sprawowaniu dowodztwa nad siłami zbrojnymi w czasie pokoju i ustanowieniu Generalnego Inspectorata Sił Zbrojnych, 6 Aug. 1926, Dziennik ustaw, 1926, no. 79, item no. 445, 882.


young, they showed the same unquestioning loyalty toward Piłsudski as his political operatives.

The new command organization and purge placed the army firmly in the hands of the commander-in-chief designate, the general inspector of the army, a post Piłsudski held until his death in May 1935. The general inspector, managed the army single-handed; he did not allow matters to be discussed which he did not raise himself.\(^\text{11}\)

Piłsudski was firmly in control of the army by the time Sosnkowski returned to active service in March 1927 after recuperating from his wounds.\(^\text{12}\) On returning to duty he was restored to high command by Piłsudski. Although he had found his friend’s politics inconvenient, Piłsudski continued to value Sosnkowski’s military abilities. Sosnkowski was not punished for his actions or his inaction in May, retaining command of Corps District VII throughout his long convalescence. He was relieved of his duties as district commander only on 17 March 1927, when he formally returned to active service and was made an army inspector. The Polish Army’s six later 12 and then 14 army inspectors worked under the supervision of the general inspector. Inspectors prepared studies of operational problems and conducted wargames. Their chief task was to “know the state of the army and to prepare on this basis suggestions for the future growth of the army.”\(^\text{13}\) Their sphere embraced a front-line sector and the units assigned to its defense as well as other installations. Sosnkowski was first assigned the Podolia, the the Volhynia, and finally the Polesie sector, which he oversaw for the next 11 years. Piłsudski divided responsibility

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\(^{11}\) Romeyko, _Przed i po maju_, 56-7.

\(^{12}\) The wound Sosnkowski inflicted upon himself, though not fatal, caused him serious injury. The bullet from the large bore revolver which he used (according to one account, a Colt .45 caliber revolver) pierced his lung and destroyed a portion of his rib cage. He underwent three operations and a long period of recuperation in hospital. He completed his convalescence in the first months of 1927 on the French Riveria. Sosnkowski to Józef Matecki, Warsaw, 20 Dec. 1965, JPI, Archiwum Sosnkowskiego, part II, cont. XVI/14/40.

\(^{13}\) M.S.Wojsk., Sztab Gen., Oddz. I, Rozkaz Inspekcyny, Warsaw, 30 Nov. 1926, CAW, Akta GISZ, cont. 1.302.4.392.
for the east and west between his inspectors, and Sosnkowski had little to do to with the West. Contemporaries saw in Sosnkowski one of the most dedicated of the army's inspectors. Among Polish commanders Sosnkowski's views inspired great respect and carried great weight. In addition to his duties as inspector, from late summer 1927 he served as chairman of the Committee for Equipment and Armament Affairs (Komitet Spraw Uzbrojeni i Sprzętu or KSUS). In August 1932 he assumed the chairmanship of the new Committee for the Superior War College as well. The exodus of many senior generals after the coup left the forty-two year old Sosnkowski the most senior officer after Piłsudski.

Sosnkowski's position was enhanced by continued good relations with Piłsudski. Piłsudski regarded Sosnkowski as his informal deputy in military affairs. When the general inspector was out of the country on holiday in Madeira between December 1930 and March 1931 and in Constanza, Romania in October 1931, Sosnkowski replaced him. Also, bonds of friendship continued to unite them. Piłsudski felt great remorse for Sosnkowski's suicide attempt, for which he blamed himself. After the coup, according to Sosnkowski, both men put the events of the preceding years behind them, never speaking of May. They remained close personally, sharing each other's company and visiting in each other's homes. Piłsudski became

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15 Żeligowski, "Piłsudczycy," 27 Nov. 1926, AAN, Akta Żeligowskiego, file 48, fol. 103; Piłsudski to Sosnkowski, order, Warsaw, 13 Aug. 1930; and order 2743/tj.31, Warsaw, 11 October 1931, JPI, Archiwum Sosnkowskiego, conts. I/9, fols. 32 and 33.


the godfather of Sosnkowski’s first son, Alexander. He even paid homage to Sosnkowski, acknowledging his leading role in founding the Union of Active Struggle in his book *Historical Revisions (Poprawki historyczne)* published in 1931.

Sosnkowski’s position was not as powerful or as enviable as it at first might have appeared. Sosnkowski returned to the army as an assistant and not a collaborator to Piłsudski. His new position did not give him anything like the independence and influence he had enjoyed as war minister. Inspectors did not command in peacetime. Their influence on army-wide policy was therefore limited, the more so as they reported directly to Piłsudski. Furthermore, Sosnkowski was now kept as far as possible from politics as well as diplomacy. The events of the preceding years had irreparably damaged Sosnkowski’s relationship with Piłsudski. Piłsudski no longer trusted his friend as fully as he had before. He may have continued to regard Sosnkowski’s military talents highly and felt affection for him, but a gulf remained between them. His desire to keep the most important commanders out of politics or to hold them in reserve also may have played a role, as Alexandra Piłsudska, the marshal’s second wife, later maintained. In the 1930s, battling stomach cancer, Piłsudski became bitter and distant with his collaborators, including Sosnkowski. In addition, many among the Piłsudski camp now disliked Sosnkowski, seeing the events of May as sign of disloyalty. Many like Sławek distanced themselves from Sosnkowski. Slanderous rumors emanated from former comrades in arms. It was claimed that Sosnkowski’s suicide was staged. He was called indecisive. The latter accusation followed him for the rest

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of his life. This disaffection was mutual. Sosnkowski lost some of his faith in Pilsudski after 1926. Later he wrote: "For me there was only one Pilsudski. After May 1926 he was no longer my Pilsudski. I did not understand many things. I never understood Brest and similar acts."¹¹

Alone, Pilsudski determined military policy. Dreams of a Polish-backed federation in Eastern Europe gone, he was now concerned with the problem of Poland’s defense against Germany and the U.S.S.R. Pilsudski is credited with bringing to the army a preoccupation with the problem of war with the Soviet Union associated with the slogan "Eyes East" ("Oczy na wschód"). This was not unnatural. Between 1925 and 1929 the Red army numbered 562,000 officers and men. This Eastern emphasis, never formalized, should be not overstated. The problems of defense against a German attack were considered from the outset of Pilsudski’s tenure. Events in the first half of the 1930s gave Polish military leaders pause for thought. On 12 April he polled army inspectors, General Staff officers, as well as Beck and his undersecretary at the Foreign Ministry, Jan Szembek, on whether Germany or Russia posed the greater danger to Poland.²² Pilsudski’s worry over Germany, however, was tempered by a belief that Hitler was not firmly in power and many years were required before the German armed forces would be able to challenge Poland and its allies. Furthermore, these years saw important developments in the U.S.S.R., the completion of First Five Year Plan, a program of industrial development which greatly improved the Red Army’s arsenal. In a report the military attache in Moscow noted:

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¹¹ Katelbach, "Pilsudski i Sosnkowski," 40 and W. Babiński, "Fragmenty rozmów," 124. He also had a low opinion of Pilsudski’s new collaborators, whom he believed were "ruining" the good reputation of the Legions. Sosnkowski had a particular dislike of Miedziński. S. Babiński, Sosnkowski, 124.

"Everything that one could do to strengthen the power of the Red Army technologically has been done."  

Pilsudski held views on warfare markedly different from those who had directed the army in previous years. A gifted student of Bonaparte's campaigns, Pilsudski conceived of war in the East in almost Napoleonic terms, envisioning bold advances and outflanking maneuvers by isolated armies on a great field. This thinking was confirmed in Pilsudski as well as his acolytes by the experience of the Polish-Soviet War in which they won their spurs. In this war, wrote one officer, "The Legion captain became a general, the legion soldier, a captain... Thus our officer corps, more strictly speaking, that part of it which determined military policy, had every reason never to forget the 1920 war, to return to their experiences on every occasion... In this fertile soil, the experiences of that war assumed vast proportions in their eyes."

Pilsudski discounted the defensive, firepower, and the innovations of the First World War. Pilsudski himself had little regard for artillery and aircraft; he thought prevailing views of their capabilities "exaggerated." The importance of cavalry was increased, although the infantry remained the chief arm and in Pilsudski's war of maneuver railways were more important. Pilsudski had little regard for planning and staffs which he associated with routine and paper creations. Like the new weapons he thought their importance exaggerated. Also, Pilsudski was

23 Józef Kowalewski to Director, Russian Section, Moscow, 25 Nov. 1930, AAN VI, Akta Institucji Wojskowych, cont. 296/I/82, fol. 49.

24 Pilsudski's views are summed up in the phrase "Le stratégie le plein air." Pilsudski, "Rok 1920," Pisma, 7:26-9, 165.

25 Jerzy Kirchmayer, 1939-1944: Kilka zagadnień polskich (Warsaw, 1947), 47.

guided by a pragmatism which echoed Tsar Alexander III’s admonition to the Polish nobility in the 1860s: “no reveries, gentlemen.” The general inspector had a low estimation of Poland’s resources. He identified its poverty as one the greatest obstacles to building a lasting system of defense and felt that modernization was beyond Poland’s means, never setting his sights beyond providing the army with the bare necessities. This may have been borne out during the Great Depression, but the years between 1926 and 1928 saw an economic revival which was characterized by growth in investment and industrial production. In this climate the Polish Army went to seed.

The army’s organizational growth became stunted under Piłsudski. Between 1926 and 1935 the postwar expansion and modernization programs were scaled back or terminated. New programs proposed in order to keep abreast of developments elsewhere were rejected. Only a few small pilot projects were initiated, and overall investment in arms and equipment declined. In 1924 only 46 percent of army outlays were given over to the maintainance of existing personnel, animals, and equipment. Between 1926 and 1935 this percentage rarely fell below 55 percent and sometimes was as high as 68 percent. The budgets for the maintainance of personnel and animals annually exceeded the minimum necessary, 750 million złoty, by 50 to 100 million złoty. These


28 In certain industries, like coal and coke, production regained and then surpassed prewar levels. Landau and Tomaszewski, Zarys historii gospodarczej, 169.
sufficient to arm and equip 60 divisions. Although a large army reserve was built and civilian military training programs created a cadre of youths ready to be mobilized, little effort was made to organize them in meaningful units, and no progress was made toward the 60-division army. The state of infantry equipment was disappointing. Apart from the purchase of some heavy mortars from the Czech Škoda firm, little progress was made to provide the artillery with the guns it needed. By the end of the period in 1935 the Poles had four cannon for every infantry battalion, while the Germans, French, and Soviets had eight or more. In 1930 the army still possessed only the armored units of the former Haller Army and their original equipment. After the Western powers had begun to develop large tank arms and independent armored formations, the Poles only christened two new tank regiments equipped with Polish-built tankettes and purchased a lot of 50 British tanks for tests. Motorization continued to remain only a distant objective. The air arm received more attention than tanks and motorization, but fared little better. The new chief of the service Brigadier General Ludomil Rayski had great plans. And in the early 1930s Polish factories, including the new state-owned Polish Aviation Works (Polskie Zakłady Lotnicze), began producing aircraft of Polish design—the high-wing P-7 and P-11 monoplane fighters and the R-XIII scout aircraft. However, little investment and Rayski's own preference for expensive Polish machines did not allow the army to maintain the air fleet at its 1926 level of 800 craft and it shrank to 417 by 1936. Army inspectors reported the anti-tank and anti-aircraft establishments in a deplorable state.


Between 1926 and 1935 the intellectual growth of the army also slowed. Training and education, especially for high ranking officers, suffered under Pilsudski. The Center for Higher Military Studies which offered advanced training to division and army commanders was closed in October 1933. Pilsudski mandated the removal of instruction in command of anything greater than a regiment from the curriculum of the Superior War College, narrowing the focus of the course of study to one which turned out "modest, nameless aides of commanders." Staff work and planning suffered also. Staff officers were discriminated against in promotion, being routinely passed over in favor of line officers without advanced training. The new command organization circumscribed the role of the General Staff, demoting it and subordinating it to a general inspector who disliked staff officers and did not respect staff work. The development of the General Staff slowed and its activities were reduced in nearly every sphere. High level planning was almost altogether ignored between 1926 and 1935. Under Pilsudski, the doctrinal development of the army deteriorated. Because the physical development of the army was stunted, a gulf appeared between operational doctrine and the means to implement it. The appearance of this gulf led to an effort to revise the army's doctrine. This was accomplished piecemeal at as individual regulations were revised. Only in 1931 did a guiding instrument, albeit of a provisional nature, The General Battle Instructions (Ogólne Intrukcje Walki), appear. The emerging doctrine retained much of that put forward in 1921.


33 Upon taking command of the Superior War College Kutrzeba wrote "The charge that our regulations are not good and therefore cannot be taught is incorrect." Kutrzeba memorandum, 12 October 1928, CAW, Akta WSWoj., cont. I.320.1.1.
cooperation as its chief canon, however. A number of other modifications were introduced as well. These—reliance on flanking maneuvers, operations in difficult terrain, night operations—aimed to make up for Polish material weakness. The defensive was treated, although greatest attention was given to the delaying action which was to create the conditions for a flank attack. One contemporary Polish theorist called this "a doctrine of poverty."34

Sosnkowski brought to his duties a view of the strategic position of Poland which was similar to Piłsudski’s. Between 1927 and 1935 he also believed that Russia constituted the greatest threat to Poland. Sosnkowski’s views like Piłsudski’s reflect a preoccupation with Russia, although in former’s case this was a function of his duties. Sosnkowski, however, reflecting the professional soldier’s bias to emphasize the magnitude and immediacy of security threats and in contrast to Piłsudski, saw the situation as much more grave, especially after 1933.35 Events outside of Poland in 1933 and 1934, the start of German rearmament as well as the end of the First Five Year Plan in the Soviet Union, gave Sosnkowski pause for thought as they did many Polish military leaders. In his response to the question Piłsudski put to inspectors, whether Germany or Russia posed the greater threat, Sosnkowski stated that both were great dangers to Poland. The inspector feared that Western diplomacy might lead to the complete isolation of Poland and, if so conflict with Germany, relatively soon, and he believed war was "inevitable in the long run," perhaps 20 years hence. However, emphasizing the Reichswehr’s lack of a standing cadres, especially officers—he did not foresee that the Nazis were to dispense with the old corps and flood officer ranks with new men—Sosnkowski did not believe that the Germans were capable

34 Lityński, "Udział Wsziej Szkoły," 33ff.

35 On the military mind see Huntington, Soldier and the State, 65ff.
Sosnkowski genuinely believed that Russia posed a great immediate danger to Poland. He pointed to the deployment, in ever greater quantities, of offensive weapons such as bomber aircraft, tanks, and heavy artillery. Sosnkowski was deeply worried by political developments. He carefully kept track of changes in the composition of the Russian Communist Party’s Central Committee noting the rise of Stalinist stalwarts, although he saw in them the rise of “military elements.” The social disruption of the Five Year Plan also concerned him. Sosnkowski believed the Soviet Union in the thick of an ideological crisis as its leaders moved farther and farther from such goals as equality. The morale of society was low, and corruption was rife. He thought it possible that a desperate leadership might turn to a foreign adventure, war with Poland, as an exit from this situation.

Although Sosnkowski shared Piłsudski’s views on Poland’s strategic position, his ideas on military affairs differed markedly from his superiors’. In the course of executing his duties as army inspector Sosnkowski became dismayed by what he found. He found that the new emphasis on movement and maneuver had wrought much damage. The two came at the expense of reconnaissance. He also found coordination and cooperation woefully lacking. In field training exercises troops congregated together and “fell all over each other.” This would have disastrous consequences, if they were exposed to well directed artillery fire. He also found cooperation

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between infantry and artillery inadequate. Everywhere Sosnkowski found the army wanting in arms and equipment, in particular artillery.38

Sosnkowski strove to remedy what deficiencies he was able to in his capacity as inspector. When Sosnkowski supervised field training exercises, he strove to hone the skills of commanders as well as soldiers. Under his supervision exercises strove to improve the use of firepower and coordination between the combat arms, especially the artillery and infantry. At all times Sosnkowski sought to impress upon a generation of officers who had never seen combat the deadliness of small arms and artillery fire; the difficulties encountered in battle, Clausewitz’ “friction”; and the importance therefore of communication.39 Despite the cloud over their relationship, Sosnkowski was free and open with Pilsudski, and he used his inspector’s direct channel to express his misgivings. Sosnkowski used field training exercises as well as wargames to study problems in training, organization and methods, relaying his findings as well as suggestions to the general inspector. Mostly the inspector suggested modest changes in organization and methods—proposing, for instance, that machine guns and like weapons be assigned to small units to improve mobility and firepower, that infantry unit commanders and artillery observers position themselves with the forward elements of units, or that scouting be given greater attention.40 His most far-reaching proposal came in a November 1929 report on the state of radio-telegraphy in the armed forces. He pointed out that the army lacked sufficient

38 See, for example, Sosnkowski to Generalny Inspector Sił Zbrojnych, report 861/tjn/33, Warsaw, 18 March 1933, CAW, Akta GISZ (1.302.4), cont. 456 and “Sprawozdanie z ćwiczenia grupowego” z ostrym strzelowaniem baonu piechoty i artylerii w 3 D.P.Leg.,” Warsaw, 15 Jan. 1930, CAW, Akta GISZ (1.302.4), cont. 436.


40 Sosnkowski to Pilsudski, report, 18 March 1933; GISZ, Biuro Inspekcji, Regulaminyy-wyciągi z rocznych raportów z inspekcji, Warsaw, 6 March 1928; and Sosnkowski, Sprawozdanie z "ćwiczenia grupowego,” 6 March 1928, CAW, Akta GISZ, conts. 1.302.4.456, 1551, and 436.
radios and that officers and men were in general unfamiliar with the signals service, and in conclusion he proposed the reconstruction of the entire arm.\textsuperscript{41} Sosnkowski's suggestions fell on deaf ears. Despite his urging that the army's radio communication capacity be expanded, for example, Piłsudski chose to rely exclusively on the antiquated Hughes teletype and telephones.\textsuperscript{42} Sosnkowski's strained relationship with Piłsudski now led him to refrain from challenging the general inspector or acting on his own. Although the counsels of inspectors in theory were a venue to influence key policies, they in fact were not. Few officers spoke during these meetings. Reverting to the behavior of earlier years Sosnkowski chose to be silent rather than challenge Piłsudski, and he, too, rarely spoke out at meetings of inspectors.\textsuperscript{43}

Sosnkowski's chairmanship of the Committee on Arms and Equipment Affairs similarly did not provide an opportunity to influence army-wide policy. Originally established in March 1920 by Sosnkowski as the Committee for Army Armament Affairs (Komitet dla Spraw Uzbrojenia Armii), it was potentially one of the most important policy making-organs. Its task was to recommend which arms and equipment the army was to employ and the manner of their employment.\textsuperscript{44} The committee chairman from December 1926 by Lieutenant General Leonard

\textsuperscript{41} Sosnkowski, Raport o stanie obecnym radiotelegrafii w armji polskiej na podstawie inspekcji i ćwiczeń międzypodwórkowych, Warsaw, 12 Nov. 1929, CAW, Akta Kancelarii Sztabu Głównego, 1.302.2, cont 91.


\textsuperscript{43} Sosnkowski spoke at length on only one occasion, the meeting of 8 January 1931, when he led the deliberations of the army inspectors while Piłsudski was away on holiday. Protokół konferencji nr 14 odybytej pod przewodnictwem Inspektora Armii gen. dywizji K. Sosnkowskiego z Inspektorami Armii i Generalami do Prac z rozkazu i zastępcwie marszałka J. Piłsudskiego, Kozłowski ed., "Protokoły posiedzeń inspektors," 25:321-26.

\textsuperscript{44} M.S.Wojsk., Wiceminister, order, Warsaw, 30 March 1920, CAW, Akta Wiceministrów, cont. I.300.2.5 and Piłsudski, order, Skład Komitetu dla Spraw Uzbr. i Sprzętu, Warsaw, I Dec. 1926, Akta GISZ, cont. I.302.4.1838.
Skierski. In late summer 1927 Sosnkowski replaced him.\textsuperscript{45} When Sosnkowski assumed the chairmanship, the committee was studying heavy guns, light tanks, and signals equipment. However, the committee did not complete this work. The last sitting for which there is any evidence, took place on 9 and 10 January 1928. No evidence of any activity after June 1930 can be found. The committee remained moribund until 1935.\textsuperscript{46} The reasons for this organ's suspension are unclear. It is likely that the end to any efforts at modernization, deprived the committee of itsraison d'être.

In 1932 Sosnkowski's sphere was enlarged to embrace the Superior War College and other military institutions of higher education. In early 1932 a Committee for the Superior War College which was chaired by Sosnkowski was established.\textsuperscript{47} The committee was charged with overseeing the Center for Higher Military Studies until it was closed in October 1933, the training of officers abroad at the French Ecole Superior de Guerre and other centers, and the army's various specialized courses for commanders as well as the Superior War College. It answered directly to the general inspector.\textsuperscript{48} Committee members included Army Inspector Rydz-Śmigly; the commandant of the War College, Colonel then Brigadier General Tadeusz Kutrzeba; and the


\textsuperscript{47} The committee's first recorded sitting was its second meeting, which took place on 8 February 1932. However, it was formally constituted only on 30 August 1932. Eugeniusz Kozłowski, "Dokumenty do historii Polskich Sił Zbrojnych w latach 1918-1939," Biuletyn Wojskowej Akademii Politycznej 3(1959), dotatek: 4.

\textsuperscript{48} M.S.Wojsk., Kasprzycki, order, Kompetencje w sprawach wyszkolenia, 29 Oct. 1932, Dziennik Rozkazów M.S.Wojsk: Dodatek Tajny, 1932, no. 8, item 67, 44-5.
vice minister of military affairs, to June 1934 Brigadier General Kazimierz Fabrycy, from June 1934 Brigadier General Janusz Gluchowski. The chief of the General Staff occasionally attended committee meetings.

The committee was charged with bringing training in line with Piłsudski’s views. However, what this meant is unclear, and no order delimiting this has come to light. Piłsudski was deeply dissatisfied with the quality of staff officers as well as commanders. The agenda of the committee, presented at the second meeting of the committee on 8 February 1932 suggest that the body was to carry out an overhaul of higher education, both its administration and curriculum, in order to improve overall quality, but chiefly in the training of staff officers.49

Under Sosnkowski’s direction the Superior War College Committee moved to improve the quality of graduates by improving the quality of the officers admitted. In spring 1932 the committee established new guidelines for admission, adding a battery of qualifying exams. In addition, the committee raised the maximum age of an applicant from 28 for lieutenants and 30 for captains to 31 for both, in order to enlarge the pool of applicants. The new guidelines were issued by the War Ministry in August.50 Moreover, the committee attacked the sources of the decline of staffs and staff officers. A survey of commanders, although it evaluated staff officers favorably in general, found, for instance, that they had little enthusiasm for their craft and the study of military science. It also revealed that they felt that completion of the War College course was of little benefit in the practice of their craft. It certainly was of no benefit to their careers as line officers were promoted ahead of equally qualified staff officers. The unattractiveness of staff


service was further brought home by a dramatic decline in the number of officers seeking to enter the War College: 83 officers sought to begin the course in 1933, nearly 50 percent fewer in 1931. On Sosnkowski's initiative the committee proposed that the condition of staff officers be dramatically improved. In December 1932 the committee endorsed a memorandum prepared by Sosnkowski which was sent to Piłsudski proposing: that war college graduates be promoted over line officers, that graduates without command experience be given commands after matriculation, and that time spent in studies be counted as line service to improve officers' chances of advancement. 51 These recommendations were at odds with Piłsudski's views on staffs and staff work, and they appear not to have been implemented.

From reform of the quality of candidates the committee proceeded to an overhaul of the Superior War College curriculum in March 1933. The focus of this work was higher tactics or operational doctrine as taught at the college. The Superior War College played an important role in the formulation and dissemination of doctrine, and the project was a sincere attempt to resolve the problems of operational doctrine. At the committee meeting of 7 December 1934 Sosnkowski told members that the role of the committee embraced: "the discussion of certain problems, the resolution of existing doubts, and the establishment of lasting viewpoints, which can be used to fill existing lacunae and shortcomings of doctrine and regulations." 52 The project owed its ambitious nature to Sosnkowski, who may have seen an opportunity to right many of the wrongs


of recent years now that Pilsudski was in increasingly ill-health and his grip on the army weakened. Nevertheless, Sosnkowski relied on oral orders here.\textsuperscript{53} In spring 1934 he instructed Kutrzeba to prepare studies of select problems of the army's operational doctrine, and these were to be the basis of committee discussions. By February 1935 three studies were completed, one on artillery and its employment, a second on the defense, and a third on operational groups or independent corps formations. The studies were frank. That on artillery admitted that too few guns were available for this arm to accomplish its appointed tasks. Kutrzeba also pointed out the absence of corps formations within an army made the army commander's job difficult, impossible without staff officers capable of taking over many of his responsibilities.\textsuperscript{54} The committee augmented these studies with the investigations of its own members. The committee was to move to discussion and resolution of doctrinal problems on 8 January 1935.\textsuperscript{55} Pilsudski's final illness, however, intervened to suspend this work.

On 12 May 1935 Pilsudski died. His death came as a surprise to many for the nature of his illness had been concealed. His passing caused genuine grief in his followers and the entire nation. It also caused profound crisis. For some, close collaborators, like Sławek, this crisis was existential, for the Commandant's passing deprived them of their purpose. For others this trial was less philosophical, for a succession crisis and the emergence of deep divisions in the Sanacja camp followed Pilsudski's death.

\textsuperscript{53} Tadeusz Kutrzeba, report, Warsaw, 26 May 1934, CAW, Akta GISZ, cont. I.302.4.828.


It was widely expected that President Mościcki was to resign in favor of now Prime Minister Sławek or even Sosnkowski after the introduction of the new constitution. Mościcki, however, refused to step down. He was encouraged by liberals and moderates in the Sanacja camp, most notably former trade and industry minister Eugeniusz Kwiatkowski, an advocate of government intervention who wished to depart from the economic conservatism of the preceding years. Showing himself a man of ambition and a politician of talent, he swiftly removed Sławek from politics. Sławek, at loose ends since Piłsudski’s death, did not want the presidency and was chiefly concerned with completing the construction of the authoritarian system which he had designed for Piłsudski. He implemented a new electoral law instituting indirect elections and removing political parties from the process. After general elections in September Sławek disbanded the BBWR, believing that its work was done. Mościcki then forced Sławek’s resignation as prime minister, replacing him with the liberal Piłsudski-ite Marian Zyndram-Kościalkowski. Yet when victory was in Mościcki’s grasp, a challenge was issued by the new general inspector, Lieutenant General Edward Rydz-Smigly.

It has been widely asserted by Piłsudski-ites associated with the Colonels that Rydz-Śmigły was nominated general inspector, because this was Piłsudski’s wish. Although Rydz-Śmigły was one of Piłsudski’s favorites, he had never been a member of the marshal’s inner circle. Also, Piłsudski doubted his lieutenant’s ability to fulfill the duties of commander-in-chief in wartime. In his last years he disparaged Rydz, and at one meeting of his generals told them that "in this gathering I see only two generals capable of command: Sosnkowski and Rybak." 

56 Jędrzejewicz, W służbie idei, 202, and Narbut-Łuczyński, U kresu wędrówki, 320. This view is often presented by historians as a testament, although there was none. Leslie, History of Poland, 186, and Piotr Stawiecki, Następcy Komandanta: Wojsko a Polityka Wewnętrzna Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej w latach 1935-1939 (Warsaw, 1969), 33-4.

It is more likely that for the role of commander-in-chief Piłsudski favored Sosnkowski. And it was widely expected that Sosnkowski would replace the marshal.\footnote{Kajetan Morawski, *Wczoraj* (London, 1967), 187 and *Diariusz Szembeka*, 3:190.} However, it was not Piłsudski's choice to make. Mościcki at Ślawek's suggestion made the decision, within hours of Piłsudski's death. On 11 November 1936 the president promoted Rydz-Śmigły marshal completing the transition. Both camps favored Rydz-Śmigły over Sosnkowski, because the they believed the former was apolitical and the latter politically ambitious.\footnote{Morawski, *Wczoraj*, 187.} But in the same fashion as Mościcki, the new general inspector with encouragement from Miedziński and others cast off his mask of passivity and showed he also had political ambitions. Rydz inclined to a simple nationalism and opposed radical change and forced the dismissal of Zyndram-Kościelkowski. After much wrangling a government was formed headed by former army surgeon Brigadier General Felicjan Sławoj-Składkowski and including Kwiatkowski and several of the president's men in the economic posts. Although intended as a stopgap, the new government proved resilient, remaining in power until 1939.

Poland now moved toward fascism. This was perhaps the continuation of the post-1926 drift toward ever more authoritarian forms. It also was the product of the regime's weakness. A majority of citizens boycotted the rigged elections for a new legislature under the 23 April 1935 constitution. The failure of the conservative economic policy of previous years to bring relief from the depression caused strikes by workers and peasants. Now consolidated Peasant and National Parties geared up for a determined assault on the regime. Even Paderewski ended his retirement to rally leaders like Józef Haller and Sikorski and to form a Center-Right opposition coalition called the Front Morges after the pianists' Swiss villa which was its headquarters. Not long after the BBWR was disbanded and it was declared that there was no need for "an
organization of political character intervening between the legislature and the country," did political leaders, in particular Rydz-Śmigly and his partisans, begin searching for a new prop. In February 1936 they established the Camp of National Unity (Obóz Zjednoczenia Narodowego or OZN). The camp was a semi-official organization which strove to bind society to the regime. The chief architect of the organization was Colonel Adam Koc, a former aide to Piłsudski during the First World War and director of the Bank of Poland. An advocate of civilian military training and the militarization of Polish society in the 1920s, Koc borrowed heavily from nationalist organizations in an attempt to tap the support of Poles, especially youths, who favored them. The central tenet of OZN was "national defense," and it elevated the importance in national life of the army and the general inspector. It also advanced a concept of "directed democracy" mobilizing the nation to develop state power. The Camp of National Unity devised a large-scale economic program. It called for government investment in home industry, including the creation of state-owned concerns. The program called for investment of 1.8 billion złoty between 1936 and 1940 and, characteristic of the age, was known as the "Four Year Plan." In investment, priority was given to sectors of the economy which played a role in national defense, war industry. The regime's economic program was balanced against the fiscal policies of Kwiatkowski and his partisans. Although they favored government investment, they opposed government ownership and insisted on a deflationary currency policy and controls on foreign exchange and trade.60

In the succession crisis that gripped the regime after Piłsudski's death only one of his followers had a strong position: Beck. Beck alone had the sanction the others sought. He directed Poland's foreign affairs largely without interference, both Mościcki and Rydz-Śmigly directed Poland’s foreign affairs largely without interference, both Mościcki and Rydz-Śmigly

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deferring to him. Sikorski observed: "Śmigly has no developed concept of foreign policy. He lacks understanding and grasp of the broad problems tied to it. For him the 'marshal's line' in the area is authoritative and satisfactory." Beck could be courageous and never feared shouldering important responsibilities. However, he was an amateur, acquiring his knowledge of foreign affairs from the Superior War College and Pilsudski's tutoring. As one historian writes: "The basic problem that any government must master in diplomacy and peace as well as strategy and war is the estimation of others' intentions." It is difficult to escape the impression that Beck as well as other leaders woefully misinterpreted the intentions of friend and foe alike.

Under Beck the watchword of Poland's foreign policy remained independence and its chief pillars, alliance with France and equilibrium between Germany and the U.S.S.R. In addition, he continued to hold the Czechs at arms length. However, Beck pursued this policy in circumstances far different from those in which it was first conceived. On 16 March 1935 Germany renounced the military clauses of the Versailles Treaty, reintroduced universal military service, and adopted peacetime military organization of 36 divisions. One year later, almost to the day, the German Army reoccupied the Rhineland, demilitarized under the 1925 Locarno treaties. Closer to home, the status of Danzig remained an inflammatory issue and the Germans carried out a number of provocations. At the same time the Western powers' policy of appeasement rose toward flood tide. In the United Kingdom the Conservative governments of Ramsay MacDonald and Stanley Baldwin were reluctant to embark on a policy that demanded a strengthening of the armed forces. French leaders, still unable or unwilling to act without British support, again took

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61 Quoted in Stawecki, _Następcy_, 10n.


no action to uphold the Versailles and Locarno agreements. To remedy this impotence French leaders turned not to their East Central European allies but to the Soviets, who had adopted an anti-fascist foreign policy on Hitler's rise. A Franco-Soviet pact was signed on May 2 1935. (The Czechs adopted a similar course and two weeks later signed a pact with the Soviets.)^64 The new French commander-in-chief, General Maurice Gamelin, favored Poland and Czechoslovakia, but was then reluctant to challenge government policy.

Beck's policy was likened by contemporaries to "tight-rope walking." On one hand, he worked to preserve the Franco-Polish alliance, going so far as to pledge to the French ambassador, Léon Noël, that Poland was ready to fulfill her obligations to France when German forces entered the Rhineland in March 1936. On the other, he pursued independent objectives that were often contrary to French interests. Beck strove mightily to thwart French cooperation with the Soviet Union. French as well as Czech cooperation with the Soviet Union depended in large measure on Poland's involvement. Polish cooperation in the form of permission to deploy troops across Poland was required to actuate the alliances. However, there existed, as historian Henry L. Roberts writes, "a conviction on the part of the government, so pervasive as to be undebated, that no fruitful relationship with the Soviet Union was possible."^65 Beck and his policy were despised by French leaders, in particular Noël who intrigued against the Polish minister. The years following Pilsudski's death saw the nadir of Franco-Polish as well as Czecho-Polish relations. Thus Beck more and more worked to "redress the equilibrium" with amicable relations with Poland's western and eastern neighbors. With regard to Germany, he strove to settle

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disputes, as in Danzig, to the satisfaction of the Germans while making it clear that Poland tolerated no infringement of its rights, to cooperate while maintaining Poland's independence.

While the Foreign Ministry bumbled along in the old groove, the army high command dramatically departed from the course Piłsudski had charted. This change was brought on largely by events outside of Poland. The increasing tempo of German rearmament led all the nations of Europe to modernize their armed forces. In Poland this course was facilitated by changes in the high command. The new general inspector was regarded as having surpassed the limits of his capabilities. Zeligowski observed: "Smigły is a good soldier, perhaps an expert, he would command a regiment, brigade or even a division well."\(^\text{66}\) Rydz-Śmigły shared Piłsudski's view on economy and his ignorance of economics. Like Piłsudski he thought of staff officers as mere technicians: "The staff, which is to assist the commander, can not usurp the elements of command. . . A staff officer is a machine working objectively." His views were caricatures of Piłsudski's; he very nearly made a virtue of Poland's backwardness.\(^\text{67}\) Rydz, however, had a knack for surrounding himself with better-prepared and, in some instances, very talented officers. He made a number of important changes within the army leadership upon his accession. He named Brigadier General Waclaw Stachiewicz, a graduate of the French war college, his chief of the General Staff. A graduate of the Polish Superior War College Brigadier General Tadeusz Malinowski became Stachiewicz's deputy. Rydz-Śmigły also brought Kutrzeba to GISZ. Also, unlike his predecessor the new general inspector did not manage the army single-handed. He surrendered important policy decisions to the minister of war and chief of the General Staff and


\(^{67}\) Rydz-Śmigły, Omówienie na ćwiczenia W.S.Woj na kursie doskonalającym oficerów dyplomowanych, 24 Feb. 1939, CAW, Akta GISZ, 1.302.841. See also Kirchmayer, Pamiętniki, 336-7.
left the two to their own devices much of the time. This led to the resurgence of the general staff, as it again assumed the role of chief operational policy-making and planning organ. New mobilization and war plans were at last begun. Moreover, it led to frank attempts to come to terms with new problems and ideas. In 1936, for example, an Air Staff within the General Staff and an Air Defense Command (Dowództwo Obrony Przeciwlotniczej) were created.

The army's new leaders discarded Piłsudski's "Eyes East" policy, for a more balanced one. In the minds of military men, Nazi Germany was as great a threat as the Soviet Union. Many had long inclined to this view. Those who did not were no longer able to claim that Hitler was not firmly in power and had to admit that Piłsudski had erred. In 1935 and 1936 military leaders moved to take a closer look at the German threat. A number of reports were ordered, the most important of which was a study on the possibility of war between Germany and Poland prepared for GISZ by Kutrzeba. This study confirmed the view that war with Germany was possible, even probable, and no longer a distant prospect, 20 years in the future as Sosnkowski and some had thought. It revealed great advances, thought impossible only two years before. The study assumed Germany's isolation. A combination with the Soviets, who were regarded as the only possible ally, was precluded on the basis of ideological differences. The study concluded that "by 1940 Germany will possess an army capable of waging a war of aggression against a Polish-French coalition, even in the worst case for Germany, when neither France nor Poland is engaged on other fronts." Kutrzeba, however, did not think war likely until somewhat later. Although

68 This led to a lack of coordination between the two, for Kasprzycki and Stachiewicz did not always see eye to eye. Kopański, Mi ta sł użbi e, 222.

69 Rosja czy Niemcy?: Zestawienie odpowiedzi, [May 1934], AAN VI, Akta Institucji Wojskowych, cont. 296/III/2, fols. 1-2; Diariusz Szembeka, 1:154-6; and Narbut-Luczyński, U kresu wędrowki, 269.

70 Kutrzeba, Studjum nad możliwościami wojennemi Niemiec i Polski, Part I: Ocena siły wojennej i gotowości Niemiec, [?] 1936, CAW, Akta GISZ, cont. 1.302.4.317.
now alive to the German threat, military leaders did not ignore the Soviet. Work on plans for war with Germany began in 1936, but little progress was made before 1938, before the completion of a plan for conflict with Russia, as the latter continued to be accorded higher priority.\textsuperscript{71}

After Piłsudski's death Polish military leaders embarked on an ambitious program of modernization of the armed forces. The move to modernize the army was brought on by the new awareness of the German threat. It was spurred by comparative studies, commissioned in mid-1935 by the General Staff, of the effectiveness of the Polish, French, German, and Soviet armed forces. These studies laid bare the weakness of the Polish Army and underscored the need to modernize.\textsuperscript{72} A decision to modernize appears to have been made by the General Staff in mid-1935, when General Staff and War Ministry departments were called on to prepare modernization plans for the army's various branches. In June 1936 a team under the direction of Colonel Jan Sadowski was formed to oversee this work. Completed by 1937, these plans came to constitute a program to be realized over a four-year period, 1936/1937 to 1940. The plan was not to remake the Polish Army, drastically altering its character, force structure, or doctrine. The actual program itself, a series of plans or reports for each individual arm, belies its limited nature. It proposed to effect a technological reconstruction of the armed forces. This reconstruction resembles the modernization called for after the Polish-Soviet War but never completed. It proposed to provide the army's various branches with modern arms and equipment. The plan did not call for the creation of new units. Mobilization plans continued to posit fielding only the 36 first-line and reserve infantry divisions organized in the early 1920s. The modernization program only aimed


\textsuperscript{72} PSZ, vol. 1, part 1, 168. See also Kozłowski, \textit{Wojsko Polskie}, 26.
to alter the army’s structure in so far as it would develop, strengthen, and expand those arms such as the air and tank forces whose growth had been stunted.\textsuperscript{73}

In the move to modernize the Polish Army Sosnkowski played an important role. After Piłsudski’s death Sosnkowski abandoned his passivity and assumed a more active and influential role. Dissatisfaction with the \textit{Sanacja} regime and its policies spurred Sosnkowski to action. However, the death of Piłsudski was an important factor as well. He later wrote:

\textit{The death of Piłsudski, the progress of Soviet Russian and German rearmament as well as the course of international relations caused me to review of the general situation. I was certain that the loss of the figure of the marshal, who protected Poland and who was a strong restraint, inspiring respect in the two neighbors mentioned above, would lead to dangerous adventures up to and including war.}\textsuperscript{74}

It is unlikely that Piłsudski’s death had the effect on Sosnkowski which the above Piłsudski-ite formulation claims it did. Yet the importance of the marshal’s passing is clear even from this passage. It is likely that for Sosnkowski, just as for others, Piłsudski’s death was a release from the straightjacket of his will.

Sosnkowski’s part in modernization was facilitated by his relationship with the new general inspector. Sosnkowski was profoundly shocked by the elevation of Rydz-Śmigly. However, he quickly recovered and offered the general inspector his full and loyal cooperation. "I sincerely wanted to help Śmigly; I wanted to assist him actively, and not only with counsel and words," he later wrote. Sosnkowski, who was in a position to know Rydz-Śmigly’s shortcomings, may have felt that the responsibility for Poland’s defense now fell to him and that it was his duty


\textsuperscript{74} Sosnkowski, \textit{Przycinki}, 5.
to assist Rydz in readying Poland for the war on the horizon. Perhaps because he recognized he was out of his depth, Rydz accepted Sosnkowski as a collaborator. Promoted lieutenant general on 11 November 1936, Sosnkowski remained the army's second most senior officer.

From the very start Sosnkowski played an important role in the technological reconstruction of the armed forces, helping to shape modernization plans. The progress the Germans made between the Hitler's accession and Piłsudski’s death led Sosnkowski to revise his estimation of Poland's strategic situation, concluding that war was likely to come sooner than later, certainly sooner than the 20 years he had believed in 1934. He was convinced that modernization was the most important task before military leaders. In June 1935 Sosnkowski therefore proposed to Rydz that the KSUS be revived. The committee was once again called to life, and Sosnkowski became its chairman. Committee members included the chief of the General Staff, vice ministers of war, and two army inspectors. The committee, which had no executive functions, was relocated to GISZ. Its resolutions were submitted to the general inspector, who confirmed or rejected them. Once confirmed resolutions became directives implemented by the General Staff or Minister of War. Smigly did not reject any of the committee's resolutions, signing them without comment or question. The KSUS was, according to Brigadier General Józef Zając, "a surrogate war council." All of the modernization plans assembled by Sadowski's team were submitted to Sosnkowski's committee for consideration and confirmation.

One of the most important aims of the General Staff and the KSUS in modernizing the army was to increase the firepower of the combat arms, especially the firepower of the infantry.

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75 Ibid, 11. See also Babiński, Sosnkowski, 97.


77 Sosnkowski, Przycinki, 5-6; Józef Zając, Dwie Wojny: Mój udział w wojnie o niepodległość i w obronnie powietrznej Polski (London, 1964), 82; and PSZ, vol. 1, part 1, 169.
division. Modernization of the infantry was taken up by the General Staff already in 1935 and was the first plan reviewed up by the KSUS. The number of heavy machine guns, heavy mortars, and light mortars in each division was ordered increased. More importantly, anti-tank weapons were to be introduced to infantry formations. The KSUS resolved on 16 October 1935 that each division was to have 18 anti-tank guns, four per regiment and six held at the division level. This was revised to 36 to 48 at the suggestion of a special commission summoned by the KSUS to study anti-tank defenses. Each cavalry brigade was to receive a four-gun anti-tank platoon. As the standard anti-tank weapon for the army the KSUS adopted a 37 mm gun produced by the Swedish Bofors firm. Anti-aircraft as well as anti-tank guns were introduced to the cavalry and infantry. The KSUS resolved that each infantry division was to have a four-gun and each cavalry brigade a two-gun anti-aircraft platoon equipped with 40 mm anti-aircraft guns also designed by Bofors. In addition, plans called for the modernization of signals equipment entailing greater reliance on radios, especially at the regiment and division levels. Increasing the punch of the artillery was also an aim of the military leaders. The artillery establishment was set by the KSUS on 9 August 1936 at 2,951 guns: 2,144 light or field, 744 heavy and 63 super heavy guns. Plans called for the artillery to undergo "howitzerization" (haubizacja), field guns were to be replaced with howitzers. More importantly, the army's small complement of heavy artillery was to be increased, and each infantry division was to have a battery of heavy guns at its disposal.

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The development of the armored arm and motorization were important element of the army's modernization plan. The General Staff prepared a plan for the modernization of the armored arm in the last months of 1936. This plan called for an armored establishment of independent companies of tankettes to be assigned to infantry divisions and cavalry brigades, a force of 11 or 12 battalions of tanks to be placed in reserve at the disposal of the high command, and three brigade-sized motorized cavalry units composed of one company of scout tankettes, one tank battalion, two motorized cavalry regiments, a motorized artillery battery, an anti-tank battalion, and anti-aircraft platoon. Units larger than a brigade were considered beyond the means of the state, and a single armored division required an estimated 1,500 motor vehicles, a number equal to one third of all Poland's civilian and military vehicles combined. The General Staff proposal was considered by Sosnkowski's committee on 8-9 January 1937. The committee reduced the size of the tank force to 8 battalions, but added a fourth motorized cavalry brigade. Sosnkowski for one believed that the cavalry was a relic and that its role had been taken over by the armored as well as the air arm. In one report he expressed the view that the cavalry be done away with almost entirely, only a few mounted units being retained for use as reconnaissance elements within infantry divisions. The KSUS also proposed that the army's First World War vintage tanks be scrapped and that the TK tankettes be rearmed with 20 mm cannon. The committee furthermore resolved that the army adopt a new light tank, faster, more heavily armored, and better armed than the Vickers tanks which the army experimented with in the early 1930s and a recently acquired Polish copy, the 7TP. The committee also called for a 10-ton medium tank with a 75 mm gun. The adoption of these new vehicles generated protest from several committee members, who thought the project too expensive. However, Sosnkowski believed the army ought to have armored vehicles capable of offensive operations and matching

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80 Kucharski, *Kawaleria i bróń pancerna*, 185.
the latest foreign models. He argued that this must be done regardless of the cost, and he carried
the day. In addition to modernization of the armored arm the General Staff did submit a
proposal to increase the number of vehicles in use in the army. The General Staff plan, which
was approved by the KSUS on 6 March 1937, called for the motorization of division, brigade, and
army commands and services. An infantry division, for instance, was to have enough vehicles
to transport one regiment if necessary.

The most technologically advanced branch of the Polish armed forces, the air force also
figured prominently in Polish Army modernization plans. Under Piłsudski the air corps, despite
its standing as an independent arm, had been a poor cousin of the infantry, cavalry, and artillery,
but in 1935 it quickly moved to assume a place in the front rank. When the KSUS discussed
modernization of the air arm on 13 October 1935, it's first action was to affirm its importance.
The modernization program accepted by the KSUS called for an establishment of 78 squadrons,
an increase of 50 percent over its present complement. The plan included provisions, testifying
to the influence of Polish adherents of the Italian theorist Douhet, for a force of 21 bomber and
10 fighter bomber squadrons. These units were not to be assigned to cooperate with ground units
as were most, but were to be employed in mass attacks as directed by the high command.
Sosnkowski's committee adopted this proposal over the objections of the army's new air defense
"czar," Air Defense Inspector Brigadier General Zając, who favored the expansion of fighter forces

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82 Stachiewicz, Zestawienie opracowań nad rozbudową, [April-May] 1937, appendix 10, Wojna Obronna, 133.

83 Kieśniewski notes, 1940, OSS, Archiwum Sosnkowskiego, cont. 212/84, fol. 61.
Also, the air arm was to have its old machines replaced with new ones, the second generation of Polish-built craft. The P-11 was to be replaced with a faster, all-metal, low-wing craft. Light or fighter bomber units were to receive a new all-metal, low-wing dive bomber and bomber units, a recently developed machine, the high performance P-37.

Modernization plans proposed to develop the army's air defense capability. Sosnkowski's committee asserted the importance of air defense early, in 1935, resolving that infantry divisions and cavalry brigades include anti-aircraft units and adopting a standard anti-aircraft weapon for the army. Although it did not constitute a single service but coordinated elements of several—the air arm's barrage balloons units, the artillery's batteries of anti-aircraft guns and search lights—a separate plan for the army's air defense forces was prepared. This plan, prepared by Zajac in mid-1936, called for the creation of large anti-aircraft artillery forces for front-line units. These had already been called into being by the KSUS. However, Zajac's plan raised the strength of division and brigade anti-aircraft artillery to six- and four-gun platoons from four- and two-gun platoons and placing at army commanders' and the commander-in-chief's disposal a further 45 batteries of heavy guns. In addition, Zajac called for the establishment of home defense forces of 200 40 mm platoons and 113 heavy batteries. The KSUS took up Zajac's proposals on 17 December 1936. It accepted the need for both front-line and home air defense forces, but perhaps out of concern for the high cost—one anti-aircraft gun battery cost 14,981,410 złoty—the committee reduced the force to defend administrative and industrial installations to 78 heavy batteries and 136 40 mm units.

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85 Koszt dyonu artylerii przeciwlotnicze, nd, CAW, Akta Szefa Sztabu, cont. I.303.1.197; Kieśniewski notes, 1940, OSS, Archiwum Sosnkowskiego, 212/84, fols. 70-73; Józef Zajac, Dwie wojny: Mój udział w wojnie o niepodległość i w obronie powietrznej Polski (London, 1964), 102-3; and Stachiewicz, Zestawienie opracowań nad rozbudową wojska [April-May] 1937, appendix
The technological reconstruction of the Polish Army naturally entailed the expansion of Poland’s very modest war industry. Along with the plans for the modernization of individual arms a plan for the development of war industry was prepared in early summer 1936. The plan is contained in a memorandum of the chief of the General Staff from 28 July 1936. It aimed to develop the productive capacity of industry so that it could be mobilized within a few months of war’s outbreak, after existing stockpiles of war materials were depleted, to meet the needs of the armed forces. The army therefore would not have recourse to purchases abroad in wartime, as shown in 1920, a tenuous prospect. The plan focussed on expanding production in the crucial areas of ammunition, explosives, cannon, aircraft, and armored fighting and motor vehicles, calling for the expansion of existing artillery shell and fuse factories, the creation of a new powder mill, cannon factory, airframe and airplane engine plants, and the retooling of the State Engineering Works to produce new types of armored vehicles in a first phase. Later, production of radio and telephone equipment, raw materials for war production, chiefly chemicals, was to be expanded. Stachiewicz’s proposal urged great speed in its implementation: work was to begin immediately in 1936 and double shifts were to be employed.66 Sosnkowski’s committee considered the plan on 31 July. The KSUS embraced it wholeheartedly. Sosnkowski, who knew firsthand the difficulty Poland had in supplying its armies in war, remained a strong supporter of the development of war industry.67 The committee altered the General Staff program only slightly, for instance, according expansion of the State Radio and Telegraphic Works a high priority.68

2, Wojna obronna Polski, 125.

66 Stachiewicz to Sosnkowski, report, 28 July 1936, CAW, Akta SeKOR, cont. I.303.4.128.


68 Projekt uchwały Komitetu dla Spraw Uzbrojenia i Sprzętu co do rozbudowy przemysłu wojennego, 31 July 1936, CAW, Akta SeKOR, cont. I.303.4.128.
In preparing the above modernization program, both the General Staff and the KSUS gave careful consideration to cost.\textsuperscript{89} Still by the time the most important elements were approved the cost of the program had risen to 4.759 billion złoty. The cost of the expansion of war industry alone was estimated to be 424 million złoty.\textsuperscript{90} To pay for modernization it was estimated that from war ministry appropriations 160 million złoty could be wrung yearly for investment.\textsuperscript{91} By coupling the development of war industry to Kwiatkowski’s program of investment in home production military leaders hoped to secure another 100 million złoty yearly for modernization. Also, it was estimated that the National Defense Fund formed in April 1936 to raise money through gifts and the sale of army properties would provide an additional 50 million złoty annually. The sale of cast off arms and equipment as surplus and of new Polish-built arms by the "Sepewe" state consortium was to provide additional sums. Yet state revenues for a single fiscal year, 1935-1936 for example, amounted to only 2.03 billion złoty.\textsuperscript{92} An enormous gap remained between state resources and the cost of modernization, inclining military leaders to adopt a six-year timetable for realization of the plan, postponing its completion to 1942, and soon the a four-year plan became a six-year plan.\textsuperscript{93} Yet the shortfall remained and military leaders turned to a foreign loan, obtaining nearly 2.25 billion francs (more than 500 million złoty) in military aid.

\textsuperscript{89} Sosnkowski to Kasprzycki, 26 October 1935, CAW, Akta Szefa Sztabu Głównego, cont. 1.303.1.30.

\textsuperscript{90} Stachiewicz, Zestawienie opracowań nad rozbudową wojska, 1937, \textit{Wojna Obronna}, 120. See also Kozłowski, \textit{Wojsko Polskie}, 35. Estimates of the plans’ cost vary. According to the General Staff Historical Commission the program’s cost approached 6 billion złoty. \textit{PSZ}, vol. 1, part 1, 174.

\textsuperscript{91} Sosnkowski to Stachiewicz, 26 Oct. 1935, CAW, Akta Szefa Sztabu Głównego, cont. 1.303.1.30.


\textsuperscript{93} Sosnkowski to Kasprycki, 26 Oct. 1936, CAW, Akta Szefa Sztabu Głównego, cont. 1.303.1.30.
from France, when an improvement in relations between the two countries occurred in the first half of 1936.

Sosnkowski applied himself to modernization with the same energy which he had shown building the Polish Army in 1920. Nevertheless, the technological reconstruction of the armed forces was only one of a number of initiatives, albeit the largest, which aimed to remedy the deficiencies that had plagued the army since its inception or were the product of the Pilsudski regime. An important current and one in which Sosnkowski joined was improving staff work and officers’ technical preparation, and the committee launched an initiative to increase the number and the quality of officers with advanced training.

In spring 1936 Stachiewicz brought the improvement in preparation of staff officers before Sosnkowski’s Superior War College Committee. At the committee meeting on 28 April 1936 the chief of the General Staff charged that the army suffered from an acute shortage of war college graduates and that the army’s pool of these included many mediocre or poor officers. The army required 1,200 officers with advanced military education, but fell short of this total by 400. Stachiewicz urged that the yearly War College class be upped to 120 until the shortage had been eliminated and that the maximum age for admission be raised to 34 years to achieve this. In addition, he urged that steps be taken to encourage officers to undertake staff training. Pointing out that raising the age of applicants would only modestly increase the number of entrants, Sosnkowski urged that greater emphasis be placed on encouraging more and better-qualified officers to enter the War College by improving the prospects of its graduates. Stachiewicz then prepared a series of proposals which aimed to accomplish this. At the next sitting of the committee on 24 June passed resolutions calling for promotion to captain for lieutenants upon graduation, waiving for graduates completion of the course for battalion commanders for promotion to major, the promotion of select graduates before they had completed the time in one
grade required before advancing to the next, and considering War College training a stage for promotion to command of a company and staff service as a stage for promotion to second-in-command of a regiment or division. The general inspector confirmed these resolutions almost immediately and without comment.94

In the mid-1930s as in the early 1920s Sosnkowski regarded alliance with France and cooperation with the states of East Central Europe as one of the chief pillars of Poland’s defenses. He strongly disapproved of Beck’s foreign policy, believing it had estranged France. He also disapproved of what he construed as an out and out anti-Czech policy. Sosnkowski felt that it was necessary to replace these with a “positive tendency toward improving cooperation and revitalizing the existing alliances.” He also worried about Beck’s “tight-rope walking.” He appears to have misunderstood Piłsudski’s and Beck’s policy toward Germany, interpreting it as an attempt bring about the return of the wayward French and ultimately a stronger relationship between the two countries. Because it caused Franco-Polish relations to deteriorate, he regarded it as failed. He discounted it’s capacity to safeguard Poland from Germany, because he did not believe that National Socialist regime’s avowed pacific intentions were at all sincere.95 Convinced of the wrong headedness of Poland’s foreign policy, Sosnkowski pressed Polish leaders for a change of course, especially for a revitalization of the French alliance every chance that he had. As early as August 1935 he pressed Mościcki for improved relations with France. The president told him: “Colonel Beck is the best foreign minister, that he knew and knows, and the only one for

94 Protokół 28 posiedzenia Komitetu Wyższego Szkoły Wojennej, 28 April 1936; Protokół 29 posiedzenia Komitetu Wyższej Szkoły Wojennej, 24 June 1936; and Rydz to Sosnkowski, Warsaw, 31 July 1936, CAW, Akta GISZ, cont. 1,302. 4. 820.

95 Sosnkowski, Przycinki, 11 and 24 Jan. 1936, Szembek, Diariusz, 2:52-3 and Sosnkowski, Przycinki, 11.
A more propitious occasion to effect a change in policy was negotiation for a French loan.

In historical analysis there is some confusion as to whether French or the Polish military leaders initiated negotiations for the loan. However, what is clear are the serendipitous circumstances in which negotiations took place. When a loan was first proposed in the last months of 1935 and early 1936, French military leaders feared for the very existence of the Polish alliance. It was widely believed in European capitals that Beck's policy was carrying Poland into the German orbit. The hackles of French leaders were raised by German minister Hjalmar Schacht's program of economic penetration of East Central Europe and the Balkans. Perceiving a struggle between Beck and francophile military leaders, they saw a loan as means to strengthen the hand of the latter to bring about a revitalization of the Polish alliance. A reorientation in foreign policy and closer relations between the Poles and Czechs were implied in this. In addition, never well disposed toward the U.S.S.R., military leaders saw improved Polish relations as an alternative to cooperation with the Soviets. The French military attache, General Charles d'Arbomeau, and Noël, who had close ties to the military, therefore encouraged Polish military leaders to submit requests for arms. Among the leaders approached was Sosnkowski.

The architect of the 1921 military alliance was a personal acquaintance of d'Arbonneau's, maintained close ties to the French embassy, and was well known to French leaders like then

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96 Sosnkowski, Przycinki, 13.


99 Sosnkowski, Przycinki, 13. Sosnkowski made an error, asserting that Laroche approached him, but by this time he had been replaced by Noël.
Minister of State Joseph Paul-Boncour whom he knew from the 1925 League of Nations conference on the sale and transport of arms. Moreover, Sosnkowski was regarded as one of the Poland’s chief francophiles. He needed little urging and stepped forward to assume a leading role in early efforts to secure a loan. In late January 1936 he headed the Polish delegation to the funeral of King George V of the United Kingdom, and he hoped to use this occasion to influence French leaders. He had his chance when Gamelin invited him to call in Paris on his return from London. With Rydz’s leave Sosnkowski called on Gamelin on 2 and 3 February, but on the general inspector’s orders the visit was of a "private" character. Sosnkowski met with Gamelin, the minister of war, maritime minister and the powerful Paul-Boncour. In these discussions he put forward the Polish proposal for credits for arms purchases in France and a loan for the development of war industry. Moreover, believing it necessary to improve relations after their long miasma, he assured Gamelin and other leaders that they could trust Poland to fulfill its obligations. Sources do not indicate the response of French military leaders. However, shortly after his return Sosnkowski drew up a plan for the utilization of a 2 billion franc loan, and by the start of March Polish leaders were planning how to spend French monies.

Upon his return to Poland Sosnkowski attempted to convince Polish leaders to seek closer relations with France. After Sosnkowski’s visit French civilian leaders expressed misgivings about

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101 Beck told Szembek that Sosnkowski presented the ministry line, "castigating" the French their mistakes and "ridiculing" their Russian policy. 4 Feb. 1936, Szembek, *Diariusz*, 2:71. However, Sosnkowski’s own account and Jordan’s findings suggest this is not the case. Sosnkowski, *Przyczynki*, 14-5 and Jordan, *Popular Front*, 150.

102 On 3 March a conference of administrative and ordnance chiefs convened to determine how French monies were to be spent. Kozłowski, *Wojsko Polskie*, 28.
Beck's diplomacy and skepticism of the Poles' reliability. While in Paris Sosnkowski was informed by French leader Georges Mandel of the impending German remilitarization of the Rhineland. He returned to Poland armed with an assurance from Mandel "if Germany marches, France will mobilize," which however may have been merely an attempt to test Beck and his policy. Sosnkowski saw the impending crisis as an opportunity to allay French fears in one stroke. Marshalling the strongest arguments that he was able, Sosnkowski urged that the foreign minister issue a declaration of Poland's willingness to honor its obligations under the 1921 alliance. Sosnkowski may have influenced Beck's decision to offer to mobilize the Polish Army. However, this offer may have been a test, this time of the French, and there was no change in Polish foreign policy.

Although Sosnkowski was unable to effect a change in Polish policy, the Rhineland Crisis soon broke the resistance of remaining French leaders to woo the Poles with a loan. Also, army plans were facilitated by the accession of a the new Popular Front government of Leon Blum on 4 June. Blum, his foreign minister, Yvon Delbos, and the war minister, Edouard Daladier, favored closer ties with Poland. Also, they were pressed to court Poland. In June 1936 the Superior War Council asserted that consolidation of the Polish alliance was "essential for France."

A rush

103 Ambassador Alfred Chłaposwski, Raport polityczny Nr VII/1, Paris, 21 Feb. 1936, Diariusz Szembeka, 392-6.


to consolidate the Polish alliance using a loan as incentive followed. In August Blum sent Gamelin to Warsaw to meet with the general inspector, and Rydz-Śmigły was repeatedly entreated to visit Paris, finally coming in September. Eager to win over the Poles, French leaders yielded to a hard position determined beforehand by Beck and Rydz, foregoing a demand for closer relations with Czechoslovakia, a control clause to guard against misuse of French monies, and even a firm promise not to join Germany in a war with the Soviet Union.106 On 6 September agreements were signed at the chateau at Rambouillet which with the signing of a supplementary agreement on 28 September ultimately secured a 1 billion franc credit for arms purchases in France and one for 250 million for purchases from French-owned firms in Poland, and 945 million francs in cash for the development of Polish war industry. Beck took Rambouillet as a product of his diplomacy, securing recognition from the French of Poland's importance while maintaining policy independence.107 Thus revitalization of the Franco-Polish alliance remained a goal of his opponents.

After Pilsudski's death Sosnkowski strove to play a role once again not only in foreign affairs but into politics as well. This was prompted by Sosnkowski's disapproval of the regime of Pilsudski and of his successors. However, Sosnkowski overcame his dislike of partisan politics to seek to rejoin the fray largely out of concern for Poland's security. As Europe was buffeted by ever more dangerous crises the divisions within the regime and its policies caused Poland injury, hampering the mobilization of all society for the extraordinary labors and sacrifices ahead. Sosnkowski resurfaced apparently in search of a role immediately following Pilsudski's death. After the fall of the Slawek government and then again after the ouster of Zyndram-Kościulkowski


among the many names of potential ministers or prime ministers bandied about was Sosnkowski's.\textsuperscript{108} In the first instance he made little attempt to seek office, being content to wait, fruitlessly, for a role to be handed to him, but in the latter, in mid-May 1936, Sosnkowski seized upon rumors of his candidacy to step forward and to propose that he form a new government. To Rydz-Śmigły Sosnkowski put forward a platform which called for a new electoral law and a coalition including the most important political parties from the Right as well as the Pilsudski camp and the Left. He was deeply concerned with financing the armed forces modernization program. Even as the Polish Army was on the verge of obtaining the French loan, he proposed a dramatic change in economic and fiscal policy, combining devaluation of the zloty with expansion of credit. Sosnkowski's candidature, however, appears not to have been seriously considered in ruling circles and Rydz rejected his proposal after only superficial consideration. Sosnkowski later wrote: "After the death of the Commandant I was downright hermetically separated from politics, and my attempts to obtain some direct influence in this area met with opposition."\textsuperscript{109}

Although he was able to overcome his distaste of partisan politics to step forward as a candidate for premier, he was unable or unwilling to do anything more than this. Opposition circles, especially on the Right, knew the general's predilection for compromise and collaboration and during the government shake-ups of 1935 and 1936 looked forward to the establishment of a government under or including Sosnkowski. Sosnkowski had personal connections to opposition leaders, most notably to Sikorski and the Front Morges through his brother-in-law, the son of his


early mentor, Ryszard Świętochowski.\textsuperscript{110} Opposition efforts to enlist Sosnkowski were frequent, especially in the first uncertain years of the Colonels' regime. These included even conservative landowners, who hatched a scheme for a coalition "government of National Unity" with Sosnkowski at its head in winter 1935 and autumn 1936. Sosnkowski, however, held these and other oppositionists at arms length.\textsuperscript{111} Sosnkowski carefully avoided even the appearance of disloyalty to the regime. He publicly gave Rydz-Śmigly his loyalty, offering an impromptu oath during ceremonies for Rydz' accession to the GISZ. To a friendly note from Sikorski regarding Piłsudski's funeral he replied formally and in a detached fashion, using the address "Dear General," and duly sent a copy of the letter to Rydz and the war minister.\textsuperscript{112}

Sosnkowski sought to act as an independent and supraparty leader. To exert influence on government policy he relied solely on his personal prestige and moral authority. After Piłsudski's death Sosnkowski continued to enjoy great popularity inside and outside of the army. However, prestige and moral authority did not readily translate into political power. Sosnkowski's influence within the army was perhaps due in large part to the pleasure of Rydz-Śmigly and his own careful behavior which deprived the general inspector of cause to sack him. Outside of military affairs few were willing to grant him similar latitude. Mościcki appears to have seen him as a rival, and in August 1935 offered him the ambassadorship to France in an attempt to remove him from the


\textsuperscript{111} Stawecki, \textit{Następcy Komendanta}, 52-3; 29 April 1936, Szembek, \textit{Diariusz}, 178; and Buczek, "Tragedia Świętochowskiego," 150.

\textsuperscript{112} Informacja o sytuacji w Polsce po śmierci J. Piłsudskiego, [May] 1935 and Sikorski to Paderewski, 2 June 1935, \textit{Archiwum Paderewskiego}, 4:29 and 33-4
scene. Also, Sosnkowski could not count on Rydz-Śmigły's support. He may have needed Sosnkowski, but he never completely trusted him. Observers reported that Rydz wanted to remove Sosnkowski, although "in a kindly fashion."114

By spring 1937 the General Staff and KSUS had completed plans for modernization, and the technological reconstruction of the army—initiated, sequentially, as the individual plans were approved by the general inspector—was under way. The development of weapons and equipment which had heretofore proceeded desultorily was stepped up, and searches for new types launched. Large orders for arms, ammunition, and equipment were placed with French manufacturers as well as with concerns in Poland. And army and civilian authorities began to expand home production of war materials. A number of army and civilian government contracts were dispensed, and construction of several new plants was begun.115 The modernization program racked up a number of early successes. Already in March 1937 the first mechanized brigade, the Tenth Cavalry Brigade, was organized. By retooling for army production existing plants then standing idle as a result of the world economic crisis, licensed production of Swedish designed anti-tank and anti-aircraft guns was established quickly. In a few short years, by 1939, Polish firms were able to sell anti-aircraft guns to the government of the United Kingdom. At the same time steel production in 1937 rose dramatically, surpassing pre-Depression levels.116


116 Główny Urząd Statystyczny, Mały rocznik statystyczny, 1939, 129.
For every success, however, modernization encountered many more failures. Many of the problems encountered were of a technical nature. Production of proven models of anti-tank and light anti-aircraft guns could be established relatively easily, but production of a heavy anti-aircraft weapon lagged as the design of the Starachowice Metal Works suffered from a number of problems. The development of a 100mm howitzer for the field artillery and light and medium tanks lagged even further. The reason the Poles supplied the British with anti-aircraft guns was their inability to produce sufficient ammunition for those in Polish service. Aircraft deliveries, P-37 bombers in particular, fell behind as a result of a policy by aviation chief Rayski to meet foreign orders even at the expense of the army's in order to keep unit costs down.\footnote{\[M.S.Wojsk., Dept. Uzbr.\] Referat na K.S.U.S. w sprawie dz. plot. 75mm ruchomych i półstałych polskiej konstrukcji, [Jan.-Feb. 1938] CAW, Akta Szefa Sztabu, cont. I.302.1.197; PSZ, vol. 1, part 1, 182-183, 201.} The inability of home producers to give the army many of the weapons it needed was compounded by the inability of French firms to do the same. French firms were busy producing for the French Army which had launched its own modernization program in 1936. "In short," wrote KSUS secretary Colonel Kazimierz Kieszniewski, "the greater the specter of war embraced Europe, the more difficult it was to fulfill the [army's] needs for war materials abroad." French Army orders were given highest priority with the result that no Polish orders were filled in 1937 and 1938. Numerous Polish entreaties, due to the state of Franco-Polish relations, "had no effect." By September 1939 only 130 million francs of from the 1 billion-franc credit for purchases in France was utilized by 1939.\footnote{Kazimierz Kieszniewski, "Materiały i zagadnienia przemysłu wojennego w Polsce w latach 191-1939," Niepodległość, n.s. 6(1958):187; Military Attache Col. Władysław Fryda to Stachiewicz, Paris, 25 March 1938, Wojna obronna, 161-2; Janusz Głuchowski, "Relacja uzupełniająca," Niepodległość, n.s. 6(1958):180-1; and PSZ, vol.1, part 1, 175.} The construction of new factories, which now seemed so crucial,
lagged most of all. In 1937 and 1938 many were only empty lots or plans on drawing boards.\textsuperscript{119} Overshadowing as well as underlying these failures was the paucity of capital for investment. Even with the French loan state resources fell short of sums it required. Military leaders shortly lengthened the period for the realization of the program to 10 years. The new completion date was 1947.\textsuperscript{120}

The KSUS and its chairman continued to play a role in modernization even after work on plans was complete. The weapons whose development the committee's earlier plans initiated now had to be tested and approved. In addition, modernization plans, on occasion, needed to be corrected or supplemented and thus required the ministrations of Sosnkowski's KSUS. Modernization plans made scant provision for very heavy artillery, for example, and in December 1937 Sosnkowski ordered the War Ministry Artillery Department to explore the problem. New developments in warfare often prompted the committee to reconsider its plans. New model tanks developed in Germany and France were much more heavily armored than earlier models and impervious to army's new anti-tank guns. Consequently the KSUS commissioned a study of the introduction of a more powerful weapon.\textsuperscript{121}

The continuing involvement of Sosnkowski's committee in modernization was not the least a consequence of the many technical problems modernization encountered. The Starachowice 75mm anti-aircraft gun and its problems were the subject of almost perennial discussion. By the end of 1937 three different models had been produced and the weapon still

\textsuperscript{119} Note of the M.S.Wojsk., Biuro Administracji Armii, [Jan.] 1937, Ibid, 112-5.

\textsuperscript{120} Kozlowski, \textit{Wojsko Polskie}, 34-7.

\textsuperscript{121} Generalny Inspektor Artillerii Lieutenant General Stanislaw Muller to Sosnkowski, Artylceria najcięsza, Warsaw, Dec. 1937, CAW, Akta GISZ, cont. 1.302.4.1489. The KSUS resolved that the army introduce a 47mm anti-tank gun in July 1939. Instytut Techniczny Uzbrojenia, Referat na KSUS w sprawie 47mm a.przeciwpancerna polskiej konstrukcji, 4 VII 1939, CAW, Akta GISZ, cont. 1.302.4.1839.
suffered from important problems.\textsuperscript{122} Often Polish designs were not forthcoming or were slow in preparation, and the committee sought new ones. The search for new light and medium tanks was particularly fruitless. Frequently the committee issued new instructions calling for the purchase of suitable stopgaps and substitutes abroad, mainly in France. In 1938, after research turned up no promising models the KSUS resolved that the army purchase French R-35 light tanks.\textsuperscript{123} Similarly the committee ordered Schneider-Creusot anti-aircraft guns until Polish production was ready. Turning to France was, of course, no solution to the army's problems. In March 1938 the Polish Military attache in Paris reported that French anti-aircraft guns would only be delivered at the end of 1939.\textsuperscript{124} Yet it was the only choice military leaders had.

Although the KSUS remained actively involved in modernization, its role was, of course, secondary, and in 1937 and 1938 Sosnkowski turned to other matters, but giving particular attention to the problem of operational doctrine. The Polish modernization program formulated between 1935 and 1937 did not embrace the Polish way of war, then in a baleful state. However, the years following Pilsudski's death saw a flood of journal articles and reports on the conduct of operations and contemporary warfare by Polish thinkers, especially the faculty of the War College. Heated debates on the employment of cavalry and armored and motorized forces, countering tank attacks, and war in the air.\textsuperscript{125} There was no War Ministry- or GISZ-sponsored

\textsuperscript{122} Generalny Inspektor Artillerji Lieutenant General Stanislaw Muller to GISZ, Armata przeciwlotnicza 75mm wz. 36 i wz. 37 Starachowice, Warsaw, 27 Nov. 1937, CAW, Akta GISZ, com 1.302.4.1849.


\textsuperscript{124} Fryda to Stachiewicz, 25 March 1938, \textit{Wojna obronna}, 162.

\textsuperscript{125} Alexander Praglowski, "Oddziaływanie motorizacji przeciwnika na walkę broń połączonych," \textit{Bellona}, o.s., 1935, 51-71; Franciszek Skibiński, "Rozważania o działaniach wielkich jednostek pancernych," \textit{Bellona}, o.s., 1938, 244-58; Stefan Mossor, "Przypożyczalny
overhaul of doctrine; a revised *General Battle Instructions* was prepared but was never issued. But a move to revamp doctrine on the plane of the Superior War College was initiated. This was facilitated by the relatively free atmosphere created by Piłsudski's passing. Impetus for reexamination of the Polish way of war came not only from developments abroad but as well from modernization which in 1937 and 1938 began to provide the army with the weapons it had lacked and promised overthrow the 'doctrine of poverty'.

The Superior War College Committee returned to doctrine anew in 1936 on Sosnkowski's initiative. Then Sosnkowski, once again in an oral order, directed Commandant Kutrzeba to prepare a study of the infantry division's organization which was the basis for War College instruction and exercises in tactics and operations. However, it was not until the next year, after the formulation of modernization plans was completed, did the committee discuss this matter. Kutrzeba's report was discussed at the committee's sitting of 5 April 1937. It posited that the up-gunned infantry division of modernization plans become the model for instruction for staff officers and commanders. Sosnkowski told the committee current training was out-dated. The introduction of the new was necessary "to plan in the minds of officers the new tactical concepts, associated with modern weapons, [and] the art of appropriately using he new equipment." "The anticipated introduction of the new organization to instruction," he said, "will intellectually accustom commanders to the contemporary reality of the battle field." The committee members agreed; Stachiewicz thought the modernization of instruction "essential." The change was to be

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introduced immediately, in order that the armed forces be fully prepared to utilize new weaponry as it arrived. The committee's resolutions were approved by Rydz-Śmigły on 8 July.¹²⁷

At the 5 April sitting the committee resolved to tackle next the questions of operations at the operational group and the army level, the organization of these units utilized in training and wargames. However, the committee did not proceed any further than placing the matter on its agenda. The further progress of revision of operational doctrine was halted by the general inspector. Rydz-Śmigły views on operations and war, which were similar to Pilsudski's, were strongly held and he was hostile to any change.¹²⁸ This explains Sosnkowski's continued reliance on oral orders and euphemistic and subtle approach to this matter. Although Rydz did not often express his views, in early March 1938 he uncharacteristically asserted himself in this matter at a meeting with his army inspectors. At the meeting, which took place on 22 March, he sent a strong warning signal to Sosnkowski, the war college committee, and war college instructors. He told the group that revision of doctrine and criticism of regulations "can only occur on a level suited to establishing military thought—and not in contact with those who have to teach regulations." The committee's review of doctrine ceased, and Polish commanders continued to apply a doctrine of poverty.¹²⁹

¹²⁷ Protokół 30 posiedzenia Komitetu Wyższej Szkoły Wojennej, 5 April 1937, and GISZ, order, Warsaw, July 8 1937, CAW, Akta GISZ, cont. 1.302.4.820.

¹²⁸ Rydz-Śmigły's former membership on the war college committee is mistakenly taken as evidence of his support for its work in the area of operational doctrine. Cieplewicz, et al., Zarys dziejów wojskowości, 647. However, his outlook is betrayed by the fact he never formulated his own views of operations in a future war nor did he encourage his subordinates to do so. PSŻ, vol. 1, part 1, 301.

¹²⁹ Rydz-Śmigły's remarks were disseminated in a GISZ Inspections Bureau circular of 22 March 1938. Omówienie odprawy w dniu 9.III.1938, CAW, Akta GISZ, cont. 1.302.4.379. Feild training exercises in summer saw the application of the old doctrine unchanged. Kuropieska, Wspomnienia, 229.
As important as modernization of the armed forces physically and intellectually was to the safety of Poland, any advantage it gave the army was jeopardized by the course of international events and a seismic shift in the European balance of power. In 1937 German rearmament began to bear fruit. Moreover, at a meeting with his chief military and civilian advisers on 5 November 1937, the proceedings of which are documented in the Hossbach memorandum, Hitler announced his intention to go to war to create the ‘Judenfrei’ German-dominated continental dominion that was his vision of Europe. Such a war which would naturally be a general European conflict was to take place in the early 1940s, when German rearmament reached its peak. Hitler’s preconditions for a successful war were union, Anschluss, with Austria and the elimination of Czechoslovakia. Hitler’s designs first fastened on the Austrian Republic. In an interview on 4 February 1938 he browbeat the Austrian head of government Kurt Schuschnigg into surrendering a portion of the southern state’s sovereignty. On 12 March the German Army, rechristened the Wehrmacht, invaded Austria, forcibly incorporating it into a greater Germany, the Third Reich. Hitler then turned on Czechoslovakia, seeking the Sudetenland. Although it possessed a large German population, the region constituted a defensive barrier whose loss meant the end of Czechoslovakia as an independent factor in European politics. After it was surrendered on 10 October Czechoslovakia was left defenseless, and on March 16 the German Army occupied the remainder of the country.

Although Hitler was less inclined to disguise his intentions, especially to France and the United Kingdom, and made fantastic demands, the Western Powers responded as though German revision was still a matter of making amends for supposed iniquities of the 1919 Peace Settlement. Neither Britain nor France lifted a finger to prevent German subversion of the Austrian Republic or the Anschluss. When Hitler turned on the Czechs in spring 1938 Chamberlain pressed the Czechs to grant autonomy to the Germans of the Sudetenland. When Hitler demanded separation
of the region from Czechoslovakia in autumn, at the conference in Munich hastily convened by Italy’s fascist leader Benito Mussolini, the British and French governments agreed to German demands and forced the Czechs to accept this resolution by threatening to withdraw all support, if Prague refused. Like those before it, the new Conservative government of the United Kingdom, that of Prime Minister Sir Neville Chamberlain, was indifferent to East Central Europe. Chamberlain, who personally directed foreign relations, was motivated by a deep desire to avoid war at all cost. However, as the Soviet ambassador to the Court of Saint James, Ivan Maisky, suggested in his memoirs, Chamberlain’s policy also owed a good deal to incompetence.130 French leaders sincerely sought to secure British support for East Central Europe. But failing to accomplish this, they meekly followed the British lead, although they were bound to these states by the alliances of the early 1920s. The French retreat is the result of a complex nexus of factors. After the fall of the Popular Front in 1938 Blum’s old minister of defense, Daladier, formed a government, leaning toward the right and less-willing to seek an exit from France’s impotence. Military leaders took fright at inflated estimates of Germany’s military capabilities and were distracted by the civil war that broke out in Spain in 1936. The failure to achieve a revitalization of the alliances with Poland as well as the states of the Little Entente had an important effect on French policy also. French leaders continued to suspect that the Poles sought a modus vivendi with Hitler and denigrated any contribution the Czechs could make to European security. After the Anschluss their view of their Eastern allies grew more pessimistic.131


French decision-making was also influenced by a diminution of the value of the pact with Soviets. Frequently overlooked in discussion of the Anschluss and the Czech crises, Soviet foreign policy, although more subtle, is of considerable importance, especially where Poland is concerned. The years 1937 and 1938 saw the withdrawal of the Soviet Union from collective security. The Soviet response to Nazi aggression was as resolute as the British and French. Soviet intervention was physically barred by the Polish refusal to allow Red Army units to cross Poland to reach Czechoslovakia. Moreover, Stalin had never been fully committed to collective security. At all times he endeavored to keep a variety of options open, and as early as July 1935 the Soviets had sought a political reconciliation with Nazi Germany. Although fruitless, these continued through 1936 and 1937. The Soviet withdrawal from continental politics was, however, largely a function of the Great Purges which began in 1934 and grew in intensity, engulfing even the Red Army high command in 1937 and 1983. The Purges had many effects on international events. The impression of weakness and instability led Hitler to discount the Soviet Union as a factor in continental affairs. In addition, the Purges affected Soviet leaders' own estimate of their vulnerability, and they became convinced of the necessity of avoiding involvement in a major war. This was given additional impetus by Japanese aggression in China which was accompanied by pitched battles with Soviet forces.132

As early as 1937 Beck found his tight-rope walking becoming very difficult.133 Yet he did not depart from the policy, although indifference and even hostility to Czechoslovakia and,


by extension, Austria, hitherto a latent feature, now came to the fore. Not bound to uphold the independence of the Czechoslovak or Austrian republics, Beck pursued an independent line aimed at achieving narrow Polish aims. During the Anschluss he focussed on Danzig, although Rydz-Smigly urged that Polish neutrality in the crisis be sold for the highest price. The city's internal and international situation was a cause of great anxiety, for moderate and extreme Nazis wished for its return to Reich at the earliest moment. Beck strove to secure affirmation of Polish rights in Danzig, in exchange for Polish neutrality. In addition, while the crisis diverted the powers, Beck used the threat of military force to compel the Lithuanians, aloof since the seizure of Vilnius in 1920, to establish diplomatic relations with Poland. Similarly when Germany turned on Czechoslovakia Beck bargained for assurances on Danzig and extension of the 1934 non-aggression agreement. He also sought disputed Zaolza, the region behind the Olza River including the Teschen and Bohumin industrial districts with their large Polish populations. A volte face by the Czech government led to attempts to improve relations with the Poles and overtures for an alliance. Beck, rebuffed them. The Polish position was harsh. The Polish government continued to block the activation of the French-Czecho-Soviet alliances, now threatening to shoot down Soviet aircraft that attempted to reach Czechoslovakia over Poland. Instructions issued to the Polish ambassador in Berlin, Józef Lipski, on the eve of the Munich conference, read: "We consider the Czechoslovak republic to be an artificial creation convenient for certain doctrines and combinations, but one that does not take into account the concrete needs and sound claims of

134 In 1938 Czech military circles attempted to make contact and engage the Polish General Staff in talks on alliance. The Polish military attache in Prague was approached, but he was forbidden to engage in discussions with the Czechs and later transferred to Budapest. Henryk Bulhak, "Proba k (wojskowych nawiązania rozmów sojuszniczych z Polskim Sztabem Głowym w marcu 1938 r.,” Studia z dziejów ZSRR i Europy Środkowej 15(1979):205-9. See also Stanislaw Sopicki, "Jeszcze o Czechosłowacji w roku 1938," Bellona, n.s., 1955, no. 3, 24-5.
Although Polish policy complemented the German, Beck ever strove to maintain "equilibrium." German proposals in autumn 1938 and winter 1939 for an extraterritorial highway across Pomerania, the "Polish Corridor," the return of Danzig as well as military cooperation against the Soviets met with rejection. Likewise the seizure of Teschen was carried out independent of the Munich settlement.

Beck’s policy was certainly influenced, as historian Anna Cienciala argues, by the Western Powers policy of appeasement, although the opposite side of the coin—whether independence of policy would have allowed Poland to support a resolute stance by the French and English—is an open question. Polish ruling circles showed little cognizance of the dangers that the Anschluss and the elimination of Czechoslovakia held. Beck was less concerned with the fate of Austria than Danzig, which in her apologia Cienciala calls the "prism through which the foreign minister viewed the Austrian crisis."136 In regard to Czechoslovakia, Beck was only concerned that its fall might lead to German interference with the Polish Ukrainian minority as a way of indirectly contacting the Soviet Ukraine. When ruling circles recognized the dangers, they fell back on the belief that war with Germany was unlikely. From Paris Juliusz Łukasiewicz, the Polish ambassador and Beck’s trusted collaborator, wrote in May 1938:

As regards General Gamelin’s opinion that our strategic position would be greatly and dangerously prejudiced if Germany seized the whole of Czechoslovakia, I believed he was perfectly right, although I was not a military man. However, I could not understand why attentions was being drawn to this possibility, since in my opinion it was not only theoretical but was absolutely precluded.137

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This failure to grasp German intentions was not, as historians often argue, the result of a view that as an Austrian Hitler harbored no anti-Polish designs. Rather, it was due to the view that Germany desired a Poland as a buffer with the Soviet Union and continued belief that German war preparations would only be complete in 1941 or 1942. At this time Polish ruling circles minimized the danger posed by the Soviet Union, seeing it approaching collapse.138

Polish policy was also influenced by the regime's troubles at home. In 1937 and 1938 OZN faced a number of challenges from within and without. In August 1937 the Peasant party organized a farm strike that rocked the country. Meanwhile many Piłsudski-ites defected to the opposition. The prestigious Riflemen's Union (Ziązek Strzelecki), a paramilitary youth group modelled after the union created by Piłsudski and Sosnkowski, rebuffed OZN offers for cooperation. In October liberal former Legionaires constituted their own opposition party. In addition, the Mościcki camp, flush with a recent economic upturn, moved against Rydz and his followers. And Sławek managed a short political comeback. The OZN camp therefore welcomed a rise in international tensions as an opportunity to arouse opinion in its favor and threw itself behind Beck's policy. The move against Lithuania was accompanied by large OZN demonstrations. During the Czechoslovak crisis Beck advised that Teschen be seized discreetly so that Poland did not appear in league with Hitler, but Rydz and others used the Polish occupation of these lands on 9 October for a display of armed might.139


139 Wynot, Polish Politics, 197-9, 219-20.
The dangerous turn of the regime's policies was accompanied by protests from Sosnkowski. The regime's alienation of an ever greater segment of the nation deeply concerned Sosnkowski. In August 1937 he dramatically displayed his disapproval of the Colonels' budding fascism by joining a number of leading veterans of the independence movement in a boycott of Pilsudski-ite celebrations at which Rydz-Śmigly was to present a much publicized policy address. Sosnkowski, however, was most deeply concerned by events outside of Poland and foreign policy. He believed the purges underway in the Soviet Union of great importance. He reported to the general inspector in February 1937 that instability perceived as a result of the purges might lead Soviet leaders to "seek salvation in a war of aggression." Moreover, believing the U.S.S.R. was as a brake on German aggression, he felt that the weakness of the former might lead the latter move against its enemies in Europe earlier than heretofore expected.¹⁴⁰

Sosnkowski became the leading opponent in military circles of Beck's policy. Sosnkowski warned Szembek, Beck's deputy, on 23 February 1938 that Anschluss directly threatened Poland: "Events suggest that now Austria will go, after her Czechoslovakia, then us, and finally France." In March or April in an audience with Mościcki, who perhaps arranged the meeting to sound out a potential opponent of the regime's schemes, Sosnkowski repeated his concerns. Invoking the legendary battle of Cannae, he argued that Hitler was seeking to outflank Poland and that the elimination of Czechoslovakia would place Poland in "mortal danger." In August he pressed Rydz for Beck's ouster.¹⁴¹ In addition, Sosnkowski now publicly spoke out against Beck's policy. He criticized it in speeches to civic groups such as the Maritime and Colonial League, causing the foreign minister to warn him on 6 September not to inflame public opinion against the


¹⁴¹ 23 Feb. 1938, Diariusz Szembeka, 40; Sosnkowski, Przycinki, 18-9; Military Attache General Felix Musse to Daladier, Warsaw, 18 Aug. 1938, DDF, 2nd ser., 10:717.
government. It is likely that his public criticism of the regime's policy is responsible for a rift that now grew up between him and the general inspector. Nevertheless on 8 October at ceremonies in Kielce commemorating the independence movement's seizure of that town in 1914, Sosnkowski said: "Regardless of the difficulties and the obstacles Poland must be united . . . Poland's security, its future, [our] responsibility before future generations demand this . . . Time is running out--the clock of history strikes the eleventh hour." Sosnkowski's warning received scant attention as the press was filled with reportage of the army's seizure of Zaolza two days later.

Sosnkowski was not alone in comprehending the gravity of international events in 1937 and 1938 and in opposing Beck's policy. Opposition parties, especially the Front Morges, heaped unceasing criticism on the regime's foreign policy. And within ruling camps there were those who doubted the course Beck, Mościcki, and Śmigły-Rydz charted. On learning of the Nazi invasion of Austria Lipski, the ambassador in Berlin, was "convinced that the Reich was racing toward the inevitable catastrophe of war." Many again turned to Sosnkowski for leadership. The vice minister of foreign affairs, Miroslaw Arciszewski, asked Sosnkowski to intervene. Witos, the exiled leader of the Peasant Party, also had great hopes for Sosnkowski, and the Front Morges once again reached out to him. French leaders and the Czechs looked to Sosnkowski as well. Prague saw Sosnkowski as representing the army in political circles and as an important

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143 Narbut-Luczyński, U kresu wędrówki, 324. Many newspapers did not report Sosnkowski's speech. The national Tygodnik Ilustrowany only noted that Sosnkowski spoke without including his remarks. "Ostonięcie pomniku 'Czynu Legionów' w Kielce," Tygodnik Ilustrowany, 9 October 1938, 1.

144 Jędrzejewicz, Diplomat in Berlin, 351.

proponent of a resolute anti-German policy. During a tour of Poland embracing talks with opposition leaders which was blessed by now President Beneš, the Czech writer on Polish Affairs Vaclav Fiala sought to make contact with Sosnkowski. The apolitical Sosnkowski refused to ally himself with any partisan group, however. He continued to report even casual contacts with opposition activists to the general inspector. He did not see Fiala, communicating through Bishop Zygmunt Kaczyński. Even then he merely stated the obvious, that public opinion (and Beck) required the resolution of outstanding disputes--the return of Teschen and other frontier adjustments--for the conclusion of an alliance against Germany. Sosnkowski proved a great disappointment. Witos noted in his journal on 5 August 1938: "Sosnkowski is a weak and convenient man, an opportunist."

In mid-March 1939 the gambit which opened against Austria was completed. On 16 March the Wehrmacht entered Prague, occupying what remained of Czechoslovakia after Munich. These developments profoundly threatened Europe's security, but no single nation more than Poland. Union with Austria outflanked Czechoslovakia, the demise of the latter, outflanked Poland. The calculus of 1920 stipulated 60 divisions were need to defend Poland's frontiers. The army's 36 infantry divisions perhaps sufficed to defend the Western frontier and protect the interior of the country from an incursion from East Prussia, but such a force was insufficient to defend the west, north, and south of the country. Moreover, the considerable arsenal and industrial capacity of the Czechs which the Germans gained advanced the Nazi build-up for war.

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146 The former is suggested by the presence of these letters in military records collections. Letter to Sosnkowski, Cracow, 28 April 1937, CAW, Akta GISZ, cont. I.302.4.2207. On Sosnkowski and the Fiala see Stafania Stanislawska, Wielka i Mała polityka Józefa Becka (Warsaw, 1962), 116-117.

147 Witos' opinion may have been formed under the influence of Świętochowski, with whom the former had frequent contacts and who used these opportunities to defame Sosnkowski. Witos, Moje wspomnienia, 3:453-5.
Polish intelligence reported Czech army stores were sufficient to equip another 36 divisions. In 1937 Polish estimates for the completion of German rearmament may have been correct, but not so after Prague.

Prague was followed one week later by the German seizure of the Baltic port of Memel, which had enjoyed, like Danzig, the status of a Free City under League of Nations protection. Shortly the Nazis demanded of the Poles what they had earlier proposed. On 21 March the German foreign Minister, Joachim von Ribbentrop, communicated to the Polish ambassador a demand for an extraterritorial highway across the Polish Corridor and the return of Danzig. Hitler's aims may as yet have been unclear and the führer may have wished to avoid conflict with Poland for the time being, deciding on war only later, in April. The events of March 1939, however, were a turning point. German demands, according to the authors' of the Polish Army official history, "created the impression, that Hitler had now turned on Poland." Thus began what is know in Polish historiography as the "War of Nerves."

A reorientation in British and French foreign policy also followed Prague. Polish policy during the Czech crisis and the seizure of Teschen aroused outrage in foreign capitals. The Polish ambassador to England Count Edward Raczyński reported that the British parliament, Foreign Office, and press were "cold and hostile." On these the fate of Poland now turned. Beck's policy might have caused the isolation of Poland, had not Britain and France now sought to build a combination capable of checking German aggression. On the advice of the French government

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148 PSZ, vol. 1, part 1, 243. For a thorough analysis of the benefits the Nazis reaped, see Murray, Change in the European Balance, 292. Other scholars emphasize the loss to the allied cause of a worthy ally in the Czechs who could muster 17 infantry and four motorized divisions. See Marian Zgórnijk, "Zmiany sytuacji militarnie w Europie po Monachium, i. x.1938-1.X.1939," Kwartalnik historyczny 87(1970):851-65.

149 PSZ, vol 1, part.1, 56.

and the British Imperial General Staff Chamberlain chose Poland over the Soviet Union, although summer saw a half-hearted Anglo-French diplomatic initiative to woo the Soviets as well. When an Allied guarantee was extended to Romania, of which the Germans now made demands as well, the Polish government was asked to extend a similar pledge. The Poles did so on the condition that they receive an allied guarantee of the security of their country, which was readily extended. On 31 March Chamberlain told the House of Commons of the British government's promise "to lend the Polish government all support in their power" in a war with Germany.\footnote{151} The British guarantee was followed by military discussions and, later in spring, staff talks. Only in August, however, was a treaty of mutual assistance concluded.

A fundamental lack of realism continued to characterize British and French policy during the "War of Nerves." Chamberlain in his speech on 31 March still expressed hope to resolve disputes through negotiations. Neither the British nor the French expected to go to war, and rather than build the strongest military coalition they sought the strongest diplomatic combination.\footnote{152} Polish leaders, however, took the Allied guarantees and military conventions at face value and attached great weight to them.\footnote{153} Therefore even after Germany turned on Poland, throughout the "War of Nerves," many Polish leaders continued to believe that war could be avoided. Koc,


\footnote{152}{Murray, \textit{Change in the European Balance}, 286-90, and Cienciala, \textit{Poland and the Western Powers}, 207ff.}

\footnote{153}{Allied leaders encouraged this. In July the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, General Sir Edmund Ironside, when visiting Warsaw, informed Polish leaders of "His Majesty's Government's absolute determination to fulfill the terms of their guarantee to Poland." Norton to Halifax, Warsaw, 20 July 1939, \textit{BDFP}, 3rd ser., 6:416.}
now Minister of Finance and Trade and assigned to negotiate a British loan in summer, continued to believe war could be avoided even in mid-August.\textsuperscript{134}

The general inspector also was optimistic, believing that war would not come. However, soldiers are wont to take every precaution, and the circumstances demanded no less. In mid-April Smigły-Rydz met with his army inspectors and fully apprised them of Poland’s difficult situation.\textsuperscript{135} There followed a frenzy of activity on the part of Polish military. A new law regulating the authority and responsibilities of the high command in wartime was drawn up. Mobilization plans were revised and brought up to date. Operational plans for a war with Germany, to which the General Staff only recently turned a few months before, were rushed to completion. Also, a partial mobilization took place. By summer, in the face of intensifying German preparations for war, Polish military leaders’ optimism frayed, and they initiated more immediate measures: the erection of field fortifications, construction of new bridges, withdrawal of units from along the frontier, and the like.

In addition to immediate measures to ready the army for war, an effort was made to speed modernization. In 1939 modernization bore its first fruits. The firepower of the infantry had been increased substantially, and the Polish division matched the German in most important categories except anti-aircraft units owing to the small division complement established by the KSUS. Nearly 1,200 anti-tank guns were in service. However, the technological reconstruction of the artillery lagged, howitzerization having made little progress and the army being short of heavy guns. The armored arm counted only one brigade. The air corps disposed of 600 frontline aircraft, not counting reserves and replacements. Of these only 36 were modern craft, all bombers.

\textsuperscript{134} 18 Aug. 1939, \textit{Diariusz Szembeka}, 688 and Sosnkowski, \textit{Cieniom września} (Warsaw, 1988), 43. See also \textit{PSZ}, vol. 1, part 1, 57.

\textsuperscript{135} Sosnkowski, \textit{Cieniom września}, 43.
There were enough 40 mm anti-aircraft guns for combat units, but few for home defense, and as yet very few heavy anti-aircraft guns. Therefore military leaders moved to speed up modernization in spring and summer. Rayski ordered production of new fighters and light bombers to begin immediately. A second motorized cavalry brigade, the Warsaw Armored-Mechanized Brigade was formed.

Rydz-Smigly did not give Sosnkowski a role in planning and immediate war preparations with Germany. When commands were assigned for the coming conflict Sosnkowski was left out again and ordered to continue in his duties as army inspector. That the general inspector kept the past "organizer of victory" out of preparations has been a source of outrage to his partisans ever since. However, Rydz' actions were not entirely groundless. He may have had in mind the case of the unfortunate Austrian Feldmarschalleutnant Ludwik Benedek plucked from Italy to defend with disastrous consequences Bohemia, a region unknown to him, during the 1866 Austro-Prussian conflict. However, Sosnkowski was not inactive during the "War of Nerves." Sosnkowski's KSUS joined in the effort to speed up modernization. Sosnkowski believed that Poland was rushing toward war, and his committee now searched for stopgaps to give the army what it needed as quickly as possible. It hurriedly adopted new weapons even when they did not meet the standards set by the committee earlier. Still without the scores of tanks needed, the KSUS resolved that production of the 7TP be resumed. The first lot was to arrive at the end of August. Also, the committee adopted a new fighter aircraft or rather an old one, an improved model of the


machines from the generation of the 1930s which was produced for export. The committee also tried once more to obtain arms and equipment abroad.\(^{158}\)

Polish efforts to make ready for war were "prodigious" and impressed foreign observers.\(^{159}\) However, efforts to speed modernization were hampered by civilian leaders' unwillingness to approve extraordinary outlays for many war preparations. Sosnkowski blamed this on their belief that war would not come.\(^{160}\) Some relief from the government's strict fiscal policy came from a loan of £8 million from the government of the United Kingdom and a material credit of 430 million francs from France. The former was used to purchase modern light bombers and fighters, and the latter was applied to an order for tanks. In both instances, the loans were accompanied by an equally important willingness to accommodate Polish needs in the short term. A delivery of 50 French tanks arrived in Poland in May. Negotiations for a British loan dragged on through summer, and war materials were shipped only in August, via Constanza, Romania for fear of sabotage at Gdańsk.\(^{161}\)

Beck's foreign policy had been the greatest source of dissatisfaction with the regime for Sosnkowski. When Rydz-Śmigły told his generals in April of Poland's "complete solidarity and close understanding with France and Britain," a principle cause of friction between Sosnkowski


\(^{160}\) Sosnkowski, Cieniom września, 44.

\(^{161}\) PSZ, vol. 1, part 1, 175-6 and Zając, Dwie wojny, 194-5.
and the Colonels disappeared. Also, Sosnkowski's politics were certainly influenced by a conviction that war was just around the corner. War demanded national unity, but in the spring and summer Poland was a nation deeply divided. The regime suffered a disastrous defeat in local elections in early part of the year. The independent foreign policy and ostentatious military display of March had been for naught in more ways than one, failing to garner support for the regime and its prop, OZN. Opposition parties grew more aggressive throughout 1939. Sosnkowski more so than his superiors felt that Poland was hurtling toward war, and unity had been an important goal of his since the Colonels' accession. Previously he had seen the replacement or reorganization of the government, broadening the political base of the regime, as the road to unity. Many in 1939 thought this way, older Pilsudskiites at odds with the regime in particular, and so despite the disappointment of previous years they turned to Sosnkowski. In March Piłsudski's most senior collaborators contemplated the regime's ouster and establishment of a government of national unity under Sosnkowski through a coup if necessary. Sławek, the group's leader, discarded his hostility for a friendly attitude toward Sosnkowski. Sosnkowski, however, did not see dramatic political change as at all positive now, although he was incensed when Rydz-Śmigły, Mościcki, Sławoj-Składkowski, Kwiatkowski, and Beck resolved to maintain the present system unaltered. Eschewing the overtures of regime opponents, Sosnkowski stumped

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162 Sosnkowski, Cieniom września, 43.

163 Sosnkowski, Przycinki, 12.

164 "Wywiad z Waclawem Jędrzejewiczem," Zeszyty historyczne 72(1985):59. See also Sosnkowski to Pobóg-Malinowski, 24 August 1962, Archiwum Poboga-Malinowskiego, file III/6-2. Sosnkowski was also sought out by conservative landowners. Sosnkowski to Prince Karol Radziwill, 7 April, 1939, AAN, Archiwum Sosnkowskiego, file 22/39. Rumors of the establishment of a new government under Sosnkowski were rife. 25 March 1939, Diariusz Szembeka, 4:531.
the country. He gave patriotic speeches and called for unity, emulating the Witos government's campaign to rally the nation in 1920.¹⁶⁵

On 23 August 1939 Germany and the Soviet Union concluded a pact of non-aggression pact which included secret codicils regarding the partition of Poland. After Prague Stalin as yet kept his options open and desired the continued existence of an independent Polish state. The British guarantee, Soviet leaders felt, was not strong enough and doubts lingered whether the Western Powers might surrender Poland to Hitler. The lack of realism in British and French policy and only a half-hearted attempt to secure Soviet participation in anti-Nazi coalition in summer reinforced Soviet doubts and an inclination to treat with the Nazis.¹⁶⁶ The pact came as surprise to the Poles. A Nazi-Soviet combination had been unthinkable, so much so that Polish strategic policy excluded the prospect of a two front war, which had been assumed in the early 1920s. Polish war plans--one for Germany, another for Russia, none for both--reflect this. The sorry negotiations between the Western Powers and the Soviets in summer prompted Sosnkowski to raise the question of war with the Soviets with Smigly-Rydz, but when the pact was made public even he was dumbstruck. En route to inspect Polish units he had to order his driver pull off to the side of the road as Polish Radio announced the news. Although the pact's provisions for the partition of Poland were unknown, it's repercussions for Poland were profound. At the side of the road to Piotrków Sosnkowski told his staff: "Gentlemen, the news you heard a moment ago, means that Russia wants war, giving Germany a free hand."¹⁶⁷ The pact thus signalled to Polish leaders the immediate approach of war as well.

¹⁶⁵ Sosnkowski, Przemówienie wygłoszone podczas zjazdu Związku Legionistów, Cracow, 6 August 1939; Przemówienie wygłoszone na Wawelu około grobu J. Piłsudskiego, AAN, Archiwum Sosnkowskiego, file 3, fols. 1-4; and "Nie oddamy," Dzien dobry, 13 May 1939.

¹⁶⁶ Ulam, Expansion and Coexistence, 267ff.

¹⁶⁷ Sosnkowski, Cieniom września, 46 and 50.
Thus, if your illustrious house wants to follow those excellent men who redeemed their countries, it is necessary before all other things, as the true foundation of every undertaking, to provide oneself with its own arms; for one cannot have more faithful, nor truer, nor better soldiers.

Niccolò Machiavelli, The Prince

On 1 September 1939 Hitler’s armed forces invaded Poland. Powerful German armies moved in from the north, west, and south—from East Prussia, Pomerania, Silesia, and Slovakia. Poland’s French and British allies were slow to act and rendered ineffective assistance. Only after much soul-searching, on 3 September, did the United Kingdom and France declare war. The British bombed a few German North Sea naval installations. A large offensive by the French Army, pledged in May, never came. The Polish Army, too, was found wanting. The average soldier and officer of 1939 was of greater moral worth and better trained than the trooper of 1920.¹ Nearly 950,000 men answered the call and fought bravely in what all recognized as a hopeless battle. The forces defending Poland’s frontiers were cut to ribbons in the first week of fighting by German forces which included four motorized and seven armored divisions. A hastily-assembled defense in Poland’s interior, during the second week of the campaign, was similarly overcome.

¹ Klemens Rudnicki, Na polskim szlaku (London, 1984), 46.
On 12 September German forces reached Lvov and two days later surrounded Warsaw. With technological modernization only beginning to bear fruit and an operational doctrine frozen in 1920, Polish forces were materially and intellectually unprepared to repel the armored spearheads that plunged into the interior. Command of the air was decisive. This the German air force, the Luftwaffe, established early in the campaign. Also, the army’s flawed command and control system caused the commander-in-chief to lose control of his forces early in the campaign. In addition, Polish forces were poorly deployed due to government hesitation and bad planning. By 2 September Colonel Józef Jaklicz of the General Staff concluded the campaign was lost.\(^2\) The Red Army’s invasion of Poland on 17 September only sealed the collapse. Warsaw capitulated on 28 September. Large-scale resistance ended after the Battle of Kock on 5 October. Following the example of the legendary "Hubal," Major Henrk Dobrzaniśki, a few units fought on until May 1940.\(^3\)

At war’s outbreak Sosnkowski was waiting in the wings, without a role to play in the unfolding drama. For three days he waited for a call from the commander-in-chief, but none came. On 3 September he called on Rydz-Śmigły in person, but only the next day was he offered a post, that of Minister for War Economy. Sosnkowski regarded the post as “devoid of any meaning.” And because the appointment was not part of a reconstruction of the government,
Sosnkowski refused this attempt to coopt him. Rydz then sent him to investigate the situation in southeastern Poland, where German forces were closing in on Przemyśl and Lvov. Only on 10 September, while in Lvov, was he given what he desired: Rydz entrusted him with command of the forces in southern Poland, the three divisions of the small Carpathian Army at Przemyśl which met the invasion from Slovakia. Reduced to about 10,000 and in danger of encirclement, Sosnkowski attempted to extricate the army in order to mount a defense at Lvov. Between 15 and 17 September the Carpathian Army fought its way to the Janowski Forest northwest of Lvov, mauling a German armored regiment in the process. However, before it was able to join the defenders of Lvov, on 18 September, Sosnkowski received the commander-in-chief's order calling on all units to retreat to Romania and Hungary and to carry on the fight abroad. Two days later he ordered what remained of the Carpathian Army to disperse into small groups to evade German forces. Sosnkowski and his aides attempted to join the defenders of Lvov, but before they were able to enter the city word came that it had fallen to the Soviets. On 22 September Sosnkowski went into hiding. A week later he and an aide, in the company of a forest service official and an enlisted soldier, set out for Hungary. On 12 October he arrived in Paris, where an army and government-in-exile were forming.

The destruction of the Polish state did not mean the end of the struggle. Already before the war, in May, work began on a plan to form Polish units in France to assist a Franco-Polish war effort. These plans were actualized on 9 September, when an agreement for the formation of one infantry division was signed. On 28 September Sikorski, who in anticipation of defeat left Poland and located himself in Paris to pick up the pieces at an early date, assumed command of the Polish forces. The formal shift of the Polish war effort from Poland to the West came when

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4 Beck, Ostatni Raport, 190 and Sosnkowski, Cieniom wrześni, 58-9.

5 Sosnkowski, Cieniom wrześni, 81-218.
Mościcki, Rydz-Śmigły, and the members of the government left the country. Having abandoned Warsaw for the safety of Kuty on the southeastern frontier by the second week of the struggle, Poland’s leaders abandoned this shelter when the Soviet invasion commenced. They crossed into Romania on the night of 17-18 September. Although promised safe passage, the leadership was interned upon crossing the frontier. This caused a crisis from which emerged a new government-in-exile. As stipulated by the 1935 Constitution, the president designated a successor. He strongly favored Sosnkowski, but the latter’s whereabouts were unknown. Instead Władysław Raczkiewicz, former marshal of the Polish Senate and a Piłsudski-ite untainted by the politics of the preceding years, was chosen. On 30 September Sławoj-Składkowski resigned, and Raczkiewicz entrusted Sikorski with the formation of a new government. Sikorski became commander-in-chief on 7 November, when Rydz-Śmigły was formally stripped of the position. In December a National Council, a surrogate Sejm, was established. The seat of the new government was Angers, in France.

After Sosnkowski arrived in Paris he was quickly brought into the exiles’ leadership. Raczkiewicz, who did not feel equal to the task before him and who believed the presidency belonged to Piłsudski’s former right hand, offered step down and name Sosnkowski his successor. Sosnkowski refused, because he believed another transition would be damaging to the Polish cause. Raczkiewicz then named Sosnkowski, whose criticism of the old regime now won him great popularity, his deputy and minister without portfolio. The government that took shape in October was thus a curious creation. A "Government of National Unity," it combined represen-

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tatives of the most important prewar opposition—the Peasant, Socialist, National and Labor Parties—
together with moderate yet prominent Pilsudski-ites such as Raczkiewicz, Sosnkowski, and
Zaleski who returned as foreign minister. Sanacja and OZN figures were kept at arms length, by
both groups. When Stawoj-Składkowski volunteered to serve as an army surgeon, his request was
turned down because the government was, Sikorski informed him, "unable to protect you from
the assassination attempts, which you must surely meet in every gathering of Poles."8

Sosnkowski was critical of and distanced himself from the Colonels, although he continued to
cherish the memory of Piłsudski and the Legions. Despite an earnest desire to work together, the
relationship between former opposition leaders and Piłsudski-ites, especially between Sikorski and
Sosnkowski, was uneasy. In September, During the process of choosing Mościcki’s successor
Sikorski had proclaimed his allegiance to Sosnkowski.9 However, despite this and attempts in
the 1930s to bring Sosnkowski into the opposition in the 1930s, the two were not political friends.

In the new government the representatives of former opposition parties grouped around Sikorski
held the upper hand and regarded the Piłsudski-ites with suspicion. The Sikorski coalition
tolerated them, because the old diplomatic corps and the army officers who made their way to
France, both overwhelmingly Piłsudski-ite in complexion, were indispensable to the government-
in-exile. Sikorski’s own men, Józef Retinger and Stanislaw Kot, kept an eye on former
opponents.10 Sosnkowski along with other Piłsudski-ites, trod lightly.11

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10 See, for example, Raczyński, In Allied London, 45.
11 Zając, Dwie wojny, 239, and 23 Oct. 1939, Szembek, Diariusz: 1939, 117. Entreaties from
Miedziński and then his daughter for Sosnkowski’s assistance in securing his return to active
service went unanswered. Miedziński to Sosnkowski, Bucharest, 13 Nov. 1939, and Hanna
Miedzińska, to Sosnkowski, Paris, 23 Feb. 1940, OSS, Archiwum Sosnkowskiego, cont. 16581/H1,
The Sikorski government was recognized by all major states except Germany and the Soviet Union, both of which were at war with Poland. However, the Western democracies were ambivalent toward Soviet aggression against Poland; they were sympathetic to the Poles yet conciliatory toward the Russians whom they did not wish to push further into the Nazi camp. The Polish government's position was unequivocal: "Poland will never recognize the act of violence and, strong in the justice of her cause, she will not cease to struggle for the day when, her territory liberated from invaders, her legitimate rights will be established in their entirety." However, the Poles played down the problem of the U.S.S.R. and treated Germany as the enemy of first importance. The Polish-Soviet conflict is often referred to as the "theory of two enemies," but to Polish leaders there was little hypothetical about Soviet aggression.

The position of the government-in-exile has often been likened to that of Serbia in the First World War, but it more closely resembled that of the Polish Legions and the Polish independence movement during that conflict. Polish leaders, many of them like Sosnkowski, Sikorski, and Kukiel veterans of the movement did not fail to see parallels. Sosnkowski saw the Poles' position as similar to that of the NKN in 1916. Although Allied leaders pledged victory and peace, the Poles did not regard the defeat of Germany as synonymous with the restoration of Poland. True, the government-in-exile was fighting, as a junior partner in a coalition, in a general European war for the defeat of a partitioning power, but at the same time the Polish war effort aimed at reconstructing the Polish state as well.

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The resumption of the Polish war effort and the reconstruction of the Polish Army was the most important task of the government in autumn and winter 1939. On 9 November, in a radio address, Sikorski summoned "all Poles--wherever they are--to armed service and to unceasing struggle for our holy right." The exiles set to work establishing the new army as quickly as possible. This work proceeded in two directions: the creation of a modern, conventional force on foreign soil and the formation of an underground army at home. Sikorski wanted first of all to tackle the problem of building a Polish Army in the West, but quickly changed his mind as problems in Poland itself took first place. Throughout the Second World War, despite the great contribution of Polish forces to the Western Allies War effort and the attention lavished upon it by historians, the underground army took precedence. In the work of organizing this force in 1939 and 1940, Sikorski vested Sosnkowski with the leading role.

In autumn 1939 Poland organized for resistance without direction from Angers. Military organizations sprang up spontaneously. Poles instead of feeling defeated, were frustrated by the speedy collapse of the army. They believed it was their duty to stage a general resistance to the invaders. Many of the resistance organizations were linked to political parties. A large number were put together by former army officers who had evaded capture. The largest and most important was the Service for Polish Victory (Służba Zwycięstwu Polski), established in late September. This organization, which worked to subordinate other groups to it, had the semblance of an official organization. Major General Michał Karasiewicz-Tokarzewski, a prominent Piłsudski-ite, former Legionnaire, and official in the Sanacja War Ministry, founded it the with

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the sanction of army leaders before the end of September. The organization’s task was stated as undertaking "a forceful and unceasing struggle with the invader in every field of endeavor, and with every means, until the liberation of Poland in its prewar frontiers." However, it was not purely a military organization. To give the nascent underground army a political and social base Karasiewicz-Tokarzewski appealed to leaders from the Polish Socialist, Peasant Party and National Parties for their support. This led to the formation of the Main Council of National Defense (Rada Główna Rady Obronnej), which was to advise the commander and secure popular support.16

Leaders in France sought to subordinate the Karasiewicz-Tokarzewski’s organization to the Angers government and to assume leadership of the war effort at home. To this end on 8 November the Council of Ministers established the Ministerial Committee for Home Affairs (Komitet Ministrów dla Spraw Krajowych). To head the committee the ministers unanimously chose Sosnkowski whose experience organizing conspiratorial groups was unmatched. In addition, Sikorski replaced Tokarzewski’s military organization with the Union of Armed Struggle (Związek Walki Zbrojnej, known by the acronym ZWZ). Sikorski named Sosnkowski the organization’s commander. As its head acted as "the deputy of the commander-in-chief and on his orders."17 Historians speculate that Sikorski chose Sosnkowski because of his influence with Pilsudski-ites. He may have also hoped that by binding himself to Sosnkowski, he could exercise direct control


17 Sikorski, order, 13 Nov. 1939, AK, 1:4-5.
over the ZWZ and its commander. In taking charge of the war effort at home and putting it on a sound organizational basis in winter 1939-1940 Sosnkowski and Sikorski worked together harmoniously. The only noticeable instance of friction between the two was over the selection of a commander at home. On Sikorski's initiative Sosnkowski named Tokarzewski's chief-of-staff, former commander of the Warsaw Motorized Brigade Colonel Stefan Grot-Rowecki, a Pilsudski-ite and Legionnaire. Tokarzewski was removed, perhaps because Sikorski distrusted his Sanacja past. He was given command of underground forces in Soviet occupied territory and ordered to take up command in Lvov, where as Military District Commander before the war he was very well known and very likely to be arrested. Sosnkowski, however, granted Tokarzewski permission to relocate his headquarters to Vilnius. The orders did not reach him in time to prevent his arrest by Soviet authorities on 6 March 1940.

Sosnkowski gave the ZWZ his own stamp, and under his guidance the underground army acquired the nature and character that shaped its actions throughout the war. In fashioning the ZWZ Sosnkowski fell back on the methods of the independence movement and the model of the ZWC, the Union of Active Struggle. He even revived his old pseudonym, "Józef," which he combined with his family coat of arms to become "Józef Godziemba." In his instructions of 4 December, which constituted its statute, Sosnkowski gave the ZWZ a purely military character: "The ZWZ is a secret military organization based on strict adherence to the principles of hierarchy, responsibility, and discipline." It's organization was military; the basic unit was a 5-man section, several of which constituted a platoon. Units were under the orders of a district

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19 Józef Godziemba [Sosnkowski], Instrukcja dla Obywatela Rakonia [Stefan Grot-Rowecki], 4 Dec. 1939, AK 1:15.

20 Sosnkowski to Obywatel Torwid [Karasiewicz-Tokarzewski], 2 Feb. 1940, Ibid, 125.
superior who answered to one of six regional commanders. The commander of Region No. 1, Warsaw, was also commander of the German occupation. The Lvov commander oversaw the lands under Russian control. In a subsequent instruction of 16 January Sosnkowski designate the ZWZ an element of the regular armed forces and its members given the status of soldiers. He gave the organization the task of "military training of a cadre of army units." In contrast to earlier organizations which organically united political and military elements, the ZWZ contained none of the former. The formation of the ZWZ reintroduced the distinction between military and civilian authorities. In place of the National Defense Council, which was destroyed by arrests, its members perishing at Gestapo execution sites outside of Warsaw, a collective government Delegacy (Delegatura) emerged. Later a truncated underground parliament, the Council of National Unity (Rada Jedności Narodowej) was established. Although the commander of the ZWZ and the delegacy cooperated closely, their functions were distinct.

The ZWZ as fashioned by Sosnkowski constituted a cadre whose task was a "national uprising." Instead of "an unceasing struggle," the ZWZ was ordered to undertake no armed or diversionary activities, save sabotage. For the time being such actions were without political sense. Moreover, the organization had to save itself for the national uprising. Until then the organization was to provide intelligence. Only when the moment was right, on the orders of the commander-in-chief, was the force to lead an uprising. It was to be launched in the rear of an enemy in collapse. In 1939 and 1940 this was the most likely scenario, for only France and

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21 Sosnkowski, Instrukcje Nr 1, 4 Dec. 1939, AK, 1:10-13.


Britain, which had defeated Germany in the First World War, faced Hitler. None at the time envisioned the involvement of the Soviets.

The instructions from London were implemented by Grot-Rowecki in February 1940, transforming Tokarzewski's organization into Sosnkowski's. Even before the government in Angers acted the Service for Poland's Victory had moved to subordinate itself to the sovereign authority and the assertion of this authority was met with relief by leaders at home.24 The ZWZ was the only resistance organization sanctioned by the government, and all others were to give way to it. And, as Sosnkowski instructed Rowecki, "the most pressing task [of you] Citizen [Grot-Rowecki], as commandant of Region No. 1, will be making contact with the leaders of resistance groups, subordinating them to yourself and incorporating them in the organizational framework of the ZWZ."25 By spring the ZWZ was firmly established in Poland, and intelligence began to reach leaders in the West. And, though several organizations were reluctant to join the Angers-sponsored organization, the ZWZ secured the dominant role in the resistance.

In spring 1940 efforts to rebuild the Polish Army in France also came to fruition. Although this work did not directly involve Sosnkowski it deserves attention. Polish leaders turned to building conventional forces in late 1939. On 4 January 1940 a new agreement for the formation of Polish forces was concluded with the French government for the formation of Polish forces. With French support the Poles set about forming an army of two corps of two infantry divisions each and one armored brigade. Polish plans called for the creation of as many large combat formations as possible. They also called for the creation of a very large--15- to 20-

24 Ob. Rakor [Grot-Rowecki], Instrukcja dla dowódców wojewódzkich S.Z.P., 7 Jan. [Feb.] 1940; Rozkaz organizacyjny Nr 1, 7 Feb. 1940; and Tokarzewski to Sikorski, 7 Dec. 1939, AK, 1:142-48 and 22. See also Rudnicki, Na szlaku, 77-8.

25 Sosnkowski, Instrukcja dla Rakonia, 4 Dec. 1939, AK, 1:18.
squadron—air arm, one oversized for so small an expeditionary force.\textsuperscript{26} Polish leaders took away from the September campaign many lessons, including the new, unparalleled importance of military aviation. They may also have had in mind the anticipated national uprising and the army of the reconstituted state. In both instances the forces abroad were to serve as technical cadres, to be fleshed out by home personnel. To create this force the government skillfully evacuated over 43,000 officers and men of the old army interned in Hungary, Romania, and the Baltic states. In addition, the Poles extended conscription to citizens in France. By 1 April 41,000 men had been conscripted or volunteered. The government-in-exile had hoped to tap the 4.5 million Poles in the United States as the Polish National Committee had done to create Haller's Army in the First World War. However, thanks to time and demography Poles in America were now overwhelmingly U.S. citizens, whom the government was unable to conscript or enlist on a volunteer basis. Despite this disappointment a force of 7,661 officers and 74,600 men was soon established.\textsuperscript{27} By spring two infantry divisions deployed alongside French forces. Two others were forming as was a brigade in French-ruled Syria.

Once the initial obstacles of forming exile and underground armies were passed, or perhaps because of this, Sosnkowski’s relations with Sikorski deteriorated. Friction between the two began in February, but became manifest only in spring.\textsuperscript{28} This friction cannot be attributed, as Sikorski’s biographer Walentyna Korpalska contends, to Sosnkowski’s politicking on behalf

\textsuperscript{26} PSZ, vol. 2, part 1, 17-8 and 21.

\textsuperscript{27} PSZ, vol. 2, part 1, 58.

\textsuperscript{28} As early as February Sosnkowski sensed Sikorski’s dissatisfaction and confronted him. Sosnkowski to Sikorski, 21 Feb. 1940. In March Sikorski criticized Sosnkowski’s ZWZ work. Sosnkowski, note, OSS, Archiwum Sosnkowskiego, cont. 222/84, fol. 111 and 96. See also Sosnkowski to Pobóg-Malinowski, Arundal, 24 Aug. 1962, JPI, Archiwum Póbóg-Malinowskiego, cont. III/6-2.
of the Sanacja and OZN camps. Sosnkowski continued to maintain his distance from these groups. In his instructions to Grot-Rowecki he even commanded underground leaders to avoid admitting their members to the ZWZ. "The political system from before the war," he wrote Grot-Rowecki, "collapsed during the September campaign. Politicians and activists of the former Sanacja [regime] must realize this simple fact and know that all attempts to cooperate on their part are senseless, foreordained to failure, [and] can only inflame relations and bring insult to Poland." Rather, it was Sikorski's suspicions of Sosnkowski's Pilsudski-ite sympathies which caused their relations to deteriorate. The former opposition leaders now in power not only reviled the Colonels' regime but Pilsudski and his legacy as well. Yet Sosnkowski, like most army officers abroad and especially at home, while reviling the Colonels and "Sanators," continued to cherish the memory of the Legions and their pater familias Pilsudski. In speeches as well as instructions and orders Sosnkowski invoked these heroes of another independence movement. Sosnkowski also believed that excessive criticism of the old regime and the failures of the past was counterproductive. In addition, complaints were leveled at Sosnkowski for, unavoidably, relying on prewar officers who were perceived to be affiliated with Sanacja in staffing the ZWZ.

Suspicious of his politics, Sikorski attempted to remove Sosnkowski as commander of the ZWZ in mid-May. Sosnkowski, in February, frustrated by Sikorski's criticism of him, suggested the premier find other employment for him. In May Sikorski complied. Sosnkowski wanted

29 Korpalska, Sikorski, 205.


32 Sosnkowski to Sikorski, 21 Feb. 1940, OSS, Archiwum Sosnkowskiego, cont. 222/84, fol. 111.
a combat command. Sikorski, however, proposed that he become ambassador either to Turkey or the United States. As an incentive he suggested combining either post with responsibility for organizing Polish forces, in Syria or the Americas respectively. Sikorski’s proposals were transparent. The recruiting effort in the Americas was modest and the corps in Syria was no more than a brigade. Nevertheless Sosnkowski responded cautiously, rejecting neither. He pointed out that he spoke little English and so might be unable to function effectively as emissary to the United States. He did not accept the ambassadorship to Turkey, although he suggested possible conditions for taking up the offer. These included: control of Eastern missions and personnel matters, the power to raise an army in the East, and command of the force when it was committed against the Germans. Sosnkowski’s conditions were outrageous and were probably formulated with an eye toward their rejection. However, to Sosnkowski’s surprise, Sikorski accepted, supplying a vague assurance that the position combine political and military functions.

The matter of Sosnkowski’s ambassadorial appointment was cut short by events. On 10 May Germany armies invaded the Low Countries and France. The Dutch and Belgian forces were overwhelmed and the British and French armies sent reeling. By 20 May German forces reached the English Channel. French attempts to counterattack failed, and France was defeated almost as speedily as Poland. On 17 June a new government under Field Marshal Henri Petain sought peace. An armistice with Germany and Italy, which had entered the war on the Nazi side, went into effect on the night of 24-25 June. The same day Sikorski ordered the evacuation of Polish military and civilian personnel from France. The fall of France was a catastrophe for the Polish

33 Ibid.

Sosnkowski, Notatka dla premier i naczelnego wodza, nd. OSS, Archiwum Sosnkowskiego, cont. 222/84, fol. 116-82.

35 Sikorski to Sosnkowski, Paris, 24 May 1940, Archiwum Sosnkowskiego, cont. 222/84, fol. 125.
cause. Polish units, some only just organized, were thrown into the fray to stop the German onslaught. All, save the Second Rifle Division which was forced into Switzerland, were destroyed. Moreover, precious reserves of Polish manpower were stranded in German occupied territory, for the government was able to evacuate only 4,306 officers and 10,945 men from France. Furthermore, Polish bullion being transported to safety was seized by the Petain government. In addition, the fall of France had an important effect on the underground war effort. Psychologically, the debacle was a great blow. The prospects of an insurrection became distant and underground commanders reconciled themselves to a long war. When interruption in communications threatened during the French retreat, Sosnkowski named Rowecki deputy commander of the ZWZ to ensure continuity if exile leaders found themselves stranded in France. Subsequently it was decided, on Sosnkowski’s suggestion, to relocate the ZWZ command to Poland permanently.

The fall of France precipitated a government crisis. The departure of Sikorski and other leaders—evacuated hastily from France by the Royal Air Force while the rank and file fought on—was ill-advised, and he was faulted for standing by the French until the last moment. The Sikorski government was held responsible for the catastrophe by its opponents, especially old regime leaders who pressed for Sikorski’s ouster. Sikorski now also chose to raise the question of relations with the Soviet Union. Shortly after meeting with the British prime minister, Winston S. Churchill in the United Kingdom, Sikorski agreed to deal with the Soviets. He proposed

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36 *PSZ*, vol. 2, part 2, 145.


creating a 300,000-man Polish force, if Soviet authorities agreed. Sikorski was determined, according to Raczyński, "to create a sizeable Polish army, even if it required the help of the devil himself." He submitted this proposal for consideration to the British Foreign Office on 19 June, without the prior approval of his own government.³⁹ Although the proposal was withdrawn at Foreign Minister Zaleski’s urging, the damage had been done. Sikorski now stood accused of treason. On 18 July Raczkiewicz, whose relations with Sikorski were otherwise strained, dismissed him and called on Zaleski to form a new government.

The attempts of the president and Zaleski to replace Sikorski met with strong opposition. On 18 July a delegation of army officers led by Brigadier General Tadeusz Klimecki, one of Sikorski’s lieutenants, called on Zaleski hoping to persuade him to decline the mission. More importantly, the government, which continued to meet while the search for a new premier began, condemned the president’s action. All four coalition parties refused to join a government headed by Zaleski. Shortly both sides were at loggerheads. The positions of the Raczkiewicz and Zaleski were impossible. On 8 and 12 July Sosnkowski had advised against dismissing Sikorski. A proponent of unity and cooperation, especially at this moment when the Polish cause was in disarray, Sosnkowski believed removing Sikorski might damage the war effort. He did not see any "Spielraum" or room for maneuver among the exiles; the limited representation of political parties in exile and the absence of any national forum allowed for few alternatives to the combination of the four parties behind Sikorski.⁴⁰ Also, politics among the exiles was self-destructive, Sosnkowski believed, and he, personally, sought to avoid involvement in the crisis. He found himself in an uncomfortable position, for he was the Sanacja camp’s candidate for the

³⁹ Raczyński, In Allied London, 57. See also PSZ, vol. 2, part 1, 223.

⁴⁰ Sosnkowski, Materiały historyczne, 6-7.
premiership. Sosnkowski, however, was unable to remain neutral. On 18 July Zaleski offered him the position of vice premier or ambassador to Washington; meanwhile other leaders urged him to intervene on Sikorski's behalf. Also, the officers' delegation headed by Klimecki called on Sosnkowski. This action, which called to mind a "South American palace revolution," cast the Polish leadership in the worst light. It caused Sosnkowski to put aside his misgivings and to intervene in support of Sikorski. His action was received by both the president and Zaleski with relief, for it provided them, according to Sosnkowski, with a "face-saving" exit from the impasse. Sikorski was entrusted with the formation of a new government, on 19 July.

Once the crisis was resolved, Polish leaders turned once again to the exile war effort. Polish forces were quickly reorganized. The summer of 1940 was difficult. Invasion of Britain loomed, and the allied war effort needed more manpower. From the Polish forces on hand two full brigades were formed. In addition, owing to the high proportion of officers among those evacuated from France, the cadres or skeletons of an additional five brigades were established. In spring 1941 these meager units were rather optimistically designated the First Corps. In keeping with the Polish aim of creating a force which could serve as a cadre of specialists for the army of a reconstituted Poland, great emphasis was again placed on developing specialized forces. An armored brigade, named for the old Tenth Cavalry Brigade, Poland's first motorized unit, was formed under Brigadier General Stanislaw Maczek, the latter's commander. Great attention was given to the air arm as well. Squadrons evacuated from France were reconstituted while other fliers were immediately pressed into service in the British R.A.F. Of the 27,714 officers and men

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41 Łukasiewicz to Raczyński, 8 July 1940, OSS, Archiwum Sosnkowskiego, cont. 264/84, fols. 39-40.

42 Sosnkowski, Materiały. 7-9.
on hand in July 1940 6,429 were air service personnel. The Polish war effort slowed after the fall of France. The transfer to Britain was by no means smooth. Also, the army was plagued by the acute manpower and equipment problems which were to bedevil it for the rest of the war.

Sosnkowski played an important role in dealing with these concerns, and his stock rose after the July crisis. He had returned as minister for home affairs and chairman of the Home Affairs Committee in Sikorski's new government. He also became vice premier and deputy commander-in-chief, and in this capacity he became chairman of the Political Committee of the Council of Ministers. Sosnkowski continued to direct the war effort at home, since after the ZWZ command was relocated to Poland, the underground army's overall direction was entrusted to the VI Independent Home Bureau of the General Staff, which reported to the deputy commander-in-chief—Sosnkowski.

Establishing a working relationship with Great Britain, Poland's new patron was vital. In this Sosnkowski played an important role, for he negotiated the air agreement appended to a general military convention. Talks were difficult. The British government was unwilling to finance the Polish war effort without exercising control over Polish forces, yet it was eager for the Poles' contribution, since the British army and its arsenal had been wrecked in France also. The Poles had few options. Without financial and material resources and only slim human resources, they were dependent on British patronage. The British allowed only that the Poles' land and sea forces might have Polish commanders within the framework of the British command.

Negotiation of an air agreement was most difficult. Air units were as important to the British as they were to those building the armed forces of a future Polish state. As talks got underway so too did the Battle of Britain, the Nazi air assault to pave the way for an invasion of the United Kingdom. British leaders sought even greater control of Polish air units, because their

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fate now rested on these. The crisis thus afforded Sosnkowski and Polish leaders some leverage, but not much. The head of the aviation department of the Polish War Ministry wrote Sikorski, "the whole future may depend on the events of the coming months and that similarly the future of the Polish air force as well as our own depends on a strong showing in the face of the immediate danger." The British leaders initially refused to recognize air units as a part of the Polish armed forces. Sosnkowski contested this position with Air Marshal Cyril Newall, the chief of the British Air Staff. He also pressed Sikorski to include the air force as a constituent element of the Polish armed forces in the general agreement, which was then being negotiated. The British conceded this, but no more. When Sosnkowski pressed for independence for the Polish squadrons or for the organization of Polish squadrons in separate wings or groups, the British balked. Sosnkowski sought to take advantage of the R.A.F.'s difficult circumstances, staggering losses in trained aircrews as the Battle of Britain reached its climax, suggesting that more Polish fighter squadrons be organized and offering to loan the British unattached Polish pilots. The British, however, only allowed for the establishment of an Inspectorate of Polish Air Forces which nevertheless still operated only through the British Air Ministry. Only a single ground attack squadron attached to Polish land forces was to be at the disposal of Polish commanders, the remainder, four bomber and two fighter units would remain under British control.

The greatest problem Polish leaders faced was a shortage of manpower. By the summer of 1940 many Poles were in German-occupied territories, and the evacuation of interned soldiers

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47 For the text of the air agreement see, PSZ, vol. 2, part 1, 297-304.
from Eastern Europe became more difficult as well. Polish leaders seemed to have no choice but to pursue recruiting in the Americas. The government-in-exile first turned to the Polish community in Canada, which was the belligerent with the largest Polish immigrant community. Sosnkowski was a leading advocate of seeking volunteers in America, having raised the issue privately in July. In early September he presented Sikorski with a proposal for a large-scale recruiting campaign in Canada, which he was then invited to present to leading Polish ministers. Initial efforts, however, met with serious obstacles. The Canadian government was not inclined to offer the Poles any financial assistance and it forbade the enlistment of Canadian or British nationals in the Polish armed forces. Polish leaders were not deterred. At the Council of Ministers' meeting of 29-31 October Sosnkowski proposed that the sum of $4.5 million--hardly affordable for the Polish government--be allocated for recruiting in North America. The ministers approved. Sosnkowski was determined to proceed, for North America was the only source of recruits at the time. In addition, Sosnkowski also believed the Poles might be free to create their own army in Canada, away from British controls.

In March 1941 the Polish finance ministry granted $1 million from British government credits for recruiting, and the search for volunteers in North America began. The plan was to create a 30,000 man armored corps in Canada. It fell into difficulty at once. A mission headed by Brigadier General Kazimierz Duch was sent home without explanation only days after it

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48 Sosnkowski to Pawel Sapiemia, 31 July 1940; Sosnkowski to Sikorski, London, 5 Sept. 1940, and Sikorski to Sosnkowski, 13 Sept. 1940, OSS, Archiwum Sosnkowskiego, cont. 16578/II, fols. 81-3.; cont. 16544/II, fols. 6-9; and cont. 225/II, fols. 84-5.

49 Protokół z posiedzenia Rady Ministrów z dni 29-31 października 1940 r. Ibid, cont. 225/84, fols. 164-6 and 169-71. See also Sosnkowski, Rozmowa z gen. S[ikorskim] w sprawie wojska w Ameryce, 2 Nov. [1941], cont. 225/84, fol. 150.

50 Sikorski, Instrukcja formowania Wojska Polskiego w Ameryce, 10 March 1941, Ibid, cont. 225/84, fols. 193-5.
arrived. Polish leaders were not discouraged, for on 11 March the United States Congress passed the Lend Lease Act. Sikorski, himself, now intervened, to smooth difficulties with Canadian authorities and to win the support of U.S. leaders for recruiting and equipping an army. Urged on by Sosnkowski, whose hopes now soared, he visited Canada and the United States, departing on 23 March. Sosnkowski meanwhile sought to win over the U.S. ambassador to Poland’s exiled government. Sikorski was only partially successful. For the time being the Canadians authorized recruiting only 4,000 men, and these were not to constitute an independent Polish corps in Canada, but rather serve as replacements for forces in Britain. U.S. leaders also approved Polish recruiting, but granted no special concessions. Leaders of the U.S. Polish community even cautioned against expecting too much. And, while Lend Lease was approved for Poland, discussions with President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Secretary of State Cordell Hull and Under-secretary Sumner Welles made clear that American war production was to meet primarily the need of the U.S. armed forces. The British benefited from the program through the loan of 50 old destroyers, but the Poles had no need for retired warships.

In the meantime, after the fall of France, the development of underground forces continued. On Sosnkowski’s orders the war effort at home centered on organizational work, and Sosnkowski reaffirmed his injunction against large scale armed action against German occupation forces. Despite numerous arrests and an expanding Nazi campaign of terror, great progress was made. By November the underground army in the German occupied lands number nearly 116,000

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51 Sosnkowski to Sikorski, 18 March 1941, and Rozmowa z ambasadorem Biddle’m dnia 27 III [1941 r], o 10 rano, Ibid, cont. 225/84, fols. 207-16 and 306-7.

52 High Commissioner for Canada Massey, memorandum, 31 March 1941, and Klimecki to Sosnkowski, dispatch, 7 April 1941, Ibid, cont. 225/84, fols. 310 and 316-19. The Consul General in Chicago reported that the government ought to expect only 5-6,000 volunteers from the United States. Dr. Carol Ripy to Światowy Związek Polaków z Zagranicy, Chicago, 16 April 1941, fols. 321-2. On Polish participation in Lend Lease see Sikorski to Sosnkowski, dispatches, Washington, 8 and 10 April 1941, cont. 260/84, fol. 31 and cont. 225/84, fol. 311.
officers and men on active service or in reserve. In November and December, Sikorski ordered planning to begin for a national uprising, and Polish grand strategy began to take shape. On 6 December Sosnkowski submitted an outline for a national uprising in the final stage of the war. The uprising was to be directed against Germany alone and assumed Soviet neutrality. Sosnkowski acknowledged, however, that the U.S.S.R. had further territorial aspirations in Poland which might lead to seizure of German occupied lands in the last stages of the conflict. The plan called for armed uprising in rural south central and southern Poland, the Cracow-Kielce-Rzeszów region, and in Pomerania. Large underground operations were also planned for eastern Poland, where the aim was to block a Soviet invasion. Sosnkowski’s plan called for the training abroad of special or technical forces—engineers, signals, and the like—which were to be parachuted into the country. Polish air units were to support the uprising from bases on the continent, secured by a British invasion, and from home fields secured by the insurgent army. The bulk of the army raised abroad was to return home in a sea landing on Poland’s Baltic coast. In November Sosnkowski also set the underground command to work preparing operational plans for the uprising.

The fall of France and move to Britain changed the character of the Polish war effort, and it complicated Poland’s foreign policy as well. With France crushed, Great Britain stood alone

53 Godziemba [Sosnkowski], Skrót instrukcji nr 5 dla ob. Rakonia, 8 July 1940. AK 1:266-9. Estimates of Polish strength are based on reports submitted by district commanders whose methods varied. Rakord [Rowecki], Meldunek organizacyjny nr 37, 21 Nov. 1940, 1:338-53. See also Bor-Komorowski, Secret Army, 69.

54 Sikorski, order, 14 Oct. 1940, AK 1:301-3.

55 Sosnkowski to Sikorski, memorandum, 6 Dec. 1940, OSS, Archiwum Sosnkowskiego, cont. 16540/II/3, fols. 1-29.

56 Godziemba [Sosnkowski], Instrukcja nr 6 dla ob. Rakonia, 3 Nov. 1940, and Komendant Główny ZWZ, Meldunek operacyjny nr 54, 5 Feb. 1941, AK 1:310-1 and 437-42.
against the Nazi war machine. The intentions of the Soviet Union therefore assumed great
importance. To prevent the Soviets from collaborating more closely with the Nazis and to bring
Russia closer to Britain, became a matter of vital importance. The British made a number of
overtures to the Soviets. On 5 September Churchill stated in the House of Commons that while
Britain did not recognize East Central European boundary changes, it might accept them after the
war if they had the support of the peoples they affected. In October, as the price of Soviet
benevolence, the British secretly offered recognition of the Soviet gains to date, including Polish
territory.57

On 7 January the Council of Ministers resolved to redefine Polish foreign policy. The
task was entrusted to the council’s Political Committee headed by Sosnkowski. In July and
August the committee approved a set of "theses" or guidelines, prepared by Zaleski, which
significantly altered existing policy. Although it denounced the Soviet occupation of eastern
Poland as act of "imperialism," the committee held out the possibility of cooperation with the
U.S.S.R. Should the Soviets ally with the United Kingdom in the war against Germany, the Poles
would reconsider their stance toward the U.S.S.R. However, cooperation with the Soviets had to
be based on "recognition of the territorial status quo from before September 1939." Most leaders,
including Sosnkowski, were deeply concerned with Britain’s position. They did not want to cause
their ally any problems, while it was luring the Soviets out of the German camp. Sikorski who
had already declared himself in favor of cooperation with the U.S.S.R. even favored a policy in
lock step with that of the United Kingdom.58 Although the Poles appreciated Britain’s wish for
cooperation with the Soviets, Sosnkowski thought that Russo-German cooperation would tighten.

57 Karski, Great Powers and Poland, 396.

58 Protokół posiedzenia Komitetu Politycznego, 26 July 1940, OSS, Archiwum Sosnkowskigo, cont. 256/84, fol. 9. Sikorski’s presented his views at the meeting of 17 Aug. 1941, fols. 21-5. See also John Coutouvidid and Jamie Reynolds, Poland, 1939-1947 (Leicester, 1986), 55-6.
Germany might even cede parts of German-occupied Poland to the U.S.S.R. in exchange for a free hand against Britain. He urged: "We must be prepared for such an eventuality and prepare the British for this. It will be necessary to demand from them a positive expression of their position as an ally on the integrity of our frontiers in regard to the Soviets. The crossing of the Curzon line by the Soviets ought to make the acceptance of our situation easier." Securing a firm guarantee from the British of Poland's territorial integrity became a cornerstone of Polish policy.

Sosnkowski's increased authority after the government crisis of July 1940 by no means signalled a change in attitude toward him. Sikorski had needed to promote the man who had saved the government of national unity. Yet Sikorski remained suspicious and distrustful of Sosnkowski. Sosnkowski's powers as vice premier and deputy commander-in-chief were ill-defined, even more so after Kukiel who had emerged as Sikorski's close collaborator was also named deputy commander-in-chief. Repeated requests by Sosnkowski for clarification of his duties and powers were brushed aside by Sikorski. After the crisis of July, attempts to maneuver Sosnkowski out of a position of importance resumed. In early September 1940 Sikorski offered Sosnkowski the post of Foreign Minister, to remove Sosnkowski from the army high command and to rid himself of Zaleski at the same time, according to Sosnkowski.

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59 Protokół posiedzenia Komitetu Politycznego, OSS, Archiwum Sosnkowskiego, cont. 256/84, fols. 9-10.

60 Tezy polityki zagranicznej, nd., Ibid, cont. 256/84, fols. 196-7.

took care to explicitly reject this offer.\(^{62}\) Next, in mid-February 1941, Sikorski proposed to dispatch Sosnkowski to the Middle East on a lengthy, but pointless mission inspecting the small brigade which the French had formed in Syria and was now under British tutelage in Egypt. Aware that the brigade had already been assigned to garrison the Suez Canal, Sosnkowski declined. In March 1940, Sikorski proposed Sosnkowski take command of the forces in North America, a position the latter had expressed an interest in six months earlier.\(^{63}\) By March 1941 Sosnkowski was no longer interested, since the prospects for the formation of a Polish corps in America had dwindled. Sosnkowski chose to remain where he was for the time being.

Sosnkowski was the subject of much criticism in ruling circles. In September 1940 he was accused of causing a ferment in the army against the commander-in-chief. But most criticism was of his direction of the underground army. Civilian leaders charged the ZWZ with trying to subordinate the political organs of government at home to itself; it was also suggested that the ZWZ pro-Sanacja. Sosnkowski maintained that the ZWZ was apolitical, and warned Sikorski that political infighting in London would have a harmful effect on the war effort at home. Sikorski was unconvinced, issuing an order barring the ZWZ from politicking.\(^{64}\) In December Kot charged the ZWZ with disloyalty, recommending that organization be controlled by the government delegacy. Sosnkowski spoke in defense of the ZWZ and the Pilsudski-ites not associated with Sanacja. He pointed out: "Blatant exclusivism will make impossible the reconstruction of the army abroad and the collection of all healthy forces of the nation for the

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\(^{63}\) Sikorski, Instrukcja formowania wojska w Ameryce, 10 March 1941, OSS, Archiwum Sosnkowskiego, cont. 225/84, fols. 193-5.

struggle with the invader, which is at the present moment the first, main, and most essential task." Sikorski, once again, failed to defend Sosnkowski. Instead he urged Sosnkowski and the parties to work out their differences.\(^5\) At the same time other political conflicts divided the wartime leaders. In summer 1940 Interior Minister Kot stopped consulting with the Home Affairs Committee chairman regarding government instructions. In October he unilaterally committed the underground to a British diversionary program. Sosnkowski, reaffirming earlier instructions, prohibited this in a dispatch to Rowecki on 14 November. Sikorski questioned his decision, but Sosnkowski firmly opposed armed action at home, on the grounds that the ZWZ was not yet ready.\(^6\)

Without Sikorski’s support the Home Affairs Committee chairman’s position became impossible. Having deluged Sikorski in vain with memoranda, Sosnkowski resolved to take more forceful action. At the end of January 1941 he resigned, and requested that he be sent to Poland to join underground organizational work there. The latter request, in the manner of a grand gesture, was not granted. Sikorski, however, accepted his resignation as Home Committee chairman. Sosnkowski remained deputy commander-in-chief and vice premier, leaving him to direct underground organizational work but with much less authority.\(^7\) Soon after, on 12 May Sosnkowski was badly wounded during a German air raid on London. A delicate operation saved his life, although surgeons were unable to remove a bomb fragment lodged near his spine.

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\(^5\) Sikorski to Sosnkowski, 21 Dec. 1941; Sosnkowski to Sikorski, 17 Jan. 1940; and Sikorski to Sosnkowski, 23 Jan. 1941, AK 1:374-80, 412-416, and 424-5.


Sosnkowski spent several months recuperating in a hospital in Scotland, and thus was removed from decision-making temporarily.

While Sosnkowski recovered the nature of the European war dramatically changed. On 22 June 1941 German armies invaded the Soviet Union. Soviet authorities had been forewarned by the British government, in part through ZWZ reports of German troop concentrations in Poland. Soviet leaders, however, discounted reports of an invasion, which when it occurred took the Soviets by surprise. Soviet defeats in summer 1941 were greater than those of the Poles in September 1939 and the French in May 1940. The invasion broadening the war and brought the Soviets into the Allied camp. This in turn altered the nature of the Polish war effort. It elevated the problem of Polish-Soviet relations to primary importance. For Polish leaders this event, as well as the initial Russian defeats, opened up new vistas. Cooperation with the Soviets raised the prospect of the liberation of Poland by a Polish army, one raised closer to home and better poised to effect the government's grand strategy. Few leaders grasped the new situation and new possibilities as well as Sosnkowski. From his hospital in Scotland he wrote Sikorski on the day of the German invasion that cooperation with the Soviets was now "possible, and even commanded." He urged that a Polish Army be assembled in Russia. The British were even more eager for a common effort with Russia. Churchill illustrated the British position thusly: "If Hitler invaded Hell, I would make at least a favorable reference to the Devil in the House of Commons." 

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68 The information was passed to the British by Sosnkowski and later by Sikorski. Sosnkowski to Sir Brendan Bracken, Minister of Information, 21 April 1941, AK 1:516-20 and Sikorski to Churchill, London, May 23 1941, DPSR 1:102-3.

69 Sosnkowski to Sikorski, 22 June 1941, OSS, Archiwum Sosnkowskiego, cont. 16543/II/2, fol. 225.

On the day after the invasion Sikorski made his first overture to Soviet leaders. In a radio address he welcomed the newcomer to the common struggle and expressed his government's willingness to cooperate, but hoped the Soviet Union would renounce agreements with Germany regarding the partition of Poland. The pre-war boundaries as set by the Treaty Riga needed to be reaffirmed. Hosted by the British, meetings between Maisky, the Soviet ambassador, and Sikorski took place on 4 and 5 July. The two quickly agreed to a restoration of relations and to the establishment of a Polish Army in Russia. However, Maisky declined to recognize prewar frontiers, insisting that the question be left open. On 11 July a second round of talks, presided over by British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden, began. Sikorski again pressed for recognition of the prewar frontiers, although subtly. Sikorski's proposal was rejected. Maisky told Eden that the Soviet Union would under no circumstances give up its territorial gains in Poland. British leaders, Eden and Churchill, eager to cement the Soviet membership in the Western alliance, played an instrumental role in negotiations. Throughout they pressed Sikorski to come to an agreement with the Soviets as quickly as possible and to relent on the question of frontiers. In the face of an intractable Soviet stance and British pressure, Sikorski inclined to accept an agreement which put off the boundary issue. He put his trust in British pledges to support Polish claims later. (Subsequently he looked to territorial compensation in the West for losses in the East as well.)

Because the agreement Sikorski pursued called into question the inviolability of Poland's prewar eastern frontier, several leaders strongly dissented. The first to speak out was the National Democrat Marian Seyda. At the Council of Ministers' meeting on 12 July Seyda protested that in dealing with a party of demonstrated ill-will, it was essential to "prevent any [possible treaty]
evasions in advance.” Shortly Seyda was joined by Foreign Minister Zaleski and, after his return to London in mid-July, Sosnkowski. Sosnkowski insisted that agreement with the Soviets be based on the Riga frontiers, a point he communicated to Sikorski in his letter of 22 June. He was unwilling to compromise, insisting that the government hew to a policy reflecting the foreign policy theses put forward the year before. Aware of British eagerness to reach a modus vivendi with the Soviets, Sosnkowski doubted their future support for Polish claims. The Red Army was reeling in the face of the German onslaught, and Sosnkowski expected Moscow to fall. He hoped that further defeats might incline the Soviets to adopt a stance more favorable to Poland. Although reluctant, the Sikorski camp’s willingness to consider an agreement which might alter Poland’s place in Europe shows a thinking that went beyond the conceptual limits of most leaders’ thought. Sosnkowski among others felt bound by the constitutional and state obligations of the old Republic which he represented. He felt he could not make concessions to the Soviets which in his view were not only contrary to the interest of state but overwhelmingly unpopular.

In the face of opposition Sikorski again tried for Soviet acceptance of new formulas, which acknowledged the Riga frontiers. However, the Soviets were immovable, and British pressure grew, until 15 July, when Eden demanded Sikorski sign an agreement immediately.

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73 Sosnkowski to Sikorski, 22 June 1941, OSS, Archiwum Sosnkowskiego, cont. 16543/11/2, fol. 225. Also in Babirski, _Przycinki historyczne_, 583-4.

74 Protokóły posiedzeń Rady Min., London, 21 and 25 July 1941, Duraczyński, _Układ Sikorski-Majski_, 129 and 152. See also Jan Pomian, ed. _Józef Retinger: życie i pamiętniki “szarejeminencji”_ (Warsaw, 1990), 146.
Sikorski therefore moved to win acceptance of the terms he had negotiated with Maisky.\(^7\) Much effort went into winning over the opposition. Although they were in the minority, they nevertheless were important opinion leaders: Seyda represented National Democratic opinion and Sosnkowski, Pilsudski-ites and, especially, the officers of the ZWZ. Sikorski offered Sosnkowski the ambassadorship to Moscow and the role of organizing the Polish forces there, while trying to allay his misgivings about British support. At the meeting of the Council of Ministers on 21 July Kot, on the other hand, threatened to tar both the vice premier and Zaleski with the brush of the failed foreign policy of the Colonels. Sosnkowski as well as Zaleski and Seyda did not relent, remaining firm in their opposition to the agreement. Sosnkowski even strove to convince the government to adopt his delaying tactic.\(^6\) On 25 July, the morning of the final vote, Sikorski even threatened the three dissenters with dismissal, if they did not change their stance. The agreement’s opponents were put in the awkward position of having to air their views in public, in the presence of Eden, at a gala dinner where the final vote was to be taken. Seyda, Zaleski, and Sosnkowski absented themselves from the final ballot. Unwilling to shoulder the responsibility for what they saw as a tragic decision and believing their position now impossible, the three resigned that very day.\(^7\)

Sosnkowski as well as Zaleski and Seyda had by no means withdrawn from the fray. After the Council of Ministers had spoken Raczkiewicz, who also opposed the pact, turned to the

\(^7\) Karski, *Great Powers*, 408 and Sikorski to Sosnkowski, 23 July 1941, OSS, Archiwum Sosnkowskiego, cont. 270/84, fol. 36.

\(^6\) Sikorski to Sosnkowski, teleonogram, 20 July 1941; Sikorski to Sosnkowski, 23 July 1941, OSS, Archiwum Sosnkowskiego, conts. 264/84, fol. 205, and 16544/II/62-3; Protokół posiedzenia Rady Min., 21 July 1941, Duraczyński, *Układ Sikorski-Majski*, 134; and Pomian, Józef Retinger, 146.

three for help in blocking it. On 27 July Raczkiewicz called on Sosnkowski at a country retreat. The president’s solution, once again, was to step down in favor of Sosnkowski. Raczkiewicz believed that national unity was in ruins and wanted no association with what he considered a historic mistake. Raczkiewicz’s solution was hardly likely to resolve the crisis, and Sosnkowski convinced him of this. He urged Raczkiewicz to use his prerogatives to delay the agreement’s signing until Sikorski could be turned out of office and a new government established. Here Sosnkowski counted on the disaffection of a number of Socialist Party leaders, who gravitated toward Raczkiewicz. To prevent the signing of the pact he refused to accept the ministers’ resignations, refused to sign the agreement, and refused Sikorski permission to sign it. This, however, failed to stop Sikorski, who signed on 30 July in spite of the president’s opposition, ignoring objections that this act was unconstitutional.

Even after the signing Sosnkowski and the pact’s opponents still hoped to reverse Sikorski’s decision. In a dramatic meeting on the evening of 30 July they resolved, after convincing Raczkiewicz once again not to resign, to press on with efforts to form a new government, headed by Sosnkowski. Sosnkowski, who took the lead in discussions, was encouraged by the appearance, at last, of some “Spielraum” created by the defection of leaders from the ruling coalition. Between 30 July and 7 August Sosnkowski worked tirelessly and not without some success to form a government. “In the space of a few days,” recalled his aide Captain Witold Babiński, “he was able to assemble a potential cabinet.” Assembling a potential


80 W. Babiński, Przycinki historyczne, 81.
cabinet, however, was something quite different from creating a real one. Although there was room for maneuver and the camp had a number of supporters in the parties, they did not have enough of either to lure the Socialist and Peasant Parties into a new government. Even Seyda expressed reservations about his party appearing to collaborate with "Sanacja" elements. In addition, the British press weighed in on the side of the pact and attacked its opponents. These factors and indecision weighed heavily on Raczkiewicz. On 7 August he called off Sosnkowski.

The meek opposition of the exiled leaders and the British press reaction hardly encouraged Sikorski as might have been expected. For Sikorski who depended so much on British support, the reaction of the British press may have been ominous. On 8 August left-wing Truth proclaimed: "The real value of the [Sikorski-Maisky] agreement is that it enables us with a clear conscience to wash our hands of Russo-Polish relations." Sikorski may also have been apprehensive of Polish opinion, especially of the ZWZ reaction, owing to its commanders' loyalty to Sosnkowski. If so, his fears were well founded. On 15 September Rowecki reported that the news of Sosnkowski's departure caused consternation and made military work difficult. In addition, Polish immigrant sentiment strongly favored the old hero. Perhaps for these reasons Sikorski tried to bring Sosnkowski back into the government even in the wake of the debate over

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82 "Poles and Russians," Truth, 8 Aug. 1941. See also "Poland Must Help Us to Make a Just Settlement Possible," Tribune 15 Aug. 1941.

83 Rowecki's reaction was received on 3 Oct. 1941. Kalina [Rowecki] to Strażnica [Sikorski], dispatch 330, 15 Sept. 1941, AK 2:70-1. Sikorski replied the Rowecki's dispatch was "at the very least inappropriate." Sikorski to Kalina [Rowecki], dispatch, 10 Oct. 1941, AK 2:126. General Charles Gubbins, head of the British Special Operations Executive, thought Sosnkowski's departure would have a negative effect on underground operations at home and appealed to him to remain in the government in a meeting on 31 July. 1941. Sosnkowski, notes, Rozmowa z gen. Gubbinsem, 31 July 1941, OSS, Archiwum Sosnkowskiego, cont. 270/84, fols. 47. An indication of immigrant sentiment is contained in Memorandum, Dziennik Polski Detroit 23-go sierpnia 1941 r., OSS, Archiwum Sosnkowskiego, cont. 264/84, fols. 18-19.
the pact. At a meeting on 16 August he made the first of several bids for Sosnkowski’s return. He proposed successively that Sosnkowski return to the cabinet or the ZWZ, take command in the Near East, or assume a diplomatic post in Egypt, in Canada, Washington, or New Zealand. As a condition of his return Sikorski demanded that Sosnkowski recant his opposition to the pact. On 27 August, he even had a prepared text declaring acceptance of the agreement of 30 July ready for Sosnkowski’s signature. For his part Sosnkowski sincerely wished to play a role in and to influence the war effort. "In the current state of things," he wrote Sikorski, "faced with faits accomplis, I am prepared to loyally collaborate to obtain from the agreement the many possible uses for Poland and Poles imprisoned in Russia, working as well to ensure the status quo in the matter of the eastern frontier." However, Sosnkowski refused to alter his stance on the Sikorski-Maisky Pact. In addition, he demanded a role which was not devoid of influence. Sikorski rejected both, in particular, refusing to countenance nothing less than complete acceptance of the pact. Talks dragged on through September, but the outcome was foreordained. "I cannot propose to the United States a representative," wrote Sikorski in a letter of 14 October, "who in such a fundamental matter as the pact with Russia has a diametrically opposite view."

Therefore Sosnkowski watched from the sidelines as the construction of a Polish Army in Russia moved forward in 1941 and 1942 and as the war became global with the United States entry into the conflict in December 1941. Work on the Polish Army in Russia moved quickly in the dark days of 1941. On 14 August 1941 a military agreement was signed with the Soviets,

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84 Rozmowa z premierem, 16 Aug. 1941, and Rozmowa z panem premierem, 27 Aug. [1941], OSS, Archiwum Sosnkowskiego, cont. 16544/II, fols. 73-6 and 78-82. See also Sosnkowski to Raczkiewicz, 20 Aug. 1941, cont. 16545/II, fols. 29-32.


Calling for the creation of a Polish Army to be led by a Polish general under overall Soviet direction. Major General Władysław Anders, a former Tsarist officer and one of the government's defenders in the May 1926 coup, was chosen to lead the force. The army was to be assembled from the estimated 180,000 prisoners of war who had been captured in 1939 by the Soviets, the 150,000 Poles conscripted into the Red Army, as well as volunteers from among Polish deportees in the Urals and Siberia. Initial plans called for the creation of two complete infantry divisions. At the end of 1941 and start of 1942 a decision was made to form six. The force was assigned a base at Buzuluk in the Caucasus. By March 1942 it numbered 70,000 men. Tens of thousands of civilians, mostly women and children, also sheltered in the Polish encampment.

The history of the Polish Army in Russia, however, was an unhappy one. An amnesty for prisoners of war and political prisoners was executed with much delay and prevarication. Long after the amnesty 8,300 or 8,400 officers, including leaders such as Stanisław Haller, recently known to be at camps in Kozielsk, Ostaszków, and Starobielsk, remained unaccounted for. Soviet cooperation, upon which the venture's success depended, was almost non-existent. In March 1942 Soviet leaders only provided 40,000 daily rations, half of the army's needs. No provision was made for the refugees in the Polish encampment. American and British leaders rejected requests that a portion of Allied aid for the U.S.S.R. be consigned to the Polish Army there. A visit to the U.S.S.R. by Sikorski failed to remedy the situation. Under pressure from Anders who was convinced that it was impossible to build a Polish Army in the Soviet Union, it was decided to evacuate Polish personnel. In August 70,000 soldiers and civilians were evacuated to Persia, thus transplanting the enterprise to the Middle East. The odyssey left many unfit for service due to sickness, and a force of only two divisions, the Second Corps, was formed. The Poles arrived too late to take part in the battles for North Africa between the British and the Germans, although the Syrian-based Carpathian Brigade, did fight at Tobruk. However, the
Second Corps was well poised to take part in invasions of Sicily and Italy, according to a plan to tie German forces down there, which was agreed upon by British and American leaders in January 1943.  

The poor cooperation of Soviet authorities, which had necessitated the evacuation of Polish forces was symptomatic of the troubled nature of Polish-Soviet relations. Relations cooled after the signing of the military agreement. On 1 December 1941 the Soviet government declared all the inhabitants of eastern Poland, except those who were ethnic Poles as of 1 November 1939, to be Soviet citizens, thus putting them off limits to Polish recruiters. Even as the Poles struggled to form an army in the U.S.S.R., arrests of Polish diplomatic personnel and relief workers took place. After the evacuation of Anders' army relations dramatically deteriorated. On 16 January 1943 the Soviets declared ethnic Poles who were residents of eastern Poland on 1 November 1939 to be Soviet citizens. In March the Soviets founded a counter to the government-in-exile, the Union of Polish Patriots. Polish-Soviet relations reached their breaking point in April, when the Nazis announced that they had unearthed mass graves in the Katyn Forest near Smolensk containing the bodies of over 4,000 Polish military personnel, the missing officers from the Kozielsk camp. It was assumed they had been murdered by the Soviets. The Sikorski government decided to appeal to the International Red Cross for an investigation. Churchill counseled Sikorski against this step stating: "if they are dead nothing you do will bring them back." Britain continued to play the crucial role in Polish affairs even after the United States entry into the war, and throughout the Poles' difficulties the British leader was determined to prevent disharmony in the Allied camp. Because the news of the massacre caused great popular

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anguish and outcry, Sikorski was unable to follow Churchill's advice. The Polish appeal gave the Soviet government a pretext to sever relations. Once this occurred, the Soviet-sponsored Union of Polish Patriots stepped forward. The Soviets then began building their own Polish Army under the direction of a former Legionnaire, Colonel, later General Zygmunt Berling. Polish Communists began political work at home, and an underground military organization, the People's Army (Armia Ludowa), was formed under a former Legionnaire disgraced for malfeasance in 1927, Major General Michal Rola-Żymierski.89

The turning of the tide of the war in Russia—a development of great significance for Poland—followed the breakdown in Polish-Soviet relations. A vast German offensive launched in summer 1942 was stopped before Stalingrad in November. In winter, in the battles around Stalingrad two German, a Romanian and an Italian army were destroyed. The Germans never recovered from this loss. Thereafter the war in Russia became an inexorable march westward. In 1941 and 1942 it was as yet unclear to Polish leaders which was the shortest route to Poland, from Russia, the Middle East, or the Northwest Europe.90 Now the question was laid to rest, and Poland's post-war fate was in Russia's hands.

On 4 July 1943 Sikorski died in an airplane crash at Gibraltar. To replace Sikorski as commander-in-chief Raczkiewicz appointed Sosnkowski. As the president's close collaborator his choice of Sosnkowski was obvious. Moreover, Sosnkowski was the most talented and experienced of senior military leaders, and as a result enjoyed the greatest stature and most confidence among military men. The appointment, however, Sosnkowski aroused opposition from the parties of


Sikorski’s government of national unity. Hence his nomination was accepted by the parties only with the proviso that he give up his position as deputy to the president. Sosnkowski’s nomination was opposed by British leaders, especially Churchill, and the Soviets because of his views on Polish-Soviet relations. Subsequently attempts by the British began to have Sosnkowski replaced with Anders. Although Anders’ views on relations with the Soviets were similar to Sosnkowski’s and he combined these with great ambitions and a willingness to indulge them, he did have the attraction of putting greater stock in Allied support for Polish claims.

When Sikorski died Poland lost not only its commander-in-chief, but its prime minister as well. To hold together the government of national unity Raczkiewicz appointed Stanislaw Mikołajczyk, the leader of the Peasant Party and a keen supporter of Sikorski. Although he had the support of the three parties remaining in the governing coalition, Mikołajczyk did not inspire confidence, especially in military men. Sosnkowski opposed his appointment and did not wish to serve with him, but at the urging of military leaders, such as Anders, he reluctantly agreed.

Other important leadership changes occurred at this time as well. Within a week of Sikorski’s death, Grot-Rowecki was captured by the German Secret State Police, the Gestapo. Rowecki was replaced as commander of the Home Army, as the ZWZ had been renamed the year before, by

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91 Raczyński, In Allied London, 150-3; Pomian, Retinger, 177; and Notes of a Conversation between M. Mikołajczyk, M. Romer, Count Raczyński, Mr. Eden, Sir Orme Sargent and Mr. Strang, 19 October, 1943, DPSR 2:74-5.


his chief-of-staff, another former Legionnaire, Brigadier General Tadeusz Bór-Komorowski. Although he lacked staff training and had never commanded anything more than a brigade, Komorowski had two years experience building an underground army.

Relations between Sosnkowski and Mikołajczyk were rocky. They were tense not, as some historians suggest, because Sosnkowski sought to introduce old regime leaders and fascists to the government. Although Sosnkowski believed that the commander-in-chief could not be entirely removed from politics, he did not wish to entangle the army in politics and affirmed the army's apolitical character in an order issued the day he took command. However, the commander-in-chief brought to the high command an interpretation of circumstances and strategic options distinct from his predecessor and his colleagues. Sosnkowski believed the situation was catastrophic and that only with "divine providence" could impending disaster be averted. In July 1943 the Red Army stopped a Nazi attempt to regain the initiative at the Battle of Kursk, and began its inexorable march westward. By September it was across the Dnieper River and poised to enter Poland. Meanwhile, the Western Allies only now came to grips with the Germans and an invasion of the continent itself was still to come in summer 1944. Sosnkowski believed that the strategy which had emerged in the course of the war could not be implemented under these circumstances. It could only be realized, he believed, through collaboration with the Soviets. But as a condition of cooperation he still insisted on strong guarantees of Poland's independence and territorial integrity. He strongly suspected that Stalin sought to use the Red Army to sovietize of

94 See, for example, Ciechanowski, Warsaw Rising, 155. Sosnkowski continued to maintain his distance from Sanacja leaders. Many, like Lieutenant General Kazimierz Fabrycy, came to him as supplicants once he became commander in chief, but they invariably went away empty handed. Sosnkowski to Fabrycy, 11 Dec. 1943, OSS, Archiwum Sosnkowskiego, cont. 16577/11, fol. 107.

Poland. Agreement with the Soviets was therefore dangerous. "Concessions," he said "would lead
us on a downhill course, ending in the loss of not only half our country but of our independence
as well." This view was shared by most military leaders as well as leaders at home. With the
support of the Americans and British, especially the latter who continued to play the crucial role
in Polish affairs, this obstacle might be overcome, and Sosnkowski hoped that the resolve of the
Western Allies might be stiffened. In November, he pressed his government to bring Allied
leaders to take up the Polish Question at the conference of Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin in
Teheran in October and December. He did not hold out much hope for Allied assistance. He
saw in the May recognition of Yugoslav Communist resistance movement of Tito, Josip Broz, a
willingness to appease Stalin at all costs. This was borne out, when Roosevelt and Churchill
agreed to the Soviet annexation of Poland’s eastern borderlands at Teheran, pressing the Poles to
accept this as well as silence those Poles who opposed it.

Sosnkowski desperately hoped that new circumstances, ideally a German and Russian
collapse similar to that of 1918, might develop allowing for the realization of Polish plans. Yet
if Sosnkowski’s thoughts hearkened to the past, as is alleged, it was not because he rigidly
adhered to a vision of a repetition of the events of 1918. He thought such serendipity unlikely.
He recognized that the German Wehrmacht, though defeated, held together and showed no sign

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96 Jan Nowak, *Courier from Warsaw* (Detroit, 1982), 218-20; Krajowa Reprezentacja
Polityczna, Do Narodów Świata, 8 Jan. 1944; and Commander, AK, Declaration, 12 Jan. 1944,
AK 3:234 and 245.

97 Sosnkowski to Kukiel, dispatch, Cairo, 25 Nov. 1943, *DPSR* 2:95.

98 Nowak, *Courier from Warsaw*, 218.

99 Historians criticize Sosnkowski for considering possibility. However, American and British
leaders considered it as well, and the Operation Rankin plan called for a rapid invasion of the
continent in the to secure it after a Nazi collapse. Gerhard Weinberg, *World at Arms: A Global
of collapse, and for this reason he ruled out unilateral action on the part of the Poles. In his mind there also lurked the specter of a possible separate peace between the Nazis and the Soviets. He even considered a breakdown in relations between the United Kingdom, United States and U.S.S.R. Here Sosnkowski thought that changing Allied attitudes might allow for the conclusion of a favorable agreement with the Soviets together with the implementation of Polish plans.\textsuperscript{100} Perhaps consciously emulating Piłsudski in the First World, Sosnkowski sought "to beat his time," that is to wait for the favorable circumstances.

Mikołajczyk was unlike Sosnkowski in almost every way, but especially in his political and strategic views. Along with other leaders, he did not share the commander-in-chief's view of Soviet intentions. They shared with Sosnkowski a suspicion of the U.S.S.R., and a declaration of the ruling parties noted the "latent danger in the Russian Communist totalitarianism peace aims." However, Mikołajczyk did not anticipate sovietization, but did fear a political power vacuum which the communists might fill. He did not believe that there would be war between the Western Allies and the Soviets. An agreement with the Soviets was the most important task before the government, and he believed that time was working against Poland.\textsuperscript{101} Like Sikorski, Mikołajczyk was willing to accept a compromise and an agreement based on less than iron-clad guarantees. Mikołajczyk was under great pressure from the British, still deeply concerned with the preservation of Allied unity.\textsuperscript{102} Even before the Teheran Conference Mikołajczyk moved


\textsuperscript{101} Stanisław Mikołajczyk, The Rape of Poland: Pattern of Soviet Aggression (New York, 1948), 43ff. See also Nowak, Courier from Warsaw, 223 and 301. Mikołajczyk believed that if he could return to Poland he could lead with the support of the peasant masses. Raczyński, In Allied London, 154.

\textsuperscript{102} Note on a conversation between President Raczkiewicz and Mr. Churchill in the presence of Count Raczyński, Sir Owen O'Malley, and M. Zaleski, London, July 26, 1943, DPSR 2:25-7. See also Mikołajczyk, Rape of Poland, 47-9.
toward a rapprochement with the Soviets and in government councils conceded the loss of the prewar frontiers. Nevertheless Teheran's terms were a shock.103 Despite the equivocal stance of the British and the Americans, the government placed great stock in its allies' support, seeking it energetically. The Polish armed forces, both those at home and abroad, were considered an asset in dealing with both the Soviets and the Western Allies.

As commander-in-chief Sosnkowski had to grapple with the employment of Polish forces in the West. The Western Allies by late 1943 had come to grips with the fascists in Italy and were preparing for the invasion of Northwestern Europe the following year. Eager to bring more troops to bear, Allied leaders urged that the Polish Army join the fight. At the same time the Soviets criticized the London Poles for not contributing to the war effort. Polish leaders wanted to commit their troops, which now numbered three infantry, one armored division and a parachute brigade. However, they wished to preserve the force for use as the army of reconstructed Poland also. As commander-in-chief Sosnkowski reaffirmed the goal of creating a cadre of specialized troops. Finding the existing forces short of this goal, he proposed to initiate a restructuring, transforming one infantry unit of the Second Corps into a second armored division.104 Polish leaders' worries in regard to their forces' future were compounded by acute manpower shortages. When the Soviets severed diplomatic relations with the London Poles, they deprived the exiles of manpower from the U.S.S.R. New replacements came only from Poles from East Prussia, Pomerania, and Silesia drafted into the Wehrmacht and taken prisoner in North Africa and Italy. The employment of the Polish armed forces was generally beyond the commander-in-chief's

103 Narada u Prezydenta R.P. w dniu 25 października 1943, AK 3:181. On the reaction to Teheran see Mikołajczyk, Rape of Poland, 49.

control. The use of Polish forces, except for the parachute brigade, was governed by the military agreements of 1940; the decision to commit them was made on 14 July 1943 by the American and British Combined Chiefs of Staff. Under pressure from the British and Americans, the government resolved on the eve of Teheran to commit Second Corps in Italy over Sosnkowski's protests. Sosnkowski thus had to abandon his restructuring plans.

Sosnkowski did not give up on preserving a cadre for a future national army. In November he conferred with Allied Supreme Commander General of the Armies Dwight David Eisenhower and British commander in Italy General Sir Harold Alexander on the employment of Polish troops. He was able to secure a promise from Alexander to consult with him on how the corps was to be used. Yet from the start Sosnkowski's instructions were disregarded by Allied military leaders and Anders as well. In March the commander of the British Eighth Army asked Anders to lead his two divisions in an attack on Monte Cassino to pave the way for a drive on Rome. Anders eagerly accepted. Neither consulted Sosnkowski, who was furious both with the manner in which the agreement was reached as well as the decision itself. Cassino's terrain had defied previous assaults with great loss of life. Sosnkowski, however, was powerless to reverse the decision and the attack went forward on 11 May. In the fighting at Monte Cassino

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108 Ibid.
the Polish Army won great fame, but at the cost of over 4,000 dead and wounded, wrecking the Second Corps, and reducing it to little more than a division.

After Monte Cassino Sosnkowski tried to prevent the First Corps in the United Kingdom from meeting the same fate. The corp's one armored and one infantry division were under strength, and he hoped to delay committing them so that one might be brought to strength without having to disband the other. Sosnkowski above all wanted to keep the Parachute Brigade out of harm's way. That force was intended to assist the eventual uprising at home, and the Allied command’s directive of 14 July 1943 had reserved it for this use. Sosnkowski offered to lend it to the British provided it be withdrawn, if it suffered more than 15 percent casualties or if it were needed at home. These conditions were unacceptable to British leaders. The British applied enormous pressure, threatening and intimating that the Poles' refusal to actively fight the Germans would be held against them later. Such threats had little effect on Sosnkowski, but they influenced others who felt British support imperative in treating with the Soviets. On 6 June, under government and British pressure, he relented.

The war in the West and the army in exile claimed only a part of Sosnkowski's attention, and the war in the East and the Home Army or AK, which now numbered over 300,000 officers and men, dominated Polish military policy. After assuming the post of commander-in-chief Sosnkowski moved to modify plans for the use of the AK to bring them into line with the


111 Jan Kwapiński, Deputy Prime Minister, to Sosnkowski, London, 6 June 1944 and Sosnkowski to Lieutenant General A.E. Grasset, Chief European Contact Section, London, 6 June 1944, AK 3:470 and 471.
situation brought about by the Polish-Soviet split. He issued new instructions to Bór-Komorowski on 27 October 1943, which strongly bear Sosnkowski's stamp.\footnote{Notatka z narady u Prezydenta R.P. w dniu 1 października 1943, \textit{AK} 3:149-50. See also Notatka z narady u Prezydenta R.P. w dniu 25 października 1943 3:180-2.} They differed dramatically from those issued by Sikorski in 1942. Sosnkowski's instructions proposed that AK operations take either the form of a national uprising or, alternately, intensified diversionary activity in the rear of retreating German forces. Uprising was to take place only if the German army collapsed or if the Western Allies were to support the operation. If the Germany army was driven back into Poland, but not in disorder, AK operations were to take the form of intensified diversionary activity. Also, there were prescriptions relating to the entry of Soviet forces into Poland. If this should occur before diplomatic relations were restored, the AK were to remain underground. The instruction did not authorize anti-Soviet action, but allowed for self-defense in the event of arrests.\footnote{Sosnkowski, \textit{Instrukcja dla Kraju}, 27 Oct. 1943, \textit{AK} 3:182-5.}

The Instruction of 27 October was, on the whole, unfavorably received by AK leaders. Leaders at home shared Sosnkowski's misgivings regarding Soviet intentions, but were nevertheless determined to mount an active resistance to the Nazis as a demonstration to the Soviets and the West. There was growing eagerness in the ranks of the underground army to strike against the occupying Germans forces. Also, AK leaders felt that it might be impossible to remain underground under Soviet occupation.\footnote{Bor-Komorowski, \textit{Secret Army}, 180ff and Nowak, \textit{Courier from Warsaw}, 213 and 231.} Consequently Bor-Komorowski modified Sosnkowski's instructions. In keeping with his orders, he outlined two courses of action: a national uprising or intensified diversionary activity in the rear of retreating forces. The latter operation was given the code name Tempest (\textit{Burza}), which if implemented was to begin in the
Kresy and roll westward in advance of the retreating Germans. Komorowski, however, made the choice of the alternative dependent on the state of the German forces during their retreat. If in collapse, the rising was to be carried out, if not, then Tempest. Komorowski was to give the order for either operation. If units lost communication, they were to launch Tempest on their own initiative. In addition, Komorowski ordered underground commanders and civil authorities to come out of hiding and act as representatives of a sovereign Poland, when Soviet forces approached.\textsuperscript{115}

Word of the Tempest plan reached London in January 1944, just as the Red Army crossed the prewar Polish frontier. Mikołajczyk welcomed the plan, for it lent itself to his own designs. He hoped that it might win Allied support and pave the way for a rapprochement with the Soviets. Sosnkowski, on the other hand, was deeply disturbed. He expressed his misgivings in a letter to the premier on 4 January, saying he feared the action might degenerate into a national uprising, which he believed to be pointless. However, he knew first hand the strength of the desire of an underground rank and file to act. He recognized that Komorowski's plan represented "a desperate, all-consuming impulse on the part of the country to manifest Poland's right to exist." For this reason there could be no thought of revoking the order. Sosnkowski therefore urged the government to do its utmost to secure an Allied protest and a guarantee of the inviolability of the prewar frontier. To add weight to his request he asked the he be permitted to return to Poland to direct the war effort there.\textsuperscript{116} Yet, if Sosnkowski acknowledged the impetus to act, he did not understand the conditions under which Komorowski worked. In directing the underground war effort he drew on his own experience, which though rich was vastly different from


Komorowski's. When on one occasion his estimation of the conditions at home were questioned, Sosnkowski retorted: "Don't try to tell me fairy tales. I was conspiring before you were born." He was stubborn and inclined to question the home commander's judgement. In particular Sosnkowski was unable to understand why the underground commander was willing to expose his forces to certain arrest or impressment into Berling's Polish army. He sought to minimize the possible harmful consequences of the Tempest plan, attempting to persuade Bór-Komorowski to modify his order. In a dispatch of 11 January 1944 he again tried to convince him of the danger of revealing to the Soviets the underground army and state apparatus without an established basis for relations between the two.

Sosnkowski failed both to win Allied support for Poland against Russia and to convince Bór-Komorowski to alter the Tempest plan. After the Red Army crossed the prewar frontier on 4 January, Mikołajczyk inclined even more strongly to seek a modus vivendi with the Soviets. He did not wish to press the Allies as Sosnkowski requested, for he wished their help in seeking a rapprochement with the Soviets. On January 5, in a radio broadcast, the premier appealed to the Soviets to restore relations with Poland. The Soviets responded by demanding the removal of Sosnkowski among others as a preliminary to negotiations. Bór-Komorowski, who had "no illusions about the hostile Soviet attitude," felt compelled to go ahead with Tempest as planned, communicating this to Sosnkowski on 3 February. On 18 February the Council of Ministers issued a directive, over the commander-in-chief's fierce objections, amending the

117 Nowak, Courier from Warsaw, 231-2.


120 Notes of a conversation between M. Mikołajczyk and President Benes, London, 10 Jan. 1944, and Stalin to Roosevelt, Moscow, 16 Feb. 1944, DPSR 2:129 and 188.
instruction of 27 October 1943. It required underground military and civilian officials to meet advancing Soviet troops with the following declaration: "On the orders of the Government of the Polish Republic I approach as a representative of the Polish administration with a proposal to co-ordinate military operations against the common enemy with the Soviet forces entering the territories of the Polish Republic." Sosnkowski's request to return home was deflected with a council resolution calling for his and entire government's return in the event of a general uprising only.121

The initiative therefore passed to Bór-Komorowski, and Tempest began in the eastern borderlands. In mid-February AK formations in Volhynia went into action against retreating German forces. In summer, when the Soviet advance resumed, Tempest expanded, spreading to Vilnius in June and Lvov in July. When Red Army spearheads entered the central upland, a local uprising began in Lublin. Despite initial instances of cooperation between AK and Red Army units, all the Tempest battles ended similarly. Polish units were disbanded by the Soviets, their commanders "disappeared." In addition, on 21 July the Soviets created the Polish Committee of National Liberation (Komitet Polski Wyzwolenia Narodowego) out of the Union of Polish Patriots. Called the Lublin Committee, although it was not formed there, the body constituted a political organization that better rivalled the government-in-exile. Despite these developments, Mikołajczyk continued to urge Komorowski to cooperate with the Soviets, believing that each instance of goodwill won Allied support and improved the possibilities of a rapprochement with the Soviets. In June he intensified his efforts toward a rapprochement with the Soviets flying to Washington for talks with Roosevelt about the matter. He, however, came away with little.122 Komorow-

121 Lawina [Bór-Komorowski] to Commander-in-Chief, dispatch, 3 Feb. 1944; Sosnkowski to Lawina, dispatches, 12 Feb. 1944; and 20 Feb. 1944, AK 3:267-8,276-9, and 284.

122 Karski, Poland and the Great Powers, 513-20.
ski, meanwhile, came round to Sosnkowski's point of view, and finally gave up on cooperation on 30 July.\footnote{If faced with conscription, he ordered his soldiers in the east to enlist in Berling's army. Lawina [Bór-Komorowski] to Commander-in-Chief, dispatch, 31 July 1944, AK 3:593-4}

In contrast to Mikołajczyk, whom Tempest spurred to action, Sosnkowski fell into depression. He was observed to drink heavily.\footnote{Nowak, \textit{Courier from Warsaw}, 216.} Out of frustration he absented himself from London. In March and April Sosnkowski toured Italy, inspecting the Second Corps as it prepared for the Cassino battles. He was unable to endure the feeling of powerlessness, unheeded as he was in government councils and by his subordinates. In May, on the invitation of Anders, he decided again to visit the Second Corps after its blood-letting at Cassino. The tour, however, was blocked by the British high command who imposed a travel ban in conjunction with the coming invasion of Northwestern Europe. No such obstacles were put in the way of Mikołajczyk's trip to Washington, however. British leaders were perhaps pressing Sosnkowski to step down or to change his stance on a pact with the U.S.S.R. In a letter to Anders he wrote that he felt as if he were "interned."\footnote{Field Marshal Sir Alan Brooke to Sosnkowski, London, 26 May 1944, OSS, Archiwum Sosnkowskiego, and Sosnkowski to Anders, London, 5 June, 1944, OSS, Archiwum Sosnkowskiego, cont. 16558/II, fols. 28 and 29.}

Sosnkowski's action left the direction of the war effort at home in disarray. As Tempest wore on in summer, however, the minister of national defense, Kukiel intervened. On 3 July he brought Sosnkowski and Mikołajczyk together to discuss the war at home. If Kukiel hoped to bring the two leaders to some agreement on future action and to reunite the frayed strands of authority, then he was disappointed. At the meeting Sosnkowski categorically opposed an uprising. He was more convinced than ever that the odds were against the AK, for the German
Army bitterly contested the Soviet advance. Despite assertions to the contrary, Sosnkowski raised the matter of military difficulties at the meeting. He told the premier that a collapse and repeat of 1918 was not at all possible, pointing out that 100 German divisions were still deployed in Poland. He urged continued diversionary activity against the Germans, and Tempest was to continue on a limited basis. A national uprising was out of the question. Sosnkowski similarly maintained his hard line against the Soviets, for he now even more strongly suspected their aim was the sovietization of Poland. His suspicion of the Allies was greater now as well. He insisted that the reestablishment of relations between Poland and the U.S.S.R. be based on strong guarantees of Poland's independence and integrity, and he pressed the government to seek these from the Western Allies. At the 3 July meeting he also asked for a directive regarding the course commanders were to take after they revealed themselves and were disbanded by the Soviets, urging that their cadres be ordered to redeploy to German occupied Western Poland. Sosnkowski now counted on a clash between the Western Allies and the Soviets. The directive to shelter behind German lines suggests he hoped the confrontation might come while the war still raged. Then a sound agreement might be had, allowing for the execution of the exiles' strategy. To preserve Polish forces for this eventuality, Sosnkowski insisted that the Home Army not take arms against the Soviets.

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128 Ibid, 499.
In July Mikołajczyk was as firm in his views as was Sosnkowski, continuing to believe agreement with the Soviets imperative and possible. The Poles could not wait for an Allied-Soviet clash, for he had it from the British prime minister that the allies would not go to war with the Soviet Union, at least not over Poland. Moreover, Mikołajczyk discounted the possibility of a Soviet takeover of Poland, for he believed that Stalin needed Western help to rebuild after the war. And, although Roosevelt had offered no assistance in securing an agreement with the Soviets, Mikołajczyk was sure he had the American president's support. Regarding the British, Mikołajczyk had Churchill’s assurance that signing the agreement would enable the United Kingdom to defend Poland after "the eventual violation of the agreement." Unable to win better assurances, Mikołajczyk now inclined to deal directly with the Soviets. Polish overtures to the Soviet ambassador in June were met by demands to remove Sosnkowski, Raczkiewicz, Kukiel among others, who were to be replace by "democratic elements." The Soviets also demanded renunciation of the appeal to the Red Cross in the matter of Katyn, and acceptance of the Curzon line as Poland’s eastern border. Mikołajczyk rejected these for they violated Polish sovereignty, but at the meeting on 3 July he still he reaffirmed his determination to deal with the Soviets directly.\footnote{Ibid, 503. On Mikołajczyk's intentions, see also S. Grabski, \textit{Pamiętniki}, 468.} Mikołajczyk believed that with the support of the underground and Western Allies, he still had a good chance of reaching an agreement with Moscow and of transferring the London government to Warsaw. He urged that the Home Army carry on Tempest and continue to cooperate with the Soviets.\footnote{AK, 3:499.}

Sosnkowski came to the meeting on 3 July with little hope that he might be able to alter the government policy. Unenthusiastically, as if he were seeking to rule out a change in government policy, he pointedly questioned the prime minister on the Allied position regarding...
Poland’s frontiers and on his own views of Soviet intentions.\textsuperscript{131} At a second meeting on 6 July discussing instructions for the Home Army with the president and premier Sosnkowski barely spoke.\textsuperscript{132} Nothing at these meetings encouraged him, for at the 3 July meeting he learned that Mikołajczyk remained firm in his policy toward the Soviets. Subsequently Mikołajczyk, under British and American pressure, decided to meet personally with Stalin. On 26 July he informed the country of his intentions, and on 31 July departed for Moscow. Meanwhile the government’s strategic and military policy remained unchanged. On 5 July, Mikołajczyk even sent instructions to the government delegate to issue a communiqué to Home Army commanders and underground civil authorities that they were to cooperate with the Soviets. At the 6 July meeting government leaders agreed that Tempest was to continue. Meanwhile, Sosnkowski foresaw no new political and military options. On 3 July he expressed the view, confirmed by Kukiel, that the Red Army’s summer offensive would grind to a halt in mid-summer near Warsaw.\textsuperscript{133}

According to Ciechanowski, Sosnkowski resolved to lead a mutiny to overthrow Mikołajczyk, travelling in mid-July to Italy to marshal his forces. The trip to Italy had been planned in May, before Mikołajczyk decided to deal with the Soviets directly, but the visit was approved by the Allies only on 11 June, a month before Mikołajczyk’s visited Stalin.\textsuperscript{134} In a speech in Italy he announced his opposition to a compromise that "did injury to the honored dead," although he reaffirmed orders barring soldiers from politicking. Sosnkowski’s most

\textsuperscript{131} Ibid, 501.

\textsuperscript{132} Mikołajczyk to Government Delegate, dispatch, 5 July 1944, Ibid 3:495-7 and Minutes of a meeting between President Raczkiewicz, M. Mikołajczyk, and General Sosnkowski on the instructions to be issued to the Home Army for the period of the Tempest operation and the conditions in which the general rising could take place, 6 July 1944, DPSR 2:274-6.

\textsuperscript{133} Streszczenie rozmowy odbytej dnia 3 lipca 1944 roku, AK 3:498.

\textsuperscript{134} Ciechanowski, Warsaw Rising, 290. See Brooke to Sosnkowski, London, 11 June 1944, OSS, Archiwum Sosnkowskiego, cont. 16556/II, fol. 36.
important political act was to appeal privately to Raczkiewicz to reorganize the government.\textsuperscript{135} After the 6 July meeting he issued orders sanctioning the intensified diversionary operations of Tempest, only adding his caveat against a general action and urging that steps be taken to preserve cadres from Soviet repression.\textsuperscript{136} It was not mutiny, therefore, that was on Sosnkowski’s mind in July, but his own powerlessness. With the government about to move forward on an agreement with the Soviets, a bad one in his eyes, and the pointless Tempest operation continuing, there seemed to be nothing but to stand by idly. Rather than endure frustration, on 11 July Sosnkowski left London, departing on his delayed inspection of the Second Corps.

Sosnkowski’s pique was unfortunate, for the military situation was about to change, creating new strategic and political circumstances. In July not only the London Poles, but military and political leaders at home, reassessed the situation. Although the experience of Tempest inclined Bór-Komorowski to Sosnkowski’s point of view on cooperation with the Soviets, it did not shake impetus for determined action and a plan was hatched for a rising in Warsaw, the extension of Tempest to the capital. The decision for the Warsaw Rising was based on an optimistic assessment of the military situation in July. Komorowski judged that the Soviet summer offensive would shortly crack the German defenses in Byelorussia, the central front in the German Eastern theater and the historical axis for an advance on Warsaw. AK leaders believed that the Soviet attack would cause a precipitous retreat to the Vistula, and as a consequence they began to consider a national uprising in the event the retreat turned into a route.


\textsuperscript{136} Sosnkowski to Lawina [Bór-Komorowski], dispatch, 7 July 1944, \textit{AK} 3:504-6.
This information was passed to military and political leaders in London. Although he did not rule it out, Komorowski among other leaders had misgivings about a national uprising. However, the desire for action was great, and his subordinates—Brigadier Generals Tadeusz Pełczyński and Leopold Okulicki—urged a rising to seize the capital. In keeping with its character as intensified diversionary activity, the Tempest plan initially had excluded urban areas. However, a preliminary decision to undertake an insurrection in Warsaw was made on 25 July. The next day Komorowski urgently radioed London to tell his superiors: "We are ready at any time to launch the battle for Warsaw." He requested that the Parachute Brigade be readied for action at home and that German airfields around Warsaw be bombed. He informed London that he was to give the order to start the battle. Over the next days home authorities wrestled with the starting date.

Word of the AK’s plans was relayed in an urgent dispatch and reached London on 26 July, and the government responded immediately. The news arrived at the moment that Mikołajczyk, under the influence of Bór-Komorowski’s optimistic assessment of the situation and hoping that action at home might assist him in talks with Stalin, secured a cabinet resolution empowering home authorities to make a decision in regard to an uprising. On 26 July before departing for Moscow the premier communicated the resolution to the government delegate, Stanisław Jankowski. Sosnkowski, far from the decision making center, in Italy, was uninformed about these new developments. The Home Army commander’s reports and messages were sent to Sosnkowski in Italy, where they arrived only after several days’ delay. The last days

137 The dispatch was not received until 8 Aug. Lawina [Bór-Komorowski] to Commander-in-Chief, Meldunek 243, dispatch, 14 July 1944, AK 3:546-50.

138 Lawina [Bór-Komorowski] to Warta [Commanding Officer, General Staff, Bureau VI], dispatch, 25 July 1944, AK 4:11.

139 Mikołajczyk to Government Delegate, dispatch, 26 July 1944, AK 4:12
of July found Sosnkowski responding to messages from well before 26 July.\footnote{Sosnkowski to Lawina [Bór-Komorowski], dispatch, 28 July 1944, \textit{AK} 4:17-8.} Aware only that Komorowski was considering a national uprising, Sosnkowski carried on as he had before. In response to Komorowski’s messages he merely reaffirmed the existing orders to continue Tempest, to refrain from a general uprising, and use caution with regard to the advancing Soviets. He was more concerned with Mikołajczyk’s visit to Moscow. The premier’s decisions shook the army. Sosnkowski therefore pressed his views on the bases for an agreement with the Soviets and on Allied support on the government.\footnote{Sosnkowski to Lawina [Bór-Komorowski], dispatch, 28 July 1944 and Sosnkowski to Raczkiewicz, dispatch, 28 July 1944, \textit{AK} 4:17 and 22. On the army reaction see Anders, \textit{Army in Exile}, 197.} In conjunction with Komorowski’s reports from before 26 July, and perhaps Mikołajczyk’s decision to go to Stalin as well, the president summoned Sosnkowski to return to London. Sosnkowski demurred. Through his aide Babiński he asked the president to allow him to stay in Italy because, "All decisions regarding the country have either been made already or will be made at home, and communication may be shortly interrupted.” Through the end of July he saw no reason to return. Only in the first days of August did he come to have some inkling of the gravity of the situation.\footnote{Meldunek kpt Babińskiego z dnia 29 lipca 44 and Sosnkowski to Kopatiski, dispatch, 30 July 1944, \textit{AK} 4:26 and 28. On 2 August he responded to dispatches informing him of the government’s resolution empowering Komorowski to launch an uprising. Sosnkowski to Kopatiski, dispatch, 2 Aug. 1944, 4:35-6.} However, by then the Warsaw Rising had already begun.

The Home Army commander and the government delegate made the decision to begin the uprising on 31 July. It was based on a judgement that a Red Army breakthrough to the outskirts of Warsaw was to precipitate the route of German forces in the area. The battle began on 1 August with Polish forces attempting to seize the capital’s major arteries in order to disorganize
and disarm German forces within the city limits. The first day's attacks miscarried, and renewed attacks on the following days failed as well. Afterward AK action was concentrated in a number of sectors, mostly in the city center, where the Poles tried to consolidate their defenses against German counterattacks. The decision to begin operations had been based on a miscalculation as the Soviet arrival in the eastern approaches to the city did not lead to a German route. Although in August the Red Army succeeded in capturing the districts on the east bank of the Vistula River, German forces remained firmly entrenched in the city. Soviet forces in sight of the insurgents made no attempt to assist them. After the initial Polish assaults, a systematic suppression of the uprising began. The struggle was uneven, as Polish forces were lightly armed, having at the outset only 1,000 rifles, 1,700 pistols, 60 machine guns, a small cache of light anti-tank weapons, and 25,000 grenades. Nevertheless, the battle raged for 62 days.\(^{143}\)

Once the uprising began all efforts of the London Poles were focussed on securing aid and assistance for Warsaw. The government-in-exile launched a intense campaign, urging the Western Allies, and above all the British, to send help.\(^{144}\) In the very first days of August Raczyński presented Polish requests for assistance to the under-secretary for state, Sir Alexander Cadogan, and then to Churchill. Raczkiewicz appealed to King George VI and to Roosevelt. The vice premier saw Eden, and Kukiel sought out General Hastings Ismay, secretary of the British War Cabinet. Sosnkowski joined this effort upon his return to London. When word of the uprising reached him, he rushed back to Great Britain, arriving there on 6 July. One cannot but agree with Pobóg-Malinowski's assessment that, though he opposed uprising, Sosnkowski now saw no course

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\(^{143}\) For analysis of the Warsaw Rising itself see Zawodny, *Nothing But Honor*.

\(^{144}\) Early in the uprising the Allied Combined Chiefs of Staff referred the matter of aid to the Poles' patrons, the British. Mitkiewicz to Kopaniński, dispatch, Washington, D.C., 10 Aug. 1944, *DPSR* 2:339.
open to him but to throw himself behind efforts to aid Warsaw. Sosnkowski mounted his own high-level campaign, mostly in the form of letters to Field Marshal Sir Alan Brooke, chief of the Imperial General Staff, Air Marshal Sir Charles Portal, the secretary of state for air, and many others. From the time of his arrival in London he was in constant, almost daily contact with British military leaders. The Polish demands of the Western Allies were three: immediate assistance for Warsaw by air drops, dispatch of all or part of the Parachute Brigade, and recognition of the Home Army soldiers as combatants.

The campaign to obtain assistance from the Western democracies was troubled from the start. Polish demands initially met with delay and prevarication. Regular supply missions to Warsaw did not begin until the night of 8-9 August, while British leaders only promised to study the problem of the Parachute Brigade’s deployment. This caused the Poles deep frustration. Utterly unable to move the British in the crucial first days of the uprising, Kukiel offered to resign. Frustration caused Sosnkowski, who did not have much faith in the British to begin with, to take a hard line. He wrote Brooke on 8 August a letter full of recrimination, likening the failure to come to Warsaw’s aid to the Allied failure to do the same in 1939. A conference with Brooke on 9 August degenerated into a shouting match. On 12 August Sosnkowski together

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145 Pobóg-Malinowski, Najnowsza historia polityczna 700. See also Sosnkowska, W kręgu mitów, 205.


with the deputy prime minister, Jan Kwapiński, sent a dispatch to leaders at home, warning them to expect no assistance.\textsuperscript{149}

After the delays of the first week the Western Allies were more forthcoming with assistance. After 8 August R.A.F. bombers, flying unescorted at night, mounted supply missions regularly from bases in Italy. These missions continued through 17 August, when mounting losses compelled British leaders to restrict the action to volunteers and Polish aircrews. On 1 September a new full moon made supply missions too dangerous; even volunteers were not permitted to fly and the operation was halted. Meanwhile, British and American leaders worked to bring the great air fleets based in the United Kingdom to bear. Aircraft from Great Britain were able to reach Poland only via shuttle missions which landed in the Soviet Union. At the insistence of the Poles the United States and Great Britain pressed the Soviets repeatedly to agree to such missions. However, Soviet approval only came on 12 September. The only mass supply mission took place on 18 September, when 110 bombers and 70 fighters of the U.S. Army Air Corps flew to Warsaw.\textsuperscript{150} In addition to air support, on 30 August the British cabinet recognized that Home Army soldiers as an integral part of the Polish and Allied armed forces. This valuable measure, acknowledged by the United States government, forced the German command to treat the Warsaw insurgents according to international conventions or else face Allied reprisals.

Polish leaders, however, were not satisfied with Allied, especially British, efforts. As historians point out, for the British and Americans the Warsaw uprising was an operation doomed to failure.\textsuperscript{151} The resources they were willing to commit was limited by this consideration. This

\textsuperscript{149} Sosnkowski and Kwapiński to Sobół [Jankowski] and Lawina [Bór-Komorowski], dispatch, \textit{AK} 4:99.

\textsuperscript{150} Garfiński, "Pomoc lotnicza," 80-6. See also W. Babiński, \textit{Przycinki historyczne}, 404.

\textsuperscript{151} See, for example, Peszke, "Polish Armed Forces in Exile," 32:162.
was not the case for the Poles. Sosnkowski, in particular, believed that Warsaw had to be assisted at all costs. He vowed to pursue the matter up to the point of a rupture.\textsuperscript{152} Polish leaders pressed the British ever more stridently for assistance, especially more air support and the deployment of airborne troops. When supply missions from Italy were reduced in mid-August, Sosnkowski proposed that an additional Polish squadron be assigned to the operation to take up the slack. Six craft were added, but this concession hardly met Warsaw’s needs and Polish leaders’ demands.\textsuperscript{153} At the same time the Poles pressed for the deployment of the Parachute Brigade. From the start the British opposed such a move, and Brooke wrote Sosnkowski on 9 August that the deployment of the brigade in Poland was exceedingly risky and difficult to accomplish technically. On 15 August he formally rejected the Polish request, explaining there were no aircraft available for the operation. Nevertheless Sosnkowski continued to press the British, requesting that a battalion, even a company be released.\textsuperscript{154} Failing to secure more assistance the Poles sought other ways pressure the British. Sosnkowski favored a \textit{beau geste} to dramatize Warsaw’s plight. He first raised the idea at a meeting, on 20 August, with his chief of staff, proposing the mass resignation of national leaders. He presented the idea to Mikołajczyk, who rejected the plan. Subsequently, Sosnkowski returned to his often used threat of returning

\textsuperscript{152} Sosnkowski and Kwapiński to Sobół and Lawina, dispatch, 12 Aug. 1944, AK 4:99. Koparıński observed Sosnkowski while reading a dispatch from Komorowski appealing for help mutter to himself “it must be done, it will be done!” Koparıński, \textit{Wspomnienia wojenne}, 363.

\textsuperscript{153} W.Babiński, \textit{Przycinki historyczne}, 401ff.

to Poland to take charge of the war effort there. He took this plan to the president on 25 August, but the latter argued he was needed in London.\textsuperscript{155}

At the same time Polish leaders sought to secure Western aid for Warsaw, they moved to reach a compromise with the Soviets. More so than the Western Allies, the Soviets were in a position to extend aid to the insurgents, including ground and air operations in the immediate neighborhood of Warsaw. The start of the battle found Mikołajczyk in Moscow. The Soviets who sought a Communist takeover of Poland had no intention of crowning with success a venture calculated to stymie this. Nevertheless, the Soviet leader offered to provide the Warsaw insurgents with assistance. Stalin saw the need, both for internal Polish reasons and for his relations with the Allies, to associate his nascent satellite regime with a Polish politician who enjoyed genuine support at home.\textsuperscript{156} Stalin affixed a high price to a Soviet rapprochement, higher than in June when the Poles first approached the Soviets. His conditions were recognition of the Curzon line, the removal of Raczkiewicz, Sosnkowski and others, and a complete reorganization of the government, giving the Lublin Committee control. The London government was in a poor position \textit{vis a vis} the Soviets. The uprising which was already in trouble when the premier arrived in Moscow, according to one historian, "not only failed to strengthen his position but reduced him to a supplicant appealing for indispensable help."\textsuperscript{157} Mikołajczyk, however, balked at Soviet demands. The price was too high even for him.


\textsuperscript{156} Ulam, \textit{Expansion and Coexistence}, 360-2.

\textsuperscript{157} Karski, \textit{Poland and the Great Powers}, 538.
Although he returned from Moscow empty handed, Mikołajczyk was more determined than ever to reach an understanding with the Soviets, in order to avert tragedy in Warsaw. Mikołajczyk was now willing to consider the changes in government demanded earlier, even the removal of Sosnkowski. After returning to London Mikołajczyk formally appealed to the Soviets for assistance, and Stalin replied:

After a closer study of the matter I had become convinced that the Warsaw action which was undertaken without the knowledge of the Soviet command, is a thoughtless adventure causing unnecessary losses. In addition, it should be mentioned that the calumnious campaign has been started by the Polish London government which seeks to present the illusion that the Soviet command deceived the Warsaw population.

Mikołajczyk therefore immediately set to work crafting his own compromise plan, which was presented to the Council of Ministers and the underground parliament, the Council of National Unity, on 22 August. The plan went a long way toward meeting Stalin's conditions. First, it proposed to included the Polish Worker's Party, the Polish communist party, in the government as a partner on equal footing with the Peasant, Socialist and Labor Parties. As soon as possible free and democratic elections were to be held to produce a Sejm, which was to draft a new constitution and elect a new president. Second, it called for a restoration of diplomatic relations and a military agreement with the Soviets. After the war a Polish-Soviet alliance was to be concluded. Third, the plan consented to territorial changes in the east in exchanged for compensation in the west, stipulating that Poland's territory was not to be reduced. Important

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159 Notes of M. Romer of a conversation Between M. Mikołajczyk and M. Bierut and M. Osobka-Morawski in the presence of Molotov, Moscow, 8 Aug. 1944, *DPSR* 2:331.

160 Quoted in Karski, *Poland the Great Powers*, 528.
Polish centers like Vilnius and Lvov, though, were to remain within a Polish state. Finally, it called for replacing the commander-in-chief, i.e., Sosnkowski, with a war council.161

Torturous debates in London and exchanges of opinion with the underground leadership followed the unveiling of the document. Opposed to the compromise were the Socialists and the National Democrats as well as the president and underground authorities in Warsaw. Bór-Komorowski regarded it "a complete capitulation."162 The plan’s most important opponent, however, was Sosnkowski. Sosnkowski even now continued to oppose compromise with the Soviets. He continued to favor pressing the Western Allies to influence the Soviets or to await an Allied-Soviet conflict which in the end preserved Poland’s independence and integrity. Throughout August he pressed this course on political leaders.163 Mikołajczyk’s course was regarded by Sosnkowski as a foreign dictate. In the days after it was revealed Sosnkowski braced himself for a fierce personal struggle in the government. Characteristically, he ordered officers and men of the armed forces not to become involved in the political battle. In an order of the day he assured what he believed, probably rightly, to be a deeply disturbed army, that he would personally defend Poland’s rights in government councils.164

Sosnkowski and other opponents of the compromise, however, never had the chance. Before the opposition had the chance to collect itself, Mikołajczyk was able to secure the approval of his compromise. This was made possible, according to one observer, by the leaders of the


164 Commander-in-Chief, Rozkaz oficerski tajny nr 3, 20 Aug. 1944, Sosnkowski, Materiały historyczne, 195-6
parties at home passing judgement on it rapidly and returning with their approval and amendments in a little more than a week despite the difficult conditions of the German occupation. When the home political leaders' approval arrived on 30 August Mikołajczyk immediately brought the matter before the government, where he tallied a slim majority. The plan was then immediately submitted to the Soviet, British, and American governments. The adoption of Mikołajczyk's plan caused a sharp, but short crisis. The passage of the program caused a furor, and the Socialists pressed the president to dismiss him. Only the intervention of the British, who asserted they would cooperate with no other prime minister, saved Mikołajczyk.

Sosnkowski saw disaster in Mikołajczyk's course, and he prepared to make himself a thorn the premier's side. A conflict between the Allies and the Soviets was coming, he believed, therefore it was imperative to keep Poland out of the Soviet orbit before this occurred. There was a certain grim, soldierly determination in Sosnkowski's stance. Although he anticipated an Allied-Soviet clash, he realized that for the time being, the British were "100 percent" behind Mikołajczyk. The task before the commander-in-chief, as he saw it, therefore was to hold on and thwart the government until this changed. Crisis, however, now swirled about the commander-in-chief and his days were numbered. He found himself at odds with the British patrons and his government, who struck at him both openly and clandestinely. Beginning in late August, resistance to a compromise agreement to the Polish question, the campaign for aid for Warsaw, and Sosnkowski personally were attacked in the British press. So fierce were the attacks that

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165 W. Babiński, Przycinki historyczne, 422.

166 Sosnkowski to Anders, memorandum, 14 Sept. 1944, W. Babiński, Przycinki historyczne, 689.

Sosnkowski requested the president protest to the British government.\footnote{W. Babiński, *Przycinki historyczne*, 409ff and Sosnkowski to Raczkiewicz, London, 20 August, 1944, OSS, Archiwum Sosnkowskiego, cont. 16545/II, fol. 105.} Meanwhile, the first steps to remove him were taken. On 26 August Churchill called on Anders in what can only be interpreted as meeting to examine a potential replacement. Churchill let it be known then that he did not care for Sosnkowski, whom he accused of following Beck’s policy. With Anders he discussed the frontiers of reconstituted Poland and promised that Poland would not be abandoned by its ally. Although as suspicious of the Soviets as Sosnkowski, Anders was more willing to trust Poland’s fate to the Western Allies. To Sosnkowski, he wrote, "[Churchill] assured me many times that Great Britain and the United States will never abandon Poland and will be its ‘champion’ in Europe."\footnote{Anders, *Army in Exile*, 209-13 and Anders to Sosnkowski, 7 Sept. 1944, W. Babiński, *Przycinki historyczne*, 688.} 

Sosnkowski, himself, further aggravated his already difficult position, by issuing an inflammatory order of the day, Order No. 19, on the fifth anniversary of the war’s outbreak. It reflected frustration with the British government for failing to provide more aid for Warsaw, and in particular its refusal to increase supply missions.\footnote{Sosnkowski to Anders, 14 Sept., W. Babiński, *Przycinki historyczne*, 690. Sosnkowski at this time conceived another *beau geste*, a mass resignation of military leaders. A letter accompanied by the resignations of Kopariski, Vice Admiral Jerzy Świrski, Lieutenant General Mateusz Iżycki, and Brigadier General Stanisław Tabor, was prepared in the first days of September but never sent. Sosnkowski to Raczkiewicz, Sept. 1944, OSS, Archiwum Sosnkowskiego, cont. 16563/II, fol. 100-108.} It must also be regarded as a product of Sosnkowski’s unwillingness to spare the British harsh judgements. The order evoked Poland’s struggle in 1939, pointedly noting the failure of the British to come to the country’s aid and the valuable time the Polish campaign won for them. He pointed out that Polish squadrons endured 40 percent casualties defending Britain in 1940, while the R.A.F. halted supply missions to
Warsaw at the threshold of 15 percent. "The loss of 27 machines over Warsaw," he said "is nothing for the air forces of the Allies, who now possess several thousand planes of all types."

The order affirmed London's determination to seek assistance for Warsaw, but communicated to AK leaders and soldiers that they were to expect no rescue.171

Sosnkowski's order caused a storm of protest in London. Attacks on Sosnkowski in the press intensified in the first week of September. Calls for his resignation were heard. Mi kołajczyk now openly pressed for Sosnkowski's dismissal, but Sosnkowski refused. His adamance, however, caused opponents to increase their pressure. On 18 September the British Foreign Minister asked the Polish government for Sosnkowski's dismissal, and four days later the Council of Ministers passed a resolution demanding it. On 27 September Mikołajczyk gave the president an ultimatum: he would resign, if Sosnkowski was not dismissed. Mikołajczyk put the president in an impossible situation. He had to renounce either his prime minister and the British or Sosnkowski. That evening the president informed Sosnkowski of his intention to dismiss him. On 29 September Sosnkowski was relieved of his duties as commander-in-chief. Three days later Bór-Komorowski and his forces in Warsaw surrendered.

171 Commander-in-Chief, Rozkaz nr 19, 1 Sept. 1944, Ak 4:251-54.
CONCLUSION

After his dismissal Sosnkowski was granted three months' leave by President Raczkiewicz, and in November 1944 he left London for Canada, where his wife and sons had spent the war. Sosnkowski hoped to return to active service, and the president confided that it was his wish to appoint him commander-in-chief of ground forces.\(^1\) However, this was not to be. Sosnkowski was *persona non grata* in the United Kingdom. Even after his dismissal British leaders expressed concern that the "group around Sosnkowski looked for a chance to frustrate the Polish-Soviet agreement."\(^2\) Sosnkowski's leave was extended and extended again. His stay in Canada had the character of semi-internment. He was denied a visa to travel to the United Kingdom in winter 1946-1947 to participate in discussions to explore his return to the government-in-exile as minister of military affairs. Travel to the United States for a speaking tour was blocked as well. In May 1947 he was informed by the Canadian government that the condition of his presence in that country was that he was to "make no speeches and give no interviews in Canada and participate in no controversial political activities." Were he to do so in the United States, his return to Canada might be "impossible."\(^3\)

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1 Sosnkowski to Raczkiewicz, 31 October 1946, OSS, Archiwum Sosnkowskiego, cont. 16578/II, fols. 63-4.


Sosnkowski’s stay in Canada was made permanent by the Communist seizure of power at the war's end. In October 1944 Mikołajczyk took his government’s proposals to Stalin in Moscow. They were not acceptable, and the premier was compelled to surrender Lvov and Vilnius as well as accept a provisional government in which three quarters of the portfolios went to the Moscow Poles. When upon his return the settlement was rejected by his government, Mikołajczyk resigned. He was replaced by Socialist Tomasz Arciszewski. Events then moved ahead without the London Poles. On 31 December 1944 the Lublin Committee declared itself the Provisional Government of Poland. It was recognized by the Soviets on 5 January 1945. At the conference of Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin on 4-11 February at Yalta the great powers resolved the Polish Question. The three set the Curzon line as the eastern frontier of Poland. It was agreed that the present provisional government be reorganized to include democratic leaders from home and abroad and there was a pledge to hold free elections as soon as possible.4 The Provisional Government was recognized by the Western Allies in July. It was nominally a coalition, and included Mikołajczyk as vice premier, who had returned to Poland after his resignation. Although the PSL was a member of the ruling coalition, it was treated as an opposition party and subjected to government harassment as were other democratic parties. Persecution increased when the peasant leader broke with the ruling Communist coalition. A rigged general election, which returned a Communist majority, followed in January 1947. All open opposition was then suppressed as a 'monolithic' single-party regime was established. In fear of their lives Mikołajczyk and other democratic leaders fled Poland.5

After the Allies withdrew recognition of the government-in-exile, the Polish Armed Forces in the West were demobilized by the British. On 1 May 1947 Sosnkowski was discharged and

4 On the Yalta Conference see Karski, Great Powers and Poland, 581-97.

entered penurious retirement. He was denied a pension by British authorities. Despite strenuous protests on the part of Polish leaders in London, the decision was not reversed. The London government-in-exile provided a small stipend, while it was able, until 1949. With a loan from friends Sosnkowski purchased a small farm in Arundal, a small town in Ontario, Canada not far from Montreal. There he eked out a precarious living, farming and renting a vacation cottage.

After his retirement Sosnkowski devoted much time and energy to emigré politics. And with time and the onset of the Cold War the restrictions on Sosnkowski’s activities were lifted and his fortunes revived. During the United States’ presidential election of 1952 his support was courted by both Republican candidate Eisenhower and Democratic nominee Adlai Stevenson. However, this last long chapter--25 years--in Sosnkowski’s career is the least interesting and in a sense anticlimactic. Writing of the last years of Zaleski, Wandycz observed: "Emigre politics acquire after a while a certain aura of unreality and shadows replace substance. Emigre controversies . . . tend to diminish the stature of even the greatest figures." After his retirement Sosnkowski never again played an important role in Poland’s affairs. His most important mission after the Second World War was a failed campaign, waged between 1952 and 1956, to unite the political parties in emigration split by Zaleski’s accession to the presidency after the death of Raczkiewicz. Sosnkowski died in his home in Arundal on 10 October 1969 at the age of 84.

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7 S. Babiński, Sosnkowski, 277.

8 Wandycz, "Zaleski," 421.

9 For an account of this mission see Tadeusz Katelbach, O zjednocznie i legalizm: ostatni akt życia publicznego Kazimierza Sosnkowskiego (New York, 1975).
Few leaders exercised as great an influence on Polish military policy between the First and Second World War as Sosnkowski. Sosnkowski belongs not to the great captains like Bonaparte who developed successful concepts of war, but in the company of the less-glamorous administrative heads, military educators, and parliamentarians who organized armies. Sosnkowski was passionately committed to state building, first to the establishment of a Polish state where none had existed since the Partitions of Poland and, once this had been accomplished, to the construction of state institutions. In both instances Sosnkowski grappled with the problem of Poland's position between the colossi of Germany and Russia and its geography, most particularly its lack of defensible frontiers. Sosnkowski was a revolutionary military intellectual. His own roots were in the old Polish intelligentsia, and he came to the craft of arms out of a Neo-romantic "dream of the sword" and from the PPS. As a result, his military thought hearkened to the Polish insurrectionist tradition of People's War and not the grand tactical formulas or systematically articulated theories of an Antoine-Henri Jomini or Heinrich von Bülow, although he did have a keen understanding of war and strategy. To overcome the problems of geography he turned to the ideal of the nation-in-arms. Sosnkowski's work reveals a profound understanding of its underlying principle. In 1917 he wrote:

> The only army that will not fail in the field is only that which grows with its society, which has the complete faith in its officers and government; the only government which can organize and use an army well is that which having the full authority and support of society can in organizing an army impart the character, traditions, and aspirations of the nation. A foreign government and military leadership can assist in the formation of an army but only the nation can create its army.\(^\text{10}\)

Sosnkowski's endeavors to realize this principle constitute his chief contribution to military policy.

When socialism failed to bring about an all-embracing rebellion to liberate Poland from foreign rule, Sosnkowski, inspired by Piłsudski, turned to the creation of "a brutal force which

\(^{10}\) Józef, "Zagadnienia armji [sic]." Strzelec, no. 6-7, April-May 1917, 5.
would be able to break the might of the government."^11 Sosnkowski gave Pilsudski a force to do this in the ZWC in 1908 and the ZS and Strzelec in 1911. These organizations constituted the dynamic core of the militant arm of the independence movement, known as the Military Movement. These forces were not expected to do anything more than provide insurgents with trained leaders, being a cadre of specialists who were to summon the nation-in-arms. Polish plans for a national insurrection were flawed. The rebellion which was to be launched by this vanguard was to amount "to presenting the people with the question: Yes or no? will you join us in the struggle?"^12 As it turned out, when the leaders of the military movement launched their insurrection in August 1914, the nation was remarkably unresponsive. The Riflemen's associations were then reorganized as the Polish Legions and fought alongside the Central Powers. Throughout the conflict Sosnkowski worked to preserve the Legions as the nucleus of an insurrectionist force or the army of a future Polish state. The Legions became a symbolic trump card as Pilsudski waited and worked to turn political circumstances to his advantage. However, it was only the collapse of the partitioning powers, Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Russia, in 1917 and 1918 and not Pilsudski's "bargaining upward" the cause of Poland which allowed for the creation of a Polish state. Nevertheless the Military Movement furnished the Pilsudski camp with the means to make use of this opportunity as well as the nucleus of a Polish army.

As vice minister and then minister of military affairs of the new Polish Republic Sosnkowski once again faced the problem of Poland's geography, now couched in terms of defense of the state rather than the overthrow of foreign rule, and he continued to see in the nation-in-arms the counter to Poland's tenuous place in Europe. Sosnkowski now combined the principle of the nation-in-arms with the knowledge which he acquired during the long thankless

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^12 "Zarys historii militamej Powstania Styczniowego," ibid, 3:83.
years of conspiracy, that the Polish people lacked a national or a "state consciousness." During
the Polish-Soviet War Sosnkowski assembled a national army from the flotsam and jetsam of the
First World War and from peasant levees. He combined immense feats of organization with
measures calculated to put victory in soldiers' hearts. After the war he worked to institutionalize
the nation-in-arms and measures to raise the cultural level and national consciousness of soldiers.
This vision of the Polish Army, outlined in his Programmatic Expose of 8 March 1921, was given
form primarily in the army legislation of this period and a series of education and training
programs, although it pervaded many other aspects of army life.

As strong as Sosnkowski's grasp of the nation-in-arms was his understanding of modern
warfare and strategy. The product of his study of military affairs and the experience of the First
World War, it enabled him to successfully make the transition to the period of consolidation which
followed the revolutionary birth of national states after the war. Among the intellectuals retooled
for military service before and during the First World War Sosnkowski was the most professional
and most soldierly. To assure the lasting defense of Poland he tried to make the army a modern
force. Demobilization after the Polish-Soviet War was the occasion for a reconstruction program
to transform improvised forces into a modern army. This program, also outlined in the war
minister's Programmatic Expose, proposed to give the army an up-to-date force structure, arms,
and doctrine, incorporating the technological advances of the First World War and the changes in
warfare which they had wrought. Also, Sosnkowski urged that a program of alliance with the
Great Powers, namely France, and the states of East Central Europe be realized to further
strengthen Poland's defenses. He himself played an instrumental role in securing a military
alliance with France.

The minister's modernization program and his program of alliances were never fully
realized. Soon after its start modernization ran into trouble. The state's meager resources were
the chief obstacle to the program’s completion. Squabbles between the Czechs and Poles prevented alliance with Czechoslovakia, the keystone of the system of alliances fashioned by the French, Czechs, and Poles. Any further chance of the realization of these plans was dashed by Piłsudski’s drive for power and the coup of May 1926. Piłsudski’s assumption of personal direction of the armed forces, which was the most important result of the May coup, had a profound effect on the development of the army. Under Piłsudski the army’s technological and intellectual development froze, and between 1926 and 1935 the army went to seed. Attempts to make up for these lost years and to modernize the Polish Army began only in 1936. After 1926 Sosnkowski’s program of alliance and cooperation with the powers and neighboring states was supplanted by a pattern of relations which undid the work of earlier years and unravelled the French system of eastern alliances. Although Sosnkowski opposed the military policy introduced by Piłsudski and the Colonels, he was incapable of preventing its adoption. In his mind state building substituted for political philosophy. To accomplish the great tasks of state building he believed, probably rightly, in selfless unity and cooperation. He, himself, eschewed party politics and worked to build unity and cooperation, and he expected others to do the the same. This left him defenseless in a political culture of fraction and faits accompli. His nonpartisan or antipartisan approach to politics serves the historian well as a prism on history, but they did not serve state building.

Not without justification was the military policy of the first years of peace criticized as unrealistic. "There are those," Piłsudski said in an interview on 11 November 1928, "who equip the army with projects and ideas, while the soldier is short of boots and ordinary rifles, and for these projects they expend real, not metaphoric money."13 Yet Polish leaders departed from the course Sosnkowski charted at their peril. The military policy of Piłsudski and his successors

utterly failed to protect Poland from Nazi and Soviet aggression in September 1939. Once again Sosnkowski set to work building a force with which to regain Polish statehood. Once again Sosnkowski saw that the Poles had only themselves to rely on to overcome Germany and Soviet Russia, and he turned to the nation-in-arms, preparing cadres at home and abroad for a national insurrection. The position of Poland after the September 1939 campaign much resembled that of the independence movement after August 1914, as the Poles waited and worked to turn political circumstances to their advantage. Perhaps the only distinction between Sikorski's and Mikołajczyk's policy and that of Sosnkowski was the choice of when to end the waiting and what circumstances to use. Sosnkowski opposed Sikorski's and later Mikołajczyk's bids to deal with the Soviets and to stage an uprising in Warsaw not for ideological reasons, but for practical considerations as he hoped, perhaps in conscious emulation of Piłsudski, to "bargain upward" the Polish cause. Yet if Sosnkowski sought to follow in his mentor's footsteps, he lacked Piłsudski's political skills to impose the course desired. He was able only to rail apoplectically as others steered a course which he believed would and did end in a national tragedy.

There can be no way of determining that defeat in September 1939 may have been avoided, if the continuation of the policies fashioned by Sosnkowski or if his warnings were heeded. Similarly there can be no way of determining that Communist takeover may have been avoided, if Sosnkowski's policy of waiting and turning political circumstances to his advantage were adopted. Yet, it is in terms of military policy that Sosnkowski must be judged. Sosnkowski's labors to build a national army between 1918 and 1920 helped to prevent Poland from becoming an ephemeral Saisonstat, paving the way for what commentator Adam Michnik calls a "gasp of fresh air," a perdyshka to use the Russian. The twenty years of independence were used to build a new framework of national culture.14 If during this period Sosnkowski was

unable to arm the nation properly for its defense, he prepared it well nevertheless. In September
1939 950,000 serving soldiers and reservists answered the call to arms. Thousands of men who
had not been mobilized trailed behind units pleading to be given weapons and to enlist. During
the course of the war another million Polish men and women took up arms in the struggle for the
reestablishment of the Polish state. To Sosnkowski must go some of the credit for the fact that
the notion of Europe without a Polish state, which was not firmly established after the First World
War, was inconceivable after the Second World War.

15 Mieczysław Wieczorek, *Bilans walki i zwycięstwa Polaków, 1939-1945* (Warsaw, 1985),
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