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### The Polish-Soviet war in the Norwegian press during the years 1920–1921

#### Wojna polsko-bolszewicka w prasie norweskiej w latach 1920–1921

**Abstract:** During the Polish-Soviet war, it was common knowledge then that the conflict in question had a considerable influence on the Mid- and West European states. It was expected that, were the Red Army to have won, the Soviet revolution would have spread as far as the Marne. The reason why the conflict in question was of so much interest to the Norwegian press was that it reflected Norwegian public opinion regarding the position of the then superpowers towards the war, showing how Norwegian public opinion understood this war, as well as Norwegians' sympathy for or disfavour towards the militant parties. This article aims both at presenting the above-mentioned issues and juxtaposing them with the political, military, and social questions to date as they appeared in the then Norwegian press. For that purpose, my article will also refer to the literature about the Polish-Soviet war.

**Keywords:** the Polish-Soviet war, Poland in Norwegian press, Poland in the interwar period, Polish-Norwegian relationships

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**Streszczenie:** Wojna polsko-bolszewicka z lat 1919–1921 była uważana przez ówczesnych obserwatorów za najważniejszy konflikt po zakończeniu pierwszej wojny światowej. Wówczas powszechnie uważano, że spór ten miał kardynalny wpływ na losy państw środkowo- i zachodnioeuropejskich – spodziewano się, że w przypadku wygranej Armii Czerwonej rewolucja bolszewicka rozprzestrzeni się co najmniej do linii Marny. Z tych względów konflikt polsko-bolszewicki wzbudził ogromne zainteresowanie w prasie norweskiej, która odzwierciedlała stosunek norweskiego społeczeństwa do stanowiska mocarstw względem tego konfliktu, jego znaczenie dla norweskiej opinii publicznej oraz sympatię bądź nieprzychylność Norwegów dla walczących stron. Ukazanie niniejszych aspektów i skonfrontowanie ich z kwestiami politycznymi, militarynymi oraz społecznymi na podstawie analizy norweskiej prasy stanowią główny cel artykułu. W poniższym opracowaniu wykorzystano również literaturę przedmiotu traktującą o wojnie polsko-bolszewickiej i stanowiącą uzupełnienie prezentowanego problemu.

**Słowa kluczowe:** wojna polsko-bolszewicka, Polska w prasie norweskiej, Polska w okresie międzywojennym, stosunki polsko-norweskie

## Introduction

The history of Poland saw numerous events depicted in the Norwegian press. The Polish-Soviet war, waged in the years 1919–1921, is, undoubtedly, one such event. It was believed that, were Poland to have lost the war, the threat of spreading the Bolshevik revolution to Western Europe and, consequently, of the demise of its democratic political system, would become painfully real.

During the said war, Polish-Norwegian political ties were established in March 1919, at the Paris peace conference. Officially, Norway recognised Polish statehood on May 31<sup>st</sup>, 1919. Both parties aimed at strengthening mutual relationships. This was shown by the fact that a month later Czesław Pruszyński was appointed Envoy Extraordinaire and Minister of the Republic of Poland for the Kingdom of Norway, and he performed this function till April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1921. Also, in August 1919, a Norwegian economic mission to Poland under Samuel Eyde took place.<sup>1</sup> This contributed to the popularisation of the Polish affairs in Norway in the 1920s.

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<sup>1</sup> P. Jaworski, *Prasa norweska wobec niektórych problemów odradzającej się Polski 1920–1921*, "Rocznik Gdański" 1998, vol. 58, issue 2, p. 87.

As the Polish-Soviet war was being fought, the staff of the Legacy of the Republic of Poland in Christiania collected the articles which had been published in the Norwegian conservative *Aftenposten* and *Morgenbladet* (associated with Høyre (Conservative Party)), conservative-liberal *Tidens Tegn* (associated with *Frisinnede Venstre* (Free-minded Liberal Party)), liberal *Verdens Gang*, *Dagbladet* (associated with Venstre (Liberal Party)), and social-democratic *Social-Demokraten* (associated with *Det norske Arbeiderparti* (Social Democracy)) press<sup>2</sup> in the years 1920–1921.<sup>3</sup> At present, this archival material is stored in the *Archiwum Akt Nowych* in Warsaw. It comprises a voluminous set, of which the Polish-Soviet war is a vital part: a source I am going to rely on while discussing my topic. The articles in question reflect the then approach of the Norwegian society to the Polish question, as it appeared during the above-mentioned war.

This approach will involve tackling the question of the significance of the conflict for the Norwegian public opinion. It is with the view of the above-mentioned context that I have pointed to the most interesting, for Norwegian authors, political, military, and social questions which many a time have been studied within a broader, international perspective.

### **The Polish-Bolshevik conflict from the beginning to the battle of Warsaw**

The Polish-Soviet war was both a political and territorial conflict. Its political character was generated by the question of whether the Polish could put their state in order with their own or under Soviet rules. The territorial aspect of the said war concerned eastern Poland, the latter being Russia's loot obtained as a result of the three partitions (between Austria, Prussia and Russia).

The leader of Poland, Józef Piłsudski, planned to establish the federal bloc, with Poland staying as close as possible to Ukraine, Byelorussia,

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<sup>2</sup> I. Flo, *Norske aviser fram a til å*, in: *Norsk presses historie*, vol. 1–4: (1660–2010), ed. H. F. Dahl, Oslo 2010, p. 367.

<sup>3</sup> It is worth adding that the archival collection lacks articles from the main organ of the Communist Party of Norway (Norges Kommunistiske Parti) – *Friheten*.

and Lithuania, which were supposed to constitute a buffer for the Bolshevik Russia. The project became significant again on September 5<sup>th</sup>, 1918, when the Council of People's Commissars annulled the Prussian and Austrian treaties on the partition of Poland, thus, according to the Polish public opinion, depriving Russia and its people all legal titles to the territory of the pre-partition Republic of Poland.<sup>4</sup> This situation, however, did not bring an end to the problem of the Polish-Russian border because it was only a propaganda action on the part of the Soviets. The Polish-Bolshevik conflict began on January 4, 1919, with a clash of two regular armies of the Polish Army and the Red Army near Vilnius.<sup>5</sup>

The misperception of the Polish politics by the allied forces was conspicuous in, for example, *Morgenbladet* of February 4<sup>th</sup>, 1920. Apart from a report on the situation on the eastern front and political information, the issue included an article stating that its author did not know why the Poles had fought against the Soviets *in toto* rather than arm in arm with the "White Forces" against the Bolsheviks. The journalist suggested that this was a result of the long-lasting wars with the Russians which in turn resulted in the Polish lack of trust towards this nation.<sup>6</sup> Thus, the misperception in question is surprising, the more so that the same article clearly states that, while fighting against the Russian, Poles aimed at two goals, namely, keeping their independence and liberating the Poles on Russian territory. This was impossible to attain regardless of the side 'White' or 'Red' Poles would have taken in this conflict. Therefore, contrary to his earlier statement, the said journalist also suggested that Poles must have aimed at both parties' defeat in the war. The article also pondered on how far east the new Polish borders would reach, as it was conjectured that Poles intended to occupy the vast area within Byelorussia, thus regaining its territory from before 1772.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> J. Pajewski, *Budowa Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej 1918–1926*, Poznań 2007, p. 57–58.

<sup>5</sup> W. Rezmer, *4 stycznia 1919 roku – początek wojny Polski z Rosją Sowiecką*, "Przegląd Historyczno-Wojskowy" 2009, vol. 1, p. 68.

<sup>6</sup> Archiwum Akt Nowych w Warszawie (further: AAN), Poselstwo RP w Oslo, sig. 9, "Truselen mod Polen", *Morgenbladet*, 4. Feb. 1920, p. 4.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*.

Additionally, the Norwegian press commented on an immense influence of the Polish-Soviet war on Europe's further lot. The article entitled "Truselen mod Polen" ("The threat to Poland") of February 6<sup>th</sup>, 1920, published in *Aftenposten*, perceived Poland to be an eastern outpost – an outrageous fact if we consider Lenin's dictatorial-imperialist power as dangerous for West European culture. Were Poland to have experienced a defeat, the west would have been opened wide for the Soviets – a reason why Poland's strong statehood was believed to be necessary. Alas, as a bereft and aid-deprived country, Poland was not expected to be able to prevail over the Soviet Russia; the help of the allied forces in the form of sheer advice was insufficient. Interestingly, not only was England not considered capable of supporting Poland in her liberation; Germany, too, was approached as Poland's prospective, understanding partner in crisis. Regarding France, the article stated that she was the only West European state to have the 'right' approach to the East European matters.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, it is a well-known fact that as early as late March 1920, France accepted the defeat of the "White Forces", thus embracing the Bolsheviks as a sole negotiating party.<sup>9</sup>

The press also reported on the raging warfare and doubted the success of the Polish army, this due to the insignificant fighting value of the Polish soldier. Accordingly, on March 19<sup>th</sup>, 1920, *Aftenposten* and *Tidens Tegn* speculated that, although the Polish troops had taken out two Byelorussian railway junctions: Mozyr and Kalenkowicze, they would humbly withdraw once the Red Army advanced.<sup>10</sup> The *Aftenposten* of March 25<sup>th</sup>, 1920, commented on the advance of the Polish troops in this tone, too, additionally suggesting that Poland, then in the state of war for six years, was too exhausted with the heavy fighting during WWI to be able to successfully face Soviet Russia. The Norwegians understood that Poland's having regained freedom motivated her to undertake hard conflicts with the Bolsheviks. Still, they (i.e. the Norwegians) considered such an effort to be a flash in

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<sup>8</sup> Ibidem, *Aftenposten*, 16. Feb. 1920, p. 5.

<sup>9</sup> A. Nowak, *Pierwsza zdrada Zachodu. 1920 – zapomniany appeasement*, Kraków 2015, p. 57–58.

<sup>10</sup> AAN, Poselstwo RP w Oslo, sig. 9, "Polakernes straalende seir ved Kalenkowicze og Mozyrz", *Aftenposten*, 19. Mar. 1920, p. 16; "Et alvorlig nederlag for de røde armeer", *Tidens Tegn*, 19. Mar. 1920, p. 17.

the pan, the more so that the then Polish army, comprising not even a million soldiers, was composed of many peasants and representatives of other social strata unused to fighting, as well many young people conscripted from the Polish territories that had been the property of Austria-Hungary, Germany, and Russia before WWI. The shortage of officers, food supplies, uniforms, and weapons was yet another problem of the Polish army.<sup>11</sup>

The information on the perfectly trained 'Blue Army' which the above-mentioned article quoted somewhat changed the unfavourable opinion of the combat value of the Polish troops. This is because, along with the 'Blue Army', the French sent their own military instructors whose task was to support the Polish staff.<sup>12</sup>

The Norwegian press often highlighted the possibility of signing a treaty between Poles and the Soviet with the participation of West European states, aimed at hindering the German-Russian cooperation. On April 14<sup>th</sup>, 1920, *Tiden Tegn*s informed its readers about the peace talks to be held by Poles in Borysowo, Warsaw, and Moscow.<sup>13</sup> *Aftenposten* of April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1920, elaborated on the topic of the peace talks by falsely stating that the Polish army had already reached its strategic point; a point Poland did not want to break. Proposing Borysław, a Byelorussian city situated within the war zone, as a site of the mentioned talks, the Polish party had neutral space in mind. Since the Soviets proposed Warsaw as such space, negotiations ended in deadlock.<sup>14</sup>

The Polish-Bolshevist talks were never brought to conclusion, and the offensive of the Polish army at the Ukrainian frontline belies the earlier reports on the unwillingness of Poles to cross the border they had previously reached. *Aftenposten* of May 4<sup>th</sup>, 1920, rightly explains the reasons why the Polish military attacked the central frontline was fixed and often ran across the marshes, which complicated the warfare. That is why the Polish military staff resolved to strike in the southern, Ukrainian part of the frontline, bet-

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<sup>11</sup> Ibidem, *Aftenposten*, 25. Mar. 1920, p. 18.

<sup>12</sup> Ibidem, "Den polske hær", *Aftenposten*, 25. Mar. 1920, p. 18.

<sup>13</sup> Ibidem, "Sovjetsregjeringens fredstilbud til Polen", *Tidens Tegn*, 14. Apr. 1920, p. 26.

<sup>14</sup> Ibidem, "Polen", *Aftenposten*, 23. Apr. 1920, p. 30.

ter for fighting as regards space. Furthermore, Poles wanted to make use of the rebellious mood Ukrainians were in as, at the time in question, Ukrainian interest in bolshevism waned and many a Ukrainian was of an opinion that arms should be raised against the Soviets.<sup>15</sup> The Polish state authorities tried to use this situation by engaging in talks with the Ukrainians, which, according to the author of the article, might lead to a reciprocal agreement. Besides, as the same journalist highlighted, Piłsudski had announced that the Poles, with the help from the Ukrainians, would like to get rid of the Soviets.<sup>16</sup> The political events as regards Ukraine, in particular the agreement on the state border between Poland and Ukraine,<sup>17</sup> signed by Piłsudski and Semen Petlura, were of interest to the Norwegian press as well.

In May 1920, the Polish military success was recognised, to a degree, by the Norwegian press. *Tidens Tegn* of May 5<sup>th</sup> informed its readers that on April 26<sup>th</sup>, the first day of the offensive, the Polish military had broken the frontline only to easily take out Zhytomyr and Kyiv and, consequently, landing in the heart of Ukraine.<sup>18</sup> *Aftenposten* of May 4<sup>th</sup> emphasised that Poles, effortlessly, had also taken Mogilev out as well as redirecting the Bolshevik attacks towards the west. The author of this article assumed that such a spectacular capture of territory suggested the poor fighting value of the Bolsheviks. Poles, the journalist continued, aimed at the simultaneous liberation of the Ukrainians and even at enabling their creation of their own state.<sup>19</sup>

The Polish Kyiv-directed offensive aimed at creating, in Ukraine, the conditions as in the plans of the Polish government. The Ukrainian army which, too, participated in that offensive and contributed to the Bolshe-

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<sup>15</sup> Ibidem, “Den polske offensiv”, *Aftenposten*, 4. May 1920, p. 36.

<sup>16</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>17</sup> On the strength of the agreement signed between Poland and the Ukrainian People’s Republic (UPR) in Warsaw on April 21<sup>st</sup>, 1920, the Polish government recognised the UPR as well as relinquished the claims to the Polish territories up to their pre-1772 borders. The UPR government recognised the border on the River Zbruch.

<sup>18</sup> AAN, Poselstwo RP w Oslo, sig. 9, “Polakkernes store offensiv”, *Tidens Tegn*, 5. May 1920, p. 44.

<sup>19</sup> Ibidem, “Den polske offensiv”, *Aftenposten*, 4. May 1920, p. 36; “Polakkernes store offensiv”, *Tidens Tegn*, 5. May 1920, p. 44.

viks' defeat thus aided Ukrainians to establish their own state.<sup>20</sup> In view of a wider, international context of the Polish-Bolshevik conflict, it needs to be emphasised that it became significant as soon as the Polish army began to prevail, militarily, in Ukraine. *Aftenposten* of May 4<sup>th</sup> reported that the said Polish offensive had made England as well as the other Entente states politically affiliated with the Soviet Russia "anxious".<sup>21</sup>

*Aftenposten* informed its readers of the further successes of the Polish army publishing, on May 8<sup>th</sup>, the translated announcement of the Polish general staff, according to which, on the territory between the River Daugava and Boryslaw, the Polish military drove the enemy away towards the pre-offensive positions. Within the present territory of Byelorussia Poles occupied the area north of the Lake Narach, taking many prisoners of war and large amounts of ammunition. Not only that, the Poles also went beyond the Polotsk-Maladzyechna railway line, whereas in the south they captured Rzysszczew near Kyiv. Between the Rivers Dnieper and Dniester, the Polish troops fought hard with the 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Army of Semyon Budyonny.<sup>22</sup>

*Aftenposten* of May 12, 1920, informed of the liberation, by the Polish army, of part of Lithuania, Byelorussia, and Volhynia and the establishment of the civil administration there, a significant experiment, in the view of the newspaper. The article includes words of praise for the right engagement of the Polish military in the creation of new state structures, the latter being half-military, half civil in the region in question at that time.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, *Aftenposten* of June 2<sup>nd</sup> informed its readers of the fight of Poles and the Bolsheviks, the effect of which caused the Soviets to withdraw as far as beyond Polotsk. The Polish cavalry defeated, too, the Red Forces fighting them at Berezina, north of Babruysk.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Ibidem, "Den polske offensiv", *Aftenposten*, 5. May 1920, p. 43.

<sup>21</sup> Ibidem, sig. 11, *Aftenposten*, 4. May 1920, p. 36.

<sup>22</sup> Ibidem, sig. 9, "Polakkernes kamp", *Aftenposten*, 8. May 1920, p. 49.

<sup>23</sup> Ibidem, "Den polske administration i de østlige grænselande", *Aftenposten*, 12. May 1920, p. 51.

<sup>24</sup> Ibidem, "Polske seire over bolsjevikerne", *Aftenposten*, 2. Jun. 1920, p. 62.



The subsequent reports were not so optimistic, this due to the Bolsheviks' grand counteroffensive commenced on July 4<sup>th</sup>.<sup>25</sup> As early as July 5<sup>th</sup>, *Social-Demokraten* published an article which reported on the request for the aid in fighting the Bolsheviks Poles forwarded during the Brussels conference. The French calmly accepted the request, yet no conclusive decisions were made.<sup>26</sup> *Aftenposten* of July 10<sup>th</sup> published an article questioning the future of the Polish army, which could have shared the fate of the troops commanded by Kolchak, Yudenich and Denikin. The article suggested the perspectives for Poland as terrifying because their defences had been breached at many positions, and the Polish government announced that their homeland was in serious danger. The text also referred to the fact that, according to the Polish state authorities, Poles should prepare themselves again for assembling a new army in what was depicted as their 'martyred country'. The Norwegians, expecting Poles to ask the allied forces for aid, at the same time doubted that the West European states would manage to save Poland from the Bolshevik claws as it was believed that this country would soon come tumbling down.<sup>27</sup>

*Aftenposten* of July 15<sup>th</sup> published the article entitled "Poles' Defeat" ("Polakkernes nederlag") where Poland's military debacle was reported as a certainty, the latter due both to the unfavourable, for Poland, results of the plebiscite in Warmia and Masuria and the seizing of the city of Minsk by the Bolsheviks. The article also pointed to the fact that the Bolshevik army outnumbered the Polish one (7 : 4 respectively) and the former had the state-of-the-art equipment and a bigger amount of ammunition at their disposal.<sup>28</sup>

In July, Poland's situation was getting worse and worse day by day. After the military successes of Mikhail Tukhachevsky's troops in July 1920, the Polish state authorities, feeling that their country was in danger, solicited

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<sup>25</sup> N. Davies, *White Eagle, Red Star. The Polish-Soviet war 1919–1920 and "the miracle of Vistula"*, London 2003, p. 145.

<sup>26</sup> AAN, Poselstwo RP w Oslo, sig. 11, "Lemberg erobret av de røde?", *Social-Demokraten*, 5. May 1920, p. 1.

<sup>27</sup> Ibidem, "Det svigtende bolverk og en ærlig mægler", *Aftenposten*, 10. Jun. 1920, p. 3.

<sup>28</sup> Ibidem, *Aftenposten*, 10. Jul. 1920, p. 8.

the allied forces to pressure the Soviets for a ceasefire. *Aftenposten* of July 22 informed its readers about Poland's difficult situation as well as Europe's being threatened in an article on Europe's growing concerns as regards the probability of the Red Army marching to the west of the continent. At the time in question, the Soviets were as close as 250 km away from Warsaw and 15 km away from the German border, and it was obvious Poland needed help before it was too late. The author of the article was of the opinion that the West should have understood Poland was the only, and not that strong, barrier both to prevent the spread of the 'red wave' and establish the bloc of states composed of Russia, Germany, and Turkey. Furthermore, Slovakia was believed to have joined the conglomerate, as she was strongly influenced by bolshevism; Romania, on the other hand, was supposed to become isolated once she had confronted Soviet Russia.<sup>29</sup>

*Aftenposten* of September 23rd remarked on the extremely difficult situation of Poland and Europe in the article entitled "Poland's Misery – Europe's Jeopardy" ("Polens nød – Europas fare"). This text stated that the advancement of the Red Army allowed the Soviets to forward the proposition of peace talks, with England as a mediator. Furthermore, the article pointed out that Lenin's government used the method of friendly dialogue as a cover for its brutality towards Poland and Western Europe. An English delegation to Moscow had already known the Janus face of Bolshevik politics; that is why Lloyd George publicly declared the allied forces' non-involvement in it. The author of the said article, too, stated that the Allies would not be able to use their military force against the Bolsheviks. Contrary to that statement, George hoped not to send the English troops to Poland as, in his view, the latter's human potential was significant. What, however, he believed the Polish army lacked was both the military equipment and the instructions the French military staff stationing in Poland had already conveyed. Additionally, George hoped for the momentum of the Bolshevik invasion to subside after the Red Forces had reached the West European territories.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Ibidem, "Bolsjevikernes marsch mod vest. Voksende fare helle Mellem-Europa", *Aftenposten*, 22. Jul. 1920, p. 11.

<sup>30</sup> Ibidem, "Polens nød – Europas fare", *Aftenposten*, 23. Jul. 1920, p. 14.

The *Verdens Gang* of July 23<sup>rd</sup> reported on the difficult situation of Poland as well. Although the article stated that the Polish troops had stood their ground, including the most tangible positions situated between Suwałki and Augustów, at Grodno the Soviets had gone round the Polish army, pushing it towards the upper River Neman and, consequently, opening a way running along the railway track Grodno–Warsaw to the Red Army. The situation in the Polish capital was hopeless – a reason why its dwellers started to leave the city, as *Verdens Gang* misinformed its readers.<sup>31</sup>

As the Bolshevik threat increased, the Norwegian press began publishing articles on the mobilisation of the Polish government and society. *Morgenbladet* of July 26<sup>th</sup> informed its readers about the announcement of the Polish Prime Minister Wincenty Witos concerning Poles' support for the newly established government in its fight against the Soviets.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, the former Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, Erazm Piltz, stated that if the Russians flaunted their imperialist attitudes, Poles would fight for the independence of their country “to the last man”. At the time in question, the Polish army had regrouped, and its top tier communicated with the French commanders on regular basis. Piltz was anxious that neutral Germany, which cooperated with the Soviets, had a pretext to refrain itself from the aid for Poland. The Norwegian press also informed its readers that the Bolsheviks invaded Poland and Ukraine to establish the Soviet government in Warsaw.<sup>33</sup>

*Aftenposten* of August 9<sup>th</sup> argued that it was not Bolshevik Russia but Poland which had fought for the just cause, i.e. law and civilisation, as well as helped Ukraine, Lithuania, and Byelorussia become independent states. These countries were supposed to be liberated from the Bolshevik oppression and terror, the latter justified neither historically, nor naturally within the limits of the said states. The Soviets threatened the whole of Europe then, the more so that they were in the possession of the state of the weapons intercepted from Denikin's and Kolchak's armies. Once an occupier, the Bolsheviks acted relentlessly, compelling the native people to work for

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<sup>31</sup> Ibidem, “Paris. Torsdag”, *Verdens Gang*, 23. Jul. 1920, p. 15.

<sup>32</sup> Ibidem, *Morgenbladet*, 26. Jul. 1920, p. 17.

<sup>33</sup> Ibidem, *Tidens Tegn*, 27. Jul. 1920, p. 18.

the Soviet army, confiscating their property, closing the schools, and dismantling Polish culture.<sup>34</sup>

In early August 1920, Poland's situation in the international arena went from bad to worse. Accordingly, Czechoslovakia's announcement on August 9<sup>th</sup> of her neutrality as regards the Polish-Soviet conflict equalled her ban on the transfer of the allied weapons to Poland. Not only that,<sup>35</sup> simultaneously the Soviets refused to accept British mediation in the peace talks. Poland's critical situation pushed *Morgenbladet* to report, on August 11<sup>th</sup>, on the Allies' reluctance to directly aid Poland militarily. The article also touched upon an English political problem, which turned out to be an obstacle as regards Poland's unfavourable situation. Namely, the English government's hesitation about aiding Poland was allegedly due to the working class's decision to step back from bolshevism, thus allowing Poland to become instrumental for Lenin's policy. As early as the beginning of August, the leader of England's opposition Labour Party, Arthur Henderson, issued a manifesto encouraging organising protests against the allied intervention in Poland. Furthermore, railroad workers in Lancashire and London refused to transport ammunition for Poles engaged in the Polish-Soviet conflict, at the same time warning George of implicating Great Britain in another war. The Labour Party and English trade unions declared, too, the blockade of transports other than weaponry and threatened that, should English soldiers get involved in the Polish-Soviet conflict, they would make England lose in that war.<sup>36</sup>

*Morgenbladet* of August 11<sup>th</sup> presented the then situation as defeatist both for Poland and Europe by claiming that no power existed which could stop Lenin in his effort to reach the Marne and La Manche. In view of the author of this article, the red revolution, propounded by the great instigator back in Moscow, was approaching. Unfortunately, the article read, Great Britain's position of a superpower in trade and on sea was irretrievable gone,<sup>37</sup> the reason why England was no longer capable of aiding Poland in

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<sup>34</sup> Ibidem, *Aftenposten*, 8. Aug. 1920, p. 28.

<sup>35</sup> S. Pilarski, *Zarys stosunków polsko-czechosłowackich 1918–1933*, Toruń 2008, p. 66.

<sup>36</sup> AAN, Poselstwo RP w Oslo, sig. 11, "Domini canes", *Morgenbladet*, 11. Aug. 1920, p. 33.

<sup>37</sup> Ibidem.

her plight. The concerns about Poland's fate were reported also by *Verdens Gang*, which highlighted that the success of the Red Army translates itself into Poland's decline and fall.<sup>38</sup>

At that time, there seemed to be a chance for a Polish-Soviet agreement, as talks on signing a truce between the conflicted parties were being held in Baranavichy. *Morgenbladet* and *Aftenposten* quoted an excerpt from the Polish journal called *Robotnik (The Worker)*, in which the Polish Baranavichy delegates reported on the fact that folk commissioner for foreign affairs, Georgy Chicherin, had intended to make Poles prisoners of Soviet Russia. The Bolshevik delegates declared that, due to the considerable distance from Moscow, they had no chance to coordinate their position with the Soviet government. This 'misunderstanding' demonstrated the Bolshevik wish to delay their decision about signing the truce, thus giving them the additional 14 days in the course of which the Soviets managed to invade Poland. Contrary to what the French and English press covered, *Morgenbladet* claimed that the victory over Poland had been, for the Bolsheviks, more significant than the armistice.<sup>39</sup>

According to the *Aftenposten* of August 8<sup>th</sup>, Poles constantly tended towards a ceasefire; a fact confirmed by the armistice note sent by the Polish government to Chicherin on August 5<sup>th</sup> which, however, the Bolsheviks rejected. Simultaneously, it turned out that the Baranavichy truce with the Soviet was a flash in the pan.<sup>40</sup> In view of *Morgenbladet*, *Dagbladet*, and *Aftenposten*, initiating the armistice talks, the Polish government had hoped for the speedy end of the Soviet aggression. The Polish government also expressed its wish to sign the mutual agreement and an international law-based truce, which would guarantee peace and friendly relations with Poland's western neighbours. On the other hand, the Polish authorities could not possibly agree either to the regulations striking at Poland's sovereignty, or the Soviet interference into her domestic policy.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Ibidem, sig. 10, "Warschau fredag", *Verdens Gang*, 7. Aug. 1920, p. 10.

<sup>39</sup> Ibidem, "Warschau 6te august", *Morgenbladet*, 7. Aug. 1920, p. 11.

<sup>40</sup> Ibidem, "Warschau 8de august", *Morgenbladet*, 9. Aug. 1920, p. 17.

<sup>41</sup> Ibidem, "Warschau 8de august", *Morgenbladet*, 9. Aug. 1920, p. 17; "Polens betingelser", *Dagbladet*, 9. Aug. 1920, p. 19; "Polakkernes note til Sovjetrusland", *Aftenposten*, 9. Aug. 1920, p. 20.

In early August, the Norwegian press issued even more anxious reports on the Soviet jeopardising the whole Europe. One example can be the August 10th issue of *Tidens Tegn*, which claimed that the fate of Europe would depend on the sole lot of Poland. The words of Witos were quoted, proclaiming that the Bolsheviks were going to invade Warsaw to dictate the conditions of ceasefire to Poles.<sup>42</sup>

Contrary to the ongoing events in which the Bolsheviks posed as invaders, Poles were compelled to respond to the accusations about their alleged imperialism, a fact that *Morgenbladet* reported on in its August 8th issue. In this context, Piłsudski's mention about Poles wishing to decide their fate on their own were quoted. Piłsudski also added that the Polish army had occupied Dvinsk and freed Latvia, handing it over to the Latvians, who declared independence soon after that. Furthermore, Piłsudski supported the idea of operationalising the agrarian reform and establishing a university in Latvia. The accusation of the Polish Marshal of serving big landowners were, however, untrue, since the land was supposed to be handed down to Latvian peasants. On the other hand, the Norwegian press also published Soviet imperialist announcements, such as Leon Trotsky's proclamation of the Bolsheviks subduing the whole Europe within a year.<sup>43</sup>

Latvia announced independence on 18<sup>th</sup> November, 1918. The newly created state was a contested territory between Germany and Bolshevik Russia. During the Polish-Soviet war, Poles captured Dvinsk in January 1920. On the other hand, the land reform carried out in stages from 1919 by the Latvian government practically harmed the interests of national minorities, including Poles. Latvia was recognised as an independent state by European states and the USA in 1921–1922.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Ibidem, "Hele Europas redning avhænger av Polens skjæbne", *Tidens Tegn*, 10. Aug. 1920, p. 21; "Den hellige krig ved Warschus porte", *Morgenbladet*, 10. Aug. 1920, p. 23; "Den hellige krig begynner ved Warschus porte", *Aftenposten*, 10. Aug. 1920, p. 27.

<sup>43</sup> Ibidem, "Polens kamp for livet", *Morgenbladet*, 12. Aug. 1920, p. 35–36; "Trotzky haaber at Europa om et aar er bolsjevistik", *Morgenbladet*, 13. Aug. 1920, p. 37.

<sup>44</sup> T. Paluszyński, *Walka o niepodległość Łotwy 1914–1921*, Warszawa 1999, p. 406, 410.

## The Battle of Warsaw

At the culmination point of the Polish-Soviet conflict, that is, while the combat at Warsaw's hinterland was raging in mid-August 1920, the fight on the frontline became the headline. *Aftenposten* of August 14<sup>th</sup>, 1920, informed its readers of the push back against the Polish troops near Pułtusk, as well as at Radziechowy and Chołojów, where Budyonny's cavalry stepped into the game. The Poles, on the other hand, managed to defend Khorostkiv and Velykyi Khodachkiv.<sup>45</sup> The wire from the Polish general staff, dated for August 14<sup>th</sup>, reporting on Poles violently fighting the Bolsheviks at the northern section of the frontline was also used as a source for the issues of the Norwegian press in question. Furthermore, the Polish troops began their counteroffensive near Płońsk to the effect that they defeated three Bolshevik regiments, taking 230 Red Army POWs and taking numerous machine guns on the occasion.

A lot of space in the Norwegian press was devoted to the Battle of Warsaw, trying to accurately reflect the battles and movements of Polish and Soviet troops. Particular attention was paid to the Battles of Radzymin, Brest-Litovsk, Mława, and the Wieprz River manouver.<sup>46</sup>

The interesting thing is that George was implacable as regards Poland, even in the difficult months of July and August when he assumed an almost dictatorial pose. That he was not quite willing to aid Poland can be seen in his holding trade talks with the Soviet mission which arrived in London.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> AAN, Poselstwo RP w Oslo, sig. 10, "Patriotiske demonstrationer i Warschau", *Aftenposten*, 14. Aug. 1920, p. 44.

<sup>46</sup> Ibidem, "Heldige polske motangrep i Warschau avsnittet og ved Bug", *Morgenbladet*, 16. Aug. 1920, p. 48; "Polakkerne kjemper voldsomt og heldig", *Morgenbladet*, 16. Aug. 1920, p. 49; "Russernes kastet tilbake ved Warschau", *Dagbladet*, 19. Aug. 1920, p. 60; "Kampene utvikler sig fremd for polakkerne", *Aftenbladet*, 19. Aug. 1920, p. 61; "Warschau 19. august", *Tidens Tegn*, 19. Aug. 1920, p. 62; "Warschau, 20de august", *Morgenbladet*, 20. Aug. 1920, p. 63; "Warschau, 19de august", *Dagbladet*, 20. Aug. 1920, p. 65.

<sup>47</sup> T. Piszczkowski, *Anglia a Polska 1914–1939 w świetle dokumentów brytyjskich*, London 1975, p. 159.

When the success of the Polish counteroffensive became a fact and Poland's military situation gradually improved, the Norwegian press began to pose questions on who might be called the father of the Polish success. On August 20<sup>th</sup>, the journals only mentioned Piłsudski as the leader of the Polish military and Maxime Weygand as his advisor.<sup>48</sup> Three days later *Dagbladet* and *Aftenposten* published the fragments of an interview with General Weygand, who emphasised that the Polish victory had had broader and unpredictable consequences for the international situation in Europe. The Germans had no hopes left either for the agreement with the Soviets, or the march of the Red Army up to the line of the River Rhine, and consequently, for the breach of the provisions of the Versailles Treaty. The French general stated that if Poles had made good use of their victory, then the Red Army would not have been a serious threat. Furthermore, he believed that such a victory had been a Polish success in itself, as the military operations had been carried out by the Polish generals and in accordance with the Polish plans, whereas the role of the French officers had been both to 'fill in the gaps' in the Polish troops and cooperate with the Polish general staff. Even though Poland's empowerment was supposed to be good news from France's point of view, the French did not claim the victory over the Soviet was their victory.<sup>49</sup> Besides, *Tidens Tegn* of February 8<sup>th</sup>, 1921, reported on Piłsudski as the person who had saved Europe from defeat,<sup>50</sup> thus explicitly ascribing the victory over the Soviets to him. To this day, it has not been decided who was the author of the victory in the Battle of Warsaw. While in the Norwegian press, General Weygand was rightly excluded in this respect, General Tadeusz Rozwadowski, author of the Polish battle plan, was not mentioned.

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<sup>48</sup> AAN, Pospelstwo Polskie w Oslo, sig. 10, "Warschau, 20de august", *Morgenbladet*, 20. Aug. 1920, p. 64; "Warschau, 19 august". *Dagbladet*, 20. Aug. 1920, p. 65; "Polakkerne har fortsat fremgang", *Aftenposten*, 21. Aug. 1920, p. 71.

<sup>49</sup> Ibidem, "General Weygand om seiren", *Aftenposten*, 23. Aug. 1920, p. 72; "General Weygand finder den polske seir vidtrækkende", *Dagbladet*, 23. Aug. 1920, s. 73; "Polakkerne har tat 35,000 fanger", *Tidens Tegn*, 24. Aug. 1920, p. 75.

<sup>50</sup> Ibidem, Pospelstwo RP w Oslo, sig. 11, "Piłsudski og den europæiske civilisation", *Tidens Tegn*, 8. Feb. 1921, p. 51.



The Polish successes were widely commented by the superpowers, in the international arena. *Aftenposten* reported that the American, English, French, and Italian governments each sent advice for the Polish government as regards the future of the Polish politics. For example, the Americans wanted Poland to exercise restraint and act in accordance with the Treaty of Versailles.<sup>51</sup> As regards England, *Tidens Tegn* of August 30<sup>th</sup> informed its readers that she had not wished to interfere in the Polish-Bolshevik peace negotiations. The journal also mentioned that the Polish aim behind pushing the Soviet invasion back had been to seize the territories historically belonging to Poland. They also wanted peace, as much for Poland as for the Soviet Russia itself, and their own country's independence. The article reported on the ongoing peace talks in Minsk where Bolshevik spies were an integral part of the Soviet delegation – the reason why the Polish party sent a wire to Chicherin, proposing to move the talks to neutral Riga, provided Latvia agreed.<sup>52</sup>

By the end of August 1920, the Norwegian press pointed to the fact that Poland had taken an initiative in the Soviet negotiations, whereas interest in the war theatre significantly declined. *Morgenbladet* of August 30<sup>th</sup> stated that three days prior to Poland's taking that initiative, the Polish delegation to Minsk rejected the conditions of the Soviet peace, which excluded the possibility for Poles to decide their own fate and infringed on the country's sovereignty.<sup>53</sup> Two days after that, *Tidens Tegn* informed its readers that the Minsk peace talks had been derailed.<sup>54</sup> The majority of the Polish diplomatic participants of these talks went subsequently to Brest-Litovsk,

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<sup>51</sup> Ibidem, sig. 10, "Bolsjevikerne giver efter for de allieredes ultimatum", *Aftenposten*, 27. Aug. 1920, p. 85.

<sup>52</sup> Ibidem, sig. 12, "Spørsmålet om fredsslutning overlates helt til de delegerede i Minsk", *Tidens Tegn*, 30. Aug. 1920, p. 4.

<sup>53</sup> Ibidem, "Polen forkaster de russiske fredsbetingelser", *Morgenbladet*, 30. Aug. 1920, p. 9.

<sup>54</sup> Both the Polish and the Soviet party considered it right to have moved their talks to the neutral ground. See: *1920 wrzesień 2, Mińsk. – Protokół plenarnego posiedzenia konferencji w Mińsku*, in: *Dokumenty i materiały do historii stosunków polsko-radzieckich*, vol. 3: *kwiecień 1920–marzec 1921*, ed. W. Gostyńska et al., Warszawa 1964, p. 392.

whereas the Soviet diplomats present at the same conference headed for Moscow. The talks were expected to be recommenced in Riga.<sup>55</sup>

According to the Norwegian press, after the end of WWI, the conclusion of the Polish-Soviet peace became the hottest international relations potato; a fact reported on by, e.g. *Tidens Tegn*, dated September 3<sup>rd</sup>. At that time, the Polish offensive, predictably, lost its momentum but so did the Soviet resistance. The Soviets ended the negotiations, due to which a temporary situation, very much to the liking of Trotsky, who intended to fight to the last man rather than make peace, cropped up.<sup>56</sup>

In the articles *Morgenbladet* and *Tidens Tegn*, published on September 6<sup>th</sup>, the most tangible demands of the Polish peace delegation were laid out. The Polish parliament worked out the peace conditions, according to which the government in Moscow was supposed to no longer continue its Tsarist, annexation policy, thus allowing Byelorussia, Lithuania and Ukraine to independently decide their fate.<sup>57</sup> Furthermore, *Morgenbladet* emphasised that the Polish authorities had confirmed that Poland waged the war to protect her own borders and gain independence. The article also stated that during the war the Polish army never ventured into ethnically Russian territory. In relation to the Soviet army, *Morgenbladet* claimed that not only this army invaded the contested territory between Poland and Russia but also ventured into the ethnically Polish area, whose inhabitants did not wish to know about the communist system at all. The Polish party requested that, after the peace conditions had been decided, future political and economic relations between Poland and Russia should be discussed. One condition for these talks to begin was guaranteeing Poland her political and economic sovereignty to the degree that no foreign country could interfere in her domestic affairs.<sup>58</sup>

However, the Norwegian press still expressed no certainty as to whether the warring parties would make peace or continue the war, according

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<sup>55</sup> AAN, Poselstwo RP w Oslo, sig. 12, "Den bolsjevikiiske kavalierigeneral Budienny omringet og helt slaaet", *Aftenposten*, 3. Sep. 1920, p. 14.

<sup>56</sup> Ibidem, sig. 11, "Bolsjevikerne fredsförhandlingar", *Aftenposten*, 3. Sep. 1920, p. 41.

<sup>57</sup> Ibidem, "Polens principer för fred", *Morgenbladet*, 6. Sep. 1920, p. 42; sig. 12, *Tidens Tegn*, 6. Sep. 1920, p. 21.

<sup>58</sup> Ibidem, "Polens principer för fred", *Morgenbladet*, 6. Sep. 1920, p. 42.

to the *Aftenposten* article from September 9<sup>th</sup>, with the telling title “War or Peace?” (“Polen eller krig?”). In the view of the author of this text, there was still a long way to making peace between Poland and Russia. Although both parties officially declared the will to do so, it could be sensed that none of them sought a breakthrough. For example, Chicherin did not want the Soviets to lead the negotiations held in Riga where there was no convenient connection with Moscow. Nevertheless, Riga was a neutral ground for the peace talks to be held; the governments of both diplomacies conducted their business relatively close to one another, so the place seemed expedient enough for the purpose in question.

*Aftenposten* of September 9<sup>th</sup> reported that the Soviet counted on eventually receiving, in the metaphorical sense of the word, an ace to continue negotiations along the line they wanted to follow. The fiasco of the Red Army and its consequent utter defeat was, however, the Soviets’ problem. Because of that, the Bolshevik government was expected to be reluctant to make the peace. With reference to Poland, no authority existed that could protest or delay the peace talks, yet there was an understanding that Poles would aim to finish the war only after they had negotiated the borders they would be able to defend.

According to *Morgenbladet* of September 18<sup>th</sup>, the head of the Polish delegation for the Soviet negotiations, Jan Dąbski, stated that the Polish delegation in Riga desired a fair peace, whose making required, first, establishing a demarcation line between Russia and Poland and, second, signing a ceasefire.<sup>59</sup> Dąbski’s words were also quoted in *Morgenbladet*, dated September 21<sup>st</sup>. The Polish diplomat announced that a possible ceasefire cannot be one-sided. The Polish delegation also aimed at organising a plebiscite in the territories whose population voted for such a solution, as well as at giving a full right to decide their own fate to people living within the area between Poland and Russia.<sup>60</sup> At that time, on September 20–26, the

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<sup>59</sup> Ibidem, “Forhandlinger eller krig?”, *Aftenposten*, 9. Sep. 1920, p. 43, sig. 12, “Fredsforhandlingerne i Riga”, *Morgenbladet*, 18. Sep. 1920, p. 31; “De polsk-russiske forhandlinger”, *Aftenposten*, 18. Sep. 1920, p. 32.

<sup>60</sup> Ibidem, “Polens fredsvilkaar”, *Morgenbladet*, 21. Sep. 1920, p. 33; “Polens fremsætter moderate forslag paa fredskonferansen i Riga”, *Tiden Tegn*, 21 Sep. 1920, p. 35; *Aftenposten*, 21. Sep. 1920, p. 36.

Battle of Niemen, the last of the great battles of the Polish-Soviet war, was fought. As a result of the battle, the Red Army suffered a huge defeat, and the troops of the Western Front ceased to pose a threat to Poland, allowing Polish troops to march eastwards.<sup>61</sup> The Battle of Niemen is thought to have been decisive in the Polish-Soviet war.

The Soviet negotiation strategy caused the Riga negotiations to break down, which *Morgenbladet* reported on November 29<sup>th</sup>.<sup>62</sup> As late as January 22<sup>nd</sup>, *Morgenbladet* informed that Riga negotiations had advanced. Moreover, the two parties prepared the final texts discussing the sending of POWs back home and establishing the state borders. These two documents were practically ready, regardless of the basic treaty. Furthermore, a part of the treaty on the amnesty, rights of ethnic minorities, and mutual guarantees as regards political propaganda was drawn up. In the final days of the negotiations, it could be sensed that, unlike the previous November, the Bolsheviks had attempted to accelerate the signing of the treaty.<sup>63</sup>

The events accelerated. Accordingly, on March 17<sup>th</sup>, 1921, *Tidens Tegn* informed its readers that, a day before that date, Poland and Soviet Russia agreed to sign a peace treaty, the latter to be concluded in Riga on March 19<sup>th</sup>, 1921.<sup>64</sup> Eventually, the Polish-Soviet peace treaty was signed in Riga on March 18<sup>th</sup>, 1921. On the strength of this treaty, the Polish-Russian border was established. Additionally, Poland withdrew its recognition for URL, thus offering a significant part of Ukraine to Soviet Russia.

Yet another question for the Norwegian press to tackle as regards the Polish-Soviet conflict was Poland's attitude towards Ukraine and Byelorussia which demanded independence.

As late as September 1920, cooperation of Poles and Ukrainians was effective. At that time, Ukrainian and Polish troops together liberated East

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<sup>61</sup> J. Odziemkowski, *Bitwa nad Niemnem 20–29 IX 1920 r.*, in: *Bitwa niemeńska*, ed. U. Kraśnicka, K. Filipow, Białystok 2000, p. 43.

<sup>62</sup> AAN, Poselstwo RP w Oslo, sig. 11, "Et negativt resultat av forhandlingerne i Riga", *Morgenbladet*, 29. Sep. 1920, p. 46; "Den polsk-russiske fredstraktat ratificert av begge magter", *Tidens Tegn*, 29. Sep. 1920, p. 37.

<sup>63</sup> Ibidem, "Warschau 20de januar", *Morgenbladet*, 22. Jan. 1921, p. 57.

<sup>64</sup> Ibidem, "Polen og Rusland er nu kommet til enighet", *Tiden Tegn*, 17. Mar. 1921, p. 68; "Omsider enighed mellem Polen og Rusland", *Aftenposten*, 16. Mar. 1921, p. 69.

Galicia and occupied the entire left bank of the River Dniester; they also smashed the smaller Soviet forces. Moreover, the Ukrainian units which marched across Dniester towards Buchach pushed the Bolsheviks into a hasty retreat.<sup>65</sup> According to *Aftenposten* of September 3<sup>rd</sup>, in retreat after its defeat at Zamość, the army commanded by Budyonny was dispersed and retreated in chaos.<sup>66</sup>

Still, Poland's friendly attitude towards Ukraine's and Byelorussia's liberation transformed in the autumn. On November 17<sup>th</sup>, *Aftenposten* and *Morgenbladet* informed its readers that, on October 21<sup>st</sup>, the Polish command had ended all connection with the army of Petliura and Józef Bułak-Bałachowicz, who fought for Byelorussia's independence. The journals also reported on the announcement by the Polish army about disarming Byelorussian units should they enter the Polish territory. In this way, Polish aid for Petliura and Bułak-Bałachowicz was delayed,<sup>67</sup> a decision which translated itself into Poland's cutting herself off from the Ukrainian and Byelorussian question.

The Norwegian press raised the issue of Bolshevik crimes against civilians and Polish soldiers, especially in Chodorów, Czartkowice,<sup>68</sup> Smolensk and Minsk.<sup>69</sup> Such information is difficult to verify. It also reported a famine in the Białystok district, which is confirmed in academic literature.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Ibidem, sig. 12, *Tidens Tegn*, 2. Sep. 1920, p. 12.

<sup>66</sup> Ibidem, *Aftenposten*, 3. Sep. 1920, p. 14. Earlier, Budyonny's army raided Zamość and Hrubieszów. See. A. Smoliński, *1 Armia Konna podczas walk na polskim teatrze działań wojennych w 1920 roku. Organizacja, uzbrojenie, wyposażenie oraz wartość bojowa*, Toruń 2008, p. 429–430.

<sup>67</sup> AAN, Poselstwo RP w Oslo, sig. 12, "Polen tilbakeviser bolsjevikerens beskyldninger for at understøtte de kontrarevolutionære", *Aftenposten*, 17. Sep. 1920, p. 41; *Morgenbladet*, 17. Sep. 1920, p. 42.

<sup>68</sup> Ibidem, *Aftenposten*, 2. Aug. 1920, p. 19.

<sup>69</sup> Ibidem, "Hvordan bolsjevikerne behandler sine krigsfanger", *Tidens Tegn*, 31. Jan. 1921, p. 59.

<sup>70</sup> Ibidem, sig. 10, "Hungersnød i de besatte distrikter", *Morgenbladet*, 13. Aug. 1920, p. 38. Compare: J. Szczepański, *Spółczesność Polski w walce z najazdem bolszewickim 1920 roku*, Warszawa–Pułtusk 2000, p. 353–354.

## Conclusions

The material I have researched in this article confirms that the Norwegian press, as well as political parties associated with them, had difficulty in processing the superpowers' stand on Poland's situation during the Polish-Bolshevik conflict. Both Norwegian journalists and politicians agreed on the threat to Europe from the Bolsheviks and the revolution. They effectively interpreted England's and France's reluctance to militarily aid Poland (this opinion did not change even after the consultation with the French military advisors); they failed to explain the reasons for assuming such an attitude.

All the articles I have researched suggest that the Polish-Soviet war mattered for Norwegian politics and Norwegian public opinion yet in a broader European context and without considering the conflict's direct impact on Norway. What is more, it was emphasised that the Polish-Soviet war played a significant role in the further fate of Europe. In the event of the fall of Poland, far-reaching changes in European geopolitics were expected.

There were few differences in the Norwegian periodicals regarding the Polish-Soviet war. For example, the conservatives did not understand that both "White Forces" and "Red Forces" were enemies of the Poles. At first, they also believed (mainly in *Aftenposten*) that Poland would eventually succumb to Soviet Russia. Conservatives and liberals reported on the successes of Polish troops until May 1920. Liberals underlined, in August 1920, the demanding situation of Poland, not believing in the help of England. Social Democrats also stressed the need for aid to Poland. It is also characteristic that the attitude of all the Norwegian authors of the articles that were examined for the purposes of this article was unfavourable to the Bolsheviks and friendly to the Poles.