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## Cartographic sources on Finland in Polish documents prepared for the Paris Peace Conference

**Abstract.** The article reinstates an understanding of cartography far beyond that of a strictly geographical discipline, primarily concerned with the depiction of space in various aspects of societies. Using the example of several manuscript maps preserved in Polish documents left over from the Paris Conference, depicting the area of the Finnish state that was being established, the author illustrates the role of the map as a tool helping to shape the political entities of European societies and bringing to light various premises related to their threats or security, but also indicating development opportunities for these new state organisms. The author's subject is Finland, aspiring to be a state at the beginning of the twentieth century, seeking alliances and the support of closer and further neighbours. By discussing surviving (and lost) maps, the author adds to the knowledge of the involvement of Polish diplomats in Paris in Finnish affairs.

**Keywords:** Finland, Paris Peace Conference, history of cartography, manuscript maps, borders

### 1. Introduction

One of the consequences of the World War I was the creation of independent states in Europe: Czechoslovakia, Estonia, Finland, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, Lithuania, Latvia and Poland. Some of these countries have “regained” and some have “gained” their statehood. Thus, countries that had lost their independence in the past and countries that had not previously existed appeared on the map of Europe. Independence was gained by nations that had the opportunity under partitioned empires in the twentieth century to nurture nation-building processes and develop aspirations that resulted in having their own statehood (Zacharias, 2018). One example is Finland.

Some reflections on Poland's contribution to supporting the establishment of an independent Finland after the World War I were inspired by the manuscript maps attached to the “Poland and Finland” memorial and the maps

made for two other papers on the issue of the eastern border, which was also the western border of Russia. These cartographic and textual studies are linked by their author. They were created by Józef Ziabicki, officially a representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Finland and privately, as can be inferred from the texts analysed, an expert with an affinity for Finland.

The documents in question were found during research work on cartographic sources left over from the Paris Conference, narrowed down to matters relating to the shaping of Poland's borders. This work was carried out within the framework of the scientific grant entitled *Shaping the Borders of Independent Poland in the Light of Cartographic Documents*.<sup>1</sup> The study, which consisted of finding, organising and critically

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evaluating the maps produced for the conference, proved, among other things, how wide the range of activities of experts and interests of the politicians making up the official state delegations was. The results of the research were made available through the web application<sup>2</sup> and described in monographs (Konopska & Barwiński, 2021; Konopska et al., 2023a; Konopska et al., 2023b).

## 2. Maps during the peace conference – the genesis of the object of study

Cartographic sources, along with the memoranda and papers for which they were produced, are numerous and widely scattered. They demonstrate that the maps at the Paris Conference were an important tool during discussions and decision-making, and that many of them were used during behind-the-scenes discussions. The usefulness of maps in foreign policy in the context of a concluded event such as the Paris Conference is indisputable, and not only in terms of conveying geographical information, but above all as a tool of social communication and agitation. This is evidenced by the large number of surviving maps in European and American archives, covering all the countries affected by the new territorial layout.

The maps prepared for the Paris Conference depict, on the one hand, the various geographical spaces defined by the resurgent states as their former lands, which was intended to confirm the legitimacy of their territorial claims. On the other hand, they illustrated the spatial relations between existing or potential neighbours. The number of sources found and their state of preservation indicate that the map was a very helpful tool in the creation of national borders after the World War I.

Of the maps that have been recovered, many deserve the attention of historians of ideas and cartography, especially when combined with textual sources. The synergies of the maps and related texts (official documents or handwritten notes) raise new research questions, indicate areas not yet explored and sometimes call into question opinions established in the literature.

## 3. Description of maps and associated text documents

This article focuses on documents describing the multifaceted relationship between Poland and Finland that were found during the aforementioned searches in European and American archives. The maps that are the subject of the following consideration are kept in collections of the Archives of Modern Records in Warsaw (Archiwum Akt Nowych w Warszawie, Archiwum Ignacego Jana Paderewskiego, sign. 2/100/0/4.27/933) and Jozef Pilsudski Institute of America in New York (Adiutantura Generalna Naczelnego Wodza, sierpień – wrzesień 1919, wrzesień – listopad 1919).

### 3.1. Brief note on the author of the documents

The author of the documents in question is engineer Ziabicki (1871–1958), representative of the Regency Council of the Kingdom of Poland in Helsinki from 1 May to 1 December 1918 (Ceranka et al., 2022). The Regency Council, as the supreme authority of the Kingdom of Poland, established by an act of 5 November 1916, laid the foundations of Polish diplomacy and conducted foreign policy. One of its aims was to develop a concept for the future eastern border of the Polish state.

During the World War I, Ziabicki became actively involved in politics. His position in the international arena was reported to the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister Ottokar Czernin in April 1917 by MP Dionizy Szecheny writing about him as one of the party leaders, an influential person in the „Dziennik Piotrogradzki” (“Petrograd Journal”) and a serious industrialist, considered a decent man (Wrzosek, 1995). The observation of Ziabicki was due to the fact that, as a political activist and delegate of the Polish Supreme Democratic Committee (Polski Komitet Demokratyczny) in Russia, he took part in a meeting on the difficult situation of the Polish population in Russia, Ukraine and Finland, organised among Polish politicians in Stockholm on 28 December 1917 by Stanisław Wędkiewicz, a representative of the Supreme National Committee (Naczelny Komitet Narodowy) in Sweden. One of the resolutions of this meeting was to request the government of the Regency Council of the Kingdom of Po-

<sup>2</sup> The result of the work is available at: <http://granice.niepodleglej.edu.pl/>

land to appoint diplomatic representatives in Russia, Ukraine and Finland, Aleksander Lednicki in St Petersburg, Eugeniusz Starczewski in Kiev and Ziabicki in Helsinki (Bartoszewicz, 2018). He officially served as the delegate of the Polish government in Helsinki for a few months (i.e. until Poland regained its independence), but his relationship with Finland was much longer.

Ziabicki saw Finland as a natural political ally of Poland and perceived the possibility of Polish-Finnish cooperation in protecting the small nations of the Baltic Sea (Piechnik, 2017). Just how influential and popular a figure Ziabicki was in Polish-Finnish affairs can be gleaned from his memoirs about Mauritz Mexmontan (Dziennik Ostrowski, 1936; N.N., 1937), a friend of the Poles and close associate of Leopold Mechelin (1839–1914), leader of the Finnish opposition in the struggle for Finland's rights to autonomy (Szordykowska, 2004). The work initiated by Ziabicki was taken over from 1 December 1918 by Mikołaj Samson-Himmelstjerna, who in an interview given in August 1919 to the "Helsingin Sanomat" newspaper indicated as priorities of his mission the arrangement of economic affairs between Poland and Finland, the resolution of the situation of Polish refugees in Finland and the question of developing cooperation between Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Finland as a counter to Russian power politics (Nuorteva, 2023).

In the second decade of August 1919, Ziabicki, already the head of a section in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of independent Poland, sent a report from Finland to Warsaw in which he advocated the immediate convening of a conference of the Baltic States with Polish participation in order to prevent "the catastrophe that could be brought about by the association of German-Baltic-Russian forces in Courland..." (Juzwenko, 1969, p. 576). On the initiative of Finland, a Baltic Union conference was held in Helsinki on 15 January 1920, at which Poland was represented by Leon Wasilewski, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the aforementioned Samson-Himmelstjerna (Nuorteva, 2023).

### **3.2. Description of cartographic sources**

The documents presented were produced between April and September 1919 and, as mentioned earlier, their author is Ziabicki. Doc-

ument No. 1 can be seen as the forerunner of the other two, which were written around the same time, July–August 1919.

**Document No. 1:** The document, consisting of text and two maps, was produced on 24 April 1919. This is the original typescript of a memorial entitled "Finland and Poland" (Ziabicki, 1919, April 24), to which Ziabicki attached two handmade maps. It is evident from the preamble that the text, together with the maps, was originally conceived as an introduction to a larger study, but because of the newly established states "in the north", forming, like Poland, "a front against Russia and Bolshevism", Ziabicki decided to present it in this form "for the information of authoritative factors". He signs the document by hand as "former Polish representative in Finland".

In the first part of the document, Ziabicki justifies the commonality of interests between Poland and Finland, emphasising, *inter alia*, the long-standing struggle against Russification, the tendency, dominant since the beginning of the World War I, to break away from Russia and create an independent state, the aspiration to integrate territories according to the ethnic rationale, and similar perceptions of matters relating to the system of an independent state. He saw no contradiction in the interests of the new states, with different political concepts for the further functioning of central Europe, as he wrote "from the Glacial Ocean to the Mediterranean". Although he attributed a more prominent role to Poland than to Finland in each of his concepts.

The first map, titled "Finland and Poland I" ("Finlandia i Polska I", Figure 1), was drawn up in April 1919. On it, he depicted the pre-war and ethnographic national borders and the western border of Russia, "drawn on ethnographic principles with the incorporation of the Catholic parts of Belarus and Eastern Galicia with Lviv into Poland". He developed this map in opposition to W. Wilson's principles, which, according to him, only work in areas that are ethnically homogeneous. In mixed-nationality areas, according to Ziabicki, one cannot use only ethnographic maps or plebiscites; especially in the case of new states, the economic aspect of the lands allocated to them is important. Commenting on the map, he wrote of the small nations detached from or neighbouring Russia that "they must, for the time being, in order to

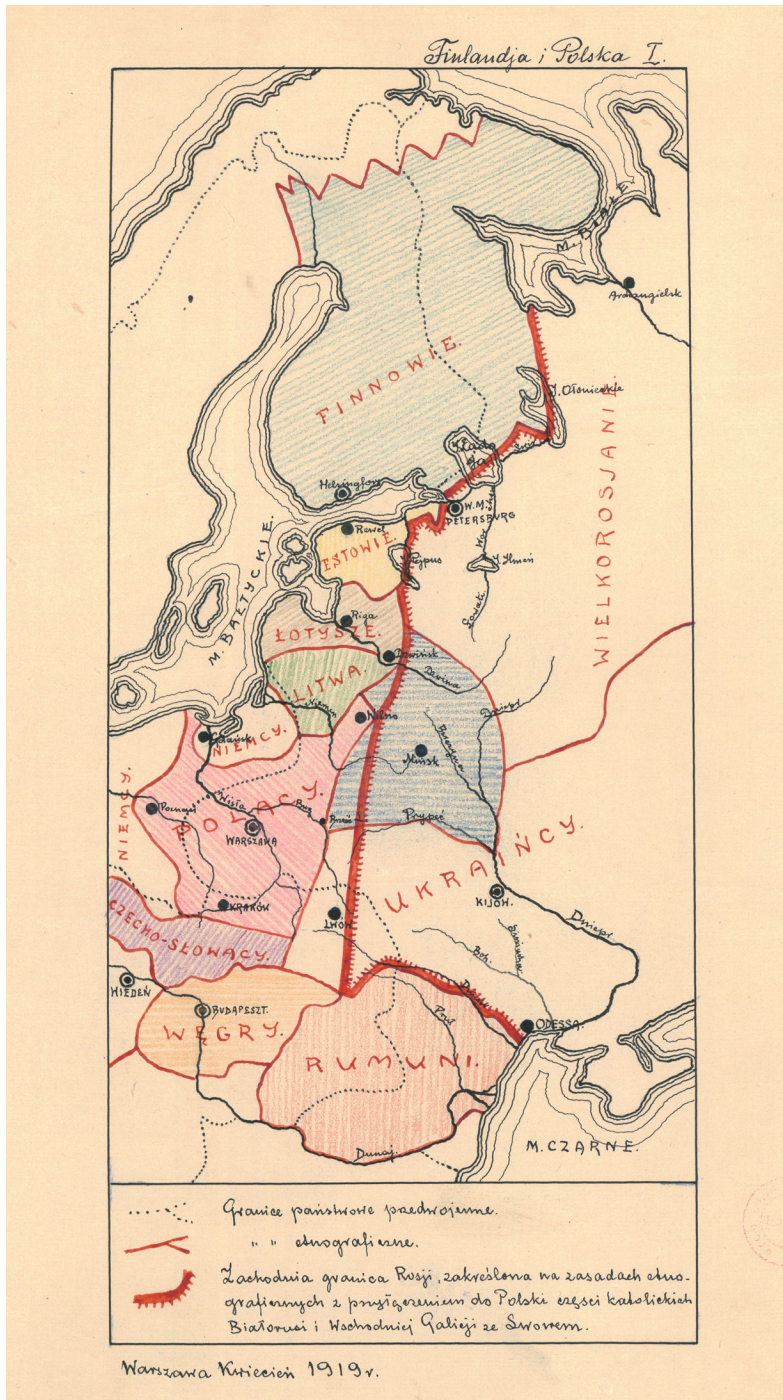


Figure 1. "Finlandia i Polska I" by Ziabicki (1919, April 24). The first appendix to the "Finland and Poland" memorial (Archives of Modern Records in Warsaw, sign. 2/100/0/4.27/933, k. 18)

strengthen their statehood and independent economic existence, or possibly to federate into a resistant complex, require the Russian border to be moved further east ...”.

The second map, entitled “Finland and Poland II” (“Finlandia i Polska II”, Figure 2) was also produced in April 1919. Like “Finland and Poland I”, the map shows the pre-war political and ethnographic borders. The main content of the map is the anti-Russian front line separating the areas of temporary occupation from Russia and St Petersburg, which remains with Russia. In a commentary on the map, Ziabicki wrote about the border drawn on the Dnieper as a natural ally of the Finland-Poland alliance. In addition to the common political interest, he strongly emphasised the economic aspect. He saw Finland as an exporter of timber, pulp, granite, gravel, fish and tar, as well as butter and artificial nitrogen fertilisers. On the other hand, he viewed Poland as an exporter to Finland of coal and food products such as sugar and its products and fruit products. Ziabicki’s argument on the complementary characters of Poles and Finns is also interesting. He saw value in combining Finnish strength of character, perseverance and stubbornness with the Polish people’s resourcefulness, sensitivity and national enthusiasm. The memorial concludes with a rather obvious statement for the moment when the maps were drawn up, that so far the priority is the obvious commonality of political and military interests between the two countries.

**Document No. 2:** The document with the three maps classified “strictly confidential” was written on 26 and 30 July 1919. Part one of the document containing extensive comments on the maps was written in Helsinki, and part two was written in Stockholm. A document in the form of a paper prepared for the Minister of Foreign Affairs by Ziabicki (already as head of a section in that Ministry) under the influence of a trip to the borderland states made in July 1919. The aforementioned maps, commented on in the second part of the document entitled “The agreed policy of the Border States”, unfortunately, have not survived. The first page of the document, which shows the addressee and table of contents, bears the handwritten annotation “M.S.Z [Foreign Ministry] did not send maps” (Ziabicki, 1919, July a).

The document in question contains 30 typed pages, five of which are taken up by the map

commentary. It shows that map one depicted the geopolitical situation of the states in the Baltic zone in two contexts, which the author elaborates further. In the first case, it was to illustrate the geographical position of the Baltic states and thus make them aware of the danger in the event of a possible alliance between Russia and Germany. In the second case, the map was intended to draw attention to the geographical distribution of the newly emerging states on the territory of the former Russian Empire, which, according to Ziabicki, sufficiently confirmed the desirability of convening a conference of such countries. It probably refers to the Baltic conference convened in Helsinki on the initiative of Finland on 15 January 1920. In his commentary on the map, Ziabicki writes about the Finnish ministry’s positive attitude to the idea of a conference, conditioning its participation, however, on Poland’s participation.

In the following commentary on the map, Ziabicki describes Finland’s official policy as ententophilic, emphasising the loyalty of the government and society to the Allies, but also draws attention to internal Germanophilic sentiments. He goes on to analyse Finland’s economic situation, which he does not assess very well, writing about its negative trade balance, the depreciation of the Finnish mark on state exchanges and the resulting high prices. He also mentions the quiet economic war between Finland and France, Italy and Spain in relation to the law passed by the Finnish Parliament to ban the import of wine into Finland.

In his commentary on the second map, Ziabicki continues the theme of the conference by focusing on the importance of the participation of Belarus and Ukraine.

The third map has the most extensive description, the likely title of it being “The Bolshevik Front” (“Bolszewicki front”). It shows that the main element of the content was the front line with the Bolsheviks with the Russians marked in its northern section. Ziabicki comments on the situation, attributing the reasons for the Russians’ defeat to the faulty organisation and a lack of ideological cohesion. He probably marked the locations of Estonian troops near Narva, behind Russian lines.

The fourth part of the document discusses the representations of the Polish state in the “Baltic” countries and in Finland, to which he devotes separate attention, considering it to





Figure 2. "Finlandia i Polska II" by Ziabicki (1919, April 24). The second appendix to the "Finland and Poland" memorial (Archives of Modern Records in Warsaw, sign. 2/100/0/4.27/933, k. 20)

be the best organised country among those newly established on the borderlands of the Russian Empire. The paper concludes, among other things, with a postulate on the issue of Finnish diplomatic representation in Warsaw.

**Document No. 3:** The document “On the eastern borders. A memorial /with 2 maps/” („W sprawie granic wschodnich. Memoriał /z 2 mapami/”) with the classification “confidential” was created on 15 September 1919 in Warsaw and is kept at the Jozef Pilsudski Institute in New York. It is a continuation of the commentary on the political situation in Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Belarus, Poland and Ukraine. Ziabicki refers here again to the proposal to convene a conference of the above-mentioned countries. It shows that Józef Piłsudski, the Chief of the Polish State, also was supportive of this concept.

The two maps attached to the document illustrate the attempt to resolve the issue of Russia’s western border and Poland’s eastern border. The first map depicts the situation after the successful agreement of the borderland states and Poland in the role of the party influencing the Entente (Figure 3). The second one shows the case where Poland adopts a passive stance and does not get involved in international politics (Figure 4). The broad commentary has a form of a political-military analysis of the entire area that fell within the scope of both maps.

**Document No. 4:** A manuscript document classified as “confidential”, together with a map entitled “Results of the trip of the undersigned Head of Section of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ziabicki to Finland via Estonia and Latvia to Scandinavia in July and August of this year...” (“Wyniki podróży niżej podpisanego szefa sekcji ministerstwa spraw zagranicznych Józefa Ziabickiego do Finlandii przez Estonię i Łotwę do Skandynawii w lipcu i sierpniu r.b. (...”). The letter was dated September 1919 and reached Piłsudski on 9 October (Ziabicki, 1919, September 21). The document consists of nine parts, which are commentaries on current issues related to the independence aspirations of Finland and the other Baltic states. The author of the letter comments extensively on the independence aspirations of Finland and all countries between Poland and Finland (pointing to Lithuania as the least involved compared to the other countries).

Attached to Document No. 4, as mentioned above, is a map (Ziabicki, 1919, July b) to which the author does not refer explicitly in the text, as he did with the earlier documents. The content of the map indicates that it probably forms a set with Document 2. I base this conclusion on the high correspondence between the content of the map and the commentary on the third map. The main content of the map is the front line in early July, with the distribution of Russians, Estonians, Latvians, Lithuanians and Poles, and the areas of German occupation and Bałachowicz’s operations. A note on the map reads: “Report by Ziabicki from travels VII – VIII. 19.” (“Sprawozdanie J. Ziabickiego z podróży VII – VIII. 19.”, Figure 5).

#### 4. Conclusions

Finland and the other Baltic states emerging from the former territory of the Russian monarchy occupied much of the attention of Polish diplomacy. It treated them as a buffer separating Poland from Russia. The political situation in which Finland and Poland were at the turn of the first and second decades of the 20th century was regarded by Polish diplomacy as analogous. In this context, the emergence of studies on Finland and Poland is fully understandable. The documents presented in the article are among several that were found during the research work mentioned in the introduction. Their uniqueness is evident from the accompanying maps. It is worth appreciating and recognising at this point that map awareness among early 20th century diplomats is exceptional. This is evidenced not only by the large number of maps produced, but also by the commentaries on them, written by the authors, which in each case serve as in-depth analyses.

The manuscript maps attached to the textual documents produced for the Paris Conference are therefore very valuable multifaceted research material, e.g.: in the mental layer – in the study of the map’s role in foreign, social and agitational politics; in the informational layer – in the study of political views and sentiments; and in the executive layer. Maps accompanying unprinted documents were most often made by hand by the authors of the texts, as in the cases discussed above. The authors were undoubtedly aided in the preparation of the maps by the calligraphy and hand-drawing education of the time.

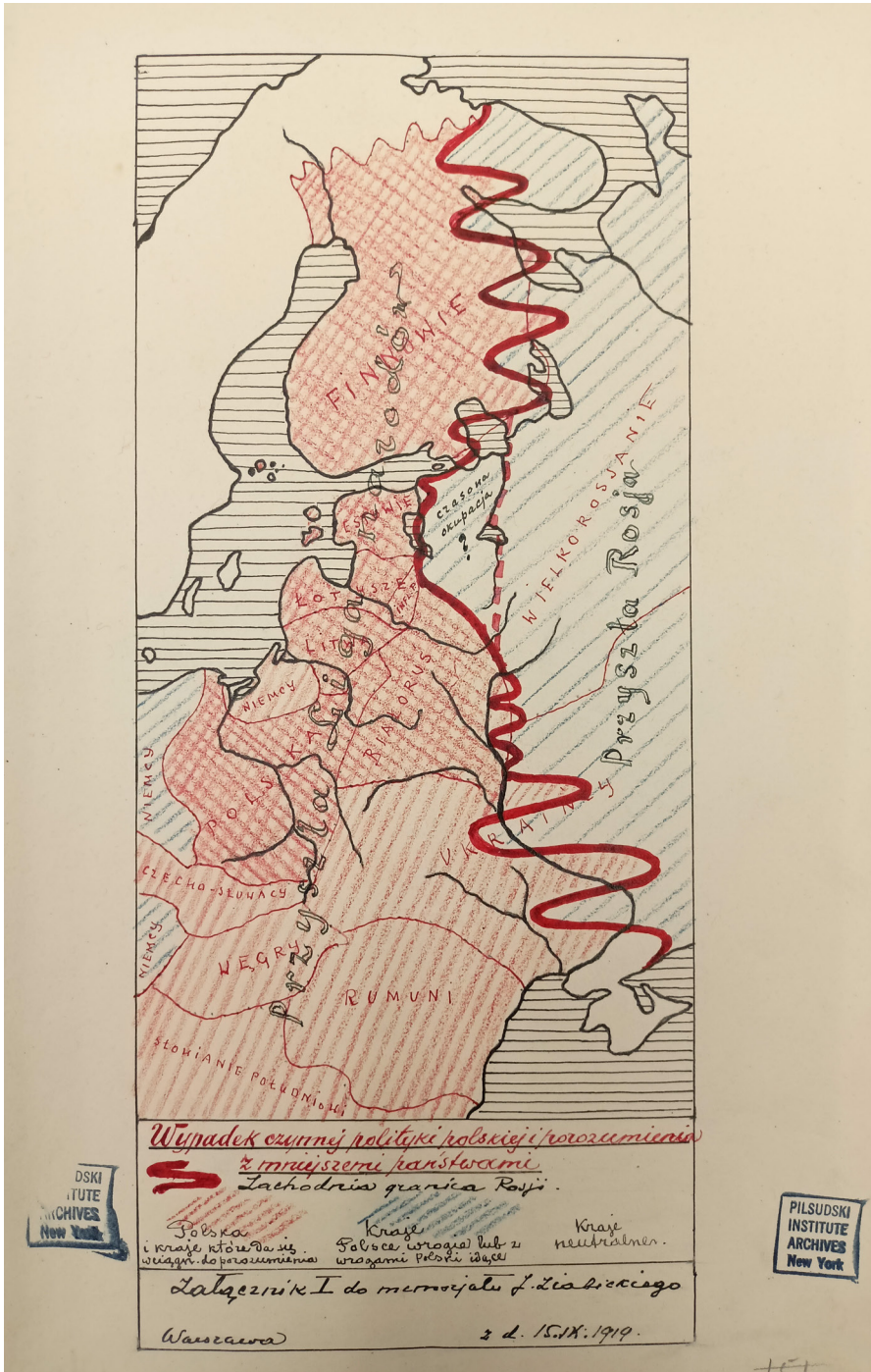


Figure 3. "The case of active Polish policy and agreement with smaller countries" ("Wypadek czynnej polityki polskiej w porozumienia z mniejszymi państwami"). The first appendix to the memorial (1919, September 15, Jozef Pilsudski Institute of America in New York, sign. 701/2/19, pp. 318)



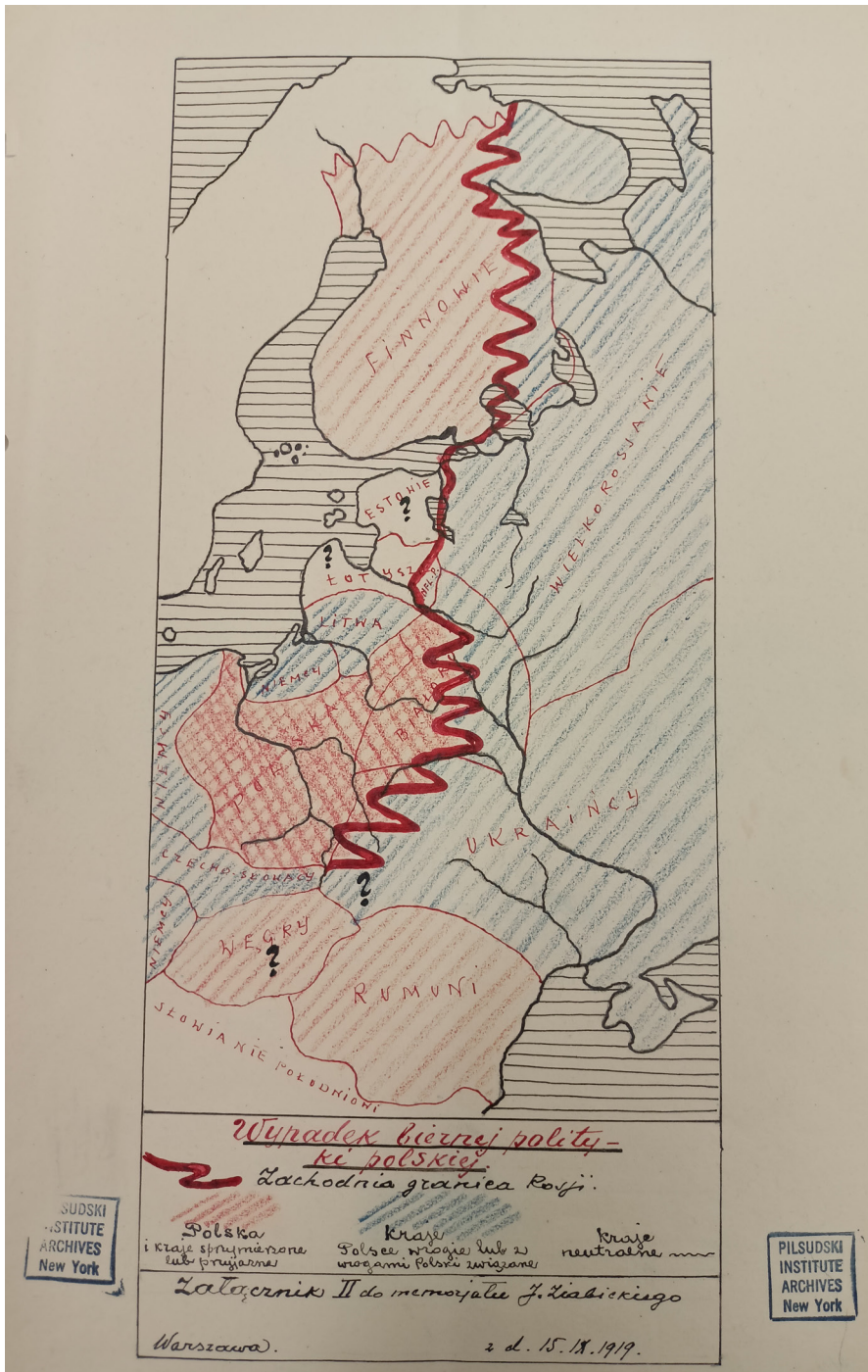


Figure 4. “The case of passive Polish politics” (“Wypadek biernej polityki polskiej”). The second appendix to the memorial (1919, September 15, Jozef Pilsudski Institute of America in New York, sign. 701/2/19, pp. 319)

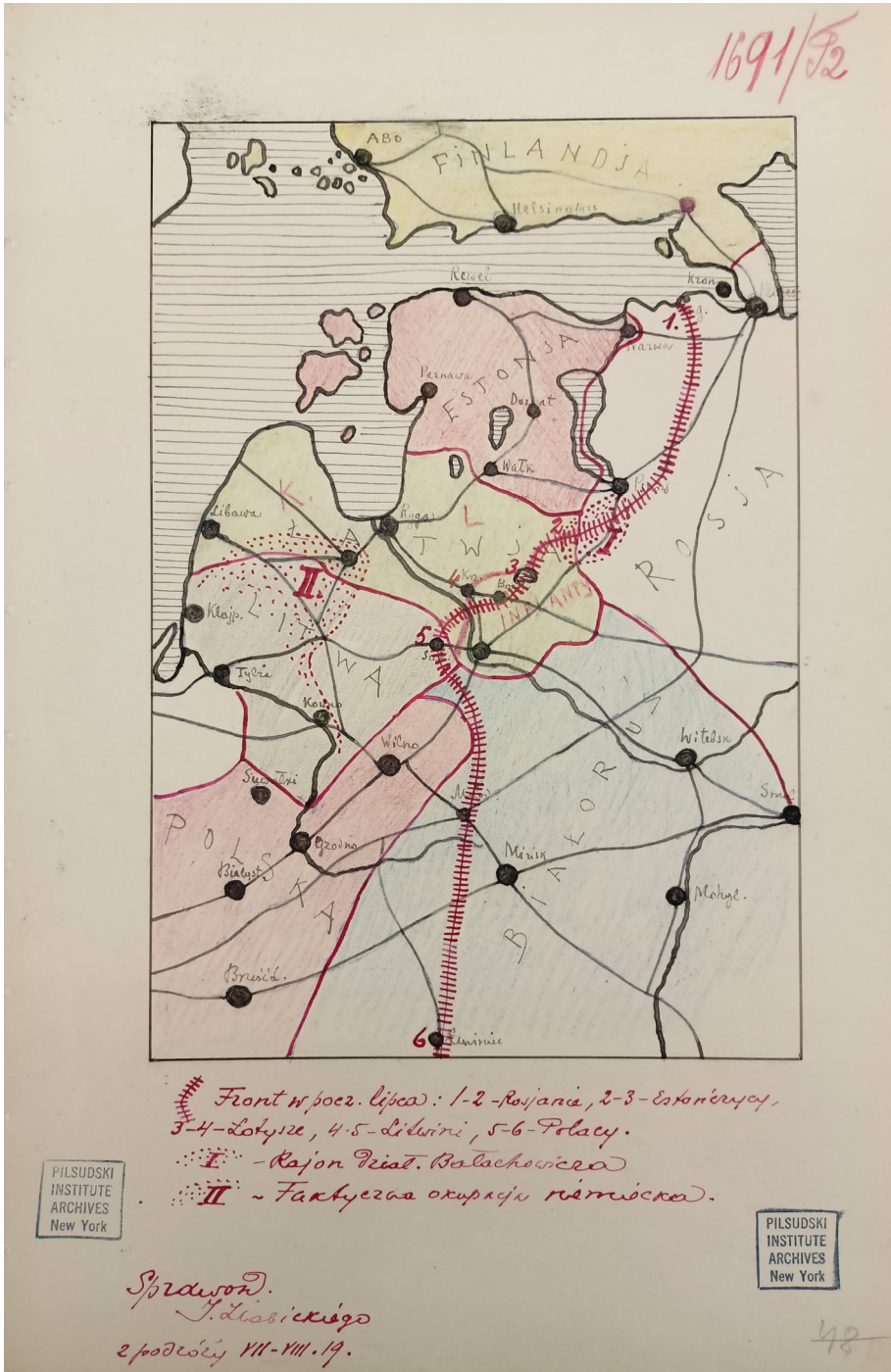


Figure 5. Untitled map showing the war front in early July 1919 (Ziabiński, July b, Jozef Pilsudski Institute of America in New York, sign. 701/2/20, pp. 185)

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