

Before further voices of dissent from Western, Polish and Ukrainian politicians could be raised, military operations started. Obviously Piłsudski had made his preparations for an offensive before the Polish-Ukrainian Agreement was signed. He could do this after Petlura, in December 1919, had accepted the proposed Polish-Ukrainian frontiers on the River Zbrucz, as this was the most important issue of the negotiations.

Piłsudski's Kiev offensive has been described so many times that it is not necessary to do so again, but it is essential to remember what forces each side had at their disposal on 25 April 1920, when the attack began. The figures below, based on several sources, are not certain. The two sides calculated differently.

On the Bolshevik side there were two armies: XII to the South of the River Pryped and XIV further South. Altogether the Bolsheviks mustered several infantry divisions and one cavalry division. According to Soviet sources the total number of soldiers was about 83 000, but only 28 000 were prepared for combat.<sup>27</sup> It is certain that these figures are an underestimation.

On the Polish side there were three armies: II (General Antoni Listowski, III (General Edward Śmigły-Rydz) and VI (General Wacław Iwaszkiewicz). The Poles deployed a total of nine infantry divisions and one and a half cavalry divisions. Marian Kukiel in his definitive work, *Dzieje Polski Porozbiorowe, 1795-1921*, writes that the Poles had about 300 000 soldiers, but perhaps this number reflected men in Polish uniforms. Piłsudski's *Rok 1920* states categorically that the strength of the divisions was 50 per cent lower than given in the reports. On the Polish side there were perhaps 150 000 fighting men and even these figures are problematic.<sup>28</sup>

The Ukrainians under Polish command had two infantry divisions: 2nd (General Oleksander Udowychenko) and 6th (General Mariko Bezruczko). They had been formed from Ukrainian prisoners of war taken in the fighting with the Ukrainian National Republic and from volunteers. These forces amounted to 556 officers and 3348 soldiers. To this force must be added General Mychailo Pavlenko's formations, which, after his famous 'winter march' behind Bolshevik lines, still had about 6000 soldiers. In the spring of 1920 his force reached the region of Mohylew.<sup>29</sup> His units would eventually be brought up to strength by volunteers on their entering East Ukraine.

During the Kiev offensive Piłsudski issued a Proclamation to the Citizens of the Ukraine:

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