The Polish Conspiracy?

BY

H W HENDERSON

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Polish Conspiracy ?

By H W HENDERSON

UNDER the title Polish Conspiracy a pamphlet has been published recently by the 'Russia To day The author is Mr G Audit The name Society sounds respectable but the contents of this booklet require a careful audit indeed We shall show by evidence of an unanswerable character that its entries apply to nonexistent transactions while existent ones have been omitted First of all let us 'ask the question-Who is interested in charging an Allied Government with being in conspiracy with the enemy? And that at a time when the Buitish Foreign Secretary appeals for the employment of discretion Russo Polish question and when the Polish the on Government and the Polish Press complying with this appeal confine themselves to necessary replies when Not content with his accusation of treachery attacked against the Polish Government Mr Audit has the temerity to demand that ' the press facilities granted to the Poles should be withdrawn In other words in London he not only claims the right to make the most serious charges of treason to the Allied cause against the Polish Government but is desirous of preventing the accused from making any reply ! Fortunately, we are hving in a country where the accused is never denied the right to defend himself, though Mr Audit would appear to have been reared on different principles He demands that 'the people of Britain should stand solidly with the Soviet Union

against the Nazi Polish plotters" In other words, he wishes so to arouse public opinion against the Polish cause that the British Government will take sides against the Polish Government One breach in the Allied camp is not enough for Mr Audit he demands another Would not Dr Goebbels gladly give his blessing to such a prospect? It would be easy in the circumstances—using Mr Audit s own methods of controversy—to charge him with conspiracy with the enemy !

Let us summarise Mr Audit's accusations against the Polish Government They are as follows —

I That the Polish Government tries to 'extort territorial concessions from the Soviet Union It started in agitation for the settlement of its claims to the Western Ukraine and Western Bialorussia, territories 'filched by Poland in 1920 and 'restored by the Soviets in 1939 when the Polish Government fled from Poland, leaving their country undefended against the Nazi hordes "

2 That Polish elements headed the campaign concerning the two leaders of the Jewish Socialists in Poland, deported to and shot in Russia and the Polish National Council drew the attention of the Government to the fate of thousands of Polish citizens deported to the depths of Russia, concerning whom the Soviet authorities [it is stated] have not yet given sufficient explanation

3 That the Polish Government in its appeal to the Red Cross in Geneva, accused the Soviets of having murdered the Polish officers in Katyn,—and this fact has resulted in the breach in Polish Soviet relations

4 That the campaign in the Katyn affair has been nothing but a preparation for the Spanish peace offensive and squared with the appeal of Dr Goebbels for a fight against the Soviet Union in defence of European culture

5 That Mr Vyshinski, the Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, has given a detailed statement concerning espionage activities by Polish diplomats in the USSR

6 That the Polish Government does not represent the nation since it is composed of Polish Junker Landlords

7 That the Polish forces organised among the Polish prisoners of war in Russia, and freed, remained for months in inactivity instead of going to the Russian front

Such are Mr Audit's charges Let us examine them in detail It will be seen that not a single one of them will stand a moment s serious investigation

The false entries in Mr Audit's book are at once apparent On the debit side he places the 'filching പ്പ territory by Poland in 1920 and on the credit side the restoring of this territory by the Soviet in 1939 And so the account is squared But an auditor of Mr Audit s book seeking an explanation of these transactions would discover a number of amazing things Mr Audit would have to explain to him (he does not explain it to his readers ') that the territory in question belonged for centuries to Poland, until in fact, the partition of that country at the end of the 18th century Eastern Galicia, comprising about 35 per cent of this territory, never belonged to Russia at all, but constituted the Austrian part of Poland during the partition period The rest belonged to Russia only by virtue of the partition agreement (concluded between Russia, Prussia and Austria), an agreement expressly condemned by Lenin and nullified by the Soviet Government in its decree of 24th August, 1918 The same Government declared on 28th January 1920, during the war against Poland that the Soviet Army would never go beyond a determined line of rivers situated far to the east of the present Riga frontier (The Red book a collection of diplomatic documents regarding the relations between Russia and Poland 1918 1920 Moscow, 1920) The Treaty of Riga, determining the frontier between the USSR and Poland states (Article 2) — The contracting parties according to the principle of self determination of the nations recognise the independence of the Ukraine and Bylorussia

This Riga frontier was recognised by the Great Powers among them Great Britain in 1923 Not only was it never questioned by the Soviet Government it was expressly acknowledged several times, the last time three years before the present war On 25th July 1932 a Pact of Non-Aggression was signed between Poland and the Soviet Union by the terms of which it was agreed that any act of violence attacking the integrity or inviolability of the territory of the contracting party shall be regarded as contrary to the undertakings contained in the present On 31d Ju y, 1933, the Soviet Government signed article with Poland a special convention in London Article III of this Agreement reads -The High Contracting Parties declare that no act of aggression can be justified on the following grounds among others The internal condition of a State On 5th May, 1934 the Soviet Government prolonged for a space of eleven years the Pact of Non-Aggression signed on 25th July, 1932 Five years afterwards on 17th September 1939, while the Polish Forces desperately defended their country, while the Polish Government were still on Polish soil the Soviet Troops The excuse given by M Molotov in his invaded Poland note to the Polish Ambassador in Moscow on 17th September, 1939, was that "the Polish Government has disintegrated " A few weeks afterwards the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact regarding the partition of Poland between the USSR and Germany was harmoniously signed

Mr Audit contends that Poland was undefended 'in 1939 Short though the campaign was, the heroic struggle of the Polish Army against the crushing superiority of the Nazi hordes will not be easily forgotten by her Allies It gave the Allies eight precious months in which to prepare defences and to profit by the experiences of the Polish campaign in which the dreaded Blitzkneg was for the first time employed on a considerable scale The attack from the East rendered further struggle futile, yet Mr Audit lays the blame entirely upon the Polish Government '

In spite of her terrible experiences in the past the Polish Government, in 1941 when Russia was attacked by Germany, gave a splendid example of understanding in the common cause by concluding with the USSR an agreement in which the latter nullified the Ribbentrop Molotov Pact of 1939 It goes without saying that by this nullification the previous legal position was restored that is to say the position existing at the signing of the Riga Treaty But in February, 1943, Mr Korneitchuk, the present high dignitary of the Soviet Government, published in the official Soviet organ Pravda an article declaring that the territory invaded by the Soviets in 1939 belongs to them ! It must be strongly emphasised that never before had either the Polish Government or the Polish official Press dealt with the problem of the Soviet Polish frontiers And now the ingenious Mr Audit charges the Polish Government (which had maintained complete silence on the matter up till then) with having started the agitation for the settlement of its claims to the Western Ukraine and Western Bylorussia ' After the statement of Mr Korneitchuk and the great publicity given to it on the wireless and in the British Press the plain duty of the Polish Government was to do what any other responsible Administration would have done in similar circumstances, namely, to explain its standpoint And in doing so it made reference only to its legal claim to recognised Polish territory—territory which had previously been acknowledged to belong to Poland by Russia and the principal European Powers This is what Mr Audit calls the start of an agitation ' To such a despetate pass is he driven in his attempts to blacken the name of Poland

Mr Audit has rendered a very bad service to the 2 Soviets in raising the matter of Erlich and Alter the two Jewish Socialists from Poland who were shot in the USSR after having been deported by the invading Soviet Forces as well as the matter of more than a million Polish citizens also deported to Russia after 1939 invasion the Mr Audit claims that the two Bundists (Bund is the Jewish Socialist shot Polish Party in Poland) were would be quislings who acted in favour of a separate peace ' Numerous docu-ments relating to this matter have been published in The Case of H Erlich and V Alter issued by the Jewish Socialist Party In a preface to it Mr Camille Huysmans outstanding leader of the Labour and Socialist International, says with reference to the writers - They do possess the proofs of then (Enlich's and Alter s) innocence, and the reader will find them in the pamphlet The reasons given for the execution are unworthy They are more They are stupid Before it was known that they were shot men like Mr Green (President of the American Federation of Labour), Professor Einstein Raymond Gram Swing Mr Murray (President of the Congress of Industrial Organizations), and other outstanding representatives of Liberal and Democratic thought sent an appeal to M Molotov asking

for the release of Erlich and Alter This request was supported by Mr Wendell Willkie personally (New York Post 30th March, 1943) But by then they had already been executed On 30th March, 1943 a great memorial meeting was held in America to pay tribute to the martyrs and to protest against their execution It was attended by 3,500 Trade Union delegates The London Times of 1st April, 1943 reported Among the speakers were the Mayor of New York Mr La Guardia and Mr Green Some of the speakers characterised the charges against the men as cynical fabrications However they reaffirmed the determination of American Labour and the American people to aid Soviet Russia to the utmost in the war Α protest against this murder was published on 12th March, 1943, by the leaders of the British Labour Party, Belgian Labour Party Czechoslovak Social Democratic Labour Party, French Socialist Party, Norwegian Labour Party, and the Jewish Labour Party Mr Audit claims that there are Polish elements leading this campaign Does he think that the representatives and leaders of the international Labour Movement are led by Poles? Or that those men, representing the workers whose hands create an indispensable flow of weapons of war for Russia are also to be regarded as pro Fascist elements? As for the well known fact that after the invasion of Poland, the Soviet authorities deported more than a million Polish men and women (including old people and children) under horrible conditions to the Soviet Union Mr Audit does not even try to deny it But he is indignant with the Polish National Council for raising doubts as to their fate! According to Mr Audit's reasoning the Poles have no right to interest themselves in the fate of their unfortunate compatriots driven with violence into the depths of Siberia Does he approve of Hitler's view that they are a race of slaves unworthy of the treatment due to human beings ?

Considerable space is devoted in Mi Audit's pamphlet to the alleged discovery by the Germans of the graves of Polish officers in Katyn and to the appeal of the Polish Ministry of National Defence to the International Red Cross for an investigation of the matter-an appeal which Mr Audit links with Dr Goebbels propaganda efforts Let us examine the bare facts contained in the Polish Government s statement on this matter, facts which must be accepted as true since they have at no time been denied by the Soviet Government According to the Polish Govern ment s statement several thousand officers and men, taken prisoners in Poland, found themselves in three prison camps After the Polish Soviet Pact in 1941 and during the organisation of the Polish Forces in the USSR only a few hundred of them could be accounted for The Polish Ambassador in Moscow the commander of the Polish Forces in the USSR and General Sikorski when in Russia made repeated requests to the Soviet authorities for information as to the whereabouts of the missing men These inquiries began in October 1941 that is to say a year and a half before the German claim about the Katyn discovery The Soviet authorities had but one answer to the repeated inquiries of the Polish representatives it was that the prisoners had all been released (though it was impossible to find them) Yet after the alleged discovery of the graves the Soviet authorities stated that they were sent by them to fortification works near Smolensk, captured by the Germans in the course of the Soviet retreat, and probably murdered by the Germans themselves It is at least, permissible to ask why this explanation was not given hefore

Over the graves of these unfortunate people (several shousand in number) arose a clamour German propaganda hypocrisy on one hand, the Soviet replies on the other But one fact remained unchanged Several thousand men

had disappeared in mysterious circumstances and their families were anxious to find out whether, among the victims of Katyn were their fathers, their brothers, or The Government's sacred duty was to give the their sons utmost possible information To address the Soviet Government was useless. It had been done before without The Germans claimed that there was a possibility result of identifying the bodies The only institution entitled, under International Law to investigate on enemy territory, is the International Red Cross It was only natural to approach this institution A similar investigation was requested by Great Britain in regard to Shanghai and Hong Kong But in his request to the Red Cross the Polish Minister of National Defence emphasised that the Polish Government did not believe the German propaganda, though it found it necessary to investigate the facts In the request he said We have been accustomed to the lies of German propaganda and understood the purpose of its The Germans asserted that the Polish recent revelations prisoners had been murdered by the Soviet authorities and claimed that they could prove their case In the interests of all concerned it was obviously desirable to clear the matter up one way or another The question whether this request was right or wrong whether the investigation could be successful or not, may admit of some dispute But here it is irrelevant. The point is that Mr Audit, quoting the Russian paper Pravda states that the Polish request cannot be regarded as anything but direct and open support of the Hitlerite provocateurs in the fabrication of their foul inventions And this is not his first attempt at falsifying truth by omitting the Polish statement which characterised the German propaganda to which they were accustomed in the past as lies

The day after the Soviet Government took offence at Poland's perfectly reasonable request and broke off diplomatic relations with the Polish Government the latter intimated that it now considered the request to have lapsed, an action which was further proof of the Polish Governments desire to remove any grounds of disharmony One has only to consider between the Allied Nations what the Poles have suffered from the disruption of their country and the martyrdom of their people (thousands of whom are buried in nameless graves or wandering as exiles in the depths of Russia) to appreciate the magnanimity of the Polish efforts to prevent a further breach Yet Mr Audit calmly informs his readers that the Polish Government 'neither retracted its invitation to the International Red Cross nor withdrew the slanderous implications of this request

The only evidence adduced by Mr Audit in sub-4 stantiation of his statement that a connection exists between the Polish Government on the one hand and German propaganda and the Spanish peace offensive on the other, consists in the fact that the Polish request to the International Red Cross was coincident with these activities As to the Spanish peace offensive it is clear that, had it taken place before the request Mr Audit could have said and certainly would have done so, that the request was in support of the Spanish step Had the latter been made after the request it would have been possible to pretend that it was a preparation for the Spanish peace offensive With regard to the German propaganda campaign Mr Audit conveniently overlooks the fact that long before the Polish request to the International Red Cross, Goebbels repeatedly employed the argument that Soviet Imperialism constituted a serious danger to the nations of Europe Mr Korneitchuks speech and the Press and Radio campaign in the USSR for the annexation of half of Poland coming as it did after the absorption of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia by the Soviet Union, provided a god sent opportunity for the German Propaganda Ministiy Goebbels had an easy triumph, but was this the fault of Poland? It requires 3 good deal of mental dishonesty to represent the Polish Government as collaborators with the Nazis when the latter constantly refer to it contemptuously as the Emigre Government a term employed by Mr Audit also in his attack upon the Polish Administration Using his own illogical method of accusation Mr Audit should now charge himself with collaborating with the German Government in attacking Poland 1

Mr Audit claims that Mr Vyshynski provided a 5 detailed account of espionage activities by Polish diplomats Before us we have the full text of this statein Russia ment given on the 6th of May 1943 to representatives of the British and American Press It is full of recrimination of the worst kind but contains not a shred of evidence The one and only proof is a letter said to have been dispatched by a Polish Embassy official to a Delegate sent to Alma Ata in the Soviet Union for the purpose of buying articles required by Polish citizens deported to the USSR His duty was, in accordance with the terms of the Soviet-Polish Agreement to see to their welfare The sentence quoted from the letter in question by Mr Vyshynski reads as follows - You are entitled to make purchases of more valuable articles in the most careful secret way To anyone who reads it without bias the meaning of this is perfectly clear It conveys to the Polish representative the information that carefulness and secrecy must be preserved in making more expensive purchases so that as in all normal purchases of this kind, a rise in prices due to an increased demand may be avoided But what on earth has this, the one and only piece of evidence produced, to do with espionage activities? No wonder the London Times, in an article quoted by Mr Audit in his pumphlet described it is regrettable that a subordinate

(Mr Vyshynski) should have undone the good impression created by Stalin's May Day Order of the Day

In the opinion of Mr Audit the Polish Government 6 does not represent the Polish Nation The latter is represented he contends, by Mme Wasilewska. famous Polish writer, Deputy to the Supreme Soviet and President of the Union of Polish Patriots in the Soviet This lady, famous only in Russia where she Union received a well paid literary prize, is the wife of the famous' Mr Korneitchuk, the gentleman who started the unfortunate frontier dispute She and her unknown Polish Patriots have organised in the USSR a Polish Division independent of the Polish Government which they do not recognise. It is interesting to note that, at the same time, there are Russian prisoners of war in Germany who call themselves Russian patriots and are organised under General Wlassov We mention this in order to demonstrate how similar are the methods of propaganda used by different Powers It is quite under standable that these Polish 'patriots do not recognise the Polish Government, but fortunately the Russian Government does even when it intimates the breaking of relations with it For let it not be forgotten that the note respecting this matter was handed over to the representative of the Polish Government and that it was with this alleged "non representative Government that the USSR con cluded the Pact of 1941 It is surely somewhat late in the day to contend that this hitherto accepted and acknowledged body, the Pohsh Government has no authority to speak for Poland Mr Audit regards the Polish Government as Polish Junker Landlords in spite of the fact that not one member of the Polish Government is a landlord nor a representative of the landlord class, nor does Mr Audit attempt to name a single individual who is The Polish Government represents exclusively workers,

peasants, and the middle class

7 With regard to the position of the Polish Army organised in Russia it is only necessary to refer to the statement issued by the Polish Foreign Ministry on 6th May to see the falsity of Mr Audit s charges The Polish statement read as follows — In August, 1942, the Soviet Government unilaterally took the decision concerning the evacuation of the Polish Army from the territory of the USSR and carried out this decision by agreement with the British Government These Polish Forces having now received adequate arms and equipment, are passing through the final strige of training and will soon take part in the fighting The truth of this statement was not denied by the Soviet Government It is sheer impertinence on Mr Audits part to attempt to decide when and where this army now under British Chief Command, should be used for operations of a military character

Having dealt with Mr Audit's principal arguments and shown their falsity, one by one, let us try to analyse the method of propaganda which he and those associated with him use in their attempt to discredit Polund It consists of four capital tricks —

- 1 To charge Poland with what the other party does -
- (a) Korneitchuk starts the frontier campaign in February in the Soviet Press and Wireless, the Polish Government attacked replied with a defence This defence Mr Audit calls attack
- (b) In August 1942, the Soviet Government removes the Polish Army from the USSR Mr Audit ascribes this evacuation to the Polish Government

2 To deliberately conceal facts relevant to the enlightenment of public opinion One charges Poland with filching territory hiding from the reader all the agreements of the USSR with Poland recognising the inviolability of this territory

- 3 To he boldly —
- (a) By stating that the Polish Government in its request to the International Red Cross charged the Soviets with murder
- (b) By stating that Poland co operates with Germany in her propaganda, and Spain in her peace offensive

4 To refuse to the Polish Government the right to look after the interests of its people and to the Polish and other nations the right to protest against cruelty, by considering it an offence against the Soviet Government (This has particular reference to the matter of the Polish citizens deported to Russia and the execution of Erlich and Alter)

Fortunately, British public opinion is not intimidated by this lien of pressure and even Left Wing papers have admitted the justice of much of Poland s case, though some have advocated a hush hush policy during the period of the war

Poland first to fight without assistance against the Nazi hordes Poland, the land of heroic struggle against the occupying forces of the German army and police, Poland, fighting beyond its boundaries on sea, land and air side by side with Britain (when her present slanderers were advocating a shameful peace and accusing the democracies of responsibility for the war)—Poland is accused of conspiracy with the enemy ' Whom do these lying accusations serve ? Who is going to reap the evil harvest sown by such propaganda ?

Between the two world wais in the period of its independence, Poland arranged her relations with Soviet Russia correctly and in a spirit of good neighbourliness This fact the Soviet Government fully recognised On 19th February, 1934 the Polish Foreign Minister, Mr Beck, was received on behalf of the Russian Government by M Litvinov and greeted with the following words --I can affirm with the utmost satisfaction that the change which has occurred in the mutual relations between the Soviet Union and the Republic of Poland, together with the further successful development of those relations, has found its expression in acts having immeasurably important significance not only in relations between our countries but also for the consolidation of universal peace In his reply Mr Beck said, among other things, The Polish Government attaches great importance to the positive development of its relations with the Union ' This policy was followed by Poland, faithfully She resisted the temptation of Germany to join her in war against Russia (as some other European States have done) She was one of the first to conclude with the USSR a pact of nonaggression She never interfered with internal affairs in the USSR although the now disbanded Comintern developed its propaganda in Poland

In spite of the violation of her territory by the USSR in the time of her desperate struggle against Hitlerism in spite of the partition pact concluded by the USSR with Germany at her expense Poland in 1941, when Russia was herself the victim of aggression, did not hesitate to restore her relations with her neighbour The Polish Press was and is full of admiration for the heroic struggle of the Soviet army, for the splendid effort of the Soviet worker Poland is anxious as always to establish the most peaceful co operation with the USSR beside whom the fates arranged her existence There is only one desire she cherishes a desire which will be appreciated by every freedom loving people It is that this co operation must be mutual *It must be based on Law and not injustice* When such a time arrives it will be unnecessary for Mr Audit and his associates of the Russia To day Society to concoct their twisted attacks on Poland or for the Polish authorities to reply to them

The writer of this pamphlet is solely responsible for the opinions it contains. The responsibility of the Indo-Polish Library is limited to commending them to the reader as a contribution to the study of the subject

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A booklet under the title "Polish Conspiracy Exposed" appeared recently in India, edited by the People's Publishing House The booklet contains among other things an article "The Polish Conspiracy' by Mr George Audit, which was published as a pamphlet in Britain a short time ago This fact alone shows that, Conspiracy' exists indeed, but it is directed against Poland, as has been proved by the foregoing article written by Mr H W Henderson