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POLAND - THE UNTOLD STORY

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By

ANNA ZAJĄCZKOWSKA.

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PART I

THE HARDEST TEST

"Poor Poland!" we sometimes hear in this country, and feel both grateful and embarrassed.

We feel grateful because no country has shown us more sympathy and understanding than Great Britain. We shall never forget the warm welcome we received in this island, whose shores then seemed the last hope of the survivors from ship-wrecked Europe, when our airmen were among those few to whom so much was owed by so many. We are grateful because it is due to Great Britain that our forces were re-organised and are able to take part in the triumphant march which the Allies have now begun in Europe. No country has suffered more grievously than Poland in this war, and we are touched by the sympathy and understanding we have found here.

But we are also embarrassed because we do not feel "poor."

Did anyone ever try to suggest to a bombed-out Londoner, during the Battle of Britain, the idea of "Poor Great Britain"? Or would one ever say to an R.A.F. pilot, "Oh, you poor fellow, so many of your friends have been killed?"

During their five years of struggle the people in Poland have preserved the spirit of those taking part in a battle.

When, after the last war, a foreign diplomat was urging the Polish representative to the Peace Conference, M. Roman Dmowski, to accept proposals unfair to Poland, he finally exclaimed impatiently:

"But don't you realise, M. Dmowski, that Poland is in a critical situation?"

"Poland has been in a critical situation for a thousand years," was the quiet reply.

And indeed it is so. The shape of this land of ours was forged during a thousand years of struggle. Generations have bled for every inch of that soil, in which we are so deeply rooted. No storm, no deluge of the floods surrounding us—though more turbulent than the English Channel or the North Sea—can sweep us away from that land so bitterly defended and so laboriously cultivated, that land in which Poles have always lived, are now living and will continue to live.

The years of the present war have been, it is true, the hardest test, but Poland has stood it more surely than ever. We are human, and among our national characteristics there are faults as well as virtues. We realise that. But even we were astonished by the endurance, outstanding courage and organising ability displayed by the Poles at home. Their spirit is that of the defenders of Britain in 1940, and may well be expressed in the Shakespearian words of Henry V before the victorious battle of Agincourt :

“’Tis true, we are in great danger, the greater therefore shall our courage be.”

AN AIR-BORNE MESSENGER

The girls in Poland are singing a new war-time song :

“ No road is too bad which leads to my sweetheart.

A Pole will fly around the world and return to his girl
By parachute down the chimney.”

From time to time one of our colleagues disappears from the offices of the Polish Government in London. “ He has left for Scotland,” we are told, but wonder why there are no letters from him. He may turn up again some months or years later. “ In Warsaw I ran into a Gestapo man on a bridge over the Vistula, and I automatically exclaimed in English, ‘ I’m sorry ! ’ ” said one of these couriers between England and Poland, and described how hastily he retreated after this indiscretion.

When a British or American plane lands in Poland, or parachutists are dropped, hope and belief become sudden reality. Those who light fires as beacons for these landings or for the dropping of supplies, which they have awaited impatiently, perhaps for years, suddenly see their dreams

materialising. They look at the containers and crates, like large cupboards, dropping out of the sky, and at the men slowly drifting under magnificent umbrellas, as if they had all come from fairyland.

There is no more convincing proof of the friendship of a powerful ally than a tangible crate filled with weapons.

And those Poles who jump from the skies with somewhat nebulous ideas of the "endurance unprecedented in history" and "unparalleled heroism" of their compatriots at home, are suddenly confronted by an organisation of no less value than British armaments. As laid down in his instructions, the air-borne courier finds on the highways of Poland, in hamlets and crowded towns, an escort, a guide, and shelter at every step. Exactly at the appointed time and place, someone, often a girl, appears and offers a lift or help of some sort. At each new stage of his dangerous journey he is passed from hand to hand by people who do not know each other, who are always only "somewhere," but belong to the single power which is everywhere. He moves in a world as yet unknown to him. He may feel aghast at the change in all he loved. Or he may be surprised by the sudden eruption of latent forces of which he himself is an element.

"In a Warsaw street, busy with afternoon crowds," relates the returned courier, "a German convoy appeared. Suddenly, at the cross-roads, as if from under the pavement, there emerged strong groups of armed men, who attacked the convoy. I saw two leisurely passers-by pull out sten guns from under their smart coats and open fire. . . ."

On such an occasion the man who has dropped from the sky will know no more what it is all about than the other spectators. Except for those directly involved, they will all only learn what is later stated in the dry communique of the organisation that is everywhere and knows everything. The air-borne messenger has a different mission. Through a labyrinth of unknown homes, passed from hand to hand by people with strange faces, he will be led to the very centre of a submerged world. At one point he will be guided by an unknown woman, introducing herself as White Helen, at another Black Helen will appear. Who they are, what they have suffered, what threatens them, he will never know. But he does know that he will soon meet those who are the brains of the whole underground state.

THE OTHER END OF THE LIFELINE

Among Polish circles in this country there are many who have only recently left their struggling homeland. It is difficult to give an idea of the difficulties and dangers which these couriers from Poland had to undergo, threatened at every step by the Gestapo, or of their struggle for survival against cold, hunger and exhaustion on their way to England.

There is among us a girl not much over twenty, fair-haired and pretty—and a little lame. She went backwards and forwards illegally over the Carpathian Mountains until she was caught by the Gestapo. She escaped, but while crossing the frozen ridges her legs were frostbitten.

There is a robust, active young man—the one who said “I am sorry” to the Gestapo man—whose vitality proves the truth of the saying that in the Polish Underground Movement “twice two must equal ten.” Though he may sleep no more than four hours a night, the face of this man, who has been through so many dangers, has not lost any of its child-like roundness and freshness.

Another is tall and sombre, with a calm recalling that of deep, still waters. His movements are quiet and measured, and you may not even notice the fresh scars on his hands. In a low voice, mild but firm, he can persuade you in two minutes that all your life's burdens are no more than a toothache.

There is also a woman who was editor of a clandestine paper in Warsaw. You would not notice her were it not for her zeal in all she does. But on rare occasions she may tell you how to hide documents in your hair, or how to fill a tube no bigger than your little finger with a thousand photographs.

Another of these couriers is tall and handsome, and in his lanky limbs and green eyes there is something of steel. You may shudder and wonder whether it was he who killed some of the Germans sentenced to death by secret Polish tribunals.

There are many, many others who managed to get through, bringing with them precious documents and messages which they had been learning by heart for weeks. Another important means of communication is the constant stream of radio-messages exchanged between London and Poland. These men and women who come here from Poland are

living symbols of the unity of Poles at home and abroad. They also bring with them some of the atmosphere which reigns in Polish homes under the terror, and this is far from gloomy. In the offices where some of these couriers work during their stay in this country there is always plenty of humour, good jokes and hearty laughter. There are no signs of nerves or war-weariness among them. They have that spirit which enables millions to survive and to fight, though the world sometimes treats them as though they were dead.

THE NERVOUS SYSTEM OF A LIVING ORGANISM

The turmoil in which the world is now plunged has scattered Poles all over the globe. After the initial blow of the war had been directed against Poland, millions of Poles were driven away from their homeland. They were either flung into camps or dungeons, deported to distant parts, or by their own zeal and devotion plunged into the bitter but glorious struggle of the Allies.

Although Polish soldiers who are fighting with the British Eighth Army in Italy are not shedding their blood on the thresholds of their own homes (which are mostly in Lwów, Wilno and the surrounding districts), they are cells of the living organism of Poland. And Polish sailors, who have brought to this country in four years a tonnage equivalent to a two-years' food supply for London, though far away from their homeland, also form part of a society which has been organised throughout the centuries, and are deeply rooted in their native soil. All other Poles, fighting on various fronts on land, at sea or in the air, are impelled by the same unshakable resolve towards a single goal. Above all, those millions of men, women and children who for years have been involved in the bitterest struggle in Poland itself—and the bulk of the 35 millions is there—are part of a living and virile nation. These different parts are controlled by one central nervous system—the Polish Government.

The main part of the Polish Government is at present established in London, though some of its members left Poland and the strain of underground struggle as recently as the spring or summer of 1944.

On the spot in Poland are other authorities of the Polish State, who work in the closest contact with the Polish

Government in London. The Polish Deputy Prime Minister and three other Ministers of the Polish Cabinet reside in Poland. The Polish Underground Parliament—the Council of National Unity—assembles somewhere in Poland, and its decisions are binding on the Polish Government in London.

Although a great part of the Polish State is submerged, like a ship hit several times by torpedoes and boarded by the enemy, the struggle continues on the lower decks, while supplies and commands are given from an island. Or the Polish State could be compared to a submarine plunged in the turmoil of Europe, with its periscope in London.

A STATE SUBMERGED.

One afternoon I had a talk with a representative of the Polish Underground Movement who is at present an Under-Secretary of State in the Polish Government in London. His risky journey from Warsaw was undertaken because of the necessity of adapting Poland's economic plans to world schemes for the post-war period.

He told me the story of Ninka. She had been one of his secretaries in Underground Poland. Poor Ninka, a fragile, sensitive and enthusiastic girl who sent a brave and hopeful code message from prison on the eve of her sudden death. She was one of his sixty-eight immediate collaborators who within three years were caught by the Gestapo and executed.

"Owing to my position," explained the emissary from Poland, looking cautiously round by force of habit, "I was in immediate touch with a group of twelve. Usually those working in conspiracy do not know more than two or three of their colleagues. This set of twelve was constantly changing—from time to time some disappeared and others took their place. I survived the death of sixty-eight in all."

The life of a civil servant was hardly less dangerous than that of a soldier. Last summer 35,000 people were employed in the civil administration of the Polish Underground State.

"I kept all my belongings in a dispatch case and changed my address every few days. I hadn't many opportunities of seeing my family," said this man, who for four years led a life difficult for us to picture.

The civil administration in Underground Poland, though working in discomfort and danger, was carrying out the

functions of the departments of a normal state. All departments were under the control of Mr. Sobolewski, the Deputy Prime Minister in Poland, and worked in close co-operation with the Home Council of Ministers and the Underground Parliament. The individual departments dealt with the immediate requirements of the country under enemy occupation and were preparing for the post-war reconstruction of the State.

The Underground Ministry of Education, for instance, had the hard task of organising secret teaching, which replaced, with amazing results, the secondary schools and universities closed down by the Germans. At the same time civil servants, threatened at every step by death or arrest, continued to collect data and prepare schemes for post-war education.

The Underground Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare organised immediate relief for the starving millions, and at the same time was preparing a future scheme of social insurance.

A hard and highly dangerous task was to collect data on the state of German-controlled industries in Poland so as to plan the reconstruction of trade, industry and commerce after the war.

Another department was responsible for planning the rebuilding of towns, country villages, roads, railways and waterways. The State Department of Home Affairs was preparing the framework and training the staff for civil administration to replace that imposed by the enemy. Another body was preparing the rehabilitation of agriculture and the completion of the Land Reform programme undertaken in pre-war Poland, by the further distribution of land and the compulsory amalgamation of dwarf holdings.

The activities of various departments covered other requirements of Poland's social and national life. All this planning and preparation was based on a realistic and detailed knowledge of existing conditions under enemy occupation. It was co-ordinated with the activities of the corresponding departments of the Polish Government in London, and took into account the schemes for world organisation which are being discussed among the United Nations.

NEWS AND GUIDANCE

One of the great services rendered by the Underground authorities to the country was an organised net for listening

to foreign broadcasts, which eliminated the necessity for private individuals risking their lives to do so. The Department of Information published and distributed various daily news bulletins and had several press agencies. The offices of the Deputy Prime Minister, besides supplying the whole of the Polish Underground Press with news items and official communiques, also published their own papers and several special publications of war documents of inestimable historical value. Including the publications of the civil authorities and those of the military headquarters, there were some 180 secret papers appearing regularly in Poland, many of which were published by political parties or various organisations and societies.

On the one hand the Underground Press was giving official news, and on the other these papers were an explicit expression of public opinion which under the circumstances had no other outlet. And, indeed, it would be difficult at the present moment to find a more free press than this, produced in defiance of death. The only censorship was the Gestapo, which, on discovering a printing office, wiped out not merely lines or paragraphs but sometimes the lives of fifty or eighty human beings, whether involved in illegal activities or those merely living in the neighbourhood.

Poland's will and her understanding for what her people are dying are expressed more freely in this Underground Press than by any other Polish source.

The technical difficulties of producing a journal in 50,000 copies, as in the case of the Information Bulletin published by the Home Army Headquarters, presented a tremendous problem of organisation. The amount of paper required for a single issue filled half a small room to the ceiling. The printing press itself and other necessary machinery took up two rooms. How did the underground editors get hold of these installations? The answer is that the Germans lost much of the loot which they had acquired in Poland.

The difficulty of obtaining paper was acute. The sources of paper supplies varied. One publication, for instance, was for some time printed on the finest Japanese paper. Certain periodicals had pictures in three colours, and there were frequent new editions of Polish literary classics, running to several hundred pages per volume. Some news bulletins appeared daily, some had evening editions as well, and two

came out four times a day. There were very numerous weeklies, fortnightlies and monthlies. Fifteen papers were published by youth organisations, and there were several women's papers. The average Pole was getting the news only between six and twenty-four hours later than a Londoner.

Another tremendous task of the Underground Press was distribution. Post offices, like all other public services, were in the hands of the enemy. Last year the newspapermen of several South American towns paid a fully deserved tribute to the Polish secret distributors. They marched through the streets on the day of a Polish celebration, demonstrating their admiration and sympathy for their colleagues in Underground Poland. Once in Poznan, in Western Poland, the bodies of thirteen women, on whom underground papers had been found by the Gestapo, were left hanging all day in a public square.

There was one other service of the highest importance rendered by the Polish Underground Press. Newspapers warned the people when reprisals were imminent. A mother might save her child if she was forewarned that children in her district were threatened, or a man could have a chance to evade one of the dreaded man hunts.

Above all, this secret press of Poland brought to the remotest districts instruction and guidance for carrying on the common struggle.

PART II

THE ARMY ON THE UNDERDECK

BEFORE the war Poland had a regular army. There was conscription for military service for every male citizen, and all who were not regulars were soldiers or officers of the reserve.

When, in 1939, Germany demanded from Poland an extraterritorial motor road through the Polish province of Pomerania to connect Germany with East Prussia as well as the incorporation of Danzig into the Reich, attempts were made by the Western European Powers to avoid the approaching horrors of war and at the same time to preserve the rights of Poland.

The German claim, though only to a narrow strip of land, would have cut Poland's only outlet to the sea. It was recognised to be only an initial attempt on Poland's independence and another step towards world domination. On August 25th, 1939, Great Britain and Poland signed a Treaty of Mutual Assistance. Each country pledged itself "to give all support and assistance in its power" to the other "in event of any action by a European Power which clearly threatened directly or indirectly the independence of one of the contracting parties." Until the very last moment diplomatic efforts were made to save the world from the disaster of war, and it was on account of these efforts that general mobilisation in Poland was ordered only two days before Germany launched her attack.

The Polish divisions which fought in September and October, 1939, were only part of Poland's potential military strength. When fighting ceased some of these troops crossed the frontiers, and are at present fighting on many different battlefields; hundreds of thousands were taken prisoner by the Germans and the Russians. Those who remained in Poland hastily discarded their uniforms and went underground, where they were joined by those who had not had time to join their regiments owing to the last-minute mobilisation.

Secret military organisations sprang up all over Poland; from the south-eastern stronghold of Trembowla, which was defended centuries ago by the wife of its Polish commander after he himself had been slain, to Silesia, soaked in the blood of generations; from the plains of north-eastern Poland, fatherland of our greatest poets and warriors, to the Baltic coast and the port of Gdynia, pride of modern Poland; in every part of Poland men of military age gathered spontaneously to form the nuclei of a secret army. As early as June 30th, 1940, all Polish armed units were merged into one highly organised body under the General Headquarters of the Underground Army in Warsaw.

Since the outbreak of war military activities in Poland have not ceased for a day. The Polish Home Army, under the direction of the Polish Supreme Command in London, has continued to fight the Germans within the framework of the Grand Alliance and, in accordance with the Pact of Mutual Assistance, to take part in the common struggle in the direst conditions.

PROBLEMS OF ORGANISATION

Many buildings in Great Britain—even the huge new building of London University—have been requisitioned for various purposes connected with the war effort. Numerous proud private residences, luxurious hotels in holiday resorts and school buildings have been taken over for offices, factories and for billeting troops.

In Poland such buildings were requisitioned too—but by the Germans. All public institutions, all powerful economic factors which decide the striking power of a fighting country in wartime, were also seized by the invaders.

The Underground soldiers were mostly quartered in the woods. The winter in Poland is very much colder than in this country; in some districts, particularly in the north and east, thick snow covers the fields for several months. Shacks built of branches were primitive; trenches and dug-outs were more cold and damp than romantic. Some of the conspirators dwelt in the caves of the Tatra Mountains.

Owing to the unusual conditions, the principles on which the Polish Underground Army was based differed from those of a normal army.

The Polish Underground units who have recently been in action comprised as many as 250,000 men. Some of them held large districts under their control, others moved from place to place, sleeping in barns or farmhouses. Polish farmers did not spare themselves so as to help the army in which their sons and brothers were serving. Large numbers of trained officers and soldiers were living in towns, remaining in touch with their units through a net of couriers. The organisation of a secret army relies to a very large extent on its liaison service. Ordinary people, working in offices or engaged in handicrafts or trade, met at a given time when an attack was to be made on the Germans or some objective. The blowing up of munition dumps, railway junctions and factories was the work of these soldiers in disguise.

The moral strength and undaunted spirit of these men and the courage of the couriers, constantly circulating throughout the country, made this struggle possible. Special tribute should be paid to the women, who constituted the greater part of the liaison service.

It was because of the physical endurance of the British, their contempt of danger and discomfort and their invincible spirit of adventure, that the British Empire came into being. It is perhaps due to similar qualities that the island of Poles has survived the floods of aggression. Primitive shacks or damp dug-outs were endured for years by the Poles in the same hardy spirit as that of British empire-builders.

Food and armaments were the two main problems for this Polish Army whose ingenuity had to find substitutes for the output of a country totally mobilised for war.

Many weapons were hidden after the September campaign in 1939. This was something to start with. Later, hidden munition factories were installed. Some arms were dropped from the air by the Allies. But, above all, there was a constant stream of iron and steel from Germany to the eastern front, which was the object of attacks and a source of supply for the Poles.

Of the anonymous achievement of supplying tens of thousands of fighting Polish soldiers with food, much must remain untold until the end of the war, but this may perhaps be mentioned :

In starving Poland, under the heel of the Germans, it was possible for the Deputy Prime Minister to raise an internal loan for the purpose of feeding the army, and this loan was over-subscribed !

It is also worth recording that the Peasant Party, owing to its wide organisation, was able to collect, in the given time and at the right place, the amount of food required by the Underground military authorities. The farmers divided the burden among themselves and supplied the produce free of charge. They regarded it as a kind of income tax paid to the Polish State. To get a true idea of their spirit it should be realised that their only reward might have been German mass reprisals, death or a concentration camp.

Many of the youngest soldiers were engaged in the intricate process of supplying the army with food. It was often the task of boys in their 'teens to collect produce from the farmers and convey it safely to army units. The greatest care was taken by the authorities in Poland not to allow young boys to take part in the actual fighting, with all its brutality. Many of the boys ran away from home to join an armed unit ; many

more joined when threatened by deportation to Germany for forced labour. These fifteen and sixteen-year-old youngsters, well armed and enterprising, were often entrusted with the task of bringing carts loaded with food to the dug-outs in the forests.

The solution of the organisational problems of establishing a fighting army in a country suppressed and devastated by terror, whose economic resources had been mercilessly plundered, is an amazing exploit. This could not have been possible without the whole-hearted support of the entire population of the country.

THE WHOLE OF A NATION

The whole of the nation took part in the struggle—not in a material sense, not the factories, communications or postal and telegraph services, but in another sense; the entire Polish nation has sacrificed to the common cause its security, property and strength.

- It cannot be supposed that an army of 250,000 men in action, and several times that number of reserves, all controlled by the iron net of the military authorities, could have existed in occupied Poland without the help of millions. There is not a single Polish woman who would not open her home to a man in danger, or who would have refused to hide or carry ammunition or deliver messages. There is not a child who would not keep secrecy. The Polish nation has acquired a strong instinct of self-preservation.

There is one factor which has particularly favoured the growth of the Underground Movement in Poland. Of all the occupied European countries, Poland was the only one in which there was no Quisling Government, no rival to the Underground State. There was, therefore, no hesitation on the part of individuals whether to support the administration of a Petain or a Hacha, or the Free movement, like that of de Gaulle.

All attempts to find a Polish Quisling failed. In 1939 the Germans took Prince Janusz Radziwill, who was then in Soviet captivity, to Warsaw and pressed him to form a government under German auspices. He refused. They

then tried to win over M. Studnicki, who had always been honestly convinced of the advisability of co-operation with Germany. After conversations with the Germans, Studnicki was arrested by them. It seems that he was inclined to accept the German proposals, but on condition that the Germans withdrew their armies from Poland! As the occupying power was most anxious to preserve relative quiet behind their Eastern front, there were many other attempts to form a Quisling Government—but all in vain. On one occasion they hopefully produced large stocks of Polish flags, which were displayed in a bombed-out building after a Soviet air raid on Warsaw. There was not one single Polish mayor during the German administration in Poland, and no Poles have taken part even in local government.

Owing to this lack of collaboration Poland has of course suffered more from hunger than other countries; there were millions more beggars who had lost all their possessions, and millions more were massacred; but there was also no greater unity, no greater support for the Government, no stronger Underground Army, and no greater faith in the Allies than in Poland.

The struggle was extremely bitter. The rewards for helping the Underground State were torture and the concentration camp. But, on the other hand, support was reciprocal. Not only did the Underground Movement rely on the adherence of the whole nation but its armies also protected the people. When a German punitive expedition was raiding a village, Polish armed units often came to the rescue. There were many such battles, some lasting for days. The German used regular troops, artillery and sometimes their Air Force: the Poles had, of course, fewer arms, but their losses were not necessarily greater.

When, in June, 1943, school children were threatened with deportation, some transports of boys and girls destined for forced labour in Germany were stopped by Polish battle groups. Throughout Poland preventive action was taken by the Polish authorities which eventually saved the bulk of the children from deportation; 25–30 per cent. of men and women captured in man-hunts for forced labour were set free before they reached Germany. Soldiers too, and other members of the Underground Movement, when caught

by the Gestapo, could always hope to be helped by the far-reaching arm of the organisation. In 1943 more than sixteen prisons were raided by the Poles and the captives freed. Sometimes transports taking captured Poles to concentration camps were stopped and those who survived the battle with the escort were given another chance.

There is complete unity in Poland's struggle—unity of spirit, sacrifice and purpose. All Poles fight, and they fight for all.

TYING DOWN GERMAN FORCES

Because of British and American bombing, many German war industries were shifted eastwards. Czechoslovakia and Western Poland became centres of German munition factories. The Germans produced various parts of an aircraft, ship or gun in different factories. The Poles attacked the vital lines of communication between various industrial plants and their assembly points. Well-directed blows often paralyzed the efficiency of large industrial areas.

Polish armed units were active not only on Polish territory. There was, for instance, a young lieutenant of the Polish Home Army whose pseudonym was "Lucky." His unit once reached East Prussia, some on foot, others travelling without tickets by rail, but their return was glorious, for they came back in armoured cars captured from the Germans. There were many other raids reaching territory outside Poland. Polish bombs exploded in Berlin and in German Silesia, and Polish raids reached the Germans in Slovakia.

The Polish Home Army carried out military operations in all parts of Poland. There were large stretches of the country, particularly in Eastern Poland, where Polish flags were openly hoisted on the trenches or shacks in which the soldiers lived, and signposts pointed to the Headquarters. In the summer of 1943 the Germans lost control over large stretches of the country. At that time Poles were concentrating on raiding towns and villages and destroying the local German administration. Police stations were seized and German offices responsible for collecting agricultural quotas and other instruments of economic pressure, such as German labour

exchanges, were destroyed. Long before January 1944, when Poland became a direct battlefield for the third time in this war, the Germans in Eastern Poland controlled only the large towns where they had strong garrisons and vital communications. The continuous, carefully-planned and well-executed Polish revolt compelled the Germans to withdraw at night into towns under the protection of their armies. "In the countryside, the night belonged to us," say the Poles coming from Poland, describing the constant movement of Polish troops along country roads under cover of darkness. In the towns, where a curfew was enforced, the night belonged to the Germans.

From time to time huge German punitive expeditions raided the Polish countryside, bringing untold misery to the people whose homes were razed to the ground. Battles raged between these expeditions and Polish armed units. German troops surrounded woods held by Poles, and the Luftwaffe bombarded them from the air. During one such pacification in a large area in the Lublin district 140,000 German troops were used. But the only result was that the Polish Home Army grew stronger; 90 per cent. of the men dragged from their devastated homes escaped before they could be deported to Germany and joined the Polish armed forces. The number of desolate ruins of Polish towns and villages grew, but the Polish Home Army grew too, strengthened by the new contingents of homeless.

ATTACKS ON GERMAN SUPPLY LINES

Since the German attack on Russia on June 22nd, 1941, the main effort of the Polish Home Army has been directed against the German supply lines to the Eastern Front. Three-quarters of the German life-lines for their Eastern campaign passed through Polish territory. This was a tremendous opportunity for the Poles.

During the first year of Germany's Eastern campaign, when they were advancing into Russia, the main object of Polish activities was German oil supplies, the essence of modern war. Fuel transports were derailed, railway engines blown up, trains were stopped, their petrol tanks machine-

gunned and set on fire. Some of the biggest German petrol dumps were overpowered by Poles and the contents destroyed.

There was another period when the Poles concentrated on changing the chemical properties of German petrol for various types of weapons. This was in the last months of 1943, when the number of German air accidents was inexplicably high. Owing to Polish sabotage, inferior petrol was supplied for machines requiring a particularly light mixture.

On Polish roads fighting went on between Poles and German supply columns speeding to the east. An illustration of the extent of these activities is the fact that from July, 1941, up to the end of that year, that is, in six months, 3,164 German military vehicles were destroyed by Poles. This is the number checked by the intelligence service, the actual number reported being double. This means that in constant skirmishes with the Poles the Germans were losing 20-40 military vehicles daily, which could ill be spared from their attacking forces.

In the same six months, during the Germans' greatest advance in Russia, almost 2,000 railway engines of German supply trains were destroyed or damaged by Poles. During the same period 239 military transports were derailed, that is, four transports every three days.

In 1943 the average number of railway engines damaged or destroyed by Poles was 175 per month; in 1944 it grew to 245 per month. In the first six months of 1944 an average of 30 German troop or munition transports were derailed monthly, that is, one transport per day.

Both at the time of the German advance into the Soviet Union and during the decisive Russian victories, Polish activities were of great assistance to the common cause.

German war correspondents filled their newspapers with tales of the heroism of German railwaymen, who were covered with military decorations. Their descriptions of the dangers threatening them on the Polish territories of the so-called General Government are impressive. Even more impressive, from the Allied point of view, are the last pages of these German papers, giving obituaries of German railwaymen "who fell while carrying out their duties." The following excerpt from the German press is perhaps worth quoting.

The *Rhein-Mainische Zeitung* of October 17th, 1943, wrote :

“ More than two-thirds of the supplies for the Russian front pass unmolested through the General Government.”

There is a certain note of optimism in this quotation about supplies for the Eastern Front passing “ unmolested ” through that Polish territory which the Germans call the General Government. There was optimism, too, in the statement of the German Supreme Command, quoted last autumn in the German press :

“ The situation as regards communication lines is well in hand ; 65 per cent. of supplies are reaching the Eastern Front.”

Taking into consideration that the bulk of German supplies had to pass through Poland, a short note which appeared in the London *Times* on November 11th, 1943, seems to point to the same facts :

“ During the part of October when hundreds of military trains were passing daily through Poland eastwards to supply the Russian front, Polish partisans wrecked about one-third of these trains and otherwise so damaged the lines that the Germans were compelled to reduce the average speed of trains running through Poland to something like fifteen to twenty miles an hour, which must appreciably have affected German military operations in Russia at a critical period.”

If we recall the nature of this “ critical period,” the help given by Poles in decisive moments may be appreciated. It was at the time when the Russians were closing in on the German armies trapped in the Dnieper bend and pressing those cut off in the Crimea.

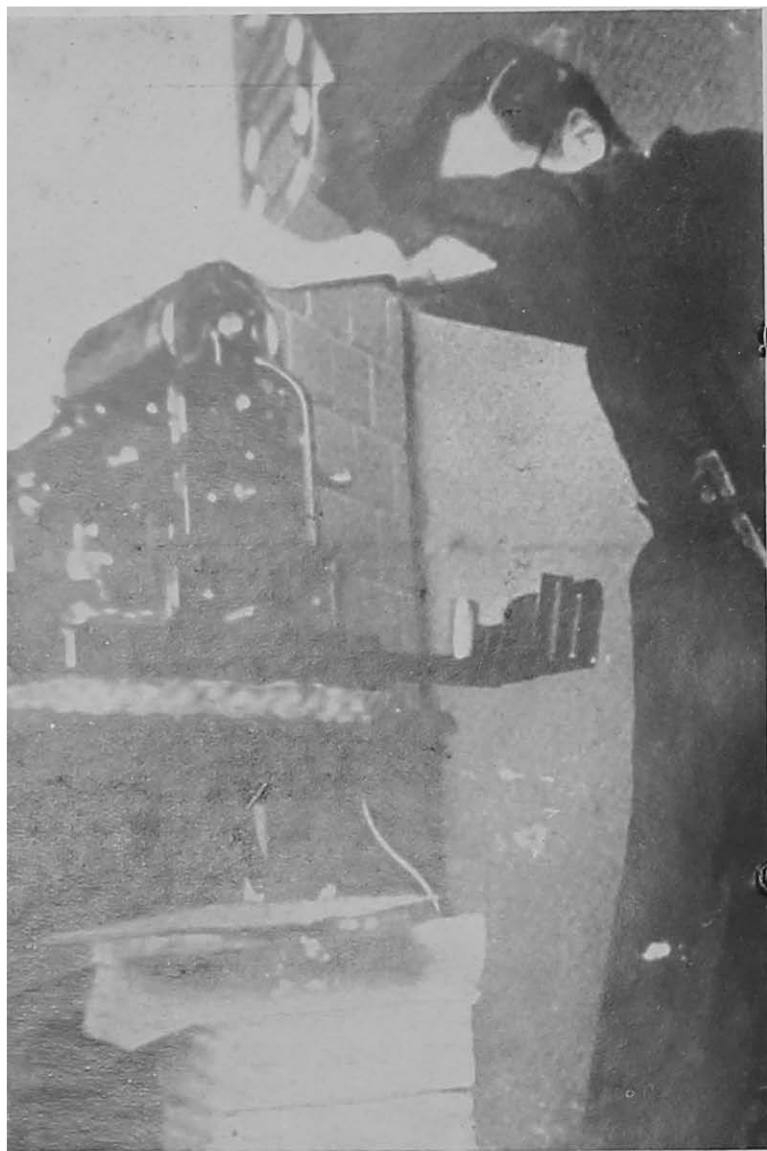
The Poles, as was stated in the Nottingham *Evening Post* of August 24th, 1944, “ have shared in the supply triumph ” of the delivery of many million tons of war material from the Persian Gulf to the Russian border. Besides this, Poles not only shared the risks of British and American convoys to Murmansk and Archangel, but also added to the Allied aid to Russia this contribution of stopping or delaying one-third of German war materials sent to the east.



PW : Polska Walczaca : Fighting Poland.



The Germans are perpetually reminded of their doom.



In secret journalism, a pistol in the belt is a necessary argument.



und Italien

ICH HABE IN DIESEN JAHREN (1914 - 18) MEINEN TEIL MITGEKAMPT, NICHT DAMIT SÜDTIROLI ZU ITALIEN KOMMT, SONDERN DAMIT ES GENAU SO WIE JEDES ANDERE DEUTSCHE LAND DEM VATERLAND ERHALTEN BLEIBT'

„Mein Kampf“ S - 207

Die Schuld am Kriege

ES IST GRUNDFALSCH, DIE SCHULD AM KRIEGE VON DEM STANDPUNKTE AUS ZU ERÖRTER, DASS NICHT NUR DEUTSCHLAND ALLEIN VERANTWÖRTLICH GEMACHT WERDEN KÖNNTE FÜR DEN AUSBRUCH DIESER KATASTROPHE, SONDERN ES IST RICHTIG, DIESE SCHULD REST LOS DEM GEGNER AUFBURDEN, SELBST WENN DIES WIRKLICH NICHT SO DEM WAHREN HERGANGE ENTSPROCHEN HÄTTE

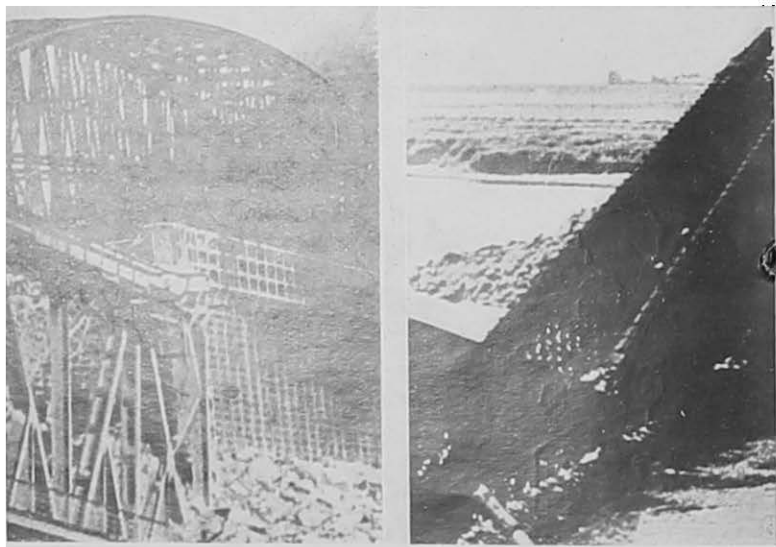
„Mein Kampf“, S - 200



Camouflaged cover and two pages of a Polish anti-Hitler publication in German.



Well-earned rest of a Polish Home Army unit.



Polish sabotage hampered German supplies to the East.



When the Germans took over all cars, the Poles made do with carts.



Well trapped! One transport to the East less!



Warsaw at peace.



Warsaw in 1944.



The centre of Warsaw, October, 1944.



A German mobile gun versus Polish small arms.



They fought to the last.



Out of the ruins to prisoner-of-war camps.



Lost in the burning capital.



Searching for the names of relatives after the disaster of Warsaw.

Obwieszczenie

Dnia 17.1.1944 r. w Gminie Skolimów, Obwód Warszawa-Wieś, został jeden Niemiec przez 8 bandytów zastrzelony i obrabowany. Dnia 24.1.1944 r. zostali przy ul. Aleje Jerozolimskie 2-aj Niemcy w nieczny sposób zastrzelani a 1 Polak przez strzał w głowę poranny. Sprawy oprócz tego rzucili jeden granat ręczny. Jedyne zastrzelony nie doszło do dalszych porażeń. Dnia 25.1.1944 r. przy ul. AL 3-go Maja został jeden Niemiec w swoim własnym lokalu przez kilku bandytów śmiertelnie poranny i obrabowany. Wobec tego polećmy z osób skazanych przez Sąd Doraźny Policji Bezpieczeństwa, następujących 100 w dniu 28.1.1944 r publicznie rozstrzelać. Poprzednio przewidziane ulaskawienie dla tych osób nie mogło nastąpić, ponieważ przez wyżej wymienione dalsze napady możliwość ulaskawienia upadła

1. Kowalski Edward	nr. 518,83	38. Matusz Przemysław	nr. 26,11	66. Gryboski Marek	nr. 18,1 900
2. Węgrzyn Leon	78,218	39. Kozłowski Zdzisław	5,1257	67. Pankowski Zygmunt	13,2,29
3. Piskun Tomasz	28,413	40. Wasiak Wacław	1,6113	68. Papias Zygmunt	7,4,86
4. Rawa Czesław	7,730	41. Kocuch Wacław	76,8,89	69. Loba Karol	11,111
5. Michalski Zdzisław	7,1511	42. Kowczyk Franciszek	16,3,84	70. Krowka Kazimierz	24,5,88
6. Mironaj Czesław	18,2,80	43. Szymanski Adam	4,421	71. Gucwalski Roman	13,11,90
7. Szwedowicz Zdzisław	9,1,26	44. Sowa Antoni	93,2,26	72. Kubiak Henryk	24,5,88
8. Wronka Władysław	21,1,21	45. Tawarz Tomasz	17,4,25	73. Szwarcwald Artur	41,1,90
9. Boczko Jerzy	17,3,21	46. Krawczyk Stefan	23,6,11	74. Furtak Zygmunt	27,4,21
10. Trzciński Marian	4,7,22	47. Kucharski Ignacy	1,2,26	75. Dębicki Stanisław	28,9,20
11. Trzciński Wacław	28,4,16	48. Czapalski Zdzisław	18,2,28	76. Dębicki Stanisław	16,8,20
12. Malczewski Zygmunt	23,4,16	49. Rudziński Zdzisław	25,10,13	77. Pachera Stanisław	28,8,24
13. Szary Władysław	17,4,21	50. Jankowski Bogdan	4,9,23	78. Szwarcwald Henryk	37,10,20
14. Prowalski Aleksander	22,1,26	51. Gajda Jerzy	76,2,24	79. Szwarcwald Henryk	38,9,21
15. Szwarcwald Stanisław	26,11,24	52. Gajda Jerzy	29,1,26	80. Kuzmierz Kazimierz	13,3,25
16. Babowski Seweryn	6,11,20	53. Jwan Władysław	28,1,21	81. Krawczyk Zygmunt	11,8,23
17. Henrykiewicz Stanisław	18,1,21	54. Płociczka Stanisław	55,11,21	82. Krawczyk Zygmunt	24,11,20
18. Marz Jan	4,8,26	55. Perwa Stanisław	6,6,14	83. Jędrzejewski Henryk	1,9,21
19. Wierzbicki Józef	34,2,29	56. Wernicki Jerzy	16,10,20	84. Jędrzejewski Henryk	27,10,20
20. Wierzbicki Andrzej	23,2,21	57. Jędrzejewski Władysław	38,3,24	85. Krawczyk Józef	11,8,23
21. Szwarcwald Stanisław	22,1,26	58. Szymanski Władysław	18,8,25	86. Szwarcwald Zygmunt	39,8,24
22. Szwarcwald Stanisław	22,1,26	59. Wernicki Jerzy	16,10,20	87. Szwarcwald Zygmunt	24,11,20
23. Dąbajski Marian	13,4,16	60. Adamczyk Wacław	3,1,20	88. Wierzbicki Józef	18,12,19
24. Janaszek Stanisław	23,1,26	61. Jędrzejewski Jerzy	31,2,27	89. Szwarcwald Zygmunt	18,12,19
25. Grubisiewicz Józef	23,1,26	62. Szwarcwald Kazimierz	18,12,19	90. Wierzbicki Józef	11,8,23
26. Wierzbicki Józef	17,1,20	63. Malatyna Zygmunt	31,2,27	91. Szwarcwald Zygmunt	29,8,23
27. Krawczyk Karol	7,12,24	64. Rymaszewski Stanisław	3,8,20	92. Szwarcwald Zygmunt	11,8,23
28. Jędrzejewski Zygmunt	23,1,26	65. Płociczka Wacław	24,1,20	93. Szwarcwald Zygmunt	11,8,23
29. Tłomacz Stanisław	18,11,11	66. Dymczyński Henryk	14,1,14	94. Szwarcwald Zygmunt	11,8,23
30. Wierzbicki Józef	23,1,26	67. Płociczka Zygmunt	35,1,25	95. Szwarcwald Zygmunt	18,12,19
31. Wierzbicki Józef	3,10,23	68. Kowalski Wacław	28,1,23	96. Tłomacz Zygmunt	18,11,19
32. Malatyna Zygmunt	23,1,26	69. Jędrzejewski Ignacy	37,1,20	97. Szwarcwald Zygmunt	18,12,19
33. Malatyna Zygmunt	1,8,23			98. Szwarcwald Zygmunt	17,11,16

Dalej zostali przez Sąd Doraźny Policji Bezpieczeństwa na podstawie §§ 1 i 2 rozporządzenia o zwalczaniu wykrężeń przeciw niemieckiemu dziełu obudowy w Gen. Głub. z dnia 2.10.1943 r. z powodu udziału w zabronionych organizacjach i posiadania broni skazani na karę śmierci:

1. Szlachetka Stanisław	nr. 15,2,26	13. Szlachetka Józef	nr. 8,12,20	21. Jędrzejewski Henryk	nr. 18,7,29
2. Szwarcwald Stanisław	18,12,19	14. Szlachetka Józef	23,2,27	22. Szwarcwald Zygmunt	17,1,20
3. Wierzbicki Stanisław	13,4,13	15. Adamczyk Czesław	3,1,20	23. Krawczyk Zygmunt	16,8,24
4. Szlachetka Stanisław	17,1,20	16. Ostrowski Zygmunt	1,8,23	24. Szwarcwald Zygmunt	1,8,23
5. Wronka Władysław	21,1,21	17. Sowa Jerzy	9,1,20	25. Dębicki Zygmunt	1,8,23
6. Błociński Zygmunt	37,10,21	18. Szwarcwald Stefan	18,12,19	26. Wierzbicki Józef	23,8,24
7. Prowalski Zygmunt	22,1,26	19. Jędrzejewski Zygmunt	31,2,27	27. Wierzbicki Józef	11,8,23
8. Jędrzejewski Zygmunt	23,1,26	20. Szwarcwald Henryk	23,2,25	28. Pankowski Zygmunt	26,11,20
9. Prowalski Zygmunt	22,1,26	21. Jędrzejewski Zygmunt	31,2,27	29. Szwarcwald Zygmunt	18,12,19
10. Wierzbicki Józef	17,1,20	22. Szwarcwald Zygmunt	18,12,19	30. Krawczyk Zygmunt	18,12,19
11. Krawczyk Zygmunt	23,1,26	23. Płociczka Zygmunt	18,11,19	31. Krawczyk Zygmunt	18,12,19
12. Krawczyk Zygmunt	23,1,26	24. Płociczka Zygmunt	18,11,19	32. Krawczyk Zygmunt	18,12,19

Z wyżej wymienionych objętych liczbą 1 i 2. zostali już straceni, ponieważ byli w posiadaniu broni

Skazani od liczby 3. do 32. są przewidziani do ulaskawienia

W wypadku powtórzenia się jednak w ciągu następnych 3 miesięcy w obrębie miasta Warszawy wżgi obwodu Warszawa-Wieś gwałtownych czynów napadów, w szczególności napadów na Niemców, Członków Państwa i Wielkim Państwem Niemiecmy zaprzających lub też na Polaków pracujących dla interesów obudowy w Guberni Generalnej, zostanie wyrok, w razie natychmiastowego nie ujęcia przestępcy, wykonany również i na tych, przewidzianych do ulaskawienia i to za jeden napad na jedną z wyżej wymienionych osób zostanie co najmniej 10 skazanych straconych

Jeśli czyn został dokonany przez elementy komunistyczne, to z liczby wyżej wymienionych będą wykluczeni komuniści z akta ulaskawienia, jeśli natomiast czynu dokonały inne elementy, wprowadzone na błędną drogę to z wyżej wymienionych będą wyłączone z akta ulaskawienia te osoby, które były politycznie z nimi związane

Leży zatem w rękach ludności niemieckiej

przez natychmiastowe zatrzymanie

lub przyzwanie się do ujęcia sprawców

lub przez wywieranie wpływu na znane jej a wprowadzone na błędną drogę elementy

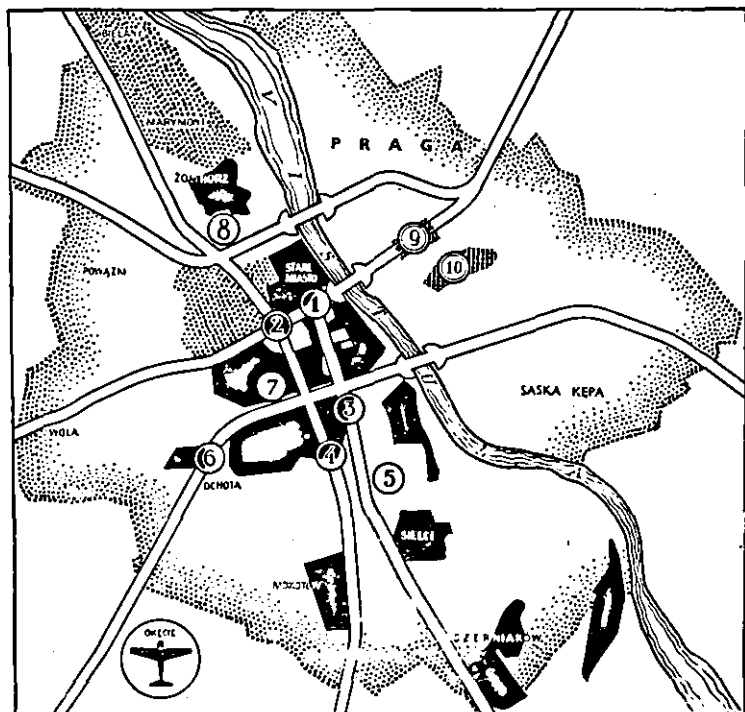
lub przez dokonanie doniesienia na osoby podejrzane

przyczynić się do tego, by wyrok na skazanych, a przewidzianych do ulaskawienia nie był wykonany

Warszawa, dnia 28 stycznia 1944 r





DOWÓDCA 44- I POLICJI
na Dystrykt Warszawski

Specimen of a German official announcement, dated January 29th, 1944, listing the names of a hundred Poles shot at a public execution in Warsaw. The names of 32 Poles under arrest are added, who will also be shot, if information for the Gestapo is refused—typical blackmail, that always fails.



Plan of Warsaw during the Rising in 1944.

- 1.—Old Royal Castle. 2.—Town Hall. 5.—Lazienki Palace. 7.—Main Railway Station. 8.—Danzig Station. 9.—Wilno Station. 10.—Eastern Station.

-  In Polish hands on August 28th.
-  Scenes of fighting.
-  Town boundaries.
-  Points retaken by the Germans.

AN EXPERT

I sat opposite a man of commanding strength and reserve. He was an officer of the Polish Home Army.

"I hear that in Poland you have been producing explosives, mortars, even armoured cars, in concealed factories?" I started the conversation.

"Yes, and flamethrowers too, and anti-tank weapons," he answered and then paused, afterwards explaining that he must not say anything which might add to the dangers of his colleagues in Poland, whom he left only a short time ago.

"I can describe to you one place I know," he continued. "There were four rooms in a basement. One group of women, who had volunteered for the job, spent all day kneading chlorate of potassium and rape-seed oil in wash-basins. Another group was doing the same all night. The work went on without a break. One room was left free for the isolation of sound. In that empty room was a chest, the contents of which were known only to the manager of the place and one of his women assistants. The chest was filled with ready explosives, connected by a fuse to the door-bell. In case of a German intrusion the whole of the building would have been blown up.

"This was a wise precaution," he continued. "Had the place been discovered, none of the inhabitants of the building would have escaped death. This measure would at least have spared them investigation and torture."

Feeling that it would be difficult to learn much more about the subject, I ventured another question.

"Were you really able to produce armaments in German factories? How did you get access to them?"

"The Germans would willingly have fettered the whole world to their munitions if they could." He smiled and went on to tell of their lack of success in trying to profit from Polish labour. "Poles constituted a percentage of the foreign slave labour in German war industries, but the output of Polish workers was only one-sixth of the normal average. Their ill-will, and also their particular ingenuity, caused this deficiency. It was a considerable achievement, for instance, to blow up the transformers and cut off the electric power of one of the industrial districts, with the result that all the plants had to

remain idle for a month. Besides other qualifications, great technical knowledge and experience was needed to tamper with precision instruments used for measuring parts of apparatus and engines so that the output of whole factories came out the wrong size. The number of machines whose life was shortened and of tools hopelessly damaged in an inconspicuous way was astonishing. Besides sabotage controlled by the underground organisation, there was also a certain amount of which we were not aware until later. There was, for instance, a man who for a year and six months was successfully cutting down towing-ropes for German U-boats after they had already passed inspection. The damage was done to the internal part of the towing-rope by cutting through three-quarters of the thickness at regular intervals: the exterior was quite untouched."

"Could you describe one or two methods of stopping enemy trains?" I asked.

"There are some which already have a history behind them," he said. "One, for example, was used by the Underground Organisation of the Polish Socialist Party, the P.P.S., during the revolution of 1905. It was a very simple one. A huge sloping oak stake, driven three-quarters into the ground between the sleepers outside the rails was quite sufficient to derail the engine or at least to crush the cylinder. Another quite primitive method was adopted by the Tsarist Cossacks during the Japanese War. A few horseshoes were fixed on to one rail and, a few yards further on, a few more were put on the other rail. If this was well set up on a curve in the line it upset the equilibrium of the train enough to derail the transport. We introduced some improvements and used heavy iron structures which were more effective. This was one of the night exercises for our recruits under training."

My host continued his story. He described some of the background of the fuel campaign against the Germans. Specially prepared implements were thrown into the empty containers and when petrol was put in, it caused the tanks, often the whole train, to catch fire. Delayed action explosives were plastered to the walls of reservoirs.

"We could cope quite well with the big dumps," he added, "especially if petrol was stored in barrels. In July, 1942, for instance, there was a magnificent and rather lengthy

display of fireworks at the Eastern Railway Station in Warsaw. Burning 50-gallon barrels were blown 200 yards into the air."

A COURIER'S BAG

A young lieutenant of the Polish Home Army opened a fireproof chest to show me some papers brought from Poland.

We often wondered whether there was more of the sensitiveness of an accomplished intellectual or of the brusqueness of a soldier in that young man. We read his excellent articles and asked ourselves what he could have been in civil life. We did not know his real name, only a pseudonym. He was recently sent here from Poland.

The first object in the chest which caught my attention was a small pamphlet in German. On its cover was a caricature of Mr. Churchill, and the German title was "The Greatest Liar in the World." Due to this stratagem the pamphlet was distributed freely, in tens of thousands of copies, among the Germans in Poland and in the Reich. It presented Hitler as the greatest liar, condemned by quotations from his own speeches. The lieutenant told me that an original copy was forwarded to Mr. Churchill, with a covering letter in broken English by the authors of the pamphlet in Poland, explaining to Mr. Churchill why they had used his caricature and assuring him of their deepest respect and their faith in Great Britain.

Another booklet of the same type, also printed in German, pointed out the sadism and degeneracy of the Nazis, describing in detail the appalling cruelties committed by the Nazis in Poland and hidden from the average German. It was entitled "The Red Terror," and the cover presented a revolting picture representing the Soviets. This time Poles exploited German anti-Soviet slogans and turned them against the Nazis.

The young lieutenant showed me about twenty various periodicals printed regularly in German by Poles and distributed among German soldiers on the Eastern Front as well as in Germany itself. They all aimed at sapping the morale of the Germans. He also showed me a poster, which

had been placarded on the walls in Cracow, announcing a general evacuation of all Germans. The poster was an imitation of official German announcements and was signed by Koppe, the chief Gestapo officer for Poland. Panic and confusion broke out among the invaders when the poster appeared last February. The Poles had imitated the German official announcement so well that even the lieutenant who was now showing me a copy was himself deceived when he saw it on the walls in Cracow.

I saw a whole little library of pamphlets and books printed in Poland under the occupation; they included military textbooks for the Home Army and a few huge volumes, which were theses for the doctors' degrees within the framework of secret teaching. In this chest were also beautifully written scripts of music—symphonies, chamber music and songs—by Polish composers written under the German occupation.

But there were also documents brought in couriers' bags from Poland which filled me with awe. There were genuine German proclamations and posters. One of them was a soiled German official notice torn down from a wall. It announced in cool, official language several cases of shooting which occurred during the first days of July, 1943, in the district of Bialystok. In four days, four Germans were killed by Poles. On the fifth day the Germans announced: "Five members of the Wehrmacht and three gendarmes were shot."

Under five headings in the formal German notice the reprisals were made public. For the first German, a village was burnt down and all its inhabitants shot dead. For the second, "fifty inhabitants of the town of Bialystok, whose membership of the Polish Resistance Movement or blood relationship with any of its members was established, were arrested and shot." For the third German, twenty-five members of the Polish Resistance Movement or their relatives fell. Fifty persons were the price for the fourth. Under heading No. 5 the German announcement stated: "One thousand persons from the district of Lomza, who were suspected of being members of bands or of supporting the resistance movement, were shot, their property confiscated and their homes burnt down. In addition, nineteen persons, recruited from local doctors, town officials and teachers, were

arrested with their families and shot, as they were supporters of the Polish Resistance Movement or were relatives of its members."

This was the price Poles were paying for their struggle.

There were about sixty similar German official announcements brought here from Poland. The most horrifying were the German lists of names and birth dates of the victims of German reprisals. These lists were placarded on walls, and the inhabitants of the place could read the names of their husbands, brothers and sons who perished in mass reprisals, carried out in public in streets or squares.

The ransom for every blown-up bridge, for every attack on German military transports, did not check the struggle of the Poles, who, on their sector, did for the Allied cause what many nations might fail to do in similar circumstances. Nations who have not lived for a thousand years where Poles do would perhaps consider that compromise is the saner policy. The Poles have not produced a Quisling to save lives. Were it not for Poland's stubborn will to survive and her refusal to collaborate with her oppressors, she would have been wiped off the map centuries ago.

The lieutenant of the Polish Home Army who was showing me the documents pointed out one poster in particular. This was a list of a hundred names of those shot on January 29th in a Warsaw street. He showed me that no name was signed under this announcement. In place of a signature there was only the official title of the commander of the Gestapo for the Warsaw district. German high officials often avoided mentioning their names, too many of them having already perished at the hands of Poles. The commander of the Warsaw district whose name did not appear on the poster of January 29th was General Franz Kutchera. He was killed by members of the Polish secret organisation on February 1st, not even three days after the list of a hundred names appeared.

After the death of Kutchera, public executions in Warsaw were stopped. This time the death of one German saved the lives of hundreds of Poles.

1,181 Germans were shot by Poles in 1943. All of them were first formally sentenced to death by special tribunals

operating within the framework of the Polish Underground State Organisation. Descriptions of how the death sentences were carried out would fill a couple of sensational films. During the years of German occupation in Poland, several thousand efficient Nazis, German high officials and Gestapo agents perished in their offices, on their way to work, in restaurants, in their homes, besides those who fell in action against the Home Army. This number includes only those who were very carefully selected and sentenced after long consideration of their case. The aim of the Polish Special Tribunals was not to increase mass reprisals, but to check them and thereby save thousands of lives and protect the people. It was only worth risking reprisals to get rid of such people as commandants of concentration camps or prisons, degenerate torturers, members of the Gestapo, men in key positions in German war industries, those responsible for man-hunts and economic robbery.

Consistency brought good results. Fear is not conducive to work. A German called Werner, for instance, who was director of the main German labour exchange in Warsaw, and whose task was to supply slave labour for the Reich, must have always been painfully conscious of the fact that his predecessor, Kurt Hoffman, had been killed by Poles. Hugo Dietz and Geist, two high officials of the same German labour exchange, fell too. Werner himself was shot only a few weeks after Kurt Hoffman, and the man who succeeded him probably felt still worse.

The last documents I saw from the courier's bag were a number of original death sentences passed by the Polish special tribunals. They were printed in both Polish and German. The names of those sentenced and their addresses were typed. The special tribunal did not, of course, give its address, but only its number. Polish State emblems and seals were on these documents, as on any official despatch. The culprit received by post first a warning, then the announcement that the case was under consideration, then a formal death sentence, sometimes also a reminder. The procedure was legal and open. The well-earned Polish counter-reprisals were carried out in an honourable way.

PART III

“TEMPEST”

How to use the Polish Home Army, which had grown to a considerable strength, became an inter-Allied problem in 1943.

Polish sabotage and anti-German military activities in Poland received relatively little publicity in this country, perhaps even less than the essential British and American help in war material for the Eastern Front. All this was going on long before the landing in Normandy took place.

Just as America and Britain were urged to land in Europe, so Poland was called upon by the U.S.S.R. to take up arms openly against the Germans. For years various Soviet wireless stations were urging an immediate general insurrection in Poland. But Poland's strategy was then similar to that of the Western Allies. The so-called Second Front could not have been opened until the armies were ready and the moment ripe. A general insurrection in Poland, if started too early, would have been quenched by the Germans in a sea of blood.

At the same time the political deadlock caused by the U.S.S.R. severing diplomatic relations with Poland in April, 1943, continued. All subsequent efforts on the part of Poland and the Allies to restore the recognition of the constitutional Polish Government by the one country which withheld it had been of no avail. It was considered, nevertheless, that military co-operation might speed up the solution of the political deadlock. Poland was advised not to spare herself in proving her goodwill.

Poland's course was dictated by her unshakable faith in the ends for which the Allies entered this crusade against a brute force trampling on the rights of other nations. The line of Polish policy has always been the same. It was Poland who first offered armed resistance to the German bid for domination over Europe. For five years millions of Poles gave their lives in their fight against the invaders. Since June 22nd, 1941, when Germany attacked the U.S.S.R., Poland, paying in proportion to her population the heaviest toll of all the Allies, has given her support to Russia.

The strategy adopted by Poles for the period when Polish

territory would become the battlefield, consisted in thorough preparations for an insurrection in areas approached by the front line. A decree was issued by the Polish Government on October 25th, 1943, that the Polish Home Army was to co-operate with the Soviet forces whatever the circumstances.

On January 4th, 1944, the Red Army crossed the Polish-Soviet frontier. Two months later large Polish districts were already in the front line. In accordance with the decisions of the Polish Government, the Commander-in-Chief of the Polish Home Army, General Bor, issued instructions to the commanders of all Polish armed units, stating the principles of their collaboration with the advancing Red Army. Individual Polish Underground units were ordered to mobilise all their reserves and to come out into the open in full strength as soon as their areas became close to the battle front. The Polish commanders were instructed to get in touch with the commanders of the advancing Red Army and to co-ordinate Polish strategy with theirs.

Operationally the Poles were to subject themselves to the Soviet High Command. But it was to be made quite clear that individual Polish divisions were units of the Polish Forces, subordinate to General Bor, the Commander-in-Chief of the Polish Home Army, and through him to the Polish High Command in London. The same principle was adopted as in the case of other Polish forces, then fighting in Italy and on various other fronts, which, though under the direct command of the British and Americans, remained parts of the Polish Army.

The new type of military operations which were carried out by the Polish Home Forces in Eastern Poland during the spring and summer of 1944 were known as "Burza." "Burza," which means "Tempest," was the code signal for the beginning of open warfare.

"Tempest," that is, a rising in the battle area, first broke out in Volhynia, south of the Pripet Marshes, after the Red Army crossed the Polish frontier west of Zhitomir. A whole division of the Polish Home Army supported the advance of the Soviet vanguards. Then Polish insurrection spread violently like an outbreak of fire, north to the Wilno region and south to Tarnopol and the Lwów area.

The German columns retreating under heavy pressure of the Soviet advance were attacked from the rear by divisions

and regiments of the Polish Home Army. On many sectors the German retreat was delayed or stopped until their troops were encircled and annihilated. Polish activities behind the front lines were reaching such proportions that German reinforcements had to be turned against them instead of being sent to the battle front. Even the Luftwaffe, so badly needed in the front area, had sometimes to be directed against the Poles in the rear.

As the Polish Home Army entered a new phase, that of regular war, Polish diversionary activities grew more intense than ever. A new kind of operation was devised. It frequently happened that communications were destroyed simultaneously in a number of places, cutting the German supply lines, their lines of retreat and of attack. During the battle of Lwów the Poles, by destroying communications, succeeded in cutting off the German armies from their rear.

In the battle of Wilno, Polish forces, to the strength of two divisions, first went into the attack, and a day later were joined by Red Army units. Inside the town, Polish formations fought in the streets and overwhelmed the German strong-points. At the same time Polish Home Forces were fighting in the whole area of the Wilno district.

As in Italy, when Poles in co-operation with the British captured Ancona in July, and later in Normandy, where Poles played an important rôle in closing the Falaise gap, so in a similar way Poles co-operated with the Red Army in Poland. At Lida, for instance, the 77th Polish Infantry Regiment for a time took the whole brunt of the German attack, as did the Polish Armoured Brigade for some time near Falaise.

By the end of July, not only regular units of the Polish Army but women and children were also fighting in the streets of Lwów, in south-eastern Poland, storming the German positions.

“Tempest” was in operation in all districts east of the Vistula. It was with the greatest enthusiasm that the Poles joined the struggle to free their own homes.

As long as operations continued the help of Poles was welcomed; but when the fighting was over, Polish units were disarmed by the Russians and their officers arrested. The belief that military co-operation would remove the political

deadlock appeared to have been unfounded. The U.S.S.R. continued to withhold recognition of the Polish Government, which is recognised by all other Allies; they continued to consider the eastern half of Poland, occupied by them in 1939, as belonging to them; and, to administer the remaining part of Poland, the U.S.S.R. appointed the so-called Committee of National Liberation. This committee, backed by the military strength of the Red Army, later proclaimed itself the provisional Polish Government.

“TEMPEST” IN WARSAW

In the annals of this war the year 1944 will go down as one of stupendous Allied achievements. The summer of this year, in particular, was rich in events. After the first few decisive weeks following the landing in Europe, an avalanche of British and American armour swayed in a formidable drive through France and Belgium and reached Germany.

For one-sixth of this momentous year Warsaw, the capital of Poland, was waging a battle unequalled in history on one of the most important European fronts.

If we recall our exhaltation at the end of July, on hearing from the B.B.C. about the crushing Russian advance, we may well imagine what were the feelings of the Poles, on whose territories the battle was raging. In the last days of July the papers here were featuring startling news in huge front-page headlines: “Battle for Poland Begun”—“Russians Breaking Into Warsaw”—“The Ways to Warsaw and Riga Open: Declares *Pravda*, the Moscow Newspaper, To-day”—“Red Army’s Greatest Day Yet: Dwinsk, Lwów, Bialystock, Stanislawów Fall, Vistula River Line Crossed.”

The gunfire of the advancing Red Army was already heard in Warsaw. The Germans evacuated the city and Warsaw watched the growing disorder of the retreating German columns. The German civil administration withdrew, their files and records were burnt in the streets. Main buildings were mined, ready to be blown up; reprisals began, and Poles were rounded up in mass arrests; Polish prisoners who were still in the notorious Pawiak prison in Warsaw were shot.

The whole of the country to the east of the River Vistula was already in the throes of Polish revolt. During July, Moscow radio constantly broadcast appeals to the Poles. On July 29th, for instance, such an appeal from Moscow was picked up by the B.B.C. Monitoring Service.

"No doubt Warsaw already hears the guns of the battle which is soon to bring her liberation. Those who have never bowed their heads to the Hitlerite power will again, as in 1939, join battle with the Germans, this time for decisive action."

Another Soviet station broadcast four times on July 30th, in Polish :

"The million and more inhabitants of Warsaw should become an army of a million strong. . . . People of Warsaw, take up arms! Help the Red Army in crossing the Vistula."

The Russians were struggling for bridgeheads. Strategically the most important was in the Polish capital.

On August 1st "Tempest" broke out in Warsaw. The rising aimed at paralyzing Warsaw as a centre of communication. It was intended to facilitate the crossing of the river by the Red Army. Besides, the Germans were preparing a counter-attack : six German armoured divisions were nearing Warsaw from the west, four of them to march through Warsaw. The Poles met their first blow.

In the first three days of fighting, the main objectives of the town, the General Post Office, Power Station, Gas Works, Water Supplies, bridges over the Vistula and Central Railway Station were taken by the Poles. Fighting broke out simultaneously in several parts of the city. On the first day of revolt Praga, the district on the east bank of the Vistula, was also in Polish hands.

The Germans counter-attacked fiercely. An avalanche of bombs and shells was directed against the Poles. On the fourth day of revolt the Germans began burning down street after street in their advance. In the districts held by them, the Germans dragged the inhabitants out of their houses and drove them in front of their detachments. Polish women were tied to German tanks and used as a screen during attacks.

On the seventh day of battle three-quarters of the capital was in Polish hands. There was great enthusiasm in the city.

Polish newspapers appeared openly. Although the lack of supplies of arms and of Allied co-operation—despite dramatic appeals—was inexplicable, although there was a sudden lull in the east, where guns had been roaring a few days ago, the Poles were fighting with unexampled bravery. Attack and counter-attack followed each other. Polish flags appeared on the main objectives of the city and on all houses which had been turned into fortresses. Polish posters on the walls were calling people to arms. There were ten times as many volunteers as weapons. Two Polish improvised wireless transmitting stations were operating, keeping up the morale of the fighting capital and transmitting to the world Polish broadcasts for the first time in five years. Hospitals, cinemas and rest rooms were set up for the soldiers. Women constituted one-seventh of the Polish fighting forces.

The battle swayed. The Germans brought up reinforcements and threw in armoured trains. They used artillery of the largest calibre, mortars, flamethrowers and a mass of aircraft. They bombarded the city not only from the air and land but also from boats on the Vistula. German sappers blew up house after house.

The Poles captured weapons: German tanks they had taken were repaired under fire and put into use. Poles stormed German tanks, using bottles filled with petrol or hand grenades made out of water-pipes filled with explosives. By an ingenious device, captured German shells were turned into grenades. A continuous call went out to the world for arms to be dropped, for co-operation of Allied air forces; Polish Headquarters in Warsaw wirelessly time and time again, specifying targets for Allied bombing. The Germans were exploiting with complete impunity their technical superiority over the Poles.

In London, people impatiently queueing for papers read the front-page news:

“Normandy Battle is now a Pursuit,” “Pincers closing on Routed Nazis,” “The Falaise Gap Closed,” “Poles took the brunt of the attempted German break-out,” “The End of War is in Sight,” “Allies over Seine, encircling Paris,” “Paris Rises Against the Enemy,” “British Troops Enter Toulon,” “Rumania Accepts Armistice,” “Paris Freed.”

The rising in Paris lasted four days. We read long descriptions in the Press and admired news reels in all the cinemas. Warsaw was then fighting for the fourth week.

"We allow children to go on the barricades," called the women of Warsaw in their appeal to the world, one of the numerous appeals for arms and Allied co-operation.

"A twelve-year-old girl destroyed a German tank," broadcast the transmitting station "Lightning" from the Polish capital.

The Germans brought into the battle Goliath robot tanks loaded with dynamite to break up masonry, and used landmines. German planes, unchallenged in the air, were diving on the city and directing cannon fire against the streets.

In the first week of September, 1944, we read here with excitement the cross-headings day by day :

"Retreat of the Germans Becomes a Rout," "Battle of France Ending," "Bulgar Peace Delegation Awaits Terms," "British Take Arras, head for Belgium," "Russians Thrusting to Jugoslavia."

In Warsaw, on September 3rd, the Old City, a district held by Poles for thirty-four days, had fallen. Eighty per cent. of the original Polish forces holding the ancient part of Warsaw had been killed or wounded. Only heaps of ruins were abandoned. The fight continued in the centre of the town and other districts. On September 4th the Power Station and Waterworks were destroyed. The struggle went on in darkness, without water and with the lack of food growing daily more acute.

"The unpunished and systematic burning of the city is a great disaster. Bombing of Germans required," wirelessly Polish H.Q. from Warsaw.

Warsaw's entire population was fighting, with little more than bare hands, against German forces equal to seven divisions. They were fighting for the sixth week when we here read the headlines :

"Russian Advance Into Greece Reported," "British are Twenty-three Miles from Germany," "Russians Push into Hungary," "Belgians Back in Brussels," "U.S. Guns Shell Germany," "Allies Fighting in Aachen Suburbs. Seven Miles Into Germany in New Thrust."

Every day a new country entered, another capital freed !
Warsaw became a city of cave-dwellers. A labyrinth of underground tunnels provided the only means of communication.

"The whole town is swathed in smoke, which remains thick and impenetrable," related one of the crews who flew over Warsaw amidst the fiercest German barrage. "The burning city was far behind and our cabin was still full of thick smoke."

"Fires and a cloud of smoke could be seen for a distance of forty miles," said an American airman who, on September 18th, flew over Warsaw. Stereoscopic photographs taken then show that not much was left of the capital. Whole quarters of the town, often several square miles in area, were but heaps of ruins.

Warsaw fought for two weeks longer. On some days there were as many as 96 enemy raids, and not a single plane to counter them. The whole town was ablaze. There was no water to put out the fires, and the whole fire brigade, with all its equipment, had been evacuated by the Germans in July. People suffered from the most horrible burns. There was no more food, no water to drink, only fire, smoke and darkness.

Still, in this last period, Poles were taking objectives in their attacks on German strong points. There were again a few days of hope. On September 18th, American Flying Fortresses dropped ammunition and food; on September 19th, the Commander of the Warsaw garrison, General Bor, wirelessly :

"This is the second day which has passed without German raids, as a result of the action of Soviet anti-aircraft fire."

The Soviet offensive was resumed by the middle of September. In Warsaw those who for weeks had been fighting with no air support, first in the streets and buildings and then defending every cellar and heap of ruins, and who finally fought in sewers, miraculously gained new strength. Praga, the eastern suburb of Warsaw, was captured by Soviet troops.

But on September 30th a public statement was made in Moscow that the capture of Warsaw could take place only

after the encirclement of the city, because of the unavailing attempts to force a crossing of the Vistula.

It was after sixty-three days, over two months of super-human struggle, that Warsaw fell.

After five years of appalling terror this city, which in 1939 amazed the world by its courage, again fought for two months, almost without arms, against a power which the three greatest States of the world are finding it difficult to overcome.

History will one day reveal how powerful were the German counter-attacks which, in the summer of 1944, checked the Russian frontal attack on Germany and held them for nearly six months. Strategists and politicians will study that big encircling movement which led the victorious Red Armies, during that eventful summer of 1944, through nine countries of Central Eastern Europe, but not across the River Vistula.

The struggle for independence, fought with the utmost sacrifice by the inhabitants of the Polish capital, was carried out in constant touch with the Polish Government in London, who spared no effort, even to the Polish Prime Minister's visit to Moscow on the eve of the rising, to achieve Allied co-operation on this decisive sector of the Eastern Front.

Daily reports of the fighting were directed to London. The British Foreign Office in London forwarded to Moscow the messages indicating targets for bombing, sent either by General Bor or by the Soviet Liaison Officer, Captain Kalugin, who was in Warsaw. At a time when two separate districts of Warsaw were cut off from each other, it was through London that they communicated. Everything went to London. History knows no more dramatic vote of confidence given by a country to its government than the Warsaw Rising.

The Polish capital is now an appalling, deserted cemetery. It is estimated that a quarter of a million people perished in its ruins. A quarter of a million—that is, as many as the whole population of a town like Nottingham, Leicester or Cardiff. Of the Warsaw garrison of the Home Army, a large proportion perished. About 30,000 men, officers or soldiers of the Polish Home Army, were led to German prisoner-of-war camps. Some of these prisoners were boys of fourteen years; others were women with small babies, all of whom are getting the

normal rations allowed for prisoners of war. The Warsaw garrison, which originally constituted some 10 per cent. of the Polish Home Army, ceased to exist. The population of this city of over a million inhabitants was evacuated and suffer misery inconceivable to people in this country.

Warsaw was a magnificent example of Poland's fight for independence, which will continue until freedom is regained. For this aim no sacrifice is too great for Poles. Their spirit of sacrifice is so immense that sometimes it is even over-estimated. There are some who seem to believe that Poles may even sacrifice that purpose for which they have suffered so much. These Poles, who for five years have been living in the discomfort of the woods and waging war without modern equipment, are in normal times like average British people, who have also made great sacrifices in this war. These women, who collected wounded in the streets of the Polish capital, who fought alongside the men and are now in German Stalags or Oflags, are also like the ordinary women of this country. And children in Poland do not normally go on the barricades. All these people, as history has shown, are capable of courage and sacrifice almost beyond the limit.

But Polish heroism and spirit of sacrifice ought not to be exploited. Poland does not offer the world her glorious death. The sacrifices of her people means that there is no price too high for Poles to pay for a free life on their own territory.

THE MAJESTY OF THE LAW

I waited at the Polish Prime Minister's Office in a large, quiet room. I recognised it as the same room we traversed in dramatic silence after General Sikorski's death. In the room opposite, sharply lighted, the coffin then stood under a mass of flowers and standards.

I recalled that it was in this same room we had listened to a speech by Mr. Mikolajczyk, General Sikorski's successor.

The vast room looked different in its everyday calm; it was sparsely furnished and its thick carpets muffled both steps and words.

"Men may perish; others take their place, and the struggle goes on." I recalled the words of the man who told me about

the successive deaths of sixty-eight colleagues in Underground Poland. Those who serve their country as its leaders may also change, I thought, but the State continues.

I called to mind the words of the Polish Foreign Minister before the war, on May 5th, 1939, in reply to the German territorial demands :

“ A self-respecting nation does not make one-sided concessions.”

Are not these same words still to be heard in the Polish Prime Minister's office? Men may change, but the organisation of a State, its laws, its aims, do not alter. Has the line of Polish policy altered? Poland may be overrun, but Poland does not capitulate. To be overrun by brute force is not to acquiesce. Poland's attitude is perhaps similar to that of the British, who never realise they are beaten and for this reason are always victorious.

The door opened and a man entered whom I recognised as the Polish Minister of the Interior, who arrived last April from Warsaw. He walked through the big, silent room and entered the one opposite, where the bust of General Sikorski stands. The door was left ajar, and I saw him join a group of three others, conversing by the window. I recognised the silhouette of the Polish Prime Minister, M. Arciszewski, described in the British press as an “ apostle ” or “ socialist saint.” With him were his Under-Secretary of State, the man who once described to me his haunted life in Poland and whose words I have just recalled, and the robust young man, the Prime Minister's Secretary. I could catch only a few words of their talk.

“ We were all in Warsaw this time last year,” said one of them.

“ And where is the Gestapo ? ” said the young man who was once a courier to Poland.

I looked at these four men who left Poland so recently, as envoys of the country's Underground organisation. Surely by no stretch of imagination could they be described as “ emigrés ” or “ London Poles.”

Mr. Arciszewski, when I was later ushered into his room did not give me the impression of a saint or an apostle

though of course those ideas are conveyed by his white hair and longish beard, and in particular by his gaze, which seemed to say that very few things really matter. He struck me as very erect, even rigid, as if cut out of one single block of stone. While he talked, my general impression was of a rock impassively defying the persistent waves. During the whole interview he spoke with great simplicity and directness. He recalled his first visit to England forty-seven years ago.

"At that time," he said, "when going through the streets at night, I used to see people lying on the pavement. They slept under the walls of houses. They were probably the unemployed or those whose old age was not secure, people who did not yet enjoy the benefits of social insurance. I do not see this now."

"On the other hand," he continued, "there used to be an atmosphere of exuberance and gaiety in the streets of British towns. I used to see couples dancing jigs in the streets. There is no sign of this now. People are in a serious mood, preoccupied with their struggle. They are in earnest about this war, and what is striking is their grave concern about the future."

He then commented on the social reforms in Great Britain and on the growth of socialism.

As I had heard that in Poland Mr. Arciszewski had led the secret military organisation of his party, which I thought was amazing in a man over sixty, I questioned him on that subject.

"We had two types of military formation," he explained, "the militia and the regular military units. The task of the militia was to replace the State or local government police in towns and country districts, or to safeguard the factories. The units operating in factories were protecting industrial and State-owned property. Their task was to put the industries in motion after the end of the occupation. On the other hand, both the local and the industrial militia took part in open fighting in their own district, under the command of the Home Army, and will do so in the areas where future fighting will take place. Directly after the 'cease fire' the militia is to resume its main tasks as security guard."

Here I recalled the Polish Minister of the Interior's description of Christmas, 1943, in Poland, which he spent in a

country house. After Christmas Eve dinner, when the children had been sent to bed, first a security patrol of twelve, and later a large unit of the Home Army, called to rest by the fire and have a hot meal. His hosts told him that this happened nearly every night.

Is it possible for the inhabitants of this island to imagine a situation in which laws protecting the rights of human beings do not exist, in which tribunals and police are there not to protect but to destroy the people? Protection was given to Poles only by the Underground State Administration.

"Besides the territorials," continued Mr. Arciszewski, "we had regular military units. Their tasks were carried out in strict secrecy, and consisted of either sabotage or diversionary activities. I worked out tactics for the military units, based on the experiences and strategy of the P.P.S., the Polish Socialist Party, during the revolutions of 1905 and 1908."

I remembered the two methods of derailing trains, one with stakes and the other with horseshoes, mentioned by the officer of the Home Army, and regretted that he had not been able to refer to more than those two simple devices. Neither did Mr. Arciszewski continue this subject.

We then spoke of the Warsaw Rising and its inevitability as a consequence of five years' struggle against the Germans. Here I thought of some of the questions asked at public meetings in this country.

"I have so often been asked by British people," I said, "whether the Warsaw Rising was not a kind of protest against the setting-up of the so-called Committee of National Liberation in Lublin by the Soviets."

"A protest?" he asked, surprised. "Half the country was already aflame with insurrection. For five years we had been preparing for this. How could we have been passive in a struggle for our freedom and our territory . . . ? The Committee . . ." He paused. "Oh, yes, by then they had already been imported from Moscow."

I felt embarrassed and regretted that I had put an irrelevant question, quite beside the point, to a man who all his life had fought against the harshness of the whole world towards common men, who in his youth defied the might of Tsardom and in his old age that of Hitlerism.

We then spoke of the co-operation between the Polish Government in London and the Polish State Authorities at home.

“Decisions on political issues are taken by agreement between both these authorities, that is, the Government in London, on the one hand, and on the other the Cabinet of Ministers at home, which works in collaboration with the Council of National Unity.”

He then recalled that during the Warsaw Rising, when the city was burning and the fiercest battles were raging, the Cabinet of Ministers and the Underground Parliament (Council of National Unity) were constantly meeting and that the Polish Memorandum to Moscow could not be sent until it had been agreed upon by them.

“Sometimes proposals from Poland are the starting point of our common decisions. The last two declarations of principles worked out in Poland are the fundamental basis of the Polish Government’s policy.”

When looking at this man, who so recently belonged to the State Authorities in Poland and who now heads the Polish Government in London, I realised how futile it would be to go on trying to define in detail where the main responsibility lay, here or in Poland. I asked about the principles adopted in choosing members of the Underground Parliament.

“The same four main political parties that form the Home Cabinet choose their representatives in the Council of National Unity,” he said. “Besides the representatives of these four main parties—in other words, the Socialist and Peasant Parties, the Christian Democratic Labour Party and the National Party—the Underground Parliament also embraces the other political trends existing in Poland, as well as representatives of social and professional institutions.”

The same principle, then, was adopted in Poland as in Great Britain during the present emergency, in which all political parties, except the Communists, share the burden of responsibility.

I also asked whether the British official attitude towards the Polish Government—described by the British press as “somewhat cool”—affects Polish policy.

“By no means,” he said. “Our policy is based on treaties and obligations.”

I was anxious to learn to what extent the collapse of the Warsaw Rising affected the Underground Movement in Poland.

“After the fall of Warsaw,” said Mr. Arciszewski, “those members of the Underground State Organisation who had not perished managed to leave the city during the evacuation. The Deputy Prime Minister, the other Ministers and the Council of National Unity still remain in close touch with us, and also with the Home Army, which continues to fight. They are all active in the territories still under German occupation.”

He did not continue the subject. Warsaw was a big city and provided more protection than the provinces. This veteran of the Polish struggle for independence, who in his youth spent three years in prison, began speaking instead of the first difficult moments for Poland during this war.

“It was during the siege of 1939,” he said, “that the Underground Movement in Poland started. In the deep shelter of the Postal Savings Bank in Warsaw—the same place, by the way, for a time was General Bor’s headquarters during the recent rising—representatives of the Polish Socialist Party and the Army, took an oath, in September, 1939, that the struggle would continue in spite of everything. The city was burning, and people were still dying in defence of Warsaw, which stood on the Germans’ route to the east. Later, the basis of co-operation was widened. In December, 1939, I was at an assembly to which other political parties also sent representatives. Besides officers of the regular army, emissaries of the Polish Government then in Paris were present. We discussed joint military co-operation. All political movements created their own military units and joined them to the secret organisation of the regular army.

“If you ask me what kind of work in Underground Poland gave me the greatest satisfaction,” continued Mr. Arciszewski with animation, “I should say it was that of finding a common platform among people representing various trends of political thought, to work out a common coherent plan. We must take into account that there is no Right or Left wing in Poland at present. All parties gave their signatures to the same declarations of principles. All we stand for is the

restoration of the majesty of the law. All want the best relations with our neighbours. All defend the same right to independence and to our own territory. If you speak of political trends, there is only one now in Poland."

As I was walking back through the London streets I thought about the sentence which had particularly caught my attention. "All we stand for is the restoration of the majesty of the law," Mr. Arciszewski had said. Did he mean the abolition of the lawlessness brought about by foreign occupation, against which his militia fought, or did he mean that all over the world the rights of common people must be secured?—he spoke about social reforms in Great Britain. Or he might also have meant a democracy in a still wider sense, not only among individuals and classes, but among nations, a democracy in which the rights of every nation would be honoured—he mentioned international treaties.

And if treaties and international conventions were not honoured, if prisoners of war were murdered, towns through which foreign troops pass turned into heaps of ruins? Eventually all institutions of the civilised world would be abolished by the wild mob, and our civilisation, based on Christian principles, would collapse.

"All we stand for is the restoration of the majesty of the law." I again recalled the words of the Polish Prime Minister, and experienced a feeling of complete calm and security. By reminding the world of the necessity of the rule of law, Poland is adding one more contribution to the Allied effort. Is this not the very thing for which British soldiers are fighting, far away from their homes?

January, 1945.

William Brown & Co. Ltd., 11/12, Bury Street, London, E.C.3.