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# POLAND— OUR NEIGHBOUR

By

N. BALTIISKY

9d



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**POLAND—OUR NEIGHBOUR**

(From "War and the Working Class," Moscow)

By **N. BALTIISKY**

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Picture on front shows: Soldiers of the KOSCIUSKO DIVISION of the Polish Army, raised on Soviet soil, salute their flag, which carries the motto "For Your Freedom and Ours" on one side, and "Honour and Fatherland" on the other.

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# POLAND OUR NEIGHBOUR

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**By N. BALTIISKY**

**P**OLAND has been, and must continue to be, the Soviet Union's neighbour, and consequently Soviet public opinion cannot help but be interested as to the kind of neighbour the resurrected Polish State will be after the present war. Will it be a peaceful and respectable neighbour or a malicious disturber of the security of our Western frontier, and of peaceful collaboration with the nations of Europe? This is a question of no little importance and one to which we cannot remain indifferent.

The Soviet Government on its part has consistently striven to establish friendly relations between the U.S.S.R. and Poland on a basis of durable good-neighbourly relations and mutual respect. This striving was very distinctly expressed once again in the Soviet Government's statement of January 11, 1944, and not only expressed but confirmed by its magnanimous proposal regarding the settlement of the question of Poland's frontier.

The emigré Government of Poland and its adherents, however, do not wish to establish good-neighbourly relations with the Soviet Union. These circles are doing all in their power to prevent the establishment of friendly relations between Poland and the Soviet Union, in spite of the fact that the establishment of such relations is primarily in the interest of Poland, as well as being in the common interest for the establishment of a firm and lasting collaboration between the peace-loving nations of Europe.

The prospects of Poland's foreign policy have been widely discussed in the foreign Press recently. It seems to us, however, that some of the opinions expressed on these questions take little account of past experience, and yet all attempts to appraise the trend of development of Poland's foreign policy will be fruitless unless the lessons of the recent past are taken into account. It will be far more useful, therefore, to recall what kind of a neighbour Poland was to the Soviet Union after Versailles.

## POLAND AS NEIGHBOUR

**I**T is common knowledge that a century and a half ago Prussia, Austria, and Tsarist Russia seized and partitioned Poland among themselves and demolished the then existing Polish State. For several decades afterwards the progressive sections of Polish society fought for the restoration of an independent Polish State, but in a period of rapid capitalist development the Polish squires became so intimately connected with the ruling



classes of the countries to which Poland's territories had passed that they abandoned all thought of restoring Poland's independence.

At the beginning of the present century, the Polish people inhabiting the main part of the country, which belonged to Tsarist Russia, were ground under the yoke of the Tsarist autocracy, but the Polish squires did not raise a finger to combat Tsarism. On the contrary, they cringed before it and supported it in resisting the attacks of the oppressed masses of the Russian people. And when the Russian people threw off the yoke of Tsarism, brought about the great October Revolution, and transformed what had been the Tsarist Empire into the Soviet State, into a fraternal union of free nations, the Polish squires forthwith became the bitter enemies of our country.

It would do no harm to recall, however, that the Soviet Revolution in Russia was, of course, a vital factor in the restoration of an independent Polish State. As early as November, 1917, the Soviet Government proclaimed the right of nations inhabiting Russia to self-determination. Even before the First World War had drawn to a close the Soviet Government, by its decree of August 29, 1918, had annulled all treaties concluded by the Tsarist Government for the partition of Poland and recognised the "inalienable right (of the Polish people) to independence and unity."

This declaration served as the cornerstone for the restoration of Poland to a state of independence. At that time the Polish State did not yet exist. Poland was occupied by German troops. Only after the final defeat of Germany in November, 1918, did the "Council of Regents" from Poland, which was appointed by the German occupational authorities, transfer power to Pilsudski, who, during the war, had been at the head of the Polish legions, which formed part of the Austro-German Army. We will mention in passing that, while in the service of the Austro-German General Staff, Pilsudski and his followers were quite satisfied with a promise from the German imperialists to "restore" Poland in the form of a German protectorate within the boundaries of the former kingdom of Poland, then a constituent part of the Tsarist empire. It goes without saying that this promise covered neither the Ukrainian nor Belorussian territories, which the German imperialists intended to seize for themselves, nor Posen and Galicia, including Cracow, which were to remain within the boundaries of Germany, Austria, and Hungary. After the collapse of German imperialism, the Pilsudskyites forgot their former "modesty" and betrayed a voracious appetite for alien territory.

Subsequently, in 1919, the Polish State was formally recognised by a decision of the Versailles Conference. The Constitution of Poland was adopted only in 1921.

Immediately after the Versailles Conference, Pilsudski, after reaching agreement with the French imperialists, began to make



preparations for war against Soviet Russia. The Soviet Government attempted to open negotiations with Poland with the object of averting war, but the Polish Government would not even discuss the question of maintaining peace. It was determined to make war. Why? Was war essential for Poland's existence or security? Of course not. Even Pilsudski dared not assert anything of the sort. But he thirsted for war in order to achieve the old Polish ambition to become a great Power; he wanted to seize the whole of that part of the Soviet Ukraine situated on the right bank of the Dnieper, right up to Odessa, and also Soviet Belorussia. At the same time he wanted to help the White Guard General Wrangel defeat the Red Army and overthrow the Soviet regime, which the Polish squires detested, in our country.

In the spring of 1920 the Poles started war. Their troops invaded the Soviet Ukraine and captured Kiev. But a month later Soviet troops liberated Kiev and then expelled the boastful Polish invaders from the Ukraine and Belorussia, pursuing them to the gates of Lvov and into Poland proper, right up to Warsaw. It was only due to the treacherous activities of Trotsky and his adherents among the command of the Red Army at that time that the successes of the Soviet troops were nullified, and they were compelled to retreat. When our troops were preparing for another counter-stroke, Poland, lacking the forces to continue the war, was obliged to agree to the conclusion of peace and to abandon a large part of her aggressive aims. But the Soviet Union was also greatly enfeebled by long years of war and economic ruin, while the situation on the fronts in the struggle against another enemy of our country remained strained. In this situation the Soviet Government, desiring a speedy cessation of the war, was obliged to make important concessions to the Polish aggressors. The Soviet Government's proposal that a democratic plebiscite be taken in Eastern Galicia was rejected by Poland and the Soviet Republic was obliged to accept a treaty (the Treaty of Riga, 1921) by which the western parts of the Ukraine and Belorussia remained annexed to Poland. Poland thereby ignored the decision adopted in 1919 by the Supreme Council of the Allied Powers, which had laid down the so-called "Curzon Line" as marking the eastern frontier of Poland and which left the Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia within the boundaries of the Soviet Union. In the autumn of 1920, Poland also seized Vilna, the capital of Lithuania, and also Vilna province.

It is no secret that behind Poland's back in the preparations for the conduct of the war against the Soviet Union stood the governments of the Entente countries which, in 1918, replaced the German imperialists in organising military intervention with the object of overthrowing the Soviet regime and dismembering our country. The Polish squires served these Powers as obedient satellites ready to embark upon any adventure in the struggle against Soviet Russia.



Pilsudski and his adherents changed their masters with extraordinary ease and passed from the service of the German imperialists to that of the French imperialists. This adventurism on the part of the Polish squires revealed the tenacity of the resurrected age-long Great Power aspirations of the ruling circles of Poland. It was enough for the western imperialists to give them free rein and to point to the east for them to rush headlong down the Kiev road on the way to "great conquests."

True, the Polish squires failed by a long way to achieve all their aggressive plans, but the mission entrusted in Versailles to the new Polish State at the moment it was formed—the mission of serving as the imperialist battering ram against the land of the Soviets—left its impress on the entire policy of the Polish State for the course of two decades.

Who knows? Perhaps Poland would have proved to be a peaceful State if at Versailles it had been given only territory within the ethnographical frontiers of the Polish people, and then been firmly told: "Here's your country, if you live peacefully your security and independence will be secure; if, however, you intend to disturb the security of your neighbours, you will have to stand the consequences."

But the imperialists from the victorious Powers spoke to the Poles in entirely different terms. They insinuated that it was the mission of the Polish State to serve as the "bastion of the west against the east," to play a leading role in the struggle against the land of the Soviets and in forming a *cordon sanitaire* along our frontiers. This was enough to cause the Polish squires to lose even the meagre stock of common sense they possessed. In their inflamed imagination Pilsudski and his adherents immediately saw prospects of carrying out a programme of conquest and forming a new great Power—Zecz Pospolita—stretching from "sea to sea," i.e., from the Baltic to the Black Sea, and even to the Caspian.

For the ruling classes in any country to be subject to unrestrained flights of aggressive imagination is disastrous for that country, and dangerous for its neighbours.

### A QUEER COMMERCIAL POLICY

**A**FTER their unsuccessful war against Soviet Russia, the rulers of Poland were obliged to set to work to put the economic life of their country in order. They had to establish commercial relations with other countries. But in examining the commercial policy they pursued in relation to the Soviet Union, one gets the impression that they were constantly trying to hit something with a boomerang which returned and hit them instead.

It was obvious that we did not stand in need of Poland's trade, but Poland needed trade with us. The rulers of Poland, however, would not permit the development of that regular commercial intercourse between the two countries that was dictated by the



interests of Polish industry; they merely wanted to make profits wherever the opportunity offered and to do so as far as possible without any reciprocity.

The main branches of Polish industry depended on imported raw materials. These raw materials Poland could purchase most advantageously from the U.S.S.R.—the former kingdom of Poland obtained its raw materials mainly from Russia. Before the First World War Polish iron and steel plants extensively utilised high-grade ore from Krivoi Rog and coke from the Donets basin. But as post-Versailles Poland reduced her imports from the Soviet Union to a minimum, the production of iron and steel in that country dropped far below the level of 1913.

Brygiewicz, the Polish economist, complained in the magazine *Przemysł i Handel* Number 6, 1926, that Soviet exports of iron and manganese ore from which Poland suffered the greatest shortage went mainly to the west, avoiding Poland, which lay much nearer to the U.S.S.R.

"Unfortunately," he wrote, "the blame for the insignificant imports of Russian ore into Poland rests upon Polish industry. Much benefit could be gained by the possibility of creating a basis for the normal development of our mining industry by mixing Polish ores with high-grade Russian ores."

These sober voices, however, remained in Poland merely voices crying in a wilderness.

In 1913-1914 the textile industry of the former kingdom of Poland consumed 115,000 tons of raw cotton, cotton waste, and imported cotton yarn. Over half this quantity of raw material was obtained from Russia. In post-Versailles Poland, however, in spite of the annexation of textile centres, such as Biala-Bielsko and Belostok, the consumption of textile raw materials greatly diminished. Thus in 1932 Poland imported only 54,000 tons of the above-enumerated materials, and raw cotton was imported almost exclusively from distant countries such as the United States, Egypt, British India, and Brazil.

Polish industry needed the Russian market even more than the imported raw materials of the Soviet Union. Before the First World War, coal from the Dombrowa coalfields not only supplied the home requirements of the kingdom of Poland but also found a market in the Ukraine on the right bank of the Dnieper, Belorussia, Lithuania, Latvia, and Esthonia. Post-Versailles Poland, with its three coal regions of Dombrowa, Cracow, and Upper Silesia, stood in even greater need of foreign coal markets. The fact that the Soviet market was closed to Polish coal, thanks to the anti-Soviet policy pursued by successive Polish governments, was one of the reasons for the decline in the coal output. The same thing applies to the Polish zinc industry, only a small part of the output of which could be marketed at home.

The cotton industry of the former kingdom of Poland exported about 60 per cent. of its output to Russia. The woollen industry was even more dependent upon the Russian market. Post-



Versailles Poland, however, refusing to develop normal commercial intercourse with the Soviet Union, encountered increasing difficulties in finding foreign markets for her textile products. In 1928, Poland exported 9,000 tons of textile goods to the value of seventy million zlotys; in 1938, however, she exported only 5,000 tons to the value of twenty-three million zlotys. As a result production greatly declined.

In 1938, Poland's entire trade with the Soviet Union amounted to only one-half of one per cent. of her total foreign trade. In volume it was even less than little Lithuania's trade with the Soviet Union and much less than the trade of countries like Holland or Belgium with our country.

It is appropriate to ask, can such economic relations between two neighbouring countries be regarded as normal?

What would Americans say, for example, if Canada or Mexico suddenly applied to the United States a commercial policy which caused their trade with the United States to shrink to one-half of one per cent. of their total foreign trade? Americans would undoubtedly call such a commercial policy economic war and, of course, they would be absolutely right.

The economy of the land of the Soviets did not suffer in the least from the fact that Poland declined to develop normal commercial intercourse with us, but that of Poland undoubtedly did. Her anti-Soviet commercial policy was one of the reasons for the steady decline and deplorable state of the country's entire economy. It was a striking expression of the suicidal aloofness of the Polish aristocracy.

With which country did squire-ridden Poland establish the most intimate economic relations? With Germany. Even in 1938, after long years of tariff bickering between Poland and Germany, Polish imports from Germany were twice as large as those from Great Britain and the United States, and ten times as large as those from the Soviet Union.

Poland's exports to Germany amounted to over 24 per cent., to Britain 18.2 per cent., to the United States 5.3 per cent., to the Soviet Union 0.1 per cent. of her total exports. This is characteristic. Poland placed herself in a state of economic dependence upon Germany who, owing to her economic structure, could only exploit Poland and did nothing to facilitate her development.

In addition to this, German capital occupied important positions in Polish industry. Considerable amounts of French, American, Belgian, and British capital were also invested in Polish industry. In the long run all important branches of Polish industry, except the textile industry, passed into the hands of foreign capital.

The Polish squires sold and mortgaged the entire economic foundation of their country. The economic, like the political, independence of Poland was pure fiction.



## TREATMENT OF SUBJECT PEOPLES

ON the insistence of the Soviet Government the Treaty of Riga laid down the definite rights of the Ukrainian, Belorussian and Russian populations inhabiting those parts of the Ukraine and Belorussia which remained in Polish occupation.

It is obvious that had the Polish rulers desired to establish good neighbourly relations with the Soviet Union they would have conscientiously respected these rights of the national minorities, for they were perfectly well aware that the Soviet people were by no means indifferent to the fate of their kinsmen in Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia. But Poland failed to carry out the obligations she undertook in signing the Treaty of Riga.

Clause 7 of the Treaty of Riga states: "Poland grants to persons of Russian, Ukrainian and Belorussian nationality residing in Poland on the basis of equality of nationalities all rights ensuring free development of culture and language, and performance of religious rites." The same clause goes on to say: "Persons of Russian, Ukrainian and Belorussian nationality in Poland have a right within the limits of the laws of the land to cultivate their native language, organise and maintain their schools, develop their culture, and form societies and associations for these purposes."

In the early years of its existence Poland undertook obligations towards the national minorities in a number of other international acts. Thus Clause 93 of the Treaty of Versailles imposed on Poland the obligations to ensure on her territory rights for the national minorities equal to those of Poles. On June 28, 1919, Poland and the Entente Powers signed a special treaty for the protection of national minorities in conformity with which the national minorities were to enjoy political rights equal with the dominant nation and an equal right to hold public office. The treaty also guaranteed the right of national minorities to use their respective native languages in conducting public business, etc. And lastly, on March 15, 1923, the Supreme Council of the Allied Powers noted in its decision that "Poland has recognised that ethnographical conditions of Eastern Galicia require for the latter an autonomous regime."

But all this remained a dead letter. Poland brazenly violated her obligations to her national minorities.

The Soviet Government was obliged to make repeated representations to the Polish Government concerning its gross violations of Clause 7 of the Treaty of Riga. Thus, in its note of May 10, 1924, the Soviet Government stated that:—

"It is impossible to present anything like a complete list of the ways in which the national minorities were subjected to violence and humiliation. Owing to the down-trodden state to which the Belorussian and Ukrainian peoples have been reduced, and their patience, in most cases, their humiliation and the violence done to them, have passed unobserved by public opinion abroad. The atmosphere of

frightful police terrorism that prevails in the Belorussian border districts and in Eastern Galicia, fills the inhabitants of these regions with horror, and this violence and oppression, far from subsiding, is assuming a systematic and wholesale character."

The Polish rulers subjected the peoples of Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia to colonial enslavement of the worst semi-feudal type. It is common knowledge that in these areas the main population—Ukrainian and Belorussian peasants—lived under the unbearable tyranny of the Polish landowners. The peasants suffered from acute land hunger and were kept in bondage by the landlords, who owned vast estates. Throughout Western Ukraine only from 12 to 13 per cent. of the land was owned by the inhabitants—poor and middle peasants. The rest of the land belonged to the squires and "settlers," the Polish military colonists, who had been granted hundreds and thousands of acres of the best land.

In Western Belorussia, 1,027 Polish landlords owned 67.6 per cent. of the land. Prince Januez Radziwill, one of the biggest landed proprietors in the country, former Prussian Army officer, and one-time chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Sejm, the Polish Parliament, owned in Western Ukraine over 72,000 hectares of land. Another landlord, Count Potocki, owned 55,000 hectares.\*

A handful of landlords of this kind cruelly exploited millions of Ukrainian and Belorussian peasants and agricultural labourers, preserving semi-feudal forms of exploitation and personal dependence, such as payment of rent in labour, payment in kind, etc. In many districts of Western Ukraine the peasants at ploughing and harvesting time had to work from fifteen to fifty days on the landowners' farms for the right to use pastures and forests, in payment of debts, etc. The burden of debt and taxation became unbearable; no less than one hundred different taxes were imposed. The peasants were too poor to buy sugar, tea, kerosene, coal or tobacco, and of bread even they never had sufficient. Their children were clad in rags and thousands died annually from undernourishment. The industrial workers in Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia also lived in extreme poverty and oppression.

The Polish authorities in Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia suppressed the development of the culture of the national minorities and waged constant war against their schools. In 1919, at the time that the Polish regime was established in Western Ukraine, there were 3,062 Ukrainian schools; twenty-five years later there were only 135. Prior to the Polish occupation there were 500 Belorussian schools in Western Belorussia, but soon after they were nearly all closed.

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\*An hectare is almost 2½ acres.—ED.



## LANGUAGE AND EDUCATION

**E**VEN official Polish statistics, in which the policy of suppressing the national minorities is concealed to the utmost, give the following data as regards schools. In the educational year 1936-37, elementary schools in Poland were as follows: Polish, 28,337; Ukrainian, 496; Belorussian, 8. Secondary schools: Polish, 756; Ukrainian, 23; Belorussian, one. Higher educational establishments: Polish, 24; other nationalities, none. And this in spite of the fact that the Ukrainian population of Poland numbered eight million and the Belorussian population three million. It is not surprising therefore that in the Ukrainian and Belorussian districts the percentage of illiteracy was extremely high and tended to rise from year to year.

This cruel exploitation and political repression caused widespread discontent among the Ukrainian and Belorussian population. The ruined peasantry refused to pay taxes. In retaliation to the growing discontent of the masses, the rulers of Poland resorted to bloody methods of "pacification." Punitive expeditions were sent to hundreds of villages where they resorted to wholesale and indiscriminate flogging, torture, hanging and shooting. In some years as many as seven or eight hundred villages were subjected to such "pacification." Scores of peaceful villages were razed to the ground by the Polish police. Also frequent were wholesale arrests and trials, in which as many as eighty, one hundred, and one hundred and forty persons appeared in each case. The horrors perpetrated in the dungeons of the Polish *defensywa* (secret police) and Polish prisons are indescribable. No State in Europe—except the Hitler State in Germany—has treated its national minorities so inhumanly as Poland treated hers.

In view of the fact that the Allied Powers placed Poland's international obligations to her non-Polish nationalities under the control of the League of Nations, representatives of the oppressed nationalities repeatedly complained to the League of Nations about their treatment by the Polish rulers, but all these complaints remained fruitless. Yielding to the arrogant demands of the Polish Government the leading Powers of the League of Nations callously abandoned their duty of protecting the elementary rights of the oppressed national minorities; and when Germany and Italy began to denounce the League, the Polish Government became still more arrogant and decided to repudiate its international obligations. Thus on September 13, 1934, the notorious Colonel Beck, then Poland's Minister for Foreign Affairs, made a statement at the Assembly of the League to the effect that Poland no longer recognised the right of international bodies to interfere in questions concerning the national minorities of Poland.

This insane national policy could not but rouse among the masses of the people of Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia



a just and profound hatred towards their Polish oppressors. The servitors of the Pilsudskyites among the Ukrainian bourgeoisie endeavoured to restrain the masses from offering resistance, but popular unrest continued despite this. In many places Peasants' Self-Defence detachments were formed to protect the inhabitants from the Polish punitive expeditions and in Volhynia a Partisan movement developed.

It was clear long before 1939 that the oppressed masses of the Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia were burning with desire to take advantage of the first opportunity that offered to throw off the unbearable oppression of landlord-ridden Poland and secure national reunion with the majority of the Ukrainian and Belorussian peoples, with Soviet Ukraine and Soviet Belorussia.

No impartial observer could have had the slightest doubt about this, and when at last the opportunity arose the inhabitants of the Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia enthusiastically and unanimously joined the fraternal family of the peoples.

### POLAND'S FOREIGN POLICY

**A**FTER Versailles the foreign policy of Poland was invariably hostile towards the Soviet Union. Even the lives of Soviet representatives in Poland were in constant danger, as is witnessed by the assassination of Voikov, the Soviet Ambassador in Warsaw, on June 7, 1927, the attempt on the life of the U.S.S.R. chargé d'affaires in Poland on September 2 of the same year, and the attempt on the life of the U.S.S.R. trade representative in Poland in the summer of 1918. After Hitler came to power in Germany, Poland, where a Fascist regime already existed, steered its foreign policy in the wake of Nazi Germany. From that time Poland's foreign policy became still more hostile towards the Soviet Union and a constant menace to the security not only of our country but of all other peace-loving countries in Europe.

Up to 1933 Poland's foreign policy had leaned mainly on France, with whom she was bound by a military alliance. In 1934 Poland betrayed her ally and established close collaboration with Germany by concluding a political agreement with her, at the time that negotiations were proceeding between France and the Soviet Union for the conclusion of an East European Pact with the object by means of mutual assistance of ensuring security in face of the growing danger of aggression. This pact might also have ensured the security of Poland, but Poland, together with Germany, launched a furious campaign against it and refused to participate, thus frustrating the efforts of its promoters.

In the autumn of 1934, the Soviet Union joined the League of Nations and endeavoured to secure the organisation of collective security for the purpose of curbing aggressors and averting war. Germany and Italy launched a furious campaign against the



League and the principle of collective security, but as they themselves were no longer members of the League, they used the Polish representatives as their agents to disrupt it from within and thwart every attempt to curb aggression. This, practically, was Poland's role in the League of Nations from 1935 to 1938; and exceptional zeal in fulfilling the function of agent of Hitler and Mussolini in the League of Nations was displayed by Beck, the Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs.

But Beck, as Poland's representative, acted not only at Geneva in the interests of the Fascist aggressors. He established contact with Hungary in order to draw her into Hitler's plot against Czechoslovakia. He went to Rumania and Yugoslavia to break up the Little Entente and hereby weaken France and Czechoslovakia. He strove to revive and to expand the Polish-Rumanian War Treaty which had been directed against the Soviet Union. He tried to form an anti-Soviet *bloc* of the Baltic countries under Poland's hegemony. Four or five years before the war Beck visited all the capitals in Europe, everywhere preaching the gospel of non-resistance to the aggressor and inciting opposition to the Soviet Union's peace policy. It was not for nothing that international public opinion dubbed him "Hitler's carpet-bagger."

This, of course, was not merely Beck's personal policy. It was also a fatal policy for Poland. Poland's foreign policy was entirely directed towards supporting the predatory plans of the aggressor. This was admitted frankly, although by no means fully, by Potocki, Polish Minister to the United States, who, in an interview with American journalists, stated that the Polish Government was striving to form a *bloc* of States "from the Baltic to the Black Sea."

"This *bloc*," he said, "would protect Germany's frontier and prevent the Soviet Union from going to the aid of Czechoslovakia and France, in the event of Hitler attacking those countries."

The more Hitlerite Germany's predatory aggressiveness grew, the more persistent became the Polish rulers in their efforts to take the utmost possible advantage of the situation for the purpose of realising their own predatory plans. This was most distinctly revealed in 1938. Welcoming the seizure of Austria by Germany on March 11, 1938, the Polish rulers at once asked themselves: Why should we not squeeze a neighbouring country? Nobody dared resist the German aggression! It seemed to them that the least risky thing would be to start with little Lithuania.

Six days after Germany's seizure of Austria the Polish Government presented an ultimatum to Lithuania and Polish divisions were moved to the Lithuanian frontier. But the Soviet Government forthwith informed the Polish Ambassador in Moscow that it warned Poland not to resort to force, and held



itself free to act in the event of an armed attack upon Lithuania. It was this unambiguous statement alone that brought the rulers of Poland to their senses and persuaded them to abandon their intended act of piracy.

When Hitler began to demand the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia, the Polish Press also launched a campaign against that country, endeavouring to conceal its real object by uttering hypocritical phrases about "protecting" a tiny group of Poles living there.

In the autumn of 1938, after the Munich Agreement, Hitler, as is common knowledge, commenced the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia. Poland forthwith seized the area around Teschen, which belonged to Czechoslovakia, and Hungary seized Southern Slovakia and part of Carpathian Ukraine.

It is characteristic that, following the example of Hitlerite Germany, Poland also launched a campaign demanding colonies. General Kwasniewski stated that Poland would not be satisfied with colonial mandates or concessions, but wanted "her own colonial possessions" as befitted a "great Power"!

As the subsequent course of events showed, Poland's participation in the aggressive policy of Hitlerite Germany constituted a menace to Poland herself, for the Polish Government did nothing to ensure the security of its own country against the danger threatening it from Germany.

On the contrary, it opened the gate to the impending German invasion of Poland. Armed to the teeth and encouraged by the utter impunity they enjoyed, the Hitlerite beasts of prey were already extending their claws towards Poland as their next victim. Soviet public opinion repeatedly warned Poland of the mortal danger she was in, but ruling circles in Poland proved to be blind and deaf. They saw no danger, because they did not wish to see it. They were dazzled by the splendid vistas of great Power conquests that were opened up by the growing aggression of Fascist Germany.

They themselves facilitated the growth of subversive activities by the numerous Hitlerite organisations and agents in Poland. They rejoiced when butcher Goering visited Poland from time to time, to hunt boars. These visits reassured them. That Nazi bully and Prussian swashbuckler was able to outwit and trap the Polish "boars" because they were drawn into the trap by their own avarice.

The Government newspaper *Kurjer Poranny* published an article one day entitled "Is Germany's Policy towards Poland Sincere?" That paper, of course, had not the slightest doubt about the "sincerity" of Hitler's policy and, quoting the opinion of an unnamed Polish diplomat residing in Berlin, it gave the following as grounds for this "sincerity":—



"The key to Hitler's attitude towards Poland is his anti-Russian mission. To achieve her anti-Russian plans Germany needs allies who are directly interested in the achievement of these plans. Among these allies she is glad to see Japan, who is interested in Siberia, Italy who is interested in the Near East, and also Rumania and Poland. This is what our interlocutor told us. If Germany carries out her aggressive intentions towards the Soviets, Poland will become extremely important for Germany."

Isn't this a thinly veiled admission that the ruling circles in Poland were preparing to participate in Hitler's anti-Soviet war in the capacity of an interested ally?

On another occasion the same Government newspaper exclaimed as if inspired: "A new Europe is coming into being and in this new Europe Poland would, of course, obtain its proper place!"

Isn't this exactly what Germany's satellites—Finland, Hungary, and Rumania—wrote and trumpeted in 1941 in the first months of the war they were waging jointly with Germany against the Soviet Union and our allies? It only proves, however, that squire-ridden Poland procured her standard for the struggle for "a new Europe" from the same Berlin store as had Hitler's vassals participating in the present war.

Yes, all the signs go to show that the Polish Government intended to participate in the war on the side of Hitlerite Germany. Poland's entire foreign policy, commencing with 1934, was directed towards this object. This is a fact and an extremely important one. Things turned out differently only because Hitler decided to make Poland his victim, instead of his ally. And only after the Hitler Government itself revealed this intention by arrogantly presenting Poland with aggressive demands in 1939 did Poland again turn to Great Britain and France and beg for their assistance in her misfortune.

Thus our neighbour—post-Versailles Poland—was a mere adventurer.

## WESTERN UKRAINE AND BELORUSSIA

**I**N the autumn of 1939 the national assemblies of Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia petitioned the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. to incorporate their territories in the U.S.S.R. and re-unite them with the Ukrainian S.S.R. and the Belorussian S.S.R. respectively. There cannot be the slightest doubt that this was a genuine application of the principle of the right of nations to self determination.

It is useless for Polish reactionaries and their hangers-on to attempt to prove that the Red Army imposed the decision to join the U.S.S.R. upon the inhabitants of Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia. Actually the Red Army gave the inhabitants of these territories the opportunity to determine freely their own destiny. The Polish central authority fell to pieces before the Red Army's arrival; the Government fled and left the country at the mercy of the German invaders. Had not the Soviet Govern-



ment intervened at the time by sending the Red Army to the aid of their brother peoples of the Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia these territories would have fallen into Hitler's clutches immediately. There is not a little disinterested evidence provided by foreign eye-witnesses of how enthusiastically the Ukrainian and Belorussian inhabitants welcomed the Red Army, their liberator.

The Polish magnates and their flunkys, of course, attempt to question the democratic nature of the elections held in October, 1939, in which the inhabitants of Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia determined their own destiny, but the incontrovertible facts are as follows :—

Firstly, in these elections all men and women aged eighteen or over, irrespective of race, nationality, religion, social origin, property status or former occupation, enjoyed the right to vote. Thanks to this the number of registered voters was far higher than at any preceding election (in which the age qualification was first twenty-one, and later twenty-five). The elections were conducted in constituencies of about five thousand inhabitants, each constituency electing to the national assembly one deputy, whose election required an absolute majority of votes cast by secret ballot.

Secondly, in Western Ukraine 93 per cent. of the electorate (4,433,997 from a total of 4,766,275) went to the polls and Western Belorussia 96.7 per cent. (2,672,280 from a total of 2,763,191). This fact is also evidence of the democratic nature of the elections. The newspapers at the time quoted numerous examples, showing that even the landed nobility, factory owners, etc., enjoyed and exercised the right to vote.

Thirdly, candidates who were nominated by public organisations and were in favour of joining the Soviet Union obtained 4,032,154 votes or 90.9 per cent. of the total Western Ukraine and 2,409,522 votes or 90.7 per cent. of the total in Western Belorussia. Thus the opposition vote, including spoiled ballot papers, was only about 9 per cent. of all votes cast.

Who, indeed, can doubt that representatives of the people elected in this democratic manner really reflected the will of the overwhelming majority of the inhabitants of Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia? The question of seceding from Poland and rejoining their kinsmen in the Soviet republics was discussed in the course of the three weeks' election campaign with the most lively interest at numerous meetings of workers, peasants and intellectuals. The elected deputies who gathered at the National Assembly of Western Ukraine on October 26 and the National Assembly of Western Belorussia on October 28, 1939, unanimously decided to petition the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. to incorporate their territories with the U.S.S.R. and to re-unite them with Ukrainian S.S.R. and the Belorussian S.S.R. respectively.



Was this not a democratic plebiscite in the fullest sense of the word? Let the Polish reactionaries try to answer the question: Where, when and in what part of the world has an oppressed nation ever expressed its will to abolish its fortuitously imposed subjection to alien rule in a more democratic manner?

Thus the decision of the National Assemblies of Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia, and also the extraordinary fifth session of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. remains unimpeachable. The Ukrainian and Belorussian inhabitants of Poland at that time exercised the democratic right of nations to self determination and decided to re-unite their respective territories, which the Poles had usurped in 1920, with the territories of the bulk of the Ukrainian and Belorussian peoples. Since the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. ratified this expression of the will of the Ukrainian and Belorussian population and gave it constitutional sanction, this part of the question must be regarded as closed. The only question that can be open to reconsideration is that of the final line of the Soviet-Polish frontier.

### THE FRONTIER

On this question the Soviet Government on January 11, 1944, issued a statement to the effect that it did not regard the Soviet-Polish frontier of 1939 as final, and that by agreement with the Soviet Union this frontier could be altered in favour of Poland by transferring to that country those districts in which a Polish population predominates. In that case, the Soviet Government stated, the Soviet-Polish frontier could run approximately along the so-called Curzon line that was adopted in 1919 by the Supreme Council of the Allied Powers.

This proposal of the Soviet Government for the final solution of the Soviet-Polish frontier problem is a further striking proof of the just, high-principled and genuinely democratic character of the national policy consistently pursued by the Soviet Government, which recognises the right of nations to self determination, and desires a stable peace and durable friendly collaboration among the nations.

What are the main advantages of the Soviet Government's new proposals? While preserving in full force the reunion with the U.S.S.R. of the territories of the Ukrainian and Belorussian populations, it at the same time provides a just solution of the problem of those districts in which Polish inhabitants predominate. In the autumn of 1939 it was impossible to separate these districts from the Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia, which were being incorporated in the U.S.S.R., for this would have meant throwing them into the clutches of the Hitlerites. That is why the majority even of the Polish inhabitants did not wish to be separated. Now, however, when real prospects for the liberation and regeneration of Poland have arisen, the situation is different.



Now the question of transferring these districts to Poland can be discussed.

For us, the Soviet people, the Soviet Government's proposal is valuable as embodying a principle. The right of nations to self-determination and national unification is one of the fundamental principles of the Constitution of the Soviet Union. No other multi-national State has either the desire or the courage to inscribe in its Constitution the principle that every nation constituting that State enjoys the right to free secession. Our Stalin Constitution contains this principle and we are proud of it; and this, far from weakening, still further strengthens the indestructible unity of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Respecting the right of the Soviet peoples to self-determination, we also recognise and respect the right of other nations to self-determination and national unity. And since certain districts in which the Polish population predominates have been incorporated within our Western frontiers, we welcome the readiness expressed by the Soviet Government to give these Polish districts the opportunity of rejoining Poland. We regard this as another magnificent expression of the Lenin-Stalin national policy pursued by our Government.

Furthermore, the Soviet Government makes provision for the expansion of Poland's frontiers by restoring to Poland the ancient territories of that country which Germany had annexed in the past and without which the unification of the whole Polish people within their State is impossible.

Clearly agreement regarding the final determination of the Soviet-Polish frontier based on the Soviet Government's proposal would create exceptionally favourable conditions for establishing a stable and permanent friendship between the Polish people and their neighbouring Ukrainian, Belorussian, and Russian peoples. Grounds for friction over territorial questions would disappear once and for all. Nothing would prevent the peoples of Poland and the Soviet Union from uniting forthwith in the struggle against the common foreign foe—Hitler Germany; and this is dictated by the interests of both countries and the common cause of all the Allies. It is quite obvious that if the present Polish Government really wished to reach a final settlement of controversial questions and establish friendship between Poland and the Soviet Union, and if it really desired to wage the joint struggle against the Germans, it would without a moment's hesitation declare its readiness to accept the Soviet Government's proposal. However, it desires neither friendship nor a settlement.

Examination of the facts will show what the Polish Government wants and what it does not want.

#### HAVE THE POLISH SQUIRES CHANGED ?

**I**F we ask ourselves why the present Polish Government is opposed to the settling of the question of the Soviet-Polish frontier on such a reasonable and just basis, we shall find that



its immediate motive is that it champions the material interests of the big border land-owners, the Radziwills, Sapichas, Potockis, and others, who own vast estates in the Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia. It sets the selfish interests of this handful of Princes and Counts higher than the national interests of Poland.

But this does not yet fully explain the uncompromising position held by the emigré Polish Government and its supporters. The Polish reactionary Government would in any case ensure a privileged position for their precious Radziwills and Potockis in one way or another. Hence the root of the evil must lie deeper. Where is it?

Anybody who has followed the discussion of the Polish question in the columns of the foreign Press could not have failed to note the following circumstances. When well-intentioned but rather naive writers try to prove to Polish reactionaries that a wise and moderate conduct on their part would put an end to the controversies between Poland and the Soviet Union, it is precisely this plea that rouses the ire of the Polish ruling clique most of all. In this respect the Polish squires put one in mind of the grasping lawyers of olden days, who deliberately dragged out litigation over the inheritance of a property for years and even decades for the sake of the fees; it used to be said that such lawyers tried to convert such litigation into life pensions for themselves. Evidently the Polish reactionaries have an interest in endlessly dragging out the controversy with the Soviet Union; it provides them with a political life pension. After all they have no ideological and political capital, if one may say so, except their anti-Soviet Chauvinism. This is the source of their political livelihood. Without this glue they would have nothing with which to stick together the political combinations and coalitions which they need for the purpose of retaining governmental power; and this is far more important to them than the national and political interests of Poland. This is the root of the evil.

### THE POLISH PRESS

**R**EADING Polish newspapers which are closely connected with the emigré Government one gets the impression that they are in constant dread that their readers may grow weary of anti-Soviet slander and cease to hold aloof from the Soviet peoples. That is why these newspapers constantly try to dope their readers with the drug of anti-Soviet Chauvinism. Newspapers which are secretly distributed in Poland and directed by the London centre are particularly zealous in stirring up enmity. It is extremely characteristic that in the early part of 1943, when the historic victories of the Red Army in the region of Stalingrad, in the North Caucasus and Don area, roused the admiration of all freedom-loving nations, the underground Pilsudski organisations in Poland which stand close to the Polish emigré Government launched a scurrilous anti-Soviet campaign,



in the course of which they indulged in outpourings of which the following are examples :—

*Panstwo Polskie* wrote :

“An essential condition for our victory and our very existence is at least the enfeeblement, if not the defeat of, Russia.”

Another newspaper, *Polska Walczy*, wrote :—

“Everybody is longing as speedily as possible to enter on a new order without the Germans and, if the German's historical mission is fulfilled, without Russia.”

This Polish newspaper obviously counted on the fulfilment of the “Germans' historical mission.” A third Pilsudski newspaper bearing the title of the *Eastern Territories of the Republic of Poland* gave utterance to the following howl :—

“Russia has proved that to the east of Poland there exists a savage community, the extermination of which will be as much a boon for the whole of the world as the extermination of Germany.”

Such are the gigantic doses of anti-Soviet dope which the Pilsudski gentlemen deem essential to inject into the veins of their readers in Poland. To enhance the effect of this dope they advocate far-reaching plans for the usurpation of Soviet territory. While the diplomats of the emigré Government talk only about preserving the frontier laid down by the Treaty of Riga, *Rzecz Pospolita*, the official organ of this Government's representation in Poland, says the following :—

“The line of our Eastern frontier, as laid down by the Treaty of Riga, is the minimum of our aims in the east.”

In another article (published in February, 1942) the same newspaper quite definitely indicated the direction of their usurpatory designs by stating that in the east, the regions of the Dvina and Dnieper, the natural geographical and strategical frontiers of Poland, remained far outside her territory. *Polska Walczy* which stands close to the Polish Government in London, wrote (in October, 1942) :—

“Naturally the area of expansion of Poland's constructive efforts in Eastern Europe is the space between the frontiers of Poland and ethnographical Russia, that is the area between the Baltic and the Black Sea, and particularly the Ukrainian and Belorussian territories beyond the frontiers of Poland.”

These are only a few examples ; numerous other arrogant effusions of this kind could be quoted. They testify, firstly, to the fact that there is not only a German but also a Polish *Drang Nach Osten* ; and secondly, that the Polish squires even in their present position, practically without State power, cannot refrain from betraying their ferocious, though toothless, imperialism. They are shouting about this to-day, even more vociferously than before 1939, before Poland's military debacle. Ordinary mortals usually lose the power of speech when suffering from severe shock ; the Polish squires lose the power to remain silent.

Thus Tadeusz Bielecki, one of the most prominent members of the Polish “National Council,” wrote a programme article entitled



"Greater Poland—the Centre of Central Europe," in which he demanded that the Soviet Union should be deprived of the power to influence European affairs in so far as, according to Bielecki, "it is not a European Power" (*Mysl Polska*, February 20, 1942). Grabski, the President of this National Council, though trying to write in a more moderate tone, cannot, however, curb his fantasy and belches forth the following rhodomontade:—

"We must abandon high faluting phrases about becoming a great power, but we must not abandon realistic great power politics. We must build up the necessary military might which will be capable of repelling attacks of any of our neighbours, in order to assure Poland a position in the international arena commensurate with her historical role in Middle and Eastern Europe, etc."

What is this? Megalomania, adventurism, or quixotism? At all events, it is clear that the centres of inhibition have ceased to function in these people's heads. Naturally they refuse to hear a word about the Curzon Line. For them even the frontiers laid down by the Treaty of Riga are only the minimum of their aggressive ambitions in the East and, moreover, they realise that the final settlement of controversial questions between Poland and the U.S.S.R. would forthwith reduce their entire political platform—and also themselves—to useless lumber.

#### CAN THEY FIGHT THE NAZIS?

THE facts prove that, every time the question arises of the supporters of the emigré Polish Government taking a practical part in the active armed struggle against the Germans, this Government, contrary to its own verbal assurances, always finds a pretext for beating a retreat. Such was the case in the U.S.S.R. (1941-1942), and such is the case in Poland.

The Soviet Government provided the Polish Government with the opportunity of forming and training in the U.S.S.R. a Polish Army for the purpose of fighting the German invaders jointly with the Red Army, and granted it a loan without interest for the purpose. In conformity with a proposal made by the Polish General Anders, it was agreed that as each division became ready for action it should be despatched to the Soviet-German front.

In October, 1941, the Polish Army already numbered over 41,000 men (of whom 2,630 were officers), but General Anders did not send a single division to the front. Instead, the Polish Government in its declaration of December 4, 1941, again promised that the troops of the Polish Republic stationed on the territory of the Soviet Union will wage war against the German robbers shoulder to shoulder with the Soviet troops. But the Polish Government had no intention of keeping this promise. In February, 1942, the Polish Army already numbered over 73,000, but the Polish Government refused to send its units to the front on the grounds that "the utilisation of individual units will produce no results." In conformity with the wishes of the



Polish Government, the Soviet Government permitted the evacuation in March, 1942, of a part of the Polish troops (31,000 men) to Iran. In June, 1942, it became perfectly clear that the Polish Army had no intention whatever of fighting the Hitlerites on the Soviet-German front. The question was then raised of completely evacuating this army from the U.S.S.R., and in August an additional 44,000 men were evacuated to the Near East. There General Anders' army has been idly kicking its heels to this day.

It is common knowledge that while betraying this persistent passivity in relation to the war against the Germans, many of the Polish Government's representatives in the U.S.S.R., ostensibly engaged in philanthropic activities for the benefit of Polish citizens, displayed considerable activity in organising espionage against the Soviet Union and spreading provocative defeatist rumours.

Finally, in the spring of 1943 the emigré Polish Government sank so low that it assisted the Hitler propaganda service in its scurrilous campaign connected with the massacre, by the Germans, of Polish war prisoners and officers in the Katyn forest near Smolensk. The Soviet Government then decided to break relations with the emigré Polish Government. In the light of material published by the special commission established for the investigation of the circumstances of the shooting by the German Fascist invaders of Polish officers and war prisoners in the Katyn forest, the revolting sequence of Nazi provocation, murder, and fraud in this matter is fully revealed. In the public pillory, side by side with the Hitlerites, stand their accomplices in the Polish Government.

In Poland itself the supporters of the emigré Government on their own assurances have long been ready for the armed struggle against the German invaders, but they have done nothing, as they are waiting for a signal from London. From London, however, we hear no exhortation to fight, but the warnings of the "Commander-in-Chief" Sosnkowski and his associates: "You must remain calm," "You must not yield to unbridled instincts of despair," etc. Had the inhabitants of Poland heeded these exhortations to remain passive the German invaders in Poland would have felt absolutely safe and could have continued their atrocities against the Polish people undisturbed. Happily the real patriots of Poland, like those in other countries, scorned these treacherous exhortations and are waging a stubborn and heroic struggle against the German miscreants.

The official Polish Press justifies the Government's "waiting policy" on the grounds that it is necessary to avoid "premature and needless sacrifice." But this is obviously an evasion, for the emigré Government is restraining not only rebellion but all forms of struggle against the German invaders, and as experience has proved, passivity entails no less sacrifice than active struggle, which dislocates the rear of the German Army.



In complete harmony with Sosnkowski's suspect policy, the underground semi-official bulletin *Informacyjny* wrote on March 18, 1943 :—

"The fighting spirit in the governor generalship has grown very considerably; further premature growth is inexpedient from the point of view of Polish interests. The acceleration of mass armed revolts against the invaders would benefit only the Communists."

On February 11, 1943, the same paper frankly admits :—

"We could strike heavy blows at the invaders and wage the struggle on a wider scale, but we deliberately refrain from doing so. We are bound by the instructions of the Government and the commander-in-chief of the armed forces of the country to wait for the order to arms."

In relation to the patriotic partisans of Poland—the active enemies of Hitler—the supporters of the emigré Government do not confine themselves to a position of passive waiting, but fiercely denounce them and, when the opportunity arises, offers to resort to bloody violence against them. *Swit* radio station, which has lately proclaimed itself the official radio station of the emigré Government representatives, engages in unbridled incitement against the partisans. It describes all democratic anti-Fascists as Communists, and the Polish partisan units as "wrecker bands" or "robber bands," just as the Germans do. Thus on September 22, 1943, *Swit* trumpeted :—

"Robber bands are also roaming our country. Some of them disguise themselves with historical names, Tadeusz, Kosciuszko, Mickiewicz, Kilinski, Dombrowski, and those of many other great Poles."

It is evident from this that the *Swit* radio station incites its listeners precisely against those partisan detachments which bear the names of Kosciuszko, Mickiewicz, and others, and are heroically fighting the German invaders against great odds.

In August, 1943, supporters of the Polish Government in London brutally exterminated the Kilinski Polish partisan unit. In the district of Yanow, in the Lublin region, this unit encountered an armed Government detachment, commanded by Polish officers and armed with heavy and light machine-guns. While negotiations were proceeding with the view to combining the operations of the two units against the invaders, the Government unit wantonly attacked the Killinski unit, surrounded it, and shot men down with machine-guns. The survivors were disarmed, bound, and brutally hacked to pieces with axes. In all, thirty men were treated in this way. Only one member of the unit managed to escape.

It is noteworthy that in *Biuletyn Informacyjny*, September 2, 1943, "The Leadership of the underground struggle" reported "the liquidation of the bandits of the Yanow district of Lublin." This, then, is what the agents of Sosnkowski are capable of!

The supporters of the emigré Government are particularly active in combating the partisans in connection with the latter's attacks on certain Polish quislings who sold themselves to the German invaders.

Polish newspapers sometimes assert that the Germans found no traitors whatever among the Poles. This is a downright falsehood. They found a number of quislings among the intimate friends of many prominent Polish reactionary emigrés, particularly among those close to the camp of Sosnkowski.

Such open traitors for example are Leon Kozłowski, ex-Premier of the Sanacyjny Government of 1934 and organiser of the Bereza Kartuske concentration camp; Wysocki, ex-Polish Ambassador in Berlin; Count Roniker, the big landlord, formerly a notable Pilsudskyite, whom the German invaders appointed President of the Chief Wardens' Council, and a number of others.

In connection with the execution of the Polish patriots, the *Swit* radio station stated on October 1, 1943:—

"Communists pass sentence in the name of Ambassador Replin (Russian Ambassador in Poland in the reign of Catherine the Second—N.B.). Rzecz Pospolita will judge and pass sentence on these self-appointed judges—agents of Replin."

As is evident from the above, those Government circles which control *Swit* radio station (and speak in the name of the new Rzecz Pospolita) act as the faithful guards of the despicable traitors who sold themselves to the German invaders. This is not surprising considering the past careers of the leading figures in the Polish emigré Government such as Raczkiewicz and Sosnkowski. In the past, Raczkiewicz, to whom Mosticki, Premier of Poland, "transferred presidential powers" when he fled to Switzerland, was Governor of Vilna, and directed the suppression of the Belorussian people's organisation known as the *Gromada* and the sanguinary pacification of Western Belorussia. In 1935-36 he was a member of the Fascist Government, together with Beck, as Minister for the Interior, and deported very many Polish democrats to the Bereza Kartuske concentration camp. Sosnkowski, whom Raczkiewicz appointed "Commander-in-Chief" and Minister of War, is one of the chief Polish Fascists, distinguished as such already before the war.

Is it surprising that such representatives of the Polish Government are not only incapable of organising the struggle against the German Fascists, but often play into the latter's hands? These men have not the desire to fight German Fascism. They are divorced from the Polish people and do not in the slightest degree represent either their real interests or their real opinions.

The temper of the masses of the Polish people, groaning under the heel of the German invaders, may be judged by the meetings held in May, 1943, in Opatow, Radom, Kielce, Cracow, and other districts of Poland, which have passed resolutions denouncing the Katyn fraud, expressing contempt for the pro-Hitlerite flunkies Kozłowski and Wysocki, and declaring that Polish patriots have nothing in common with the policy of the emigré Government which is continuing the fatal policy of the Becks and Rydz-Smigly.



## WHAT KIND OF NEIGHBOUR?

THE Soviet Government repeatedly stated that it stands for the restoration of a strong and independent Poland and for friendship between the Soviet Union and Poland. The Polish Chauvinists and their friends, however, who are opposed to collaboration between Poland and the Soviet Union against the Germans, vehemently exclaim that behind the Soviet Union's desire for friendship with Poland is the desire to restrict her independence. Strangely enough in their minds independence is incompatible with friendship : either independence or friendship—one appears to exclude the other. The same line of argument is pursued by certain reactionary circles in Britain and America with which the Polish squires are connected.

For example, F. Voigt, editor of the *Nineteenth Century and After*, argues that "if in conformity with the wishes of the Russians a friendly Government is established in Poland, it will be a Government friendly to Russia, and therefore subject to her."

It is evident these gentlemen are opposed to an independent Poland combining friendship with the Soviet Union and mutual assistance against the Germans; they demand for Poland independence combined with hostility towards the Soviet Union, and the prospect of another rapprochement between Poland and an aggressive Germany.

Isn't it obvious that such an attitude towards our country on the part of a neighbouring country would be an abuse of independence? We have experienced this attitude on the part of Poland in the past; it caused us no little harm and proved to be fatal for Poland. It was the anti-Soviet position held by Poland that kept her in constant dependence upon bellicose alien imperialism and made her first the accomplice, and later the victim, of German imperialism.

In spite of all these lessons of history Polish Chauvinists still wish to pursue this fatal path. One would think that the duty of other nations would be to curb these inveterate adventurers and convince Poland that this path is unprofitable and unsafe for her.

Certain British and American publicists, however, prefer to encourage the truculent Polish squires in their efforts to set up a new hostile ring around the U.S.S.R. With this object they have dug up old Polish plans which history had long buried, of forming a federation of all States "from sea to sea"—that is, from the Baltic to the Black Sea and the Aegean—and have extolled this lifeless idea so much that the representatives of the emigré Polish Government advanced it as a demand in their programme. Strictly speaking, it is nothing more or less than the notorious plan proposed by Clemenceau in 1919 of forming a stifling *cordon sanitaire* around the land of the Soviets.

It is common knowledge now that the attempts to carry out such plans benefited only German imperialism.



The Soviet Government desires to establish friendship between the U.S.S.R. and Poland on the basis of durable and good-neighbourly relations, and, if the Polish people desire it, on the basis of an alliance for mutual aid against the Germans as the principal enemies of the Soviet Union and Poland.

Why do certain reactionary circles in America and Britain object to this? The United States and Great Britain also wish to have neighbouring small and medium-sized countries as their friends and not their enemies. Nobody condemns them for this. If the United States objects when the Argentine, which is 6,000 miles from New York, adopts an anti-United States position, why should the Soviet Union reconcile itself to the fact that Poland, its immediate neighbour, adopts an anti-Soviet position, which, moreover, obviously runs counter to Poland's own interests? Has not experience proved that only by an alliance with the U.S.S.R. can Poland really ensure her security and independence?

Recently the American publicist, Walter Lippman, in discussing the mutual relations of the leading Great Powers with their neighbours, said that no single country bordering on the Soviet Union, no single country in Western Europe adjacent to Great Britain nor a single neighbouring American republic could count on peace and order unless it realised that it existed in a definite system of strategical defence. The country that rebels against this may cause endless trouble for itself and the whole world.

The Soviet Union needs no spheres of influence nor vassals; it needs friendly neighbours and its neighbours need its friendship. Every attempt to set our neighbours against us and prevent the development of friendly relations and lasting collaboration between them and our great country will obviously run counter to the task of ensuring lasting peace and security for all peace-loving people.

Normal political relations between neighbouring countries presuppose also the establishment of normal economic relations. As we have seen, the rulers of post-Versailles Poland, guided by a policy of hostility towards us, reduced Poland's trade with the U.S.S.R. almost to zero. In this they followed a very simple "principle": on the one hand, to refrain from taking any step which, though in the interests of Poland, might help to strengthen the Soviet Union or give Polish economic circles interest in the further development of trade with the U.S.S.R.; on the other hand to refrain from nothing which, in the opinion of the rulers of Poland, would serve to weaken the Soviet Union. It must be supposed that a reborn Poland will not try to avoid the development of economic collaboration with the Soviet Union. Only on the basis of such collaboration can Poland secure the rapid restoration and further development of her economy. Regenerated Poland will also be deeply interested in preserving and enhancing unity among the Allied Great Powers, whereas those in the present emigré Government who pursue Beck's policy



are, like the German Fascists, counting on being able to cause friction between Great Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union, and particularly on waging a scurrilous campaign against the Teheran Three-Power Conference, as well as against the Soviet-Czechoslovak Treaty of friendship, mutual aid, and post-war collaboration.

It is not surprising that the League of Polish Patriots in the U.S.S.R., as well as numerous representatives of progressive Polish circles in America and other countries, assert that the Polish people are faced with the task of expelling the reactionaries and semi-Fascists from the Polish Government. Democratic Polish organisations operating underground in Poland itself are equally emphatic on this point.

The League of Polish Patriots in the U.S.S.R. has formed a Polish Army Corps consisting of Poles fit for active service who refused to flee from the battlefield with General Anders and are determined to play their part in the present glorious struggle for liberation.

As is well known, the first divisions of this Polish Corps are already fighting shoulder to shoulder with units of the heroic Red Army, are routing the German Fascists, and are bringing liberation to Poland.

This joint struggle for liberation opens a new page in the history of Soviet-Polish relations—a page of collaboration for the mutual benefit of both countries.

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## APPENDIX

*The following is the full text of the statement made to representatives of the British and American Press in Moscow on May 6, 1943, by A. Y. Vyshinsky, Assistant People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the U.S.S.R., in connection with the breach of relations between the Soviet Government and the Polish emigré Government a few days earlier.*

**I**N connection with inquiries made by some representatives of the British and American Press concerning Soviet-Polish relations, I think it is necessary on behalf of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs to acquaint you with some facts and circumstances bearing on this problem.

This is all the more necessary at the present time in view of the fact that the present Polish Government, under the influence of pro-Hitlerite elements within it and in the Polish Press, provoked the well-known decision of the Soviet Government to suspend relations with the Polish Government, while Polish officials, Polish Press, and Polish radio continue to circulate numerous false statements concerning Soviet-Polish relations. In so doing they very often take advantage of the circumstance that wide public circles are not informed of the real facts bearing on these relations.

### 1. ON THE POLISH ARMY UNITS WHICH WERE FORMED IN THE U.S.S.R.

**F**OLLOWING the conclusion of the Polish-Soviet Agreement on July 30, 1941, the formation of a Polish Army was begun on the territory of the Soviet Union in accordance with the military agreement concluded by the Soviet and Polish Commands on August 14 of the same year.



At the same time, by agreement between the Soviet and Polish Commands, the total strength of the Polish Army was fixed at 30,000 men, while in conformity with the suggestion of General Anders, it was also found expedient that as soon as one or another division was ready it should be dispatched immediately to the Soviet-German front.

The Soviet military authorities, which on the instruction of the Soviet Government assisted the Polish Command by every means to achieve the speediest settlement of all problems connected with the accelerated formation of the Polish units, established full equality of supplies for the Polish Army and for Red Army units in process of formation.

To finance measures connected with the formation and maintenance of the Polish Army, the Soviet Government granted to the Polish Government a loan without interest amounting to 65,000,000 roubles, which later, after January 1, 1942, was raised to 300,000,000 roubles. In addition to these sums allotted by the Soviet Government, more than 15,000,000 roubles were distributed in unrepayable allowances to officers of Polish Army units in process of formation.

It should be noted that, although the strength of the Polish Army had been fixed originally at 30,000 men, on October 25, 1941, the Polish Army already numbered 41,561 men, including 2,630 officers. The Soviet Government received favourably the proposal of the Polish Government, made in December, 1941, by General Sikorski for the further expansion of the contingent of the Polish Army to 96,000 men. As a consequence of this decision, a Polish Army was formed consisting of six divisions, and in addition it was decided to raise to 40,000 the effectives of the officers' school reserve units and army reinforcement units originally fixed at 3,000 men.

In conformity with the desire of the Polish Government the whole army was transferred to southern districts of the U.S.S.R., a decision dictated chiefly by climatic conditions, and there the construction of camps was commenced and H.Q., military schools, and medical institutions, etc., were quartered.

Despite difficult war-time conditions, in February, 1942, the planned divisions had already been formed and numbered 73,415 men. Despite the repeated assurance of the Polish Command, however, concerning their determination to put their units into action as soon as possible, the actual date of dispatch of these units to the front kept on being postponed.

When the formation of the Polish Army began, the time limit for its readiness was fixed at October 1, 1941. Moreover, the Polish Command stated that it believed it expedient to dispatch the divisions to the front separately, as their formation was completed.

Although the preparation of some units was delayed, nevertheless there existed ample opportunity to act on this intention, if not on October 1, then somewhat later. It was not fulfilled, however, and the Polish Command never even raised the question of the dispatch of the Polish divisions to the Soviet-German front.

The Soviet Government did not think it possible to press the Polish Command in this matter. However, five months after the commencement of the formation of the Polish units, namely, in February, 1942, the Soviet Government considered that the Polish units could start fighting the Hitlerites, and mentioned the 5th Division as one which had already completed its training. When posing this question the Soviet Government proceeded in the first place from the direct and clear provisions of the Soviet-Polish military agreement of August 14, 1941, the seventh article of which stated:—

*"The Polish Army units will be moved to the front on the achievement of all fighting readiness. They will march out as a rule in formations not smaller than a division and will be used in conformity with the plan of operations of the Supreme Command of the U.S.S.R."*

In spite of the categorical provisions of the Soviet-Polish military agreement, General Anders, on behalf of the Polish Government, subsequently stated that he thought it undesirable to send the divisions into action separately, although on other fronts Poles were fighting even in brigades. General



Anders gave a promise that the whole Polish Army would be ready to take part in war operations against the Germans by June 1, 1942.

Neither on June 1 nor considerably later did the Polish Command and the Polish Government show readiness to send the Polish Army to take part in operations on the Soviet-German front. Moreover, the Polish Government even formally refused to dispatch its troops to the Soviet-German front, stating as the motive that "The use of separate divisions will not yield any result," and that "the military training of one division will not justify our expectations." (Telegram of General Sikorski dated February 7, 1942.)

Meanwhile, deliveries of provisions to the U.S.S.R. fell short of the plan in view of the outbreak of war in the Pacific, and this imposed the necessity of reducing the number of rations issued to army units not engaged in actual fighting, for the sake of assuring supplies for troops in the field.

Inasmuch as the Polish Command displayed no desire to dispatch any of the Polish Army units to the Soviet-German front and continued to keep them far in the rear, the Soviet Government was naturally compelled to regard these units as troops not engaged in actual fighting, and consequently the decision on the reduction of food rations for units not engaged in fighting was extended to them.

In view of this, the Soviet Government adopted the decision, as from April 1, 1942, to reduce the number of food rations to 44,000 and permit, in conformity with the desire expressed by the Polish Government, the evacuation to Iran of Polish troops in excess of 44,000 remaining in the Soviet Union.

This evacuation was effected in March, 1942, when 31,488 men in military service left the U.S.S.R.; 12,455 members of families of Polish soldiers were permitted to leave together with them.

While refusing to dispatch its army to the Soviet-German front, the Polish Government at the same time pressed the Soviet Government for consent to additional recruitment to the Polish Army on the territory of the U.S.S.R. Simultaneously with its proposal on additional enrolment, the Polish Government addressed the Soviet Government in a note proposing such employment of Polish Army units as meant nothing but refusal to use them on the Soviet-German front.

In reply to this note (June 10, 1942), the Soviet Government informed the Polish Government that as, contrary to the agreement between the U.S.S.R. and Poland, the Polish Government did not find it possible to use Polish units formed in the U.S.S.R. on the Soviet-German front, the Soviet Government could not permit the further formation of Polish units in the U.S.S.R.

Then the question was raised of the evacuation of the whole Polish Army from the U.S.S.R. to the Near East, and 44,000 Polish military were additionally evacuated in August, 1942. Thus the question of the participation of Polish troops, in common with Soviet troops, in the struggle against Hitlerite Germany was removed from the Order of the Day by the Polish Government. The Polish Government decided this question in the negative, contrary to its original assurances, contrary to the solemn statements made in the declaration of December 4, 1941, to the effect that "Troops of the Polish Republic stationed on the territory of the Soviet Union will fight the German brigands shoulder-to-shoulder with Soviet troops."

Prior to the second evacuation, the Polish Army Command requested permission for 20,000 to 25,000 members of the families of Polish soldiers to leave together with Polish Army units. The Soviet Government granted this request. In fact, by September 1, 1942, 25,301 members of families of Polish military had already been evacuated. Thus, altogether in 1942 there left the U.S.S.R., besides 75,491 Polish military, 37,756 members of their families.

Recently Monsieur Romer, the Polish Ambassador, raised the question of the additional departure from the U.S.S.R. of 110 members of families of Polish military who failed to arrive at the evacuation centres at the moment of evacuation. The Soviet Government agreed. No other proposals for the evacuation of families of Polish military were made to the Soviet Government by the Polish Army Command or the Polish Embassy. All allegations that



the Soviet authorities hindered or hinder the departure from the U.S.S.R. of Polish subjects, whose number in fact is not great, and also of the families of Polish military who left the Soviet Union, are false.

All the above proves that the Soviet Government took every measure to ensure the successful formation and expansion of the Polish Army on the territory of the Soviet Union.

The regulations of the agreement of July 30, 1941, and of the declaration dated December 4, 1941, faced the Soviet Government and the Polish Government with a quite definite and clear-cut task: to unite the efforts of the Soviet and Polish peoples in joint struggle against the Hitlerite brigands and occupationists, to create a Polish Army inspired by this great idea and to enable it to fight for the independence of its motherland shoulder to shoulder with the Red Army.

The Soviet Government did all that was necessary to accomplish this task. The Polish Government adopted a different path. It did not dispatch its divisions to the Soviet-German front. It refused to use Polish troops against the Germans on this front shoulder-to-shoulder with Soviet troops, and thus evaded the fulfilment of the obligations it had assumed.

In connection with the question of the formation of the Polish Army on the territory of the Soviet Union, it is necessary to mention the following: after the union, by the will of the Ukrainian and Belorussian peoples, of the western regions of the Ukraine and Belorussia with the Ukrainian Soviet Republic and the Belorussian Soviet Republic on November 19, 1939, a decree was issued by the Supreme Soviet by force of which, in accordance with the general union legislation regarding citizenship, the residents of these regions acquired Soviet citizenship.

As I have already pointed out, after the restoration of relations between the Soviet Government and the Polish Government and the conclusion of the Soviet-Polish military agreement of August 14, 1941, the Soviet Government carried out a number of measures to ensure the formation of a Polish Army on the territory of the U.S.S.R. In order to facilitate the formation of this army and ensure cadres for it, the Soviet Government expressed its readiness, by exception from the decree of November 29, 1939, to consider persons of Polish nationality among the residents of the Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia to be Polish subjects. Despite this manifestation of good will and pliancy on the part of the Soviet Government, the Polish Government adopted a negative attitude towards this act of the Soviet Government and was not satisfied with it, being guided by its unlawful claims to territories of Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia.

Meanwhile, as I have already stated, the Polish Government withdrew its army units from the U.S.S.R. as far back as August, 1942, and thus the necessity for further formation of Polish Army units on Soviet territory lapsed. In view of the above-mentioned circumstances, there lapsed the need for excepting persons of Polish nationality concerning which the Soviet Government had expressed its readiness in December, 1941.

Therefore, on January 16, 1943, the Soviet Government informed the Polish Government that its previous statement of readiness to permit the exception from the decree of November 29, 1939, of the above-mentioned persons of Polish nationality should be considered as no longer valid and the possibility of their exemption from the provision of Soviet laws on citizenship as no longer existing.

Such are the facts shedding full light on the circumstances of the formation of the Polish Army units on the territory of the U.S.S.R. and the evacuation of those units from the U.S.S.R.

## **2. ON MEASURES FOR RELIEF TO POLISH FAMILIES EVACUATED FROM DISTRICTS OCCUPIED BY GERMAN INVADERS**

SINCE the very moment of the restoration of Soviet-Polish relations, in the summer of 1941, the Soviet Government willingly met the wishes of the Polish Government in the matter of organising relief to Polish citizens on the territory of the U.S.S.R. In this connection the Soviet Government



permitted the opening of representations of the Polish Embassy in many towns of the Soviet Union. Such representations were opened in twenty places of the U.S.S.R.

The local representatives of the Embassy were charged with rendering material aid to Polish citizens. This aid was rendered in the first place from the loan, amounting to 100,000,000 roubles, granted by the Soviet Government for this purpose, in addition to the loan of 300,000,000 roubles I have already mentioned. This aid was rendered at the expense of the funds of the Polish Embassy and donations put at the disposal of the Embassy from abroad.

The Soviet Government found it possible, along with the organisation of special representations of the Embassy in twenty places in the Soviet Union, to permit also the appointment by the Embassy of so-called delegates. By January 1, 1943, the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs gave consent to the appointment of 421 delegates of the Polish Embassy, to whom the local authorities rendered every assistance in their work.

Thus the Polish Embassy was enabled to organise a wide network of its representatives throughout the territory of the Soviet Union, through whose medium it could render regular aid to needy Polish citizens and exercise its influence in the spirit of Soviet-Polish collaboration, using for this purpose also such channels as the newspaper *Polska*, published by the Polish Embassy, with the assistance of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs. The representatives of the Embassy, as well as the delegates, were accorded by the Soviet authorities every opportunity for the most successful solution of the tasks before them.

For the same purpose of assistance to Polish citizens, the Soviet Government adopted also a number of large-scale financial and economic measures directed towards increasing material assistance to needy Polish citizens. The Soviet Government set aside special stocks of provisions for Polish charitable institutions and allowed a reduced railway tariff for freight destined for Polish citizens.

With the full assistance of the Soviet authorities, the Embassy organised 589 charitable institutions (dining-rooms, children's homes, crèches, homes for invalids, etc.). Thus the Soviet Government took all measures to satisfy the needs of the Polish population, and for the widespread and fruitful development of the activities of Polish institutions which had as their task the rendering of material aid to the Polish population. The local Soviet organs—executive committees of Soviets—on whom fell the main care of settling Polish citizens, supplying them with food, housing, fuel, medical aid, finding them employment, etc., likewise did everything possible to facilitate the development of the activities of the local Polish representations and gave these representations wide help. This entailed quite a few difficulties, in view of the exceptionally complicated wartime conditions.

The Polish representatives were thus afforded the widest possibilities for fruitful work in rendering material assistance to needy Polish citizens. In reality, however, it transpired that the Polish representations in the localities, and a number of their staff members and delegates, instead of honestly performing their duty and their obligations in collaboration with the local Soviet authorities, chose the path of espionage activities hostile to the U.S.S.R.

The persons guilty of these offences were arraigned for trial, which established that local representatives of the Embassy had conducted their espionage under cover of alleged "charitable" activities, widely using Polish citizens who needed material aid, and that the principal organiser of these criminal activities hostile to the Soviet Union on the part of a number of Polish citizens were some members of the diplomatic staff of the Embassy, who encouraged, organised, and directed these criminal activities.

General Wolikowski, the former chief of the Polish Military Mission, who played one of the most important parts in the promotion and realisation of espionage in the U.S.S.R., the First Secretaries of the Embassy, Arlet and Zalenski (the latter being also representative of the Embassy for Vladivostok), the Second Secretaries, Gruyar (representative for the Archangel region) and



Glogovski, the attachés of the Embassy, Rolya-Janicki, Slovikovsky, Plosski, Litzkindorf, Koscyalkovski, Heiteman, and others, the majority of whom simultaneously acted as representatives of the Embassy in various territories and regions, were exposed and deported from the U.S.S.R.

In addition to the above persons, other representatives of the Embassy and staff members of representations participated in criminal activities against the U.S.S.R. and were prosecuted under criminal law. Some of them were deported from the Soviet Union, while others were arraigned for trial and sentenced to various terms of deprivation of freedom.

It should be said that the overwhelming majority of the representatives and staff members of the Polish Embassy prosecuted under criminal law, in addition to espionage activities, engaged in systematic circulation of all kinds of slanderous rumours and fabrications hostile to the Soviet Union, intended to discredit the Soviet order and aimed at provoking discontent and hostility of Polish citizens against the Soviet people. Numerous instances of extolling the Hitlerites by the said Polish representatives, of malignant escapades by them against the Red Army and of the circulation of defeatist provocational rumours, were proved to have taken place. In court the overwhelming majority of these persons, as well as others brought to criminal responsibility, pleaded guilty to criminal activities and gave detailed evidence elucidating the essence and methods of these activities.

It is also necessary to mention the "instructions concerning courier mail" issued by the Embassy, which contained practical directives to couriers on the performance of their illegal function, on the use of a special code, agreed code words, agreed passwords, etc.

How discriminating certain representatives of the Embassy were in the means and methods of their criminal activities may be seen from the following document, which is an official letter signed by the Attaché of the Embassy, Povezh, dated February 19, 1942, addressed to the delegate Benoeck in Alma Ata. This letter stated: "In addition to our previous conversations, I beg to inform you of the decision of the Embassy of the Polish Republic concerning your delegation: 1. You are empowered to conduct in the most cautious and secret manner the purchase of valuables. . . ."

On May 31, 1942, the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs warned the Polish Embassy concerning facts of espionage work hostile to the U.S.S.R., on the part of some representatives of the Embassy. Despite this warning, espionage and other activities hostile to the Soviet Union by staff members of the Polish Embassy were not discontinued.

Then on July 20, 1942, the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs informed the Embassy that the Polish representations were to be liquidated as they did not justify their existence.

Such are the facts relating to the question of assistance to Polish families evacuated from areas occupied by the German invaders, and illustrating the activities of some Polish representatives in the U.S.S.R. hostile to the Soviet Union.

The facts I have already cited are the reply to the recent numerous false utterances, hostile to the Soviet Union, on the part of the Polish representatives and the Polish official Press. The false nature and anti-Soviet hostility of such utterances cannot serve as an obstacle to really friendly and close Soviet-Polish relations, in which the peoples of the Soviet Union and Poland are interested, especially in face of the common enemy—Hitlerite Germany.



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