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GENERAL SIKORSKI, POLAND, AND THE SOVIET UNION, 1939-1943

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The marriage of the Lithuanian Prince Jagiełło to the Polish Queen Jadwiga in 1389 deflected Poland's political orientation to the east and the shift immensely influenced Polish political attitudes until 1945. At first the states merely had a common monarch, but by the end of the sixteenth century the two nations had fused politically and to a large extent, socially into a single nation, the Rzeczpospolita (the Commonwealth). And no one was more deeply involved in the ultimate fate of the kresy[1] than Władysław Sikorski, Prime Minister of the Polish Government-in-Exile (1939-43).

Until the middle of the eighteenth century Polish national life was dominated by the szlachta, or gentry. The class was numerous, constituting about 8 per cent of the population.[2] Economically, it ranged from the magnates of the kresy who ruled what were, in fact, little kingdoms, to impoverished individuals who lived the life of peasants or became dependents

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[1]The term kresy was applied to the borderlands between Poland and Russia.

[2]Stefan Kieniewicz, Aleksander Gieysztor, Emanuel Rostworowski, Janusz Tazbir and Henryk Wereszycki, History of Poland (Warsaw: Polish Scientific Publishers, 1968), p. 344.

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at the courts of rich fellow nobles. Although the class no longer exists as such, it has left its indelible mark on the Polish political mentality. The szlachcic was a Roman Catholic who looked upon his nation as the defender of western civilization against the barbarians from the east. He had a highly developed sense of personal honor and his fierce individualism could lead to factionalism verging on anarchy. He could be heroic, proud and vain. But above all, the szlachcic was a Pole. The old aristocracies of the native Lithuanian and Ruthenian peoples quickly became polonized because to be civilized in that area was to partake in the more advanced Polish culture. Most of these traits were to be found in varying degrees in Sikorski's own personality, as well as in that of both his Polish political supporters and adversaries.

The Rzeczpospolita went into decline during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The world outlook which characterized the Polish Renaissance deteriorated into a narrow parochialism during the Counter Reformation. Wars ravaged the countryside. Effective governmental action virtually ceased as foreign influences in the Rzeczpospolita's internal affairs became dominant. Under these circumstances, another factor which was to have a decisive effect on Sikorski's political career began to make its presence deeply felt: Russian concern with Poland's internal politics. Russia was becoming one of the Great Powers with a profound interest in the West. Since Poland was Russia's land-link with the West, it became of vital im-

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portance to Russian national interest and has remained so until the present day. By the middle of the eighteenth century Poland was little more than a Russian client state and a passage way for Russian troops. Although this state of affairs was altered somewhat by the Russian, Prussian and Austrian partitions of Poland in 1772, 1793[1] and 1795 and during the upheavals of the Napoleonic Wars, Russia received the lion's share of the former Polish state in 1815.

Even before the partitions, new forces were at work within the national organism which were to have a far-reaching effect on Polish national development in the nineteenth century. A new liberal reformism and national feeling were demonstrated in the Constitution of May 3, 1791 which abolished the liberum veto and established a constitutional monarchy; and Kościuszko's Insurrection of 1794 further aroused and strengthened these forces. The élan of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars gave another powerful impetus to the growth of Polish nationalism and liberalism.

The social origins of the leaders of the national movement also underwent a drastic change in the nineteenth century. During the eighteenth century Poland had virtually no army and was dominated by the magnates. During the Napoleonic Wars a Polish Army effectively came into being and the officer corps became a focal point of Polish nationalism. Most of the officers

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[1]Austria took no part in the second partition of Poland (1793).

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were members of the petty szlachta. By the middle of the nineteenth century and especially after the 1880s, with the growth of industry and urbanization, a new social group began to make its influence felt. The intelligentsia was a melting pot of classes: at first, it consisted of impoverished szlachta who had moved into the towns and had mixed with polonized German and Jewish burghers; next, the sons of industrial workers entered this rather vague grouping; and finally, by the turn of the twentieth century, the sons of peasants.

The officer corps and the intelligentsia accepted many of the values of the szlachta, blended them with the intellectual currents of the nineteenth century, and passed them on to other social groups such as the workers and the peasants. Nineteenth century liberalism and socialism buttressed the national traditions of individualism and democracy. Catholicism remained the religion of most Poles, although it was replaced in some circles by the current intellectual fads. Above all Polish political thinking was dominated by nationalism. Even though its romantic, idealistic and revolutionary aspects ebbed after unsuccessful revolutions in 1830-31 and 1863-64, they remained dominant themes in Polish nationalism throughout the nineteenth century.

At this juncture of Polish history, Władysław Sikorski was born on May 20, 1881 in the western Galician village of Tuszów. The Sikorskis were technically szlachta by descent, but economically they were closer to proletarians. One of Sikorski's ancestors had taken part in the Insurrection of

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1830-31 and the family estate was expropriated by the Russian Government. Members of the family fled as impoverished refugees from Kingdom Poland to Galicia. Sikorski's father became an organist in a church and a village school teacher, but died when Sikorski was only three. The Sikorskis were very poor. By tutoring other students, young Władysław succeeded in educating himself first in Kraków and later at the Institute of Technology of Lwów where he received a degree in civil engineering (1907). During his school years he performed his military service in the Austrian Army (1904-5), holding the rank of second lieutenant; later he rose to first lieutenant in the reserve.[1]

In the decade before World War I Galicia was the scene of much semi-clandestine political activity. Although Sikorski never belonged to any political party, he was a political activist. In 1908 he, along with Kazimierz Sosnkowski and Marian Kukiel, organized in Lwów the secret military organization Związek Walki Czynnej (Union of Active Struggle) and Sikorski became its leader. In 1910 Sikorski led in the formation of and was the president of Lwów's first Związek Strzelecki (Riflemen's Association), an officially sanctioned organization which was actually a society for training military cadres in semi-secrecy. After the formation of the Komisja Tymczasowa

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[1]Otton Laskowski, ed., Encyklopedja Wojskowa (Military Encyclopedia), Vol. VII (Warsaw: Towarzystwo Wiedzy Wojskowej, 1939), p. 475; F. C. Anstruther, General Sikorski (Harrow, Middlesex: "Atlantis" Publishing Co., Ltd., 1943), p. 4.

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Skonfederowanych Stronnictw Niepodległosciowych (Provisional Commission of Confederated Independence Parties) in 1912 he headed its Military Department--i.e., he was its Minister of War. During this period he was the editor of the secret paper Sprawa Polska (The Polish Question) as well as the author of a military manual for the Riflemen's Associations--the first work of its type written in Polish in fifty years.[1]

* * * *

The Polish question had been a unifying factor among the three partitioning powers during most of the nineteenth century. In the 1890's the old alignment broke down. When war broke out between Russia, and Germany and Austria-Hungary in 1914, the Polish question catapulted onto the world stage. And as the military situation swayed back and forth, the Powers started to bid for Polish support. The Riflemen's Associations, whose activities had been of minor significance, were to become the nucleus of the Polish Army.

Józef Piłsudski, who had been one of the leaders of the Riflemen's Associations, was the first Polish leader to act. He believed that Polish independence could only be achieved by the active participation of Polish troops and by the defeat of Russia, which he considered Poland's worst enemy. On August 6, 1914, with 176 ill-equipped "legionaries" whom he had recruited from the Riflemen's Associations, Piłsudski invaded Russian Poland

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[1]Laskowski, op. cit., VII, 475; Anstruther, op. cit., pp. 5-6.

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the Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Army, issued a proclamation promising self-government to the Poles, with freedom of religion and language, under the Russian sceptre. In November, 1914 the Russians sanctioned the formation of the Polish National Committee which was led by Roman Dmowski.

In the summer of 1915 the German and Austrian Armies drove the Russians out of Congress Poland, and to the disappointment of their Polish friends, they divided the territory between them and administered their zones on a strictly military basis. After the heavy German losses suffered at the Battles of Verdun and the Somme, General Erich von Ludendorff devised a plan for recruiting Polish troops by promising them an "independent" state. On November 5, 1916, the Emperors Wilhelm II and Franz Joseph issued a manifesto creating an "independent" Poland from the former Russian territory. The state would be a constitutional monarchy with the boundaries to be settled later. The Polish Army was to be under the command of the Central Powers. The scheme failed to arouse any enthusiasm among the Poles, however.

By 1917 the force of events had outstripped anything the Central Powers could offer. Under the influence of Ignacy Jan Paderewski, President Woodrow Wilson called for an independent Polish state on January 22, 1917. In Russia after the fall of the monarchy in March, the Provisional Government at once recognized the need for an independent Poland embracing all territory where Poles constituted a majority. Dmowski, who had left Russia,

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for the West, led in the formation of the Polish National Committee. It was located first in Lausanne, Switzerland, but later moved to Paris. In exchange for organizing a Polish Army in France the Committee was recognized as the "official Polish organization" by France, Great Britain, Italy and the United States. Meanwhile, in the "Kingdom" Piłsudski and the majority of his legionaries were interned (July, 1917) for refusing to take an oath committing themselves to "brotherhood-in-arms" with the Austro-German Armies. The Central Powers' efforts to rally Polish support could not match the Allies' offer of unqualified independence.

After the October Revolution Lenin also committed himself to the right of self-determination for all nationalities. His commitment was both tactical and qualified. Russia was in such turmoil that there was widespread secession from Russia, and there was nothing he could do to prevent it; secondly, according to Lenin the right of self-determination applied only to the "toiling and oppressed classes" of the population and not to the propertied classes.[1]

Since Russia desperately needed peace, the Bolsheviks opened negotiations with the Germans at Brześć (Brest-Litovsk) on December 3, 1917. The Poles were excluded. The peace was signed on March 3, 1918. It was the cause of Sikorski's final break with the Austrians because it made territorial concessions

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[1]Titus Komarnicki, The Rebirth of the Polish Republic (London: William Heinemann, Ltd., 1957), p. 184.

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to the newly constituted Ukrainian People's Republic which Sikorski considered would constitute another partition of Poland. The remnants of the legions under Lieutenant-General Józef Haller broke away from the Central Powers into Russia which was in chaos and eventually made their way to France. Sikorski protested to the Austrians and wrote a letter to Haller declaring his solidarity with him. Since he was cut off from Haller and the front, the Austrians arrested him and interned him in Hungary.[1]

In the autumn of 1918 the Central Powers were collapsing. Sikorski was freed and returned to Galicia where he organized secret forces. In early November the Army and the nation began to take shape. Piłsudski returned to Warsaw from his captivity at Magdeburg in Germany and became Head of State and Commander-in-Chief. Sikorski was appointed Chief of Staff of the Eastern Army of Poland. He patched together the disorganized Polish forces in eastern Galicia and led them against the Ukrainians in the defense of Przemyśl, the defense of Lwów's communications, and the capture of Tarnopol and Brzezany.[2]

Poland's fate was being decided at the conference table at Versailles as well as on the battle field. The Polish delegation was led by Prime Minister Paderewski and Dmowski. Wherever possible the French tended to favor the Polish case because

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[1]Laskowski, op. cit., VII, 475; Anstruther, op. cit., p. 7.

[2]Ibid.

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they wanted Poland to be part of an eastern counterbalance against Germany. Because of their traditional interest in maintaining a certain balance of power on the continent, and also desiring a return to economic stability as soon as possible, the British were inclined to be more lenient towards the Germans than the French who were intent on weakening their traditional foe as much as possible. The British felt that the Bolshevik regime would collapse in Russia and that a more nationalistic Russian regime would replace it. They, and Prime Minister David Lloyd George in particular, viewed the new Polish state with suspicion. To them it was a French satellite with exaggerated territorial ambitions. They tended to oppose or minimize Polish territorial claims both in the west at the expense of Germany and in the east at the expense of Russia.

On November 20, 1919, in spite of British opposition the Supreme Allied Council drew a provisional demarcating line for the southern section of Poland's eastern frontier on the rough basis of nationality. Western Galicia was to be given to Poland, whereas the eastern portion, with a Ukrainian majority, was to be given to Poland for twenty-five years in trust for the League of Nations.[1] A second line was drawn on December 8, 1919. It ran north from the former Austro-Russian Border along the Bug River to near Brześć which itself was left east of the line. Then it ran north to East Prussia giving Poland Białystok

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[1]Harold W. V. Temperley, ed., A History of the Peace Conference of Paris (London: Henry Frowde and Hodder & Stoughton, 1920-4), VI, 274.

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and Suwałki, but excluding Grodno. The line was to be "a provisional minimum frontier" and "both the French and the Americans believed that the final frontier line should be farther to the east."[1] In the meantime, Poland was to establish a regular administration in the territories lying to the west of the line.[2] Actually, these two lines had nothing in common with the chaotic political-military circumstances in the area and the Allies had no power on the spot to enforce their suggestions. These two resolutions concerning Poland's frontiers probably would have been forgotten in the archives of Western capitals had they not been resurrected the following summer. Together they were to form one of the pivotal issues of twentieth-century European diplomacy, the Curzon Line (Figure 1).

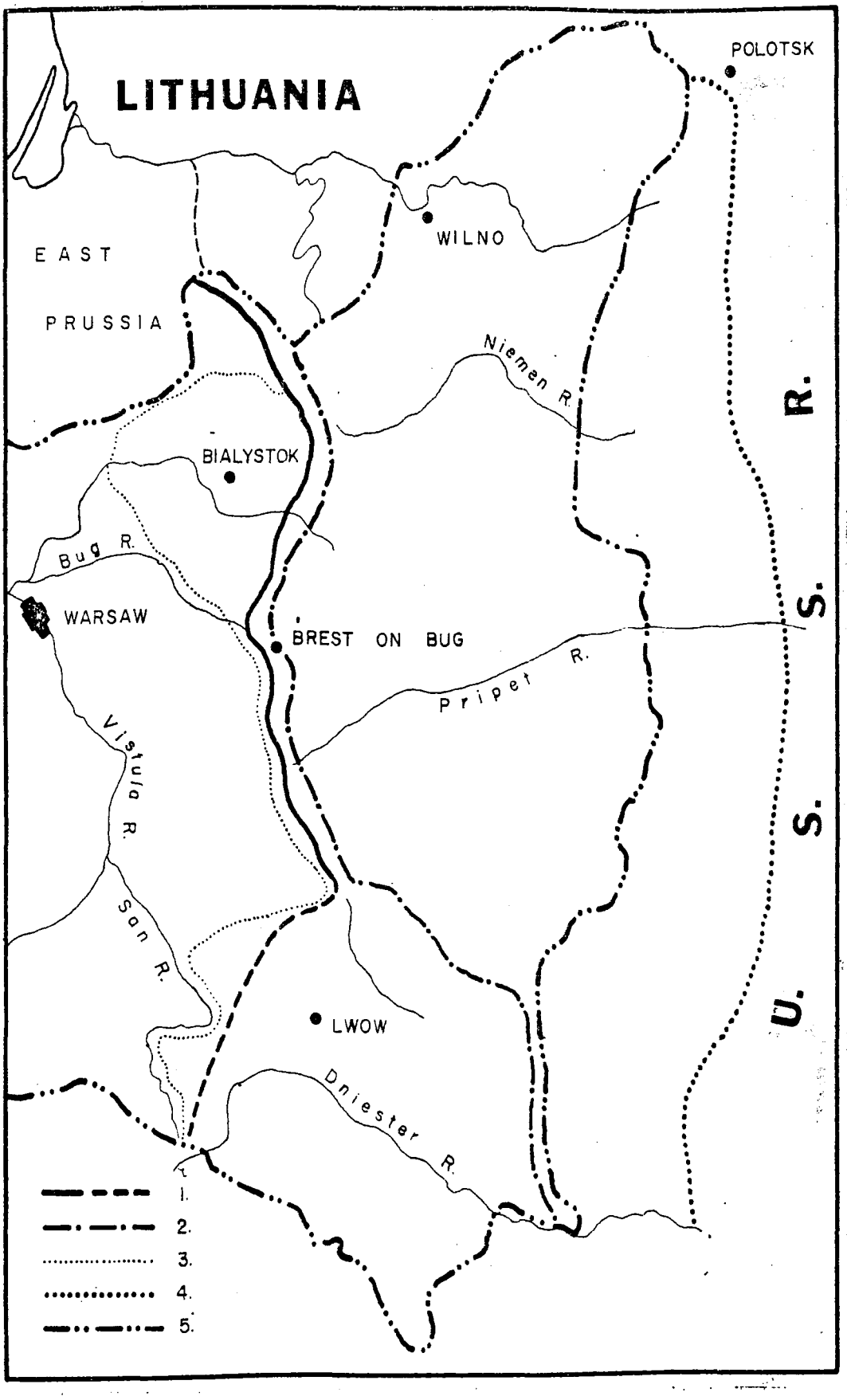
As the Ukrainian and White Russian forces collapsed in 1919, the Bolsheviks and the Poles moved into the vacuum and began to clash. In early 1920 the Bolsheviks suggested peace talks. The Poles agreed, but insisted that they be held at the town of Borisov near where they thought the Bolsheviks were mounting a force to strike. The Bolsheviks refused. Piłsudski took the offensive; striking south, he occupied Kiev on May 8. By the late spring the White Russian armies were evaporating and the Bolsheviks had more and more forces to throw against the Poles. In June they struck. The Poles evacuated Kiev and were

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[1] Ibid., p. 275.

[2] Leszek Kirkien, Russia, Poland and the Curzon Line Duns, Berwickshire: Caldra House, Ltd., 1945), p. 23.

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in full retreat. As they advanced on Warsaw, the Bolsheviks created a Polish Soviet provisional government under Julian Marchlewski and Felix Dzierziński. Following a pattern which was to become familiar during and after World War II, the provisional government claimed to represent the true interests of the Polish people. Its calls for insurrection received no support.

On July 6, 1920, the Polish Government appealed to the Conference of the Allied Supreme Council at Spa for diplomatic mediation or military assistance. At the moment the French were suffering from internal weakness, and Lloyd George was in a commanding position. On July 10 the Allies demanded that the Polish Government accept as the armistice line, the line of December 8, 1919, in the north and the battle line in the south. If the Bolsheviks did not agree to negotiate on this basis, the Allies would send aid. On July 11, the Allies sent a telegram to the Bolsheviks which was similar to the offer they had made to the Poles, but with the exception that the armistice line of December 8, 1919 was extended in the south to include the line of November 20, 1919. Since the telegram was signed by Lord Curzon, the line was called the "Curzon Line." Although the Bolsheviks rejected the proposal for an armistice, the opinion subsequently gained general acceptance among British circles that the Curzon Line represented the line of predominantly Polish population and that Poland's right to the territory beyond it was of dubious validity.

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As the Bolsheviks moved on Warsaw, Piłsudski prepared for the defense of the capital. Sikorski, now holding the rank of major-general, was given command of the Fifth Army which held down the northern sector. His army was still only forming when the Bolsheviks attempted to encircle Warsaw from the north. Even though the Army's organization was far from complete, Sikorski received orders to take the offensive so that pressure could be diverted from the capital. Under Sikorski's brilliant leadership the Fifth Army checked and drove back the more powerful Bolshevik forces.[1] Warsaw was not encircled; the Bolsheviks were stopped and thrown into retreat by a general Polish counter attack. Since both sides were exhausted, negotiations opened at Riga and concluded on October 12, 1920. The definitive treaty was signed on March 18, 1921. By the Treaty of Riga the Polish-Soviet frontier was drawn about 150 miles to the east of the Curzon Line to include the cities of Lwów and Wilno in Poland, but about 50 miles to the west of the armistice line suggested by the Bolsheviks on January 29, 1920. (Figure 1.)

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Poland began her national existence under the worst possible economic conditions. Her territory had been the chief theatre of war between the Central Powers and the Russians, and this was followed by the Polish-Soviet War. There was widespread devastation of buildings, industry and communications.

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[1]Laskowski, op. cit., VII, 475; Anstruther, op. cit., pp. 9-10.

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The various occupants had looted everything of value. Three different administrative and economic systems had to be integrated. Before World War I about 85 per cent of the trade from the territory which constituted the new Polish State was with Russia, Germany and Austria,[1] but these markets were now largely closed to it and new ones had to be found. Whereas large amounts of foreign capital flowed into Germany after the War, Poland received very little. Of the population, 32.7 per cent was illiterate.[2] The problem was most acute in the former Russian section where neglect of education had been a deliberate policy: over 60 per cent of the population in the eastern provinces was illiterate.[3] Inflation became hyperinflation in 1923 and was checked only in 1924.

Such critical social and economic problems complicated the already difficult internal political situation. With the exception of Poles from the Austrian section most Poles had very little experience of the give and take of practical politics. Added to this problem was the Polish political tradition which stressed individualism and did not encourage the spirit of compromise. Polish politics until 1926 were very stormy and cabinet changes were frequent.

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[1]Raymond Leslie Buell, Poland: Key to Europe (London: Jonathan Cape, 1939), p. 88.

[2]Poland. Bureau of Statistics, Rocznik Statyki 1925-1926 (Statistical Year-book) (Warsaw, 1927), p. 43.

[3]Poland. Ministry of Information, Statistical Atlas of Poland (Edinburgh: McLagan and Cumming Ltd., n.d.), p. 55.

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In the spectrum of Polish political parties the Right was dominated by the National Democratic Party. Its spiritual leader was Piłsudski's arch-rival, Dmowski. It was basically an urban-based, middle-class party, being supported by white-collar workers, professional people, and intellectuals. It was strongly nationalistic and anti-Semitic. In the Centre was the "Piast" Party, led by Wincenty Witos and supported by well-to-do peasants. To the Left was the party of the poor peasants, the Wyzwolenie Party, and the Polish Socialist Party (PPS). Piłsudski had been a prominent member of the PPS before the War, but after the War he increasingly disassociated himself from it.

From the beginning, but especially after the Treaty of Riga, domestic politics during the first years of independence revolved around one issue: the role of Piłsudski in the new state. His supporters in the PPS, the army, throughout the other parties and among the population at large saw him as the natural leader. His critics, led by the National Democratic Party, wanted to limit his influence to a minimum. The Constituent Diet, which governed the nation between 1919 and 1922, had the responsibility of drawing up the Constitution. Piłsudski's opponents who dominated the Constitutional Commission produced a document which kept the powers of the President to a minimum and entrusted most power to the legislature.

The elections of 1922 under the new Constitution brought a new factor into Polish politics, the minorities. They tended to ally themselves with the Left and Centre and to prefer

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Piłsudski. When Piłsudski refused to consider accepting the office of President because it would not give him sufficient power, a coalition of the Centre, the Left and the minorities in the Seim (Diet) and the Senate elected Gabriel Narutowicz. The Right went wild because Narutowicz was a friend of Piłsudski and because the minorities' vote decided the election. One week after his election Narutowicz was assassinated (December 16, 1922) by a Rightist fanatic.

The country teetered on the brink of civil war. Since a strong and yet new personality was needed at the helm of state, Piłsudski advised the Acting President to appoint Sikorski as Prime Minister. Sikorski also held the post of Minister of the Interior. Sikorski's premiership was comparatively stable because of his lack of political affiliation, his fair but firm policies, and his harmonious relationship at this time with Piłsudski who became Chief of the General Staff. During Sikorski's Ministry (December 16, 1922-May 26, 1923) Poland saw the recognition of its eastern frontiers by the Conference of Allied Ambassadors (March 15, 1923) and the laying of the corner-stone for the port of Gdynia (May 23, 1923). His government was toppled by a Centre-Right coalition. Piłsudski, disgusted by the petty politicking of the capital, resigned all his military positions and went into retirement at his small villa just outside Warsaw.

After his government fell, Sikorski continued to be politically active. When Władysław Grabski formed a cabinet of non-party experts (December 19, 1923), Sikorski was Minister of

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National Defense. It was in this period that Piłsudski finally broke with Sikorski. The quarrel was centered around the complicated question of the role of Piłsudski, the Commander-in-Chief in the event of war, during peace time. Piłsudski wanted to keep the Army largely independent of party politics and maintain it as his preserve. Sikorski worked to strengthen Minister of National Defense's control over the Army in time of peace. Piłsudski was infuriated and never forgave Sikorski.[1] After Grabski's ministry fell (November 13, 1925), Sikorski was appointed Commander of the Lwów Army Corps.

Although Piłsudski had retired, he continued to exert great influence through his frequent and often sharp public statements, and through his numerous friends in high positions. By May, 1926 he lost patience with the constant political turmoil in the capital and marched on Warsaw with some of his partisans. Sikorski played no effective role during Piłsudski's coup d'état. There was deep hostility between Piłsudski and Sikorski; and at the same time there were cool relations between Sikorski and Prime Minister Witos' ruling Right-Centre coalition which had toppled Sikorski's government three years earlier. When the Government called for reinforcements from Lwów, Sikorski procrastinated because of alleged Soviet troop movements along the border, the possibility of insurrectionary activity among the Ukrainians in the area if he removed his forces, the

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[1]Joseph Rothschild, Pilsudski's Coup d'État (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966), pp. 25-44.

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reluctance of PPS railway personnel, who supported Piłsudski, to transport his troops and the unreliability of his junior officers in support of the Government. Although we have no definite proof, it has been suggested that Sikorski's attitude was governed by the hope that the two forces in Warsaw would fight to a stalemate, leaving him the decisive voice.[1]

After his successful coup, Piłsudski and his followers tightened their grip on the political life of the nation in an effort to reform it and to purge it of corruption.[2] At first, Piłsudski tried to rule under the Constitution with modifications, but he faced increasing opposition which reached its climax when the forces of the Left and Centre united at a giant rally in Kraków on June 29, 1930. They demanded the end of undemocratic practices, attacked Piłsudski and called for the resignation of Piłsudski's friend, President Ignacy Mościcki. Again Piłsudski lost patience. Seventy-nine leaders from the PPS, the Wyzwolenie, the National Labor, the "Piast" (including Witos), and the National Democratic Parties, and several Ukrainians were arrested and interned at the Brześć Fortress. Their maltreatment caused a national scandal.

In 1935 a new Constitution was adopted which widely extended Presidential powers. Among other powers the President

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[1] Ibid., pp. 106-8.

[2] Hence the use of the word sanacja which means "curing" or "healing" (i.e., of the malaise which affected Poland's political life) when describing Piłsudski's followers.

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could appoint and dismiss the Prime Minister, appoint one-third of the members of the Senate, dissolve the legislature and appoint his own successor in time of war. The Constitution was tailor-made for Piłsudski, but he died on May 12, 1935 and President Mościcki was re-elected.

After Piłsudski's death, his followers, the "Colonels," continued to rule Poland in a semi-authoritarian way until the outbreak of World War II four years later. The three leading personalities were President Mościcki, Inspector-General Edward Smigły-Rydz, and Foreign Minister, Józef Beck.

After Piłsudski's coup Sikorski retained his command at Lwów until March 19, 1928 when he was relieved of his post. He received no new appointment, but was kept at the disposal of the Minister of War and paid only a part of his normal salary. Between 1928 and 1939 he divided his time between writing and political opposition. Nad Wisłą i Wkrą (On the Vistula and the Wkra), his description of his role during the Battle of Warsaw, appeared in 1928. Francja i Polska (France and Poland-1930) was his analysis of the international situation: it showed his very strong pro-French orientation. In Przyszła Wojna (Modern Warfare-1933), his greatest work, Sikorski revealed himself to be a military theorist of the first rank. He described the weapons and tactics of blitzkreig warfare and warned that the concepts were being accepted widely in Germany.[1]

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[1]Władysław Sikorski, Modern Warfare (New York: Roy Publishers, 1943), p. 86.

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Since domestic opposition to the government was very limited after the Brześć Incident and the Constitution of 1935, the leaders of many parties grouped themselves around the elder statesman, Paderewski, who lived in Switzerland, forming a loose organization called the "Morges Front." Sikorski played a leading role in this widely-based, democratic alliance. Other colleagues were: from the now united Peasant Party, Witos and Prof. Stanisław Kot; Prof. Stanisław Strónski from nationalist right; members of the newly formed Christian Labor Party such as Generals Józef Haller and Marian Kukiel; and independent democrats. Dmowski and his radical supporters did not join the "Morges Front" because they felt that it was too uncritically pro-French where Jewish influence was too strong.[1] The members of the "Morges Front" formed a nucleus of Sikorski's support when he took office as Prime Minister of the Government-in-Exile in 1939.

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Throughout the twenty years of independence, one of the basic issues with which each Polish regime had to deal was the question of the minorities. Along the Polish-German border there were pockets of Germans within the new state. In all the cities except Poznań there were large Jewish populations. But unlike the territories lying to the west of the Curzon Line, those to the east did not have a Polish majority. From the ethnographic

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[1]Andrzej Micewski, "Sikorski a opozycja-czyli główny spór w Paryżu i Londynie," Więź, nr. 7-8 (1961), 202.

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point of view they presented a very complex picture.

The kresy came under Polish control 600 years ago. The original inhabitants were Lithuanians and Eastern Slavs, but for centuries Poles had settled in the region and assimilated the native aristocracy. Poles formed the political, economic and social leadership in the area. Polish dominance declined markedly in the nineteenth century. Many estates owned by the Polish szlachta were confiscated by the Russians for their owners' role in the Insurrections of 1830-31 and 1863-64. The Russian Government brought back to the Orthodox Church millions of Uniate peasants: in political terms this meant a shifting of their outlook from a Polish to a Russian orientation.[1] Finally, many Ukrainians and Lithuanians developed a national consciousness of their own. Almost inevitably both movements had an anti-Polish tendency because they were in opposition to Polish culture which had dominated the area for centuries and had absorbed the older Lithuanian and Ukrainian upper classes.

To the Allies assembled in Paris committed to a policy of self-determination the area beyond the Curzon Line posed a most difficult problem. A fair ethnographic line could not be drawn. And politically and economically it was not viable as an independent state.

In an effort to protect the rights of minorities in the completely reorganized map of eastern Europe, the Allied Powers made provisions for Minorities Treaties to be signed with the

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[1]Temperley, op. cit., VI, 229.

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newly formed states. Poland signed its Minorities Treaty with the Allied and Associated Powers on June 28, 1919. The Polish Government agreed not to show any discrimination against non-Polish minorities and to protect their civil rights. They would have the right to use their native tongues in courts and a guarantee of elementary education facilities. The obligations were placed under the guarantee of the League of Nations and any member of the League's Council could draw attention to infractions. Poland also agreed to make no changes in the agreement without the approval of the majority of the Council. The Treaty was generally resented among Polish ruling circles because it seemed to infringe on Polish national sovereignty and because Germany, which contained a Polish minority, signed no comparable commitment.

The Lithuanians claimed Wilno as their historic capital. The Ukrainians attempted to capture eastern Galicia, claiming that the Ukrainian population there constituted the majority. The Poles believed that the disputed territories were theirs because the partitions of the eighteenth century were illegal. Culturally and politically, the kresy had produced a galaxy of Polish greats, Tadeusz Kościuszko, Adam Mickiewicz, Julusz Słowacki, Paderewski, and Piłsudski himself. Piłsudski wrote that their value to the new Poland was primarily strategic since they pushed the Russian frontier to a distance which made Soviet intervention in Polish life impossible.[1] But whatever the

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[1]Józef Piłsudski, Pisma Zbiorowe (Collected Works), Vol. VII; Rok 1920 (The Year 1920, Warsaw), p. 147.

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subtle arguments and counter-arguments in the capitals of central eastern Europe and in Paris, the Poles finally gained the territory by force of arms, driving out first the Ukrainians, next the Bolsheviks, and finally the Lithuanians.

Sikorski's opinion of Poland's right to and need of the area was typical:

> ... la frontière de 1921 était et reste une necessité vitale. Cette frontière englobe des terres peuplées depuis des siècles de Polonais melés de Ruthènes et d'Ukrainiens dont le caractère distinct peut se développer librement dans le cadre de L'Etat polonais. Mais la Pologne ne peut renoncer à ces provinces, non seulement parce que les Polonais y représentent très souvent la majorité relative, non seulement parce qu'elles ont été protégées au cours des siècles par les soldats polonais, et que les Polonais les ont fécondées par leur propre travail, mais aussi pour les considérations d'ordre politique, économique et stratégique.[1]

Sikorski emphasized that Poland needed the disputed territories because they gave Poland physical contact with its ally, Rumania and with the Baltic States thereby allowing Poland to play an effective role in the eastern political equilibrium; and unlike the Curzon Line, the line of Riga offered room to organize a defense against a possible Soviet invasion.[2]

There were two theories of what policy was to be followed with the territories once they became Polish. In the years 1918-20 Piłsudski favored a "Jagiellonian" solution: the Ukrainians, Lithuanians, and Byelorussians should unite under Polish leadership to form a federal state. The Right did not

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[1] Władysław Sikorski, Le Problème de la paix (Francja i Polska) (Paris: La Vie latine, 1931), p. 122.

[2] Ibid., pp. 122-23.

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share Piłsudski's view and wanted a Polish Poland. Since the line drawn at Riga included only a small portion of the Ukrainian and Byelorussian peoples, Piłsudski's policy would have been difficult to implement. The Constitution of 1922 created a centralized state which, in fact, would be under Polish control. A law passed on September 26, 1922 promised autonomy to the south eastern area, but it remained a dead letter.

After the frontiers in the area had all been settled, the Polish element represented a large minority in the *kresy* and an absolute majority in some districts. Poles were the leaders in the community. The largest landowners were Poles. They also tended to be concentrated in the cities where they played a role out of proportion to their numbers in the civil service, education and the professions. Ukrainians and Byelorussians tended to be peasants. The Jews also lived in the towns where they were rivals of the Poles. According to the Polish census of 1931 the area between the Curzon Line and the Riga Line had a population of 10,768,000.[1] The breakdown according to language was as follows:

Ukrainians	4,010,000	(37%)
Poles	3,914,000	(36%)
Byelorussians	928,000	(9%)
Jews	899,000	(8%)
Polesians	711,000	(7%)
Russians	102,000	(1%)
Germans	80,000	(1%)
Lithuanians	76,000	(1%)
Czechs	32,000	(-)
Others	16,000	(-)[2]

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[1] Kirkien, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

[2] *Ibid.*

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Eastern Galicia had a population of 4,771,000: 53 per cent were Ukrainians; 39 per cent, Poles; and 7 per cent Jews. In the towns Poles and Jews predominated. Lwów (population 300,000) consisted of 64 per cent Poles, 25 per cent Jews and 11 per cent Ukrainians.[1] The countryside surrounding Lwów was strongly Ukrainian. To the east of Lwów the Polish population tended to increase rather than decrease. Poles formed an absolute majority in five powiaty clustered around the city of Tarnopol. The powiat of Skałat (Figure 3) not only had the highest percentage of Polish population (66.6 per cent), but also was located on the Polish-Soviet frontier.[2]

Wołyn, to the north of Galicia, had a Ukrainian population of 68 per cent.[3] To the north of Volhynia was Polesie (Pripet Marshes), the most primitive and isolated part of interwar Poland. According to the census of 1931, 63 per cent spoke Polesian, a native tongue very similar to Byelorussian;[4] 14 per cent spoke Polish (Figures 2 and 3).[5]

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[1] Ibid., p. 50.

[2] Poland. Institute for the Study of Minority Problems. The Polish and Non-Polish Populations of Poland (Warsaw, n.d.), p. 43.

[3] Kirkien, op. cit., p. 54.

[4] It is debatable whether the inhabitants of the marshlands should be classified as a separate ethnic group. On the one hand, the language they spoke was very much like Byelorussian. But on the other, they did not know it and had virtually no concept of belonging to any national group in the usual sense of the word.

[5] Ibid., p. 55.

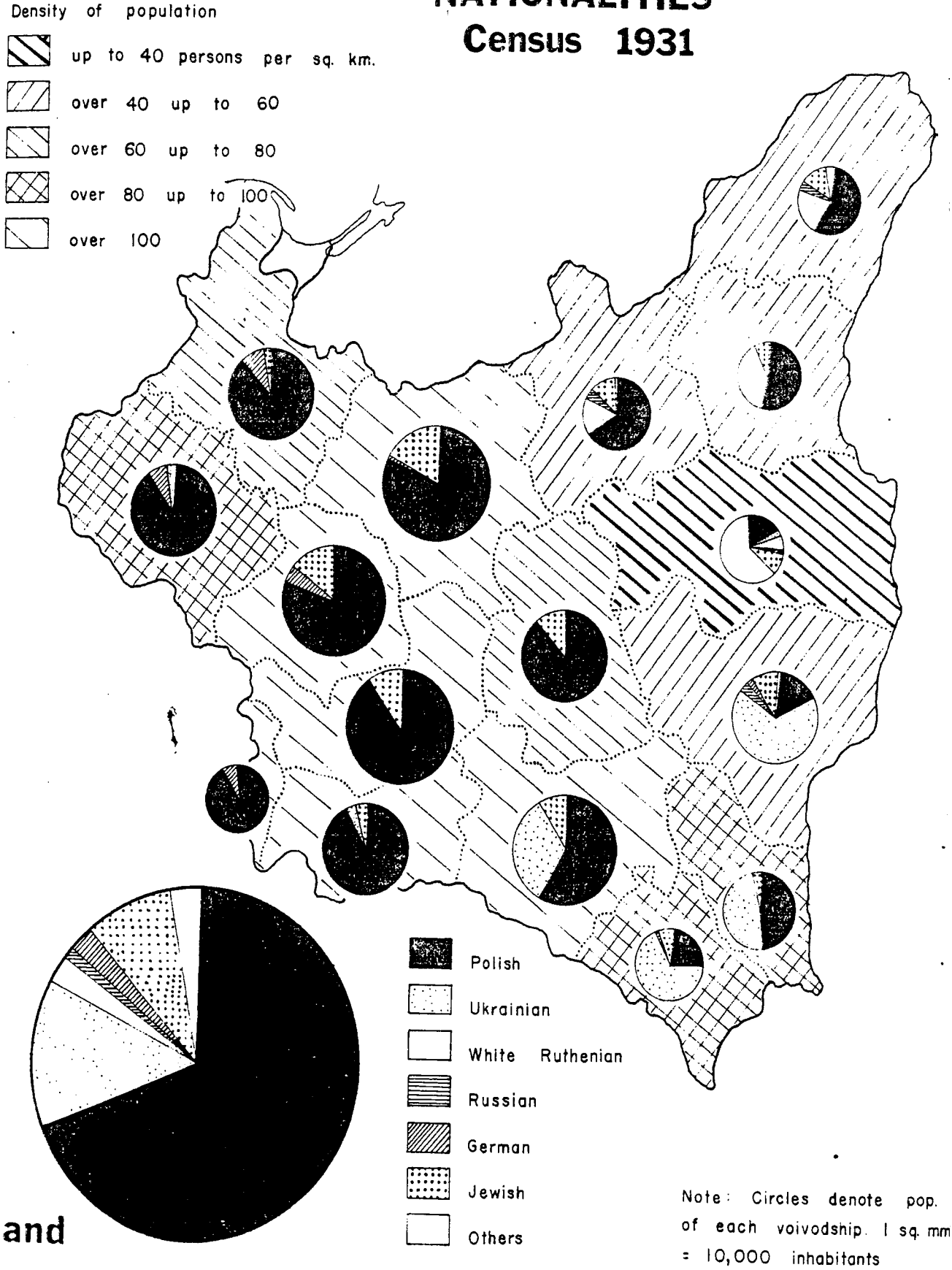
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Fig. 2.--Poland's Minorities (Census 1931)

Source: Poland. Ministry of Information, Statistical Atlas of Poland (Edinburgh: McLachen and Cumming, n.d.), p. 27.

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NATIONALITIES
Census 1931



Poland

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Fig. 3.--France. French Military Mission to Poland, 1938. Polish minorities map of eastern territories compiled from Polish census of 1931 and French military sources.

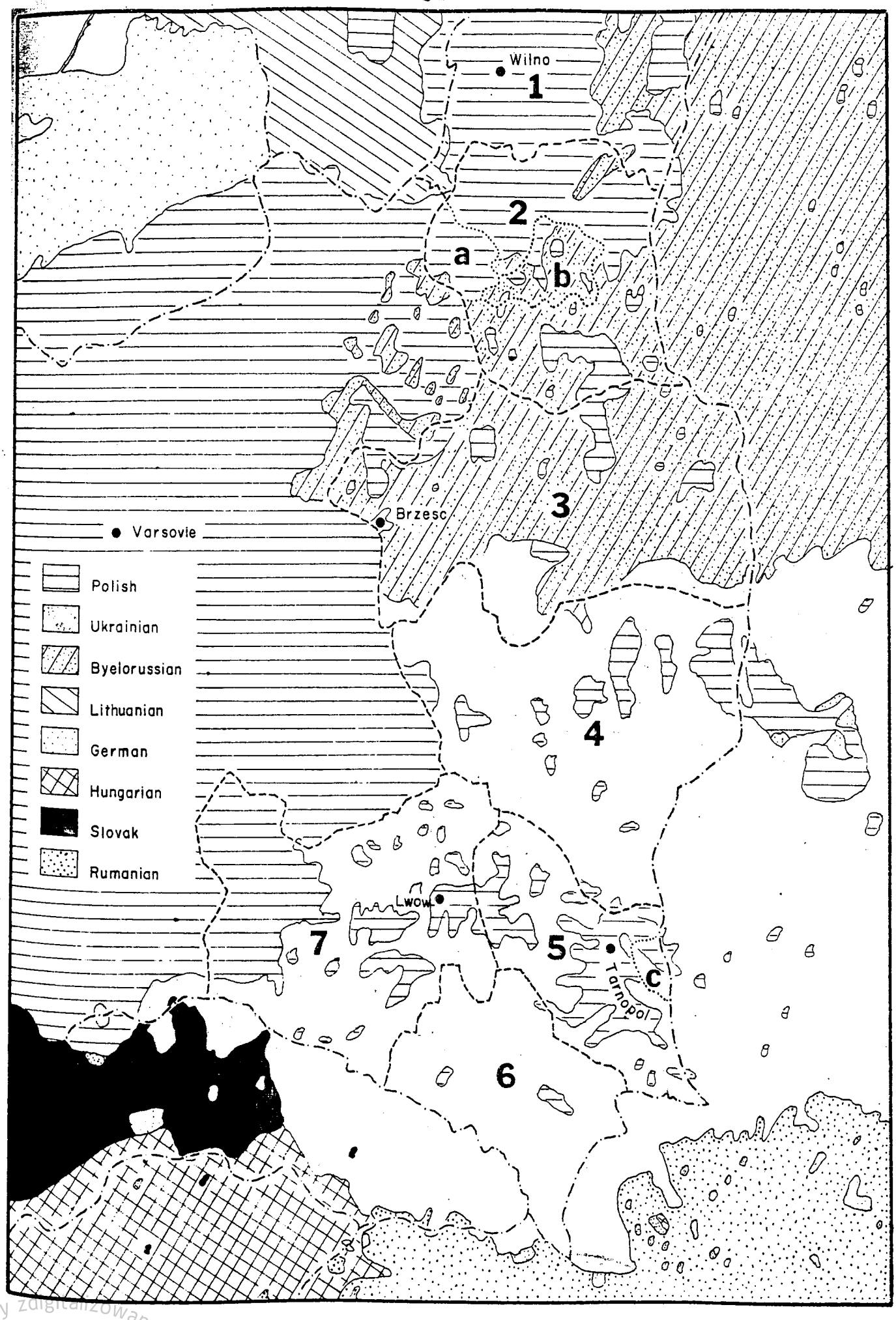
Legend: Wojewody

1. Wilno
2. Nowogródek
3. Polesie
4. Wołyn (Volhynia)
5. Tarnopol
6. Stanisławów

Powiaty

a. Szczuczyn
b. Nowogródek
c. Skałat

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In the north eastern corner of the inter-war Poland there was a Polish majority. Again Poles and Jews tended to live in the cities and the Byelorussians in the countryside. The population of the major city of Wilno consisted of 66 per cent Poles, 28 per cent Jews, 4 per cent Ukrainians, 1 per cent Lithuanians and 1 per cent Byelorussians. The breakdown by powiaty varied from 84 per cent Polish in Szczuczyn to 23 per cent in the adjacent powiat of Nowogródek (Figure 3).[1]

Intermarriage between peoples of different nationalities produced a situation where the nationality line cut right through individual families. The Iwanowski family produced one brother who was a Polish Minister, a second (Ivanovskij) who was a Byelorussian nationalist politician and a third (Ivanauskas) who was a Lithuanian professor.[2] President Narutowicz, who descended from Samogitian nobility, had a brother (Narotavicius) who signed the Lithuanian Declaration of Independence.[3] Adam Mickiewicz, the nineteenth century Polish poet, was of Byelorussian ancestry. The first lines of his great Polish patriotic poem Pan Tadeusz were:

> O Lithuania, my country, thou
> Art like good health; I never knew till now
> How precious, till I lost thee. Now I see
> Thy beauty whole, because I yearn for thee.[4]

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[1] Ibid., p. 56.

[2] Hans Roos, A History of Modern Poland, trans. J. R. Foster (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1966), p. 66.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Adam Mickiewicz, Pan Tadeusz, trans Kenneth Mackenzie (London: Everyman's Library, 1966), p. 2.

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He was claimed by Poles, Lithuanians and Byelorussians as their own.[1]

Relations between the Ukrainians and the Polish Government were never good during the inter-war period. The leadership of the Ukrainian national movement came from two sources both of which had grass-roots ties with the Ukrainian peasant: the Uniate clergy and a small group of intelligentsia who were concentrated in the co-operative movement, some of whom were fanatically anti-Polish.[2] The hostility can be traced back to before World War I when the Austrians played the Ukrainians off against the Poles in Galicia. The military clash in 1919 between the Poles and the Ukrainians greatly embittered relations. After 1921 the Ukrainians complained that when estates were broken up during the land reform, the land was given to Polish settlers and not to Ukrainians.[3] The government bureaucracy, the officer corps[4] and positions in the educational system[5] were closed to them. Before the War twelve subjects were offered in Ukrainian at the University of Lwów and there existed two separate educational systems. After the War all courses were taught in Polish at the University and in 1924 a unified educational system, largely bilingual was established.[6] The Ukrainian nationalists interpreted these changes as efforts to

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[1] Roos, op. cit., p. 66.

[2] Buell, op. cit., pp. 265-66.

[3] Ibid., p. 269.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid., p. 266.

[6] Ibid., p. 270.

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polonize their people. On the other hand, illiteracy among children aged ten to fourteen in eastern Galicia dropped from 26 per cent to 8 per cent during the years 1921-31 and from 41 per cent to 17 per cent in the former Russian provinces.[1]

The Polish Government was alarmed by Ukrainian nationalist talk of making Galicia the Ukrainian "Piedmont." Agitation reached its climax in 1930 when hundreds of buildings and estates owned by Poles were burned, and several post offices were robbed. In addition, the leading Polish advocate of rapprochement with the Ukrainians, Tadeusz Hołowko, was assassinated in 1932 by the Ukrainian nationalists. During the Polish "pacification" of 1930 entire villages where terrorism had occurred were punished. Although few if any Ukrainians were killed, the application of collective responsibility aroused criticism from liberal circles both in Poland and abroad.[2]

Thereafter matters improved. Events across the border in the Soviet Ukraine had their influence. The Ukrainian peasant with his fierce attachment to his patch of land, heard tales of collectivization from fugitives who had braved the Soviet frontier guards equipped with machine-guns and searchlights.[3] About 1932 it became known that all the inhabitants along the frontier had been replaced by people who did not speak Ukrain-

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[1]Kirkien, op. cit., p. 57.

[2]Buell, op. cit., p. 268.

[3]Ann Su Cardwell, Poland and Russia: The Last Quarter Century (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1944), pp. 162-63.

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ian.[1] Ukrainian intellectuals knew the tragic fate of mildly nationalistic Ukrainian Communists in the Soviet Union. They looked to Germany for sanctuary and possible assistance. There was no desire by any part of the Ukrainian population to become a part of the Soviet Ukraine.

The Byelorussians had a weaker national consciousness and were not interested in politics other than the problems of local government. Like the Ukrainian peasants they were fiercely attached to their own land.[2]

Jews formed about 8 per cent of the population of eastern Poland. They were concentrated in the towns where they engaged in commerce, the professions and crafts. In 1938 the Jews throughout Poland controlled nearly one-half of commercial enterprise; 47 per cent of the artisans were Jews; one-half the lawyers; and a large percentage of doctors were Jews.[3] Anti-Semitism became serious in Poland in the second half of the nineteenth century when large numbers of Poles moved into the cities and began to compete with the Jews. There was a violent outbreak of anti-Semitism in eastern Galicia in 1919 because it was believed by the Poles that the Jews were politically hostile to the new Polish state. After a lull in the 1920s there was a rash of anti-Semitic legislation and social activity in the

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[1]Adam Zółtowski, Border of Europe--A Study of the Polish Eastern Provinces (London: Hollis & Carter, 1950), p. 313.

[2]Kirkien, op. cit., p. 57.

[3]Buell, op. cit., p. 298.

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1930s. Boycotts were organized against Jewish businesses; the numerus clausus and special Jewish benches in the class rooms were introduced in the Universities. Numerous laws were enacted directed against Jewish business.[1]

Within the Jewish community the vast majority were law-abiding citizens who looked upon Poland as their home. Jewish society was complex. There was the strictly religious Orthodox Jew. At the other extreme, the polonized Jew felt as much a Pole as his Catholic neighbor and was wounded by the events of the 1930s. Jews were active in socialist circles. Of all socia groups and nationalities the Jews were the only segment of society which produced a significant number of individuals who were pro-Soviet. The very small Communist Party of Poland was dominated by Jews until it was liquidated by Stalin during the purges. Some members of the Jewish working class looked across the border with sympathy for the Soviet Union before World War II.[2]

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Polish foreign policy during the inter-war period was largely influenced by its geographic location between Germany and the Soviet Union. In the early 1920s Poland was closely associated with France. By 1925 its position was becoming

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[1] Ibid., pp. 282-96.

[2] Kazimierz Iranek-Osmecki, Kto Ratuje Jedno Życie . . . Polacy i Żydzi, 1939-45 (He Who Saves One Life . . . The Poles and the Jews, 1939-45) (London: Księgarnia Polska Orbis, 1968), p. 69.

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increasingly insecure as both Soviet Russia and Germany were reviving and the Western Democracies seemed less willing to guarantee Poland's security. With the rise of Naziism Poland's situation became even more precarious. In April, 1933, Piłsudski suggested to France that it join with Poland and the Little Entente in bringing the question of German rearmament before League as a violation of the Treaty of Versailles.[1] When Germany re-occupied the Rhineland, Beck offered Polish support to France if France would resist Hitler with force.[2] Since France refused both times, it became clear that France was not a reliable ally. In the mid-1930's Polish foreign policy became more independent as Beck tried to stave off both the German and Soviet threats. In Western eyes he appeared to be opportunistic and pro-German.

Polish-British relations were never more than cool and correct. Since British policy was influenced by its interests in sea power, British leaders never knew or cared much about virtually landlocked Poland. The traditional view of British diplomacy was that eastern Europe was the zone of German and/or Russian interests and that British vital interests were confined to western Europe.[3] Lloyd George was hostile towards Poland

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[1]Bernadotte E. Schmitt, ed., Poland (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1945), p. 399.

[2]Jozef Beck, Final Report (New York: Robert Speller & Sons Inc., 1957), p. 110.

[3]Anna M. Cienciala, Poland and the Western Powers 1938-1939 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968), p. 261.

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because he considered it a French puppet. The Treaty of Riga was never popular in British circles and the area beyond the Curzon Line was never thought of an integral part of Poland. In the words of the senior civil servant and east European expert, William Strang, the British thought that Poland had "over-extended frontiers" and "cherishing romantic illusions that by dint of manoeuvre she could play the part of a Great Power, [she] had not the strength to maintain the balance."[1] Neither the undemocratic rule of Piłsudski nor the "Colonels" regime was ever popular in Great Britain. Since the Soviet Union was a Great Power whose assistance might be needed in the event of a crisis involving Great Britain, the possibility always remained that the British would sacrifice Poland's eastern territories for Soviet friendship.

The Treaty of Riga brought a certain amount of stability to Soviet-Polish relations, though Soviet leaders considered it only a temporary arrangement. In his Journal Count Jan Szembek, the Polish Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, recalls an incident involving William C. Bullitt, the United States' Ambassador in Paris and Maxim Litvinov, the Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs:

> Il y a quelques années, l'ambassadeur voyageait avec lui de Moscou vers l'Ouest; au moment où ils traversèrent la région de Bialystok, Litvinov lui dit qu'il en était originaire. L'ambassadeur observa avoir ignoré jusque-là

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[1]William Strang, Home and Abroad (London: André Deutsch, 1956), p. 162.

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qu'il fût Polonais. Litvinov très irrité lui répondit que tout cela n'était pas la Pologne mais la Russie, et lui reviendrait.[1]

In the early 1920's relations were tense. War scares flared up periodically on both sides of the frontier. The Soviets looked on the Poles as aristocratic tools of French imperialism bent on destroying the Socialist Revolution. The Poles saw the Soviets as bloodthirsty murderers who planned to subjugate the entire world to their atheistic dogma. Soviet leaders were very suspicious of Polish efforts to form an alliance of states along the western frontier of the Soviet Union and the toleration of anti-Soviet Russian and Ukrainian émigrés in Poland. The Treaty of Rapallo (1922) between the Soviet Union and Germany produced a similar feeling of insecurity in Poland.

When Piłsudski, a known russophobe, came to power in 1926, the Soviet Government assumed that he would follow an aggressively hostile policy towards the Soviet Union. But he did not. As a result of the failure of his plans for east European federalism in 1919-20, the revival of Germany and Soviet Russia, the passivity of the West and his realization of Poland's limited power, he followed a cautious policy.[2] He did not believe a large scale détente was possible, but he did want to try to settle everyday causes of friction.[3]

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[1]Jan Szembek, Journal, 1933-1939, trans. J. Rzewuska and T. Zaleski (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1952), p. 251.

[2]Bohdan B. Budurowicz, Polish-Soviet Relations, 1932-1939 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), p. 6.

[3]Beck, op. cit., p. 3.

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In the early 1930's there was a slight thaw. French-Soviet negotiations and the increase of German revanchist tendencies led to the signing of a non-aggression pact between Poland and the Soviet Union on July 25, 1932 after lengthy negotiations. It was far from a final solution because Piłsudski knew that the Soviets had not given up their ambition towards Poland and because the Soviet leaders continued to mistrust Piłsudski as an agent of French imperialism.

The early events of the Nazi Revolution and corresponding French weakness revealed Polish vulnerability. On January 26, 1934, Beck signed a non-aggression pact with Germany. Then to allay Soviet fears of a secret Polish-German accord directed against the Soviet Union, he flew to Moscow and signed a ten-year extension of the Polish-Soviet non-aggression pact.

The Minorities Treaty had been a thorn in Poland's side for fifteen years. While the Soviet Union was preparing to enter the League of Nations, Beck proposed that principles of the Treaty be applied to all nations. He recognized that it could be a dangerous tool in Soviet hands, offering an excuse for constant intervention in Polish internal affairs in the name of Poland's Ukrainian and Byelorussian minorities. When the Great Powers rejected the scheme, Beck informed the League on September 13, 1934, that Poland would no longer feel bound by the Treaty until a uniform plan was accepted by all nations. The Soviet Union entered the League on September 19, 1934.

Between 1935 and 1938 Polish-Soviet relations continued to be tense and dominated by mutual suspicion. In 1935, Goering

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made his first offer to Poland for joint German-Polish action against the Soviet Union. Piłsudski rejected it because he knew that "aller en Ukraine serait litteralement travailler pour le roi de Prusse."[1] Poland would at best become a prominent satellite of Nazi Germany. The incident indicated to Polish leaders just how aggressive and how far-sweeping Hitler's secret schemes could be. Poland was caught between two powerful and very dangerous neighbors. After Piłsudski's death Beck's policy was to try to balance between the two.

Sikorski's concepts of foreign policy revolved around the Franco-Polish Alliance supplemented by closer Polish-Czech relations. In the early 1920's even before the Treaties of Locarno (1925) Sikorski was convinced of the seriousness of German ambitions to revise frontiers in the east, of growing Western acquiescence, and of the League of Nations' inability to offer security to Poland. After 1921 he sought the consolidation of Poland's eastern frontier. During his premiership he created a force of frontier guards to defend Poland from Soviet incursions and he worked to prevent a renewal of Soviet-Polish hostilities in spite of Soviet provocations.

In the 1930's Sikorski's opinion on foreign policy continued to be divergent from Piłsudski's. Although Piłsudski and his successors were very cautious in their dealings with Germany, they still saw the Soviet Union as Poland's most

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[1]Budurowicz, op. cit., p. 192.

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dangerous foe. Sikorski, like the other members of the "Morges Front," wanted to maintain close relations with Czechoslovakia and France, so that Poland could help to maintain French vigilence against the German menace. He hoped for peaceful coexistence with the Soviet Union and wanted to quiet Soviet fears by convincing its leaders that Poland was not interested in additional conquests, but, on the other hand, Poland wanted to keep what legally belonged to it. He had no illusions about Soviet malevolent intentions. In 1939 he wrote:

> . . . The nation . . . cannot forget the fact that in the terrible days of 1920, which recalled for it the Russian invasions of other times, a Polish Bolshevist government was in office in Wyszkow near Warsaw, with two Poles, Marchlewski and Dzierzynski, in charge. They are reminded of all this by the present Russian Constitution . . . which says that the Red Army of workers and peasants may receive orders at any time to take up arms in defence of the international proletariat.[1]

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By the late 1930's the threat of German expansionism had become acute for Poland. In 1933 Hitler came to power; in 1934 Germany withdrew from the League of Nations and there was an attempted Nazi coup in Austria; in 1935 Hitler denounced the rearmament clauses of the Treaty of Versailles; in 1936 German troops re-occupied the Rhineland; in March, 1938, Austria was annexed. And as Hitler grew bolder, the Western Democracies grew more timid.

After the Anschluss Czechoslovakia's position was exposed.

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[1]Władysław Sikorski, "Poland's Defence" The Slavonic and East European Review, XVII (January, 1939), 345.

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Polish-Czech relations had been cool ever since 1919 when the Czechs seized Teschen while the Polish Army was fighting the Ukrainians. Then, after the Soviet-Czech Treaty of mutual assistance (May 16, 1935), the Poles were increasingly concerned by the growth of Soviet influence in Prague.

The high point of Western appeasement came at Munich in September, 1938, when the Allies agreed to Hitler's territorial demands. Beck took advantage of Czech helplessness and demanded the return of Teschen. The Czechs had no choice but to yield. Sikorski, his colleagues in the "Morges Front," as well as former Foreign Minister (1926-32), August Zaleski, strongly disapproved because they saw that the balance of power in eastern Europe would be undermined by the destruction of the Czechoslovak state. The Polish public image in the West was severely injured as Poland appeared to be the jackal following the German lion. Commenting on Polish actions during the Munich Crisis Winston Churchill writes:

> The heroic characteristics of the Polish race must not blind us to their record of folly and ingratitude which over the centuries has led them through measureless suffering. We see them in 1919, a people restored by the victory of the Western Allies after long generations of partitions and servitude to be one of the main powers in Europe. Now, in 1938, over a question so minor as Teschen, they sundered themselves from those friends in France, Britain, and the United States who had lifted them once again to a national, coherent life, and whom they were soon to need so sorely. We see them hurrying, while the might of Germany glowered up against them, to grasp their share of the pillage and ruin of Czechoslovakia. During the crisis the door was shut in the face of the British and French Ambassadors, who

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> were denied even access to the Foreign Secretary of the Polish State. . . .[1]

These were the irate words of the man who had a decisive voice in the fate of Poland during World War II!

Early in 1939 Hitler began to apply the same pressures to Poland that he had used against the Czechoslovaks. In mid-March he tore up the Munich Agreement and occupied what remained of the truncated Czecho-Slovak State. Appeasement had failed and Poland was faced on three sides by German military units. The British Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, hearing rumors of an imminent German attack on Poland,[2] attempted to deter Hitler by making a unilateral guarantee of Poland's independence in the House of Commons on March 31, 1931:

> . . . in the event of any action which clearly threatened Polish independence, and which the Polish Government accordingly considered it vital to resist with their national forces, His Majesty's Government would feel themselves bound at once to lend the Polish Government all support in their power. . . .[3]

Beck came to London on April 3, and on April 6, and an official communiqué promised mutual assistance against aggression until the signing of a formal accord.

To be effective the guarantee needed Soviet inclusion because the Soviet Union was the only country in the area with

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[1]Winston S. Churchill, The Gathering Storm (London: Cassell & Co., Ltd., 1948), pp. 252-53.

[2]Keith G. Feiling, The Life of Neville Chamberlain (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1946), p. 403.

[3]Great Britain, 5 Parliamentary Debates (Commons) CCCXLV (1939), 2415.

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sufficient military power to offer Poland adequate assistance. Negotiations began on April 15, between Allied representatives and Soviet leaders in Moscow. The Poles and the Rumanians, to whom the British had also given their guarantee, refused to allow Soviet troops on their soil, fearing that once they had come they would never leave. Sikorski's opinion on this issue was the same as that of his Polish opponents:

> . . . we might ask for certain guarantees, proceed to a revision of our views, and for the future, consider a certain measure of agreement with Soviet Russia which would guarantee us benevolent neutrality on our Eastern borders. Under no conditions, however, could we agree to admit Bolshevist armies on to Polish territory. . . .[1]

Stalin's amour-propre had been wounded when he was not invited to Munich. He was suspicious that the Allies were trying to divert a German attack from themselves by turning Hitler against the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union was not ready for war: its economy and social structure were still unsettled from the dislocations caused by the Five Year Plans and Stalin had just finished an extensive purge of the high ranking officers of the Red Army. Since the Allies would not agree to allow the Soviet Army to enter Poland and Rumanian without their permission, he started to play a double game. Only two days after he began negotiations with the Allies he put out his first secret feelers to Germany. On May 3, Vyacheslav Molotov replaced Litvinov, a Jew, as Commissar of Foreign Affairs. Negotiations with the Allies continued simultaneously with the

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[1]Sikorski, "Poland's Defences," p. 346.

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secret German negotiations during the spring and early summer. Western leaders did not think a political accord was possible because of the deep ideological gulf between Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia.

When discussing the possibility of a Soviet-German alliance, Sikorski's opinion in early 1939 revealed his political acumen.

> . . . The danger of war both with Germany and the Soviets which threatened Poland at the time of the Rapallo agreement in 1923, seems for the moment to be past. Whether for ever no one can say. Such things depend on political considerations, and these are always in a state of change.
> . . . . . .
> . . . we should remember that there exist in the Third Reich influenctial military circles which have not rejected the idea of a return to friendship with Soviet Russia. Such a policy was favoured by von Seeckt. It has not been uncongenial to Marshal von Blomberg, and even General von Fritsch has professed it. What is more, the present Chief of General Staff, Keitel, was Chief of the Military Mission which worked for a time with the Red Army. Strategic considerations draw toward this arrangement, in a Germany that is without colonies. Russian raw materials are vitally needed by German industry. They would also help to make possible the complete motorisation of the country, as well as of the mechanised armies that are at the moment too large to handle

Thus Sikorski felt that at the moment of writing a Soviet-German alliance directed against Poland was not a probability, but that it was a distinct possibility. Four months after the publicatio of this article Soviet and German officials made their first unofficial political contact while discussing an economic agreement.

The Germans could offer Stalin what the Allies never

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[1] Ibid., pp. 345-46.

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could: definite and extensive territorial concessions and at least temporary peace. Stalin, like everyone else, over-estimated the strength and the morale of the French Army. He planned to let the Germans and Allies exhaust themselves while he would be the tertius gaudens. Accordingly, before an astonished world German Foreign Minister, Joachim von Ribbentrop, flew to Moscow and signed a non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union on August 23, 1939. In the secret protocol the Soviet Union was promised Estonia, Latvia, the eastern half of Poland and Bessarabia; Germany was to get Lithuania and western Poland.

On August 25, the British and the Poles signed a pact of mutual assistance. With his eastern flank now secure Hitler started to make impossible demands. The Allies continued to try to negotiate, but war had become inevitable. Since the Allies asked the Poles not to call a complete mobilization lest Hitler use the opportunity as a provocation, the Poles agreed. On August 30, they decreed a partial mobilization. Then, on September 1, 1939, the Germans struck.

* * * *

At the time of the outbreak of World War II Sikorski was fifty-eight years of age. He was matured and at the height of his powers. Count Edward Raczyński, Sikorski's Foreign Minister from 1941 until his death, saw in Sikorski the Pole. Sikorski was a person

> . . . whose political assets are a prepossessing appearance, eloquence and virile energy. His weaknesses have done almost as much as his virtue to endear him to his fellow-countrymen:

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> impulsiveness without rancour, a certan vainglory (reflectin his personal courage and panache), and a disposition to flatter or criticize freely on the spur of the moment or for immediate ends. He is, in fact, a thoroughly Polish character who while using the catchwords as befits an actor in the twentieth-century drama, reminds one for all the world of the "democratic noblemen" who ruled Poland in former times.[1]

In Raczyński's eyes Sikorski's major strength was his sense of reality.

> . . . He did . . . possess one quality which is indispensabl to a statesman and which placed him in a high rank among his contemporaries, namely the sense of reality. This may appear commonplace but is, in fact, extremely rare, especially among our compatriots. It is a combination of two qualities: the capacity for sound thinking, and in addition a kind of instinct or sixth sense which enables one to ignore rumours and illusions and go straight for the facts in a natural and, as it were, inevitable way. It is this which distinguishes a statesman from a political dilettante, like a precious stone from glass. It is seldom met with in Poland, where rumours of every kind flourish and have all too great an invluence on public opinion, its emotions and reactions.[2]

Coupled with his sense of reality Sikorski had an immense capaci for work and an ability to get things done.

Most of Sikorski's compatriots and his Western colleague held widely diverging images of the man. To his Polish opponent he was vain, politically ambitious and authoritarian when his ideas were challenged. He preferred to work among people whom he had known for years and trusted and was uncomfortable with newcomers and critics. In contrast, Sikorski was always at ease among foreign dignitaries. His manly charm and his ability

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[1]Edward Raczyński, In Allied London (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1962), pp. 55-56.

[2]Ibid., pp. 161-62.

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to make quick incisive analyses and decisions favorably impressed them and made him a generally popular figure. After Sikorski's death Raczyński wrote:

> . . . Ambitious, with boundless amour-propre and faith in his power to extricate himself from any and all difficulties, he was capable of astutely mingling fact and fancy to any extent which the need of the moment might require. The Poles, who are lively critics of one another, soon perceived this and lost no time in spreading it abroad. Foreigners, however, and above all our British hosts, who are more naïve or less censorious in such matters, saw him a chivalrous exponent of the qualities and aspirations of a far-away country which, thanks to him, became accessible and intelligible. They readily accorded to him the palm of a statesmanship for which he strove so tenaciously all his life with his fellow-countrymen.[1]

Although a realist in tactics, Sikorski also had a romantic side which revealed itself when the questions of the Polish nation and the Polish Army were involved. He shared the view of Poland, the outpost of western civilization defending it against barbarism. Commenting on the Battle of Warsaw, he wrote:

> Ce n'était pas la première fois dans L'histoire que la Pologne barrait la route à l'Orient qui se ruait au nom d'un prétendu idéal à l'assaut du monde occidental.
>
> Lorsque les neveux de Gengis Khan, fondateurs de l'immense empire mongol, parvinrent au début du XIVe siècle [sic] sous les murs de Liegnitz et de Wroclaw (Breslau), la Pologne leur opposa la même résistance qu'en 1920 a Varsovie elle opposa a l'invasion des armées soviétiques.[2]

And on the Polish Army:

> The Polish army of our time is the heir of the fine tradition of those knights of other ages. These were maintained during generations of political subjugation by men

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[1] Ibid., p. 163.

[2] Władysław Sikorski, La Campagne polono-russe de 1920, trans. M. Larcher (Nad Wisłą i Wkrą; Paris: Payot, 1928), pp. 306-7.

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> who fought to regain their liberties; and they have been handed on to the now restored commonwealth. . . . [After many basic organizational difficulties] the force did find itself quickly; rising as a Phoenix from ashes in an atmosphere of universal enthusiasm, under the leadership of the first Chief of the State--Joseph Piłsudski. This army was the first achievement of the restored Poland.[1]

Ideologically Sikorski was a nationalist and a moderate liberal, in spite of his sharp resentment of personal criticism from his compatriots. He had spent all of his adult life in the service of his country. And between 1928 and 1939 he was a critic of the semi-authoritarian regime of Piłsudski and his successors and a leader of the democratic elements who were in opposition.

Although Sikorski abhored Soviet totalitarian political methods which ran completely against his personal and political grain, he was a realist who saw clearly that the Soviet Union was a factor which could not be ignored in Polish political calculations or spurned quixotically by a Polish government. The Soviet Union was Poland's neighbor; it was a Great Power; and Poland needed friendly relations with it if political stability in eastern Europe was to be maintained.

This then, was the man who was to assume the leadership of the Polish Government-in-Exile after the German and Soviet invasions of Poland and subsequent collapse of the pre-war Polish establishment, and who would direct the Polish ship of state through its stormy dealings with the Western Allies and the Soviet Union during the critical years from 1939 until his death in 1943.

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[1]Sikorski, "Poland's Defences," pp. 343-44.

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CHAPTER II

SEPTEMBER, 1939-JUNE 22, 1941

The German onslaught on Poland was the world's first exposure to blitzkrieg warfare. Since the Polish Armed Forces had not been fully mobilized and, in terms of manpower alone, they were greatly outnumbered, Poland was scarcely a match for German might. German armored columns tore through Polish lines and German air power wrought havoc behind the lines. Most of western Poland was overrun within the first two weeks of the campaign. Western military leaders failed to recognize the full power of blitzkrieg tactics and attributed Poland's defeat to poor leadership, numerical inferiority, lack of proper equipment and general incapacity.

Soviet leaders continued to play a double game during the first two weeks of the September campaign. As early as June, 1939 they had offered material support to Poland in the event of war.[1] Four days after the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact (August 27) an interview of Soviet Marshall Kliment Voroshilov in Izvestia said:

> Help in the form of raw materials and war materials is a commercial question, and no Pact of Mutual Assistance

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[1] Léon Noël, L'Agression allemande contre la Pologne (Paris: Flammarion, 1946), p. 378.

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whatever, far less a Military Convention, is needed in order to supply Poland with these materials.[1]

On September 2, the Soviet Ambassador in Warsaw asked Beck why he had not taken advantage of the Soviet offer.[2] When the Polish Ambassador in Moscow, Wacław Grzybowski, informed Molotov (September 3) of German aggression, Molotov asked if he counted on Western intervention. In reply to Grzybowski's reply that he anticipated declarations of war momentarily, Molotov smiled sceptically and said, "We shall see, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur."[3] Meanwhile, the Germans were pressuring Moscow to attack. On September 6, Grzybowski received a detailed list of Polish needs. He had difficulty in contacting Molotov, but when he succeeded in meeting the Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs (September 8 the atmosphere had changed. Molotov told him that "the intervention of Great Britain and France had created an entirely new situation" and Poland had become "synonymous with England." War materials could not be supplied because such action might be in contradiction to the Soviet-German Pact.[4] A partial Soviet mobilization was ordered on September 10.[5] Two days later the first propaganda attack on Poland for oppressing its minorities

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[1]Poland. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Official Documents Concerning Polish-German and Polish-Soviet Relations, 1933-1939 [Polish White Book] (New York: Roy Publishers, n.d.), p. 187.

[2]Ibid. [3]Ibid., p. 209.

[4]Ibid., p. 188.

[5]Jane Degras, ed., Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy, 1917-41 (London: Oxford University Press, 1953), III, 372.

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appeared in the Soviet press. On September 14, the scene was set in Pravda for the Soviet military attack:

> What are the causes of a situation which has brought Poland to the verge of bankruptcy? These causes are in the first place rooted in the inner weaknesses and contradictions of the Polish State, which is a multinational State. . . . Poland is inhabited by no fewer than 8,000,000 Ukrainians and about 3,000,000 White Russians. . . .
>
> The national policy of the ruling circles in Poland has been characterized by the suppression and oppression of national minorities, particularly the Ukrainians and White Russians. The Polish language dominates all rungs of the administration from top to bottom. Polish ruling circles maintain their domination by punitive expeditions, field tribunals, and White terror, fanning national discord.[1]

The Soviet press also mentioned alleged risings of the populace in Galicia and the Byelorussian-speaking areas of Poland.[2] Soviet forces crossed the Soviet-Polish frontier on September 17. Molotov sent a note to the Polish Embassay and made a broadcast on the same day stating that as a result of the swift German advance

> . . . No one knows the whereabouts of the Polish Government. The population of Poland have been abandoned by their ill-starred leaders to their fate. The Polish State and its Government have virtually ceased to exist. In view of this state of affairs, treaties concluded between the Soviet Union and Poland have ceased to operate.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Nor can it be demanded of the Soviet Government that it remain indifferent to the fate of its blood brothers, the Ukrainians and White Russians inhabiting Poland, who even formerly were nations without rights and who now have been utterly abandoned to their fate. The Soviet Government deems it its sacred duty to extend the hand of assistance to its brother Ukrainians and White Russians inhabiting Poland.
>
> In view of all the above, the Government of the Soviet Union this morning handed a note to the Polish Ambassador

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[1] The Times, London, September 15, 1939.

[2] Ibid.

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> in Moscow[1] announcing that the Soviet Government has instructed the high command of the Red Army to order the troops to cross the frontier and to take under their protection the lives and property of the population of western Ukraine and western White Russia.[2]

On September 28, Ribbentrop and Molotov signed an agreement dividing Poland along the Curzon Line with added concessions to the Soviet Union in the north and south (Figure 1), and recognizing Soviet interest in Lithuania.

The Allies declared war on Germany on September 3, but offered Poland no military support, either in the form of war material (impossible because of geography) or in the form of an attack on Germany's western frontier. When the Soviet Union entered the War, the Allies had to reconsider their commitments to Poland. Chamberlain announced to the House of Commons (September 20) that two days earlier the British Government had issued a statement

> . . . that this attack by the Soviet Government upon Poland (a country with whom she had a non-aggression pact) at a moment when Poland was prostrate in the face of overwhelming forces brought against her by Germany could not be justified by the arguments put forward and, that while the full implication of these events was not yet apparent, nothing which had occurred would make any difference to the determination of His Majesty's Government to fulfill their obligations to Poland and to prosecute the war with all energy until these obligations have been achieved.[3]

There was no declaration of war because the British felt that it

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[1]The Polish Ambassador refused to accept the note. Polish White Book, p. 190.

[2]Degras, op. cit., III, 375.

[3]Great Britain, 5 Parliamentary Debates (Commons) CCCLI, 975.

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would not save Poland, it might drive the Soviet Union into a closer alliance with Germany, and could lead to a Soviet attack in the Middle East.[1]

Sikorski was eager to take part in the September Campaign in spite of the deep gulf between him and his opponents in Poland. On August 24, he wrote to Śmigły-Rydz, asking for an assignment. He received no reply. He went to Śmigły-Rydz's headquarters and asked for an interview (September 12). He received neither an interview nor a command. Next Sikorski went to Bucharest where he met (September 21) the French Ambassador to Poland, Léon Noël, and the Polish Ambassador to Rumania, Roger Raczyński. They decided that since there were large numbers of Polish citizens working in French agriculture and industry, a Polish army could be created in France. Sikorski arrived in Paris on September 25. The Polish Ambassador, Julian Łukasiewicz appointed him, as senior officer on the spot, Commander of the Polish Army to be formed.[2]

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After the Soviet attack an acute political and constitutional crisis occurred within the Polish Government. As the Germans advanced the leaders evacuated Warsaw and moved to the

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[1]Llewellyn Woodward, British Foreign Policy in the Second World War (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1962), p. 7.

[2]Polskie Siły Zbrojne w Drugiej Wojnie Światowej: Kampanie na Obczyźnie (PSZ) (The Polish Armed Forces During the Second World War: The Campaigns Abroad) (London: General Sikorski Historical Institute, 1959), I, 14-15.

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east. On hearing of the Soviet invasion, President Mościcki, Smigły-Rydz and most of the important Government officials crossed the bridge at Kuty into Rumania (September 17-18) and requested permission to go to France. The Rumanians had been Poland's ally, but under pressure from the Germans, they interned the Polish leaders almost immediately. Technically, Poland was without a Government. The danger of an interregnum could open the entire question of the legal existence of the Polish State.

Since the President had the right to name his own successor under the Constitution, Mościcki designated as his successor General Bolesław Wieniawa-Długoszowski, the Polish Ambassador in Rome. On September 26, Ambassador Łukasiewicz informed the French Government of the change and Count Edward Raczyński, the Polish Ambassador in London informed Lord Halifax. But the French refused to recognize Wieniawa-Długoszowski, a close friend of Piłsudski and Beck.[1]

In Paris there seemed to be three possible alternatives, Paderewski, Zaleski and Władysław Raczkiewicz. Paderewski, the choice of Sikorski and the opposition, seemed too old and infirm. On September 27, Polish Ambassador to Breat Britain, Edward Raczyński, the Polish Ambassador to France, Łukasiewicz, and the Polish Ambassador to Italy, Wieniawa-Długoszowski, sent a message to Mościcki via Bucharest suggesting Rackiewicz as the

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[1]Mańian Romeyko, "Ze Wspomnień attaché wojskowego" (From the Recollections of a Military Attaché) Part III, Wojskowy Przegląd Historyczny nr. I (1960), p. 275.

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best choice to head a government of national unity. Wieniawa-Długoszowski and then Mościcki (September 29-30) resigned in favor of Raczkiewicz. The French Government welcomed the choice and promised that Raczkiewicz would be granted full powers on French territory.[1] The United States recognized the new Government of October 2,[2] and Halifax announced in the House of Lords on October 2 that Great Britain would recognize the change.[3]

Raczkiewicz was a former President of the Senate and had served as Minister of the Interior. When the War broke out he was Wojewoda (Governor) of Pomorze and Chairman of the Organization of Poles Abroad. He was hesitant to accept the office, but agreed to serve on condition that he would resign in favor of General Kazimierz Sosnkowski, who was still missing, when and if he made his way to the west. When Sosnkowski arrived in Paris, Raczkiewicz offered his resignation, but was dissuaded because another change in the Presidency could create a further question of the credibility of the Government's legality. He did, however, name Sosnkowski his successor (October 16).

On September 30 Raczkiewicz asked Zaleski to form a government of national unity, but he failed because the opposition was unwilling to have both a President and a Prime Minister

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[1] PSZ, op. cit., I, 13.

[2] Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers, 1941 (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1958), I, 209.

[3] Great Britain, Parliamentary Debates (Lords) CXIV (1939), 1326.

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who had been connected with the pre-war regime. Next Raczkiewicz turned to Stanisław Stroński. Stroński, who was from the opposition, told Raczkiewicz that it would be impossible to form a government of national unity if the President retained the power to decide all important questions, and especially the power to change the Prime Minister. The President had to agree to act only with the accord of the Government. Raczkiewicz accepted these conditions. Sikorski let it be known that he would be willing to form a Government on the same conditions. Stroński told Raczkiewicz of Sikorski's bid. On October 1 Sikorski and his Government were sworn in and Raczkiewicz declared that he would exercise his powers only with the approval of the Government.

Sikorski's position was strengthened by the fact that there was a sharp reaction against the pre-war regime among Poles in exile who held it responsible for the defeat of September. The majority of émigrés fell in behind Sikorski and his political allies. Yet since the sanacja group held many key positions in the officer corps and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sikorski needed their talents. In foreign affairs the sanators tended to be more rigidly anti-Soviet than Sikorski and his followers.

Sikorski's first cabinet was a coalition which reflected this state of affairs. It was a government of national unity which was dominated by the opposition, but included members of the pre-war Government. Sikorski was Prime Minister, Minister

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of National Defense and later became Commander-in-Chief (November 7) after Smigły-Rydz resigned. Stroński, an independent and former National Democrat, was his Deputy Prime Minister. His Foreign Minister was Zaleski, a supporter of the pre-war regime, but an opponent of Beck's policies. The Minister of Public Welfare was Jan Stańczyk (PPS). The Minister of Treasury, Industry and Trade was Adam Koc, a former prominent member of the "Colonels." Koc was replaced on December 9, 1939, by a non-party expert, Henryk Strassburger. Other Ministers of State were Józef Haller (Christian Labor), Marian Seyda (Nationalist); General Sosnkowski (Raczkiewicz's heir apparent and favorite of the officer corps), and Aleksander Ładoś (Peasant Party). Sosnkowski had as his special responsibility the direction of the underground movement in Poland. Professor Stanisław Kot replaced Ładoś on December 7, 1939.

Kot was a very influential person in Sikorski's entourage from the beginning. He had been Sikorski's close personal and trusted friend since 1914 when they worked together in the Naczelny Komitet Narodowy.[1] Kot was a very active person with great organizational talents which could be useful when channelled into constructive fields, such as the care of the unfortunate and education. His major weakness was an exaggerated enmity towards and suspicion of sanators. This led him into

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[1] In their correspondence Kot was one of the handful of collaborators with whom Sikorski used the intimate personal "ty" (thou) form, instead of the more formal, but generally used Polish expression, "pan" (mister, you).

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many personal intrigues and created enemies for Sikorski out of people who otherwise might have been his friends.

Under the Constitution the President had the power to dissolve the Sejm and Senate during a state of war and "the right to summon the Seym and Senate as a reduced body, formed by these Chambers" (Article 74, paragraph 2).[1] On the suggestion of Sikorski, Raczkiewicz dissolved the Sejm and Senate of 1935 on the ground that they no longer expressed popular opinion and decreed (December 9, 1939) the creation of the Rada Narodowa (National Council), a quasi-parliament with advisory powers designed to represent a cross-section of Polish national opinion. Paderewski was its President until his death (June 29, 1941). Vice-Presidents were Stanisław Mikołajczyk (Peasant Party), Herman Liebermann (PPS) and Tadeusz Bielecki (Nationalist Party). Besides the major parties, membership included individuals from other segments of Polish society: a representative of Polish Jews, of Poles in Germany, several Piłsudskiites Bishop Józef Gawlina, and independents. The institution met regularly and had commissions which dealt with economic and budgetary, military, legal-constitutional, diplomatic and post-war matters.[2] In February, 1942, it was reconstituted under the

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[1] Constitution of the Republic of Poland (London: West London Offset Co., 1967), p. 46.

[2] Michal Kwiatkowski, Rząd i Rada Narodowa R.P. w Świetle Faktów i Dokumentów od Września do Lutego 1942 (The Government and National Council of the Polish Republic in the Light of the Facts and Documents from September to February, 1942) (London: Publication of the Author, 1942), p. 140.

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Presidency of Władysław Grabski and continued to function throughout the War.

Sikorski's policies were built around the French Alliance. He had the greatest confidence in France and the French Army. Sikorski wanted to rebuild the Polish Army in France. He felt he had to demonstrate that Poland was still an effective ally and to erase the world's opinion that Poland had fallen as a result of its own folly.[1] Recruits for the new Polish Army came chiefly from the large numbers of Polish citizens living in France and from Polish soldiers who had managed to escape from Poland after the September campaign via Hungary, Rumania and the Baltic States. By June, 1940, he had created an army of 7,661 officers and 74,600 non-commissioned officers and men. With the exception of naval personnel and part of the Air Force who were in Great Britain, and 4,038 men in the Near East, the entire force was in France, integrated into the French forces.[2]

Sikorski also began to organize underground forces in Poland. On the morrow of the September campaign the elements for resistance were in existence, but disorganized. Quickly they began to coalesce. Former regular army units formed themselves into the Związek Walki Zbrojnej (Union of Armed Warfare) under the command of Major-General Stefan Rowecki ("Grot"). Rowecki and his forces were under Sosnkowski in Paris. In

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[1]Marian Kukiel, Six Years of Struggle for Independence (Newtown, England: Montgomeryshire Printing, Co., 1947), p. 11.

[2]PSZ, op. cit., I, 58.

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addition, the various political parties had their own units at first. Within months after September an efficient communication system had been constructed between Poland and Paris. In May, 1940, underground courts were initiated when Sikorski authorized Rowecki to try and punish individuals found guilty of treason.[1]

Sikorski's post-war aim was the creation of a central eastern European federation as a bulwark against Germany and the Soviet Union. This idea was not new in Polish political thought During the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries most of east central Europe had been ruled by monarchs of the Jagiełłon Dynasty in a loose federation headed by Poland. The Naczelny Komitet Narodowy had wanted Polish partnership within the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Piłsudski, too, had strongly espoused federalism in the early 1920's. When Zaleski visited London (October 11-13, 1939), British statesmen informed him that the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House) had made a study of the problems of central eastern Europe and had suggested the possibility of a federation including Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary.[2] Sikorski accepted the idea completely. He met Czechoslovak leader Eduard Beneš and when he

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[1]Tadeusz Bór-Komorowski, The Secret Army (London: Victor Gollancz, 1950), p. 44.

[2]Sprawa Polska w Czasie Drugiej Wojny Światowej na Arenie Międzynarodowej (The Polish Question during the Second World War in the International Arena) (Warsaw: Polski Institut Spraw Miedznarodowych, 1965), p. 275.

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visited London in November, 1939, he delivered a speech advocating federalism. On December 20, 1939, the Polish Government officially committed itself to the "creation of a politically solid bloc of Slav states extending from the Baltic to the Black Sea and the Adriatic."[1] The key state in any such structure would be Czechoslovakia.

Unlike the Poles, the Czechoslovaks were not united at first. The Czechoslovak National Committee (in Paris) favored a centralist solution in domestic matters. Beneš who lives in London belonged to this group. A rival Czecho-Slovak National Council (also in Paris) was presided over by Milan Hodža. The Council stressed the dual nature of a Czecho-Slovak state. Hodža, who was quite friendly to the Poles, was interested in a tripartite arrangement with Poland, whereas Beneš wanted a bipartite relationship.[2] In exploratory talks Beneš stipulated that Poland must surrender all its territory which did not contain a Polish majority.[3] And whereas Sikorski thought in political terms, Beneš thought a federation might

> . . . be based on [an] economic foundation, on the idea of a customs union and of a common trade and financial policy, and that further questions, especially political ones, would be resolved in progressive evolution.[4]

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[1]Piotr S. Wandycz, Czechoslovak-Polish Confederation (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1956), p. 34.

[2]Ibid., p. 35.

[3]Raczyński, In Allied London, p. 46.

[4]Wandycz, op. cit., p. 36.

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Sikorski's policies did not exist in a vacuum. Since he had no bargaining power except his small army and the good will he could win, he was closely dependent on France and Great Britain. In the long term Poland's political position was weak because it was a function of Great Power relations.

Once it was clear that Poland would be crushed in the September campaign, the first ripples of pro-Soviet appeasement and criticism of the Poles appeared in the British press. In The Times of September 23, 1939, it was stated that

> . . . once Poland was defeated and overrun by the Germans, Russia could not let the White Russian and Ukrainian provinces fall into the hands of the Nazis, who would have forme them into separatist puppet States, a menace to Russia.

In the Sunday Express (September 24) Lloyd George published an article ("What is Stalin Up To?") in which he attacked the "class-ridden" Polish Government and praised the Soviet Government for liberating their kinsmen from the Polish yoke.

Within the British Cabinet Churchill relates that there was indignation about the Soviet attack on Poland at first, but he worked to keep it to a minimum. He believed that there was a basic antagonism between Germany and the Soviet Union, and that Great Britain had to concentrate on defeating the major enemy, Germany, in spite of Soviet actions. On September 25 he presented a memorandum to the War Cabinet which pointed out that a common German-Soviet frontier was a potential eastern front and that Great Britain should work for closer relations

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with the Soviet Union.[1] The British Government started to seek political contacts behind the scenes. Halifax asked the Soviet Ambassador to Great Britain, Ivan Maisky, if the Soviet Union would be willing to discuss a war trade agreement (September 23). Four days later Maisky answered in the affirmative.[2]

A turning point in British-Soviet relations came when Churchill made his ideas public in a broadcast on October 1:

> Russia has pursued a cold policy of self-interest. We could have wished that the Russian armies should be standing on their present line as the friends and allies of Poland instead of as invaders. But that the Russian armies should stand on this line was clearly necessary for the safety of Russia against the Nazi menace. At any rate, the line is there, and an Eastern front has been created which Nazi Germany does not dare assail. . . .
>
> I cannot forecast to you the action of Russia. It is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma. But perhaps there is a key. That key is Russian national interest. It cannot be in accordance with the interest or safety of Russia that Germany should plant herself upon the shores of the Black Sea, or that she should overrun the Balkan States and subjugate the Slavonic peoples of South-eastern Europe. That would be contrary to the historic life-interests of Russia.[3]

Churchill's broadcast aroused a great deal of interest. Lloyd George praised the speech in the House of Commons (October 3). And in answer to a question as to whether the speech represented the Government's point of view, Chamberlain said (October 26):

> My right Hon. Friend in his broadcast on Oct. 1 gave his own personal interpretation of events in reference to Russian action in Poland. I can, however, assure the hon.

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[1]Churchill, The Gathering Storm, pp. 351-52.

[2]Woodward, op. cit., p. 17.

[3]Churchill, The Gathering Storm, p. 353.

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Member that there is nothing in his interpretation which is at variance with the view of His Majesty's Government.[1]

Maisky called Churchill, and Churchill, responding in an "extremely friendly fashion," invited him to the Admiralty. At the meeting (October 6) Churchill pointed out that the differences between the Soviet Union and Great Britain were a "melancholy misunderstanding" and that in substance their interests coincided. Maisky noted that after this meeting he became "something like a rich bride with many suitors," having discussions with Halifax, Eden, Churchill, Butler and other members of the Government. All stressed the need for a renewal of British-Soviet friendship.[2]

On October 26 Halifax made a speech in which he differentiated between the German and the Soviet attacks on Poland. Germany attacked without a declaration of war, whereas

> . . . the action of the Soviet Government has been to advance the Russian border to what was substantially the boundary recommended at the time of the Versailles Conference by the noble Marquess, who used to lead the House, Lord Curzon. . . .[3]

The change in the British position affected the position of Sikorski's Government. When Zaleski visited London (October 11-13), Chamberlain and Halifax advised him to play down anti-

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[1]Great Britain, 5 Parliamentary Debates (Commons), CCCLII (1939), 1570.

[2]Ivan Maisky, Memoirs of a Soviet Ambassador, The War 1939-1943, trans. Andrew Rothstein (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1967), pp. 32-34.

[3]Great Britain, 5 Parliamentary Debates (Lords) CXIV (1939), 1566.

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Soviet activities because they did not want to drive the Soviet Union into the German camp.[1] During Sikorski's visit of the following month (November 14-20) he was anxious to learn if Halifax's speech of October 26 meant that the British Government was recognizing the Curzon Line as the Soviet-Polish border. Sikorski's fears were allayed. It was pointed out that it was too early to make any decisions on Poland's frontiers, that Halifax's speech had not been prepared by the Foreign Office, and that he had been improvising. Halifax told Sikorski that he should not treat it as an official statement of the British Government and that it would not be repeated.[2]

The Soviet attack on Finland (November 30, 1939) brought an abrupt halt to British efforts for a rapprochement. British public opinion was outraged. The British press denounced the Soviet Union in the sharpest terms. The British Government was more cautious. The Foreign Office did not want the question of Soviet expulsion from the League of Nations to be brought up, but when it was, the British Government voted in favor of the motion for expulsion (December 14).[3] The British Ambassador, Sir William Seeds, left Moscow and no successor was appointed. When the Finns appealed for aid, Norway and Sweden refused to allow the transit of Allied troops across their territory. The

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[1] Sprawa Polska w Czasie Drugiej Wojny Światowej na Arenie Międzynarodowej, p. 112.

[2] Ibid., pp. 118-19.

[3] Woodward, op. cit., p. 18.

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Foreign Office felt that unless the Soviet Union attacked the other Scandinavian nations, there were no grounds for changing the policy of avoiding war with the Soviet Union.[1]

Again the change in Soviet-Allied relations affected the Polish position. Since the Allies did not want war with the Soviet Union and yet wanted to aid Finland, they thought of using Polish units.[2] On January 24, 1940, the Polish Government discussed the matter and agreed to send Polish troops to Finland if they were to be part of an Allied expeditionary force.[3] Sikorski wanted to use the Soviet-Finnish War as a means to seal co-operation between Great Britain, France and Poland.[4] He was eager to have the Soviet Union officially recognized as an enemy, equal to Nazi Germany. By the end of February a Polish brigade had been organized, but before it could go into action Soviet troops had pierced the Mannerheim Line and the Finns signed a peace (March 12).

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Sikorski's policy during these months of trying to have the Allies declare war on the Soviet Union was strongly influenced by the reports he was receiving about Soviet policies east of the Ribbentrop-Molotov Line. A systematic policy of extermina

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[1] Ibid., p. 17.

[2] PSZ, op. cit., I, 45.

[3] Ibid.

[4] General Sikorski Historical Institute (GSHI), Archives of Prezes Rady Ministrów (Prime Minister's Office) (PRM) 1/16, "Sikorski to Zaleski on the Question of Aid to Finland" (February 22, 1940).

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tion of all possible centers of opposition was being carried out in the Soviet zone as well as in the German zone.[1]

On October 31, 1939, Molotov described the collapse of Poland to the Supreme Soviet as follows:

> . . . mention must be made of such a fact as the military defeat of Poland and the collapse of the Polish State. The ruling circles of Poland boasted quite a lot about the "stability" of their State and the "might" of their army. However, one swift blow to Poland, first by the German Army and then by the Red Army, and nothing was left of this ugly offspring of the Versailles treaty which had existed by oppressing non-Polish nationalities. . . .[2]
>
> . . . . . .
>
> . . . There is no need to prove that, at the moment when the Polish State was completely collapsing, our Government was obliged to extend a helping hand to our brother Ukrainians and White Russians inhabiting the territory of Western Ukraine and Western White Russia. That is what it did.
>
> When the Red Army marched into these regions it was greeted with general sympathy by the Ukrainian and White Russian population who welcomed our troops as liberators from the yoke of the Polish landlords and capitalists. . . .[3]

On October 6 Marshall Semen Timoshenko ordered an election of "Popular Assemblies" scheduled for October 22. The electorate was not made aware of the purposes of the elections. In the various constituencies nominations were controlled. Most of the nominees were individuals from the Soviet Union, and personally unknown to the local population, including Molotov and Voroshilov. Agitators were also imported from the Soviet Union. The elections were supervised jointly by the Red Army and the NKVD, and the votes were counted in secrecy. According to Pravda 93 per cent

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[1] PSZ, op. cit., I, 55.

[2] Degras, op. cit., III, 388.

[3] Ibid., p. 392.

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of the electorate voted in Western Ukraine and 97 per cent in Western Byelorussia. Out of 1,495 candidates in Western Ukraine 1,484 were elected.[1] The elections were not democratic and free by western standards. The Western Ukrainian Assembly met (October 26) in Lwów and the Western Byelorussian Assemble (October 28) in Białystok.[2] They unanimously resolved:

> 1. That Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia pass into the hands of the working class.
> 2. That Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia be admitted to the Soviet Union.
> 3. That the big estates be confiscated.
> 4. That the banks and industries be nationalized.
> 5. That homage be paid to "The Great Stalin."[3]

On November 1 the Supreme Soviet decreed the incorporation of the Western Ukraine into the Soviet Union, and on November 2, it decreed the incorporation of Western Byelorussia. And then on November 29, 1939, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR issued a decree granting Soviet citizenship to the inhabitants of Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia.

Soviet rule was unwelcomed by most of the population. With the exception of a very small minority, the Polish and Byelorussian population opposed Soviet rule. The Ukrainian nationalists, who dreamt of independence, momentarily were pro-Soviet, but when the true Soviet intentions became clear and

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[1]Edward J. Rozek, Allied Wartime Diplomacy: A Pattern in Poland (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1958), pp. 42-43.

[2]R. Umiastowski, Russia and the Polish Republic, 1918-1941 (London: Aquafonda, n.d.), pp. 234-35.

[3]Rozek, op. cit., p. 43.

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Ukrainian hopes were dashed, they too became hostile.[1] The greatest number of supporters of the Soviet invasion came from the Jewish working classes who welcomed the Soviet soldiers and co-operated in hunting down such wanted individuals as Polish officers.[2] But on the whole the Jews opposed Soviet rule and suffered greatly. Members of the Jewish socialist party the "Bund" and wealthier Jews were special victims of Soviet rule.[3]

Soviet occupation was a social and economic catastrophe for the inhabitants of the area. The NKVD ruled with a brutal hand. Industries, banks, railroad rolling stock and raw materials were nationalized and much of the portable capital wealth was transferred to the Soviet Union. Businessmen, shopkeepers and people with savings were ruined. The rouble, whose true purchasing power was about one-twelfth the złoty's, was introduced at par.[4] There was an orgy of buying by the Soviet occupiers, and shopkeepers were forced to sell. On December 11 shops were nationalized and all remaining merchandise expropriated.[5] Without warning and without compensation the złoty was cancelled as legal tender (December 21).[6] Private homes came under the control of Tenants' Committees and homeowners

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[1]GSHI, PRM, "Report of Roman Luda" (May 15, 1940).

[2]Iranek-Osmecki, op. cit., p. 70.

[3]GSHI, PRM, 1/25, "Report of Roman Luda" (May 15, 1940).

[4]Umiastowski, Russia and the Polish Republic, 1918-1941, p. 241.

[5]Ibid., p. 242.

[6]Ibid., p. 241.

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"voluntarily turned them over to the state."[1] In the beginning of 1940 collectivization was started in the villages. The various religious groups were ruthlessly attacked. The press was compelled to publish the official Party interpretation of events. Education was reorganized to teach Communist doctrine. The Polish language was not tolerated: even shop and railroad signs in Polish were ordered removed.[2]

With Soviet rule and citizenship came Soviet law. Individuals could be arrested on such vague charges as counter-revolutionary activities injurious to the "interests of the world proletariat," to the "revolutionary movement" or to the "basic achievements of the proletarian revolution."[3] By these definitions anyone who had held a position in the Polish Army or the Polish Government, owned property, belonged to a non-Communist political party, or was in the slightest degree suspected of being opposed to Soviet rule, was a criminal and could be arrested.

After the renewal of diplomatic relations, members of the Polish Embassy in the Soviet Union (1941-43) estimated that during the twenty-two months of Soviet rule in eastern Poland approximately 1,230,000 individuals (or 9.3 per cent of the entire

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[1] Ibid., p. 242.

[2] Ibid., p. 256.

[3] United States. House of Representatives. Select Committee on the Katyń Forest Massacre. The Katyń Forest Massacre. Hearings before the Select Committee to Conduct an Investigation of the Facts, Evidence and Circumstances of the Katyń Forest Massacre. 82nd Congress, 1st and 2nd Sess., 1951-1952 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1952), pp. 1639-40.

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population) had been arrested and dispersed across the broad expanses of the Soviet Union. Within the first few weeks, well known political and social leaders, army officers, senior civil servants, and larger property holders and businessmen were arrested individually. The first mass deportation took place in February, 1940, when about 120,000 were arrested. The victims tended to be former Polish soldiers settled in the area after 1921, magistrates, civil servants and policemen. The second wave (about 320,000) which occurred in April, 1940, included the families of those previously arrested and the victims of collectivization, the small-holders and farm-hands. The third wave (about 240,000), which took place in June and July, 1940, came from the more active urban elements (including a large percentage of Jews) and refugees from western Poland. The final wave (about 200,000) was in response to the German invasion (in June and July, 1941) and comprised prisoners and detainees from the occupied territory, children from educational establishments and orphanages, railway workers and craftsmen. Of the deportees, 52 per cent were Polish, 30 per cent Jewish and 18 per cent Ukrainian and Byelorussian.[1]

One of the consequences of the Soviet Union's sudden attack upon Poland in September was that its mechanized units cut off the possible escape route of large numbers of the Polish Armed Forces through Rumania. Red Star (September 17, 1940)

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[1] Documents on Polish-Soviet Relations, 1939-1943, (DPSR) (London: Heinemann, 1961), I, 573.

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reported that 181,000 men and over 9,000 officers had been taken prisoner. The rank-and-file of the Polish Army suffered the same fate as the other deportees. They were spread across the Soviet Union to become part of the masses of forced labor working on collective farms, on construction projects, in the lumber industry, in mines, etc.

The captured Polish officers received special treatment. Most were separated from their men and sent to three detention camps at Kozielsk, Starobielsk and Ostashkov. The camp at Kozielsk contained about 4,500 prisoners, including four generals, one rear-admiral and 100 colonels and lieutenant-colonels. Starobielsk held about 3,910 individuals including eight generals and 150 colonels and lieutenant-colonels.[2] Many of the inmates were not professional soldiers, but reservists. Among the inmates of Kozielsk and Starobielsk there were several hundred university professors and lecturers, almost 800 medical doctors, hundreds of judges, lawyers, and teachers, as well as numerous journalists and writers--the élite of a generation.[3] Ostashkov held about 6,500 prisoners, but only about 400 officers. Most of the inmates were non-commissioned officers, military police, frontier guards, landowners, priests, state police and court magistrates.[4]

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[1] The Crime of Katyn: Facts and Documents (London: Polish Cultural Foundation, 1965), p. 18.

[2] Ibid., p. 19.

[3] Ibid., pp. 18-19.

[4] Ibid., p. 20.

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The prisoners were fairly well treated by Soviet standards. They did not starve and by mid-December every prisoner at Starobielsk had shelter and a bed. The generals had special living quarters which were relatively comfortable. The prisoners even had limited camp self-government and there was no general compulsory labor. After the middle of December they were allowed to correspond with their families.[1]

The camps were run by the NKVD. The entire reason for the existence of the camps remains cloudy, but it was obvious that the NKVD-men hoped to convert their captives. They interrogated each prisoner separately. Each man was encouraged to give an account of his life, to express his views on philosophic, political and social subjects, to discuss his social origins and to talk about his family and friends.[2] Re-educational techniques included placards, talks, films, books and loudspeakers. There was no systematic brutality.

The NKVD-men failed completely. Most officers frankly told the NKVD officers that they did not believe in the superiority of the Soviet way of life. An unbridgeable mental chasm existed between the Polish officer with his code based on personal honor, patriotism and Christianity, and the NKVD-man who had been molded in Stalin's Soviet Russia. The two individuals used the same words, but spoke entirely alien languages. The Polish officers could not be converted.

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[1] United States. House of Representatives, The Katyń Forest Massacre, pp. 1646-69.

[2] The Crime of Katyń: Facts and Documents, p. 23.

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In early April, 1940, the Soviet authorities started to break up the three camps. The pattern was the same in each case. The NKVD officials let it be known that the prisoners were to be returned home to their families. Throughout April and early May they departed in groups of 100 to 300. Until this point Sikorski and his Government knew the whereabouts of the officers. When the camps were broken up, they completely lost contact. They lost contact because the officers, instead of being returned home, were systematically liquidated. The prisoners from Kozielsk were taken to the Katyń Forest near Smolensk where they were shot. The exact fate of the prisoners from the other two camps is not known, although it seems probable that the prisoners from Starobielsk were killed in a similar fashion near Kharkov,[1] and that those at Ostashkov were drowned in the White Sea.[2] Less than 400 survived.[3]

* * * *

Approximately at the time of the mass executions of these Polish officers, the Germans struck in the West (May 10, 1940). Churchill became Prime Minister of Great Britain on the same day. The Germans soon breached the Allied line and the military situation became critical. In early June the British Expeditionary Force was evacuated from Dunkerque. With their right flank secure the Germans turned to the South.

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[1] Ibid., p. 272.

[2] Ibid., pp. 272-74.

[3] United States. House of Representatives, The Katyń Forest Massacre, p. 1684.

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Churchill looked to the Soviet Union again. Relations had been frigid since the Russo-Finnish War. Nevertheless, the British War Cabinet invited Sir Stafford Cripps to go on an "exploratory" mission to Moscow. Cripps was a left-wing, warmly pro-Soviet intellectual. He was not sympathetic to the pre-war Polish state. In February, 1940, he had said:

> It is perhaps necessary to say a word about the Polish attitude to Russia. This is, of course, traditionally hostile, and after the Polish attack on Russia in 1920 and the taking then of Russian territory by Poland against the advice of all allied statesmen, the Poles became more frightened as Russian strength grew.
>
> Col. Beck and the Polish Government represented the big landowners of Poland and they feared Germany far less than Russia. Indeed no one was ever certain whether Col. Beck had entered into a secret agreement with Germany or not!
>
> . . .
>
> It naturally followed that when Germany overran Poland and the Polish Government ran away to Roumania, Russia entered up to the Curzon Line. . . .[1]

Halifax told Maisky (May 20) that the British Government had decided to send Cripps to Moscow as "Ambassador on special mission." On May 26 Moscow replied that it would accept Cripps only as "Ambassador of His Majesty," to which Halifax agreed.[2] Cripps left immediately and arrived in Moscow on June 12. Stalin received him only once (July 1, 1940) before the German attack on the Soviet Union a year later, and the meeting produced no results. The Cripps mission was a failure.

The Soviet Union took advantage of the crisis in the West

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[1]Eric Estoric, Stafford Cripps: A Biography (London: William Heinemann, Ltd., 1949), pp. 247-48.

[2]Maisky, op. cit., p. 137.

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to incorporate the Baltic States (June 14-17) and to issue an ultimatum to Rumania (June 26-27) demanding Bessarabia.

Sikorski was taken by surprise when the Germans attacked in the West. He had considered rumors of the attack to be mere propaganda.[1] He was even more surprised by the sudden defeat of the French Army which he so admired. Sikorski left for the front on June 13, the day Paris fell. Zaleski met French Prime Minister Paul Reynaud (June 15) to ask him what line of defense the French would adopt. Reynaud told Zaleski that France was going to ask for an armistice and would try to get the best terms possible for the Polish Government, its Army and its refugees.[2] Sikorski was still at the front. On June 16 Józef Retinger, a semi-official Polish representative in London, obtained an airplane from the British, flew to Bordeaux, found Sikorski amid the chaos, and took him immediately to meet Churchill in London.

Sikorski's meeting with Churchill was crucial to the future course of Polish-British relations. In Raczyński's words:

> . . . Sikorski spoke admirably, and with a tinge of romanticism which was just what was needed to captivate the Prime Minister and play on his sentiments in favour of Poland and her army. Subsequently I was able to witness at close quarters how, without hesitation or friction, the two statesmen together wrote the first chapter of the heroic legend of comradship between the two countries.[3]

Churchill promised to rescue the Polish Army, but frankly warned

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[1] PSZ, op. cit., I, 55.

[2] Jan Ciechanowski, Defeat in Victory (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1947), pp. 9-12.

[3] Raczyński, In Allied London, p. 165.

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Sikorski that he had virtually no equipment. When discussing the question of the Soviet Union, Sikorski said that he was "not advocating a policy which would provoke Russia, but warned against any illusions regarding the Soviets and their policy towards the Allies." Churchill was more optimistic and said that he held no illusions but "once England would defend itself against an invasion, Hitler might be tempted to turn his large armies against the Soviet Union the following spring."[1]

During Sikorski's visit the Soviet Government lofted a trial balloon. A few days before Sikorski's arrival in London, the TASS representative there, Andrew Rothstein, suggested to Stefan Litauer of the Polish Telegraph Agency that semi-official contacts be made between Poland and the Soviet Union. Litauer presented to Sikorski on his arrival a memorandum which envisioned the formation of a Polish Army of 300,000 on Soviet soil; the attachment of a Polish observer to Cripps' staff in Moscow; the acknowledgment of Soviet possession of Polish territory; and Polish consent to the passage of Soviet troops through Poland.[2] Sikorski was going to show the document to Churchill, but Ambassador Raczyński convinced him that it was entirely unacceptable in its original form. During his meeting with Churchill, Sikorski touched on the idea of getting the Soviet

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[1]GSHI, PRM, 20, "A Conversation between General Sikorski and Prime Minister Churchill (June 19, 1940)."

[2]Sprawa Polska w Czasie Drugiej Wojny Światowej na Arenie Międzynarodowej, p. 170.

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Government to agree to form a Polish Army on the territory under their control; the same afternoon he enlarged upon the idea with Lord Halifax and the British Foreign Minister asked for a note in writing. Raczyński rewrote the memorandum, deleting references to boundaries and the right of transit, and including a statement that the Soviet Government would cease its maltreatment of Polish citizens.[1] The document in its revised form was presented to Halifax. When Raczkieicz and Zaleski arrived in England, they opposed the memorandum because it went too far in making concessions to the Soviet Union and it was withdrawn as "premature."

Soon after the Polish Government arrived in London, Sikorski faced an internal political crisis. It involved both personalities and issues, and was magnified by the fact that everyone's nerves were frayed by the shock of the collapse of France. It was basically the old conflict of the sanacja group versus the opposition parties. Sikorski behaved badly towards Raczkiewicz and Zaleski when they arrived in London because he felt that they had left France too hastily. King George VI was at the station to greet the President of the Polish Republic (June 21); Sikorski was absent, claiming that he was too weary.[2]

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[1]Raczyński, In Allied London, pp. 57-59.

[2]Raczkiewicz, Zaleski and other members of the Polish Government left Bordeaux (June 17) on the British warship Arethusa. Sikorski arrived in London by air on June 18, met Churchill and other British leaders on June 19, and returned to France on June 20. He flew back to London the following day (June 21).

The acknowledged heroes of the evacuation were Professor Stanisław Kot, for civilians, and Generals Kazimierz Sosnkowski and Marian Kukiel, for the Army.

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He would not see Zaleski until three days after the Polish Foreign Minister's arrival. The sanators who had been on the defensive since the September campaign took the offensive after the events of June. They wanted to replace Sikorski by General Sosnkowski as Commander-in-Chief. Sikorski's allies continued to be the members of the political parties that had formed the basis of his support since October, 1939.

Sikorski was attacked on several issues. Under his command in France the Polish Army did not fight as a single unit. When the French capitulated, it was dispersed and suffered heavy losses. Only 19,451[1] out of an army of over 80,000 were evacuated to Great Britain. Sikorski was held responsible for this disaster by his opponents. In this over-heated atmosphere rumors ran wild about the Litauer memorandum and a possible dishonorable agreement with the Soviet Union.[2]

Under pressure from the opposition, Raczkiewicz dismissed Sikorski as Prime Minister (July 18) and named Zaleski his successor. When friends of Sikorski in the General Staff heard of these events, they went to Zaleski and warned him that the dismissal of Sikorski would have a harmful affect on the morale of the Polish Army. There was an unpleasant scene. Sosnkowski did not favor a change because he felt that a Cabinet crisis in

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[1] PSZ, op. cit., I, 145.

[2] Sikorski's critics in the Government were not in actual possession of Litauer's original memorandum and knew about it only from hearsay.

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London would be misunderstood in Poland and would have a divisive influence on efforts to unify the underground movement.[1] Halifax told Raczyński that the removal of Sikorski would have a harmful effect on Polish-British relations.[2] When Zeleski saw that he could not form a broadly based Government he declined the premiership. The incident ended quickly but intensified feelings which would come to the surface at the next crisis.

A new power within the Polish Government after the move to Great Britain was Józef Retinger. Sikorski had known Retinger since 1916[3] and they had been friends and political colleagues in opposition during the inter-war period. He became one of Sikorski's closest collaborators and made himself indispensable from the beginning. He was called Sikorski's éminence grise because he was at the center of power, attending to everything from assisting Sikorski at his conferences with Churchill to renting hotel rooms. Retinger was a colorful and controversial personality. His friends found him a charming peace-maker among the quarrelling factions, a loyal Pole and a man with extensive connections in British circles of power, especially among British socialists. He was an old personal friend of Cripps. His enemies accused him of being a political adventurer, a

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[1]Kazimierz Sosnkowski, Materiały Historyczne (London: Gryf Publications, Ltd., 1966), p. 10.

[2]Leon Mitkiewicz, Z Generałem Sikorskim na Obczyźnie (With General Sikorski in Exile) (Paris: Instytut Literacki, 1968), p. 71.

[3]"Hommage à un grand européen: J. H. Retinger," Bulletin du Centre européen de la culture, Nr. 5 (1960-61), p. 36.

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tool of British Intelligence, and a Free Mason.

One of Sikorski's most serious mistakes before the fall of France had been the neglect of his British ally. He had visited London only once as Prime Minister. Now he worked to strengthen the bond. On August 5, 1940, Sikorski, Churchill, Zaleski and Halifax signed a military agreement which received considerable favorable publicity. Both nations pledged to fight on and the Polish Armed Forces were to be reorganized in co-ordination with the British military structure. The Polish Army was assigned the defense of Scotland and the Polish Air Force won popularity for its distinguished role during the Battle of Britain. Sikorski's aim remained to rebuild the Polish Armed Forces so that Poland could be considered an active Ally. With France fallen and the Soviet Union hostile, he planned to approach North America for recruits.

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In the autumn of 1940, after his failure to force Great Britain to ask for peace, Hitler started to look to the east. Germany and the Soviet Union had clashing ambitions in the Balkans and Finland. Molotov's visit to Berlin in mid-November was a turning point in the relationship. Hitler wanted to shift Soviet interests from the Balkans to the territory south of the Soviet Union in the direction of the Indian Ocean; he was willing to offer freedom of transit for Soviet ships through the Turkish Straits. Molotov made more explicit demands: a Soviet guarantee to Bulgaria, a Soviet base within reach of the Straits and the

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withdrawal of German troops from Finland.[1] Soviet interests could not be diverted from the Balkans. On December 13 Hitler issued orders for an attack on Greece through Bulgaria.[2] Five days later he committed himself to "Operation Barbarossa": "The German Armed Forces must be prepared to crush Soviet Russia in a quick campaign even before the conclusion of the war agains England."[3]

* * * *

Polish-British-Soviet relations were contradictory durin the final third of 1940. On September 5 Churchill stated in the House of Commons:

> . . . We have not adopted at any time, since the war broke out, the line that nothing could be changed in the territorial structure of various countries. On the other hand, we do not propose to recognize any territorial changes which take place during the war, unless they take place with the free consent and good will of the parties concerned.[4]

Yet Great Britain needed allies desperately. From November 21 the Polish Government was in possession of information from British sources that Churchill's Government was ready to recognize the Soviet Union's annexation of the Baltic States.[5] Halifax's letter to Zaleski (November 27) explaining that British recognition would only be a "temporary arrangement" and the

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[1] Documents on German Foreign Policy; Series D, Vol. XI, Nos. 325-26, 328-29.

[2] Ibid., No. 511. [3] Ibid., No. 532.

[4] Great Britain, 5 Parliamentary Debates (Commons) CCCLXV (1940), 40.

[5] DPSR, I, 574.

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"definite solution . . . can only be effected at the end of the war,"[1] did not remove Polish fears that a precedent might be created which could be applied to the Riga Line.[2] But in spite of British efforts to win their friendship, Soviet leaders continued to be hostile. At the end of January Eden protested to Maisky that Cripps had not been invited to see Molotov in three months.[3]

By March, 1941, the Polish Underground was sending information to Sikorski's Government in London of a vast German build-up of troops and supplies in western Poland. The Polish Government passed the information on to the British. Churchill was delighted because it looked as if his hopes were about to come to pass. On April 3, after he had what he thought was conclusive proof of German intentions, Churchill sent his only personal message to Stalin before the outbreak of hostilities. Cripps did not deliver the message as he was ordered to do, because he did not think its timing correct. He finally sent the message to Vyshinsky (April 19).[4] Stalin never answered.

The Soviet reaction to the German threat was appeasement. Symbolic of Stalin's entire policy was his action at the Moscow station when bidding farewell to the Japanese Foreign Minister,

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[1] GSHI, PRM, 20 "Letter from Lord Halifax to Minister Zaleski concerning Anglo-Soviet Relations" (November 27, 1940).

[2] DPSR, I, 574.

[3] Woodward, op. cit., p. 147.

[4] Ibid., pp. 148-49.

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Yosuke Matsuoka. He embraced the German Ambassador and said: "We must remain friends. You must now do everything to that end" (April, 1941).[1] The Soviet Government delivered the raw materials which they had promised to Germany until the eve of the attack. Politically, the Soviet Union co-operated with the Germans by expelling the diplomatic representatives of states occupied by the Germans--Belgium, Norway, Yugoslavia, Greece. Stalin continued to spurn all British efforts for a rapprochement. On June 10 Permanent Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Sir Alexander Cadogan, visited Maisky, gave him precise details of German military preparations, and explained that Churchill had urgently requested that the information be passed on to the Soviet Government. TASS brushed off the reports (June 14) as rumors which were "clumsily cooked-up propaganda by forces hostile to the USSR and Germany."[2]

Any potential change in Soviet-British relations would have its influence on Sikorski's Government's position. Hints of pro-Soviet appeasement began to appear again in the British press. On May 31, 1941, Sir Bernard Pares, the former Director of the School of Slavonic and East European Studies at the University of London, wrote an anti-Polish article in the Manchester Guardian entitled "Anglo-Russian Understanding--A Polish Factor." Pares explained that in the confusion after World War I, "some ten millions or more Russians passed under Polish

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[1]Winston S. Churchill, The Grand Alliance (London: Cassell & Co., 1950), p. 170.

[2]Maisky, op. cit., pp. 148-50.

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rule" and that "when the Germans broke the back of the new Poland, and the Polish Government was in flight, the Russians marched in and recovered their kinfolk, with not a large section of Poles."

Sikorski's Government was also losing ground in British public opinion over the issue of anti-Semitism. Persistent rumors during Autumn, 1940 and early 1941 tarnished the favorable image created by the Poles during the Battle of Britain. Questions of anti-Semitic incidents in the Polish Armed Forces in Great Britain and the right of the Polish Government to conscript unwilling Polish Jews were aired in the House of Commons and the press. The leaders in the attack were Communist M.P. William Gallacher and the Communist newspaper, the Daily Worker. Sikorski and his senior staff worked to avoid incidents. On August 5, 1940, he issued an order encouraging brotherhood-in-arms among all Poles:

> . . . My principle is that a Pole who is now fighting for the common cause has thus given sufficient evidence that he is a Pole irrespective of his origin or religion. I strictly forbid to show to soldiers of Jewish faith any unfriendliness through contemptuous remarks or anything humiliating to human dignity. All such offenses will be severely punished. This Order is to be read on parade to all soldiers.[1]

A second source of difficulty was the extreme right-wing paper Jestem Polakiem (I am a Pole) which included anti-Semitic articles. Again the issue was brought up in Parliament and appeared in the papers. Sikorski and his colleagues attacked the paper, and its last issue appeared May 15, 1941. Even though Sikorski and his Government not only opposed anti-Semitism but

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[1]Great Britain, Parliamentary Debates (Commons), CCLXIV (1940), 1388.

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included many Jews in key positions,[1] these incidents injured the reputation of the Polish Government-in-Exile.

Sikorski's interest in federalism continued. The fall of France strengthened the hand of Beneš who had numerous connections in Great Britain. The British recognized the Czechoslovaks as a Provisional Government on July 21, 1940, and the Poles followed on July 29. Meetings between Sikorski, Beneš, Raczyński and other Czechoslovak and Polish officials led to the "Joint Declaration of the Polish and Czechoslovak Governments Favoring Closer Political and Economic Association" (November 11, 1940). In early 1941 the courtship began to run into difficulties. On January 26 Sikorski and Beneš met. Beneš told the Polish Prime Minister that the Soviet Union would soon enter the war and Poland and Czechoslovakia must make their "plans on this basis, come to terms with the Soviet Union about the military direction of the war and regulate our conception of the whole of World War II in mutual agreement."[2] In reaction to this concept, Sikorski became very agitated and said "with extreme gravity: 'What you are saying would be a catastrophe

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[1]Within the first Rada Narodowa Herman Liebermann (PPS and Vice-President) and Ignacy Schwarzbart (Zionist) were Jews. In the second, Jewish representatives were Schwarzbart and Szmul Zygielbojm (Bund). Liebermann served in Sikorski's cabinet from September 3, 1941, until his death on October 21, 1941, as Minister of Justice. Liebermann's wife was Sikorski's private secretary.

[2]Eduard Beneš, Memoirs, From Munich to New War and New Victory, trans. Godfrey Lias (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1954), pp. 147-48.

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for us all.'"[1] There ensued an exchange of letters. Sikorski declared that Poland would have to return to its pre-1939 boundaries and could make no concessions in the east to the Soviet Union (February 10). Beneš replied (February 25) demanding the return of Teschen.[2] This presented Sikorski with an awkward dilemma. Although he had opposed the seizure of Teschen in 1938, if he were to agree to the return of Teschen he would contradict his policy of no territorial agreements before the end of the War and, thereby, undermine his position vis-à-vis the Soviet Government's claims to the Curzon Line. At this stage negotiations were transferred to the Czechoslovak-Polish Co-Ordinating Committee which had been established to direct and co-ordinate the mixed commissions which were to be created.[3]

* * * *

Sikorski made his first visit to North America in the spring of 1941 (March 24-May 9). He had several aims: to establish a recruiting center and camp in Canada for volunteers he hoped to raise from among Polish Americans; to get promised Lend-Lease aid for the Polish Armed Forces; and to obtain President Franklin D. Roosevelt's approval for his federalist plans. In Ottawa arrangements were made for the camp and recruiting center. In his meetings with Roosevelt and leaders of his

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[1] Ibid., p. 148.

[2] Wandycz, op. cit., p. 46.

[3] Ibid.

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Administration, Sikorski made a favorable impression.[1] His plans for federalism appealed to Roosevelt. When Sikorski tried to ascertain the President's opinion on enlarging the proposed Polish-Czechoslovak federation to include the Baltic States, Roosevelt replied: ". . . You may be faced with some difficulties on the part of your eastern neighbor who has already declared these small democracies to be part of the Soviet Union."[2] Then Roosevelt went on to explain that the United States did not recognize unilateral changes brought about by force on threats of force, especially during wartime. The Polish Ambassador, Jan Ciechanowski, observed that Under-Secretary of State, Sumner Welles, seemed as sympathetic to Sikorski's plans as was President Roosevelt.[3] When Sikorski asked Roosevelt if he could make a short visit to Chicago, the President encouraged him to make a speaking tour to help combat Communist influences which were active among minority groups and were trying to disrupt the Lend-Lease program.[4] Roosevelt approved of recruiting for the Polish Armed Forces, but asked that it be done discreetly so as not to violate the United States' neutrality. Roosevelt also reaffirmed the granting of Lend-Lease material to the Polish Armed Forces.

When Sikorski returned from his American trip six weeks remained before Germany's attack on the Soviet Union. Although

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[1] Ciechanowski, op. cit., p. 19.

[2] Ibid., p. 20.

[3] Ibid., p. 22.

[4] Ibid., p. 21.

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ample circumstantial evidence existed indicating a German attack on the Soviet Union, there was a division of opinion among Polish leaders. Raczyński was convinced that the attack was imminent. Zaleski was of the exact opposite opinion, believing that the Soviet-German quarrel was not genuine and both had as their aim the blackmailing of Great Britain and its friends.[1] Sikorski's opinion was crucial. He miscalculated, believing that the massing of German troops was merely an effort to put pressure on Stalin. Sikorski thought that Stalin looked on the Western Democracies as his real enemies and that the Soviet Union might even enter the War on the German side.[2] This mistake bore the most serious consequences. Sikorski did not approach Churchill in time to try and obtain the British Prime Minister's explicit support for the Polish position in his initial official reaction to the German attack on the Soviet Union.[3]

Sikorski met Cripps on June 18 when the British Ambassador had returned to London for consultations. Cripps was convinced that Hitler was not bluffing and that he wanted to

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[1]Edward Raczyński, W. Sojusznizcnym Londynie (In Allied London) (London: Polish Research Centre, 1960), p. 118. .ed

[2]GSHI, PRM, 39-a, "Letter and aide-mémoire from General Sikorski to Mr. Churchill concerning future German aggression against USSR (May 23, 1941)."

[3]Marian Kukiel, "Polityka polska wobec układów brytyjsko-sowieckich w r. 1941-1942" (Polish Politics in the Face of the Soviet-British Treaty, 1941-1942) Bellona 43rd Year, No. III-IV (1961), p. 168; infra, Chapter III, pp. 96-97.

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crush the Soviet Union before it could organize sufficient power to be a menace. He told Sikorski of Soviet military preparations and of Great Britain's willingness to assist the Soviet Union. Sikorski replied that in the event of war he saw no reason why Poland could not co-operate with the Soviet Union if full Polish sovereignty were recognized within its pre-war frontiers. When Sikorski asked Cripps about the thousands of Polish civilians in the Soviet Union, Cripps said that Soviet leaders had refused to discuss the Polish refugees.[1]

After the conversation Sikorski was also convinced that war was only a matter of days. He immediately began to prepare the speech that he eventually delivered on the night of June 23. Many thoughts influenced him: the fate of the Polish civilians; the prospect of large numbers of troops for the Polish Armed Forces; the importance of the Soviet Union in winning the War; the wish to prepare for post-war collaboration between the Soviet Union and to win Soviet Russia's backing for his federalist plans; and the hope for a stable settlement between Russia and Poland.[2]

Belatedly, Sikorski saw that the war and the pattern of Polish-Soviet relations were about to take a critical turn.

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[1]GSHI, PRM, 39-b, "Note made by General Sikorski on his conversation with Sir Stafford Cripps on the imminent outbreak of war between Germany and the USSR" (June 18).

[2]Jan Pomian, "Biography of Józef Retinger" (unpublished biography based on Józef Retinger's autobiographical notes, London, England), Chap. XI, p. 6.

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CHAPTER III

THE TREATY OF JULY30, 1941

On June 22, 1941, the German forces, then at the peak of their power, and aided chiefly by their Rumanian and Finnish allies, struck at the vast bulk of the Soviet Union along a front extending from the Black Sea to the Arctic Ocean. Their main thrusts were towards Leningrad in the north, Smolensk in the center and the lower Dniepr in the south. Within the first month they advanced 300 miles into the Soviet Union. Smolensk fell on July 16, but Leningrad and Kiev held. All of Poland was under German occupation several weeks after the initial assault.

The morale of the Red Army was a question which Allied leaders pondered. Could the Soviet Union hold out against the hitherto invincible German military machine, or would the Germans crush the Red Army and knock the Soviet Union out of the war in a swift campaign? In the late 1930's Stalin had executed a large percentage of the Soviet General Staff, and other high- and medium-ranking officers on political grounds. Three of the five Soviet Marshals had been executed, including Marshal Mikhail Tukhachevsky who was highly respected in Western military circles. The two remaining marshals, Kliment E. Voro-

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shilov and Semen M. Budienny, had survived not because of their military abilities, but because of their personal loyalty to Stalin. Marshall Semen K, Timoshenko, a recent appointee, was considered "not a commander on Tukhachevsky's scale" and "unripe for military operations."[1] The initial débâcle of the Russo-Finnish War had demonstrated the low morale of the Red Army, at least for offensive operations.

There was a general scepticism among Allied military experts about the Soviet Union's ability to withstand the German attack. Cripps told the War Cabinet (June 16, 1941) that the prevailing view within Moscow's diplomatic circles was that the Soviet Union could not hold out more than three or four weeks.[2] Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Sir John Dill, hoped for a little longer, but thought it unwise to count on more than six or seven weeks.[3] British and Polish Intelligence gave the Soviet Union eight to ten weeks. Sikorski, commenting as a military strategist on the deep effects of the purges and recent Soviet efforts to build a defense told Cripps (June 18):

> . . . Such misdeeds cannot be made good within one year's time. The Red Army will probably fight, but it will not be able to withstand the impact.[4]

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[1] GSHI, PRM, 39-b, "Note made by General Sikorski on his conversation with Sir Stafford Cripps on the imminent outbreak of the war between Germany and the USSR (June 18, 1941.)"

[2] Eden, op. cit., p. 269.

[3] Ibid.

[4] GSHI, PRM, 39-b, "Sikorski's conversation with Cripps (June 18, 1941)."

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Even Cripps agreed that Soviet defenses would probably break down.[1]

British prospects of victory before the German attack on the Soviet Union were very bleak. Great Britain faced the probability of a state of siege of an indefinite duration, perhaps lasting years, and the ever-present menace of an invasion.[2] Therefore, in spite of past Soviet hostility and duplicity, and the pessimism of British military experts, Churchill spoke on the same evening of the German attack, unconditionally welcoming the Soviet Union as an ally:

> . . . No one has been a more consistent opponent of Communism than I have for the last twenty-five years. I will unsay no word that I have spoken about it. But all this fades away before the spectacle which is not unfolding. The past, with its crimes, its follies and its tragedies, flashes away. I see the Russian soldiers standing on the threshold of their native land, guarding the fields which their fathers have tilled from time immemorial. I see them guarding their homes where mothers and wives pray. . . .
> . . . . . .
> . . . We have but one aim and one single, irrevocable purpose. We are resolved to destroy Hitler and every vestige of the Nazi regime. . . . We will never parley, we will

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Retinger recalls an anecdote which humorously exaggerated the British position: ". . . I heard a story in the Middle East which I thought funniest of all. A Rabbi asked God how the war was going to end. God answered, 'Either in a natural way or in a supernatural way. The natural way would be if I were to send down to earth five million angels to wipe out the Germans. The supernatural way would be if the English beat the Germans!'"
Retinger told the joke to Sikorski, but Sikorski warned him not to tell it to Churchill. Retinger did. Churchill laughed and laughed, and told it to all his friends. Eventually, the story made the press. Retinger continues, "I also told it to Anthony Eden, but he did not think it funny." Pomian, op. cit., Chap. XII, p. 12.

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> never negotiate with Hitler and his gang. . . . Any man or state who fights on against Nazidom will have our aid. . . . That is our policy and that is our declaration. It follows therefore that we shall give whatever help we can to Russia and the Russian people. . . .[1]

The German invasion of the Soviet Union was a godsend to the British. They wanted the Soviet Union as an ally and were prepared to pay heavily to keep the Russians in the war. Churchill's failure to mention the Poles already indicated that the Polish question was of secondary importance to the British Government.

Within the Polish Government there was a division of opinion as to how to deal with the Soviet Union, now that both nations had a common enemy and would be forced to get along with each other. President Raczkiewicz and Foreign Minister Zaleski had both grown up under Russian rule and were very cautious. They wanted the restoration of Polish-Soviet relations, but they wanted an agreement which spelled out precisely and unequivocally such issues of vital national interest as Soviet recognition of the frontiers of 1939 and the regularization of the position of Polish citizens in the Soviet Union.[2] They wanted such an agreement to be guaranteed by the British. A similar attitude existed among certain members of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Since Sikorski believed that either Germany would defeat the Soviet Union or the Soviet Union would be weakened for some time in the future, and he was a soldier and not a diplomat

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[1]Churchill, The Grand Alliance, pp. 331-32. --

[2]Ciechanowski, op. cit., p. 38.

[3]Ibid.

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by training, he was inclined to be less concerned with the diplomatic fine points. Although he wanted the same ends, he was less concerned with written agreements than he was with the fate of Polish civilians in the Soviet Union. He believed that Poland's real strength lay in the army he could build from the prisoners of war in the Soviet Union and the good will it could win both in the West and in Russia.

Accordingly, Sikorski made a broadcast to the Polish Nation (June 23, 1941) on the German-Soviet War in which he extended an offer of friendship to the Soviet Union, while clearly defining Polish terms:

> . . . Behold Germany, the foremost foe of the Polish Nation, has torn asunder an alliance which has so long been the source of our greatest misfortunes. By striking at Russia they are undertaking at great risk a task of which the issue is uncertain and to say the least weakening in its accomplishment. The Polish-Russian question which might have shadowed the outlook of many a friend of ours in the West and effected noxious frictions and clashes, I believe may disappear from international politics.
>
> Ever since the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk of 1918 Russia has been continually collaborating with Germany against Poland. . . . The Ribbentrop-Molotov Treaty . . . was its crown point and its consequence. The Soviet Republic aided Hitler in matters concerning military, political, and economic domains as well as propaganda. . . .
>
> At this moment we are entitled to assume that in these circumstances Russia will cancel the Pact of 1939. That should logically bring us back to the position governed by the Treaty concluded in Riga on March 15th 1921 between Russia and Poland recognized on March 15th 1923 by the Conference of Ambassadors and on April the 5th by the United States of North America. This Treaty was considered to be founded upon a sound and reciprocol agreement.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> . . . For the love of their country, their freedom and honour, thousands of Polish men and women, including 300,000 war prisoners, are still suffering in Russian prisons. Should it not be deemed right and honest to restore these people to their liberty?

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He went on to explain that Germany planned to crush the Soviet Union and use its resources against the Democracies. He predicted that the Soviet Union would "absorb" German military power.

> . . . To us the Germans will remain the eternal and the irreconcilable foe, with whom there can be neither pacts nor covenants. The Germans must be overthrown, they must be disabled and destroyed in order to provide a place for Poland among the family of free nations.[1]

In preparation for the formation of a Polish army in the Soviet Union he sent a message on the following day (June 24) to the Head of the British Military Commission in Moscow, General Sir Frank Mason Macfarlane, stating the conditions for military collaboration between Poland and the Soviet Union. Point one was that the Soviet Union "fully recognizes rights founded on the Treaty of Riga and repudiates Russo-German Treaty of 23rd August, 1939." Polish citizens were to be released and a Polish army formed, which would be dependent on the Polish Government in London. This Polish army would be under a Polish Commanding Officer and would have the right to have full liaison with the Polish Government.[2]

The first Soviet reactions were ominous, unofficial

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[1]GSHI, PRM, 63, "Broadcast by General Sikorski to the Polish Nation on: 'Poland and the German-Soviet war' (June 23, 1941)."

[2]General Sikorski Historical Institute (GSHI), Archives of the Polish General Headquarters (A.XII) 1/57, "Letter from General Sikorski to General Macfarlane on conditions of military collaboration between Poland and Russia and on the protection and relief of Polish citizens in the USSR (June 24)."

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rumblings. TASS correspondent, Andrew Rothstein told Litauer, Counsellor of the Polish Embassy in London, that Poland "must forfeit her former Great Power policy and accept the principle of a national, ethnographic Poland" (June 27).[1] Through unofficial sources Polish leaders heard that the Soviet Ambassador to Great Britain, Ivan Maisky, considered that Sikorski's speech demonstrated a "lack of taste" and that the Soviet Union would agree only to the Curzon Line because beyond it there were no more than 100-150,000 Poles and the rest of the population was Russian.[2]

It was not until July 4, 1941, that the Soviet Government made an official reply to Sikorski's offer. Maisky visited Anthony Eden, and as Eden subsequently told Sikorski, informed the British Foreign Secretary that the Soviet Government

> . . . had been considering their relations with Poland, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. They had taken the decision to give facilities to all three States to form National Committees in the USSR. These Committees would have facilities to form national military forces. . . . The Soviet Government undertook to supply arms and equipment to these forces. It followed as a result of this that all Polish prisoners of war in Russian hands would be handed over to the Polish National Committee. Their number was not as large as General Sikorski had told me; he understood that there were only 20,000. . . .
>
> With regard to Poland, Soviet policy was to favour the establishment of an independent national Polish State. The boundaries of this State would correspond with ethnographical Poland. From this it would follow that certain districts

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[1] GSHI, PRM, 41/4, "Record of a conversation between TASS correspondent, Mr. Rothstein and Counsellor of the Polish Embassy in London, Mr. Litauer. (June 27."

[2] General Sikorski Historical Institute (GSHI), Ministry of Foreign Affairs (A.11), 49/Sow/1a, "A Note of a conversation with R. H. (an Englishman) by Leon Barański (July 1, 1941)."

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and towns occupied by Russia in 1939 might be returned to Poland. . . .[1]

After Maisky's visit, Eden[2] called Retinger and asked him to bring only Sikorski to the Foreign Office.[3] When Sikorski heard the Soviet propositions he said that they constituted a "clear tendency to revive panslavism, though of a 'red' variety this time." In contrast to the blocs of states which he and his colleagues wished to build as "a serious barrier to German or Russian imperialism," the consequence of Maisky's propositions would be a "panslav bloc" which would be a "shield or an extension of Russia." He made it clear that the

> . . . time of National Committees of the Great War (1914-1918) belongs to the past. Such a proposal would only serve to disclose hidden Soviet designs. Today there exists a lawful Polish Government with which the Soviet Government can talk. . . .

He rejected Maisky's figures of prisoners of war and quoted

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[1]GSHI, PRM, 39-b, "Record of a conversation between General Sikorski and Mr. Eden on reestablishment of Polish-Soviet Relations--English Protocol (July 4)."

[2]Eden's role in both the negotiations leading up to the Polish-Soviet Treaty of July 30, 1941 and subsequent relations between the Poles and Soviets was crucial. Unfortunately, his memoirs prove very disappointing as a source of information. Although he donates several pages to the negotiations of July, 1941 (The Reckoning, pp. 271-73), he adroitly avoids any of the controversial details connected with his role and gives essentially a superficial treatment to the whole incident. Consequently, until British archives for this period and, less likely, Soviet archives are opened to public scrutiny, it will be necessary for the scholar to rely on Polish sources, supplemented by American documents--even though the Polish point of view may be rather limited by the Polish position.

[3]Pomian, op. cit., Chap. XI, p. 8.

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Pravda's figure of 190,000, including 10,000 officers. Fundamental Polish conditions were: "The Soviet Union acknowledges as null the German-Soviet agreements of August and September 1939"; the restoration of a Polish Embassy with the right to care for Polish nationals; the freeing of all prisoners and deportees in the Soviet Union; and the creation of a Polish army under the Polish Commander-in-Chief in London. Eden agreed to pass Sikorski's proposals on to Maisky.[1]

Sikorski, Eden, Polish Foreign Minister Zaleski and Maisky met the following day (July 5) in the room of Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Sir Alexander Cadogan, who recorded the protocol. Sikorski described the Polish proposals: reversion to the situation covered by the Treaty of Riga, the restoration of normal relations and the provision of proper conditions for Polish deportees. Sikorski and Maisky agreed on the formation of a Polish army operationally under the Soviet General Staff, but organically autonomous, as were the Polish forces in Great Britain. But Maisky said that although the Soviet Government was willing to recognize an independent Polish State, they "could not explicitly recognize the frontiers of 1939. Perhaps, however, it would not be necessary to say now, and the question might be left open." Maisky was setting a diplomatic trap. Sikorski took the bait.

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[1]GSHI, PRM, 39-b, "Record of a conversation between General Sikorski and Mr. Eden on the reestablishment of Polish-Soviet relations--Polish Protocol (July 4)."

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> . . . General Sikorski said that he could agree that this question need not be discussed in detail at present. He could not, however, agree that the Soviet Government should declare that the frontiers of 1939 would not be restored. . . .
> . . . . . .
> . . . General Sikorski said he would be content if the Soviet Government would denounce the two treaties with Germany of August and September, 1939.

Maisky summed up what he thought was the Polish position:

> 1) Provided the Soviet Government denounce the two treaties with Germany of August and September, 1939, the discussion of frontiers is not material.
> 2) Return to normal relations between the two Governments and the appointment of a Polish Ambassador in Moscow.
> 3) Poland would then be prepared to collaborate in the common fight against Germany.
> 4) A special Polish Army would be formed as a unit on Soviet territory or to be transported elsewhere if that were desired. The exact status of the Polish Army would be similar to that of the Polish Forces in the United Kingdom.
> 5) Polish military and political prisoners to be liberated.

Sikorski agreed.[1]

After the meeting Zaleski pointed out to Sikorski the pctential consequences of his action. Since the Polish Prime Minister did not stand firm on Poland's territorial integrity and the meeting with the Soviet Ambassador had been officially recorded by a member of the British Foreign Office, his lack of response could be interpreted at a later date as Polish acquiescence to the Curzon Line either by Soviet Russia, or by some other future Russian government, should the Soviet regime be toppled. Sikorski replied that he felt the matter to be of secondary importance because the Soviet Union would either be

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[1] GSHI, PRM, 41/4, "Record of a conversation between General Sikorski and Ambassador Maisky on the conditions of resumption of Polish-Soviet relations (July 5)."

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defeated or would be so weakened by the war that Poland would not have to worry about a Russian menace for some time in the future.[1]

In a second meeting between Sikorski, Eden, Zaleski and Maisky (July 11), the Soviet Ambassador followed up the events of the first meeting by expressing the Soviet position:

> The general position of the Soviet Government as regards the Polish State was that they maintained the point of view previously expressed in favour of the independence of the Polish State within the limits of Polish nationality. . . . They were prepared to accept the Polish suggestion to put aside for the present the question of the frontiers of Poland.

The Soviet Government were willing to consider as non-existent the Soviet-German treaties and not to insist on the formation of a National Committee. They would agree to the resumption of diplomatic relations and to the formation of a Polish army in the Soviet Union under Polish commanders with the approval of the Soviet Government. Sikorski retorted that "if the Soviet Government renounced the treaties of 1939 with Germany, this meant, in his view, the return to the legal situation which existed before those treaties were concluded." There was a sharp exchange in which Sikorski insisted that, "If the Soviet Government denounced their pact with Germany, they should renounce all territorial gains they got from it." Next they clashed on the question of political prisoners, a subject related to the frontier issue. Maisky said that there was difficulty in making

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[1]Interview with August Zaleski, December 9, 1968.

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a "comprehensive promise to release all prisoners." He cited the example of a Pole who had committed a political crime after the Soviet occupation of Eastern Poland. Sikorski insisted on the release of all political prisoners and stated that "It was a sacrifice for Poland to ignore the Russian aggression of 1939. It was a heated meeting. Each side reacted sharply when its vital interests were questioned and when past wrongs were recalled.[1]

* * * *

The British Government were anxious to settle the Polish Soviet Treaty as quickly as possible. Cripps had met Stalin on July 8 and signed a pact (July 12) with Molotov, in which the Soviet Union and Great Britain promised to render each other mutual assistance and not to sign a separate peace with Germany. The Czechs signed a treaty with the Soviet Union on July 18. To the British, the dispute between their Polish ally and their Soviet ally was a matter of secondary importance, but the Poles' reluctance was a real and increasing embarrassment.

Within the British Government there was sympathy for Poland whose independence was, after all, the casus belli. On the other hand, there was the interest of their Soviet ally and the traditional British belief, dating from the early inter-war period, that the Curzon Line should be the Russo-Polish frontier

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[1]GSHI, PRM, 41/4, "Record of a conversation between General Sikorski and Minister Zaleski and Ambassador Maisky, held in the presence of Mr. Eden, concerning the resumption of Polish-Soviet relations (July 11)."

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Churchill wanted the Polish-Soviet Treaty to consolidate his new alliance with the Soviet Union. As for the sensitive territorial question he preferred to put it off to a more favorable time.[1] Eden wanted the Treaty because it would improve British relations with Catholic countries.[2] In addition, Eden had a personal reason. The Polish-Soviet negotiations was the first important task he had been assigned since Churchill had re-instated him in the Foreign Office, and his reputation to a certain extent depended on his handling of it.[3] Ciechanowski had heard from confidential sources that in Moscow Cripps was not unduly pressing the Soviet Government to make any concessions to the Poles.[4] He even heard from friends in the State Department that Cripps was discreetly suggesting to the Soviets that they could use the occasion to get territorial concessions.[5]

Since it seemed face-to-face meetings would bear no fruit, during the second stage of the negotiations, both the Polish and the Soviet Governments agreed that Eden should act as intermediary. The technique had the advantage of allowing each participant to speak freely without arousing the other side's ire. It also left Cripps, who was in touch with Stalin,

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[1]Churchill, The Grand Alliance, p. 349.

[2]Rozek, op. cit., p. 59.

[3]Pomian, op. cit., Chap. XI, p. 12.

[4]Ciechanowski, op. cit., p. 37.

[5]Rozek, op. cit., p. 59.

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completely and immediately informed. Maisky had made it clear from the beginning that he was acting only as a "letter-box."[1]

The Polish team underwent a change of personnel after Eden made it clear that Zaleski was not wanted.[2] Since Sikorski and Zaleski had been on bad terms for some time, Sikorski agreed. He conducted the negotiations increasingly by himself, aided by Retinger and Litauer, neither of whom was a trained diplomat, and by his British liaison officer, Major Victor Cazalet.

The second stage of negotiations saw ever increasing British pressure on Sikorski to sign a treaty with the Soviet Union. Pressure came from Eden, Churchill, the Foreign Office and even from the Duke of Kent. The main point of disagreement continued to be the eastern border.

* * * *

The Polish Government presented a suggested draft on July 13, 1941, which stated:

> 1) The Soviet Government will issue a statement denouncing their treaties concluded with Germany and relating to Poland and declaring the restoration of Polish-Russian relations to the status previous to September, 1939.
>
> The Polish Government reserves the right to claim reparations at the appropriate time for all damages caused by the USSR on the territory of the Polish State after the entry of the Soviet Armies on September 17th, 1939.
>
> 2) . . .
>
> All Polish citizens who are within the boundaries of the Soviet Union will be returned their freedom. . . .[3]

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[1]Pomian, op. cit., Chap. XI, p. 11.

[2]Raczyński, In Allied London, p. 95.

[3]GSHI, PRM, 41/1, "Draft agreement between Poland and the USSR proposed by Poland (July 13)."

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The British amendments (July 15) were deliberately vague and left open the question of the frontiers and related matters.

> Article 1. The Government of the USSR recognizes that the treaties concluded with Germany on August 23rd, 1939, and September 28th, 1939, respectively are no longer in force, and that the existing relations between the USSR and Poland in consequence revert to the basis existing before those dates. . . .
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Draft Protocol I (for publication)
>
> The two contracting Governments accept the principle that, subject to military considerations, Polish citizens who are at present in detention in the territory of the USSR shall be set at liberty.
>
> The application of this principle in respect of such persons, including the arrangements for their protection, shall be settled by discussion between the two contracting Governments, which shall take place through the diplomatic channel as soon as diplomatic relations have been re-established.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Draft Protocol II (not for publication)
>
> Any claims relating to public or private Polish property in the possession of the USSR are reserved for subsequent discussions between the two contracting Governments.[1]

When Sikorski asked for the text for three hours to show his Cabinet, Eden refused and told Sikorski and Zaleski that they would have to make the corrections on the spot.[2] He told them, "Whether you wish it or not, the treaty must be signed."[3]

The Polish community in Great Britain was becoming restless as negotiations dragged on. Sikorski made a speech to the Polish airmen on July 16 at Swinderby, explaining that he and the British were holding firm on the question of frontier,

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[1] GSHI, PRM, 41/1, "British amendments to the proposed political agreement between Poland and the USSR sent by Mr. Eden to Minister Zaleski (July 15)."

[2] Rozek, op. cit., p. 60.

[3] DPSR, I, 576.

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but Maisky was creating difficulties. Eden called Zaleski and told him that the speech would not appear in the British press.[1]

The following day (July 17) the second Soviet proposal was presented. The key was contained in the first phrase:

> Taking into account that the Soviet Government recognizes the Treaties concerning Poland which were concluded between the USSR and Germany in 1939 as invalid. . . .

It provided for the restoration of diplomatic relations, cooperation in the war against Germany and the formation of a Polish army in the USSR, "its Commander to be appointed by the Government of the Polish Republic in agreement with the Soviet Government."[2]

Zaleski's view of the Soviet proposal was that

> the whole question of frontiers was relegated to the preamble and the question of reverting to normal relations omitted altogether, while the question of political prisoners was to be settled by an oral declaration by M. Maisky, stating the good will with which it would be treated when the Polish Ambassador would deal with the matter in the future.[3]

When Sikorski heard the Soviet proposals from Eden he rejected them on the spot. During the conversation Zaleski stressed the point that "the Poles might be more amenable in the question of negotiations with Russia" if they had a British Pleadge on "the future order in Europe."[4]

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[1]Rozek, op. cit., p. 60.

[2]GSHI, PRM, 41/1, "Draft of the proposed agreement between Poland and the Soviet Union (the second Soviet proposal) (July 17)."

[3]GSHI, A.11. 49/Sow/1, "Conversation between General Sikorski and Foreign Minister Zaleski (July 17)."

[4]DPSR, I, 576.

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Late the same night the Polish Government submitted to the Foreign Office their amendments to the Soviet proposal and a suggested British guarantee to Poland. The first article stated:

> 1) The Soviet Government recognizes the Treaties concerning Poland which were concluded between the USSR and Germany in 1939 as invalid, and recognizes the legal status of the frontiers between the USSR and the Polish Republic as it had existed in July 1939. . . .

With regard to the formation of a Polish army in the Soviet Union they omitted the Soviet reference to any Russian right of approving the appointment of the Commander. In the Protocol they accepted the British position of July 15 on the questions of the release of prisoners and claims.

> 1) All practical questions concerning the release of the Polish subjects who are now detained on the territory of the USSR will be considered in a positive spirit after the restoration of diplomatic relations between the USSR and Poland.
> 2) The various claims of a public, as well as of a private, nature will be considered in the subsequent negotiations between the two Governments.[1]

The suggested draft of the British note to Poland was a positive guarantee of the Polish frontiers of 1939.

> Le Gouvernement Britannique, ayant reconnu les frontières occidentales de la Pologne par le Traité de Versailles et les actes y consécutifs, et les frontières orientales par la décision de la Conférence des Ambassadeurs en date du mars 23 1923,
> considérant comme inexistant tous les faits accomplis ou qui seraient accomplis au détriment de la Pologne a la suite de l'agression allemande du 1-er septembre 1939, ...
> ... a l'honneur d'informer le Gouvernement Polonais qu'il considère comme nuls et nonavenus tous les accords

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[1] GSHI, PRM, 41/3, "Letter from General Sikorski to Mr. Eden with Polish amendments to the second Soviet proposal of July 17, 1941 (July 17)."

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> et actes internationaux intervenus ou qui interviendraient à la faveur de l'agression allemande contre la Pologne et préjudiciables aux droits polonais tels qu'ils ont existé au 31 août 1939.
>
> Le Gouvernement Britannique supporte et continuera de supporter le Gouvernement en tant que seul représentant légitime de toutes les provinces qui composaient l'Etat Polonais avant l'agression allemande.[1]

It was clear that the British were not going to support Poland against their new Soviet ally. Retinger describes the luncheon (July 18) at which Sikorski gave in to British pressure:

> Grand fighter that he was Sikorski knew when he was defeated. The first paragraph of our agreement with Russia proved a terrible bone of contention. Eden wanted it one way and Sikorski another and neither would budge. The whole dinner was poised ineffectively in mid-air, and we saw that we were not going to have our phrasing. Then Eden passed Sikorski a glass of brandy and, taking it the General said: "You know that Retinger always drinks for me, but this time I'll let myself be sold to the English rather than to the Russians. I accept your glass and your phrase."[2]

An encouraging factor in Sikorski's decision was the draft of a note sent by Eden to the Polish Government which stated:

> . . . I also desire to assure you that, as has been publicly stated by the Prime Minister, His Majesty's Government do not propose to recognize any territorial changes which take place during the war unless they take place with the free consent and good will of the parties concerned.[3]

The British would not guarantee Poland's territorial integrity,

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[1]GSHI, A.11. 49/Sow/1, "Suggested draft of a British note to Poland guaranteeing Polish frontiers submitted by Minister Zaleski to Mr. Eden (July 17)."

[2]Pomian, op. cit., Chap. XI, pp. 14-15.

[3]GSHI, A.11. 49/Sow/1, "Draft of a note sent by Mr. Eden to Minister Zaleski, stating the resolve of the British Government not to recognize territorial changes during the war (July 18)."

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but they would agree not to recognize any unilateral changes.

In Sikorski's next draft (July 21) he extended Soviet obligations, as expressed in the Soviet draft of July 17, but at the same time left the frontier question open: "The Government of the USSR recognizes the treaties concerning the territorial changes in Poland concluded since July 1939, as invalid." The new Polish draft provided for a Polish army to be formed in the Soviet Union and a special agreement to settle the details of its command, organization and utilization. Practical questions concerning the release of Polish deportees would be "considered and settled" after the reestablishment of diplomatic relations. In the secret protocol it was stated that:

> 1) The various claims of a public, as well as of a private nature will be considered in the subsequent negotiations between the two Governments.[1]

A meeting of the Polish Cabinet took place on July 21 to discuss Sikorski's latest draft. The proceedings were stormy. Sikorski complained about vexatious rumors within the Polish community. Zaleski denied any connection with the rumors and criticized Sikorski's handling of the negotiations. He warned against haste and complained that it was poor diplomacy for Sikorski to conduct the negotiations personally. A commitment made by the Polish Prime Minister would be binding, whereas a commitment made by Maisky's diplomatic Polish opposite, Edward Raczyński, who was also Ambassador to Great Britain,

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[1] GSHI, PRM, 41/1, "Draft of the agreement between Poland and the USSR as submitted to Moscow by Ambassador Maisky (July 21)."

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could be rejected after consideration. After very long and very difficult discussion, the Cabinet accepted Sikorski's policy.[1] In a letter to Eden, Sikorski wrote:

> . . . All the Polish Ministers unanimously accepted the draft of the Treaty, provided that today's corrections be approved by the USSR Government. However, further changes would not be acceptable to us.[2]

Maisky sent the Polish draft to Moscow.

The Soviet Government rejected it. They asked for the use of the words "mutual claims" in the secret protocol. Very reluctantly and under British pressure they conceded that the creation of a Polish army in the Soviet Union should be linked to a special agreement. They insisted on keeping secret the protocol relating to the release of prisoners, and refused to accept the terms "considered and settled," but only the word "considered." They reluctantly agreed to allow the passage concerning the annulment of the treaties of 1939 to appear in the first article instead of in the preamble, but rejected the extension of this clause to all treaties in general, insisting that it apply only to the treaties with Germany.[3]

The Soviet Government's insistence on keeping secret the protocol concerning the release of prisoners put the Polish Government in an awkward position because they could not prove

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[1]GSHI, PRM - K, 104, "The Proceedings of the Council of Ministers (July 21)."

[2]GSHI, PRM, 41/3, "Polish amendments to the British suggestion of July 18, 1941 with personal letter from General Sikorski to Mr. Eden (July 21)."

[3]GSHI, PRM-K, 104, "The Proceedings of the Council of Ministers (July 25)."

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to their own people that the treaty promised the release of deportees. The limitation of the annulment of treaties would leave open the question of Wilno which had been handed over to Lithuania (October 10, 1939) by the Soviet Union before that Baltic State became the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic. Sikorski approached Eden, but the British Foreign Minister said there was no chance of obtaining a better agreement. Eden's attitude was completely unbending. He warned that a refusal to sign the agreement would undermine Poland's position in the public opinion of the Anglo-Saxon countries which had become warm to the Soviet Union after the unexpectedly stubborn resistence of the Red Army.[1]

When Sikorski faced his Cabinet on July 25 to report what had transpired, he warned that if the Polish Government rejected the Treaty, the Soviet Union might create a Polish National Committee on Soviet soil, which would assume the character of a government and proceed to form a Polish army. Soviet misrepresentation of the Polish rejection could induce many Polish deportees to come to terms with the Soviet Government. Both Ministers of State, Marian Seyda and General Kazimierz Sosnkowski voted against the Treaty. Zaleski said he would take on the unpleasant task of signing it only if all the Polish political parties would agree. Sikorski said that in spite of the ferment the Treaty would create among Polish émigrés, it had to be signed in the interests of the Poles in the Soviet

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[1] Ibid.

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Union and to maintain good relations with the Anglo-Saxon powers. He would bear the responsibility. At an evening meeting of the Cabinet after the resignation of Zaleski, Sosnkowski and Seyda

> . . . the Council of Ministers having heard the report of the President of the Council (Sikorski) which states that the British Government agreed . . . to the publication of a communiqué which will disclose the actual tenor of the Protocol without mentioning the Protocol itself, unanimously voted for the signature of the Treaty, which, in view of Minister Zaleski's resignation, should be signed by the President of the Council.[1]

Through the last-minute intervention of Cripps, Stalin agreed to the general liberation of Poles detained in the Soviet Union. Cripps pointed out that to leave the question open to future negotiations would give rise to mutual recriminations and bad feelings. He appealed to Stalin's good will. Stalin agreed to include the article in the public protocol.[2] The word "mutual" was omitted with reference to public and private claims.

Sikorski had planned to sign the Treaty on July 29. Under the Constitution, the President alone had the right to conclude and ratify treaties (Article 12). In anticipation of President Raczkiewicz's refusal the Cabinet resolved (July 28) that the President no longer had the constitutional power to frustrate the signing of the Treaty after his explicit proclamation that he would take no independent actions without the

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[1] Ibid.

[2] GSHI, PRM, 41/5, "Note of a conversation with Ambassador Cripps by Wiesław Arlet (August 8, 1941)."

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strictest agreement of the Prime Minister.[1] When Sikorski met Raczkiewicz on July 29, the President demanded the postponement of the signing of the Treaty. He said that he would not grant Sikorski the powers to sign it. Sikorski said he would sign anyway. Raczkiewicz threatened to resign.[2] With Sikorski's permission Retinger visited Strang at the Foreign Office and Foreign Office legal experts found a precedent to get around the constitutional dilemma.[3]

Accordingly, the Treaty was signed at 4:15 P.M. in Eden's office. Its final text was as follows:

> The Government of the Republic of Poland and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics have concluded the present Agreement and decided as follows:
>
> 1) The Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics recognizes that the Soviet-German treaties of 1939 relative to territorial changes in Poland have lost their validity. The Government of the Republic of Poland declares that Poland is not bound by any Agreement with any third State directed against the USSR.

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[1]GSHI, PRM, 42/1, "Resolution of the Polish Cabinet on the question of the attitude of the President to the Polish-Soviet Treaty."

[2]Mitkiewicz, op. cit., p. 160.

[3]Retinger recalls: ". . . With Sikorski's permission I want to see William Strang at the Foreign Office and put the case to him. The Foreign Office's legal advisers were called in, and finally it was decided that since the treaty between Russia and Britain had been signed only by the British Ambassador in Moscow and Molotov, similarly it would not be necessary for this agreement to bear the President's signature, all the more so as the Foreign Office had been informed that Maisky was not going to ask for an exchange of credentials and powers, seeing that he was dealing with the head of the government. Pomian, op. cit., Chap. XI, p. 20.

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2) Diplomatic relations will be restored between the two Governments upon the signature of this Agreement and an exchange of ambassadors will follow immediately.

3) The two Governments mutually undertake to render one another aid and support of all kinds in the present war against Hitlerite Germany.

4) The Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics expresses its consent to the formation on the territory of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics of a Polish army under a commander appointed by the Government of the Republic of Poland, in agreement with the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The Polish Army on the territory of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics will be subordinated in operational matters to the Supreme Command of the USSR on which there will be a representative of the Polish Army. All details as to command, organization and employment of this force will be settled in a subsequent Agreement.

5) This Agreement will come into force immediately upon its signature and without ratification. The present Agreement is drawn up in two copies, each of them in the Russian and Polish languages. Both texts have equal force.

Secret Protocol

1) Various claims both of public and private nature will be dealt with in the course of further negotiations between the two governments.

2) This protocol enters into force simultaneously with the Agreement of 30th July, 1941.

Protocol

1) As soon as diplomatic relations are re-established the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics will grant amnesty to all Polish citizens who are at present deprived of their freedom on the territory of the USSR either as prisoners of war or on other adequate grounds.

2) The present Protocol comes into force simultaneously with the Agreement of July 30, 1941.[1]

Władysław Sikorski I. Maisky

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[1] GSHI, A.11. 49/Sow/1, "Polish-Soviet agreement annulling the Soviet-German treaties of 1939 relating to Poland, restoring mutual diplomatic relations, undertaking mutual aid and support in the present war and formation of a Polish Army on the territory of the USSR. Additional Protocol on an amnesty to be granted to all Polish citizens on the territory of the USSR deprived of their freedom (July 30)."

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After the signing of the Treaty Eden handed Sikorski a note which stated:

> On the occasion of the signature of the Polish-Soviet Agreement of today, I take this opportunity of informing you that in conformity with the provision of the agreement of mutual assistance between the United Kingdom and Poland of the 25th of August, 1939, His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom have entered into no undertakings towards the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics which affect the relations between that country and Poland. I also desire to assure you that His Majesty's Government do not recognize any territorial changes which have been effected in Poland since August 1939.[1]

On the same day Eden announced to the House of Commons that the Treaty had been signed and informed the members of the British Declaration. There were questions about the Declaration.

> CAPTAIN MCEWEN: Am I right in assuming that as a result of this Agreement, no guarantee will be undertaken by His Majesty's Government?
> MR. EDEN: Yes, Sir. The exchange of Notes which I have just read to the House does not involve any guarantee of frontiers by His Majesty's Government.
> . . . . . .
> MR. MANDER: On the question of the guarantees of frontiers, surely the existing guarantees to Poland hold good?
> MR. EDEN: There is, as I have said, no guarantee of frontiers.[2]

The day after the signing of the Treaty (July 31, 1941) Sikorski made a broadcast to the Polish Nation in which he explained its implications. On the frontier issue he said:

> . . . But it [the Treaty] does not permit even the suggestion that the 1939 frontiers of the Polish State could ever be

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[1] GSHI, PRM, 41/3, "Note issued by the Foreign Office in London on non-recognition of any territorial changes in Poland since August, 1939 (July 30)."

[2] Great Britain, 5 Parliamentary Debates (Commons) CCCLXXIII (1941), 1504.

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> in question. It does not allow any idea that Poland has resigned anything; . . .[1]

Izvestia quickly made the Soviet position clear in an editorial (August 3):

> The Soviet Government has recognized that the Soviet-German [sic] Agreement of 1939 concerning territorial changes in Poland has lost its validity. By this it emphasized that "territorial changes" are not eternal and that frontiers established by such "changes" are not immutable. For instance, we do not consider immutable the Polish-Soviet frontiers established by the Treaty of Riga in 1921, nor do we share the view that "no one dares to presume that the boarders of the Polish State of 1939 may be questioned" as expressed by General Sikorski in his speech. . . . The problem of Soviet-Polish frontiers is a matter for the future.[2]

* * * *

The use of the word "amnesty" in the Treaty created a furor among Sikorski's critics in the Polish community. They complained that the word implied guilt. The word was used to ensure the coverage of all Polish detainees in the application of the Treaty relating to the freeing of Polish citizens and to prevent Soviet authorities from twisting other possible formula so as to enable them to keep certain Poles imprisoned. There was a precedent its use in this sense in the Treaty of Riga.[3]

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The Treaty permanently shattered the uneasy coalition

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[1]GSHI. A.xii. 30/18.6, "Broadcast by General Sikorski to Poland, in connection with the Polish-Soviet Agreement (July 31)."

[2]DPSR, I, 582.

[3]Marian Kukiel, "Klauzula amnestyja (The Amnesty Clause Tydzień polski (Polish Week), London, October 12, 1968.

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within the Polish Government. Now almost all the sanators, who had been critical of Sikorski before the Treaty, went into complete and rigid opposition. They were joined by most of the Nationalists and part of the Socialists. After July, 1941 Sikorski's support came basically from parties and individuals of the center and left: primarily the Peasant Party, but also the Christian Labor Party, some Socialists and Independents. On September 3, 1941, he added three new members of his Cabinet: Stanisław Mikołajczyk (Peasant Party--Minister of the Interior), Herman Liebermann (PPS--Minister of Justice) and Karol Popiel (Christian Labor Party--Minister of State). The exception to this pattern was the appointment of Edward Raczyński as Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs. Raczyński had been appointed Ambassador to Great Britain by Beck and had extensive connections in London. He was the only major figure in Sikorski's inner group of collaborators who had been connected with the pre-war Polish regime. Not only did Sikorski need Raczyński, but he trusted and respected him.[1]

Raczyński notes the consequences of the internal crisis over the Treaty on Sikorski's future presentation of his policies:

> . . . The Government's critics argued in and out of season that the treaty was a bad and useless one, since it was not being carried out by the Russians. From this they inferred that Sikorski was responsible for our troubles and that his opponents had been right. This led to the critical attitude that the worse matters got, the better. The Government, for its part was inclined in self defence to make things out to be better than they really were.[2]

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[1] Raczyński, In Allied London, pp. 165-66.

[2] Ibid., p. 101.

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The reaction to the Treaty among Poles in Poland and the Soviet Union was affirmative. General Tadeusz Bór-Komorowski writes on the reaction in Poland:

> . . . For the moment everything seemed to indicate that Russo-Polish relations had returned to pre-war status. In the German-occupied part of Poland hatred of the Germans was far stronger than the memory of the wrongs done to Poland by Russia. The news of every German victory was received with the greatest misgiving; that of each setback, with joy. Never in the history of Poland and Russia had the moment been more propitious for forgetting the past and establishing friendly relations.[1]

In the Soviet Union during the autumn of 1941 Polish officers, from the Commander of the emerging Polish Army, Władysław Anders, down were enthusiastic about Sikorski's policies.[2] The Polish people in the Soviet Union looked to Sikorski as a savior who had liberated them from bondage.

The constitutional difficulties were eventually straightened out (August 19-20, 1941) when Sikorski and Raczkiewicz recognized that "the Polish-Soviet Treaty ceased to be a matter of dispute between the President and the Council of Ministers and that the principles on which co-operation between them was based remained in force."[3]

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In the light of the split which the Treaty precipitated within the Polish camp the question poses itself: What motivated

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[1]Bór-Komorowski, op. cit., pp. 66-67.

[2]Stanisław Strumph Wojkiewicz, Gwiazda Władysława Sikorskiego (The Star of Władysław Sikorski) (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1946), pp. 199-200.

[3]DPSR, I, 581.

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Sikorski to sign the Treaty if he knew what the consequences would be?

Sikorski knew that there were large numbers of prisoners of war in the Soviet Union. He could rebuild the Polish Army with them and thereby strengthen Poland's position as an ally. Related to this was his hope that he could win Soviet friendship in the post-war world, should the Soviet Union survive the German attack. Ciechanowski critically writes:

> He harbored the illusion that nothing could bring the Soviets and Poland closer than brotherhood in arms which would allow them to share in a future victory over Germany. He would certainly work for the return of the pre-war status of relations and territorial settlements, but he hopefully believed that the mere annulment by the Soviets of the Ribbentrop-Molotov agreement could be interpreted as automatically restoring the status of the Riga Treaty. He was also inclined to believe that a gentleman's agreement or a tacit understanding between a gallantly fighting Poland and a gallantly fighting Russia, concluded in the course of an unprecedented war, would be sufficient safeguard of mutual loyalty. . . .[1]

Sikorski was also aware that if he rejected the Treaty, the Soviet Union could create its own puppet Polish Government and army.

The argument which was decisive reflects Sikorski's basic humanitarianism and his interest in the fate of his compatriots under enemy occupation. He knew that if Germany defeated the Soviet Union, Poland would be under German control for an indefinite period. The Germans had already made clear their policy of genocide against the Polish Nation. Whether he liked it or not the Soviet Union had to be his ally because the fate

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[1]Ciechanowski, op. cit., pp. 37-38.

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of the Polish nation was dependent on the defeat of Nazi Germany.[1] Secondly, there was the fate of 1,250,000 Polish deportees strewn across the harsh terrain of the Soviet Union, living under the worst physical conditions. It was already midsummer when he signed the Treaty. How long would it take to get relief to them? How many would perish during the fierce Siberian winter? General Kukiel, a close personal friend of the Polish Prime Minister recalls a private conversation with Sikorski on the subject:

> When the Polish Army in Russia was soon to become a reality and tens of thousands of individuals freed from concentration camps and deportation General Sikorski said to me, his voice charged with emotion, "You know, when I had to sign that treaty and I was struggling with myself whether to delay any more, I heard, as it were, the whisper of thousands of voices--hurry, O please save us."[2]

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[1]Kukiel, "Polityka polska wobec układów brytyjsko-sowiechich," p. 167.

[2]Ibid., p. 170.

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CHAPTER IV

AUGUST-DECEMBER, 1941

The German attack on the Soviet Union created a diplomatic revolution. Hitherto, the Soviet Union had been a hostile, enigmatic giant. Now, the Polish, British and American Governments had to come face to face with the Soviet Government. They were forced to work at close quarters with all levels of its administration and they found Soviet governmental philosophy, organizational structure and motivating forces in many regards quite foreign to their own. These fundamental differences were bound to cause misunderstandings and strife in the new Alliance.

The Soviet Union was born from the womb of revolution. Its civic credo rested on the ideals of Karl Marx and Lenin. Although Marxism-Leninism experienced many mutations during its application to real situations, Soviet leaders continued to appeal to its basic principles. The Soviet Union was a Socialist State created by the blood and sweat of the workers and peasants who had expelled capitalist exploiters from the territory which had been Tsarist Russia. The USSR was the fortress of the proletarian revolutionary movement, destined by the forces of history to spread throughout the world.

The Soviet Union's attitude towards the outside world

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was influenced both by state ideology and by its early contacts with outsiders. The Imperialist Powers, including Great Britain the United States, Japan, France and the tool of French Imperialism, Poland, had attempted to destroy the Socialist Revolution by armed intervention in the early days of the Soviet Republic. It became a fixed idea of Soviet political thought, which was reflected in action, that the Bourgeois Imperialist Powers were, by their very nature, enemies of the Soviet Union. The result was a distorted view and deep-seated suspicion of Western action. This mentality continued throughout the inter-war period, during the forced wartime Alliance, and on into the post-1945 world.

Since ideology played such a key role in Soviet policy, the events of World War II had to be explained ideologically. During the late 1930's Russian national feelings received increasing emphasis, and after the German attack Russian nationalism was called to the fore. The past military glories of such Russian warriors as Suvorov,[1] Kutuzov[2] and Alexandr Nevsky[3] were recalled by the creation of military Orders named after these "Great Ancestors." Sergei Eisenstein's films depicted great Russian leaders crushing their internal foes and driving out the hated foreign invaders. The Second Imperialist War became the

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[1]Alexandr Suvorov (1729-1800).

[2]Mikhail I. Kutuzov (1745-1813).

[3]Prince Alexandr Nevsky (1220-63).

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Great Fatherland War.[1] Even so, Stalin and the Soviet Government never repudiated Marxism-Leninism. They merely played it down to smooth relations with the Western Powers and stressed Russian national feeling to arouse the patriotism of the Russian people in the struggle against the Teutonic invaders who were ravaging the Russian countryside as in days of yore. To Stalin and presumably to his leading Communist collaborators the fundamental issue was still capitalism versus socialism. The war was seen just as further proof of the contradictions within the capitalist world: it had originated as a conflict between the Bourgeois Democratic states and the Fascist States. By definition, both were enemies of the Soviet Union.

The Soviet governmental structure was a massive, bureaucratic, virtually all-inclusive, highly centralized pyramid. Its major components were the Communist Party, the State Administration and the security police (NKVD). In theory, almost all aspects of political, social and economic life found their place within the pyramid.

At the apex was Joseph Stalin. Although foreign dignitaries often misjudged and underestimated him on first encounter, Stalin was one of the great politicians and practical social revolutionaries of this century. He was a master of applying the correct pressure at the correct moment and had a

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[1]The Napoleonic Invasion of 1812 was traditionally referred to as the Fatherland War; the German Invasion of World War II became the Great Fatherland War.

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great capacity for getting things done. He was deceptive, wily and suspicious to the point of paranoia. To his subordinates Stalin could be orientally brutal and held them in a constant state of terror. Nonetheless, it was Stalin, more than anyone else, who created the power of the new Soviet State during the first Five Year Plans by these very means of terror and brutality. He made all important and many very minor decisions. During the negotiations with Sikorski, Maisky received very precise instructions and his powers were limited to their presentation. Stalin made all decisions in Moscow and Maisky was his "letter-box." Allied leaders were struck by Stalin's extremely detailed knowledge of all aspects of the war effort. This was an indication of how detailed his control was.

The State Committee of Defence, a small inner group of Soviet leaders,[1] was formed on June 30, 1941, to direct all aspects of the War. It can only partly be compared to the British War Cabinet. Churchill was Eden's senior colleague: Stalin was Molotov's master. Anders recalls his impression of the relationship when he and Sikorski met the Soviet leaders on December 3, 1941:

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[1]Originally it consisted of Stalin as chairman, Molotov as vice-chairman, and Marshal Kliment E. Voroshilov, NKVD chief Laurenti P. Beria, and Georgi M. Malenkov. On February 3, 1942, Anastas I Mikoyan and Nicolai A. Voznesensky were added; February 20, 1942, Lazar M. Kaganovich joined the Committee. On November 22, 1944, Nicolai A. Bulganin replaced Voroshilov. Merle Fainsod, How Russia is Ruled (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), pp. 391-92.

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> . . . Stalin dropped to the floor a piece of paper with some notes on it, and Molotov immediately dived down and picked it up, handing it back with an obsequious gesture. Indeed, one of the most impressive things about the talk was Molotov's subservience to Stalin, which was expressed in continual gestures such as his quick offer of a light every time Stalin drew another cigarette from a case. His attitude throughout was more that of a lackey than of a colleague.[1]

The pyramidal structure extended downward through the various levels of the Soviet State--from Moscow to the Republics and oblasts, to the raions, to the individual plant and collective farm. Everyone was a cog in the giant machine of State created during the first two Five Year Plans, with a superior whom he dreaded, with very specific and often extremely heavy responsibilities to get results and with the prospect of dire consequences if he failed.

The NKVD had a key function in Soviet society. As the Polish Government was soon to learn, the NKVD had two faces. Its members maintained internal security by the use of terror and were "Asiatic" in their suspicion. Yet it could also be beneficial when something had to be done quickly, because the NKVD was the most efficient organ in the Soviet Union possessing first access to all communication facilities--a very important asset in a country of Russia's size.[2]

The institutionalism of terror was an aspect of Soviet society which affected everyone from the top ruling circles to

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[1] Władysław Anders, An Army in Exile (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1949), p. 87.

[2] GSHI, PRM, 42/7, "Report of Trip by M. Heitzman (December 1, 1941)."

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the lowest collective farmer. Churchill vividly recalls Molotov's actions while visiting London in May, 1942:

> Extraordinary precautions were taken for Molotov's personal safety. His room had been thoroughly searched by his police officers, every cupboard and piece of furniture and the walls and floors being meticulously examined by practiced eyes. The bed was the object of particular attention; the mattresses were all prodded in case of infernal machines, and the sheets and blankets were rearranged by the Russians so as to leave an opening in the middle of the bed out of which the occupant could spring at a moment's notice, instead of being tucked in. At night a revolver was laid out beside his dressing-gown and his dispatch case. . . .[1]

These actions reflect the mental atmosphere in which the man existed. Molotov was one of the small inner core of leaders who cooperated with Stalin in deciding Soviet policy, and he was terrified. The systematic application of terror reached its zenith during the purges of the late 1930's when thousands of arrests, incidents of bestial brutality and scenes of hysterical fear occurred in every corner of the Soviet Union among all echelons of Soviet society.[2]

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[1]Winston S. Churchill, The Hinge of Fate (London: Cassell & Co., 1951), p. 301.

[2]In his work based on the captured archives of the Communist Party for the Province of Smolensk, Smolensk under Soviet Rule, Merle Fainsod gives many examples of terror at the grass roots of society. To cite one revealing case: on August 4, 1936, the local Party bureau of Kozielsk met to discuss a letter from the Central Committee on the Trotskyite-Zinovievite bloc. One after another the members rose to speak and as the hysteria mounted they launched greater and greater denunciations. The climax came when Kutasov of the local sanatorium said: "I love the Central Committee. I love Comrade Stalin, but I think that up to now the Central Committee and Comrade Stalin have taken a conciliatory attitude toward the Trotskyite-Zinovievite group. Now it is necessary to finish them off--the Trotskyites and Zinovievites--and to finish them off for good. We should give them no mercy." Kutasov was sharply censured for daring

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The officials of the Polish Government came into direct contact with the local Soviet administration only three years after the worst of the purges had ended, when their horror was still very fresh in everyone's memory. Major Victor Cazalet, British liaison officer to Sikorski, recalls an event during his visit to Moscow with Sikorski in December, 1941:

> . . . One of the Russian Generals in an expansive moment after dinner, replying to a question addressed him by a Pole as to why they had deported so many Poles, said "I don't know why you complain so bitterly. There are 20 millions of our own people living under the same conditions, and we treat the Poles exactly as we treat our own people. . . ."[1]

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Although Allied leaders knew in general terms about life in the Soviet Union, their knowledge was much like the early astronomers' knowledge of the moon's craters. Before the German attack they had direct contact only with officially sanctioned Soviet personnel. Had it not been for the diplomatic colony Cripps would have lived a hermit's life in the metropolis of Moscow. He rarely saw Soviet leaders and never spoke to average Soviet citizens because they were terrified to speak to foreigners. The wartime Alliance forced closer relations.

The first contacts set the tone for future relations.

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to criticize Stalin. He apologized with great excess; "My statement was incorrect and harmful. I censure it myself." We do not know what was his fate for his excessive zeal, but we can speculate that he suffered the tragic fate of so many thousands of others. Merle Fainsod, Smolensk under Soviet Rule (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1959), pp. 234-36.

[1]Victor G. Cazalet, With Sikorski to Russia (London: Curwen Press, 1942), p. 51.

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As mentioned above, Churchill spoke on the night of the German invasion unconditionally welcoming the Soviet Union as an ally and promising aid. In his first message to Churchill which came almost one month later (July 18), Stalin made a request which was to be repeated constantly, and at times with biting venom, for the next three years:

> . . . the military position of the Soviet Union, and by the same token that of Great Britain, would improve substantially if a front were established against Hitler in the West (Northern France) and the North (the Arctic).[1]

Stalin wanted a second front. Churchill replied (July 21) that under the existing circumstances a second front was a technical impossibility.[2] The absence of the Second Front became a powerful lever in Stalin's hands to win concessions.

By the summer of 1941 President Roosevelt was guiding the United States increasingly towards the role of an active belligerent. The day after the German attack on the Soviet Union Acting Secretary of State, Sumner Welles, told the press:

> In the opinion of this government . . . any defense against Hitlerism, from whatever source these forces may spring, will hasten the eventual downfall of the present German leaders, and will therefore redound the benefit of our own defense and security.[3]

On the following day the President announced that Soviet dollar

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[1] Stalin's Correspondence with Churchill, Attlee, Roosevelt and Truman, 1941-45 (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1958), I, 13.

[2] Ibid., pp. 13-15.

[3] Herbert Feis, Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), p. 10.

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resources which had been frozen would be freed so that the Soviet Union could buy armaments in the United States.[1]

The question still remained: could the Soviet Union withstand the German onslaught? Presidential aide, Harry L. Hopkins, while visiting London to discuss British military plans found his task dependent on definite knowledge of Soviet military prospects. He asked Roosevelt for permission to go to Moscow. Roosevelt agreed. Hopkins arrived in Moscow on July 30, 1941. Stalin's personality and leadership qualities greatly impressed him. Hopkins felt that Stalin and the Soviet Union were determined and capable of fighting on. He reported to Roosevelt (August 1): ". . . I feel ever so confident about this front. . . . There is unbounded determination to win. . . ."[2] Hopkins promised Stalin that the Western Allies would do everything possible to supply the Soviet Union during the following crucial weeks. Commenting on Hopkins' visit to Moscow, Herbert Feis notes:

> . . . Writing later of Hopkins' visit to Moscow, Robert Sherwood called it ". . . the turning point in the wartime relations of Britain and the United States with the Soviet Union. It marked rather, I think, the "point of no return.". . .[3]

On August 2 Sumner Welles formally informed Soviet Ambassador, Konstantin A. Oumansky:

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[1] Foreign Relations of the United States. Diplomatic Papers 1941 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1959), I, 768-69.

[2] Ibid., p. 814.

[3] Feis, op. cit., p. 13.

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> . . . the Government of the United States has decided to give all economic assistance practicable for the purpose of strengthening the Soviet Union in its struggle against armed aggression. . . .[1]

In view of the rapid changes in the war situation, Churchill and Roosevelt met off the coast of Newfoundland (August 9-12, 1941) to formulate Anglo-American war aims. Hopkins had returned from Moscow in time to be present. He made a glowing report of Soviet resistance and expressed his confidence that if the Soviet Union could last until winter, it could regroup its military and economic forces for the next spring's campaign. Following Hopkins' suggestion Roosevelt and Churchill sent Stalin a message (August 12) proposing the dispatch of a joint Anglo-American mission to Moscow which would discuss Soviet war needs. Stalin agreed.

During their meeting, Roosevelt and Churchill drew up a definition of their war aims, the Atlantic Charter, and issued it in a joint declaration (August 12). Points one and two were of special interest to the Polish Government:

> First, their countries seek no aggrandisement, territorial or other.
> Second, they desire to see no territorial changes that do not accord with the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned.[2]

On September 24 the Soviet Ambassador to London, Ivan Maisky, informed the Allies of a somewhat qualified Soviet acceptance of the principles of the Atlantic Charter:

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[1] Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers, 1941, I, 815.

[2] Churchill, The Grand Alliance, p. 393.

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> Considering that the practical application of these principles will necessarily adapt itself to the circumstances, needs, and historical peculiarities of particular countries, the Soviet government can state that a consistent application of these principles will secure the most energetic support on the part of the government and peoples of the Soviet Union.[1]

Another vital feature in Western-Soviet relations made its first appearance in early September. On September 3, 1941, Stalin sent a message to Churchill which stated:

> Without these two kinds of aid [a second front and war material] the Soviet Union will either be defeated or weakened to the extent that it will lose for a long time the ability to help its Allies by active operations at the front against Hitlerism.[2]

The contents of the message were vague and there was no specific reference to a separate peace, yet Churchill was alarmed by Stalin's tone and informed Roosevelt (September 5):

> . . . Although nothing in his language warranted the assumption, we could not exclude the impression that they might be thinking of separate terms. . . .[3]

Even though there was never a shred of concrete evidence throughout the entire war that the Soviet Union was seeking a separate peace--nothing beyond rumors and vague allusions--Western leaders misinterpreted Stalin's situation and intentions, and underestimated their own position of strength. The fear of a separate peace haunted and handicapped them in their dealings with the Soviet dictator, allowing him to turn setbacks into

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[1]Feis, op. cit., p. 24 n.

[2]Stalin's Correspondence, I, 21.

[3]Churchill, The Grand Alliance, p. 409.

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moments of strength when dealing with his Allies.

Press and public estimation of the Soviet Union in Great Britain was changing in the summer of 1941. The Soviet Union was quickly accepted as an Ally. Editorial opinion began to discuss Poland as a protégé of the Soviet Union in the post-war era. On August 1 an editorial appeared in The Times which stated:

> . . . leadership in Eastern Europe is essential if the disorganization of the past twenty years is to be avoided; . . . this leadership can fall only to Germany or Russia. Neither Great Britain nor the United States can exercise, nor will aspire to exercise any predominant role in these regions.

Raczyński asked Eden for an explanation. Eden informed the Polish Government that the British Government disassociated itself from the opinion expressed in The Times (August 19).[1] Even so, accommodation to Soviet claims was in the air.

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Poland's renewed relations with the Soviet Union were somewhat different from Anglo-American relations with the Soviet Union. Whereas Churchill and Roosevelt could deal with Stalin as an equal, Sikorski's position was much weaker, being dependent on the support of his Western Allies and Stalin's good will. Western leaders dealt essentially with the top of the Soviet pyramid of power. As a result of the presence of about 1,250,000

[1] GSHI, PRM, 39-b, "A Report by Min. Raczyński to General Sikorski on a conversation with Min. Eden (August 18, 1941) on the question of doubts raised about the Churchill-Roosevelt declaration as well as on the question of the article in The Times (August 19)."

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Polish nationals in the Soviet Union, the Poles had to deal with all levels of the Soviet power structure. The Poles knew from first hand experience, in a way the British and Americans never could, how the Soviet system functioned in its entirety. Such knowledge led to a more realistic assessment of the Soviet Union and its aims.

Sikorski appointed Professor Stanisław Kot as his Ambassador to Moscow (July 30). His choice was the result of both external pressure and internal politics. He told Kot:

> . . . The Soviets have made the release of the Poles dependent on the restoration of diplomatic relations, and in particular on the exchange of Ambassadors. I have just been informed that they are nominating Bogomolov,[1] and are asking the name of our Ambassador. I want to let them have it this very day. I'm afraid they will use any delay in nominating an Ambassador as an excuse for holding our citizens longer in prison. I should never forgive myself if that continued for a single day just because the Government could not find an Ambassador.

Kot was surprised by Sikorski's decision. He pointed out his obvious weaknesses as a candidate. He was not a diplomat by training, he had never been to the Soviet Union and he could barely read Russian. When Kot suggested the appointment of a professional diplomat from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sikorski replied:

> Nobody in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs wants to go, I don't know whether they all solidly oppose the pact; or whether they're afraid. Sosnkowski . . . has become the biggest opponent of the treaty and has left the Government.

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[1]Alexandr Y. Bogomolov, previously Soviet Ambassador to Vichy France. He also became Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentary to the Czechoslovak, the Yugoslav, the Norwegian and the Greek Governments-in-Exile.

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> I have no one. Even if I forced one of our diplomats to go to Moscow, what certainty should I have that he would follow my political line . . . ? There's no help for it, you've got to agree. . . .[1]

Kot agreed, but explained that he would need time to organize.

Sikorski's choice of Commander of the Polish Army in the Soviet Union was Lieutenant-General Stanisław Haller, or if he could not be found, Major-General Władysław Anders. Since Haller was missing,[2] Anders became Commander (August 2). Anders was selected because of his seniority, his reputation for bravery and enterprise, his knowledge of the Russian mentality obtained during his service in the Russian Army in World War I and his familiarity with the present situation in the Soviet Union.[3] In the September campaign of 1939 Anders had commanded a cavalry unit and was severely wounded. He was captured by Soviet forces and imprisoned, first in Lwów and later in Lubianka. As a prisoner, he was both severely beaten and offered a post in the Red Army.[4]

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In accord with the Treaty's first Article of the Protocol, on August 12 the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet decreed:

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[1]Stanisław Kot, Conversations with the Kremlin and Dispatches from Russia, trans. H. C. Stevens (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), pp. xii-xiii.

[2]Haller had been interned at Starobielsk and was one of the officers liquidated in spring, 1940. The Crime of Katyn: Facts and Documents, p. 19.

[3]If Sikorski did have any political motive for his choice it was Anders' opposition to Piłsudski in 1926 and his subsequent aloofness from politics.

[4]Anders, op. cit., p. 18.

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> An amnesty is granted to all Polish citizens on Soviet territory at present deprived of freedom as prisoners of war or on other grounds.[1]

The decree precipitated a long and crucial debate over the tangled question of conflicting definitions of citizenship--a debate, which was directly tied to the very sensitive issue of Polish-Soviet frontiers. Although the problem was blurred during the first months after the restoration of diplomatic relations by the wartime emergency and the Soviet Government's apparent uncertainty as to how much support the Poles would receive from their Western Allies in the dispute, from the very start the Soviet and Polish Governments espoused radically different interpretations of what constituted a citizen of their respective nations. This difference would eventually affect profoundly the former inhabitants of eastern Poland held in the depths of the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Government rested its case on the Citizenship of the U.S.S.R. Act (August 19, 1938). Article 3 states:

> Aliens, of whatever nationality or race, can acquire the citizenship of the USSR at their own request by a decision of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR or the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the republic or the territory in which they reside.[2]

Since the inhabitants of the Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia had expressed their desire to be admitted to the Soviet

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[1] GSHI, A.II 49/Sow./3, "Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR granting amnesty to Polish citizens deprived of their freedom on the territory of the USSR (August 12)."

[2] DPSR, I, 541.

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Union through elections for "Popular Assemblies" in October, 1939, the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. issued decrees incorporating Western Ukraine (November 1, 1939) and Western Byelorussia (November 2, 1939) into the Soviet Union and the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet granted Soviet citizenship to all local inhabitants (November 29, 1939).[1] Therefore, all the territory occupied by the Soviet Union in September, 1939 had become an integral part of the Soviet Union and all its inhabitants had become Soviet citizens.

The Polish Government based its case on entirely different principles. First, it rejected the elections of October 1939, as being held under duress and consequently invalid. Then, it referred to certain fundamental concepts of international law. Article 45, Section III of the Fourth Hague Convention of 1907 states: "It is forbidden to compel the population of occupied territory to swear allegiance to the hostile Power."[2] In addition, it was considered contrary to international law to impose naturalization upon individuals against their will.[3] Finally, all territory between the Curzon Line and the Riga Line was recognized as an integral part of the

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[1] Supra, pp. 70-71.

[2] The Proceedings of the Hague Peace Conferences: The Conference of 1907 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1920), I, 630.

[3] Max Sørensen, Manual of Public International Law (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1968), p. 478; "In re Rau," Annual Digest of Public International Law Cases, 1931-2, Case No. 124.

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Polish State by the Soviet Government at the time of the signing of the Treaty of Riga (March 18, 1921), by Conferences of Allied Ambassadors (March 15, 1923) and by the United States Government (April 5, 1923). And Poland had never renounced her claim to the territories. Therefore, the Poles concluded, all Polish nationals on August 31, 1939, whatever be their ethnic background--Polish, Ukrainian, Jewish or Byelorussian--retained their Polish citizenship, and the territory between the Curzon Line and the Riga Line was legally Polish.

In addition to these abstract, legalistic arguments, there were also the explosive emotional arguments based on history: the benefits which the Poles felt that all the inhabitants of the disputed territories would derive from the superior Polish and western civilization which would flow from Polish rule as it had in the past. On the Russian side, there was the ideal of completing the collection of the Russian peoples under a single political roof which had begun in the fifteenth century. No doubt, Stalin also calculated that the annexation to the Soviet Union of all adjacent territories with a Ukrainian population would end forever all talk of a "Ukrainian Piedmont." But both Stalin and Sikorski were realists. And as realists, they knew that both the ultimate fate of the disputed territories and the question of the citizenship of the various peoples who inhabited the region would not be decided by subtle legal logic, the true justice of historical claims or the free choice of the people involved, but by military and political

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power as had been the story in 1918-20.

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The first prominent person Sikorski actually sent to Moscow was Major-General Zygmunt Bohusz-Szyszko, the leader of the Polish Military Mission (August 2, 1941). It was his responsibility to prepare a draft military convention. When the Polish Military Mission met Soviet leaders, they discovered that the Soviets did not envision an army on the scale that the Polish Government did. The Soviet Government were more concerned with putting a Polish unit into battle as quickly as possible for propaganda value. A token Polish force fighting against Germany would go far to discredit Hitler's claim to be conducting a crusade for European civilization against Bolshevism. But in 1941 the leaders of the international proletarian movement found themselves fighting alone against a German Army containing token contingents from many European nationalities. Said one outspoken Soviet military chief, "We are not concerned with your five, ten or fifteen divisions, we have hundreds of our own. If we start to arm your divisions an equal number of ours will have to go unarmed."[1]

The Polish-Soviet Military Agreement of August 14 was rather vague because neither side could produce reliable figure or was certain how large the Polish Army would be. Its salient points were:

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[1]Roman Umiastowski, Poland, Russia and Great Britain, 1941-1945 (London: Hollis & Carter, 1946), p. 29.

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2. . . .
e) during the entire period of common operations, it will be subordinated operationally to the High Command of the USSR. In respect of organization and personnel it will remain under the authority of the Commander-in-Chief of the Polish Armed Forces, who will coordinate the orders and regulations concerning organization and personnel with the High Command of the USSR through the Commander of the Polish Army on the territory of the USSR.

3. The Commander of the Polish Army on the territory of the USSR will be appointed by the Commander-in-Chief of the Polish Armed Forces; the candidate for this appointment to be approved by the Government of the USSR.

. . . . . .

6. The formation of Polish units will be carried out in localities indicated by the High Command of the USSR. Officers and other ranks will be called from among Polish citizens on the territory of the USSR by conscription and voluntary enlistment. Draft boards will be established with the participation of USSR authorities in localities indicated by them.

7. Polish units will be moved to the front only after they are fully ready for action. In principle they will operate in groups not smaller than divisions and will be used in accordance with the operational plans of the High Command of the USSR.

. . . . . .

12. Armament, equipment, uniforms, motor transport, etc. will be provided as far as possible by
a) the Government of the USSR from their own resources,
b) the Polish Government from supplies granted on the basis of Lend-Lease. . . .

13. Expenditures connected with the organization, equipment and maintenance of the Polish Army on the territory of the USSR will be met from credits provided by the Government after the end of the war.[1]

Sikorski demanded from Bohusz-Szyszko that article 2e be changed so as to leave no doubt that the only point dealing with personnel in which the Soviet High Command would have a say was the approval of the appointment of the Commander, and Article 7 be changed so that it would be clear that the Polish Army would

[1] GSHI, A.XII. 22/30.I, "Polish-Soviet Military Agreement (August 14)."

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fight only as a single unit. On September 10 Soviet Deputy Chief of Staff, Major-General A. P. Panfilov informed Bohusz-Szyszko that the Soviet Government officially agreed to these changes.[1]

Kot's departure took longer than had been anticipated even though Cripps and General Mason Macfarlane were pressing for the speedy arrival of a Polish Ambassador.[2] Sikorski took Eden's advice and sent Józef Retinger as Polish Chargé d'affaires to Moscow (August 12) because, after Sikorski, Retinger knew the most about the negotiations leading up to the Treaty of July 30, 1941.[3] Retinger's responsibilities were to make administrative arrangements for the formation of the Polish Army and to secure consular protection for all deportees. When he arrived in Moscow (August 13) he met Anders, Cripps, General Bohusz-Szyszko, and five or six other prominent Poles who had been released.[4]

The Soviet leaders welcomed Retinger with a massive reception and treated him warmly. He met Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Andrei A. Vyshinsky, on August 14. He explain

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[1]General Sikorski Historical Institute (GSHI), Collection of General Anders (KGA), 7b, "Report from Major-General Bohusz-Szyszko to General Sikorski on steps taken in order to obtain a proper interpretation of Articles 2 and 7 of the Polish-Soviet Military Agreement (September 11)."

[2]DPSR, I, 582.

[3]Pomian, op. cit., Chap. XI, p. 23.

[4]Ibid., Chap. XI, p. 26; p. 30.

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the Polish Government's desiderata: the prompt release of all Polish nationals, and Soviet support of large scale welfare action to be undertaken by the Polish Government. He said the Soviet Government could show its good will by having its local officials assist in the registration of Polish deportees, the classification for military service and the operation of medical boards. Vyshinsky assured Retinger that, "although he could not discuss details, the Soviet Government would take a positive view of these problems."[1]

Retinger found that during the first week the Soviet authorities were slow in releasing prisoners because lesser Soviet officials needed Polish labor to fulfill their own responsibilities.[2] He wrote a note (August 22) to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs (NKID) in which he reiterated Polish demands. He asked for the appointment of Polish men of trust among the deportees to register Polish deportees and to inform the Embassy. In addition Retinger requested that Polish citizens be assigned only to labor for which they were physically fit, and that those unfit for work should be directed to welfare agencies. Finally he suggested the creation of mixed Polish-Soviet commissions at the local level to work out particular

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[1]GSHI, PRM, 41/4, "A Conversation between Chargé d'affaires Retinger and Deputy Commissar Vyshinsky on the fulfilment of the Polish-Soviet Agreement of July 30, 1941 (August 14)."

[2]Sometimes Soviet officials forced prominent Poles to sign a declaration that they were spies as a condition of their release only to have the documents used to prolong the Poles' incarceration. Pomian, op. cit., Chap. XI, pp. 28-29.

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problems.[1] In a conversation with Retinger (August 24) Vyshinsky agreed to speed up the release of Polish deportees.[2] On August 28 the NKID informed Retinger that orders had been given to free Polish citizens, that they would receive free transportation and money for the journey, that they were free to move or to stay where they were and that the Soviet Government would not oppose the appointment of men of trust.[3]

Anders had his first official conference with Soviet military officials on August 16, 1941. General Panfilov told him that there were only about 20,000 prisoners of war and 1,000 officers, plus an undetermined number of Polish citizens in Siberia and the Urals.[4] At the second meeting (August 19) Panfilov gave Soviet permission for the formation of two divisions of infantry and one reserve regiment. The Polish headquarters would be at Buzuluk, in the region of the middle Volga, about 600 miles west-south-west of Moscow and the two divisions would be located nearby. The Polish units were to be ready for action by October 1. Mixed Polish-Soviet Commissions would be sent

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[1]GSHI, PRM, 41/2, "Note from Chargé d'affaires Retinger to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs on the application of the Polish-Soviet Agreement of July 30, 1941 (August 22)."

[2]Pomian, op. cit., Chap. XI, p. 29.

[3]GSHI, PRM, 41/2, "Pro-memoria of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs in connection with the Note of Chargé d'affaires Retinger, dated August 22, 1941 (August 28)."

[4]GSHI, A.XII. 30/18.4, "Protocol No. 1 of the Polish-Soviet military conference (August 16)."

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to prisoner-of-war camps.[1]

Kot arrived in Moscow on September 4. His orders were to co-operate in the formation of the Polish Army, to guarantee its effective use against Germany in spite of possible anti-Soviet feelings, and to assist in protecting it against Soviet propaganda. Among his chief responsibilities as Ambassador was the organization of a system of social assistance for all persons who had held Polish citizenship on September 16, 1939. There was to be no compromise on the question of citizenship: "Any other interpretation is quite inadmissible for us if only because it would mean the acceptance of a well-known Soviet interpretation of the agreement of 30th July, 1941." The protection and assistance of Polish citizens was to be concentrated in the Consular Department of the Embassy, so that welfare agents on the spot would have diplomatic immunity.[2] The Embassy was to learn how many people there were to be released, to prepare lists of names, to sound out the Soviet Government for a loan to finance the welfare system, to try to have its people resettled in more tolerable regions, and to inform the Polish Government of the kinds of assistance needed.[3]

Kot met Anders, Cripps, Molotov (September 8), Mikhail I Kalinin, the President of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet

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[1] Ibid., "Protocol No. 2 of the Polish-Soviet military conference (August 19)."

[2] GSHI, A.II 49/Sow./6, "General Instructions for the Ambassador of the Republic of Poland in the USSR (August 28)."

[3] Rozek, op. cit., pp. 70-71.

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(September 9) and Vyshinsky (September 10) during his first week. Because of the complexity of the problems involving deportees, the Polish Embassay suggested the formation of a Polish-Soviet Mixed Commission to settle details. It would consist of a member of the NKID, a member of the NKVD and two members of the Polish Embassy staff. On September 9 the commission met for the first time. The Poles put forward their points of view and requests, but the Soviet replies were vague. The Commission soon stopped meeting because even the most trivial questions had to be handled through normal diplomatic channels. As early as October 14 Kot told Vyshinsky:

> . . . The Commission is a dead institution and will settle nothing. The Soviet side doesn't include anyone who could make a decision on even the tiniest point.[1]

The Poles were learning quickly that all decisions had to go to the top.

Kot found that the Embassy could not deal with its work because it did not have sufficient staff. By mid-September it was receiving over 1,000 letters and telegrams daily and could not even open them all.[2] When Kot asked Vyshinsky for permission to enlarge his staff (September 22), Vyshinsky said: "There is a state of war in Moscow. Arrivals of all kinds must be restricted as much as possible. . . ."[3] Neither Kot nor Cripps could obtain Soviet approval for setting up consular posts throughout the Soviet Union because Soviet leaders equated a

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[1]Kot, op. cit., p. 68.

[2]Ibid., p. 19.

[3]Ibid., p. 36.

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consular service with espionage.[1] The Polish Embassy was, in fact, still cut off from the Polish deportees.

It was estimated that during the first month after the Supreme Soviet decreed amnesty 200,000 Poles were released, and 150,000 were released during the following month.[2] They all told the same story: each had been released individually and there were still many more Poles held in captivity because the local Soviet authorities needed their labor. Usually the healthier prisoners were detained and the feeble freed, as they were less productive. The state of the released prisoners' health was poor after up to twenty-two months of insufficient nutrition, overwork in severe climate and morale-draining, slave-labor conditions. It was estimated that between 15 and 20 per cent of the Polish deportees perished before December, 1941.[3] These were mainly children, the aged and the infirm. The number of released prisoners indicated the possibility of forming an army much larger than two divisions. On the day after his arrival Kot wrote to Sikorski (September 5): ". . . Anders is contemplating bringing the strength up to 100,000 under arms. . . ."[4]

The Polish Government's position was complicated by a rift which grew between Anders and Kot. Both men were subject to Sikorski in different capacities, but neither had de facto authority over the other. Kot, the Ambassador, was subject to

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[1] Ibid., p. 39.

[2] Bronislaw Kusnierz, Stalin and the Poles: An Indictment of Soviet Leaders (London: Hollis & Carter, 1949), p. 87.

[3] Rozek, op. cit., p. 77.

[4] Kot, op. cit., p. 2.

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Sikorski as Prime Minister; Anders, Commander of the Polish Army in the Soviet Union, was subject to Sikorski as his Commander-in-Chief. At their first meeting (September 5) Kot, apparently on his own iniative, asked that all former officers of Piłsudski's Legions be excluded from the new Army. Anders made it clear that if they were to remain on good terms Kot was not to interfere with military matters. A few days later Professor Władysław Grabski, a former member of the opposition who had just been released, together with a member of the Embassy's staff came to Anders and made the same request.[1] Although Kot's secret correspondence with Sikorski indicates that he liked and respected Anders, Anders resented Kot's interference and thought that he was obsequious to Soviet leaders. Gradually the gap widened. The existence of two separate chains of command (civil and military) produced questions of jurisdiction. Geography was also a cause of misunderstandings: the Polish Embassy and the Polish Military Headquarters were separated by a great distance, and quick communication between them, especially in wartime conditions, was poor to non-existent. Finally, Soviet leaders were quick to see the difference and played upon it whenever it suited their purposes.

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By mid-September the military situation on the Eastern Front was extremely serious. Leningrad's last rail link had been cut (August 30). The Battle of Kiev ended on September 17

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[1]Anders, op. cit., pp. 61-62.

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with the capture of large numbers of Soviet forces. The Germans were preparing for their offensive against Moscow. Since Allied leaders were uncertain about Soviet intentions but hoped to keep the Soviet Union in the war at all costs, they hastened to send a joint mission to Moscow.

The British team was headed by Lord Beaverbrook, Minister of Supply and a member of the War Cabinet, and included General Sir Hastings Ismay, Chief of the General Staff to the Ministry of Defence. The Americans were led by Roosevelt's personal representative, Averell Harriman. In London before their departure it was decided, in Harriman's words, to "give and give and give, with no expectation of any return, with no thought of a quid pro quo."[1]

The question of Lend-Lease aid to the Polish Army in the Soviet Union was of paramount interest to Sikorski. Roosevelt had promised Lend-Lease aid for the Polish Armed Forces when Sikorski had visited Washington in the spring.[2] On September 17 Sikorski wrote a pro-memoria to Churchill in which he explained that Anders hoped to organize a Polish Army of four to six divisions and all that was lacking was equipment, especially heavy equipment.[3] On September 19 he put his case before Harriman.

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[1]William H. Standley and Arthur A. Ageton, Admiral Ambassador to Russia (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1955), p. 63.

[2]Ciechanowski, op. cit., p. 22.

[3]GSHI, A.XII. I/56, "Pro-memoria sent by General Sikorski to Mr. Churchill relative to the proposed formation of the Polish Forces in the USSR (September 17)."

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Harriman said he could make no promises[1] and he asked Roosevelt how to deal with Sikorski's requests.[2] In reply to the Polish petition, Welles read the contents of an American memorandum to the Polish Ambassador, Jan Ciechanowski.[3]

> We feel that it would be preferable to deal with the needs of the Polish forces in Moscow direct with the Poles while you are in the Soviet Union for two reasons: (1) We have already decided that Poland is to receive the benefit of Lend-Lease appropriations. Such a decision has not yet been made with regard to Russia. It would therefore be difficult to furnish through Lend-Lease arms and equipment to the Poles through Russia. (2) It is believed that it would be in conformity with our policy of maintaining so far as possible Polish prestige and influence in Eastern Europe for us to deal direct with the Poles with regard to the supplying of the Polish forces in Russia since such direct negotiations would be likely to enhance the prestige and stress the individuality of those forces now as well as in the future.
>
> Of course, any negotiations which you may have with the Poles should be carried on in cooperation with and the consent of the British and Russians since both . . . must share the responsibility for the transport and delivery of such supplies. . . .[4]

The key person was Beaverbrook. He was a newspaper magnate and the most pro-Soviet member of the War Cabinet. On September 22 Sikorski met Beaverbrook, who had a reputation for being critical of Poland, and asked him if he knew of the pro-

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[1]GSHI, A.II. 49/Sow./4, "Notes on the conversation between General Sikorski and Mr. Harriman on the supplies of equipment for the Polish Army in the USSR to be demanded from the Anglo-American Mission at the Moscow conference (September 19)."

[2]Foreign Relations of the United States. Diplomatic Papers, 1941, I, 253-54.

[3]Ciechanowski, op. cit., p. 56.

[4]Foreign Relations of the United States. Diplomatic Papers, 1941, I, 253-54.

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memoria to Churchill. Beaverbrook said he had. Sikorski asked him if Kot and Anders could present Polish needs to the conference. Although Beaverbrook did not commit himself he spoke of his changed attitude towards the "New Poland" after the Battle of Britain.[1]

The Beaverbrook-Harriman Mission arrived in the Soviet capital on September 28 at the beginning of the Battle of Moscow. Beaverbrook dominated the meetings with the Soviet leaders. Cripps did not attend the proceedings and was only partly informed of what had transpired.[2] Beaverbrook, the capitalist par excellence and man of power, got on with Stalin in a way in which Cripps, the intelleltual socialist, never did. Beaverbrook became convinced that"Stalin will fight on, come what may. . . ."[3]

During the meetings Stalin presented a massive list of Soviet needs: airplanes, tanks, artillery, ammunition and a vast array of raw materials for war industries. The total value was $1,000,000,000.[4] Beaverbrook agreed to everything without even receiving in return information about Soviet needs and stocks--information which was asked of every other nation seeking Lend-Lease aid.[5] The British and American delegates did not

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[1]GSHI, PRM, 39-b, "The record of a conversation between General Sikorski and Lord Beaverbrook (September 22)."

[2]Estorick, op. cit., p. 284.

[3]Eden, The Reckoning, p. 387.

[4]Alexander Werth, Russia at War, 1941-1945 (London: Pan Books Ltd., 1965), p. 275.

[5]Feis, op. cit., p. 17.

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promise to deliver the goods, but said that they would "give aid to the transportation of these materials to the Soviet Union and will help with the delivery."[1] This was to be a source of future discord because when the Western Allies failed to deliver the goods Stalin accused them of a breach of faith. On October 30 Roosevelt cabled his approval of the list to Stalin.[2]

Anders and Bohusz-Szyszko arrived in Moscow on September 25 and presented a list of Polish needs to the Head of the British Military Mission, General Mason Macfarlane. The Poles took no part in the above conferences which were solely with the Soviet leaders. Soviet demands had greatly exceeded what had been anticipated. Only shortly before the departure of the leading participants and on the strong insistence of Kot, did Kot, Anders and Bohusz-Szyszko finally meet Beaverbrook, Harriman, Cripps, the American Ambassador, Lawrence A. Steinhardt, the British Generals Ismay, Mason Macfarlane, Gordon MacReady and the American, General James Burns. In spite of the assurance given in Washington and to the surprise of the British generals who offered sympathetic arguments in favor of the Polish requests Beaverbrook behaved contemptuously towards the Poles and said that it would be up to the Soviet Union to allocate supplies for the Polish Army.[3]

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Sherwood, op. cit., I, 398.

[3] Kot, op. cit., pp. 42-44.

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Kot describes Harriman's intervention as "timid."[1] When Harriman returned to Washington Ciechanowski asked him why, in the light of Roosevelt's instructions, he had not acted more decisively. Harriman explained that he was impressed by British fears that Germany would break the Soviet Army, and that they wanted to impress on Stalin that the Allies wanted to give the Soviet Union their full material and moral support.[2]

The consequences of the Beaverbrook-Harriman Mission for Sikorski's position were far-reaching. The supplying of the Polish Army in the Soviet Union depended on Stalin's good will and Stalin needed all the material given to him by the Allies for Soviet troops. Secondly, the behavior of the Mission indicated that the Polish question was only of secondary importance to the Allies. Stalin therefore realized that he would have much more freedom to deal with the Poles as he willed.

* * * *

October was a critical month on the Eastern Front. Despite stiff Soviet resistance, the Germans were closing in on Moscow from several directions. The guns could be heard from the city. There was no continuous front. The Luftwaffe was master of the air. Pressure mounted as the Red Army and masses of civilians retreated eastward. On October 15 the Embassies were moved from Moscow to Kuibyshev, 500 miles to the west-south-west. On October 16 German tanks reached the suburbs of

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[1] Ibid., p. 43.

[2] Ciechanowski, op. cit., p. 64.

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Moscow. On the same day a panic broke out among the inhabitants of the Soviet capital and everyone who could, tried to get out. Order was maintained by the NKVD. The announcement that Stalin was still in Moscow greatly strengthened morale.[1] A state of siege was proclaimed on October 20. Between October 18 and early November the Germans made little progress because of Soviet counter-attacks, the Russian mud, and German supply difficulties. The second German offensive began on November 16 and lasted for three weeks, but this time the Muscovites were better prepared psychologically.

Elsewhere along the Front the Germans captured Odessa (October 16), Kharkhov (October 24), Rostov (November 19) and completed encirclement of Leningrad early in November. The loss of the Ukraine was a disaster, because Soviet heavy industry was largely concentrated in that Republic. It was also the most important food-producing region. In spite of the evacuation of entire factories east of the Urals, Soviet war output dipped drastically. On the other side, by December 10 the Germans had suffered 775,078 casualties, or 24.22 per cent of their men on the Eastern Front.[2]

As the Germans ripped into the heart of the USSR, Stalin's notes to Churchill became increasingly acrimonious. He desperately needed a Second Front to relieve the pressure. Churchill knew that an attempted invasion of France could only end in a catas-

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[1] Werth, op. cit., p. 232.

[2] Ibid., p. 249.

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trophe. On November 7 Churchill offered to send General Archibald Wavell, the British Commander-in-Chief in the Middle East and Lieutenant-General Bernard Paget, the British Commander-in Chief designate for the Far East, to help clarify military matters.[1] Stalin's reply was rude:

> I agree with you that we need clarity, which at the moment is lacking in relations between the U.S.S.R. and Great Britain. The unclarity is due to two circumstances: first, there is no definite understanding between our two countries concerning war aims and plans for the post-war organisation of peace; secondly, there is no treaty between the U.S.S.R. and Great Britain on mutual military aid in Europe against Hitler. Until understanding is reached on these two main points, not only will there be no clarity in Anglo-Soviet relations, but . . . there will be no mutual trust. . . .
>
> If General Wavell and General Paget . . . come to Moscow to conclude agreements on the main points stated above, I shall be willing . . . to meet them and consider these points. If, however, the mission . . . is to be restricted to information and examination of secondary issues, then I see no need for keeping them from their duties, nor can I my self go out of my way to engage in talks of that nature.

Even at the most critical moment of military operations Stalin was already thinking of the future peace. He went on to ask why Great Britain had not declared war on Finland, Hungary and Rumania which had joined Germany in the attack on the Soviet Union. Then he posed the question, "Can it be that the purpose is to demonstrate that there is disagreement between the U.S.S.R. and Great Britain?" In the final paragraph he complained that material sent to the Soviet Union had been badly packed.[2]

Churchill comments on this message:

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[1] Stalin's Correspondence, I, 31-32.

[2] Ibid., pp. 33-34.

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> Even Stalin seems after a while to have felt that he had gone too far in the tone of this communication, which I had not attempted to answer. The silence was expressive. . . .[1]

Eden gave Maisky an interim reply (November 12), explaining that the War Cabinet had been "surprised and pained" by the tone and contents of Stalin's message and that it had raised some very large issues. Maisky said that Stalin was under great strain. Later (November 20) Maisky told Eden that Stalin had not meant to cause offense by his message.[2]

On November 21 Churchill sent a note to Stalin in which he proposed sending Eden, accompanied by military experts, to discuss both the conduct of the war and war aims. Such a visit was of great interest to the Polish Government. The willingness to accept Soviet territorial gains since 1939 was gaining ground among British circles of power. Although nothing official had been said, the Curzon Line had always been widely accepted among the British, and the subject of Poland's eastern frontier was considered an open question. The British attitude was causing alarm among Polish civil and military personnel.[3] When the Americans learned of the purpose of Eden's visit, Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, informed the British Foreign Minister (December 5, 1941) that the United States rested its policies on

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[1]Churchill, The Grand Alliance, p. 470.

[2]Woodward, op. cit., pp. 159-60.

[3]GSHI, PRM, 75, "A Study by the Second Bureau [Military Intelligence] of the General Staff on the attitudes of the British towards Poland's eastern frontiers (November 17)."

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the principles of the Atlantic Charter and that "it is evident that no commitments as to individual countries should be entered into at this time."[1]

While Stalin and Churchill were alternating sharp notes and sulky silences in secret, the Anglo-American press and public opinion grew increasingly enthusiastic about the Soviet Union with the prolongation of Soviet resistence during the autumn and early winter of 1941. In Great Britain former hostility had been almost forgotten. In the United States opinion was more divided. The United States was still at peace. Whereas the British were separated from German panzer units by twenty miles of Channel and daily faced the prospects of air raids, the United States had the Atlantic Ocean as a shield. American society was much more heterogeneous than British society. American isolationists still opposed involvement, particularly alongside the Soviet Union; conservatives continued to oppose Bolshevism; and many American Roman Catholics were dogmatically opposed to Communist ideology. Polish Americans, who were largely Democrats, were nervously concerned about Polish-Soviet relations. Nonetheless, there was a steady growth in admiration for the Soviet Union, especially among liberals, and American editorial opinion generally accepted the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact as an effort by Stalin to gain time.[2]

On the anniversay of the Bolshevik Revolution (November 7)

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[1] Foreign Relations of the United States. Diplomatic Papers, 1941, I, 195.

[2] William H. McNeill, America, Britain and Russia (London: Oxford University Press, 1953), p. 20.

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Roosevelt informed Lend-Lease Administrator, Edward L. Stettiniu that

> the defense of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is vital to the defense of the United States. I therefore authorize and direct you to take immediate action to transfe defense supplies to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics under the Lend-Lease Act to carry out the terms of my letter of October 30, 1941 to Premier Stalin.[1]

* * * *

After the Beaverbrook-Harriman Mission there was a general deterioration of Polish-Soviet relations. Kot reported to Sikorski (October 14):

> For some time we have been conscious of a complete hold-up in our affairs. This has been evident since the beginnin of the Moscow Conference, when doubtless they [the Soviet leaders] became convinced that the Allies are not supporting us.[2]

The release of Polish deportees virtually ceased. On October 6 Vyshinsky informed Kot:

> We have issued regulations for counteracting the mass unorganized movement of Polish people. For instance, in Molotov region we have stopped the mass movement of Poles, as we have already informed you.[3]

The Embassy had not been informed.[4]

Efforts to provide welfare were made almost impossible by the Soviet Government. There were a limited number of officers to direct military groups to the proper termini and to care for them, but local Soviet officials often frustrated their

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[1] Foreign Relations of the United States. Diplomatic Papers, 1941, I, 857.

[2] Kot, op. cit., pp. 69-70.

[3] Ibid., p. 49.

[4] Ibid.

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activities. The Soviet Government continued its refusal to discuss the formation of a consular system and rejected a plan for forming welfare committees among the deportees themselves. It did agree to the sending out of delegates, for whom the Polish Ambassador was responsible, as well as the selection of men of trust from the deportees to report on the needs of Polish citizens. The powers of the delegates were limited. The Soviet Government adopted a favorable attitude only to the delegates sent to Novosibirsk and Kazakhstan. The delegate in Archangel had the right to supervise the transport of materials arriving in the port, but he was not allowed to have contact with the numerous Polish citizens in the region.[1] The Embassy still had very little direct contact with Polish citizens.

Since the Polish Government had no resources to finance its welfare schemes, Kot approached the Soviet Government for a loan (September 20).[2] At first the request was refused. On November 5 Vyshinsky offered a loan of 3,000,000 roubles for the aid of the civilian population. It was only about 3 per cent of the estimated needs and Kot refused "this butt end."[3] With the onset of their third Russian winter, Polish civilians faced bleak prospects.

There was confusion over the locating of the freed Poles. Once released, where were they to go? The drive from distant parts of the Soviet Union, and especially from the north, to

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[1] Ibid., p. 98.

[2] Ibid., p. 33.

[3] Ibid., p. 100.

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join the forming army created a demographic avalanche with which the over-taxed Soviet communications system and bureaucracy were not prepared to deal. About mid-October, Soviet officials started to direct the Poles to Uzbekistan. As a result of inadequate preparations, added to the wartime dislocation, local Soviet officials were unable to cope with the starving throngs which were arriving. They distributed them in inhabited arid zones where Poles faced difficult working conditions and near starvation.[1] The Soviet Government was not ready or able to render them any special support.[2]

With reference to the latter point, it must be pointed out in fairness to the Soviet Government that Kot was making requests for special treatment of his compatriots at a critical juncture in Soviet history. The Germans were closing in on Moscow. Confusion reigned in many sectors of the Soviet administration as the center--towards which all Soviet bureaucrats looked for direction--was almost totally engrossed in saving Moscow and perhaps the Soviet State itself. Kot, in effect, was asking for material privileges for Poles which the masses of stunned, starving and oppressed Soviet people themselves were not receiving.

The thorny question of citizenship also began to appear. At first, Soviet actions were comparatively subtle and restrained. Soon after amnesty was granted, the NKVD tried to foment discord between Jewish and Christian Poles by recalling the past wrongs

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[1] Ibid., pp. 97-98. [2] Ibid., p. 91.

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which the Jews had suffered at the hands of the Christians. But most Jews refused Soviet citizenship and insisted on their right to join the Polish Army. Within the Polish Army some right-wing, anti-Semitic Polish officers and a small group of Zionists worked for the formation of separate Jewish units. Anders rejected the scheme and strictly forbade any manifestation of anti-Semitism. After their release the prominent Bund leaders, Henryk Ehrlich and Viktor Alter, also opposed the entire idea.[1] They expressed their loyalty to the Polish Government-in-Exile and asked to be represented in the Rada Narodowa.[2]

Following the Beaverbrook-Harriman Mission the Soviet Government became more overt in their actions. The Polish Embassy received information that the War Commissar of Kazakhstan, General Alexandr S. Shcherbakov, had issued orders that Polish citizens of Ukrainian, Byelorussian and Jewish origin were to be inducted into the Soviet Army. When a Polish representative protested, the Soviet official explained that he was acting on orders from central authorities. Only Polish citizens who were ethnically Polish were to be given travel permits; all others were to be refused. The Polish Embassy sent a note of protest to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs (November 10).[3]

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[1] Ibid., p. 112.

[2] Ibid., p. 60.

[3] GSHI, A. XII, 22/30.2, "Note from the Polish Embassy in Kuibyshev to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs concerning the conscription by the Red Army of Polish citizens of Ukrainian, White Ruthenian and Jewish origin (November 10)."

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Anders too was facing enormous difficulties in organizing the Polish Army. Great numbers flowed into his camps. He had 35,000 by mid-October,[1] 50,000 by the end of the month[2] and 60,000 by mid-November.[3] The flood continued. Whereas the Soviet Government had thought in terms of several token units in August, the Poles were anticipating ten divisions by November.[4]

Anders had many rank-and-file soldiers, but he was puzzled and alarmed by the absence of officers. He knew of the existence of the camps at Kozielsk, Starobielsk and Ostashkov and their mysterious break-up from the few survivors who reached him. The matter was touched on obliquely during the first meeting between Anders and Major-General A. P. Panfilov (August 16), when the latter told Anders that there were only 1,000 officers. During his meeting with Vyshinsky on October 7 Kot explicitly asked: "In round figures 9,500 officers were imprisoned in Poland and deported into the U.S.S.R.; but in the army we have only 2,000. What happened to the 7,500?"[5] Vyshinsky was embarrassed and denied the figures. The question was repeated on various occasions during the following months. When Kot met Stalin (November 14), he presented the Soviet leader with a list of officers known to be held in the camps. Stalin

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[1]Władysław Pobóg-Malinowski, Najnowsza Historia Polityczna Polski, 1939-1945 (A Modern Political History of Poland, 1939-1945) (London: Gryf Publishers, 1960), III, 202.

[2]Umiastowski, Poland, Russian and Great Britain, p. 34.

[3]Ibid., p. 41.

[4]Ibid., p. 34.

[5]Kot, op. cit., p. 51.

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made a telephone call to inquire about the Polish officers. After a few minutes the telephone rang, Stalin answered, listened for a while, replaced the receiver and continued his discussion without returning to the question of the officers.[1] Other alarming fragments of information were appearing. The Polish Government knew of a conversation which occurred in October, 1941 between Polish Lieutenant-Colonel Zygmunt Berling,[2] and NKVD chief, Laurenti P. Beria, and his deputy, V. N. Merkulov, on the possibility of forming a Polish Army to resist a German attack on the Soviet Union. When Berling said that the officers from Kozielsk and Starobielsk would be necessary, Merkulov blurted out, "No, not these. We made a great mistake with them."[3]

Anders received almost no Soviet cooperation in arming his forces. As a result of the decisions made during the Beaverbrook-Harriman Mission he had to rely on Soviet good will. Stalin was not eager to have an independent, partly hostile, army within his country. Also, it cannot be stressed too strongly that these were desperate moments for the Soviet Union because it was fighting for its very life and needed all its resources for its own Army. Only one Polish division was partly

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[1] Ibid., pp. 112-14.

[2] Berling was one of the handful of Polish officers from the 400 who had escaped liquidation and who was willing to enlist in the Soviet Army before the German attack. Infra., pp. 345-46.

[3] The Crime of Katyn: Facts and Documents, pp. 96-97.

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equipped with light arms. On November 6 the Soviet Government informed Anders that the size of the Polish Army would be limited to 30,000 men and rations would be cut accordingly.[1]

Anders was not only concerned for his Army. Around the camps collected thousands of civilians--the families of soldiers, women, children, the old. The soldiers shared their meager rations with these civilians, especially with the children.

Since the Soviet Government was unable to equip the Polish Army, the alternative was its temporary withdrawal from the Soviet Union to the Middle East where Great Britain could supply its needs. On October 24 Churchill suggested to Sikorski that he discuss with Stalin the possibility of shifting the Polish Army either to Iran or to the northern shores of the Caspian Sea where the British could supply it.[2] At the same time Ciechanowski sent a memorandum to Roosevelt advocating a temporary withdrawal.[3] The Americans, like the British, favored

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[1]GSHS, KGA, 7-b, "Telegram from General Panfilov to Lieutenant-General Anders announcing the limitation of the Polish Army in the USSR to 30 thousand men (November 6)."

[2]GSHI, PRM, 39-b, "Note on the conversation between General Sikorski and Mr. Churchill on the defence of the Caucasus and the suggested transfer of the Polish Army in the USSR to the Caucasus or to the Southern border of the Caspian Sea (October 24)."

[3]GSHI, PRM, 41/3, "Note from Ambassador Ciechanowski to President Roosevelt concerning the stalemate in the formation of the Polish Army in the USSR and the suggestion of shifting it to Central Asia, with Memorandum (October 31)."

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the idea and attempted to intercede in Moscow.[1] On October 25 Sikorski asked Bogomolov, Ambassador to the Polish Government-in-Exile, if it would be possible to move the Polish Army to Iran or Astrakhan. Bogomolov said that the former was unacceptable because of the excessive strain it would put on railway facilities, obstructing the flow of war supplies.[2]

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In mid-October Sikorski decided to visit Moscow to settle outstanding difficulties personally. In addition to the issues already mentioned he had other motives. He was willing to approach Stalin in a spirit of good will which he hoped would be reciprocated. Sikorski could see that the desperate military situation was a partial cause of Soviet intransigence and he wanted to demonstrate his confidence in the Soviet Union's ability to resist.[3] When Kot told Vyshinsky of Sikorski's desire to visit Moscow, he explained the visit of the Polish Prime Minister could help offset German, anti-Soviet propaganda among Roman Catholics (October 14).[4] Sikorski also had in mind the strengthening of his own position by assuring the consolidation of a Polish Army in the Soviet Union under his Government.[5]

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[1] Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers, 1941, I, 258.

[2] GSHI, A. II, 49/Sow./4a, "Note on a conversation between Sikorski and Bogomolov (October 25)."

[3] Kot, op. cit., p. 64. [4] Ibid.

[5] Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers, 1941, I, 256.

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Kot asked Vyshinsky (October 14) and Molotov (October 22) if the Soviet Government would return Sikorski's sign of good will by acceeding to certain practical Polish desiderata before the Polish Prime Minister's arrival. On November 1 Kot sent his request to Molotov in a note. He asked for: (1) the speeding up of amnesty for all Polish citizens still held and an assurance that those who would not be enlisted in the Polish Army would be given suitable employment or means of subsistence; (2) the concentration of the great numbers of men who were showing up to serve in the Polish Army in areas where the British could supply them; (3) the evacuation of 15-20,000 Polish soldiers from the Soviet Union to Great Britain and Egypt.[1] Kot advised the Polish Government that if these requests were not met Sikorski's visit should be cancelled (November 2).[2]

Molotov answered the note on November 8. He reply stated that all Polish citizens had been released and had been given such aid as free transportation and financial allowances for the journey. As for the employment and care of Polish citizens not in the Army, ". . . the question should be settled in the same manner as in the case of Soviet citizens, without any special undertaking on the part of the Government of the

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[1]GSHI, A. 11., 49/Sow./3, "Note from Ambassador Kot to Commissar Molotov concerning the conditions of the intended journey of General Sikorski to the USSR and his suggestion of previous settlement of Polish requests connected with the execution of the Agreement of July 30, 1941 (November 1)."

[2]Kot, op. cit., pp. 88-89.

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USSR." The issue of which Polish citizens should be enrolled into the Polish Army was dependent on the Soviet-Polish Agreement of August 19, 1941.[1] This aspect of Molotov's reply would have limited the size of the Polish Army to only two infantry divisions and one reserve battalion and would prevent further recruiting. Molotov's note explained that the Soviet Government would be ready to take into consideration the relocation of Polish forces should any need arise and that there were no obstacles to the evacuation of 15-20,000 Polish soldiers from the Soviet Union to Great Britain and Egypt.[2]

When Kot read the Soviet note, he advised Sikorski to cancel his visit and he informed Soviet officials of his action.[3] In addition to, and independent of Kot's efforts, Roosevelt, through Harriman, sent a key message to Stalin, asking for a favorable settlement of the Polish question (November 7).[4]

Results came quickly. Vyshinsky summoned Kot to his office (November 12). The Soviet Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs promised to arrange an interview with Stalin whom foreigners had difficulties reaching in normal times. Two days later Kot was in Moscow for conversations with Stalin and Molotov.

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[1] Supra, p. 145.

[2] GSHI, PRM, 41/2, "Note from Commissar Molotov to Ambassador Kot concerning the journey of General Sikorski to the U.S.S.R." (November 8)."

[3] Kot, op. cit., p. xxvii.

[4] Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers, 1941, I, 258.

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During Kot's meeting with the Soviet dictator (November 14), Stalin agreed to raise the limit on the size of the Polish Army. He told the Polish Ambassador:

> . . . Will you please, Mr. Ambassador, keep in mind that we might be too short of arms and food supplies to supply the front, the reserves and the Polish army as well. We have many million under arms, and they must be fed. We can arm only two Polish divisions; one of them is ready now. I do not object to the formation on Soviet territory of five, six, seven Polish divisions, as many as you have serviceable men for, but, I repeat, we are carrying on a war, we are fighting on a long front, and we may become too short of material to supply this army with arms. The Poles must themselves try to find equipment and arms for these troops. . . .[1]

The following day Kot met Molotov (November 15). They discussed the planned distribution and employment of Polish civilians; material security for those not fit for army or labor, possibly in the form of a loan; transportation facilities for aid from abroad; and the development of Embassy delegations at places where Poles were concentrated.[2]

After his return from Moscow to Kuibyshev Kot wired Sikorski (November 16): "Atmosphere favourable, though few definite promises made. . . . Conclusion from both conversations the Premier's visit necessary. . . ."[3]

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[1]GSHI, PRM, 41/4, "Record of a conversation held in the Kremlin between Ambassador Kot and M. Stalin in the presence of Commissar Molotov on the building up of the Polish Army, the fate of the Polish population deported to the USSR and the release of Polish prisoners of war (November 14)."

[2]GSHI, PRM, 41/4, "Record of a conversation held in the Kremlin between Ambassador Kot and Commissar Molotov on the release of Polish citizens still detained in Soviet labor camps and on the Polish relief organization (November 15)."

[3]Kot, op. cit., p. 123.

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Having examined Kot's messages describing what had transpired in Moscow, Sikorski instructed the Polish Ambassador through Acting Foreign Minister Raczyński to advise the Soviet Government officially of the Polish Prime Minister's arrival in the Soviet Union at the end of November (November 19).[1]

Sikorski had decided to go in spite of the advice of Anders, Bohusz-Szyszko and the Polish Military Attaché, Major-General Romuald Wolikowski, who wanted him to wait until the Soviet Government showed its good will by clearing up some of the concrete issues between Poland and the Soviet Union. President Raczkiewicz and members of the Polish Government shared this view. Although criticism had been silenced after the initial success of the Treaty of July 30, 1941, it was increasing among Sikorski's opponents, who tended to be russophobes, because they felt that the Soviet Union was not fulfilling its commitments. If Sikorski succeeded in his mission, opposition among Polish émigré groups in Great Britain and the United States could again be silenced.[2]

* * * *

On the eve of Sikorski's arrival and during his stay in Moscow, the Soviet Government carried out three faits accomplis in an effort to soften him up. Each was a harbinger of issues which were to exacerbate Polish-Soviet relations and eventually to destroy Sikorski's policy of seeking good relations with the

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[1] Ibid., p. 126.

[2] Mitkiewicz, op. cit., p. 185.

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Soviet Union while maintaining Polish independence. They involved questions of citizenship, and implictly frontiers, and, in the embryonic form, the very legitimacy of the Polish Government-in-Exile as the true representative of the Polish people.

Sikorski arrived in Kuibyshev on November 30. On December 1 the NKID responded to the Polish Ambassador's note of November 10 which protested the induction into the Soviet Army of Polish nationals who were ethnically Ukrainian, Jewish and Byelorussian:[1] To Sikorski's chagrin the Soviet Government completely and emphatically rejected the Polish interpretation on the citizenship question:

> In conformance with the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the USSR of the 29th November, 1939, all citizens of the Western districts of the Ukrainian and White Russian S.S. Republics, which were in the territories of the above-mentioned districts, between the 1-2 November, 1939, in agreement with the Decree re citizenship of the USSR of the 19th August, 1939, acquired Soviet Citizenship. The readiness of the Soviet Government to recognize as Polish citizens, persons of Polish nationality inhabiting the above-mentioned districts till the 1-2 November, 1939, shows the good will and readiness to compromise of the Soviet Government, but it can in no case serve as a basis for the analogous recognition as Polish citizens, of persons of other nationalities, in particular, Ukrainian, White-Russian and Jewish; the question of a Polish-Soviet frontier is not yet settled and is liable to discussion in the future.[2]

Shortly before his interview with Stalin, Sikorski read an article in the December 2 issue of Izvestia entitled, "Listen

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[1] Supra, p. 162.

[2] GSHI, A. 11. 49/Sow/3, "Note from the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs in reply to the note of the Polish Embassy of November 10, 1941, concerning the conscription of Polish citizens of Ukrainian, White-Russian and Jewish origin by the Red Army (December 1)."

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Polish Brethran." It described the meeting of the "representatives of the Polish nation" held at Saratov on November 27. The participants were former members of the defunct Communist Party of Poland[1] and fellow travellers. The main speaker was Wanda Wasilewska, the wife of Alexander Korneychuk, a Ukrainian Communist and future Soviet Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs (1943-44). They voted to form a Union of Polish Patriots (UPP) on Soviet soil. Sikorski was furious, but when he realized it was only part of a Soviet plan to pressure him, he resolved to ignore such "Eastern" tactics and to continue his mission undisturbed.[2] Here was the Polish National Committee which Maisky had suggested in July, 1941,[3] and the nucleus of the future Soviet-sponsored Polish Government.

The loyalty of Bund leaders, Henryk Ehrlich and Wiktor Alter, as Jews, to the Polish Government-in-Exile, and their influence and activities among other Jews made them a nuisance from the Soviet point of view. Accordingly, on the same day that Stalin and Sikorski signed their Declaration of Friendship and Mutual Assistance (December 4, 1941), Ehrlich and Alter were re-arrested as German spies. This constituted still a third affront to the Polish view of the legal rights and standing of

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[1]The Communist Party of Poland was purged during the 1930's and finally dissolved in 1938. Cf. M. K. Dziewanowski, The Communist Party of Poland: An Outline History (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1959), pp. 146-54.

[2]Rozek, op. cit., p. 95.

[3]Supra, pp. 100-1.

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Polish nationals of non-Polish ethnic background. Again Sikorski was angry, but he realized the purpose of the Soviet action was to apply pressure on him and continued as planned.

* * * *

Sikorski brought with him to the Soviet Union his Chief of Staff, Major-General Tadeusz Klimecki, Józef Retinger and British Major Victor Cazalet. He spent two days in conference at Kuibyshev, especially with Ambassador Kot. Kot probably told him that Anders harbored personal ambitions, because Sikorski asked Anders, "People say you are my rival. Are you, and your soldiers my men?" When Anders assured him of his loyalty, Sikorski dropped the subject.[1]

On December 2 the Polish party flew from Kuibyshev to Moscow. In spite of their efforts to pressure him, the Soviet Government received Sikorski lavishly. He met Stalin and Molotov on December 3 for a conference lasting two and one-half hours and was treated to an opulent banquet the following day with most of the top Soviet dignitaries in attendance.[2] Stalin personally appointed Vyshinsky, the Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, to accompany Sikorski on his subsequent itinerary.[3]

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[1]Anders, op. cit., p. 81.

[2]Stalin, Molotov, Beria, Kaganovich, Mikoyan, Zhdanov, Malenkov, among others. Ksawery Pruszyński, Russian Year (New York: Roy Publishers, 1944), pp. 109-10.

[3]GSHI, PRM, 41/4, "Minutes of the conversation held in the Kremlin between General Sikorski and M. Stalin on the outstanding problems of Polish-Soviet relations. Present also: Ambassador Kot, Commissar Molotov, Lt.-Gen.Anders (December 3).

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The first problem Sikorski took up in conference with Stalin was the question of the Polish civilians. Sikorski protested that local Soviet officials were not freeing Polish citizens and that they were living under the worst physical conditions. He asked for a large loan and for the right of Embassy delegates to enter Polish communities. He cited the example of the delegate in Archangel as an example of the Soviet Government's unwillingness to allow the Polish Embassy to aid and have direct contact with its own people. He said that he would also like to have a delegate in Vladivostok, because Polish Americans were collecting supplies and would only send them on the condition that they were delivered into Polish hands. He also requested that Poles be resettled in areas with better climate. Stalin was most agreeable. He approved of freeing Poles still detained, the formation of a system of delegates, the loan for civilian relief and the relocation of Polish citizens.[1]

Early in the conference, when discussing military matters, Sikorski asked about the missing officers:

> General Sikorski: . . . I have ordered that checks be made whether they are in Poland, . . . It has been proven that not one of them is there, likewise they are not in the prisoner of war camps in Germany. These people are here. Not one of them has returned.
> Stalin: That is impossible, they have escaped.
> General Anders: Where then could they escape?
> Stalin: Well, to Manchuria.
> General Anders: It is impossible that all could escape. . . .
> Stalin: Surely they have been released, but as yet have not arrived.[2]

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Ibid.

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Sikorski sketched his military plans for the Polish Army in the Soviet Union. He wanted to send 25,000 to Scotland and the Middle East as reinforcements. These forces would fight in the establishment of the Second Front, or else would return to the Soviet Union. Should the latter occur, Sikorski himself would personally take command. Churchill and Roosevelt had promised to supply the remainder without lessening supplies to the Soviet Union, but only if they were transferred to a more convenient location. Sikorski suggested that they be withdrawn to Iran, be equipped and then returned to fight on the Eastern Front.

Stalin strongly objected to this plan because he believed that the British wanted the troops and once they were out of the Soviet Union they would never return. Sikorski retorted:

> (in a sharper tone): Then please show me another solution, because the proper conditions for organizing our armed forces are not available here, and I do not want my people to perish in vain. . . .

They agreed to move the Polish Army to a part of the Soviet Union where it could be supplied by the British and Americans. Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Transcausasia were mentioned. Anders pointed out that he was counting on having 150,000 men, or eight divisions plus the Army's auxiliary units. Stalin finally agreed:

> If you insist--one corps, 2 or 3 divisions may leave. However, if you so desire, I shall assign place and means necessary for the forming of seven divisions. . . .

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Sikorski stressed the manner in which the Polish Army was to be used:

> After organizing and training, all should be gathered together as one unit, in order to strike as an army. . . .[1]

The problems of frontiers and citizenship were not touched on at the meeting. The next night at the banquet (December 4) Sikorski protested that Polish citizens of Ukrainian, Byelorussian and Jewish origin were not being released. He could not "accept, even in principle, any suggestion that the Polish state frontiers could be considered fluid." Stalin said that they had taken part in the plebiscites and had become Soviet citizens, to which Sikorski replied ". . . We know well . . . what these plebiscites in the Eastern territories were like. . . ."

> Stalin: We should settle our common frontiers between ourselves, before the Peace Conference, as soon as the Polish Army enters into action. We should stop talking on this subject. Don't worry, we will not harm you.
> General Sikorski: The 1939 frontier must not be questioned. You will allow me, Mr. President, to return to this problem.[2]

The question has since been asked: should Sikorski have followed up Stalin's invitation to discuss frontiers, if only to discover what Stalin had in mind?[3] But if he had, would not his action have been a tacit admission that the frontiers were open

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[1] Ibid.

[2] GSHI, PRM, 41/4, "Note of a conversation between General Sikorski and Stalin during dinner at the Kremlin, Lt.-Gen. Anders taking part (December 4)."

[3] Ciechanowski, op. cit., p. 79.

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to discussion? And perhaps Stalin could use it at a later date to create a fait accompli. On the other hand, Polish-Soviet relations were never again to be so friendly and the Soviet Union was very hard pressed by the Germans. At no other time could Sikorski have received better terms. In two months it was too late for a compromise.

Following the banquet Stalin and Sikorski signed a Declaration of Friendship and Mutual Assistance which stated that Hitlerite imperialism was "the worst enemy of mankind" and that both nations would fight until the menace was destroyed. It promised full military cooperation during the war and friendship in the post-war world.[1]

Sikorski made a speech to the Polish nation in which he paid homage to the Soviet military effort and to Stalin personally, and predicted the destruction of Germany.[2] The speech was translated into forty languages[3] and received wide publicity.

Sikorski's visit to Moscow seemed to have been a complete success. The log-jam in Polish-Soviet relations seemed to have been eliminated in a spirit of good will. Even though the sensitive question of frontiers had not been solved, and

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[1]GSHI, PRM, 41/1, "Declaration of Friendship and Mutual Assistance signed in Moscow by General Sikorski and M. Stalin (December 4)."

[2]GSHI, PRM, 63, "General Sikorski's Broadcast to Polish nation (December 4)."

[3]Kot, op. cit., p. xxvii.

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the Soviets had tried to pressure Sikorski by three separate and obvious faits accomplis, Sikorski was optimistic that a new era in Polish-Soviet relations had begun.

Sikorski left Moscow to visit the Polish Army, after which he planned to return to Moscow for further consultations with Stalin. But he was struck down by influenza for several days. Eden arrived in Moscow on December 16. In the meantime, the Japanese had struck the American fleet at Pearl Harbor (December 7, 1941) and a series of uninterrupted military disasters for the Western Allies followed. Stalin's position had been enormously enhanced by Soviet victories. If Sikorski returned to Moscow to face Stalin with Eden there, he would find himself in a most difficult situation, being merely a "poor relative" in negotiations. Kot explained to Vyshinsky that since Sikorski did not want to complicate negotiations between Eden and Stalin, he had decided to cancel his second visit.[1]

The Japanese attack and Western defeats had brought the United States into the war and created an entirely new diplomatic situation. With everything now in flux, Sikorski looked anew to Washington where he had been so warmly received nine months before and whence he had received significant assistance in his dealings with Stalin a month earlier.

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[1] Ibid., p. 161.

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CHAPTER V

DECEMBER, 1941-JUNE, 1942

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor (December 7, 1941) drastically altered Allied diplomatic relations. In one morning all plans, agreements and problems (including Polish-Soviet relations) were opened to reconsideration. The shock of the Japanese attack created fluidity in Washington. American leaders faced unfamiliar problems for which they were not prepared--day-to-day problems which were often difficult to bring into conformity with the idealism of the Atlantic Charter. Churchill immediately left for Washington (December 12, 1941), in order to coordinate Anglo-American policies and war efforts. Churchill made his impact in the United States during the first confused days of war. The Polish ambassador to the United States, Jan Ciechanowski, comments:

> At the close of Mr. Churchill's visit it became clear to me that wide circles of American public opinion were worked upon and propagandized into adopting the British viewpoint of unconditional support of Russia and of avoiding any questions of principle. The British in Washington were busily spreading the fear that a Soviet-German partnership might be re-created if the Soviet Union saw any advantage in concluding a separate peace.
>
> From information I gathered, I knew that Mr. Churchill was keenly apprehensive of such a possibility. He lost no opportunity to impress his fears on the President.[1]

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[1] Ciechanowski, op. cit., p. 91.

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The unchecked string of Japanese victories during the last weeks of 1941 and the first months of 1942 created an extremely perilous situation in the Far East and the Pacific, areas of special American and British interest. Through the single blow of Pearl Harbor the Pacific balance of power tipped sharply in favor of the Japanese. Japanese forces fanned out. During the second and third weeks of December they landed in the Philippines; the American fortress of Corregidor held out until May 6. On December 8 the Japanese landed in Malaya and the "impregnable" British fortress of Singapore fell on February 15. In January and February they swept into the Dutch East Indies. Burma was in Japanese hands by the beginning of May. India was threatened, the Indian Ocean lay open to Japanese sea power, Australia was in a very exposed position and the use of the sea route to the Soviet Union via Vladivostok was seriously curtailed. Not until the Allied victory at the Battle of the Coral Sea (May 4-8) and the American victory at the Battle of Midway (June 3-6) was the Japanese initiative checked.

At the exact moment when the Anglo-Saxon Powers were suffering their worst defeats, the Soviet Army began a counter-offensive in the Moscow sector of the Front (December 7, 1941), driving the Germans back as much as 200 miles in some places during the first three months of 1942. The Soviet Union was thus the only Ally winning victories during the early stages of American involvement when the Western military fortunes were at their nadir. Stalin experienced new confidence and was ready

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to make new, more concrete demands. He wanted a second front. Since the Western Powers could not produce it, they felt embarrassed in the face of Soviet military success which contrasted with their own failures, and indebted to the Soviet Union for the blood spilt in the common struggle.

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Sikorski was not blind to Soviet political methods and aims, yet on the morrow of his conversations with Stalin, he was generally optimistic about the future of his policies. Even though he and Stalin had not agreed on the question of frontiers, Sikorski had found Stalin willing to agree on most other points and, on the whole, quite reasonable. He felt that with mutual good will he could do business with the Soviet dictator.[1] Should Stalin prove difficult, Sikorski thought that the war strain on the Soviet Union was so enormous that even if it did emerge victorious from the War, it would be seriously weakened by heavy losses in manpower and capital wealth. With the support of the Western Allies he would thus be able to deal with Stalin.

Sikorski's position in the Allied camp was based on the Polish Armed Forces and the good will they could win. Axiomatic to his military strategy was unity of command for all Polish fighting forces on all fronts. The power of the Polish Underground was rapidly increasing and he planned a general uprising against the German occupation at the proper time. At the same moment, he believed, Poland would be invaded by a Polish Army.

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[1] Mitkiewicz, op. cit., p. 200.

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Since the direction from which the invasion would come was uncertain, Sikorski wanted to keep a sizeable Polish force in every theater: in the Soviet Union; in the Middle East; and in Great Britain for a cross-Channel assault. He opposed the concentration of all or a major part of the Polish Army in one theater, where misfortune could bring about its annihilation.[1] Although he was not unaware of the colossal risks, Sikorski was an advocate of a Second Front as early as late 1941. He saw that if the Soviet Union were defeated the task of the Western Allies would be immensely increased. Poland would be subjected to a German occupation of indefinite duration and in the meanwhile, the Germans were systematically exterminating Poles.[2]

Sikorski's post-war plans continued to be built on the idea of a central east European federation. The nucleus would be formed from Poland and Czechoslovakia, but he also foresaw the includion of Lithuania and possibly Hungary. The scheme was tied to the Soviet Union's attitude. Sikorski hoped that it would follow a friendly policy towards the scheme. There were some obvious clashes of interests. The Soviet Union wanted to retain the Baltic States, including Lithuania, as well as Bukovina, Bessarabia, Finnish territory acquired in 1940 and eastern Poland.

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[1] GSHI, KGA, 7-f, "General Sikorski's instructions to Lt. General Anders on the plans for the use of forces under his command in the general political and military situation (May 1, 1942)."

[2] Marian Kukiel, "Strategiczne Koncepcje Gen. Sikorskiego" (The Strategic Concepts of General Sikorski), Bellona, 38th Year, No. III (1955), p. 21.

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Sikorski opposed Stalin's ambitions because he was unwilling to surrender Polish territory, because he did not want to set a precedent of wartime territorial changes which could be applied to Poland, and because he knew Soviet acquisition of Lithuania and Bukovina, in particular, would be strategically disadvantageous to a Poland possessing the frontiers of 1939. In such a case, Poland would have borders overly exposed to the Soviet Union and would be cut off from its pre-war ally, Rumania.

Although Sikorski had refused to discuss Polish-Soviet frontiers, there are indications that he did not hold them as sacrosanct as most of his compatriots.[1] He was determined to keep Wilno[2] and Lwów at all costs, and perhaps he might have been willing to sacrifice areas with small Polish populations, such as Polesia, eastern Volhynia and Pololia, if Poland received territorial compensation in the west from Germany in areas where there were sizeable Polish populations. Sikorski wanted to eliminate the Polish Corridor. He was interested in obtaining East Prussia, Opole Silesia and western Pomerania.[3]

Sikorski's plans had several fundamental weaknesses. His only trump card was the Polish Army, but it was minute by comparison with the Soviet military effort. He was dependent

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[1] Foreign Relations of the United States. Diplomatic Papers, 1942 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1961), III, 102.

[2] He might have been willing to allow Wilno to be the capital of a Lithuania federated with Poland or a possible larger federation. Interview with General Marian Kukiel, July 18, 1969.

[3] Mitkiewicz, op. cit., p. 221.

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Stalin's good will, which was very soon to prove non-existent, nd Western guarantees which he did not have and failed to get. e needed the cooperation of his colleagues from the other ations in the proposed federation, especially Beneš. Since eneš made Soviet approval a condition of post-war projects, he Czechoslovaks tended to opt out of Sikorski's federal plans s soon as the Soviet Union expressed opposition to them.

Hence, Sikorski's optimism during the last days of 1941 ere soon to be rudely jarred when new Soviet demands altered he political situation.

* * * *

Eden departed from Great Britain after the American entry into the war and arrived in Moscow on December 16 where he had three conferences with Stalin. He was at a serious disadvantage because his visit coincided with the rapid deterioration of the British (and American) military positions. Eden found that Stalin would not be satisfied with treaties of friendship, but wanted specific commitments. In their first meeting Stalin presented Eden with the drafts for two treaties: one, a military alliance, and the second, dealing with the Soviet Union's western frontiers. In principle, he wanted British recognition of the Soviet frontiers of 1941. He made an exception with Poland:

> The Polish frontier remains an open question and I do not insist upon settling that now. What I am most interested in is the position in Finland and the Baltic States and in Rumania. With regard to Poland, I hope that we shall be able to come to an agreement between the three of us. Generally speaking, our idea is to keep to the Curzon line with certain modifications. . . .[1]

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[1] Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers, 1942, III, 495-96.

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Poland would receive compensation in the west at Germany's expense. Eden did not reject Stalin's demands, but explained that he would have to discuss such far-reaching changes with the Cabinet, the Americans and the Dominion Governments. At the second meeting "Stalin began to show his claws"[1] and asked for the immediate recognition of the Soviet frontiers of 1941. Again Eden said he would present the proposals when he returned to London. Eden's reaction to Stalin's demands implied that they were negotiable. The Poles were soon aware of Eden's lack of positive support for their position.[2]

When Churchill read Stalin's desiderata on board the Duke of York en route to the United States, he cabled Deputy Prime Minister, Clement R. Atlee (December 20):

> Stalin's demand about Finland, Baltic States, and Roumania are directly contrary to the first, second, and third articles of the Atlantic Charter, to which Stalin has subscribed. There can be no question whatever of our making such an agreement, secret or public, direct or implied, without prior agreement with the U.S. The time has not yet come to settle frontier questions, which can only be resolved at the Peace Conference when we have won the war.[3]

The Cabinet shared Churchill's opinion and so informed Eden in Moscow. When Stalin learned of the British Government's position, he said he would rather wait until the British had carried out their consultations than sign a treaty which did not contain the desired provisions.

After his return to London Eden telegraphed Churchill

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[1]Eden, op. cit., p. 295.

[2]Kot, op. cit., p. 175.

[3]Churchill, The Grand Alliance, p. 559.

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(who was still in Washington) that he thought Stalin's requests should be met for the Baltic States, Bessarabia and the Finnish territory ceded to the Soviet Union in 1940. The inclusion of Poland was not mentioned by Stalin as an essential point.[1] Churchill wrote a stiff reply (January 8) rejecting any territorial changes until the war was over.[2]

January was a month of debate and uncertainty in London. Eden had returned from Moscow. Churchill returned from Washington on January 15. Cripps had ended his duties as Ambassador and returned on January 23. Cripps, who had a considerable personal following,[3] felt that Great Britain should agree to Soviet demands. His arrival strengthened the group of British leaders who favored accommodating Soviet demands. Within the War Cabinet Beaverbrook could also be counted on to support Eden's position.

The Foreign Office was more cautious. It felt that the first step should be to consult Roosevelt. If he did not accept territorial concessions to the Soviet Union, the British Government should propose that the United States and Great Britain should support Soviet acquisition of bases in contiguous territories or control of the defense and foreign policy of the Baltic States. But the question of Soviet absorption of the

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[1] Foreign Relations of the United States. Diplomatic Papers, 1942, III, 513.

[2] Churchill, The Grand Alliance, pp. 615-16.

[3] Cripps became Leader of the House of Commons and Member of the War Cabinet February 19, 1942.

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Baltic States and Rumanian and Finnish territories should be finally decided only at the Peace Conference.[1] Churchill stuck to the principles of the Atlantic Charter.

On January 26 Cripps told Sikorski that it would be necessary to accept Stalin's demands, but "by mutual consent Polish-Soviet affairs were excluded from the negotiations (between Stalin and Eden) and left to be settled between the Polish and Soviet Governments." He also remarked that in unofficial Soviet circles the Curzon Line had been mentioned.[2] The same day Eden told Raczyński, the Acting Polish Foreign Minister, that "Soviet pressure on the British Government for the recognition by the latter of Soviet territorial claims to the Baltic States, Rumania, Persia, etc." persisted. "The British Cabinet has not yet considered this question but it seems that it will be forced to do so shortly."[3] Five days later (January 31) Churchill told Sikorski that "as long as victory has not been achieved, the problem of the future State boundaries in Europe would be in no way discussed."[4] British leadership remained divided.

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[1] Woodward, op. cit., p. 192.

[2] GSHI, PRM, 68, "Note on a conversation between General Sikorski and Sir Stafford Cripps, relating to the territorial claims put forward by the Soviet Government (January 26)."

[3] GSHI, PRM, 68, "Note on a conversation between Raczyński and Eden (January 26)."

[4] GSHI, PRM, 68, "Notes on a conversation between General Sikorski and Mr. Churchill at Chequers on the problem of Polish-Soviet relations and of Stalin's expansionist aims (January 31)."

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During the last weeks of 1941 and the first part of 1942 British press and public opinion reached new heights of adulation for the Soviet Union (cf. Figure 4). The press and the BBC were so exaggeratedly enthusiastic about Soviet victories that Maisky intervened with the Ministry of Information and the Directors of the BBC to tone down their descriptions and stress the difficulty of the Soviet Union's position.[1] The Times was also in favor of granting Soviet demands. On February 2 an editorial stated:

> The recent events have shown that the imperative necessities of Russian defence provided a more solid foundation for some past claims than most people in this country were prepared to concede to them at the time (i.e., August, 1939).

* * * *

The honeymoon in Polish-Soviet relations following Sikorski's visit to Moscow was brief. There is some indication that in December, 1941-January, 1942 Stalin toyed briefly with the idea of a compromise between the Line of Riga and the Curzon Line. Kot notes (January 3) that during a conversation in Moscow with Cripps, the British Ambassador said that the Soviet Government counted on the Curzon Line, but that he

> . . . is of the opinion that on the question of a frontier with Lithuania, and in regard to Lwow, we should make haste to seek the support of America, for Russia will press for a speedy decision. . . .[2]

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[1] GSHI, PRM, 73/1, "A letter from Stroński to Ambassador Kot on the question of propaganda related to current Soviet problems (April 23)."

[2] Kot, op. cit., p. 176.

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Fig. 4.--*The Times*, December 10, 1941.

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SALUTE TO AN ALLY

In another practical way Great Britain salutes its great and gallant Ally. This month throughout the country Flag Days, on which we shall "give generously," are to be held for Mrs. Winston Churchill's Red Cross Aid to Russia Fund. London's "day" is Tuesday, December 16th.

The British people welcome this opportunity of showing their individual appreciation of the sacrifices and suffering of the Russians: their response will be equal to the urgency of the need.

Published in tribute to a brave people and a gallant Ally by

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Then, the Soviet Government began to apply pressure. Kot had sent a Note (December 9) protesting the Soviet unilateral declaration of December 1, declaring Polish citizens of Ukrainian, Byelorussian and Jewish origin to be Soviet citizens. The NKID reply (January 5) completely rejected the Polish protest:

> 1. After taking note of the considerations set out in the Note of the Embassy of December 9, 1941 . . . the People's Commissariat cannot see any reason to change the attitude set forth in its Note of December 1, 1941.
> 2. . . . the assertion of "occupation" in respect to Western Ukraine and Western White Ruthenia is . . . devoid of all foundation, alike from the political as from the international point of view, because the entrance of Soviet forces into Western Ukraine and Western White Ruthenia in the autumn of 1939 was not an occupation but an attachment of the districts mentioned to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics as a result of the freely expressed will of the population of those districts.[1]

On January 6 Molotov sent a lengthy Note to all accredited missions describing German atrocities committed against the civilian population in the Soviet Union. The Note included the following passages:

> Every step of the German Fascist army and its allies on seized Soviet territory of the Ukraine, Moldavia, Byelorussia, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and on the territories of Russian districts and regions brings in its train the destruction of countless material and cultural treasures of our people. . . .
> . . . . . .
> During forced labour, they outrageously shoot down for not fully carrying out the quota of work stipulated. On June 30th the Hitlerite bandits entered the town of Lvov, and the following day they organised a mass slaughter under the slogan: "Kill off the Jews and Poles," . . .
> . . . . . .

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[1] GSHI, A.11, 49/Sow/3, "Note from the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs to the Polish Embassy in the USSR on the subject of Polish citizenship (January 5)."

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> In the town of Lvov, 32 working women of the Lvov clothing works were raped and then killed by German storm troopers. Drunken German soldiers dragged young women and girls in Lvov to Kosciuszko park and brutally raped them. . . .[1]

Veiled under the denunciation of German atrocities was the Soviet claim to the frontiers of 1941. Kot quickly replied (January 9):

> . . . I have the honour to draw Your Excellency's attention to the fact that the inclusion of Lwow among "other Ukrainian cities" in your Note of January 6, 1942 must have been the result of a misunderstanding, for from the historical point of view and from that of international law, and as far as the ethnographic constitution of its population, Lwow was and remains a Polish city.[2]

The NKID firmly rejected Kot's Note (January 17):

> While finding it impossible to enter into a discussion on the historical and legal bases on which the city of Lwow or any other town on the territories of the Ukrainian SSR and the White Ruthenian SSR belong to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the People's Commissariar deems it his duty to inform the Embassy that in the future he will not be able to accept for consideration Notes of the Embassy containing declarations of this kind.[3]

On January 11 an interview with Acting Foreign Minister Raczyński appeared in the Sunday Times. He attempted to counter Soviet claims by outlining Polish aims. He said that the Soviet Union could not altogether compensate for the weakening of France

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[1]GSHI, A.11, 49/Sow/3, "Extracts from Commissar Molotov's Note to all the diplomatic missions accredited in Moscow concerning German atrocities against the civilian population of the USSR (January 6)."

[2]GSHI, A. 11, 49/Sow/2, "Note from Ambassador Kot to Commissar Molotov on the status of Lwów as a Polish city (January 9)."

[3]GSHI, A. 11, 49/Sow/3, "Note from the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs to the Polish Embassy in the USSR on the status of Lwów, Brześć and Stanisławów and other towns, annexed to the USSR (January 17)."

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in the reestablishment of a new European balance, because it was as much absorbed by Asiatic, as by European problems. Rather, the balance against Germany should be based on the "third Europe" --the area extending between Germany and the Soviet Union. He described Polish plans to create a federation which would be a barrier against Germany, while maintaining friendly relations with the Soviet Union. Raczyński included Lithuania among the states in the proposed federation. As guarantors of security he hoped for Anglo-American collaboration.

The interview infuriated Soviet authorities. Bogomolov sent a Note (January 23) to the Polish Government protesting that the interview was not in the interests of Polish-Soviet friendship. In particular, he pointed out that the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic was part of the Soviet Union.[1] Sikorski sent a stiff reply on January 30. He said that a member of his Cabinet had the right to speak out on problems affecting the welfare of the Polish State, such as the future status of Lithuania. He protested against Molotov's Note of January 6 which described Lwów as a Soviet city. And he said that the Soviet Union seemed to understand the Atlantic Charter in somewhat different terms than the Polish Government.[2]

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[1] GSHI, PRM, 72/1, "Note from Ambassador Bogomolov to the Polish Government concerning Minister Raczyński's interview in the 'Sunday Times' of January 11, 1942 (January 23)."

[2] GSHI, PRM, 72/1, "Letter from General Sikorski to Ambassador Bogomolov stating in connection with Minister Raczyński's interview in the Sunday Times on the Polish attitude to the Soviet claims to annexed Polish territories (January 30)."

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In spite of this, the Soviet Embassy was gradually winning on the propaganda front. Maisky's contacts with the press, British-Soviet friendship organizations, the British Communist Party with its organ the Daily Worker, and above all Soviet military victories helped to create a good image of the Soviet Union in the British public's eye. Any rise of the Soviet position in public opinion indirectly meant a relative decline in the Polish position.

When the Poles moved to London after the Fall of France, many newspapers mushroomed up reflecting all shades of Polish political opinion. In February, 1942, Kaminsky, a special TASS representative, endowed with wide powers, was appointed to the Soviet Embassy with the task of monitoring the Polish press for the least signs of anti-Soviet attitudes. He created an incident over articles by Władysław Grabski in the Peasant Party's paper Jutro Polski (Poland's Tomorrow).[1] The opposition paper, Wiadomości Polskie (Polish News), was critical of Sikorski because it considered that the Polish Prime Minister was too soft in his dealings with the Soviet Union. Bogomolov complained (March 3) to Polish Under-Secretary of State, Kajetan Morawski, that the tone and direction of Wiadomości Polskie were not conducive to good Polish-Soviet relations.[2] Again on March 12

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[1] GSHI, PRM, 73/1, "A Letter from Stroński to Ambassador Kot on the question of propaganda related to current Soviet Problems (April 23)."

[2] GSHI, PRM, 72/3, "A conversation between Morawski and Ambassador Bogomolov (March 3)."

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Vyshinsky protested to Kot that Wiadomości Polskie was the most hostile paper to the Soviet Union in the Allied camp.[1]

The Soviet Government added a new dimension to Polish-Soviet relations in late 1941 and early 1942 when it started to sponsor its own organization in Poland. In November, 1941 the Union of Friends of the USSR was established in Warsaw. It merged with another group to form the Polish Workers' Party (PPR) in January, 1942. Soon the new organization formed its own military units, the People's Guard. The leaders of the PPR had been members of the Communist Party of Poland. The PPR avoided the name "Communist Party" because the Soviet Union's occupation of eastern Poland had made Communism more unpopular than ever in Poland. It avoided Communist phraseology and did not stress love for the Soviet Union, but insisted on the relentless struggle against Germany and on helping the Soviet Union. The PPR admitted the loss of Poland's eastern territories and claimed recompense in the west from Germany.[2]

On January 1, 1942, Kosciuszko Radio, the propaganda medium of the UPP, went on the air.[3] Its broadcasts were designed to minimize the fact that Poland was a sovereign state with its own territory and political aims, and to create the impression that Polish and Soviet aims were identical. On

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[1]GSHI, PRM, 73/4, "A dispatch to General Sikorski from Ambassador Kot on Wiadomości Polskie (March 12)."

[2]Dziewanowski, op. cit., pp. 162-63.

[3]DPSR, I, ix.

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February 17 it called for mass risings against the Germans without regard for the consequences to civilians. On February 23 it described the Red Army as the "national army of Poland." On February 28 it glorified the Red Army and called for Poles to see their debt:

> We owe our utmost gratitude to the Red Army, and this has been beautifully put into words by Wanda Wasilewska who writes: "You, Red Soldier, arose to fight the German Army, which had made the whole world tremble. You are carrying freedom to the enslaved nations on your bayonet. Kiev longs for you and so does Bialystok and Lwow. You bring destruction to Hitlerism and freedom to the Polish Nation."[1]

By creating the Polish Workers' Party in Poland and strengthening the Union of Polish Patriots with a radio outlet of its own, the Soviet Government were laying the ground work for an alternative Polish Government which, unlike the self-willed Poles in London, would bend to Soviet needs and commands.

* * * *

In January, 1942 the British were divided on how to treat Stalin's territorial demands. In February and March they decided on their course of action. In the foreground of their deliberation was the fact that the Soviet Army continued to be victorious, whereas the Western Powers encountered one calamity after another. Stalin's Order of the Day for February 23 shook the British by arousing the fear of a separate peace. He rejected foreign press "chatter" that the Red Army had as its aim the destruction of the German people and State. Its aim was the

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[1]GSHI, A. 11, 49/Sow/1, No. 66-a, "Report made by Counsellor Weese on the subject of Soviet broadcasts in Polish (March 5)."

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expulsion of German forces from the Soviet Union. Stalin said that the liberation of Soviet soil could lead to the fall of Hitler and that it was ridiculous to identify Hitler's clique with the German people and State. There was no reference to sending Soviet troops beyond the boundaries of the Soviet Union. Added to the speech were rumors in Vatican circles that Hitler and Stalin, who would become discouraged after the next German attack, would sign a separate peace through a Japanese intermediary.[2]

Churchill, who had opposed Soviet demands, writes:

> When I was at Washington on the morrow of the American entry into the war, and Mr. Eden had reported the wishes of the Soviet Government to absorb the Baltic States, I reacted unfavourably. . . . But now, three months later, under the pressure of events, I did not feel that this moral position could be physically maintained. In a deadly struggle it is not right to assume more burdens than those who are fighting for a great cause can bear. . . .[3]

Accordingly, he informed Roosevelt (March 7):

> . . . The increasing gravity of the war has led me to feel that the principles of the Atlantic Charter ought not to be construed so as to deny Russia the frontiers she occupied when Germany attacked her. . . . I hope therefore that you will be able to give us a free hand to sign the treaty which Stalin desires as soon as possible. . . .[4]

And then he wired Stalin (March 9):

> I have sent a message to President Roosevelt urging him to approve our signing the agreement with you about the frontiers of Russia at the end of the war.[5]

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[1] Foreign Relations of the United States. Diplomatic Papers, 1942, III, 416.

[2] Ibid., pp. 432-33.

[3] Churchill, The Hinge of Fate, p. 293.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

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Sikorski was well aware of the evolution of thought in British ruling circles. There was a heated conference on March 11 when he and Retinger met Churchill, Eden, War-Cabinet member and Minister of Labour and National Service, Ernest Bevin, and Secretary of State for Air, Sir Archibald Sinclair. Sikorski warned that "Russia's territorial claims could not be justified by any strategic consideration, and were dictated by Russian imperialism." He protested that

> The Russian-sponsored agreement would mean the elimination of a discussion of Poland's Eastern frontiers. Thus in the future Poland would be left to face Russia alone, and it was clear that the latter would demand considerable territorial concessions.
> . . . . . .
>
> Gen. Sikorski said to Mr. Churchill that should such an agreement be signed, and should all the Russian demands, including the annexation of Lithuania, be granted, then the General, who once before had taken the full responsibility for his Nation for compromise with Russia, could not take it on his conscience this time to accept the far-reaching consequences of such a political step.

To this threat of resignation Churchill changed his tone and "stressed his great admiration for Poland." He said that the agreement had to be made because the Soviet Union was the only nation which had fought the Germans with success and

> Should Russia come to an agreement with the Reich, all would be lost. . . . If Russia was victorious she would decide on her frontiers without consulting Great Britain; should she lose the war, the agreement would lose all its importance. Gen. Sikorski saw another, in his opinion a more probable, alternative, namely the mutual exhaustion of Russia and Germany. Mr. Churchill retorted: "Then the decisions on peace will be with us, independently of the petty agreements signed today."

Eden explained that the Treaty would not bind Poland. But Sikorski replied that Poland would be left alone to face the

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Soviet Union and that "he could not assume the responsibility for casting the Polish Nation as a prey to the Soviets."[1]

* * * *

Since Sikorski saw that the British were ready to accept Soviet terms, he turned to the Americans for support. First, he sent Acting Foreign Minister, Edward Raczyński, who arrived in the United States on February 15. Raczyński found Washington still basically committed to the principles of the Atlantic Charter. Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, in particular, was unbending.[2] Yet, there were indications of a change in thinking among American leaders about the future role of the Soviet Union. When Raczyński and Ciechanowski met Assistant Secretary of State, Adolf A. Berle (February 24), Berle said that the Soviet Union would emerge from the War as one of the Great Powers and the granting of special demands would probably be inevitable. The unlimited sovereignty of small states in the pre-war sense would be difficult to conceive. He cited the case of Costa Rica which the United States could occupy if it so wished, but which permitted and appeared quite satisfied to have American defensive bases on its territory.[3] Ciechanowski comments:

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[1]GSHI, PRM, 68, "A conversation between General Sikorski and Mr. Churchill on the Soviet expansionist territorial claims made in the course of British-Soviet negotiations and on the situation of the Polish Army and population in the USSR. Attended by Mr. Eden, Mr. Bevin, Sir Archibald Sinclair, Col. Thompson, Dr. Retinger and Capt. Zamoyski (March 11)."

[2]Cordell Hull, Memoirs (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1948), II, 1167-70.

[3]Ciechanowski, op. cit., pp. 93-94.

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> . . . this conversation gave us much food for thought. We could not help wondering whether these remarks were the prelude to a possible change of fundamental American views repeatedly declared by the President and the American Government.[1]

When Raczyński met Roosevelt (February 25), the President reassured him that the United States had not changed its basic stand on the Atlantic Charter. As for Soviet claims, once Germany was defeated what grounds for security would the Soviet Union have to extend its territory? Assistant Secretary of State, Sumner Welles (March 6) repeated Roosevelt's opinions on territorial changes to Raczyński.

Sikorski made his second trip to the United States in late March, 1942. He and Retinger met Raczyński and Ciechanowski in Washington. Sikorski met Roosevelt twice. During his first conversation (March 24) Sikorski told the President of the Polish Government's concern over British plans to agree to Soviet territorial demands. Roosevelt emphatically replied that the United States opposed all territorial agreements before the Peace Conference. He said he intended to use all his influence to persuade the British Government to refrain from concluding a treaty along the proposed lines.[2] The following day (March 25) Welles informed Sikorski that he had been instructed by the President to make an official statement to the effect that the American Government would not enter into any secret agreements concerning post-war settlements and that the settling of terri-

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[1] Ibid., p. 94.

[2] Ibid., pp. 99-101.

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torial questions would have to wait until the end of the War.[1] In his second meeting with Roosevelt (March 26) Sikorski asked for and received $12,500,000 to finance the Polish Underground. Again, the President assured Sikorski of American steadfastness to the Atlantic Charter.[2]

Before Sikorski's departure, he, Raczyński and Ciechanowski analyzed the diplomatic situation in the light of meetings during the last four months in Moscow, London and Washington. Ciechanowski notes:

> We came to the conclusion that 1942 would be a decisive year in shaping the policies of our great Allies--Britain and America. We note with great regret the differences of approach to the subject of collaboration with the Soviets between London and Washington, . . . We feared that, if British desire to accept Soviet territorial and other demands materialized, appeasement of Russia would replace the sound policy of good partnership.
> . . . We came to the conclusion that only a firm and unswerving determination on the part of President Roosevelt could prevent Britain from making concessions in a bilateral agreement with Soviet Russia. . . .[3]

Sikorski's second visit to the United States was both a personal and a diplomatic success. He helped to bolster American policy-makers against British pressure aimed at granting Soviet demands. Shortly after his departure Welles wrote to Berle (April 4):

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[1]GSHI, PRM, 71, "Note on the conversation between General Sikorski and Under-Secretary of State, Sumner Welles, concerning Soviet territorial claims. Also present: Minister Raczyński and Ambassador Ciechanowski (March 25)."

[2]Mitkiewicz, op. cit., p. 247.

[3]Ciechanowski, op. cit., p. 102.

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> . . . The attitude of the British Government is, in my judgment, not only indefensible from every moral standpoint, but likewise extraordinarily stupid. I am confident that no sooner will this treaty be signed than Great Britain will be confronted with new additional demands for recognition of the right of the Soviet Union to occupy the Bucovina, Bessarabia, and very likely eastern Poland and northern Norway. These are the views expressed to me by General Sikorski and those views I share.[1]

* * * *

While Sikorski faced mounting difficulties during the first quarter of 1942 in London, developments within the Soviet Union had improved by comparison to the two months before Sikorski's visit to Moscow. After his visit the Soviet Government showed a generally more favorable attitude towards Polish activities within the Soviet Union.

In reply to Sikorski's request for loans to finance welfare activities and the Polish Army, Vyshinsky invited Kot on December 28, 1941, to show him drafts for an agreement allocating 100,000,000 roubles for Polish civilian needs and 300,000,000 for the Army.[2] The NKID worked late New Year's Eve to prepare the agreements so the business could be concluded before the New Year. The agreements were signed at 11 P.M., December 31, 1941, in a friendly atmosphere.[3]

Confirmations came to the Embassy from all across the Soviet Union of the better treatment of Polish citizens in the

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[1] Foreign Relations of the United States. Diplomatic Papers, 1942, III, 542.

[2] Kot, op. cit., pp. 173-75.

[3] Ibid., p. 178.

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form of improved provisions and accommodations and increased cooperation from local officials. More people were released all over the vast nation, including individuals held in northern and eastern Siberia, the remotest areas with the most severe climate. Kot asked Vyshinsky (December 16) if Polish deportees could receive special consideration for Christmas.[1] They were exempted from work and were supplied with exceptional rations, whereas natives received no comparable privileges.[2] When Kot thanked Vyshinsky (December 24), Vyshinsky said the NKVD was responsible for transmitting the instructions.[3]

An effective relief system was created during the first months of 1942. The Embassy was the center of the network. Nineteen delegates were appointed to republics and oblasts where Poles were concentrated. They were instructed to supply the Embassy with lists of Polish citizens and inform it of their material needs; they were to keep records of the people within their area, organize cultural activity, supply essential documents, such as passports, receive and distribute aid in kind received from abroad, and seek out men of trust from the local Polish population to assist them in their work. The appointment of delegates and men of trust needed the approval of the NKID and these Polish representatives were to cooperate with local

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[1] Ibid., pp. 169-70.

[2] Ibid., pp. 177-78.

[3] Ibid., pp. 171.

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Soviet officials in their efforts.[1] Delegates were to have immunity of residence and correspondence. Those who had held diplomatic immunity would continue to have it, but new appointees would not. Every delegate was given a special certificate attesting to his official position. The delegates were not consuls.[2] The two most important delegates were those at Archangel and Vladivostok. In addition to their local duties they were responsible for accepting food, clothing, medicine and other necessities from Great Britain, the United States and Canada, checking the containers' contents and forwarding them by rail either to the Embassy or to other delegates in the interior of the Soviet Union.[3]

A few months after the beginning of the distribution of goods 387 men of trust had been appointed, among whom 297 were Poles, 82 Jews and 8 Ukrainians or Byelorussians. In addition to supplying clothes, food and medicine, the relief agents founded a total of 807 institutions. These included 82 orphanages for 5,364 children, 175 kindergartens, 111 schools and educational centers, 10 hospitals and convalescent homes, 71 hostels and homes for the disabled, 1 creche and 1 laboratory,

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[1]GSHI, A. 11, 49/Sow/2, "Rules regulating the scope of activities of delegates of the Polish Embassy drawn up in consultation with representatives of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs (December 23)."

[2]Kot, op. cit., pp. 196-98.

[3]GSHI, A. 11, 49/Sow/7, "Memorandum from the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Ambassador Biddle (July 10, 1942)."

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191 feeding centers, 117 medical and first-aid posts and 47 workshops.[1] In April and May, 70,000 bales and cases arrived from abroad and in June the amount was increasing.[2] Never before and never again would the Embassy have such direct contact with Polish citizens in the Soviet Union.

The Embassy did run into difficulties in an area related to Sikorski's conflict in London--the dispute over citizenship and the frontier. The Soviet Government refused to recognize individuals of Ukrainian, Byelorussian and Jewish origin as Polish citizens. The Embassy presented to the NKID lists of individuals it was particularly interested in having liberated. In mid-January the NKID started to refuse to free people of these ethnic origins because they were not Polish citizens. On March 16 it rejected the Embassy's request for the release of Jewish socialist leaders, Wiktor Alter and Henryk Ehrlich, on the grounds that they were Soviet citizens. When Kot asked Vyshinsky (March 24) for the same privileges at Easter and Passover that had been granted at Christmas, Vyshinsky said there was a precedent for Easter, but refused to grant the Passover holiday to Polish Jews because it would involve the citizenship question.[3]

In accordance with Stalin's promise to Sikorski, the

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[1] DPSR, I, 608.

[2] GSHI, A.11, 49/Sow/7, "Memorandum from the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Ambassador Biddle (July 12, 1942)."

[3] Kot, op. cit., pp. 225-26.

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Polish Army was reassigned to a new location in the south. Anders' headquarters was situated at Jangi-Jul, thirty miles from Tashkent. The six formed divisions were located in camps nearby. The move from Buzuluk and environs took place in January and February. The new location was warmer, but life in the camps was still wretched. Since the men were exhausted and sanitary conditions poor, epidemics of malaria and typhus broke out and many died. The question of the missing officers remained unanswered in spite of repeated inquiries. Restless dissatisfaction spread among the officers and men. The ever-suspicious NKVD knew exactly how the Polish soldiers felt, because many made no secret of their deep-seated anti-Soviet feelings.

On February 2 NKVD Major-General and Soviet liaison officer to the Polish Command, Georgi S. Zhukov, asked Anders when the Polish Army would be ready for action. He said that the Soviet Government would consider it proper to send the Fifth Division to the Front, because it had already received equipment according to Soviet standards. Anders rejected the suggestion because it would be contrary to the Polish-Soviet military agreement that only the entire Polish Army would fight as a single unit. Anders felt that to put a single Division into action would be to lose it in the mass of the Red Army, to nullify its political effect and to undermine the morale of the whole Army.[1] When Sikorski heard of the request, he agreed with

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[1]GSHI, KGA, 9-c, "Telegram from Lt. General Anders to General Sikorski on the Soviet proposal to send some units of the Polish Army to the front (February 4)."

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Anders (February 7) and ordered that under no circumstances was he to put the Polish Army into action unless it was completely prepared and fought as a single unit. In his final sentence he reemphasized the political motive for his decision: ". . . I cannot agree to an utter disregard of such a mighty trump in Allied hands as would be the use of the Army as a whole."[1] Sikorski had his eye to political and propaganda value both in the West and in the Soviet Union of the entire Polish Army fighting as a unit, preferably holding down some vital sector of the Front. If it were split up, the Polish Army would be lost among the Soviet forces and Polish control would be much more limited than if it fought as one group.

Anders had deeper suspicions of Soviet intentions towards the Polish Army. He notes in his memoirs:

> . . . Our attention was drawn to the fact that Soviet policy was to draw largely on the human reserves of those nationalities considered to be most opposed to the totalitarian and centralist policy of the Soviet Union. They were bled white. Ukrainian partisans fought on the outskirts of Moscow and not in the fields of the Ukraine. Leningrad was defended by Ukrainians, and few of these defenders remained alive. Thousands of Usbeks, Kazaks, Tartars and Caucasians perished at Moscow, and soldiers of non-Russian origin died in defence of Stalingrad. Russia learned long ago to use janissaries. When we were told of this lavish expenditure of the blood of the oppressed peoples we remembered that Suvorov captured Warsaw with Bashkirs and Kalmuks.[2]

Soviet officials reciprocated Polish suspicions and hostility. The Soviet Union was involved in a mortal contest,

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[1]GSHI, KGA, 9-a, "General Sikorski's reply to the telegram from Lt.-General Anders stating the conditions under which the Polish Army could be sent to the front (February 7)."

[2]Anders, op. cit., p. 57.

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but the Polish Army would not fight. The presence of an openly hostile force behind their lines over which they had no control was not to their liking and they resented Polish complaints about living conditions and food when the rest of the Soviet peoples had to endure the same.[1]

Although we do not know exactly what transpired among the decision-makers behind the Kremlin's walls, it seems safe to assume that Polish rigidity in carrying out Polish-Soviet agreements to the letter, whereby the Polish Army would only fight as a single unit, must have annoyed Stalin who was not accustomed to anything but instant obedience. No doubt, he too shared the resentment of many Soviet citizens. Soviet soldiers were dying by the hundreds of thousands, whereas the single Polish division which had been armed refused to go to the Front. The Polish Command did not have to wait long for evidences of his reaction.

On March 9 Stalin sent a message to Anders announcing that because the Japanese had entered the War, American shipments of grain through Vladivostok had ceased. Food would be given to fighting divisions in preference to those not fighting. Therefore, after March 20 the Polish Army would receive rations for only 30,000.[2] Anders flew immediately to Moscow where he

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[1]Werth, op. cit., p. 578.

[2]GSHI, KGA, 7-b, "Telegram from Lt.-General Anders to General Sikorski transmitting the text of Stalin's telegram announcing the reduction of food-rations for the Polish Army in the USSR (March 9)."

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met Stalin and Molotov (March 18). Stalin agreed to increase the allocation to 44,000 rations, enough for three divisions and a reserve regiment and to allow the evacuation of the rest of troops to Iran.[1]

The evacuation of 40,000 soldiers, women and children was carried out almost immediately.[2] When Kot heard of the decision taken without his knowledge, he was annoyed. He opposed the withdrawal of the Polish Army because he knew that it was the only really safe refuge for Poles in the Soviet Union. Once it left Polish citizens would be exposed to Soviet mercy. Yet Anders saw that the Polish Army's position was becoming precarious with mounting Soviet pressures and hostility. He was determined to save the Polish Army by withdrawing it completely from the Soviet Union to the Middle East. With these thoughts in mind Anders flew to London to meet Sikorski who had recently returned from his American visit.

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By March, 1942 it was no secret in Polish émigré circles that the British were preparing to sign a treaty with the Soviet Union which would probably be seriously detrimental to Poland. Anxiety revived criticism of Sikorski by his opponents because

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[1] GSHI, PRM, 72/3, "Record of a conversation between Lt.-General Anders and M. Stalin on the reducing of the Polish Army in the USSR to 44,000 and evacuation of the surpluses to Iran (March 18)."

[2] 31,030 soldiers, 1,159 Women's Army Auxiliary, 1,880 boys, 3,070 children and 7,689 adults, chiefly women. Umiastowski, Poland, Russian and Great Britain, 1941-1945, p. 49.

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they feared he was working against Poland's vital interests by being too soft in his dealings with the British and the Soviet Union. His relations with President Raczkiewicz continued to be strained. On April 21 Sikorski delivered a speech to the Rada Narodowa describing the events of his American trip and explaining that Poland's eastern frontiers were gravely threatened by the proposed Soviet-British Treaty. Members of the Peasant and Christian Labour Parties applauded him, while the remainder gave him a cool reception.[1]

Anders' arrival in London the same day contributed to the uproar. His heroism during the September Campaign and his activities in the distant Soviet Union had made him almost a legend. Anders told Raczkiewicz and other members of the Polish Government of his plans to remove the Polish Army from the Soviet Union and to concentrate it in the Middle East. His ideas soon became general knowledge. The controversy heightened as Sikorski's enemies picked up Anders' plan. Sikorski was under severe personal pressure both from the Poles and the British.[2]

The leading Polish commanders met on April 23 and April 27. Sikorski spoke first, expanding on the overall military situation. He asked Anders if he thought a separate peace was possible. Anders said it was not. Sikorski felt that with material aid from the United States and with the Germans already

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[1]Mitkiewicz, op. cit., pp. 264-65.

[2]Infra, p. 214 for Sikorski's meeting with Churchill and Cripps on April 26.

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weakened Soviet military prospects looked brighter and 1943 would be a crucial year. Anders disagreed. He said that the Soviet military situation was critical. There was a desperate shortage of food and weapons, and transport was in chaos. If the Germans could throw 75 per cent of their military effort of 1941 into their spring campaign, they would defeat the Soviet Union in 1942. And if the Soviet Union were defeated it would be best to have the Polish Army out of the country in the Middle East with the British.[1] His strategy ran directly counter to Sikorski's and the General Staff's. Feelings ran high.

The British were also interested in removing the Polish Army from the Soviet Union. Rommel's offensive (January 24-February 6) had led to a deterioration of the military situation in the Middle East and Polish reinforcements would be very welcome. At the time a British-Soviet Commission had been established in Teheran, without the knowledge of Polish leaders, to plan the evacuation of Polish troops. When Sikorski heard of its existence he protested and it was suspended.[2] Anders also met various British leaders, including Churchill. On April 30 he met Chief of the Imperial General Staff, General Allan Francis Brooke and Chief of British Intelligence, Major-General Francis H. M. Davidson, and told them of his opinion of the Eastern Front.[3] The nature of the Sikorski-Anders dispute

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[1]Mitkiewicz, op. cit., pp. 270 ff.

[2]DPSR, I, 595.

[3]Mitkiewicz, op. cit., pp. 286-87.

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was certainly known to the British and they wanted the Polish Army.

Sikorski decided on the compromise of "apportioning the forces in more or less equal strength between Great Britain, Russia and the Middle East."[1] The Polish Cabinet approved his decision on April 30. The following day Sikorski gave written orders to Anders in which he reiterated his policy. Since no one knew the shortest route to Poland--from the West, the Balkans, or the Soviet Union--units of the Polish Army would be stationed in each area; secondly, he could not risk its complete annihilation by placing it all in one theater.[2] Although neither converted the other, Anders and Sikorski parted on better terms than had existed between them during the period of Anders' stay in London.

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British-Soviet negotiations for a treaty continued. On April 13 the British presented a draft which specifically excluded the Polish-Soviet frontier from any promise of a return to 1941. The Soviet counter-proposal (May 1) omitted reference to the article.[3] British acceptance of the Soviet proposal would have implied their disinterestedness in Polish-Soviet

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[1] DPSR, I, 597.

[2] GSHI, KGA, 7-f, "General Sikorski's instructions on the plans for the use of the forces under his command in the general political and military situation (May 1)."

[3] Eden, op. cit., p. 325.

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relations. Eden invited Molotov to London (April 8) but the reply was negative. Then, two weeks later on April 23 Stalin suggested sending Molotov to London to discuss the difficulties that remained.

Throughout April, 1942 Polish-British relations bristled with activity, each side seeing its basic interests involved and trying to convince the other. On April 13 Raczyński sent a memorandum to Eden, protesting that the proposed Treaty would be detrimental to Allied War policy, that it would affect Polish vital interests, and that it would violate the Polish-British Treaty of August 25, 1939. That Treaty contained a secret protocol which recognized Poland's vital interest in Lithuania and promised British support for Poland if Lithuania were threatened by a European Power.[1] Eden replied (April 17) that Raczyński's assertions were incorrect. The British-Soviet Treaty would strengthen Soviet-Western relations by showing British good will; Great Britain was not proposing anything which affected Polish territory; as for Lithuania, it was a German threat that both powers had in mind. Great Britain had also given its guarantee to Rumania in 1939, but since Rumania had become Germany's ally, the guarantee as applied to Bukovina had lost its force.[2]

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[1]GSHI, PRM, 67, "Memorandum from Minister Raczyński to Mr. Eden concerning the British-Soviet negotiations on a treaty of alliance (April 13)."

[2]GSHI, PRM, 67, "Mr. Eden's reply to the Memorandum from Minister Raczyński of April 13, 1942, concerning the Anglo-Soviet negotiations (April 17)."

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Sikorski, Raczyński and Retinger met Churchill, Cripps and several other Cabinet Ministers on April 26, 1942 at Chequers. Churchill was determined to get Sikorski's approval. He said:

> In spite of the opposition in Great Britain on the part of Parliament, the Anglican clergy, not to mention the Catholics, the conservative circles, etc., and in spite of the objections raised by the United States Government, a political treaty with Russia will be signed.

He repeated British arguments and a "highly controversial discussion ensued." Sikorski offered a firm rebuttal, warning that from Polish experience the Soviet Union was an unreliable ally.

> . . . Mr. Churchill seemed to argue without inner conviction. . . . Several times he confessed that he did not like the whole matter, that it was a violation of the Atlantic Charter, and that he was by no means sure that Soviet loyalty would not eventually fail. On the other hand he stubbornly insisted that England had no choice, that he could not cope with everything nor defend all the rights. . . .

Cripps, on the other hand, appeared to argue with conviction. He restated the British reasons without showing scepticism. Had the British sacrificed the "Baltic Provinces" in 1939, Stalin might have then become an active ally. Sikorski remained completely unmoved by British arguments.[1]

The American stand was crucial. Ciechanowski was very active in his effort to prevent the Treaty from being signed, keeping the correct people informed and, in Eden's words, "raising Hell about the Treaty."[2] On April 15 Welles assured him that

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[1] GSHI, PRM, 68, "Record made by Minister Raczyński of a conversation between General Sikorski, Mr. Churchill and Sir Stafford Cripps, held at Chequers in the presence of Mr. Casey, Mr. Duncan Sandys, Minister Raczyński and Dr. Retinger, on the subjects of the Anglo-Soviet Agreement and Soviet Western frontiers (April 26)."

[2] GSHI, PRM, 68, "Record of a conversation between Minister Raczyński with Minister Eden (May 26, 1942)."

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Roosevelt had very definitely stated his position to Churchill and it had been confirmed by Welles to the Soviet Ambassador, Litvinov,[1] who communicated it to Moscow.[2] Again in early May Welles told Ciechanowski that the American Ambassador to Great Britain, John G. Winant, on explicit instructions from the President, had presented the American position to Churchill (May 3).[3] The United States was holding firm to the principles of the Atlantic Charter.

* * * *

Soviet pressure on the Polish Government mounted in the spring of 1942. Recruiting for the Polish Army was virtually discontinued. Contrary to Stalin's promise to Anders (March 18) the Soviet Government decreed that "further recruitment had to be discontinued in view of the fact that the proposed quota had been reached." Soviet officials directed Polish conscripts to labor battalions without advising Polish authorities.[4] Polish nationals were obliged to surrender their papers to Soviet officials and military posts at rail centers were closed down.[5]

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[1]Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs 1929-39; Soviet Ambassador to the United States, 1941-43.

[2]Ciechanowski, op. cit., p. 104.

[3]GSHI, PRM, 69, "Dispatch from Ambassador Ciechanowski to General Sikorski about a conversation with Sumner Welles on the theme of difficulties caused by the Soviets in connection with evacuation and recruitment (May 5)."

[4]DPSR, I, 596.

[5]GSHI, A. 11, 49/Sow/2, "Aide-mémoire from Minister Raczyński to Ambassador Bogomolov concerning the conscription of Poles in the USSR for the Polish Army (May 1)."

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sometimes brought to bear to renounce Polish citizenship. The NKVD sharply limited the relief activities of the Embassy's representatives. There were difficulties in the transport of assistance from abroad and the depot at Novosibirsk was liquidated.[1]

On April 27 Molotov sent another Note to all diplomatic posts describing German atrocities in the Soviet Union. It contained the sentence:

> . . . According to incomplete reports, in three Byelorussian cities alone, the German occupants executed over 28,000 peaceful inhabitants: 6,000 in Vitebsk, 10,000 in Pinsk and over 12,00 in Minsk. . . .[2]

Pińsk was a pre-war Polish city.

While it attacked the Polish Government, the Soviet Government was also strengthening its own Polish clients. At a Pan-Slavic Congress held in early April, the Ukrainian representative spoke of Lwów as a Ukrainian city: Wanda Wasiłewska, dressed in the uniform of a Red Army colonel, called for the liberation of Poland, citing various Polish cities, but omitting Wilno, Białystok and Lwów.[3] Between January and August, 1941, the journal Nowe Widnokręgi (New Horizons) appeared under the joint editorship of Wanda Wasilewska and Helen Usiyevich.[4] It

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[1]GSHI, PRM, 73/4, "Report of the Embassy in Kuibyshev on the alarming course of Soviet powers towards the Polish Army and population (April 10)."

[2]GSHI, A. 11, 49/Sow/3, "Note of Commissar Molotov to all diplomatic missions in Moscow on German atrocities in the USSR (April 27)."

[3]GSHI, PRM, 73/4, "Report of the Embassy in Kuibyshev on the Slavic Congress (April 10)."

[4]Dziewanowski, op. cit., p. 158.

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ceased publication after the Treaty of July 30, 1941. On May 5, 1942, the journal reappeared as a fortnightly, published in Kuibyshev. Wanda Wasilewska was again the editor. Although the journal avoided Communist phraseology, it attacked all Poles who claimed Lwów and Wilno as Polish cities.[1]

Soviet partisans were parachuted into the Polish districts of Chełm, Zamość, Lublin and the Świętokrzyski Mountains. They lacked both a knowledge of the Polish language and of the terrain. Their acts of minor sabotage brought heavy German retribution on the local population.[2] In addition, the Polish Government was concerned because their own underground movement could be held responsible for provoking indiscriminate German terror against Polish civilians.

The Soviet Government also put pressure on the Poles through the Czechoslovaks. The key state in Sikorski's federal plans was Czechoslovakia, but Beneš considered Soviet approval essential. While Raczyński was in the United States, Ciechanowski arranged a luncheon with Litvinov (February 16), whom Raczyński had known when each had represented their respective governments at the League of Nations in Geneva. During the conversation Litvinov suddenly asked how Polish-Czechoslovak conversations were progressing. Raczyński answered that they were

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[1] GSHI, PRM, 73/4, "Report of the Embassy in Kuibyshev on Nowe Widnokręgi (May 19)."

[2] GSHI, A.11, 49/Sow/2, "Note from Minister Raczyński to Ambassador Bogomolov protesting against the activities of Soviet parachutists on the territory of Poland (May 16)."

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progressing quite well, to which Litvinov said, "This is very interesting. But has your government consulted the Soviet Government on this matter." Raczyński replied that he did not see the necessity.[1] In February the Czechoslovak envoy in Moscow, Zdeněk Fierlinger, was informed that the Soviet Union did not view Polish-Czechoslovak negotiations with favor.[2] In London Bogomolov also began to point out the dangers. The Western Powers were divided: Churchill indicated his continued support for the concept of federation even during the stormy meeting with Sikorski on April 26,[3] but Roosevelt began to discourage Sikorski.[4] On May 18 the Czechoslovak State Council adopted a resolution which the Poles interpreted as a part of a gradual surrender to the Soviet point of view:

> The Czechoslovak Republic while fully understanding the vital interests of the Polish nation, respects at the same time the vital needs of the Soviet Union, and must therefore care for the realities which the U.S.S.R. considers basic to its policy and security.
> . . . . . .
> It is impossible to overlook the declared view (of the Czechoslovak Government) that Czechoslovak foreign policy must always give priority, insofar as possible, to the largest alliance of democratic nations in Europe, rather than a mere confederation of two states.[5]

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The culmination of the diplomatic drama came when Molotov arrived in London on May 20. The British were determined

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[1] Ciechanowski, op. cit., p. 93.

[2] Wandycz, op. cit., p.75.

[3] Supra, p. 214.

[4] Ibid., p. 76.

[5] Ibid., p. 79.

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to sign the Treaty. Molotov was resolute in his aims. The Americans vigorously stood by the Atlantic Charter. And Sikorski absolutely refused to agree to British proposals.

At his first meeting with Churchill, Attlee, Eden, and Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Sir Alexander Cadogan, Molotov revealed his two objectives: the creation of the Second Front in 1942 and British recognition of Soviet territorial claims. Of the two, the Second Front was more important at the time. Minimum Soviet territorial demands were the Baltic States, Bukovina, Bessarabia and Finnish territory acquired in 1940.[1] In an afternoon meeting with Eden and Cadogan, Molotov said that the Soviet Union was ready to sign a treaty with Poland on the basis of the Curzon Line with some minor modifications, or on the basis of the line of 1941, which was the Soviet preference. In exchange for leaving the Polish question out of the Soviet-British Treaty, Molotov expected the British to cease supporting the Poles.[2]

When Hull heard of Molotov's proposals he sent a strongly worded memorandum to Roosevelt, restating the American adherence to the Atlantic Charter. Since American silence on territorial agreements could be interpreted as tacit consent, the United States government should inform the British that if they signed the Treaty, they, the Americans, would issue a separate statement, explicitly disavowing subscription to its principles and clauses.

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[1]Eden, op. cit., pp. 327-28.

[2]Ibid.

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Roosevelt approved of the memorandum and the British were duly informed.[1]

Negotiations were deadlocked. Churchill made it clear (May 22) to Molotov that an invasion of Western Europe was impossible because of German air superiority and the presence of large German forces. Molotov would not budge on the question of the annexed territories. The American warning checkmated British plans to make territorial concessions.

On May 23 Eden produced a compromise draft. He proposed putting aside all territorial agreements and merely signing a general, public Treaty of Alliance for twenty years. At first, Molotov was unwilling to submit the draft to Moscow for consideration. Winant met Molotov (May 24) and impressed on him how strongly Roosevelt and Hull opposed the introduction of frontier questions. The following day (May 25) Molotov told Churchill and Eden that he was ready to discuss the draft.

The Treaty was signed on May 26, 1942. The first part repeated earlier undertakings of mutual assistance and a promise not to conclude a separate peace. The second section, which was to remain in force for twenty years, laid down the conditions of post-war collaboration for the reconstruction of Europe and for resisting future aggression.[2] There was no mention of Molotov's "minimum conditions" involving frontiers. Apparently, Sikorski's position of avoiding territorial changes until the Peace had triumphed.

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[1] Hull, op. cit., II, 1172.

[2] Woodward, op. cit., p. 196.

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Why did Molotov accept the compromise? Churchill pointed to Anglo-American solidarity as a factor.[1] Eden felt that Molotov probably saw that he was not going to have his way over frontiers and that more could be gained in the military field by accepting the new terms and then going to Washington[2] where the Americans were more optimistic about the establishment of the Second Front.

Molotov flew from London to Washington, where he met Roosevelt, Hull and Hopkins on May 29. After American rigidity during his negotiations in London, Molotov must have been pleasantly shocked and puzzled by his conversations with Roosevelt. During his second meeting with the President (May 29), he heard Roosevelt's ideas for the post-war settlement.[3] The four major Powers, Great Britain, the United States, the Soviet Union and China, would act as the world's "policemen." They alone would have sufficient armaments to impose peace. They alone would have the power to inspect the territories of other nations to prevent clandestine re-armament. Other nations (Germany, Japan, France, Spain, Belgium, Netherlands, Scandinavia, Turkey, Rumania, Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, etc.) would be disarmed. Molotov, obviously surprised, took the part of the very

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[1] Churchill, The Hinge of Fate, p. 300.

[2] Eden, op. cit., p. 330.

[3] Hull was present at the first meeting (4:30 P.M.) but was absent from the second meeting (7:40 P.M.) which included dinner. Foreign Relations of the United States. Diplomatic Papers, 1942, III, 566, 568.

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nations that the Soviet Union would be most interested in weakening:

> Mr. Molotov remarked that this might be a bitter blow to the prestige of Poland and Turkey. "The Turks," he added, "are an extremely pretentious people." He also inquired about the re-establishment of France as a great power. The President replied that might perhaps be possible within 10 or 20 years. He added that other nations might eventually be accepted progressively at various times among the guarantors of the peace whenever the original guarantors were satisfied with their reliability. . . .
>
> Mr. Molotov observed warmly that the President's ideas for the preservation of mutual peace would be sympathetically viewed by the Soviet government and people.[1]

To a man like Molotov, brought up on Realpolitik with an oriental flavor, the whole idea must have sounded incredible. As for Roosevelt, he was one of the greatest, if not the greatest American domestic politician in the twentieth century. Yet, when the historian reads such statements he is struck by the strange blend of naiveté, idealism and willingness to use heavy-handed methods that went into the personality of Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

In one conversation Sikorski's position and the whole purpose behind the Atlantic Charter were cast into doubt.

During the dinner (May 29) Molotov went straight to the question which concerned him, the Second Front. He pointed out that it was in the interests of the Allies to do something when the Soviet Union was still strong.[2] The following day (May 30) Molotov met to discuss military matters with Roosevelt, Hopkins, American Chief of Staff, General George C. Marshall, and Admiral Ernest J. King. Again he stressed that if Hitler were successful

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[1] Ibid., III, 568-69. [2] Ibid., pp. 569-70.

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in the Eastern Front during 1942, the Western Allies would have to bear the brunt of German power and their task would be much more difficult. Roosevelt asked Marshall if Molotov could inform Stalin that the Allies were preparing for the Second Front in 1942. "Yes" replied the General.[1] This was the word that Molotov wanted to hear.

After Molotov's departure a press release was issued (June 11) from the White House which contained the sentence:

> In the course of the conversations full understanding was reached with regard to the urgent tasks of creating a second front in Europe in 1942. . . .[2]

Roosevelt's meeting with Molotov was his first real contact with top-level Soviet leaders. It was a perplexing experience for him as well as an augury of future relations. Hopkins, commenting on the President's reaction to Molotov, told Robert Sherwood that "Roosevelt was unusually uncomfortable and 'his style was cramped' in these meetings, primarily because of the enormous language difficulty. . . ." Sherwood continues:

> . . . There was also the fact that in all of Roosevelt's manifold dealings with all kinds of people he had never before encountered anyone like Molotov. His relationships with the Kremlin from 1933 to 1939 had been through Litvinov, who, although qualifying as an old Bolshevik, had a Western kind of mind and an understanding of the ways of the world that Roosevelt knew. During the years 1939-41 of the Nazi-Soviet pact Roosevelt had a few personal contacts with Ambassador Oumansky, leaving that tough proposition largely to Hull and Welles. However, Roosevelt was by no means appalled by the new and strange problem in human relations that Molotov presented. It offered a challenge which stimulated him to spare no effort to discover the common ground which, he was sure, must somewhere exist.[3]

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[1] Ibid., pp. 575-77. [2] Ibid., p. 594.

[3] Sherwood, op. cit., p. 564.

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Molotov was elated by the American declaration when he returned to London en route to Moscow. Churchill continued to see only difficulties in an invasion, but felt there was no harm in making the Germans apprehensive by issuing the public statement. But in order not to mislead his Soviet Ally by creating a false sense of optimism, he handed Molotov an aide-mémoire in which he discussed the Second Front. It contained the key sentence "We can therefore give no promise."[1] Nevertheless, Molotov returned to Moscow convinced that the Second Front would be established in the late summer of 1942. Churchill was convinced that it was an impossibility. Here was to be a fertile source of discord.

* * * *

Sikorski had struggled to prevent a British-Soviet Treaty which included territorial concessions to the Soviet Union, either at Poland's expense or any other nations, but his success was a Pyrrhic victory.

Although Eden declared that Great Britain would not conclude any secret agreements, Molotov returned to Moscow with few doubts about British policy. There was no British guarantee to Poland. They had shown that they were not interested in Eastern Europe and that Poland's eastern boundaries were of no importance to them. After the signing of the Treaty British aid to Poland in opposition to Soviet pressure was limited to occasional words professing non-recognition of Soviet claims.

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[1]Churchill, The Hinge of Fate, p. 305.

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Roosevelt, the man upon whom Sikorski had built his hopes, had also taken a stand which had gravely hurt the Polish position. The Americans had forcefully rejected the British-Soviet Treaty because it was against the principles of the Atlantic Charter. Yet when Molotov met Roosevelt, he found the president thinking in terms which, although he may not have realized the consequences, would undermine the basic purposes of the Atlantic Charter. Roosevelt, the shrewd master of domestic politics, was like an untutored child in the world of international Realpolitik. Molotov may have been puzzled by what Roosevelt said, but no doubt he saw that the President was far less formidable than he had appeared from London. By the spring of 1942 not only Roosevelt, but all Washington was starting to change its attitude towards the Soviet Union. Radical New Dealers and the press were becoming more and more vocal in their praise of Stalin and the Soviet Union. The willingness to accommodate Soviet demands would soon be in the air.

Sikorski was dependent on his two Allies, Great Britain and the United States. Increasingly they withdrew their support from Sikorski and his Government in his dealings with Stalin. The Soviet Army was killing hundreds of thousands of German soldiers. Since the Western Allies were doing very little by comparison, they felt both guilt for their inactivity and fear that Stalin would conclude a separate peace. Sikorski's military contribution was negligible. Sikorski had helped to torpedo

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Stalin's Treaty. Now, he would stand more and more alone to face Stalin's wrath. He did not have to wait long for the first bitter fruits of his diplomatic triumph.

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CHAPTER VI

JUNE, 1942-JANUARY, 1943

The Soviet plans for the winter counter-offensive to encircle and destroy the German forces between Moscow and Smolensk proved overly ambitious. Reserves in trained manpower and mechanized equipment were inadequate, and were not always used efficiently. Air support was limited and supply lines had broken down. With the thaw at the end of March, the Soviet offensive came to a complete standstill.[1] The Germans had been repulsed at the Battle of Moscow, but on May 8, 1942, they began their spring offensive and inflicted a defeat on Soviet forces in the Kharkhov region. The Crimea passed completely into German hands when the fortress of Sevastopol fell on July 3. At the beginning of July they began their great southern offensive. They broke through the Soviet lines. When Rostov-on-Don fell on July 27 almost without a fight, it seemed that the entire Front might collapse. By August German units were nearing the foothills of the Caucasus and were within 300 miles of the oil wells at Baku. At the beginning of September German forces were converging on the industrial and transportation center of Stalingrad.

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[1] Werth, op. cit., p. 256-58.

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Soviet-British relations improved briefly after Molotov's visit to London because Soviet leaders thought the Allies were going to create a Second Front in 1942 to relieve the pressure. The British Ambassador in Moscow, Sir Archibald Clark Kerr, reported (June 28) that Molotov had "swept aside" his suggestion that "no fast promise had been given." Molotov said that the true test of the British-Soviet Treaty would be the opening of the Second Front. Eden instructed Clark Kerr to inform Soviet leaders that they were overrating the probability of the Second Front in 1942.[1] As indications increased that there would be no Second Front, relations became progressively cooler.

The Artic route to Murmansk and Archangel was the most direct route to the Soviet Union for material aid from the Western Powers. Since the Soviet Union lacked sufficient vessels, three-quarters of the ships in the convoys were British and American. Between the time of the Beaverbrook-Harriman Mission, when large-scale deliveries of war material to the USSR from Great Britain and the United States commenced, and March 1942, there were few difficulties. Then German U-boats and aircraft based in northern Norway increasingly molested the convoys.[2] The climax came with P.Q. 17 which left Iceland on June 27. But after twenty-three out of thirty-four ships were sunk, Churchill ordered the suspension of the sailing of P.Q. 18

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[1]Woodward, op. cit., p. 197.

[2]Churchill, The Hinge of Fate, pp. 228-29.

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until the end of period of continual daylight. He sent a note to Stalin (July 17) informing the Soviet dictator of his decision and the impossibility of an invasion of northern Norway.[1] Stalin, interpreting Churchill's action as yet another breach of faith, answered irately (July 23):

> I gather from the message, first, that the British Government refuses to go on supplying the Soviet Union with war materials by the northern route and secondly, that despit the agreed Anglo-Soviet Communiqué on the adoption of urgent measures to open a second front in 1942, the British Government is putting off the operation till 1943.
>
> According to our naval experts, the arguments of the British naval experts on the necessity of stopping delivery of war supplies to the northern harbours of the U.S.S.R. are untenable . . . no major task can be carried out in wartime without risk or losses. You know, of course, that the Soviet Union is suffering far greater losses. Be that as it may, I never imagined that the British Government would deny us delivery of war materials precisely now, when the Soviet Union is badly in need of them in view of the grave situation on the Soviet-German front. . . .
>
> As to the second point, namely, that of opening the second front in Europe, I fear the matter is taking an improper turn. In view of the situation on the Soviet-German front, I state most emphatically that the Soviet Government cannot tolerate the second front in Europe being postponed till 1943.[2]

Churchill saw the need to acquaint Stalin more fully with the British situation. On July 28 Clark Kerr suggested to the British Prime Minister that he come to Moscow[3] and on July 31 Stalin invited him.[4] Churchill writes, "It was like carrying a large lump of ice to the North Pole."[5] In their first meeting

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[1] Ibid., pp. 239-41.

[2] Stalin's Correspondence, I, 56.

[3] Woodward, op. cit., p. 198.

[4] Stalin's Correspondence, I, 58.

[5] Churchill, The Hinge of Fate, p. 428.

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(August 12) Churchill explained that when Molotov came to London, he told him that he could make no promises about the Second Front. Now after study "The British and American Governments did not feel themselves able to undertake a major operation in September, which was the latest month in which the weather was to be counted on."[1] He described Anglo-American plans for an invasion of North Africa. Stalin was glum, but appeared to accept the fact. In their second meeting (August 13) Stalin changed his attitude and became abusive. He accused the British of being "too much afraid of fighting the Germans"[2] and demanded higher sacrifices from the Western Allies. Nonetheless, there would be no Second Front in 1942.

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Sikorski's position continued to be dependent on the backing he received from his Western Allies. The Soviet Government began an all-out attack on the Polish relief system in July, 1942.[3] The Polish Government sent urgent requests for British and American intercession and firmness, but the Allies were still checked by the same anxieties, embarrassment and admiration for the Soviet Union. Churchill told Sikorski (August 30) that he did not raise Poland's problems while in Moscow because of Allied relative weakness and their inability to give the Soviet Union effective aid.[4]

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[1] Ibid., p. 430.

[2] Ibid., pp. 437-38.

[3] Infra, pp. 237-40.

[4] GSHI, PRM, 68, "Record of a conversation held at

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Anders was invited to meet Churchill in Moscow at 8:30 P.M. on August 14, 1942. Instead of meeting Anders at the appointed time, Churchill went to Stalin's private residence and did not see the Polish Commander until 3:00 A.M. Since they scarcely had time to discuss Polish-Soviet relations because Churchill was scheduled to leave in a couple of hours, Churchill asked Anders to meet him in Cairo.[1] Churchill's silence during his discussions with Stalin about Polish complaints against the Soviet Government and his treatment of Anders indicated how unimportant Poland was to the British and certainly would not have gone unnoticed by Soviet officials.

* * * *

Stalin had found the Polish question an internal nuisance ever since the reestablishment of diplomatic relations in 1941. In the spring of 1942 he apparently decided to wash his hands of the Poles once and for all. The key institution which had to be eliminated was the Polish Army. Sikorski wanted to keep the Army in the USSR at all costs for political reasons. Anders, on the other hand, wanted to withdraw it and worked through the NKVD to obtain Soviet consent for evacuation.[2] As a result of the accumulation of ill treatment at Soviet hands, the Polish Army's morale was such that it was not prepared to fight under

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Chequers between General Sikorski and Mr. Churchill on the subject of British support for Polish claims in Moscow (August 30)."

[1]Anders, op. cit., pp. 113-14.

[2]Ibid., p. 112.

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the Soviet Supreme Command and it also wanted to leave the Soviet Union. Finally, there were the British who wanted the Polish troope to reinforce the hard-pressed British forces in the Middle East.

The manner in which the final decision to withdraw the Polish Army was made shows how Sikorski's political position had deteriorated. The British and Soviet Governments reached agreement without Polish participation. Stalin informed the British Ambassador through Molotov that the Soviet Government agreed to the entire evacuation of Polish military formations in the Soviet Union.[1] The troops were not to be equipped for service on the Eastern Front, as had been discussed in the past, but were to fight with the British in the Middle East.[2]

Sikorski and the Polish Government knew that once the Polish Army left the Soviet Union, the days of the relief system were numbered. Yet, he was in no position to resist. He regretfully accepted the decision and tried to salvage what he could from the unpleasant turn of events. On July 2 he telegrammed Kot and Anders:

> The Polish Government accepted this suggestion and agreed to it in principle, linking up this question with that of a further call-up, the setting up of a reserve centre there and the evacuation of children and civilian population residing in the area in which the troops are quartered.
> . . . . . .

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[1]GSHI, A. 11, 22/31.6, "Telegram from General Sikorski to Lt.-General Anders and Ambassador Kot containing instructions for the evacuation of Polish troops from the USSR to the Middle East (July 2)."

[2]Churchill, The Hinge of Fate, p. 241.

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> I attach great importance to leaving a strong and well organized reserve centre under the command of General Bohusz. It should be able to organize further recruitment and evacuation. You must insist on this very strongly.[1]

The actual evacuation took place between August 5 and August 25. Over 70,000 individuals, including 40,000 officers and men, were withdrawn.[2] The Soviet leaders were glad to see the "reactionary" Polish Army leave Soviet soil. Since it left on the eve of the Battle of Stalingrad when the Soviet Union faced its most desparate moments of the war, it appeared to the Russian people "like rats leaving a ship they thought was sinking."[3]

Nothing came of Sikorski's hopes to enlarge the forces under his command from Poles in the Soviet Union, because the Soviet Government refused to allow further recruitment:

> As the Polish Government does not find it possible to use the Polish divisions formed on the territory of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Soviet-German front, the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics cannot allow the formation of any Polish units whatsoever nor any recruiting in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.[4]

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[1] GSHI, A.11, 22/31.6, "Telegram from General Sikorski to Lt.-General Anders and Ambassador Kot containing instructions for the evacuation of Polish troops from the USSR to the Middle East (July 2)."

[2] 40,400 officers and men, 4,432 members of auxiliary units and 25,457 civilians for a total of 70,289. Pobóg-Malinowski, Najnowsza Historia Polityczna Polski, III, 240-41.

[3] Werth, op. cit., p. 578.

[4] GSHI, A.11, 49/Sow/2a, "Note from Minister Raczyński to Ambassador Bogomolov on further enrollment of Polish citizens into the Polish Army (August 27)."

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Racyźński sent a Note of protest to Bogomolov (August 27).[1] In his reply (October 31) Bogomolov refuted Raczyński's arguments and denounced the Polish Army, its Command and the Polish Government for unwillingness to fight the Germans on the Eastern Front.[2] The history of Sikorski's Polish Army in the Soviet Union had ended.

In a land like the Soviet Union which had so recently emerged from the purges, the Polish relief system was viewed with grave suspicion. Besides feeding people, relief agents collected information about the local needs of Polish deportees as well as about people still in confinement and their places of confinement. In doing so, they inevitably collected data about local Soviet problems and boldly peered into the forbidden land of Soviet internal security. They carried on relations with people defined as Soviet citizens in the Note of December 1, 1941, including some individuals inducted into the Soviet Army, issued Polish passports to them and helped them to send and receive letters from abroad. From time to time the Polish representatives used a code in their communications. In addition, the diffusion of Polish newspapers, including such anti-Soviet papers as Wiadomości Polskie, listening to foreign

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[1] Ibid.

[2] GSHI, PRM, 72/3, "Note from Ambassador Bogomolov to Minister Raczyński denouncing the alleged unwillingness of the Polish Army in the USSR, its Command and the Polish Government to take part in the struggle on the Soviet-German front (October 31)."

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radio broadcasts and bribing of Soviet officials were all considered to be anti-Soviet activities.[1]

Under normal circumstances these activities would be considered hostile actions, bordering on espionage in Stalin's Russia. But in 1942 the Soviet Union was fighting for its very life, and to the Russians, the Poles were not only contributing nothing to the war effort, but were continually seeking privileges which Soviet citizens did not receive. In the situation of such grave emergency Polish actions were both doubly suspect and annoying.

The clashes of interests were also symptoms of broader principles. It was not a new tradition among Poles to form self-help agencies to provide for their own material, cultural and legal needs when removed from their native surroundings and faced with a new threatening environment. Similar national institutions sprang up in the nineteenth century on the sandy soil of Prussia when the German Government tried to germanize the Poles in their share of the partitioned nation; and they flourished in the first half of the twentieth century in the liberal, but alien lands of the United States and Canada. Within a few months the Polish Government had created an efficient, independent relief system, spanning the Soviet Union. The Soviet governmental system was all-inclusive and, unlike nineteenth-century Germany, but more especially America, there was no room for such independence. If

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[1]GSHI, A. 11, 49/Sow/6/1, "Report from Raczyński to Cadogan (August 4)."

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the Soviet Government destroyed the relief system, it would cut off the connection between the deportees and their Government and return them to complete Soviet control.[1]

Secondly, the system was a source of embarrassment to the Soviet Government which had told their people for years of the bankruptcy of the capitalist way of life. Gifts from the unknown capitalist world were making a better life possible for Poles than the average Soviet citizen enjoyed. This seemed in effect, to be a subtle form of counter-revolutionary propaganda.[2]

The first direct thrust against the system was made on June 9, 1942 when the NKID informed the Polish Embassy that its delegates and representatives no longer would have the right to issue passports. In future the Polish Embassy was required to present lists of individuals with detailed personal information to the NKID for its permission before Polish passports could be issued. The data required included religion, as well as other material which the NKID could use to invalidate Polish citizenship on the basis of the Note of December 1, 1941. The Note went on to say:

> The People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs also has the honour to inform the Embassy that it is indispensable to include in the above-mentioned list all persons who have already been issued with Polish national passports.[3]

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[1] Foreign Relations of the United States. Diplomatic Papers, 1942, III, 185.

[2] GSHI, PRM, 74/3, "Report of Franciszek Wilk on the state of the Polish question in Russia (September 8, 1942)."

[3] GSHI, A.11, 49/Sow/3, "Note from the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs to the Polish Embassy in the USSR

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In July the Soviet's move against the relief system began in earnest. On July 2, in the absence of the delegate at the Archangel post, Józef Gruja, NKVD officials entered his office, removed his archives and cash on hand, and arrested his staff.[1] Gruja, in spite of his diplomatic immunity, was soon arrested himself.[2] On July 3 the NKID informed the Polish Embassy that, in view of the fact that there were few Poles left in the areas, the delegate offices at Aldan, and the two key posts at Archangel and Vladivostok, would be closed down.[3] Next the NKID sent a Note to the Polish Embassy (July 6) which announced the withdrawal of diplomatic immunity from delegates who possessed it because they were not performing a diplomatic function.[4] The

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stating that the issuing of Polish passports in the USSR will depend on the Soviet permission in each individual case (June 9).

[1]GSHI, A. 11, 49/Sow/2, "Note from the Polish Embassy in the USSR to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs protesting against the infringement of the diplomatic immunity of the Embassy Delegate in Archangel and against the arrest of his staff (July 6)."

[2]GSHI, A. 11, 49/Sow/2, "Note from the Polish Embassy in the USSR to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs protesting against the arrest of the secretaries of the Polish Embassy M. Załęski and M. Gruja at Archangel (July 9)."

[3]GSHI, A. 11, 49/Sow/3, "Aide-mémoire delivered by the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs to the Polish Embassy in the USSR, announcing the closing of the Embassy Delegates at Aldan, Vladivostok and Archangel (July 3)."

[4]GSHI, A. 11, 49/Sow/3, "Note from the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs to the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in the USSR, announcing the withdrawal of diplomatic immunity from the Embassy Delegates.

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The delegate at Vladivostok, Maciej Załęski, who also had been accorded diplomatic immunity, was arrested and his files seized.[1] Kot was not officially informed of the arrests by the NKID, but learned from Polish representatives still at liberty.[2] When Kot protested (July 8) the arrests and the closing down of the delegate offices, Vyshinsky replied:

> . . . I cannot agree that the charge that the Soviet authorities are not taking a brotherly attitude has any relation with the facts, when it is the behaviour of the other party that has necessitated their arrest. Is that not rather an abuse of hospitality? If they are accused, it is because they are not friends.[3]

In the same conversation Vyshinsky told Kot that the Soviet Government considered the First Secretary of the Polish Embassy, Wiesław Arlet, and the Polish Military Attaché, Major-General Romauld Wolikowski, as personae non gratae because of their hostile attitude towards the Soviet Union and demanded their immediate recall.[4] On July 10 the NKID informed the Polish Embassy that Gruja and Załęski would be released, but insisted on their immediate departure from the Soviet Union.[5] Other

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[1]GSHI, A. 11, 49/Sow/2, "Note from the Polish Embassy in the USSR to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs protesting the arrest of the secretaries of Polish Embassy, M. Załęski and M. Gruja at Archangel (July 9)."

[2]GSHI, A. 11, 49/Sow/31, "Report by Dr. Tadeusz Jankowski on Polish-Soviet relations after July 1, 1942 (August 22)."

[3]Kot, op. cit., p. 263.

[4]Ibid., p. 257.

[5]GSHI, A. 11, 49/Sow/3, "Note of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs to the Embassy Delegates of the Republis of Poland (July 10)."

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members of the Archangel delegate office would also be freed on the same condition.[1]

Between July 15 and 20 the pattern of removing all the leaders of the relief system became general as all delegate offices were closed down and many people were arrested.[2] Archives were seized, the Embassy's accounts at branches of the State Bank of the U.S.S.R. were blocked, and warehouses were closed and left unprotected.[3] The Soviet Government forbade (July 20) publishing enquiries about the location of Polish citizens in the Embassy's paper Polska (Poland).[4] By mid-September the Embassy knew of 110 arrests of its relief personnel.[5]

The deportees for whom the Polish Government felt the most concern were the thousands of children, many of them orphans, who were marooned at various places in the Soviet Union. According to an estimate of the Embassy there were 160,000--of

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[1]GSHI, A.11, 49/Sow/3, "Note from the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs to the Polish Embassy in the USSR, concerning the status of Embassy Delegates (July 10)."

[2]Kot, op. cit., p. 271.

[3]GSHI, A.11, 49/Sow/2, "Note from Chargé d'Affaires Sokolnicki to Deputy Commissar Vyshinsky on the Soviet Unilateral decision to close the offices and arrest several Polish Embassy Delegates (July 19)."

[4]GSHI, A.11, 49/Sow/14, "Conversation between Chargé d'Affaires Sokolnicki and Deputy Commissar Vyshinsky (July 20)."

[5]GSHI, A. 11, 49/Sow/27, "Report of Chargé d'Affaires Sokolnicki to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (September 13)."

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whom there was a possibility of moving 50,000.[1] Kot reported to Sikorski on May 24 that the death rate for the preceding two and one-half months among the Polish population in Uzbekistan was between 5 and 14 per cent and that children were one of the groups most severely hit. He earnestly asked the Polish Prime Minister to work for the evacuation of the children.[2] Throughout the spring the Polish Government was active in attempting to get Allied support for their evacuation. President Roosevelt took a personal interest in the case and agreed to allow the American Red Cross to assist in the transportation of 10,000 women and children to South Africa, but Molotov replied (July 5) to the President's request by saying that the evacuation even of 10,000 was impossible and that the Soviet Union could care for them.[3]

The fate of Jewish Poles in the Soviet Union was another related problem which caused the Polish Government considerable difficulty and, in the long run, much harm. Most welfare officers treated Jews without discrimination and thousands of Polish Jews owed their lives to the welfare system.[4] In fact, Jewish Poles,

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[1]GSHI, PRM, 73/4, "Report of the Embassy in Kuibyshev on the present state of the Polish population, with special reference to children (May 11)."

[2]GSHI, PRM, 73/4, "Report from Ambassador Kot to General Sikorski on the material situation of the Polish population and the need for evacuation (May 24)."

[3]Foreign Relations of the United States. Diplomatic Papers, 1942, III, 157.

[4]GSHI, PRM, 74/3, "Letter from the [Jewish] Polish citizens at 'White Waters' expressing thanks to the Polish Government (May 9, 1942)."

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on the whole, fared better than Christian Poles, because a larger number were located in urban centers and had easier contact with relief agencies, whereas Christian Poles tended to be settled in the countryside and were more isolated.[1] Both Kot and Anders were forcefully opposed to all forms of anti-Semitism. The Soviet Government wanted to prevent the departure of Jewish poles because of the harmful reports they could sent to powerful Jewish elements in the West.[2] When the Polish Army along with some civilians were evacuated, NKVD officials prevented the departure of many Jewish Poles. They told the Jews that the Soviet Government did not oppose their departure, but it was the Polish Government which were responsible for the decision to leave them behind.[3] There were some unpleasant incidents of discrimination by Polish officers who refused to take Jews in the final evacuation, which seemed to verify Soviet allegations.[4] When some did manage to leave and told their stories, the Polish Government appeared to be following an anti-Semitic

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[1]GSHI, PRM, 71, "Memorandum presented by Ambassador Ciechanowski during a conversation with Under Secretary of State, Sumner Welles (July 17)."

[2]Before their arrest Alter and Ehrlich had sent embarrassing messages to their colleagues in the West which was intercepted by the Soviet censor. Supra, Chap. IV, pp. 162, 172. Foreign Relations of the United States. Diplomatic Papers, 1942, III, 172.

[3]GSHI, PRM, 102/1, "Report of the evacuation by the delegate of the Polish Embassy (A. Jenicz) connected to the headquarters of the Polish Army in U.S.S.R. at Jangi Jul (No date, 1943)."

[4]Ibid.

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policy in the eyes of the English-speaking world.[1]

During the crucial month of July there was a major change at the Polish Embassy. Kot left the Soviet Union (July 13) because of ill health. His temporary replacement was the Chargé d'Affaires, Henryk Sokolnicki. Kot has been justly criticized because his scheming against sanators in the Polish Army created disharmony between himself and Anders. In the delicate matter of

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[1]Ciechanowski relates the Polish Underground's and the Polish Government's true attitude towards the fate of Jewish Poles:

> From the information I was constantly communicating to the American Government and to the press, and describing in my numerous speeches in many American cities, the monstrous pattern of Hitler's mass extermination of Polish Jews and of Jews brought to Poland from other countries was becoming clearly evident. The Polish Underground insistently demanded that our government present these facts to our Allies and especially to the American Government. Op. cit., p. 117.

Ciechanowski describes Sikorski as "working overtime" (p. 117) in his effort to bring German atrocities against Jewish Poles out into the open and to arrange repressive action against the Germans, such as retaliatory bombing of German cities. When Ciechanowski approached Roosevelt on these points (August 5, 1942), the President said that

> . . . he had refrained from making any public declaration because Secretary of State Hull was of the opinion that such a declaration would bring no result. He did not think it advisable to start actual reprisals or bombing of German cities at a time when the Allies had not yet reached their full air power, and Germany might use this as a pretext for increased bombing and terrorism.

In reply Ciechanowski pointed out

> . . . that hitherto all protests against German acts of oppression and terrorism had been voiced exclusively by the victims of these acts, while the Great Powers, the United States and Great Britain, had never directly participated in any such protests and remained mere spectators and witnesses. Ciechanowski, op. cit., pp. 118-19.

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dealing with Soviet leaders, his inexperience and excessive tenacity made him unpopular. Yet, the same tenacity saved many lives. Although Kot was hypersensitive about his compatriots' political backgrounds, he never showed discrimination in his efforts to free them from Soviet captivity.

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In 1942 Sikorski lost one great military potential--the Polish prisoners of war still in the Soviet Union. But by the end of the year he had at his disposal another growingly impressive military establishment, the Polish Underground. Sikorski firmly believed that the Underground could make a genuinely significant contribution to the war effort. Following the September campaign there were many fragmented military units in Poland. On February 14, 1942, after much effort, Sikorski ordered the transformation of the various groups--the ZWZ which the other groups considered to have a sanacja orientation, most of the Nationalist, Peasant, PPS and other units--into the homogeneous organization, the Armia Krajowa (A.K.-the Home Army). By the end of 1942 the Polish Underground was jelling into a formidable military force. The AK Command calculated that it could mobilize twenty-two infantry divisions and six cavalry brigades.[1] And by mid-1943 the AK had an enrollment of 300,000 men.[2]

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[1]Mitkiewicz, op. cit., p. 328.

[2]Bór-Komorowski, op. cit., p. 142.

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The weakness of the AK was its lack of armament. In November, 1942, its Commander, Major-General Stefan Grot-Rowecki, reported that he could arm only ten to twelve infantry brigades and completely lacked heavy equipment.[1] Roosevelt had promised Sikorski funds under Lend-Lease to arm the Polish Underground.[2] The problem was delivery. Bombers were needed to parachute equipment and specialists into Poland to instruct the AK in the art of modern guerrilla warfare. Roosevelt also promised Sikorski six Liberators for this purpose.

The stumbling block proved to be British strategists. They were hesitant to send much needed war material to resistance movements which could not be related directly and immediately to Allied operations. Throughout 1941 and 1942, they tended to support movements in the Mediterranean area and the Balkans, and considered Poland low on their list of priorities.[3] This

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[1] Mitkiewicz, op. cit., p. 328.

[2] Supra, Chap. V, p. 201.

[3] In March, 1943 the Chief of Staff set up the following priority list of resistance movements to be aided:

(i) The Italian islands, Corsica and Crete.
(ii) The Balkans.
(iii) France.
(iv) Poland and Czechoslovakia.
(v) Norway and the Low Countries.
(vi) Far East.

And in November, 1943 when operation OVERLORD had been confirmed, the list was revised to read as follows:

(i) The Balkans.
(ii) Enemy-occupied Italy.
(iii) France.
(iv) The Aegean islands and Crete.
(v) Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia.
(vi) Norway and the Low Countries.
(vii) Far East.

James R. M. Butler, ed., The Grand Strategy (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1956), V, 321-22.

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information was unknown to Sikorski.

Sikorski had definite strategic and political plans for the AK. With regard to the AK's attitude towards the Soviet Union, he informed Grot-Rowecki on November 28, 1942:

> . . . I have to reckon also with such developments which might lead to the Red Army entering the frontiers of the Republic, in pursuit of the enemy. To wage an armed struggle by the Underground Army against Soviet troops entering Poland, would be sheer madness. To keep secret the military organization of whose existence the Soviet Government is well informed, would lead to an open fight of the Soviet troops against the Underground Army, a fight on which Communist propaganda would spread distorted views in the camp of the Allied Nations. In this eventuality I order, therefore, to prepare the Underground Army for coming into the open, and to start its mobilization. Its strength should be as big as possible, and it should emphasize its sovereign status and its positive attitude towards Soviet Russia. . . . It is imperative that the Home country, and the military organizations in particular, present their totally united front, and that Communist influence does not prevail among them. . . . It is imperative for the Underground Army to absorb other semi-military organizations, as any sign of disruption would provide an opportunity for the Soviet Union; this would be the greatest calamity, extremely dangerous for Poland. By giving an example of statesmanlike attitude the Underground Army must become the rallying point for all organizations to whose patriotic feelings it is necessary to appeal. . . . I cannot stress strongly enough the great importance of national unity and discipline at such a moment. Traitors, of the kind of Colonel Berling and Wanda Wasilewska, will tread in the steps of Soviet troops entering Poland, and they will do everything possible in order to bring about the disruption of the Polish nation and undermining of the Polish State.[1]

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The military "Hinge of Fate" turned in the Allies' favor during the second half of 1942. In the Pacific the Americans invaded Guadalcanal on August 7. In North Africa the Battle of

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[1]GSHI, Collection of the Home Army, Coll, 17/2, "Instruction from General Sikorski to Major-General Grot-Rowecki concerning Polish-Soviet Relations (November 28)."

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El Alamein began on October 23 and by November 4 General Erwin Rommel was in full retreat. British and American forces landed at Casablanca, Oran and Algiers on November 8. But these victories were small efforts by comparison to the drama which was unfolding on the Eastern Front. In July it seemed that the Russians might collapse. Then in August and September Soviet resistence stiffened. On September 13 an all-out German attack on Stalingrad began and within ten days most of the center of the city was in German hands. There followed a stalemate in the fighting which lasted several weeks and which saw some of the most stubborn military action of the entire war. Meanwhile, Soviet forces were regrouping to the north and south of the city. Winter conditions set in. On November 19 the Soviet counter-offensive began in the form of two pincers which joined on November 22, cutting off 300,000 German soldiers at Stalingrad. Hitler ordered the Commander of the German Sixth Army, Field-Marshal Friedrich von Paulus, to hold the city. German efforts (December 12-23) to relieve the beleaguered Army were repulsed. The cream of the German Army was trapped, alone to face Soviet vengeance and the Russian winter.

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British-Soviet relations after Churchill's visit in August, 1942 continued to be cool. Stalin applied pressure for the Second Front and Churchill could not provide one. The Soviet Government did not trust the British. Eden told Sikorski (October 6) that he thought Stalin was afraid that the

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British wanted to let Germany and the Soviet Union fight until they were both exhausted. Consequently, the Soviet Government not only refrained from giving operational plans to Western Chiefs of Staff, but also kept secret its war-production figures.[1]

Soviet pin-pricks about the Second Front and Stalin's general secretiveness did nothing to allay British anxieties. The possibility that the Soviet Union could negotiate a separate peace with Hitler was always at the back of the minds of Western leaders. In reply to Polish requests for British intercession in such matters as the attack on their relief system, the interruption of recruiting, and Polish-Soviet relations in general, the British continued to feel their hands were tied. Churchill told Sikorski (November 19) that he could do nothing, but hoped that when the Western Allies had won some significant victories he would be in a position to act on Poland's behalf. He said, "Our best Ambassador is El Alamein."[2] Sikorski received no support from his British Ally in his dealings with Stalin as the Polish situation worsened from day to day.

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In the arena of press and public opinion praise of the Soviet Union rose to new heights, while the Polish image de-

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[1]GSHI, PRM, 68, "Report of a conversation between General Sikorski and Minister Eden (October 6)."

[2]GSHI, PRM, 68, "Report of a conversation between General Sikorski and Prime Minister Churchill on the lack of arms for the Polish Army, the shift of the Polish Army from Scotland to the Middle East, relations with Russia, Sikorski's trip to the United States and the federation in Europe (November 19)."

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clined sharply. Soviet heroism was praised throughout the Anglo-Saxon world. In Great Britain the powerful Beaverbrook press urgently called for a Second Front to relieve the Soviet Ally. Soviet Ambassador Maisky worked diligently among newspaper circles for the same purpose. In September he grew bolder and attacked Churchill and Eden for British inactivity in spite of their promise of the Second Front that year. He met with prominent members of the American press and attacked the United States Government for giving in to the British on the Second Front.[1] The British were annoyed by Soviet interference. On September 18 Eden summoned Maisky and told him that such public criticisms of British policy by the Soviet Ambassador were harmful to good relations. A week later the Foreign Office asked Clark Kerr to protest about similar anti-British propaganda in the Soviet Union.[2]

The Poles enjoyed no comparable liberty. In Great Britain they were told to keep silent in the interest of Allied unity. Deputy Polish Prime Minister Mikołajczyk, bitterly writes:

> We in London could not raise our voices. Nothing could be said that would embarrass Stalin. We were told by the British to hold our peace, not only in the face of the arrest of many relief workers, but also despite the fact that hundreds of thousands of Poles were forced to become Russian

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[1] GSHI, PRM, 74/2, "Report of Litauer to the Premier (Sikorski) on the question of the action of Ambassador Maisky among Anglo-Saxon press circles (September 21)."

[2] Woodward, op. cit., p. 199.

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> citizens. Those who resisted were jailed, shot, or sent to slow death in labour camps.[1]

The result was that outside the small inner group of British policy-makers to whom Sikorski and his colleagues protested, no one knew of Soviet actions against the Polish Government during the summer of 1942.[2] All the public saw was Soviet gallantry.

The Poles were victims of a devastatingly effective whispering campaign sponsored by Soviet representatives in Great Britain with the aim of undermining the prestige of the Polish Government. Biddle notes in a report to Hull (July 27) about the attack on the relief system:

> . . . The powerful propaganda machinery of the Comintern seemed to have been set in motion; foreign press correspondents were being given mysterious hints concerning the alleged unmasking of a large spy ring. . . .[3]

The Soviet Embassy continued to minitor carefully the Polish press in Great Britain. Vyshinsky protested to Kot (July 8) about the June 30 issue of the semi-official newspaper Dziennik Polski (Polish Daily) which contained an interview with President Raczkiwicz. There were two juxtaposed sentences which the Soviet Government considered offensive:

> Two years' suffering of Poles in Russia has strengthened their will for action and no trace of exhaustion or apathy is left among them.
>
> Everywhere I met with only one desire: to avenge the wrong inflicted on Poland.[4]

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[1] Stanisław Mikołajczyk, The Pattern of Soviet Domination (London: Sampson Low, Marston & Co., 1948), p. 26.

[2] Foreign Relations of the United States. Diplomatic Papers, 1942, III, 165.

[3] Ibid., p. 166. [4] Kot, op. cit., p. 260.

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On July 9 the Counsellor of the Polish Embassy, Litauer, met TASS correspondent Kaminsky who complained about various items which he did not consider conducive to good Polish-Soviet relations. The Soviet representative declared that not only opposition newspapers, such as Wiadomości Polskie, were causing difficulties, but individuals and papers controlled by Parties related to the Polish Government were making unfriendly statements. He reproached Litauer for Raczkiewicz's interview and a remark made by the Minister of Social Welfare, Jan Stanczyk, that the Soviet Union had fallen on Poland in 1939 and had deported 1,000,000 Poles. On July 6 Dziennik Polski contained a prediction that after the Germans had been pushed out of eastern Europe, there would be no possibility of Communism coming into the area. Kaminsky explained that the remark had upset Soviet circles. He protested that on July 1 the PPS paper, Robotnik (The Worker), had treated Communism and Fascism as one with reference to the events of 1939.[1] There were similar complaints on November 19 and December 2. On the later date, Soviet Embassy officials protested about an article in Dziennik Polski which described life in Siberia.[2]

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Cutting across all inter-Allied relations throughout 1942 was a shift in the Allied balance of power, caused by the

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[1] GSHI, PRM, 72/3, "Report of a conversation between Stefan Litauer and TASS correspondent Kaminsky (July 9)."

[2] GSHI, PRM, 72/3, "Report of a conversation between W. Wyszyński officials of the Soviet Embassy, Valkov and Shiborin (December 2)."

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rising importance of the United States. The United States was unprepared for war in 1941. By May, 1942 the Americans could veto the British-Soviet Treaty--an indication already of the swing in the Allied line-up of power. The United States was fresh and possessed gigantic resources, whereas the British had been at war three years in September and were suffering from fatigue. By the end of 1942 the United States had become the senior partner in the Anglo-American Alliance. Even though the Polish Government were tied to the British by a formal alliance, and the Polish Armed Forces were integrated into the British military establishment, Sikorski had to take increasing account of the relative change in the Allied balance of power.

During the first six months after Pearl Harbor the American Government remained constant to its commitment to the Atlantic Charter and was far from ecstatic about its Ally by chance, the Soviet Union. During the summer and autumn of 1942 the old suspicions about the Soviet Union were giving way in powerful American circles to a new admiration for its military achievements and a desire to win Soviet good will in the post-war world where wars would be anachronistic. Ciechanowski describes the change:

> . . . I had watched with growing apprehension the shaping of American opinion and the growth of influence in official and semi-official positions around the White House, whose natural enthusiasm for the Russian war effort appeared to have steadily developed into a pro-Soviet psychosis blinding them to the deep differences between American and Russian mentality, and to the very different meaning of words in the Soviet and American vocabularies. They appeared to have conveniently accepted the false idea that the Russians were very akin to Americans in their way of thinking, and regarded Russia as a near democracy, somewhat more radical

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> than the American democracy. They believed that by stressing Soviet-American friendship, and in every way humoring Soviet whims, Stalin's Russia could be persuaded to accept American principles and might adopt the American way of life.[1]

Constitutionally the American President had a very different relation to his Secretary of State and his Cabinet than the British Prime Minister had with his Foreign Secretary and his Cabinet. The British Prime Minister was more of a primus inter pares who must work with his Cabinet. Since all American Cabinet members were Presidential appointees, the President was not bound to accept their advice to the same degree that the British Prime Minister was. Secondly, as a result of geographic and historical forces, the Foreign Office's stature was by comparison much higher than the State Department's. Geographic isolation from the beginning of American history made the question of foreign relations of lesser importance. In modern times Great Britain has always been deeply concerned with European diplomatic problems. The Foreign Office became an institution which was at the center of all decision making, with well-worn paths to all focal points of power--a position the State Department never held. As a result of these constitutional peculiarities in the United States, the important question was not who held Cabinet positions, but rather who had regular access to the President's ear.

By the end of 1942 individuals having radical New Deal backgrounds and possessing strong pro-Soviet orientations were

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[1]Ciechanowski, op. cit., pp. 125-26.

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winning control of the President's ear. The most outstanding example of an individual who held no office, but who had constant direct access to Roosevelt and immense personal influence over the President, was Harry Hopkins. Robert Sherwood in The White House Papers of Harry L. Hopkins includes a memorandum which he describes as "an excellent statement of Hopkins's [sic] own views on the subject of relations with the Soviet Union."[1] Some of its postulates are most revealing.

> 1. There is nothing new or original in this paper. It is simply a summary of what is believed to be the consensus of best ideas.
>
> 2. We not only need Russia as a powerful fighting ally in order to defeat Germany, but eventually we will also need her in a similar role to defeat Japan. And finally, we need her as a real friend and customer in the post-war world.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> 8. Suggestions for improving relationships.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> (f) In general, treat Russia as one of the three foremost powers in the world.
>
> (g) Establish the general policy throughout all U.S. departments and agencies that Russia must be considered as a real friend and be treated accordingly, and the personnel must be assigned to Russian contacts that are loyal to this concept.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> (j) Agree to assist, in every proper way, to formulate a peace that will meet Russia's legitimate aspirations.[2]

Point 1 implies how widespread these ideas were. Point 8f suggests that as "one of the three foremost powers in the world" the Soviet Union would receive special treatment--something not

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[1] The actual memorandum was not the work of Hopkins himself but General James H. Burns, Sherwood, op. cit., II, 639.

[2] Ibid., pp. 639-42.

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mentioned in the Atlantic Charter. Point 8j, if interpreted as the British had done, would mean the recognition of Soviet territorial demands, including eastern Poland. And Point 8g would place the type of official who would be prone to make just such an interpretation, in positions of power where he could execute it. This was a recipe for American accommodation to the very Soviet demands which Sikorski was struggling to prevent.

American press and public opinion were also swinging towards a new pro-Soviet way of thinking. A wide range of individuals and institutions appeared to present the Soviet case to the American public. Vice-President Henry A. Wallace and the politically active elements of the CIO were becoming more and more vocal in their praise of the Soviet Union.[1] Large powerful newspapers, such as the New York Times and the New York Herald Tribune, became lavish in their praise of the Soviet Union. The influential editor of the New York daily, P.M., Ralph M. Ingersoll, told Sikorski's envoy, Rev. Zygmunt Kaczyński, that in post-war Europe there would be two spheres of influence, the British in the west and the Soviet in the east.[1] According to Ciechanowski, the American Government agency, the Office of War Information, (OWI) was especially enthusiastic about the Soviet Union. The edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica's Atlas which appeared in the summer of 1942 omitted Poland, simply showing the Soviet Union and Germany divided by the Ribbentrop-Molotov Line. When the Polish Ambassador protested

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[1]GSHI, PRM, 69, "Report of Rev. Kaczyński on his trip to America (June, 1942)."

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to the OWI, its officials would not intervene because "any rectification might annoy the Soviets and this they were not prepared to risk."[1] The incident was finally taken out of official hands by the uproar among Polish Americans who obtained the publication of a corrected edition. The large and vocal organization, Russian War Relief, Inc., which was very active both in collecting money and relief supplies, and in selling the Soviet Union as an Ally and the Soviet point of view to the American people, expounded the Soviet Union's right to Poland's eastern territories.[2] Ciechanowski notes:

> . . . Soviet propaganda intensified its efforts to impress upon receptive American minds the belief that the war was being won primarily by Russia, who was consequently entitled to privileged treatment and an unconditional granting of her growing demands.[3]

The nature of Soviet-American relations was similar to Soviet-British relations. The same motives which handicapped the British when facing Stalin, affected the Americans. Soviet leaders treated the American Ambassador in Moscow, Rear-Admiral William H. Standley, badly. He had difficulty in seeing Molotov, let alone Stalin.[4] Sikorski usually sought American intercession with the Soviet Union, when he approached the British, so they could work together and present a united front. American leaders

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[1]Ciechanowski, op. cit., p. 116.

[2]GSHI, PRM, 69, "Report of Ambassador Ciechanowski to Minister Raczyński on Soviet propaganda in the United States (October 6)."

[3]Ciechanowski, op. cit., p. 126.

[4]Ibid., p. 111.

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told Ciechanowski that Soviet officials met Standley's requests with a negative and unfriendly attitude when the American Ambassador intervened in Polish-Soviet affairs[1] and generally rejected them. Sikorski could not count on firm American support any more than on firm British support. In addition, no doubt, Roosevelt preferred to leave the knotty problem of Polish-Soviet relations in British hands for domestic reasons. There were 5,000,000 Polish Americans in the United States and injection of the issue of Poland's relations with the Soviet Union into American domestic politics would be something Roosevelt would prefer to avoid.

The Polish Americans were concentrated in the industrial northeastern states. Large solid blocs of Polish voters were located in such cities as Chicago, Detroit, Buffalo and New York City. Great numbers were laborers in American war industries. Politically, they were one of the pillars of Roosevelt's power. They voted heavily for the Democratic Party and looked upon Roosevelt as their hero who had rescued them during the lean days of the Depression. In addition, he appeared to them as the protector of Poland and the champion of the downtrodden everywhere.

Within the Polish American community Sikorski had overwhelming support. The Polish Roman Catholic clergy was completely behind him.[2] Rada Polonia (The Polish American Council)

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[1] Ibid.

[2] GSHI, PRM, 100, "Letter from Consulate-General in New York, Strakecz to Rev. Kaczyński (July 4, 1942)."

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which included such powerful associations as the Polish National Alliance and the Polish Roman Catholic Union, also backed his policies.[1] The chief criticism came from the Komitet Narodowy Amerykanów Polskiego Pochodenia (KNAPP-National Committee of Americans of Polish Descent), a sanacja group led by the talented journalist, Ignacy Matuszewski. He attacked Sikorski in his paper Nowy Świat (New World-New York City) for being too soft in his dealings with the Soviet Union. KNAPP's support was limited to the newly-arrived, educated élite and had little grass roots support in the rest of the Polish American community which was largely of peasant stock.[2] There were not many Polish Communists,[3] although they became increasingly vociferous and numerous in the later stages of the war.

Even though very strong, Polish American support for Sikorski was not total. During his first visit, while the United States was still at peace, Sikorski had hoped to find recruits for the Polish Army in North America. The plan miscarried for several reasons. Polish Americans, or more correctly, Poles in America had fought for Polish independence during World War I and the War with the Bolsheviks. The Polish Government's failure to pay them for their services after

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[1]GSHI, PRM, 100, "Polish Politics in the United States (January 27, 1943)."

[2]GSHI, PRM, 70, "The Polish National Group in the United States (no date, 1942)."

[3]GSHI, PRM, 100, "Polish Politics in the United States (January 27, 1943)."

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hostilities had ended left an unpleasant taste in the mouths of many. After the American entry into the War, the United States wanted all the men it could get for its own forces and ruled that only aliens who had not declared their intention to become American citizens could choose.[1] The decisive factor was the process of assimilation. For the younger generation, the United States was their native land, not Poland. After Pearl Harbor there was a great upsurge of American patriotic feeling among Polish Americans.[2] As a group Polish Americans were not ready to don a Polish uniform; but they retained a significant sentimental attachment to Poland. This was demonstrated both by the generosity with which they gave to relief drives and the keenness with which they followed Poland's political fortunes on the international stage.

If Sikorski, his successor, Mikołajczyk, or ranking Polish diplomatic personnel had officially made known Soviet actions and ambitions against Poland, it would have created a furor not only in the Polish American community, but among other Catholic groups, such as the Irish, who also supported the Democratic Party, and who were inclined to be suspicious of the Soviet Union. Roosevelt's envoy, Harriman, advised Sikorski (November 21, 1942) before his third visit to the United States (December, 1942-January, 1943) against any public statement

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[1] Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers, 1942, III, 214-15.

[2] GSHI, PRM, 70, "The Polish National Group in the United States (no date, 1942)."

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which would confirm Soviet actions, because it would be harmful to Allied Unity and would hurt Roosevelt's efforts to obtain positive results through normal channels. In spite of uneasiness among Polish Americans, as well as encouragement from some American leaders,[1] both Sikorski[2] and Mikołajczyk refrained from speaking out and interfering with American domestic politics. As a result, the American public knew only of Soviet military prowess and nothing of the political sparks that were flying between the Soviet Union and other members of the United Nations behind the scenes.

* * * *

Count Tadeusz Romer, Kot's successor as Polish Ambassador to the Soviet Union arrived in Moscow in mid-October. He had been Polish Ambassador in Tokyo and, unlike Kot, was a professional diplomat by training. He supported Sikorski's policy of keeping the diplomatic channels open with the Soviet

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[1] Ciechanowski met former President Herbert Hoover on October 6 and 20, 1944 (i.e., on the eve of the American Presidential elections). Hoover said "Poland was double-crossed" by Stalin and Roosevelt at Teheran when they agreed on the Curzon Line. In reply to Ciechanowski's question as to what Poland should do, Hoover said, "The only thing left for you is to appeal to public opinion. . . ." Such Polish action at that time could have been catastrophic for Roosevelt. The Polish Government retained its diplomatic silence. Rozek, op. cit., p. 300.

[2] During his third visit to the United States (infra, pp.264-71) Sikorski made an interesting speech at a gathering arranged by the Rada Polonia in Chicago on December 17. He described in detail the number and nature of relief organizations as they had existed in April, 1942. He discreetly avoided mentioning what had happened in July and what the present situation was in December. Władysław Sikorski, General Sikorski's Speeches during his Visit to the United States in December, 1942 (New York: Polish Information Center, 1942), p. 27.

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Union in order to save the thousands of deportees who faced the dire prospect of another Russian winter without proper care. Romer's position was unenviable. He found growing self-confidence in Moscow and "general ill-will towards the lack of co-operation in the war."[1] As victory at Stalingrad became increasingly certain, the feeling heightened. He could count on little real support from the Western Allies. The best Romer could do, as Polish Ambassador, if he wished to save as many Polish citizens as possible was to by-pass silently disputed issues and show a maximum of good will.[2]

In an interview with Molotov on November 3 Romer attempted to find common ground on the question of relief for Polish citizens. Molotov explained that whereas there was no opposition to the activities of the men of trust

> . . . the organization of the Embassy's Delegates did not stand the test. . . . we have to abide in this field by the decision taken at the beginning of the war: no expansion of consular offices. In my [Molotov's] view the problem of the protection of and the assistance to Polish citizens should be solved on the lines of a purely economic organization, such as stores for relief in kind, hostels, etc. . . .[3]

Romer produced a Polish scheme: the distribution of goods through 300-400 men of trust whose activities were to be supervised by some controlling offices with Soviet officials attached to them as liaison officers. The whole action would be directed

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[1]DPSR, I, 605.

[2]Rozek, op. cit., p. 117.

[3]GSHI, A. 11, 49/Sow/4a, "Report of a conversation between Ambassador Romer and Commissar Molotov (November 3)."

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by representatives of the Polish Embassy and the NKID.[1] Molotov rejected the scheme as too complicated and posed the creation of

> . . . an economic centre maintaining contact with warehouses, and the latter with the men of trust. The relief work on the spot should rest on: a warehouse man, his assistant and men of trust. We can reach an agreement on such purely economic lines. . . .[2]

Romer gave his opinion of the Soviet leader's true motives in a telegram to London:

> Having in mind the possible reactions of international public opinion, the Soviet Government cannot wind up our action completely, but it is obvious thatit is trying to get rid of special officials ensuring the relief work on the spot, to limit their scope of activity and the possibility of intervention with authorities as well as their connections with the Embassy and other local relief offices.[3]

Molotov's scheme would completely cut the Polish deportees' contact with their own Government.

Romer discreetly touched on the question of charges brought against arrested delegates:

> . . . it would be most advisable to dispose as quickly and completely as possible with the accusations and sanctions based on misunderstandings which have often arisen from the fact that our citizens were not fully conversant with the legislation and the procedure in individual cases. . . .

But Molotov would not alter the Soviet position and replied:

> As things stand now, it would be impossible for us to stop the proceedings. I assure you nevertheless that we do not intend to have a public trial, or, in general, to make too much of it. . . .[4]

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[1] Ibid. [2] Ibid.

[3] GSHI, A. 11, 49/Sow/6, "Telegram from the Polish Embassy in Kuibyshev to the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (November 9)."

[4] GSHI, A. 11, 49/Sow/4a, "Report of a conversation between Ambassador Romer and Commissar Molotov (November 3)."

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Romer approached the nationality problem from a humanitarian point of view. He pointed out that Polish soldiers who had left were recognized as Polish citizens while their next-of-kin in distant parts of the Soviet Union were not. This tragic separation was particularly the case with Jewish and Ukrainian families. Again Molotov refuted the accusation of national discrimination. He put the question beyond the framework of the existing Polish-Soviet agreement:

> . . . we cannot withdraw from nor abandon our [Soviet] position, the whole problem being of primary importance for us . . . it might be revised in future should we succeed in settling other capital problems between us.[1]

Under pressure from the Western Allies the Soviet Government promised (September 28) to allow the gradual evacuation of orphans and semi-orphans (i.e., children with only one parent) from the Soviet Union.[2] The Polish Government approached the British to ask them to receive 10,000 in India and British Africa, and the organization of orphanages and transit hostels in those countries, as well as Iran had begun.[3] When Romer brought up the question with Molotov (November 3), the Soviet leader repeated the permission "for the evacuation of a definite group of orphans," but opposed "any systematic evacua-

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[1] Ibid.

[2] GSHI, A. 11, 49/Scw/2, "Note from the Polish Embassy in the USSR to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs relating to the evacuation of Polish children from Soviet territory (January 23, 1943)."

[3] Ibid.

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tion,"[1] meaning the limitation of departures both with regard to numbers and dates.[2] In a conversation with Vyshinsky (November 12) Romer submitted a definite plan for the evacuation of 19,000 children, taking into account the possibility of placing 10,000 orphans and semi-orphans in orphanages, should the existing welfare institutions be expanded. Vyshinsky unexpectedly changed the Soviet position by agreeing to the evacuation of only 600 children.[3] Romer argued with Vyshinsky, but to no avail.

* * * *

As the Polish position became ever more acute, Sikorski decided to make his third, and what was to be his final trip to Washington. His first two visits had been successes. Once again he hoped that Roosevelt would come to his aid. He had several aims. Basically, he wanted American support against the Soviet Union. He was particularly concerned about Soviet territorial claims, which had been all but formally accepted by the British, and the hostile policy towards the Polish relief system in the Soviet Union. He wanted to get the Americans to help arm the AK, because the British had not changed in their

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[1]GSHI, A. 11, 49/Sow/4a, "Report of a conversation between Ambassador Romer and Commissar Molotov (November 3)."

[2]DPSR, I, 605.

[3]GSHI, A. 11, 49/Sow/2, "Note from the Polish Embassy in the USSR to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs relating to the evacuation of Polish children from Soviet territory (January 23, 1943)."

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attitude. He hoped to win American military support for his plans for a Balkan invasion.[1] And he sought American backing for Polish territorial aspirations in the west and for his federal plans. With these thoughts in mind Sikorski and Retinger arrived in the American capital on December 1, 1942.

His first meeting with Roosevelt (December 2) was the more important. At the beginning they discussed the general military situation. Sikorski told Roosevelt that the Soviet Union needed concrete military support in the form of a Second Front and the Second Front should not be an invasion of France, but an invasion of the Balkans followed up by a sweep into central eastern Europe. Roosevelt referred him to his military experts. Turning to Polish-Soviet relations, Sikorski expressed his fears that Soviet policies were not fully understood by the American public. Roosevelt replied that Stalin was a realist with whom one could reach an understanding. He said that Stalin wanted parts of Finland, Bessarabia, Latvia and Estonia, but that he did not want any Polish territories. Sikorski realized that Roosevelt was misinformed. He explained that he was willing to go to Moscow again in order to discuss outstanding difficulties, but that he needed the complete support of the American President and the British Prime Minister. When Roosevelt inquired what he could do, Sikorski asked for a letter supporting

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[1]Jozef Lipski, Edward Raczyński and Stanisław Stroński, Trzy Podróże Generała Sikorskigo do Ameryki (General Sikorski's Three Trips to America (London: General Sikorski Historical Institute, 1949), p. 16.

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the Polish position. Roosevelt agreed on the condition that the letter's contents were in line with the principles of the Atlantic Charter, and assigned the composition of the letter to Welles.[1]

Sikorski presented a proposed draft of the President's letter to Welles on December 4. It included unequivocal support of the Polish position:

> MY DEAR GENERAL SIKORSKI: I wish to take this opportunity once more to express my high appreciation of the part hitherto played by Poland in this war, to acknowledge the high dynamic qualities of the Polish nation, and to assure you that Poland will issue from the war undiminished in her full territorial integrity as it existed on August 31, 1939. It would indeed not be consistent with the high moral principles for which the United Nations are fighting if Poland's independence should not be thus restored. I regard this as consistent with the principles of the Atlantic Charter and of the Declaration signed by the United Nations on January 1, 1942. I do not exclude the possibility that the necessity will arise to widen the basis of Poland's security in the West in relation to Germany and thus to strengthen her economic independence.
>
> I have noted with satisfaction your constructive initiative towards the establishment of a Confederation of Poland with Czechoslovakia as a first step in the direction of a European policy of international co-operation, and I am pleased to hear that the development of this idea is progressing satisfactorily. I am looking forward to its further satisfactory development, considering that the establishment of durable peace and security in Central Eastern Europe largely depends on its successful completion. I have no doubt that the creation of such a close international understanding in that part of Europe will be generally appreciated and approved by all the United Nations.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> In my opinion, the Polish-Soviet agreement of July 30th, 1941, and the Stalin-Sikorski Declaration of December 4th, 1941 constitute a most satisfactory basis for Polish-Russian collaboration. It is my hope that this basis will be duly enlarged and strengthened in view of the fact that a Polish-Soviet alliance, based upon the mutual loyalty and mutual

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[1] Ibid., pp. 18-20.

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> respect of the sovereign rights of these two neighboring nations, must be regarded as one of the best guarantees of European peace.[1]

Welles took the draft, but noted:

> . . . that in the first paragraph it was suggested that the President say that he desired to assure General Sikorski "that Poland would issue from the war undiminished in her full territorial integrity as it existed on August 31, 1939." I said that it seemed to me that the use by the President of a statement of that character would imply that Poland was to be reconstituted in her territorial limits within exactly the same boundaries as those which existed in 1939, and that this would seem therefore to inhibit any modifications of Polish frontiers which in the judgment of the United Nations and conceivably in the judgment of the Polish people themselves would be altogether desirable and destined to insure Polish stability and European stability. . . .[2]

A Memorandum on Poland (December 9) by Acting Chief of the Division of European Affairs of the State Department, Ray Atherton, addressed to Hull reflected both the stage of development in American thinking on eastern European problems and a professional American diplomat's reaction to Sikorski's wishes. Atherton acknowledged Poland's importance in the post-war world in central eastern Europe and its need for a secure access to the sea. On the other hand, he suggested that the United States Government impress upon the various governments that it would not negotiate on European frontiers at that stage of the war to avoid bringing "nearly all of the United Nations to us with their claims." The Memorandum recognized Sikorski's

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[1] Foreign Relations of the United States. Diplomatic Papers, 1942, III, 202-3.

[2] Ibid., p. 200.

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pre-eminence among Polish leaders, yet was critical of his requests as being at variance with the principles of the Atlantic Charter and the Declaration of the United Nations. Polish demands were described as being in the

> . . . spirit of extreme nationalism, with only a mild suggestion of Poland's own plans for international collaboration, and nothing whatever regarding some of the aspects (minorities, Jews, and rehabilitation) which particularly affect the Polish area. The proposals in effect lay down Poland's maximum nationalistic demands. It is suggested that some indication be given to General Sikorski that we view them in that light.

But the vital points dealt with the Soviet Union, Poland's eastern frontiers and east European confederations:

> b. There is general admission that the question of the relations between the U.S.S.R. and the western democracies is one of the most vital to the postwar settlement and peace of the world. There is at least the possibility that the Soviet Union will abandon its previous basic hostility toward the non-Soviet states and be disposed, in its own interest as a national state to cooperate on a realistic and sincere basis in plans for a peaceful and orderly Europe. This possibility, in the opinion of Eu,[1] would be definitively removed if the Soviet Government is given any grounds for believing that the proposals for the organization of Central-Eastern Europe reflect the desire to create a series of buffer states or <u>cordon sanitaire</u> to isolate the Soviet Union from Europe.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> 8. In regard to the eastern frontiers of the future Polish State, Eu feels that any attempts to reconstitute the 1939 frontiers of Poland, which were those established by the Treaty of Riga in 1921, will lay the seed of continuing hostility between the Soviet Union and the new Poland since the return to Poland of the eastern provinces inhabited virtually entirely by White Russians and Ukrainians would split the Ukrainian and White Russian people. It will be recalled that the Curzon Line of 1919 (1920) was suggested in accordance with ethnic considerations while the Soviet-Polish frontier of 1921 was the result of the military outcome of the Polish-Soviet war of 1920. . . .

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[1]Division of European Affairs of the State Department.

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of Staff of the feasibility and advantages of his strategy, Sikorski also failed to get the assignment of bombers he needed for liaison with Poland. The difficulty continued to be the "formal conciliation of my [Sikorski's] request with the existing obligations to the British Government."[1]

Sikorski met Roosevelt on January 3, 1943. The President talked about the reconstruction of Europe after the War in which the Soviet Union would be included as an integral part. As for the Soviet Union's internal structure, Roosevelt was of the opinion that it was evolving towards a more democratic system.[2]

Before his departure Sikorski received (January 5) the letter which Roosevelt had promised to give him. Instead of the precise terms of support suggested in Sikorski's draft, the letter was vague and non-committal:

> In an effort to build a solid foundation for a lasting peace in eastern Europe based upon careful consideration of political, ethnic, and economic factors, the United States Government desires to encourage the countries of eastern Europe to continue to make careful studies of their mutual problems to determine points of agreement and disagreement in order that they may be in a position to present a plan under which lasting relationships would be assured. The United States Government would then be prepared to participate in efforts to reach a constructive and final solution of the eastern European problem within the framework of a general world settlement.
>
> I need hardly assure you of the determination of the United States Government that Poland be reestablished. This is implicit in Article 3 of the Atlantic Charter and the Declaration of the United Nations. The views of this Government moreover reflect the warm sympathy which the American

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[1]GSHI, PRM, 69, "General Sikorski to President Roosevelt on the matter of reconnaissance airplanes for Poland (December 22)."

[2]Lipski, et al., Trzy Podróże Generała Sikorskiego, p. 22.

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people have always felt toward the people of Poland in their age-long struggle freely to organize their national life.[1]

Sikorski's third trip to the United States was a failure. The spirit of accommodation to Soviet territorial demands was already starting to grip the highest levels of American leadership. The Americans were beginning to consider that if eastern Poland was inhabited by a majority of Ukrainians and Byelorussians, perhaps Soviet claims were justified.[2] The American press, hypnotized by the events at Stalingrad, scarcely noticed Sikorski's visit.[3] Sikorski returned to London with a document in which Roosevelt had pledged himself neither to Sikorski's federal plans nor to the defense of Poland's territorial integrity. With the British already committed to supporting Soviet claims, the American drift in the same direction put Sikorski in a precarious position vis-à-vis Stalin. And flushed with victory, Stalin was ready to put new pressures on his Allies for recognition of his demands and on the Polish Government.

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[1]GSHI, PRM, 97, "Letter from Franklin Delano Roosevelt to General Sikorski on guaranteeing of the rebuilding of Poland (January 5, 1943)."

[2]Mitkiewicz, op. cit., p. 307.

[3]Ibid.

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CHAPTER VII

JANUARY-APRIL, 1943

The German Sixth Army held out at Stalingrad for over two months after its encirclement. Finally, on January 31, 1943, Field Marshall von Paulus capitulated. This Soviet victory was followed up by an offensive. In the south, Soviet armies pushed into the Donets Valley and Rostov fell to the Red Army on February 8 and Kharkov on February 16. Between March 3 and March 12 the Soviet forces took the Gzhatsk-Viazma-Rzhev triangle, which had been a threat to the Soviet capital since 1941.[1] In mid-March the Germans began a violent, but very costly counter-offensive and retook Kharkov. At the end of March the front stood approximately where it had been in April, 1942 before the great German offensive in the south which ended at Stalingrad. There ensued a relative lull which lasted for three months as both sides prepared for the summer campaign.

After Stalingrad the Soviet Union had proven that it was not only capable of checking the mighty Wehrmacht with the assistance of winter, but could also sustain an effective offensive in spite of the enormous losses it had suffered. Although the German Army was far from defeated in the spring of 1943, the

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[1] Werth, op. cit., p. 570.

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military balance on the Eastern Front had swung in Soviet favor. Its commanders and men were seasoned and their morale increased with each victory. German losses had been so heavy that the German Army faced its Soviet adversaries with ever more depleted military units. Soviet war industries were starting to make a comeback and the Soviet Union's material needs were supplemented by a sharp increase in Lend-Lease assistance in 1943.

The lull ended in early July, 1943 when the last major battle which the Germans still hoped to win began in the Kursk region.[1] Within five days the Soviet Army was victorious. This was the beginning of a triumphant series of campaigns which drove the Germans out of the Soviet Union, pushed them back into central Europe and ended with the hammer and sickle flying over the Reichstag in a ruined Berlin less than two years later.

The spectacular military turn of events far exceeded the calculations of Western military experts and statesmen. The political consequences were far-reaching. The Allied war aims were summed up in the vague ideals of the Atlantic Charter and the Declaration of the United Nations. But these documents had been formulated when the military situation on the Eastern Front was very uncertain. With each Soviet victory they became more inoperative as the possibility increased of the liberation of a large part of Europe by Soviet forces rather than by Anglo-American armies. And with each victory Stalin's confidence grew and his demands became larger and more concrete--demands which

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[1] Ibid., p. 574.

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ran counter to the principles of the Atlantic Charter and the Declaration of the United Nations. The question of the Soviet Union's role in the post-war world loomed higher and higher on the horizon and its claims could not be put off until the end of the war.

Poland was at the top of Stalin's list of outstanding political problems to be settled. In matters of Soviet state interest he was determined to have his way. After the Battle of Stalingrad he began an all-out campaign to get Western approval for his territorial claims which he had hitherto pushed with caution and discretion. Stalin never trusted the Poles. Traditional Polish hostility towards Russians, Piłsudski's victory in 1920, the Treaty of Riga, frigid Polish-Soviet relations during the inter-war period, anti-Soviet feelings throughout the Polish Army and among the civilians who planned to govern Poland after the War--all aroused Stalin's deepest suspicions. Sikorski had attempted to create a modus vivendi with the Soviet Union in 1941 and 1942, but Stalin knew that even though Sikorski wanted cooperation, he was first and foremost a Pole. If Sikorski returned to Poland as leader of the Polish Government, there was no doubt in Stalin's mind that he would place Polish national interests above Soviet "friendship." Such independence would be completely contrary to both Stalin's personality and traditional Russian political interests. Secondly, there was no guarantee that Sikorski would retain power after the War. Free play of Polish politics might easily bring a positively anti-Soviet regime to power. Therefore, in addition

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to their territorial claims the Soviet Government began a campaign to undermine the prestige of the Polish Government, to force it into a position where it would be forced to break diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, while the Soviet Union would appear to be the innocent party, and to replace it by Poles who would be completely obedient to the Kremlin.

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After Stalingrad the British felt more helpless than ever as the Soviet Army rolled back the Germans. Stalin continued to demand a Second Front. The North African campaign took longer to complete than planned and each delay lessened the chance of a Second Front in Europe in 1943. Stalin informed Churchill on February 16 that since the end of December, 1942, the Germans had transferred twenty-seven divisions from Western Europe to the Eastern Front because of the slack in Allied operations in Tunisia.[1]

Stalin's Order of the Day on the Red Army's twenty-fifth anniversary (February 23, 1943) produced a new ripple of speculation among Western leaders. He predicted that the Red Army would drive the Germans from Soviet soil. The German Army would be expelled from the Russian territories, the Ukraine, Byelorussia, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Moldavia and Karelia, and it would pursue the enemy "following the German Army up to the western boundaries" of the Soviet Union. He made no reference to the Western Allies or their economic contribution to

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[1] Stalin's Correspondence, I, 95.

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the Soviet War effort. The omissions and phrasing did not go unnoticed.[1] Again the question was posed: was Stalin thinking of stopping at the western border of the Soviet Union and not assisting the Allies in the final invasion of Nazi Germany?

Churchill was forced to send Stalin another unpleasant note on March 30. Due to German attacks, Arctic convoys would be discontinued until September when the period of prolonged daylight had ended.[2] Stalin protested sharply against the decision. He interpreted each Allied failure to send the promised assistance as breeches of faith and viewed his Western Allies with deep suspicion. Stalin could never understand Western squeamishness about the loss of lives, especially at a time when the Soviet Union was suffering losses mounting into the millions. The British, for their part, were both embarrassed by their slow progress and their inability to aid their Soviet Ally, and fearful lest the Soviet Union should conclude a separate peace.

The drastic change on the Eastern Front had its reverberations on Polish-British relations. From the beginning Great Britain's Polish Ally had complicated the consistently difficult Soviet-British relations. After Stalingrad when the Soviet Government stepped up their demands, the Poles became an even greater vexation from which the British would have pre-

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[1] Foreign Relations of the United States. Diplomatic Papers, 1943 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1963), III, 508.

[2] Churchill, The Hinge of Fate, pp. 675-76.

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ferred to free themselves. Early in 1943 Sikorski, comparing the treatment received by the Polish Government in London and Washington, said:

> In the United States of America they do not treat us like they do here [in Great Britain], like the poor relatives, whom they would like to get rid of as soon as possible. Only in America can something still be done for our cause. Here in England, the Soviets have pushed us into the worst position, into the background, gaining for themselves a universal hearing and applause. They have torpedoed our federal plans with the English. . . .[1]

* * * *

In the United States the tide was also rapidly turning against Sikorski's position after the Battle of Stalingrad. Roosevelt shared Churchill's distress about Anglo-American inability to lend effective aid to Stalin as well as his fear of a separate peace. There was a steady growth of a policy favoring Allied accommodation of Soviet demands among the highest circles of decision-makers in the American Government. Roosevelt's associates were a constantly shifting group.[2] The individuals who gained the upper hand in influencing him by the beginning of 1943 tended to favor the settling of political issues among the Allies instead of waiting until the Peace Conference, as had been American policy before Pearl Harbor and during the first months of the United States' involvement in the war. With regard to the Soviet Union, these advisers tended to be very pro-Soviet and were inclined to grant to the USSR its political and territorial demands. There was a second group led by Secretary

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[1] Mitkiewicz, op. cit., pp. 326-27.

[2] McNeill, op. cit., p. 27.

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of State Hull and some members of the State Department who stood uncompromisingly by the principles of the Atlantic Charter and the Declaration of the United Nations, but they had little influence over Roosevelt by the first months of 1943.[1]

On January 30 Ciechanowski met Welles to discuss Soviet policies towards the Polish Government. Welles explained that one of the main irritants to the Soviet Union was Sikorski's federal plans which the Russians regarded as a cordon sanitaire. During the conversation Wells said: "Am I to understand that the Polish Government is determined not to sacrifice even an inch of its eastern territory?" Ciechanowski was surprised and recalled:

> For the first time since my arrival in Washington one of the highest officials of the American Government, a very close collaborator of President Roosevelt, had hinted that allied Poland . . . was to make territorial concessions to an allegedly allied Power as the price of "friendly relations."[2]

In face of the new political realities resulting from the Battle of Stalingrad, American editorial opinion underwent

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[1]GSHI, PRM, 98/1, "Report by Ambassador Ciechanowski on a conversation under Secretary of State (March 13, 1943)."

Hull did not accompany Roosevelt to the important Conferences at Casablanca, Cairo and Teheran. He learned from other sources than the President what had taken place. Although he received veiled hints, he really did not know about the atomic bomb until it was dropped (August 6, 1945) and he was no longer Secretary of State. Hull, Memoirs, II, 1110.

In contrast, Hull's British counterpart, Eden, notes that during his visit to Washington in March, 1943 he discussed with Hopkins the development of the atomic bomb and contemplated the consequences it would have on the future balance of power. Eden, op. cit., pp. 379-80.

[2]Ciechanowski, op. cit., p. 141.

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a change during the first quarter of 1943. In private conversations with Welles, the influential journalist, Walter Lippmann, pointed out the need for a settlement with the Soviet Union before the end of the War. Welles says that he entirely agreed, but was in no position to commit himself.[1] On February 28 C. L. Sulzberger wrote in the New York Times:

> . . . Moscow will insist on the restoration of Russia's prewar frontiers which means inclusion in the USSR of portions of pre-Munich, Finland, Poland and Rumania. Those claims affect only one United Nations country--Poland. Despite Polish protestations, there is scant likelihood that Moscow would be willing to give up the eastern portion of that country which it considers its own domain or that any of the other United Nations, no matter how sympathetic, would be willing to fight to back up Warsaw's desires.

Generally, the American press acknowledged that the Soviet Union would have a decisive influence in the affairs of eastern Europe. Lippman told Ciechanowski, "In the future we must no longer tolerate power politics by small European States."[2]

A telling example of the growing pro-Soviet mentality was the reaction to the fate of Alter and Ehrlich. After their arrest in December, 1941, various prominent personalities, including Mrs. Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Wendell L. Willkie, the President of the American Federation of Labor, William Green, along with many important social workers intervened on their

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[1] Sumner Welles, Seven Major Decisions (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1951), pp. 126-28.

[2] GSHI, PRM, 98/1, "Report of Ambassador Ciechanowski on the atmosphere of thought in the U.S.A. with connection to the Soviet victories, the Casablanca Conference as well as the development of the attitude of the forces in the new U.S. Congress (February 11, 1943)."

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behalf. The Soviet Embassy did not reply to their requests. Green sent a telegram to Molotov on January 27, 1943. Litvinov replied abruptly to Green's message on February 23, 1943:

> For active subversive work against the Soviet Union and assistance to Polish intelligence organs in armed activities, Ehrlich and Alter were sentenced to capital punishment in August, 1941.
>
> At the request of the Polish Government, Ehrlich and Alter were released in September, 1941.
>
> However, after they were set free, at the time of the most desperate battles of the Soviet troops against the advancing Hitler army, they resumed their hostile activities including appeals to the Soviet troops to stop bloodshed and immediately to conclude peace with Germany.
>
> For this they were rearrested and, in December 1941, sentenced once more to capital punishment by the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court. This sentence has been carried out in regard to both of them.[1]

Alter and Ehrlich had a reputation abroad for liberal humanitarianism and the most firm opposition to Naziism. To accuse these Jewish socialists of being Nazi agents was an absurdity. At first American liberals, who were becoming mesmerized by Soviet military achievements, found it difficult to believe that the Soviet Government was capable of such an act and sharp cries of protest arose. But soon the event was forgotten. Ciechanowski notes the reaction to Litvinov's letter:

> His letter was a heavy blow to all radical circles in America. For a time it appeared to shake their determination of giving unqualified support to all that the Soviets did or said. But it soon became apparent that even this incredible act of Soviet totalitarian brutality would not affect the pro-Soviet sympathies steadily gaining ground in radical American circles.[2]

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[1] Wacław Jędrzejewicz, ed., Poland in the British Parliament, Vol. II (New York: Józef Piłsudski Institute of America, 1959), pp. 163-64.

[2] Ciechanowski, op. cit., p. 121.

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As soon as the Soviet victory at Stalingrad was assured, the Soviet Government began its new all-out attack on the Polish Government. On January 16 the NKID sent a note to the Polish Embassy announcing that all people who had lived in the Western districts of the Ukrainian S.S.R. and the Byelorussian S.S.R. on November 1-2, 1939 were Soviet citizens. There would be no exceptions. The Note explained:

> In its Note of December 1, 1941 the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs informed the Embassy that the Soviet Government were prepared, by way of exception, to regard as Polish citizens persons of Polish origin living in the territories of the above-mentioned districts on November 1-2, 1939. The People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs is bound to state that despite the good will of the Soviet Government thus manifested, the Polish Government has adopted a negative attitude to the above statement of the Soviet Government and has refused to take the appropriate steps, putting forward demands contrary to the sovereign rights of the Soviet Union in respect to these territories.
>
> In connection with the above, the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, on instructions from the Soviet Government, gives notice that the statement included in the Note of December 1, 1941, regarding the readiness to treat some categories of persons of Polish origin on an exceptional basis must be considered as without validity and that the question of the possible non-application to such persons of the laws governing citizenship of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics has ceased to exist.[1]

Now even Polish citizens of Polish origin were considered to be Soviet citizens and would be treated as such.

The ramifications of the Note were highly significant.

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[1] GSHI, A. 11, 49/Sow/3, "Note from the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs to the Polish Embassy in the USSR claiming as Soviet citizens all persons who on November 1-2, 1939 found themselves on Polish territories occupied by the armed forces of the USSR (January 16)."

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If all Poles had become Soviet citizens on January 16, the Polish Government no longer had the right to have contact with them because they were not its citizens. And axiomatic to the new state of affairs was the sovietization of what remained of the relief system. The Polish Embassy heard that on January 26 the People's Council of Ministers decided that the Soviet Government would take over all local agencies which remained in Polish hands.[1] The final liquidation began early in February. Men of trust were arrested and welfare institutions, such as orphanages, homes for invalids, hospitals, etc., as well as supply warehouses were taken over by local Soviet officials. Polish citizens were given the alternative of accepting Soviet passports or facing beatings and imprisonment. At Kirov about 200 Poles were arrested and some sentenced immediately to two years of imprisonment for refusing to accept Soviet passports.[2] By mid-March about 30 per cent of Polish relief agencies had been sovietized.[3]

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The Polish Government took what action it could. The new Soviet-Polish clash was not welcomed in Great Britain.

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[1]GSHI, PRM, 102/2, "Report of the Embassy on the question of the take over by Soviet officials of Polish relief posts (February 9)."

[2]GSHI, PRM, 101/2, "Resumé of the dispatches of Ambassador Romer for March 14-18, 1943, on the question of Polish-Soviet relations presented to Ambassador Biddle (March 18)."

[3]GSHI, A. 11, 49/Sow/6-1, "Summary of Ambassador Romer's report of March 14th, 1943 (March 19)."

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Sikorski sent a letter to Churchill, explaining what had happened and asking for British intercession (February 9, 1943).[1] Churchill was inclined to put off intervention because of the Soviet attitude on the question of the convoys, but the Foreign Office pointed out that the Polish Government had very serious grievances and would have to publish their case if nothing were done. Churchill agreed to send a message in general terms to Stalin and to suggest that the British Government take over the care of orphans, young people and certain categories of adults. But before the wording of the message could be settled, a new Polish-Soviet crisis had arisen in late February.[2]

When Ciechanowski met Welles on January 30, he informed him what had transpired. Welles agreed that the Soviet Union had brought its relations with Poland to a "dangerous climax" and that immediate and very definite action was necessary on the part of the British and American Governments.[3] On February 5 Welles summoned Ciechanowski to his office. He told the Polish Ambassador that he had received confirmation that the Soviet Government was in earnest about denying Polish citizenship and closing down Polish relief activities. Since his return from

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[1]GSHI, PRM, 95, "Letter of General Sikorski concerning the refusal of the Soviet Government to consider the inhabitants of Polish Eastern territories as Polish citizens and the discontinuation of the relief for the Polish population in the USSR (February 9)."

[2]Woodward, op. cit., pp. 202-3.

[3]Ciechanowski, op. cit., p. 139.

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the Casablanca Conference Roosevelt[1] had been informed about the new situation. The President considered the new turn of events "so delicate and difficult" that he asked Welles to inform the Polish Government not to press him for immediate intercession. Roosevelt felt that he could not act at once because of the overall war situation. In the meantime he wanted Sikorski and the Polish Government to "keep their shirt on."[2] Ciechanowski met Roosevelt on February 16. The President reiterated that the time was not ripe for Anglo-American intervention. Ciechanowski disagreed and told Roosevelt that the Western Allies were not using the advantages they had over the Soviet Union in the form of Lend-Lease, and they were allowing the Soviet Union to take the diplomatic initiative. The Polish Ambassador suggested that the American and British Governments should give energetic support to the Polish Government and that the President, and perhaps Churchill should publicly restate their affirmation of the principles of the Atlantic Charter and their unswerving refusal to recognize any territorial changes before the end of the War. Roosevelt had other plans in mind. According to Hopkins, he was so intent on meeting Stalin that he did not wish in any way "to lessen his chances by making a statement which Stalin would regard as unfriendly."[3] The President impressed on Ciechanowski the necessity of the Polish Government's keeping

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[1]The Casablance Conference with Churchill, January 14-25, 1943.

[2]Ciechanowski, op. cit., p. 142.

[3]Ibid., pp. 143-46.

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the whole matter secret.[1] Ciechanowski comments on the effects of the American reaction to Soviet activities:

> The Polish Government was in a most embarrassing situation. Our only hope lay in American and British intervention. That support was indispensable to our cause. On the other hand, we could not disregard the President's wishes. And yet every delay was weakening our position with regard to the Soviets.
>
> The cautious way in which previous American interventions on Polish matters were made in Moscow had naturally been interpreted by Stalin as proof of American lack of interest which he could ignore. To be effective at this advanced stage of the problem, intervention would have to be immediate, strong, and publicly known. And we were asked to keep everything secret.[2]

Polish diplomatic approaches to the Soviet Government met with icy rebuffs. On January 26, Raczyński sent a Note to the Soviet Ambassador to the Polish Government-in-Exile, Bogomolov, protesting that the Soviet Note of January 16 was incompatible with the spirit of the Polish-Soviet Treaty of July 30, 1941, and the Sikorski-Stalin Declaration of December 4, 1941, as well as being contrary to the decisions of the Fourth Hague Convention of 1907, and the stipulations of the Atlantic Charter and the Declarations of the United Nations.[3] Bogomolov replied (February 17) that Polish claims were "devoid of all foundations" and the allegation that the Soviet Government were forcing Soviet citizenship on Polish nationals was "entirely unfounded and a distortion of the true state of affairs." The legal

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[1] Ibid., p. 146.

[2] Ibid., p. 147.

[3] GSHI, A. 11, 49/Sow/2, "Note from Minister Raczyński to Ambassador Bogomolov in reply to the Note of January 16, 1943 on the legal status of Polish citizens in the USSR (January 26)."

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justifications invoked by Bogomolov were the plebiscites of October, 1939 and the Decrees of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet (November 29, 1939).[1]

When Romer met Molotov on February 20, he encountered the same rigid position. The inhabitants of Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia had chosen to become Soviet citizens. The Soviet Government had shown its good will by making the concession of recognizing ethnic Poles as Polish citizens and the Polish Government did not reciprocate Soviet goodwill. The Soviet position was "clear and irrevocable."[2] Romer met Stalin on February 26-27 and made the same protests, but received no satisfaction. Stalin chided Romer for the anti-Soviet attitude of the Polish press in London.[3] Romer asked Stalin if relief work could continue until negotiations concerning citizenship had been concluded. Stalin dodged the question by saying, "I cannot promise you anything definite in advance, but negotiations can be started."[4] Romer met Molotov again on March 6

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[1]GSHI, A. 11, 49/Sow/3, "Note from Ambassador Bogomolov to Minister Raczyński in reply to the Note of January 26, 1943 concerning the legal status of Polish citizens in the USSR (February 17)."

[2]GSHI, A. 11, 49/Sow/4, "Minutes of the conversation at the Kremlin between Ambassador Romer and Commissar Molotov on the crisis in Polish-Soviet relations (Febryary 20)."

[3]Infra., pp. 299-300.

[4]GSHI, A. 11, 49/Sow/4, "Minutes of Ambassador Romer's conversation with President Stalin and M. Molotov, at the Kremlin, during the night of February 26-27, 1943, on some capital issues in Polish-Soviet relations producing a state of tension between Poland and USSR (February 26-27)."

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and protested Soviet arrests and the sovietization of Polish institutions. Molotov replied:

> If we establish that Soviet citizens are found there, then these institutions become subject to appropriation by the Soviet authorities. . . .

To no avail Romer protested that the institutions were the property of the Polish Government.[1] When Romer met Molotov on March 18, the Soviet leader categorically refused to enter into any further discussions on pending Polish-Soviet problems. To Romer's protests about additional arrests and confiscations, Molotov replied:

> Mr. Ambassador, it is very easy to speak about friendly understanding in the matter of incidents that have occurred, but here I do not see anything of this sort on your part. Your reproaches on this subject are unfounded and out of place. I shall not reply to them.[2]

* * * *

In Poland the AK was becoming increasingly active. During the first quarter of 1943 it derailed eighty-three German trains, destroyed and damaged 558 engines and 2,241 trucks, disrupted 197 railway communications and effected 56 interruptions in telecommunications.[3] Even so, after the Battle of Stalingrad Kościuszko Radio and the Polish Workers Party began

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[1]GSHI, A. 11, 49/Sow/4, "Minutes of the negotiations at the Kremlin between Ambassador Romer and Commissar Molotov on the crisis in Polish-Soviet relations (March 9)."

[2]GSHI, A. 11, 49/Sow/4, "Minutes of the negotiations at the Kremlin between Ambassador Romer and Commissar Molotov on the crisis in Polish-Soviet Relations (March 18)."

[3]Umiastowski, Poland, Russia and Great Britain, 1941-1945, p. 75.

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to criticize the AK for its "passive policy" against the Germans. The PPR's press sharply attacked the Polish Government-in-Exile and the AK for following a policy of "waiting with arms at ease." The Union of Polish Patriots' radio station accused Sikorski's Government and the AK of holding the view that Germany and the Soviet Union were equally dangerous enemies to Poland.[1]

The PPR also attacked the AK and the Polish Government for its refusal to form a national front. The PPR's conditions for cooperation with the AK were the initiation of open warfare against the Germans and the repudiation of the Constitution of 1935. An open attack on the Germans at that moment would have been catastrophic both for the AK and for the civilian population, because of overwhelming German strength in the form of equipment and armament. Although Sikorski had criticized the Constitution of 1935 before the War, it was the legal basis of his Government and the basis on which Poland had concluded its alliance with Great Britain. In the words of the future Commander of the AK, Tadeusz Bór-Komorowski, "Thus, practically speaking the Communists demanded that we should break away from the Polish Government. . . ." Rowecki, the Commander of the AK, rejected these terms. He demanded that further conversations be dependent on a straightforward recognition of the Polish Government in London by the PPR, the PPR's subordination to the AK's Command and a clear statement that it was not subordinated to the Comintern and that it was not acting on instructions from

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[1]Dziewanowski, op. cit., p. 166.

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a foreign power. The PPR would not accept Rowecki's conditions and remained outside the AK organization. It had only a small number of adherents, but it was a force which had to be considered seriously. It had the backing of the Soviet Union and after the Battle of Stalingrad there was a great increase in the possibility that Poland would be liberated by the Soviet Army.[1]

In an effort to prove Polish goodwill towards the Soviet Union and to demonstrate the effectiveness of the AK, Sikorski instructed Romer to offer Stalin a coordinated AK-Soviet military effort. During his meeting with Stalin on February 26-27 Romer presented the Polish plan. If the maneuver were combined with a Soviet offensive, the AK was prepared to cut simultaneously all railway lines through Poland serving the Germans on the Eastern Front. Eighty-five per cent of German equipment and food was brought by this route.[2] Stalin was non-committal. He would not agree to the joint action on the ground that the time was unfavorable and he avoided Romer's questions as to when he thought a favorable time would arise:

> . . . When the course of the war allows it, we shall certainly let you know, Mr. Ambassador. For the time being, I cannot say anything more.[3]

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The Polish-Soviet dispute had been carried on behind

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[1] Bór-Komorowski, op. cit., p. 124.

[2] Ibid., p. 125.

[3] Documents on Polish-Soviet Relations, 1943-1945 (London: Heinemann, 1967), II, 692-94.

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closed doors, hidden from the general public. Western Allied leaders wished to keep it there in the interests of Allied unity. The Soviet Government took the iniative in making public the dispute between itself and the Polish Government. On February 19 a leading Ukrainian Communist and writer, Alexander Korneychuk, wrote an article in the Soviet journal Radianska Ukrainia (Soviet Ukraine). He accused the Polish Government of launching arbitrary territorial claims and attacked the prestige of the Polish Government. He wrote that the Polish Government was using all its powers to upset the Anglo-American-Soviet coalition, to deny the right of the Ukrainian people to self-determination and to restore Polish landlord rule over a people who had flung it off. He attacked Dziennik Polski, Wiadomości Polskie and Jutro Polski for including articles which opposed the inclusion of Western Ukraine in the Soviet Union and which, thereby, thwarted the unity of the Ukrainian people. Korneychuk drew the distinction between the Polish people and enlightened leaders and writers, and the "landlord imperialists." He took issue with Władysław Wielhorski who had written in Wiadomości Polskie (October 25, 1942) about "the sacred duty of all Poles to fight for the inviolability of the Eastern frontiers":

> With whom does Belgorsky [sic] want to fight in the East? With Germans, torturing the Polish people? He is waiting in London for the Red Army to destroy the Germans and then wants to come from England with his "sacred duty to fight" against the Soviet Ukrainian people.
>
> The Polish landlords have learned nothing from history. Their record against the Ukrainian people is deplorable. They have never recognized the existence of the Ukrainian people.
>
> . . . . . .

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> In days when the Ukrainian people are straining every sinew, spending their best lives in the struggle with the fascist executioners who occupy the Ukraine and Poland, there in comfortable quarters in London Polish "politician" landlords of the feudal aristocracy, like black ravens grazing on the Ukrainian land, again are plotting to tear the Ukraine apart, to humiliate her people, brutally to pacify villages, to shoot the workers of Lwow and Drohobycz, to torture her best sons in concentration camps.[1]

The article was reprinted in Pravda and Izvestia. The story was picked up by the Western press and within a couple of days the existence of a serious Polish-Soviet dispute became public knowledge throughout the English-speaking world.[2]

Sikorski made a stiff, public declaration rejecting the allegations made in Korneychuk's article:

> . . . In her relations with the USSR Poland had not ceased to be ready to co-operate with the Soviet Union in the prosecution of the war and in maintaining friendly neighbourly relations after the victory.
>
> The Polish Government repudiate most definitely the malicious propaganda which accuses Poland of indirect or direct inimical tendencies towards Soviet Russia. It is absolutely absurd to suspect Poland of intentions to base the eastern boundaries of the Polish Republic on the Dnieper and the Black Sea, or to impute to Poland any tendencies to move her frontier farther to the east.
>
> The Polish Government . . . from the moment of the conclusion of the Polish-Soviet Treaty of July 30, 1941, maintained the unchangeable attitude that so far as the question of frontiers between Poland and Soviet Russia is concerned, the status quo previous to September 1, 1939, is in force; and they consider the undermining of this attitude, which is in conformity with the Atlantic Charter, as detrimental to the unity of the Allied nations.
>
> The Polish Government consider close co-operation and confidence between all the Allies to be an indispensable

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[1] The New York Times, February 21, 1943.

[2] Shortly after the publishing of this article Korneychuk was appointed, "somewhat symbolically," Soviet Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs "in charge of Slav countries." Werth, op. cit., p. 580.

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factor for victory and a permanent peace, and condemn all acts and suggestions tending to wreck or weaken the common front of the United Nations.[1]

Sikorski's firm denial of Korneychuk's imputations and his insistence on Poland's maintaining its boundaries of 1939 provoked a vitriolic and highly significant reply (March 1) from the Soviet Government:

> The declaration of the Polish Government in London bears witness to the fact that the Polish Government refuses to recognize the historic rights of the Ukrainian and Bielo-Russian peoples to be united within their national States. Continuing to regard as legitimate the aggressive policy of imperialist States, which partitioned among themselves the traditional Ukrainian and Bielo-Russian lands, and disregarding the universally known fact of the reunion of the Ukrainian and Bielo-Russian peoples within their national States which has already taken place, the Polish Government thus comes out as an advocate of a partition of the Ukrainian and Bielo-Russian lands in favour of the policy of plundering the Ukrainian and Bielo-Russian peoples.
>
> The leading Soviet circles are of the opinion that the denial of the right of the Ukrainian and Bielo-Russian peoples of reunion with their blood brethren bears witness to an imperialist tendency, whereas the references of the Polish Government to the Atlantic Charter have no foundation whatever. . . .
>
> Even the well-known British Minister, Lord Curzon, in spite of his inimical attitude to the USSR, realized that Poland cannot put forward a claim to the Ukrainian and Bielo-Russian lands, but the Polish ruling circles still show no understanding in this matter.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> The declaration of the Polish Government bears witness to the fact that the present Polish ruling circles do not reflect in this matter the genuine opinion of the Polish people, whose interests in the struggle for the liberation of their country and for the restoration of a strong and united Poland are indissolubly linked with the strengthening to the utmost of mutual confidence and friendship with the brotherly peoples of the Ukraine and Bielo-Russia, as well

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[1] GSHI, PRM, 103/1, "Declaration of the Polish Government concerning Polish-Soviet relations (February 25)."

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as with the Russian people and the other peoples of the USSR.[1]

This was the first official, public, Soviet claim to the Curzon Line. Secondly, veiled in the final paragraph was the first official indication of Stalin's future policy of calling into question the legitimacy of the Polish Government itself.

Sikorski broadened the scope of the public controversy by the Polish Government's barbed reply of March 5:

> Until the conclusion of agreements between the USSR and the Third Reich concerning the partition of Polish territories, the Treaty of Riga and its frontier clauses, approved in 1923 by the Conference of Ambassadors and by the United States, were never called in question by Russia. The Russo-German agreements were cancelled by the Polish-Soviet agreement of July 30, 1941. The question of any return to the German-Soviet frontier line of that year requires no further comment.
>
> The so-called "Curzon line" was proposed during hostilities in 1919-1920 solely as an armistice line and not as a frontier.
>
> The polling ordered by the Soviet-occupying authorities in Eastern Poland in 1939 was contrary to international law. It constitutes one of those unilateral acts which are not recognized by the Allied nations. Therefore it cannot form a basis for any legal acts, and cannot, in particular, deprive Polish citizens of their title to Polish citizenship or to relief organized for their benefit by the Polish Government with the aid of the Governments of Great Britain and the United States.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> The declaration of the Polish Government of February 25, 1943, unanimously supported by the entire Polish nation, was not intended to produce controversy which would be so harmful at the present moment. It only stated the indisputable Polish rights to these territories, in which the Polish nation will continue to live in harmony with its Ukrainian and White Ruthenian fellow-countrymen in accordance

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[1]GSHI, A. 11, 49/Sow/3, "TASS statement on Polish-Soviet relations in reply to the Declaration of the Polish Government of February 25, 1943 (March 1)."

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with the principles proclaimed by the Polish Government. . . .[1]

Sikorski recalled events that the Western leaders were trying to forget or keep from the public: the Allied recognition of the Line of Riga, the Molotov-Ribbentrop Agreement, the fraudulent plebiscites, and the recent Soviet withdrawal of Polish citizenship from nationals and the attack on the Polish relief system within the USSR.

* * * *

Bringing the Polish-Soviet conflict out into the open sparked a controversy throughout the Western World. Having been conditioned by almost two years of mounting praise for the heroic and massive Soviet military effort under the leadership of "Uncle Joe," the British and American press and public opinion generally took the Soviet side in the debate. There was a general ignorance of such Soviet actions as the destruction of the Polish relief system. Direct quotes from TASS which described the Polish Government as aristocratic and imperialistic placed in columns next to glowing reports of Soviet victories made the Polish Government appear irresponsible at best. The publication in Beaverbrook's Evening Standard (March 4) of David Low's cartoon (Figure 5) which treated Sikorski patronizingly and which depicted "Polish irresponsibles" conducting a "private war" against

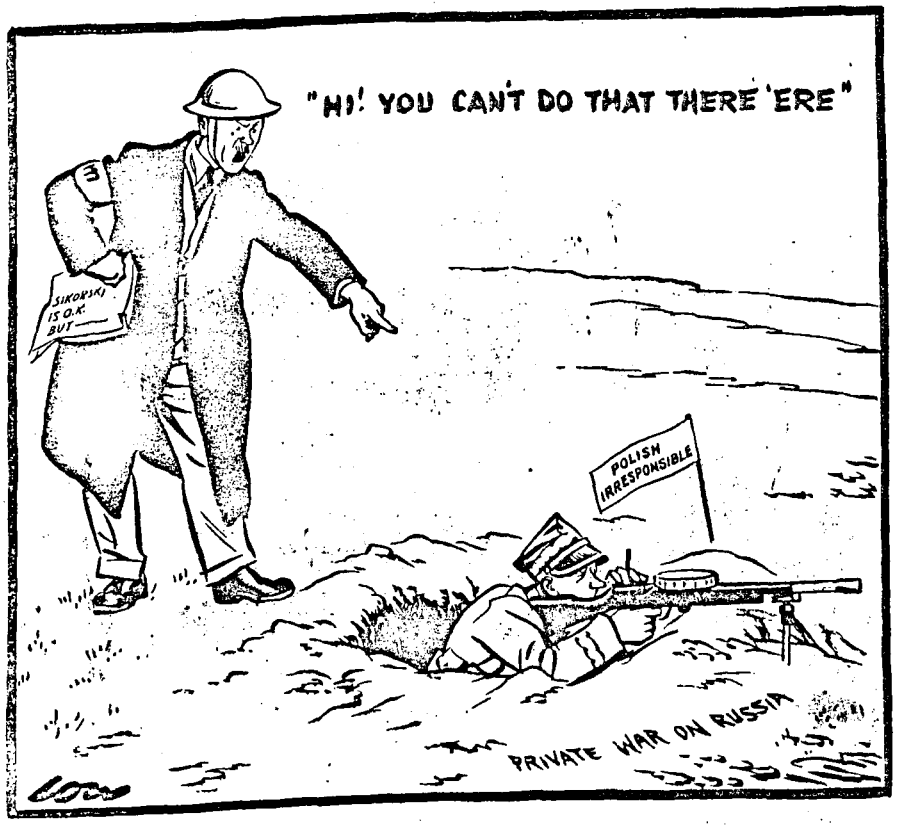
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[1]GSHI, A. 11, 49/Sow/5, "Communiqué of the Polish Telegraph Agency concerning the Eastern frontiers of Poland with a reply to the Soviet Declaration on Polish-Soviet relations of March 1, 1943 (March 5)."

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Fig. 5.--Evening Standard, March 4, 1943.

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the Soviet Union could only have had an exceedingly corrosive effect on the Polish image because of the paper's wide circulation. And the Daily Worker criticized the Polish Government unmercifully. At worst, the Polish attitude was interpreted as a threat to Allied unity.

The press controversy greatly annoyed the British Government. They feared that if it were allowed to continue it could tear fragile Allied unity to pieces. On March 3, 1943, Eden invited Sikorski, Raczyński and Retinger to dinner and made it clear that the polemics were to cease. Raczyński protested that the scales were not held even. The Polish Government were asked to keep silent, while its critics were free to attack it at will.[1] Early in March the Foreign Office instructed the Censorship Bureau to send private and confidential memoranda to the editors of London and leading provincial newspapers requesting them to refrain from discussing the controversy and to limit themselves to publishing only official comments issued by the Soviet and Polish Governments. The Polish and Soviet Embassies were informed of this action by the Foreign Office.[2] In the wake of the public uproar caused by the debate and the embarrassment it caused Western statesmen, and the British Ministry of Information's directive, Sikorski's firm official statement of March 5 irritated British and American leaders.[3]

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[1]Raczyński, In Allied Europe, p. 134.

[2]Foreign Relations of the United States. Diplomatic Papers, 1943, III, 337-38.

[3]Rozek, op. cit., p. 120.

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not refer in any passage to Polish-Soviet difficulties, but dealt with wider issues of European security." Although he felt it was ill-timed, the British Government could accept no responsibility for the article. As for the B.B.C.'s Polish broadcast which had included it, the B.B.C.'s foreign language programs summarized the most important features of the British press and this was an important item. Again the British Government could accept no responsibility.[1]

* * * *

Soviet actions in the first months of 1943 produced a stormy reaction among the various Polish émigré groups. Raczkiewicz had never agreed with Sikorski's policy and favored a firmer stand towards the Soviet Union. In spite of Roosevelt's request to keep secret the Soviet withdrawal of Polish citizenship from Poles in the Soviet Union, there was a leak from President Raczkiewicz's office. The publication of the contents of the Soviet Note of January 16, 1943 in the extreme right-wing paper Walka (Struggle) by the journalist Adam Doboszyński in conjunction with the public Soviet announcements set off a wave of political fireworks among the Poles. Wiadomości Polskie and the Nationalist organ, Myśl Narodowa, (National Thought) called for Sikorski's resignation. Prominent PPS members of the Rada Narodowa, Adam Pragier and Adam Ciołkosz, and the PPS paper, Robotnik, lashed out against the Soviet Union

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[1] GSHI, PRM, 95, "Answer of Minister Eden to the Letter by General Sikorski to Premier Churchill on March 10 on the question of the article in The Times (April 7)."

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and Sikorski's policy. In the United States Sikorski was denounced in Nowy Świat. The unrest and the revelations of the Polish press was one of the causes for Sikorski's difficulties with the British Government. Even though he strengthened censorship and arrested Doboszyński for publishing secret documents, the Polish opposition press continued to criticize Sikorski and the Western Allies for their lack of decisive action against rising Soviet pressure.

* * * *

Although during their first year at war, the American Government had insisted that political discussions be postponed until the Peace Conference, the growth of influence of those who favored accommodating Soviet demands and the rapidly changing military situation after the Battle of Stalingrad began an evolution towards a basic change of policy. By March, 1943, new political questions arose with each turn of military events which needed attention and which could not be postponed by the United States. British Foreign Minister Eden travelled to Washington in mid-March to discuss these political problems. And at the center of the problems was Polish-Soviet relations.

By the time of Eden's visit the British Government were becoming exasperated by the Polish question. British leaders had generally thought that the Curzon Line was a just frontier for Poland in the east. And with promises of compensation in the west, they were annoyed by the Poles' stubborn refusal to make any territorial concessions. On the eve of his departure

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for Washington Eden met Maisky (March 10, 1943). Maisky outlined Soviet claims and interests: the absorption of the Baltic States, Bessarabia and Finnish territory acquired in 1940, Soviet bases in Rumania and Finland and the Curzon Line with minor adjustments as the Polish-Soviet frontier. The Soviet Government would not oppose a Balkan confederation which excluded Rumania and a Scandinavian confederation which excluded Finland. As for a Polish-Czechoslovak confederation, Soviet agreement would depend on the composition of the Polish Government. The Soviet Government could not tolerate either a government like the pre-war regime or one with the coloration of the existing Polish Government-in-Exile. It would have to be friendly to the Soviet Union. Eden did not challenge or disagree with any of Maisky's desiderata, explaining that the conversation was exploratory.[1]

During Eden's stay in Washington the chief American participants in the talks were Roosevelt and Hopkins, with Welles acting as liaison with the State Department. Hull played only a minor role.[2] Since the Polish Government knew that Polish-Soviet relations would be one of the key issues to be discussed, Ciechanowski tried to arrange a meeting with Eden, but the British leader avoided him.[3]

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[1]Eden, op. cit., p. 371; Foreign Relations of the United States. Diplomatic Papers, 1943, III, 23-24; Sherwood, op. cit., II, 711-12.

[2]Feis, op. cit., p. 120.

[3]Ciechanowski, op. cit., pp. 195-96.

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At the time, British and American leaders hoped that the Soviet Union could be brought into a new friendly post-war association if Soviet claims were approached in a spirit of goodwill.[1] Consequently, in the course of his discussions with the Americans Eden took the Soviet side in the Polish-Soviet dispute, sharply criticizing the Polish Government and producing a very adverse effect in Washington on Sikorski's already rapidly deteriorating position. During a dinner conversation at which only Roosevelt and Hopkins were present, Eden explained his opinions (March 15):

> Eden stated he thought Russia was our most difficult problem; that she undoubtedly had two different plans up her sleeve--one based on British-American co-operation with Russia and the other on the assumption that the U.S. would withdraw from all interest in European affairs after the war. Eden said he believed that Russia preferred and hoped for the former, because Stalin was not prepared to face the implications of Russia's control over European affairs, and England would probably be too weak to face Russia alone diplomatically. . . .
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Eden said he thought that Russia would demand very little territory of Poland, possibly up to the "Curzon Line." This would not affect Poland unduly from an economic point of view. Eden said he believed Stalin wanted a strong Poland, providing the right kind of people were running it and that (Russian) policy at the Peace Table would depend on this.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Eden said that the Poles are being very difficult about their aspirations. . . . Eden said Sikorsky [sic] was forever meeting with the small states of the Balkans promoting Polish ambitions; that all this was known to the Russians, and Eden thinks Sikorski is doing far more harm for Poland than good. Poland has very large ambitions after the war and Eden says that privately they say that Russia will be so weakened and Germany crushed that Poland will emerge as the most powerful state in that part of the world. Eden

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[1] Feis, op. cit., p. 120.

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[1] Feis, op. cit., p. 120.

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> thinks this is completely unrealistic. Poland wants East Prussia and both the President and Eden agree that Poland should have it. Eden said that the Russians agree privately with this, but are not willing to tell this to the Poles, because they want to use it as a bargaining instrument at the Peace Table. Poland will want her original boundaries as they existed prior to the war. The President said that, after all, the big powers would have to decide what Poland should have and that he, the President, did not intend to go to the Peace Conference and bargain with Poland or the other small states. . . .[1]

Roosevelt had indicated a fundamental change in American foreign policy as expressed in the Atlantic Charter when he agreed that territorial changes, including alterations in Poland's eastern frontiers, would be imposed if necessary.

Between conversations with Eden, Hopkins visited Litvinov (March 16, 1943) to ask about Soviet demands at the Peace Table. Although he was more cautious and less precise than Maisky had been with Eden, Litvinov largely repeated Maisky's claims: the absorption of the Baltic States, Bessarabia and the Finnish territory gained in 1940. On Poland

> He said he thought Russia would agree to Poland having East Prussia, but that Russia would insist on what he called "her territorial rights" on the Polish frontier. Said he did not anticipate any great difficulty with Poland about this, although he said Poland would make "outrageous" demands. He felt that Great Britain and the United States should decide what should be done about Poland and "tell them" rather than ask them.[2]

The lack of protest against Litvinov's conditions by the American Government probably indicated to Soviet leaders where they stood in relation to Sikorski in the eyes of American policy-makers.

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[1] Sherwood, op. cit., pp. 706-7.

[2] Ibid., pp. 710-11.

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The United States Government were ready to give their tentative approval to Soviet demands. They would follow Litvinov's advice, as Roosevelt had said, of imposing a territorial settlement on Poland and that settlement would probably be the Curzon Line.

During his visit Eden had undercut Sikorski's position in Washington. He put doubts in the President's mind about Polish responsibility and Sikorski's federal plans. He succeeded in obtaining a basic change in American policy. Roosevelt agreed with Eden, privately giving his approval to the Soviet solution of the Polish-Soviet territorial dispute, the Curzon Line. Ciechanowski notes the effect of Eden's visit on Washington:

> I had closely followed the trend of Eden's conversations in Washington. As regards the relationship of the United Nations to Soviet Russia, I learned that he had used all his very convincing and suave diplomacy to impress upon the American Government and political circles how indispensable it was to continue to apply great caution in dealing with the Soviets, and to avoid so far as possible any too forceful arguments which Stalin might resent and which might result in the loss of this powerful partner, who was bearing the brunt of the war against Germany.
>
> On the whole, these arguments fell on willing American American ears and appeared considerably to impress American official, political, and press circles in Washington. Mr. Eden's influence was at that time most clearly reflected in Walter Lippmann's columns.
>
> So far as Polish problems created by Soviet Russia were concerned, Mr. Eden had discussed them in Washington, frankly expressing his concern, but he did not urge the United States Government to take action. On the contrary, I was told that he discouraged the idea of a strong intervention on behalf of Poland in Moscow.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Both Britain and America appeared to understand fully the dangerous trend of Soviet policy and were probing the possibilities of influencing Stalin. Neither of them really trusted him. Both were considerably frightened at losing Soviet Russia as a partner in the war. Each was passing the buck to the other. The American Government contended that Britain, as Poland's ally, was in a better position to defend

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Poland's interests. The British Government was inclined to believe that the United States could intervene more effectively, being less directly interested in European issues.[1]

* * * *

By the first of April, 1943 the Polish Government was in a very weak position. In Moscow Romer was almost a prisoner in the Embassy. Polish long distance telephone calls were not handled and an ever-increasing number of telegrams from outlying districts were not being delivered.[2] Polish citizens calling at the Embassy were stopped on their way out by members of the NKVD, arrested and never returned.[3] On April 6 Romer reported to London that the Soviet Government had virtually taken over the entire relief system.[4]

Romer approached the American and British Ambassadors in Moscow, Standley and Clark Kerr, for assistance and presented them with a memorandum (April 2, 1943). It explained that the Polish Government could no longer hide the true state of Poles in the Soviet Union, unless it received Allied support. In his memorandum Romer asked that the Allies should endeavor

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[1]Ciechanowski, op. cit., pp. 156-57.

[2]GSHI, A. 11, 49/Sow/4, "The Minutes of the negotiations at the Kremlin between Ambassador Romer and Commissar Molotov on the crisis in Polish-Soviet relations (March 18)."

[3]GSHI, A.11, 49/Sow/5-1, "Aide-mémoire to the British Government on Soviet Actions (March 23)."

[4]GSHI, PRM, 102/2, "Report of Ambassador Romer on the situation of the welfare system in the Soviet Union (April 6)."

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to establish that the question of citizenship of all Poles in the Soviet Union be left open for the time being; and that orphans and children whose parents could not provide a living, families whose supporters were outside the Soviet Union and certain agreed persons would be allowed to leave the Soviet Union.[1] Standley gave his opinion of the memorandum to Hull (April 3):

> I consider that the terms of the memorandum should constitute a reasonable basis for further discussions between the Polish and Soviet Governments. I feel that the Poles have gone as far as they possibly can to come to an understanding with the Russians and I realize what a harmful impression the revaluation [revelation] of the true facts concerning the situation of the Poles in the Soviet Union would have upon world opinion and our united effort. I am therefore inclined to recommend that it might be advisable for the American and British Governments to intercede on behalf of Poland. . . .[2]

Stalin was pushing the Polish Government towards the severance of diplomatic relations. After the TASS announcement of March 1, 1943, which officially claimed the Curzon Line for the first time and challenged the right of the Polish Government-in-Exile to represent the Polish people, the same themes appeared and re-appeared in Soviet and Soviet-sponsored activities.

At the same time, Stalin was preparing his own Polish clients. On March 1, the same day as the TASS announcement, the UPP began to publish Wolna Polska (Free Poland). The tone of Wolna Polska was much more abrasive than the first UPP journal,

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[1] Foreign Relations of the United States. Diplomatic Papers, 1943, III, 370.

[2] Ibid., III, 364.

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Nowe Widnokręgi. Attacking the Polish Government in London, it declared that it aimed at "uniting all Polish patriots in the USSR, regardless of their past, their views and convictions, in the joint task of waging an uncompromising struggle against the German invaders." It wanted to regain every inch of Polish ground, but would not claim an inch of other peoples' ground.[1] Wanda Wasiłewska was the editor of Wolna Polska. The paper received favorable mention in such prestigeous Western newspapers as The Times[2] and the New York Times[3] because of its reasonable stand on Polish-Soviet relations.

Stalin had succeeded in isolating Sikorski and the Polish Government-in-Exile from their Western Allies. He had set his mind on breaking relations so that he could set up a group of Poles who would bend to his will. He had done everything to provoke Sikorski: hidden from the knowledge of the Western public, he had arrested the Polish Government's diplomats and humiliated its Ambassador; he had destroyed its relief system; he had publicly claimed its territory and denounced it as not representing the Polish people; he had taken steps to create his own substitute for the Polish Government. But Sikorski was determined to maintain diplomatic relations because he knew that once they were cut, the thousands of Polish citizens still in the Soviet Union would be left to Soviet mercy and that

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[1]Werth, op. cit., p. 582.

[2]The Times, March 9, 1943.

[3]New York Times, March 9, 1943.

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Stalin would create his own Polish Government. Sikorski ignored all incidents until the Germans unearthed the time-bomb in Polish-Soviet relations buried in the forests of Katyn, the graves of 4,300 Polish officers.

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CHAPTER VIII

APRIL-JULY, 1943

The question of the missing Polish officers ran like a bright red thread through the drab fabric of Soviet-Polish relations since the restoration of diplomatic relations on July 30, 1941. Various Polish and Allied leaders--Kot, Anders, Bohusz-Szyzsko, Sikorski, Cripps, Clark Kerr, Standley--had asked Soviet officials ranging from Stalin downward about them, but all had received vague replies. All mail sent to the officers after spring, 1940, had been returned to the senders. There were rumors that they had been sent to Novaya Zemlya in the distant Arctic or to some remote part of Siberia. But as time passed without a single positive scrap of information coming to light about their whereabouts, the Polish Government and military leaders became increasingly suspicious and fearful that the officers had met a tragic end. On August 14, 1942 Anders confessed to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, General Alan Brooke in Moscow, that he believed that they were either being liquidated in Siberia or had already been killed.[1]

In late February, 1943 the German Secret Field Police

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[1]Arthur Bryant, The Turn of the Tide (London: Collins, 1957), p. 463.

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stumbled on the bodies of many Polish officers buried near Smolensk.[1] The significance of the discovery was not recognized at first. Only a few weeks later did it come to the attention of the German Minister of Propaganda, Paul Joseph Goebbels. On April 9, he notes in his diary:

> Polish mass graves have been found near Smolensk. The Bolsheviks simply shot down and then shoveled into mass graves some 10,000 Polish prisoners. . . .[2]

Goebbels immediately saw the propaganda value of the fact that one Allied Power had murdered one-half of the officer corps of another. With such a revelation he hoped to crack the brittle alliance between the Soviet Union and the Western Allies. On April, 1943 Radio Berlin announced the discovery of the graves:

> It is reported from Smolensk that the local population has indicated to the German authorities a place in which the Bolsheviks had perpetrated secretly mass executions and where the GPU had murdered 10,000 Polish officers. The German authorities inspected the place called Kosogory,[3] . . . situated 12 kilometres west of Smolensk, and made the most horrific discovery. A great pit was found, 28 metres long and 16 metres wide, filled with 12 layers of bodies of Polish officers, numbering about 3,000. They were clad in full military uniform, and while many of them had their hands tied, all of them had wounds in the back of their necks caused by pistol shots. The identification of the bodies will not cause great difficulties because of the mummifying property of the soil and because the Bolsheviks had left on the bodies the identity documents of the victims. It has already been ascertained that among the murdered is a General Smorawinski from Lublin. These officers had been previously in Kozielsk near Orel, from whence they had been brought in cattle wagons to Smolensk in February and March, 1940, and

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[1] The Crime of Katyn: Facts and Documents, p. 115.

[2] J. K. Zawodny, Death in the Forest (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame, 1962), p. 15.

[3] The Kosogory hill forms the northern part of the Katyn Wood. DPSR, I, 523 n.

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further on, taken in lorries to Kosogory where all were murdered by the Bolsheviks.[1]

* * * *

With this announcement, Goebbels supplied the missing piece to the puzzle which had baffled and troubled the Polish Government. Sikorski was placed on the horns of a dilemma. He had patiently endured mounting Soviet hostility during the past year in an effort to avoid a final break with the Soviet Union. Now, if he spoke out, he would bring Polish-Soviet relations to a climax and the Soviet Government would probably twist his remarks into an excuse to break diplomatic relations, thus precipitating all the political consequences he feared. If he remained silent, he and the Polish Government risked repudiation by the restless Polish soldiers in Great Britain and the Middle East, and the AK.[2]

The Soviet Government made the first public response to German allegations (April 15) by issuing an unqualified denial of all responsibility:

> In the past two or three days Goebbels' slanderers have been spreading vile fabrications alleging that Soviet authorities effected a mass shooting of Polish officers in the spring of 1940, in the Smolensk area. In launching this monstrous invention the German-Fascist scoundrels do not hesitate at the most unscrupulous and base lies, in their attempt to cover up crimes which, as has now become evident, were perpetrated by themselves.
>
> The German-Fascist reports on this subject leave no doubt as to the tragic fate of the former Polish prisoners of war who in 1941 were engaged in construction work in the areas west of Smolensk and who, along with many Soviet people, residents of the Smolensk region, fell into the

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[1] Ibid., pp. 523-24.

[2] Rozek, op. cit., p. 127.

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hands of the German-Fascist hangmen in the summer of 1941, after the withdrawal of the Soviet troops from the Smolensk area.[1]

This was the first time that the Soviet Government had given any precise details about the fate of the officers. The Polish Government did not believe the Soviet communiqué for a variety of reasons: if its contents were true, there had been no reason to hide these facts when the Polish Government and other Allied representatives had enquired previously; the Polish Government had an extensive spy system across Europe and would have known if such a large exchange of officers from Soviet to German hands had taken place; unlike the German version, the Soviet story did not fit other facts already known, such as details about the manner in which the camps were broken up.

On April 15 at 11 A.M. Sikorski held an informal meeting with key members of his Cabinet to discuss the Polish response. It was decided to send a Note to the Soviet Embassy demanding an explanation, to approach the International Red Cross with a request to investigate the matter, and to publish a statement about the case signed by the Minister of National Defense who was responsible for the question of Polish prisoners of war. The Foreign Minister Raczyński and Minister of Information Stanisław Kot[2] were to cooperate with the Minister of National

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[1]GSHI, A. 11, 49/Sow/6, "Communiqué issued by the Soviet Information Bureau attacking the German propaganda in connection with the murder of Polish officers in the Smolensk area (April 15)."

[2]Prof. Stroński resigned from the office of Minister of Information on March 15, 1943 and Prof. Kot assumed the office on March 18, 1943.

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Defence, General Marian Kukiel,[1] in preparing the communiqué.[2]

Shortly afterwards Sikorski and Raczyński met Churchill and Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Sir Alexander Cadogan, for lunch. Sikorski explained to Churchill that he had a wealth of information and that he could not hold back the Polish press. The Polish Government would have to issue an official statement if it were to retain the confidence of its compatriots. Churchill disagreed and said that a public announcement would be a serious mistake. As for the officers, he told Sikorski, "If they are dead, nothing you can do will bring them back."[3] Churchill remained true to his primary purpose of defeating Hitler, as well as to his sense of disadvantage in the face of Soviet military victories as compared to limited Western successes. Raczyński recalls:

> . . . Churchill without committing himself, showed by his manner that he had no doubt of it [Soviet responsibility]. He remarked: "The Bolsheviks can be very cruel." He added, however, that their ruthlessness was a source of strength, and was to our advantage as far as destroying Germans was concerned.[4]

Kot had the best background to formulate the contents of the communiqué because he had written Notes and had spoken to Soviet officials on various occasions about the officers.

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[1]Sikorski had held the offices of Prime Minister, Commander-in-Chief and Minister of National Defence. On September 26, 1942, General Kukiel assumed the last position.

[2]DPSR, I, 609.

[3]Churchill, The Hinge of Fate, p. 679.

[4]Raczcyński, In Allied London, p. 141.

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Kukiel assisted him. Kot, with his usual precision, produced a document which implied Polish recognition of Soviet guilt. It recorded the existence of the camps, what was known about their break-up, the numerous Polish efforts to locate the missing officers and the Soviet refusal to give specific replies. After Sikorski showed the draft of the communiqué to Raczyński, the Polish Foreign Minister reported its contents to Eden and Cadogan. They accepted the news of the Polish intention to publish a statement with resignation, but asked that the Polish Government insert a sentence condemning German propaganda methods. This would leave a loophole to exonerate the Soviet Government. Raczyński agreed, reported what had transpired to his Polish colleagues and the suggested British sentence was included.[1] The final paragraph of the published text ran as follows:

> We have become accustomed to the lies of German propaganda and we understand the purpose behind its latest revelations. In view however of abundant and detailed German information concerning the discovery of the bodies of many thousands of Polish officers near Smolensk, and the categorical statement that they were murdered by the Soviet authorities in the spring of 1940, the necessity has arisen that the mass graves discovered should be investigated and the facts alleged and verified by a competent international body, such as the International Red Cross. The Polish Government has therefore approached this institution with a view to their sending a delegation to the place where the massacre of the Polish prisoners of war is said to have taken place.[2]

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[1] Ibid., pp. 141-42.

[2] GSHI, PRM, 102/4, "Communiqué issued by the Polish Minister of National Defence concerning the fate of Polish prisoners of war in the camps of Kozielsk, Starobielsk and Ostashkov and the appeal to the International Red Cross for investigation (April 16)."

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Sikorski approved of the text at 12:30 P.M., April 16. The Polish Telegraph Agency issued the communiqué signed by Kukiel the same night.[1]

In an effort to prevent the Germans from exploiting the Polish communiqué for propaganda purposes, Raczyński drafted a supplementary statement. It stated that the Polish Government had approached the International Red Cross, then added:

> At the same time, however, the Polish Government, on behalf of the Polish nation, denies to the Germans any right to base on a crime they ascribe to others, arguments in their own defence. The profoundly hypocritical indignation of German propaganda will not succeed in concealing from the world the many cruel and reiterated crimes still being perpetrated against the Polish people.

It condemned the Germans for their barbarous treatment of Polish prisoners of war and civilians, including, "the massacre of one-and-a-half-million people by executions or in concentration camps."[2] The Statement was approved, with certain additions, by the Council of Ministers on April 17.

On April 20 Raczyński sent a Note to Bogomolov the Soviet Ambassador to the Polish Government-in-Exile, in which he asked:

> . . . If . . . as shown by the communiqué of the Soviet Information Bureau of April 15th, 1943, the Government of the USSR would seem to be in possession of more ample information on this matter than was communicated to the representatives of the Polish Government sometime ago, I beg once more to request you, Mr. Ambassador, to communicate to the Polish Government detailed and precise information as to the fate of the prisoners of war and civilians pre-

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[1] DPSR, I, 609.

[2] GSHI, PRM, 102/4, "Statement of the Polish Government concerning the discovery of the graves of Polish officers near Smolensk (April 17)."

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viously detained in the camps of Kozielsk, Starobielsk and Ostashkov.[1]

* * * *

Sikorski's diplomatic position was complicated by a parallel request from the German Red Cross to the International Red Cross for an investigation of the graves (April 15). The German request was completely independent of the Polish request and unknown to the Polish Government at the time. The Soviet Government used the coincidence to discredit the Polish Government's case and to turn an embarrassment into a diplomatic victory. On April 19 Pravda declared that the Polish Government was "cooperating with the Hiterite hangmen" and that the Polish appeal to the International Red Cross "constituted direct assistance to the enemy in the fabrication of a foul lie which will fill all people of common sense with repugnance. . . ."[2]

Stalin sent a Note to Churchill (April 21), which Maisky delivered personally to Churchill's private country home at Chartwell. Stalin protested against the anti-Soviet campaign which was being carried on by both the Polish and German Governments and informed Churchill that the Soviet Government was about to interrupt relations with Poland:

> The fact that the anti-Soviet campaign has been started simultaneously in the German and Polish press and follows identical lines is indubitable evidence of contact and collusion between Hitler--the Allies' enemy--and the Sikorski Government in this hostile campaign.

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[1]GSHI, PRM, 101/1, "Note from Minister Raczynski to Ambassador Bogomolov demanding an explanation of the fate of Polish prisoners missing in the USSR (April 20)."

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> At a time when the peoples of the Soviet Union are shedding their blood in a grim struggle against Hitler Germany and bending their energies to defeat the common foe of the freedom-loving democratic countries, the Sikorski Government is striking a treacherous blow at the Soviet Union to help Hitler tyranny.
>
> These circumstances compel the Soviet Government to consider that the present Polish Government, having descended to collusion with the Hitler Government, has, in practice, severed its relations of alliance with the U.S.S.R. and adopted a hostile attitude to the Soviet Union.
>
> For these reasons the Soviet Government has decided to interrupt relations with that Government.[1]

Stalin's proposal to break off relations with Poland threatened to place the British Government in a very unpleasant predicament. Churchill telegraphed Stalin on April 24 that he would oppose an investigation by the International Red Cross on German territory because it would be a fraud and that Eden was about to see Sikorski and would press him to withdraw the request for an investigation under German auspices. He hoped that Stalin's

> . . . decision to "interrupt" relations is to be read in the sense of a final warning rather than a break and that it will not be made public at any rate until every other plan has been tried. . . .[2]

When Eden met Sikorski (April 24), he showed him Stalin's Note to Churchill. Sikorski emphatically denied that the Polish request to the International Red Cross had been made in conjunction with the German Government. Eden warned that the situation was grave and Stalin would break diplomatic relations unless Sikorski withdrew the Polish appeal to the International Red

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[1] Stalin's Correspondence, I, 121.

[2] Ibid., p. 122.

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Cross and made a public statement to the effect that the Katyn mass-murder was an invention of German propaganda. Sikorski told Eden that he had no doubt that the Soviet Union was responsible and that he would not issue a statement saying that the graves found at Katyn were merely a fabrication of German propaganda. He would attempt to hush up anti-Soviet criticism and would order the Polish Envoy at Berne not to press the International Red Cross.[1] But he would do this only on the understanding that an Anglo-American intervention would be made to obtain the release from the Soviet Union of (a) Polish orphans and children, (b) indisputably Polish citizens whose status had been unilaterally changed by the Soviet Note of January 16, 1943, (c) the next-of-kin of Polish soldiers and (d) Polish males who were capable of serving in the Polish Army. Sikorski also demanded assistance from the British and Americans in providing relief for Polish citizens still in the Soviet Union. Eden protested about the last point because of the difference of treatment which could arise in the Soviet Union: "on the one hand, starving Russians, on the other hand well-fed Poles." Sikorski retorted that the mortality rate among Polish soldiers who had left the Soviet Union had been up to 12 per cent and

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[1]The International Red Cross was placed in a difficult position by the Katyn Incident. It issued a communiqué on April 23 in reply to the Polish and German requests for an investigation which stated:

> . . . The ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross) have replied in both cases that, in principle, it would be ready to lend assistance in appointing neutral experts, on condition that all the parties concerned asked them to do so. . . . DPSR, I, 532.

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> All these circumstances compel the Soviet Government to recognize that the present Government of Poland, having slid on the path of accord with Hitler's Government, has actually discontinued allied relations with the USSR, and has adopted a hostile attitude towards the Soviet Union.
>
> On the strength of the above, the Soviet Government has decided to sever relations with the Polish Government.[1]

Romer refused to accept the Note because of the allegations of complicity with Germany, but the Note was sent to him at his hotel in a sealed envelope.[2] In a final effort to prevent the inevitable, Romer gave an interview to Western newsmen in which he described the Soviet take-over of the relief system. As for the question of the graves at Katyn, he said, "I don't believe in a Russian crime, only why could they not be franker with us?" Romer's effort was to no avail. Since he was no longer an Ambassador from the Soviet point of view, he had no right to give interviews. None of his statements passed Soviet censorship, not even his comment that he believed the Soviet Government were innocent of German allegations.[3]

Immediately Allied leaders attempted to patch up the split. On April 26 Roosevelt wired Stalin:

> . . . I hope that you can find a way in this present situation to define your action as a suspension of conversations with the Polish Government in exile in London rather than

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[1]GSHI, A. 11, 49/Sow/3, "Note from Commissar Molotov to Ambassador Romer concerning the severance of relations between the Soviet Government and the Polish Government (April 25)."

[2]GSHI, A. 11, 49/Sow/2, "Note from Ambassador Romer to Commissar Molotov stating the reasons for his refusal to accept the Soviet note of April 25, 1943, concerning the severance of relations between the Government of the USSR and the Government of Poland (April 26)."

[3]Werth, op. cit., p. 587.

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to label it as a complete severance of diplomatic relations between the Soviet Union and Poland.

I cannot believe that Sikorski has in any way whatsoever collaborated with the Hitler gangsters. In my opinion, however, he has erred in taking up this particular question with the International Red Cross. Furthermore, I am inclined to think that Prime Minister Churchill will find a way of prevailing upon the Polish Government in London in the future to act with more common sense.[1]

Stalin took no heed of Allied efforts to end the breach. Ever since Korneychuk's article of February 19, 1943, Soviet communiqués had spoken in terms of "the present Polish Government" and from time to time expressed the opinion that it did not truly represent the Polish people. Stalin was bent on creating his own Polish Government. On April 28 Wanda Wasilewski wrote an article in Izvestia entitled "The Polish Patriots are against the Government of General Sikorski." She accused the Polish Government of being controlled by Hitlerite elements, not representing the Polish people and being a hangover from Smigly-Rydz's "Government of Poland's September defeat." The leaders of Anders' Army were denounced for being anti-Semitic, chauvinistic, anti-Soviet and even cowardly for "refusing to fight and withdrawing its forces from the Soviet Union." She wrote that the Polish Government's links with Berlin were as evident as its imperialistic intentions towards Soviet territory. The article concluded that the Union of Polish Patriots had requested permission from the Soviet Government to organize Polish military units "which would not sit for months in tents but would proceed

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[1] Stalin's Correspondence, II, 61.

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to the front to fight shoulder to shoulder with the Red Army."[1]

Stalin's policy was beginning to take form. A Polish Army would be formed in the Soviet Union and it would not be under the control of the Polish Government-in-Exile. But to what Government would it owe allegiance? On April 28, the American Ambassador in Moscow, Standley, informed Hull that he did not share the opinion of many qualified experts who predicted the foundation of a puppet government. The failure of the Finnish Communist regime in 1940 argued against such a move; so did the dearth of Poles of sufficient stature to form a plausible pro-Soviet government. On the other hand he warned:

> . . . I believe we should be prepared for some move in this direction whether it be in the form of a Free Polish Government Union or Committee and realize that any such organization on Soviet soil must be completely under Soviet dominance. . . .[2]

Churchill's Note of April 30 to Stalin was much sharper than Roosevelt's mild message of April 26:

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[1] Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers, 1943, III, 400-1.

[2] Standley went on to make a prediction of startling accuracy:

> . . . By the same token a similar development in relations to any Slavic or bordering country outside the 1941 Soviet frontiers which does not vouchsafe [sic] the policy of the Soviet Union is possible.
>
> The nucleus of any European Government can be found in the Soviet Union and especially those governments in which the Soviet Union has geographic or strategic interests.
>
> It has occurred to me that we may be faced with a turnabout in European history. In 1919 Western Europe attempted to set up a cordon sanitaire to protect it from the influence of bolshevism. Might not now the Kremlin envisage the formation of a belt of pro-Soviet States to protect it from the influences of the West?

Ibid., III, 401-2.

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> I cannot refrain from expressing my disappointment that you should have felt it necessary to take action in breaking off relations with the Poles without giving me time to inform you of the results of my approach to General Sikorski, about which I had telegraphed to you on April 24th. I had hoped that, in the spirit of our treaty of last year, we should always consult each other about such important matters, more especially as they affect the combined strength of the United Nations.

He explained that the Polish Government wanted to work with the Soviet Union, but they requested the evacuation of the dependents of the Polish soldiers in Iran and men capable of military service. In an obvious reference to Wanda Wasilewska's much publicized article in Izvestia, Churchill explicitly stated that the British Government would not recognize a Soviet puppet regime:

> 4. So far this business has been Goebbels' triumph. He is now busy suggesting that the U.S.S.R. will set up a Polish Government on Russian soil. We should not, of course, be able to recognize such a Government and would continue our relations with Sikorski who is far the most helpful man you or we are likely to find for the purposes of the common cause. I expect that this will also be the American view.[1]

* * * *

As has been seen, the Polish position in press and public opinion vis-à-vis the Soviet Union had been steadily eroded by an effective Soviet propaganda campaign and the heroic exploits of the Soviet Army on the battlefield. After the Battle of Stalingrad the Soviet Government began its concerted propaganda offensive. The campaign reached its disastrous climax for Sikorski at the time of the Katyn Incident and the severance of diplomatic relations. Western news media gave full coverage to lengthy TASS invectives, but skipped over Polish defenses

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[1] Stalin's Correspondence, I, 124-25.

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whenever possible in the interests of Allied unity.

The Katyn Incident and its consequences sparked a new, more violent uproar in the Western press. At first, efforts were made, particularly in Great Britain, to minimize the initial announcement, but as events unfolded most newspapers took the Soviet side in the dispute. The Poles were depicted as ambitious irresponsibles who had willingly swallowed Goebbels' lie and who, by driving a wedge in Allied unity, were distracting all concerned parties from the major task at hand, defeating Hitler. The suggestion that the Polish Government was working in cahoots with the German Government was even made.

In Great Britian major papers either ignored the Polish communiqué of April 16 or played it down.[1] Even so, the Daily Worker kept hot the coals of discord by accusing the Polish Government of being in direct contact with the Germans. When the secret could no longer be kept the anti-Polish barrage mounted. Low's cartoon (Figure 6) in the Evening Standard aptly catches the editorial attitude taken by the British press. A more critical sample is an article by the left-wing journalist, A. J. Cummings, in the News Chronicle (April 27). His choice of pointed words is noteworthy:

> . . . the Polish Government and its Press seized upon it [the German announcement about Katyn] so readily as to suggest that they welcomed the chance to asperse the Soviet Union and to discredit her with her principal Allies.
>
> What purpose could be served by the appeal of the Polish press for the wider distribution of its Government's communique together with the Nazi allegations? As the "Week"

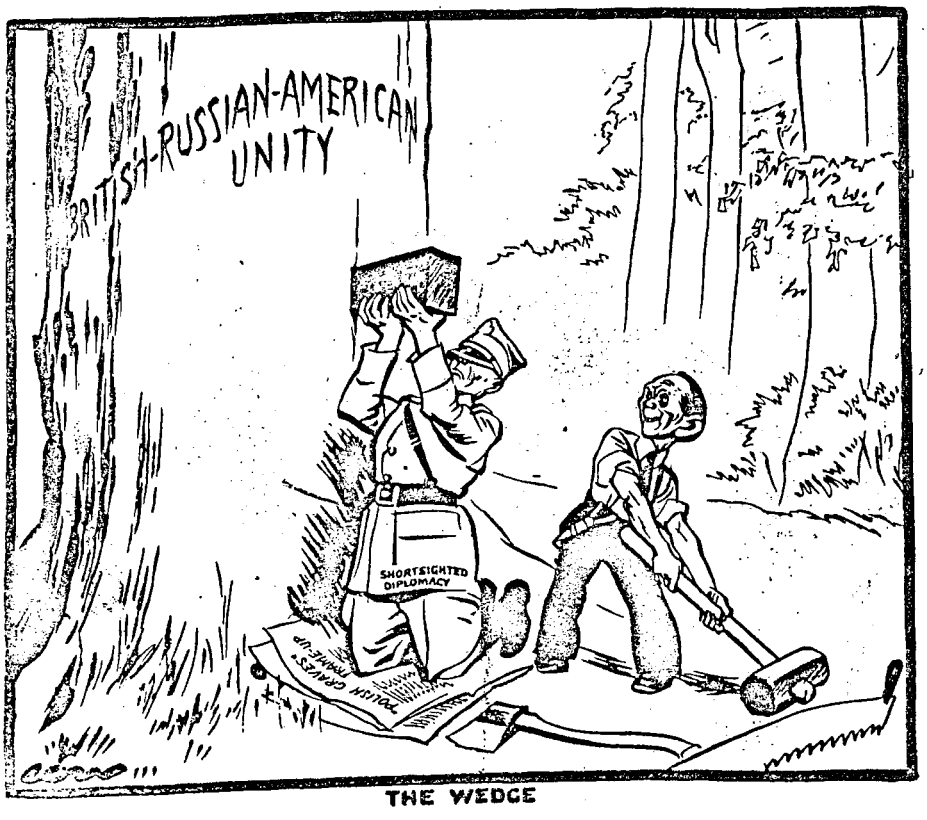
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[1] New York Times, April 18, 1943.

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Fig. 6.--Evening Standard, April 29, 1943.

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> properly points out, the effect of distributing enemy propaganda among the Allied forces in Britain would not be conducive to good discipline or good comradeship among troops dependent on Britain for everything they have.
>
> At last the Russians have expressed their indignation in drastic terms; the British Government, too, is said to be deeply annoyed. I should think so. The moment has come for London and Washington to address a plain-spoken remonstrance to the Polish Government before its ill-timed manifestations plunge an unhappy country into very deep waters. Perhaps the time has come and gone.
>
> The Poles are inveterate propagandists, and always have been. What they seem now to forget is that their liberation can come about only through the exertions and sacrifices of the Russians with whom they are constantly picking dangerous quarrels.[1]

British public opinion largely took the same position. Members of the whole political spectrum--Tories, Liberals, Trade Unionists--condemned the Poles for helping Hitler by trying to split Allied unity. After a speech by a labor leader who condemned the Poles as "whispering Quislings"[2] and stated that they had outlived their welcome in Great Britain if they persisted in undermining the war effort by attacking the Soviet Union, the Scottish T.U.C. (Trade Union Congress) unanimously adopted a resolution calling for the "most complete military co-operation among the United Nations Governments and complete elimination of all Fascist activities and propaganda on the home front. . . ."[3] The elements of British society, such as the Catholic press, which continued to be sympathetic to the Polish Government, were rapidly dwindling.

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[1] News Chronicle, April 27, 1943.

[2] One of the Polish sources of pride during World War II was that Poland was the only European nation which never produced a quisling.

[3] Daily Herald, April 30, 1943.

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In the United States the situation was more complicated. Concerted efforts were made by the Soviet Government to undermine Sikorski's position among Polish Americans by such activities as bringing in copies of Wolna Polska from the Soviet Union where it was published and distributing them in Polish communities. The conservative and isolationist press such as the Hearst chain was not pro-Soviet, but, on the other hand, it was not pro-Polish in the dispute.[1] But generally the chief molders of American public opinion were, like the British, pro-Soviet and anti-Polish. A United Press International News Agency's communiqué from Moscow (April 26) commenting on the break in Soviet-Polish relations appeared in the New York Times (April 27):

> Russia, by breaking diplomatic relations with Poland, brought to a climax a series of crises that have extended over twenty months. It is possible to reveal now that last Summer, the Russian Government hushed up, in the interest of Allied solidarity, a mysterious affair in which it believed a number of highly placed persons were taking action inimical to this country.
>
> When the break finally came, intense bitterness had spread from Russian political quarters to Russian ordinary citizens. Russian authorities feel that they have shown remarkable restraint in dealing with the series of problems that had arisen in Russia's relations with Poland.

The Christian Science Monitor, another highly respected American newspaper, published an article on the diplomatic break which included a revealing evaluation of Soviet foreign policy. Although an extreme example, it is indicative of the ignorance and wishful thinking among American liberals about Soviet aims and methods.

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[1] GSHI, PRM, 100, "Report of M. Ropp to Minister of Information, Kot (April 29, 1943)."

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> . . . One weakness, however, is that Russian diplomacy is always forthright--in fact quite lacking in the employment of the nuances and delicate phrases traditional with Western diplomacy. The language Moscow speaks is akin to what American diplomacy used in the lusty days of Andrew Jackson and Daniel Webster when "plain speaking" was a natural form of expression at the State Department. There really is nothing new or startling about Russian treatment of the affair. When they don't like something they act. It may be very upsetting to the surface of United Nations harmony. But at least there is no pretense about the Russian attitude. One knows exactly where they stand on the Polish question.[1]

In an effort to further good Soviet-American relations and to tailor the problem to the American mentality, the journalist[2] made the preposterous comparison of Stalin with the "plain speaking" Andrew Jackson and Daniel Webster. To describe Soviet diplomacy as "forthright" and to say "one knows exactly where they stand . . ." represented but one indication of how the American public completely misjudged Stalin's policy and techniques.

At the height of the controversy Walter Lippmann wrote an article on Polish-Soviet relations. He discussed the rupture in relations, but throughout the entire article he did not mention the cause of the imbroglio, the discovery of the mass graves at Katyn or whom he thought was responsible. Commenting on Polish-Soviet frontiers he explicitly accepted the Soviet position:

> . . . We would have done better to have taken the unequivocal position that the border must be settled between Poland and Russia, that we are committed under the Atlantic Charter to the resurrection of an independent Poland, but not to the restoration of a particular frontier, and that the fate of

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[1] Christian Science Monitor, April 30, 1943.

[2] Joseph C. Harsch.

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> Poland, the war against Germany, the common action of the Allies in Europe and Asia must not be hazarded upon a disputed province.
>
> A line like that would have raised among the Polish leaders no false hopes, and encouraged no imprudent defiances and challenges. Among the Russians it would have aroused no deep and old suspicions. . . .

Lippmann pointed out that if Poland continued to be an enemy of its powerful neighbors, it would amount to "romantic suicide," and that Poland should have a government which the Soviet Union recognized.[1]

In contrast to the severe criticisms leveled at the Polish Government, statements by pro-Soviet Poles received both considerable and sympathetic treatment in the British and American press. Wanda Wasilewska's article in Izvestia was widely quoted and created the impression that there existed a reasonable Polish alternative. On April 29 Professor Oskar Lange,[2] a left-wing Polish economist at the University of Chicago, wrote a strongly worded letter to the New York Herald Tribune stating that the cause of the Soviet-Polish dispute "is to be found in the romantic hyper-nationalism and in the political irresponsibility of the major part of the Polish émigré intelligentsia." He accused the Polish left as well as the right of carrying on an anti-Soviet campaign. The following day (April 30) The Times in London included a lengthy quotation from the letter, in addition to the rumor that Colonel Beck was in Bucharest and

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[1] New York Herald Tribune, April 29, 1943.

[2] Lange had been a Professor at the University of Kraków before World War II. After the War he became the Polish People's Republic first Ambassador to the United States.

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was "in constant touch with his henchmen who are everywhere."[1] And then, the next day (May 1) the Daily Worker quoted The Times' article.

* * * *

In 1941 Sikorski had been optimistic that he could deal with Stalin on the basis of a policy of an independent Poland which had friendly relations with the Soviet Union. His optimism had been cooled by the Soviet actions of 1942. By the first third of 1943 it was becoming clear to him that this basic policy was not feasible because Stalin did not want Polish friendship on these terms.

Since Roosevelt was the President of the most powerful Ally and was still considered Poland's defender, Sikorski wrote him a letter on May 4 in which he revealed his political aims and fears, and, in effect, admitted the failure of his policy. He explained that the campaign against himself and the Polish Government had been planned as early as his visit to Moscow in December, 1941. He cited instances of Soviet deliberateness including the withdrawal of Polish citizenship on January 16, 1943, and the execution of Alter and Erlich.

> Then a demand was made for the Molotov-Ribbentrop line as the boundary between the future Poland and Russia. This, of course, would have meant the beginning of the end of Poland as an independent state.
> I fear that what the Soviet Government wants is a Polish

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[1]At this time Col. Beck was interned in Rumania. He was very ill with tuberculosis. Beck died of pneumonia on June 6, 1944 under the close guard of the Gestapo.

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Communist Government which would offer them Poland as a Soviet satellite state.[1]

Sikorski asked that Roosevelt and Churchill intercede with the Soviet Union so that the united front against Germany could be reestablished as soon as possible. He requested the President's support in obtaining permission from the Soviet Government for the evacuation from the Soviet Union of all the next-of-kin of Polish soldiers, the thousands of children and orphans, and all men still fit for service in the Polish Army; he also asked for American intervention in recreating a relief system among Polish citizens still in the Soviet Union.[2]

Ralph Parker, the Moscow Correspondent for The Times and the New York Times, submitted two questions for Stalin on Polish-Soviet relations. Stalin replied on May 4:

> (1) Question: Does the Government of the USSR desire to see a strong and independent Poland after the defeat of Hitlerite Germany? Answer: Unquestionably, it does.
> (2) Question: On what fundamentals is it your opinion that relations between Poland and the USSR should be based after the war? Answer: Upon the fundamentals of solid good neighborly relations and mutual respect, or, should the Polish people so desire--upon the fundamentals of alliance providing for mutual assistance against the Germans as the chief enemies of the Soviet Union and Poland.[3]

In the West the answers were interpreted as one more example of Soviet goodwill and Stalin's personal reasonability. Few noticed

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[1] Italics mine.

[2] GSHI, PRM, 97, "Letter from General Sikorski to President Roosevelt regarding permission for the departure from the USSR of several thousands of the next-of-kin of Polish children and provision for the needs of Polish citizens deported to the USSR (May 4)."

[3] The New York Times, May 6, 1943.

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that although he wanted a strong and possibly allied Poland, he did not mention the Polish Government-in-Exile. In addition, Westerners had no grasp of Stalin's interpretation of the expressions "independent" and "mutual respect."

Sikorski took the opportunity to make a conciliatory reply (May 6). He stated that the Polish Government also wanted friendly relations with the Soviet Union based on an alliance and that in spite of recent events, "The Polish Government is ready to give a positive answer to any Soviet initiative which will coincide with the interests of the Polish Republic. . . ."[1]

The Soviet position was further defined in a blistering attack on the Polish Government by Vyshinsky in an interview to Western pressmen (May 6). Alexander Werth, who is usually sympathetic to the Russians and was present, describes Vyshinsky's manner of delivery: ". . . He spoke in a particularly harsh and snarling manner, reminiscent of his manner as Public Prosecutor in the notorious purge trials of 1936-38."[2] He accused the Polish Government and press of being under the influence of pro-Hitlerites who were circulating false, anti-Soviet information. He denounced the Polish Army which had been formed with Soviet assistance and goodwill to fight on the Eastern Front for its refusal and withdrawal.[3] He described the creation of the welfare system which further Soviet goodwill and generosity had permitted, but explained:

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[1]GSHI, PRM, 103/1, "General Sikorski's reply to Marshal Stalin's interview in 'The New York Times' (May 6)."

[2]Werth, op. cit., p. 589.

[3]Supra, Chap. VI, pp. 232-34.

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> In reality, however, it transpired that the Polish agencies in the localities, and a number of their employers and delegates, instead of honestly fulfilling their duties and their obligations in collaboration with the local Soviet authorities, chose the path of espionage activity hostile to the USSR.[1]

* * * *

Soon after the rupture in relations, the Russians began to ask Great Britain and the United States to silence the vociferous Polish press in Great Britain, and, more significantly, to arrange a reshuffling of the Polish Cabinet. On April 24 Eden asked Sikorski if he would like the British Government to take action against the segment of the Polish press that attacked him as too conciliatory towards the Soviet Union. In his Note to Stalin on April 30 Churchill wrote:

> 3. The Cabinet here is determined to have proper discipline in the Polish press in Great Britain. The miserable rags attacking Sikorski can say things which German broadcasts repeat open-mouthed to the world to our joint detriment. This must be stopped and it will be stopped.[2]

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[1] DPSR, II, 7-10. Some of the more extreme charges brought against arrested Polish representatives are instructive.

> 22. Distribution of pray-books and other articles of devotion among Soviet citizens [i.e., considered by the NKVD a Soviet citizen] and allowing them to participate in the religious services held for the Poles.
>
> 23. Z. found guilty for <u>spying for the United States</u> [Italics mine] because he met in Tchelyabinsk a Mr. Symons (?) employed in the American Consulate in Vladivostok.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> 26. Some were accused of having organized a spiritualist seance at which the ghost was alleged to have said, in answer to questions, that Stalin would die suddenly in 1943, that Russia would in future have a monarchical regime and that Poland's frontier would be on the Dniepr.

GHSI, A. 11, 49/Sow/6, "The Polish Memorandum to Great Britain and the USA refuting Soviet charges against the Polish welfare organization (May 18, 1943)."

[2] <u>Stalin's Correspondence</u>, I, 125.

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On May 4 Stalin thanked Churchill for his promise to discipline the Polish press. He wrote of Sikorski with scorn:

> . . . . Although you informed me that the Polish Government wanted to work loyally with the Soviet Government, I question its ability to keep its word. The Polish Government is surrounded by such a vast pro-Hitler following, and Sikorski is so helpless and beaten that there is no certainty at all of his being able to remain loyal in relations with the Soviet Union, even granting that he wants to be loyal.[1]

In the next paragraph Stalin flatly denied that the Soviet Government planned to set up a rival Polish government, but suggested that a change of the Polish Government's composition, imposed by the Allies, would be necessary before there could be a resumption of Polish-Soviet relations:

> As to the rumours, circulated by the Hitlerites, that a new Polish Government is being formed in the U.S.S.R., there is hardly any need to deny this fabrication. . . . This does not rule out Great Britain, and the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. taking measures to improve the composition of the present Polish Government in terms of consolidating the Allied united front against Hitler. . . .[2]

Churchill accepted Stalin's plan in principle, but felt that the time was not ripe for changes. On May 12 he informed Stalin:

> I agree that the Polish Government is susceptible of improvement, though there would be a great difficulty in finding better substitutes. I think like you that Sikorski and some others should in any event be retained. If Sikorski were to reconstruct his Government under foreign pressure he would probably be repudiated and thrown out and we should not get anyone so good in his place. Therefore he probably cannot make changes at once, but I will take every opportunity to urge him to this direction as soon as may be. . . .[3]

When Sikorski learned from the British of the contents

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[1] Ibid., pp. 127-28. [2] Ibid., p. 128.

[3] Ibid., pp. 129-30.

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of Stalin's Note of May 4, he replied that he would have to discuss the possibility of Cabinet changes with his associates. En route to his office from the conference he saw the headlines of the afternoon newspapers which featured Vyshinsky's interview of May 6. Angered that at a time of strict censorship, the British press should be allowed to feature such charges, he immediately addressed a letter of protest to Eden.[1] On the question of Cabinet changes he became rigid. A week later an American friend of Maisky approached Władysław Kulski, Counsellor of the Polish Embassy in London, and told him that the Soviet Government would be willing to reestablish relations if there were a reconstitution of the Cabinet, including the removal of Kot, the suppression of the critical Polish press and the tranquillization of the anti-Soviet attitude of the Polish forces in Great Britain and the Middle East. When Sikorski heard of the Soviet suggestions, he replied through Kulski and his American informant, with a touch of wit, that he would replace Kot and/or other members of the Polish Government by people more pro-Soviet, if the Soviet Government would replace Molotov by someone less anti-Polish. He noted that the press had already changed its tone. As for the Polish Army, he said that he had already given orders to this effect and planned to visit the Middle East personally to see that they were carried out.[2]

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[1] Foreign Relations of the United States. Diplomatic Papers, 1943, III, 415-16.

[2] Ibid., pp. 420-21.

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The American Government took the opposite stand from Churchill. On June 16 Welles informed Biddle:

> . . . While some changes might prove advantageous after the restoration . . . we do not feel it proper for us to bring pressure on Sikorski to change the composition of the Polish Government in order to satisfy the Soviet Government. In our opinion it would be unfortunate for a precedent to be established under which the government of one United Nation could successfully force changes in the composition of another government of the United Nations.[1]

The whole question of the reconstitution of the Polish Government illustrates several essential points. The mere fact that the question should even be posed and the levity with which it was treated by Churchill and Stalin show how weak Sikorski's position had become. Secondly, Sikorski's willingness to consider changes indicates that Sikorski understood his position. Thirdly, Churchill continued to feel himself so weak when dealing with Stalin, and Poland remained so insignificant in his calculations that he was willing to yield without protest.

* * * *

As a Government-in-Exile, Sikorski's Government was dependent on the firm support he received from his American and British Allies. The key person in all calculations by mid-1943 was Roosevelt. Throughout the events after the first announcement of the discovery of the graves at Katyn, the most striking feature of American policy with respect to the Soviet-Polish dispute was its weakness bordering on inactivity--in

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[1] Ibid., p. 431.

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spite of the immensity of American power in the Allied camp.

There were several causes for this. During his visit to Washington only a few weeks before Eden had put grave doubts in the minds of Roosevelt and other prominent American policy-makers about Polish grandiose ambitions and responsibility. Churchill visited Washington between May 12 and May 25. One of the major problems discussed again was the Second Front. Churchill was still wary about an invasion of France and preferred other tactical plans; the question was provisionally deferred until the spring of 1944. When Stalin heard of this decision he responded with the same anger he had shown in the past. Rumors of a separate peace continued to be circulated. And again, the Western Allies felt their disadvantage vis-à-vis Stalin. Consequently, a strong line on Polish-Soviet relations was deferred lest Stalin be offended.

The Polish Government had hoped that the American Embassy in Moscow would assume the protection of its property in the Soviet Union. The State Department did not wish to get encumbered with these duties, fearing the harmful effect it could have on Soviet-American relations.[1]

Roosevelt's reply (June 7) to Sikorski's letter of May 4[2] must have been a bitter disappointment. The President wrote:

> I was particularly gratified to have your assurances that you and your Government are anxious to do everything in your power to re-establish the united front against our common enemy and to work together with the other United Nations, including the Soviet Union, with a view to bringing

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[1] DPSR, II, 710.

[2] Supra, pp. 331-32.

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> the war to a victorious conclusion.
>
> On its part the United States Government will continue to cooperate with your Government and all the Governments of the United Nations in attempting to bring about maximum understanding among these nations in order that the full weight of our armed forces may be brought to bear against our common enemy and thus hasten victory and a lasting peace based on justice and goodwill.[1]

Roosevelt did not give the firm, specific support that Sikorski had requested. The letter was in vague, non-committal terms and left Sikorski in a most exposed position.

The Polish Government had a special claim on the British because of their Treaty of Alliance, but the British felt they could not help their Polish Ally. The balance of power within the Western camp had shifted to such an extent that the British were hesitant to act without the support of the United States. And even more than the Americans, the British were plagued in their relations with the Soviet Union by the issue of the Second Front and the fear of a separate peace. British-Soviet relations were quite strained after Stalin learned that there would be no Second Front in 1943.[2]

Like the Americans, the British did not want to assume the permanent protection of Polish interests in the Soviet Union because of the complications it could have on Soviet-British relations.[3] Nonetheless, they temporarily undertook the task

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[1] Foreign Relations of the United States. Diplomatic Papers, 1943, III, 427.

[2] Feis, op. cit., p. 135.

[3] Foreign Relations of the United States. Diplomatic Papers, 1943, III, 410.

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until May 25, 1943 when the Australian Government assumed the representation of Polish interests. The Australian Legation took immediate possession of the Polish Embassy in Kuibyshev and its funds deposited in local banks. The Polish Government offered to place several officials of their diplomatic staff at the disposal of the Australians, but the Soviet Government rejected the plan. The Australian Legation, with its very small staff, was unable to establish contact with Polish citizens across the Soviet Union and had to limit itself to providing only the most urgent needs of the Polish population nearby.[1]

* * * *

Sikorski's third Ally with whom relations were adversely affected by the rupture between the Soviet Union and Poland was Czechoslovakia. There had been a steady deterioration in the Polish-Czechoslovak association ever since the German invasion of the Soviet Union. The basic difference remained the ever-diverging attitude of Beneš and Sikorski towards the Soviet Union. Beneš became more and more pro-Soviet, whereas Sikorski's fears and suspicions of Soviet intentions mounted with each new Soviet attack on his position.

In March, 1943 a Czechoslovak unit of 2,000-3,000 men under Colonel Ludvik Svoboda went into action on the Eastern Front. Soon glowing reports of its achievements were reported in the West. The Czechoslovaks seemed to offer a sharp contrast to the Poles, putting the Poles in a bad light in the eyes of

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[1] DPSR, II, 710.

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public opinion. Anders' Army had withdrawn, and had only bitter words for the Soviet Union; the Czechoslovak forces remained and were fighting with the blessing of President Beneš.[1] The contrast of the reasonable, democratic, pro-Soviet Czechoslovaks with their neighbors, the Poles, who were depicted by their enemies as romantic, irresponsible, undemocratic, excessively ambitious and anti-Soviet, put Sikorski in a much more difficult position--especially after the beginning of the Soviet vilification campaign in the spring of 1943.

The question of Teschen remained unsolved. Beneš wanted a Polish promise that it would be returned. Even though Sikorski was a harsh critic of Polish policy during the Munich Crisis, he felt that he could not promise to return the territory without jeopardizing his entire position by creating a precedent which the Soviet Union and the Western Allies could apply to the Curzon Line.

On January 28, 1943 the Soviet Envoy Extraordinary to the Czechoslovak Government-in-Exile, Bogomolov, bluntly told Beneš that the Soviet Union opposed a Polish-Czechoslovak Alliance. Negotiations for closer Polish-Czechoslovak relations promptly deadlocked. Sikorski tried to get Great Britain and the United States to come out strongly for a Polish-Czechoslovak Confederation; Beneš tried to find a new formula in the form of a Soviet-Polish-Czechoslovak tripartite arrangement. The two concepts were irreconcilable.[2] Sikorski could not obtain

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[1] Werth, op. cit., pp. 583-84.

[2] Wandycz, op. cit., p. 88.

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Western support and Beneš would not agree to the Confederation without Soviet approval. The Poles would not accept the Czechoslovak plan because they feared that Poland and Czechoslovakia would become mere Soviet dependencies--precisely what the original concept of a Confederation was supposed to prevent. The Czechoslovaks took the final step after the rupture of Polish-Soviet relations. On May 14 Czechoslovak Foreign Minister, Jan Masaryk, sent a Note to Raczyński, informing him that Czechoslovak-Polish negotiations were suspended.

Beneš' opinions about east European problems were widely respected among Western leaders. When he made a trip to Washington in the spring of 1943 that coincided with Churchill's, the Czechoslovaks indicated that Beneš was "ready to undertake the task of mediation between the Soviets and Poland."[1] The Poles were very angry because of the way he had been undercutting their position among the Allies. On direct orders from Sikorski, the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent a Memorandum to the State Department (May 17). The pungent wording is indicative of how strongly the Poles felt about Beneš' recent actions.

> In the course of the last year the Czechoslovak Government appears to have become a fervent advocate of USSR aims and, in connection with this attitude, has shown a marked tendency to withdraw from the engagements which it had previously undertaken with regard to Poland. This fact has greatly contributed to diminish the confidence of the Polish Government in the policy of President Beneš. In the opinion of the Polish Government, President Beneš lacks the objectivity indispensible for the part of mediator. On the contrary, immixion on his part in the present delicate

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[1] Ciechanowski, op. cit., p. 172.

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After the Katyn Incident, Stalin effected a diplomatic coup which more than offset the harmful publicity which the Soviet Government had received. On May 22 the Comintern was abolished. The dissolution was welcomed in Western governing circles because it was interpreted as another proof that the Soviet Union had abandoned its policy of carrying on subversive work in the name of international Bolshevism and would become a more respectable nation, in the traditional sense, in the post-war world. In fact, the results of the abolition of the Comintern were more apparent than real. Communist activity abroad for a long time had not been directed by the Comintern, but by the NKVD.[1] Although the Decree of dissolution stated that the Communist Parties in other countries were mature and did not need the Comintern's direction, Communist activity continued to be directed tightly through Communist-front organizations from Moscow by the NKVD.

In Poland the PPR at first made no official statement on the discovery of the graves at Katyn, but at secret meetings they avowed that "Polish reactionaries" had been liquidated. They started a whispering campaign in Warsaw that a dangerous mutiny had broken out and that the ringleaders had been executed. After several days of official silence an oral instruction was given to local representatives to explain as fully justified the

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[1] GSHI, A. 11, 49/Sow/14, "Note on a conversation between Ambassador Ciechanowski and Mr. Sumner Welles on the consequences of the dissolution of the Comintern for the countries adjacent to the USSR (May 27)."

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"liquidation of the Polish reactionaries." Then, after the Soviet communiqué denied the charges, the PPR reversed its story.[1]

During 1943 the PPR made concrete preparations for taking over Poland. They aimed at portraying their Party as a legitimate, patriotic group, fully independent of Moscow, as the most militantly anti-German body and the people's sole protector against German terror, and as the only guarantor of a better Poland in the future.[2]

On May 8 Radio Moscow announced that the Council of the People's Commissars had agreed to the Union of Polish Patriots' request to form a Polish unit which would fight with the Soviet Army. The Commander of the Kościuszko Division would be Lieutenant-Colonel Zygmunt Berling. Ironically, Berling had been an officer in Piłsudski's Legions during World War I. He had been interned at Starobielsk[3] and was one of the few who had escaped liquidation. Even though he had been willing to cooperate with the Soviet Government by forming a Polish force before the German attack,[4] after the Treaty of July 30, 1941 he joined the Polish Army being created in the Soviet Union under the Command of Anders. He quarrelled with his superiors while the Polish Army was still in the Soviet Union and Anders had him arrested for a short time. Before the war Berling was known for leftist leanings and after his release from Soviet captivity

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[1] Dziewanowski, op. cit., p. 168.

[2] Ibid., p. 170.

[3] The Crime of Katyn: Facts and Documents, p. 56.

[4] Supra, Chap. IV, p. 164.

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he was very critical of the pre-war regime. In August, 1942, Berling did not leave the Soviet Union with the rest of the Polish Army, but stayed behind.[1]

The Polish Government protested to the Foreign Office that the creation of a Polish Army not under its control was a breach of International Law (May 13).[2] The British Government were also alarmed. Clark Kerr, the British Ambassador in Moscow, asked Molotov how the Soviet Union could form a Polish Army if there were no Polish citizens left in the Soviet Union as the Soviet Note of January 16, 1943 had stated. Molotov told him that there was a distinction between Polish nationality and Polish citizenship. Recruits would be drawn largely from persons who had lived in Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia. They were Poles by nationality, but Soviet citizens.[3]

The formation of the Kościuszko Division took place throughout the spring and summer of 1943. The rank and file were not Communists, but Poles still in the Soviet Union who wanted to escape confinement. Officers were carefully selected and top posts were held by Soviet officers. Political positions were given to Communists.[4] In August, 1943 Berling was appointed Major-General by Stalin. On September 1, 1943, Red Star announced

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[1]Anders, op. cit., pp. 97-98.

[2]GSHI, PRM, 101/2, "Note from the Polish Government to the Foreign Office on the formation of a Polish division on Soviet territory (May 13)."

[3]Foreign Relations of the United States. Diplomatic Papers, 1943, III, 423.

[4]Dziewanowski, op. cit., p. 166.

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that the Division had moved to the Front and soon reports of its successes were made in the West by TASS. During the following year two additional Polish divisions were also created.

An All-Slav Congress opened in Moscow on the same day as the announcement of Kościuszko Division's formation. Present were Colonel Ludvik Svoboda and Nickolai, Metropolitan of Kiev and Galich, dressed in his robes and tiara. Werth notes that the real purpose of the gathering was revealed by the presence and statements of Wanda Wasilewska and Berling. Wanda Wasilewska said:

> From here, from the Eastern Front we shall break through to Poland, a great strong and just Poland. Polish brethren! Listen to the shots fired on the Eastern Front! . . . And shame on those who are urging you to follow a policy of disastrous inactivity!

And Berling said:

> The road to our homeland lies across the battlefield, and we, Poles in the Soviet Union, are now taking this road.

Greetings were sent to Stalin, Churchill, Roosevelt and Beneš.[1]

In spite of Stalin's promises to the Western Allies that he did not plan to create his own Polish Government, the Soviet Government took a large step in that direction when they permitted the holding of the First Congress of the Union of Polish Patriots (June 9-10, 1943). The UPP had taken over the Polish Government's supplies of food, clothing and medicine and was distributing them among Polish deportees after the rupture of relations. Wanda Wasilewska therefore described the improved living condi-

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[1]Werth, op. cit., pp. 591-92.

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tions of Polish deportees in the Soviet Union as the work of UPP. Berling gave a progress report on the formation of the Kościuszko Division. The UPP's program stressed "everlasting friendship of the Polish people and the USSR" and provided for a "Democratic People's Republic." Land would be divided among peasants without compensation to the former owners. "Our eastern frontier must be a bridge and not an obstacle between Poland and her eastern neighbors." The UPP demanded the return of East Prussia, Silesia and "the mouth of the Vistula" to Poland. There was no mention of the nationalization of land or the collectivization of agriculture. The Congress dispatched a telegram to Stalin who "in spite of obstacles and the efforts of the enemies, together with the Soviet government, was maintaining friendly relations with those fighting for the freedom of the Polish people. . . ." and thanked him for allowing the formation of the Kościuszko Division.[1]

Thus, Stalin had gone a long way in creating his own Polish Government during the first months after the severance of relations with the Polish Government in London in spite of his denials to the Allies. The UPP's prestige had been bolstered to a level where it was a quasi-government directing a relief agency and having its own army. The Soviet Government was creating the nucleus of an organization which would take over the administration of the country when Soviet Armies rolled into Poland.

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Press and public reactions in the West continued to be

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[1] Dziewanowski, op. cit., p. 167.

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very critical of the Polish Government and generally sympathetic to the Soviet Union and its Polish clients. The abolition of the Comintern was greeted enthusiastically. The UPP's request to form a Polish Army in the Soviet Union, the formation of the Kościuszko Division and the platform adopted at the UPP's First Congress received very favorable press treatment throughout the English-Speaking world. Statements by such "reasonable" Poles as Wanda Wasilewska and Berling criticizing the Polish Government and the Polish Army for its irresponsibility, imperialistic tendencies, the Army's cowardice and even pro-Hitler tendencies had wide coverage both in Great Britain and the United States.

A sample of the attitude towards the Polish Government was an article (May 14) in the New York Herald Tribune which described the conditions on which the Soviet Government would reestablish relations with the Polish Government-in-Exile. Again, the strong vocabulary and the factual inaccuracy are particularly worthy of note:

> First, they want a revision of the composition of the Polish Government-in-Exile that will make its general tone somewhat less poisonously anti-Soviet than it has been. There is little doubt that this is supported by both the British and American governments, and a shake-up of General Wladyslav [sic] Sikorski's government is likely soon.
>
> Second, the Russians ask that the Poles stop indoctrinating Polish soldiers with anti-Soviet propaganda. This correspondent, who has visited Polish troops stationed in Great Britain, can testify at first hand that such propaganda exists and it is extremely violent.
>
> Third, the Russians ask that the Polish government take positive steps to control the reckless Polish press in Britain. Of the twenty-odd Polish papers here, many are bitterly anti-Soviet, some anti-Semitic and even have suggestions of being pro-Nazi.
>
> Fourth, the Russians insist that the controversial issue

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of post-war frontier be left for settlement after Germany is beaten. It is no secret that this demand coincides with the wishes of the British and American governments.

* * * *

To the Polish Army in the Middle East, already overheated by Soviet maltreatment followed by the Soviet aggressive policies of the first third of 1943, the shock of the discovery of the graves at Katyn was an explosive event. Many had lost comrades and relatives in the mass-murder. Reports of anti-Sikorski intrigues and general unrest came from both Polish and British sources. There were difficulties between Sikorski, as Commander-in-Chief, and Anders, as Commander of the Second Polish Corps, over the organization of the Polish troops in the Middle East and Anders' powers as Commander.[1] Sikorski decided to visit the Middle East and personally to settle the problems on the spot.

In spite of warnings from two members of his Cabinet, Minister of Justice, Wacław Komarnicki, and Minister of State, Marian Seyda, that there might be an attempt on his life by Polish fanatics because of his earlier compromising attitude towards the Soviet Union, Sikorski left on May 24. The tour was a success. Sikorski and Anders corrected their misunderstandings. In a conference on June 10 with all senior officers he discussed not only military matters, but also the political situation and the efforts of the Polish Government to defend Polish interests. He stated that after the Soviet Note of

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[1]Anders, op. cit., p. 145.

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January 16, 1943, he had not retreated one step on the question of Poland's eastern frontiers and that the Polish Government was doing everything in its power to have the soldiers' next-of-kin, and orphans and children released from the Soviet Union.[1] In a speech on June 17 at Beirut he pointed out that in spite of Stalin's duplicity the Polish Government was able to withdraw from the Soviet Union so many men that "the Polish Armed Forces still take fifth place amongst the Allied Nations." Polish conditions for the renewal of diplomatic relations were the evacuation from the Soviet Union of the soldiers' next-of-kin, children and orphans, and men fit for military service; and the recommencement of relief for the rest of the Polish population still in the Soviet Union. He explained that he had the promise of support from the United States and Great Britain in his future dealings with Stalin. But he warned:

> At present the initiative is no longer in our hands. We confine ourselves to maintaining an attitude of self-restraint and calmness, in order to avoid anything which would render more difficult the joint intervention of the United States and Great Britain, which at the present moment, as Minister Raczynski informs me, is taking place. . . .[2]

We know now from a study of Allied documents that Sikorski's optimism was misplaced; the American and British Governments were, in fact, doing or planning to do very little to support the Polish position in the face of Soviet pressures. And despite his optimistic exterior Sikorski himself must have had misgivings because he was already in possession of Roosevelt's letter of June 7 which consisted of only platitudes and made no precise commitments.

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[1] Ibid., pp. 144-45. [2] Ibid., pp. 146-47.

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With relative calm in the Middle East having been achieved as a result of his presence and assurances, Sikorski started his return journey to London. From Cairo he flew to Gibraltar. There was a touch of irony about his stay at Gibraltar, because Sikorski and Maisky who was returning to Moscow both stayed in the Governor's residence without the Soviet Ambassador's knowing about the Polish Prime Ministers's presence until later.

At a little past 11 P.M. on July 4, Sikorski, Major-General Tadeusz Klimecki, Major Victor Cazalet and Sikorski's only child, Zofia Leśniowska, entered the Liberator bomber which was to carry them from Gibraltar back to London. The airplane taxied down the runway, lifted off the ground, but then suddenly dipped and crashed into the sea. All except the pilot were killed.

In one instant the declining fortunes of the Polish Government received a deadly blow. Sikorski, the one Polish leader who had even a chance to deal with Stalin because of his unique stature and respect among Western decision-making groups, was suddenly and tragically eliminated from the political scene.[1]

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[1]Cf. Appendix A.

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CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSIONS

The four years after Sikorski's death saw the dénouement of Polish-Soviet relations. It followed to the bitter end the pattern which had been taking form during Sikorski's lifetime. The Polish Government tried to check Stalin's plans, but they were helpless because they received no assistance from the Western Powers whose leaders were thwarted by the uneven political-military balance between themselves and Stalin. The Soviet dictator gained everything he wanted: all territory east of the Curzon Line and a Communist regime obedient to Moscow established in Warsaw.

* * * *

On Sikorski's death Raczkiewicz appointed as Prime Minister the former Deputy Prime Minister, Stanisław Mikołajczyk. Mikołajczyk resolved to continue Sikorski's policy of attempting to reestablish an independent Poland which would have friendly relations with the Soviet Union and the support of Western Powers. The composition of his Cabinet was similar to Sikorski's--a coalition of members of the leading Parties which had been in opposition before the War, including the Soviet bêtes noires, Stanisław Kot and General Marian Kukiel. The most significant

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change was the appointment of Tadeusz Romer as Foreign Minister in the place of Acting Foreign Minister Raczyński. Raczyński maintained his post as Ambassador to Great Britain. Since Sikorski had also been Commander-in-Chief, a suitable person had to be found who both had the respect of the Army and was not displeasing politically to the Polish Cabinet, the Western Allies and the Soviet Union. No person with all these qualifications existed. Raczkiewicz's appointment of General Kazimierz Sosnkowski was very popular with the Polish Army. He had been an old colleague of Piłsudski and a supporter of the pre-war regime; he possessed the personal stature to command the respect of the officer corps and the rank and file. But Sosnkowski's appointment was not welcomed by the Polish Cabinet because of his political background. Since he favored a tougher line in dealing with the Soviet Union, the Soviet Government considered him an enemy; and the British Government did not like his appointment because of the complications it might bring in relations with the Soviet Union.

1942 was the year of military decisions. 1943 was a year of political decisions. After the Allied victories of 1942, it was becoming increasingly evident that the Axis Powers would eventually be defeated; the only military question which really remained was how long the final Allied triumph would take. Accordingly, in 1943 the Big Three started to make crucial decisions for the post-war settlement. With the Soviet Union continuing to win spectacular victories and the Western Powers

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still feeling their relative weakness and sense of inferiority, Stalin was in a very strong position to push his demands. This could only mean that the Polish Government would suffer. In August, 1943 the Foreign Office came to the conclusion that the Poles would have to accept the Curzon Line with the possible inclusion of Lwów in Poland, in exchange for compensation in the west at Germany's expense.[1] On September 9, 1943, Eden asked Mikołajczyk for the first time if the Polish Government would accept this arrangement, but Mikołajczyk replied that no Polish Government-in-Exile could accept these terms.[2]

In spite of what Mikołajczyk had said, Poland's fate was not in the hands of the Polish Government, but would be decided by the Big Three. A Conference of Foreign Ministers to prepare for the meeting of Roosevelt, Stalin and Churchill was held in Moscow (October 18-30) with Hull, Molotov and Eden participating. The question of Polish-Soviet relations was not discussed until towards the end of the Conference. Molotov made it clear that the Soviet Government felt that the Soviet Union and Poland should settle their difficulties between themselves. He criticized Sosnkowski who had opposed Sikorski on the Treaty of July 30, 1941, and animadverted upon the inactivity of the Polish Army under Western Command, pointing out how Polish

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[1] Woodward, op. cit., p. 250.

[2] GSHI, A. 11, 49/Sow/6, "Count Raczyński's report on a meeting attended by M. Mikołajczyk, Dr. Retinger and himself, and by Mr. Eden and Mr. Strang, during which the problem of frontiers and the Conference of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs were discussed (September 9)."

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units were already fighting on the Eastern Front under the Soviet Command. The problem of frontiers was avoided. The practical result of the Conference was that the Combined Chiefs of Staff formally informed the Polish military mission in Washington of the revocation of the promise to arm the AK which had been made to Sikorski during his final visit to the United States. It was hinted that to arm the AK was considered dangerous because, due to Polish-Soviet tensions, the Soviet Government might object.[1]

A turning point in Polish-Soviet relations was the meeting of Roosevelt, Stalin and Churchill at Teheran. It was Churchill who opened discussions with Stalin on Poland (November 28). Churchill, and not Stalin, suggested that Poland could lose territory in the east, but would gain in the west at Germany's expense; in Churchill's own words: ". . . Poland might move westward, like soldiers taking two steps 'left close.'" When Stalin asked whether the changes would be made without Poland's participation, Churchill replied "Yes."[2] The Americans did not take part in this first discussion of Poland. Three days later (December 1) all three leaders discussed Poland again. In principle, Roosevelt accepted the Curzon Line. The question of Lwów was left open, although Churchill told Stalin he was "not prepared to make a great squawk about Lvov."[3] They planned to

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[1]Ciechanowski, op. cit., p. 233.

[2]Winston S. Churchill, Closing the Ring (London: Cassell & Co., 1952), pp. 319-20.

[3]Ibid., p. 351.

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compensate Poland by extending its territory in the west to the Oder River.

> Stalin said that it would indeed be a large, industrial State.
> "And friendly to Russia," I [Churchill] interjected.
> Stalin replied that Russia wanted a friendly Poland.[1]

According to Churchill's record of the conversations, it was he who was the main architect of this solution of the Polish question. Roosevelt played a passive role. He made only two comments during the second discussion of Poland. At the beginning of the meeting he expressed the hope that Poland and the Soviet Union would resume diplomatic relations so that any decisions taken could be accepted by the Polish Government. When he saw that Churchill supported all of Stalin's claims, he asked if Stalin would permit the voluntary transfer of population.

Teheran was a turning point for an even more important reason than the decisions made. It was the first time that Roosevelt met Stalin. During the conversations the President was very favorably impressed by the Soviet leader. The relationship blurred the clear vision needed in the decision-making capacities of the leaders of American Government, the most powerful of the three Allies, at the critical moment in the War. Ciechanowski notes the stories he heard of the impression Stalin made on Roosevelt:

> . . . He [Stalin] played the role of the gracious host to the President and took every opportunity to impress upon him that he was a "regular guy," a democrat, not a communist of the Lenin type, and that he had no ambitions either

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[1] Ibid.

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for world revolution or conquest.[1]

At the Quebec Conference (August 12-24, 1943) Churchill had tacitly accepted operation OVERLORD--the invasion of northern France. Nonetheless, he continued to eye the Balkans for the political and military results an attack in that direction could produce. Roosevelt and his military advisers were firm in their desire to concentrate on France. On November 30 British and American Staffs agreed on a joint strategic plan: OVERLORD to be launched during May, 1944. Stalin was informed of the decision. As the Soviet military battering-ram was crushing the German Army, the definitive decision to invade France instead of the Balkans made it virtually certain that Poland would be liberated by Soviet Armies and not by Anglo-American forces.

On January 1, 1944 Radio Moscow announced the formation of the National Council of Poland, an "underground parliament," in Warsaw under the leadership of Bolesław Bierut, a pre-war NKVD agent and a Soviet citizen of Polish origin. It was an obvious rival to a similar organization in Poland loyal to the Polish Government in London. On January 4 the Soviet Army crossed the pre-war Polish-Soviet frontier.

After the Teheran Conference pressure was brought to bear on the Polish Government. Pro-Soviet propaganda was carried on to discredit the Polish Government in general, and among Polish Americans in particular. Behind the scenes, the British Government began to hammer at Mikołajczyk to accept the decisions made at Teheran. Although the Polish Government was not informed of

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[1] Ciechanowski, op. cit., p. 247.

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what exactly had transpired at the Conference, from the numerous hints they received from Allied leaders, they were acutely aware that events had not gone in their favor. On February 22 Churchill reported to the House of Commons on the results of the Conference. With regard to Polish-Soviet relations he said:

> . . . It was with great pleasure that I heard from Marshal Stalin that he, too, was resolved upon the creation and maintenance of a strong integral independent Poland as one of the leading Powers in Europe. . . .
>
> Here may I remind the House that we ourselves have never in the past guaranteed, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, any particular frontier line to Poland. . . . The British view in 1919 stands expressed in the so-called Curzon line which attempted to deal, at any rate partially, with the problem. I have always held the opinion that all questions of territorial settlement and re-adjustment should stand over until the end of the war and that the victorious Powers should then arrive at formal and final agreements governing the articulation of Europe as a whole. . . . However, the advance of the Russian armies into Polish regions in which the Polish underground army is active makes it indispensible that some kind of friendly working agreement should be arrived at to govern the war-time conditions and to enable all anti-Hitlerite forces to work together with the greatest advantage against the common foe.
>
> . . . I have an intense sympathy with the Poles. . . but I also have sympathy with the Russian standpoint. Twice in our lifetime Russia had been violently assaulted by Germany. Many millions of Russians have been slain and vast tracts of Russian soil devastated as a result of repeated German aggression. Russia has the right of reassurance against future attacks from the West, and we are going all the way with her to see that she gets it. . . . I cannot feel that the Russian demand for reassurance about her Western frontiers goes beyond the limits of what is reasonable or just, Marshal Stalin and I also spoke and agreed upon the need for Poland to obtain compensation at the expense of Germany both in the North and in the West.[1]

During the spring of 1944 the Soviet Armies began a great offensive which cleared the Soviet Union of the German Army. On March 19 the Dniestr was forced. On April 2 Soviet troops

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[1]Great Britain, Parliamentary Debates (Commons) CCCXCVII (1944), 697-98.

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crossed the Rumanian frontier. By May 13 there were no more Germans in the Crimea. In late June they began an offensive on the Byelorussian sector of the Eastern Front. Minsk fell on July 3. Soviet forces catured Wilno on July 13, Lwów on July 27 and Brześć on July 28.

On July 18 Soviet troops crossed the Curzon Line. On July 21 a Committee of National Liberation was created at Chełm from members of the Polish Workers Party and the Union of Polish Patriots. Two days later Lublin fell (July 23) and the Committee moved there. The Chairman of the Committee was Bierut. Seven of the fifteen members were Communists (including Wanda Wasilewska and Berling) and the other eight were members of radical groups dependent on Communist power. On July 22, 1944 the Committee issued a Manifesto, outlining wide reforms, but carefully avoiding any mention of nationalization of industry, commerce or banking and even the words "socialism" and "communism." In the wake of the Soviet Army, the Committee assumed the responsibility of governing, taking over local administration as the Germans were expelled.[1]

In late July Mikołajczyk flew to Moscow and was received by Molotov on July 31 and by Stalin on August 3. Neither would budge. They claimed the Curzon Line and treated the Lublin Committee as a Polish Government. Complying with Stalin's request, Mikołajczyk met with the leaders of the Lublin Committee on August 6. They upheld Soviet territorial claims and suggested

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[1]Dziewanowski, op. cit., pp. 175-77.

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the formation of a coalition government in which they would have overwhelming power and representatives of the Polish Government in London would hold only minor positions. Mikołajczyk was under tremendous pressure because the Warsaw Insurrection had broken out. After a second fruitless meeting with Stalin (August 9) he returned to London to try and get help for the insurgents.

The AK had cooperated with the Soviet Army in liberating such cities as Lwów, Wilno and Lublin, but found that after each place had fallen its members were arrested by the NKVD. As the Soviet Army approached Warsaw, Radio Kościuszko called for a general insurrection of the populace. Originally the AK had planned an uprising (Operation Burza--TEMPEST) outside the cities to avoid unnecessary bloodshed among civilians. Mikołajczyk and Sosnkowski left the details of timing and location of the insurrection to the discretion of the Commander of the AK, Lieutenant-General Tadeusz Bór-Komorowski.[1] At the last moment the AK's Command decided to stage the rising in Warsaw. They did not want to risk the unorganized insurrection of civilians which Kościuszko Radio advocated because of the German rebritutions it could bring. Soviet Marshal Konstantine Rokossovsky's troops appeared to be invincible as the whole German Front seemed on the verge of collapse; and the AK felt that it could not allow the Lublin Committee and Berling's troops win the prestige of

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[1]The Gestapo catured AK Commander Grot-Rowecki on June 30, 1943, and executed him. Soon after Bór-Komorowski was appointed his successor.

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capturing the capital. At 5 P.M. on August 1 Operation Burza began. The Soviet advance stopped. Hitler ordered five crack divisions to be sent against Warsaw to destroy the insurgents.

Since the AK had not been properly armed by the Allies, their position was soon perilous. Appeals for aid to the Soviet forces went unanswered. Soviet propaganda accused the AK of poor planning, and the Soviet Government rejected Churchill's and Roosevelt's pleas and refused to allow Western supply bombers to land on Soviet-held territory. By September 15 the Soviet Army had captured all of Praga, Warsaw's suburb on the opposite side of the Vistula. On September 24 the insurgents finally made contact with the Commander of the Kościuszko Division, General Zygmunt Berling. Berling sent a single battalion across the river, but neither additional forces nor supplies for the lone battalion were sent.[1] Thereafter, no more effective aid came from the Soviet side. Finally on October 3 the surviving insurgents capitulated to the Germans. The highest trump card remaining in the Polish Government's hands had been played and lost.

The failure of the Warsaw Uprising cost at least 200,000 lives including the most politically active, anti-Communist elements. The nerve center of the most numerous and powerful resistence movement in Europe had been eliminated.[2] The AK was

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[1] Bór-Komorowski, op. cit., pp. 347-48. Soon after this incident Berling was dismissed as Commander of the Kościuszko Division. Dziewanowski, op. cit., p. 181.

[2] Ibid., pp. 181-82.

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the best guarantee against a Communist take-over and the cream of its forces had been destroyed.

On October 9 Churchill arrived in Moscow and obtained permission to invite Mikołajczyk to the Soviet capital. Ten days after Warsaw's surrender Mikołajczyk arrived in Moscow. Stalin and the Lublin Poles made the same demands. Although Churchill disliked Stalin's protégés and Eden despised them, the British leaders put the most severe pressure on Mikołajczyk to accept the Curzon Line and the formation of a coalition government with the Lublin Poles. The Polish Prime Minister had placed hope in Roosevelt's support. To his shock and disappointment, he learned that at Teheran the American President had not opposed Stalin's demand for the Curzon Line as the Polish-Soviet frontier. When Mikołajczyk refused to agree, Churchill abused him in language consisting of the most foul four-letter words which appear in the protocol only as frequent asterisks. Mikołajczyk said that he could make no decision without consulting his colleagues in London.

When Mikołajczyk returned to London he explained to his colleagues what had happened. Only the Peasant Party was prepared to consider Soviet territorial demands. On November 24 Mikołajczyk submitted his resignation and Raczkiewicz accepted it. A new Cabinet was formed under the Socialist leader, Tomasz Arciszewski. The Peasant Party remained outside the Government. Meanwhile, in Poland the Lublin Committee proclaimed itself the Provisional Government of Poland on December 31, 1944. The

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Soviet Union recognized it on January 5, 1945 and Czechoslovakia followed on January 31.

The final decisions of the Big Three on Poland were made at the Yalta Conference (February 4-11). Roosevelt accepted the Curzon Line, but asked Stalin for the "gesture" of leaving Lwów in Poland's hands. Stalin refused. Stalin also had his way with respect to the composition of the Polish Government. In a communiqué drafted by the Foreign Ministers, it was stated that

> . . . The Provisional Government which is now functioning in Poland should, therefore, be reorganized on a broader democratic basis with the inclusion of democratic leaders from Poland itself and from Poles abroad. . . .[1]

The clause, in principle, accepted the basic legality of Stalin's Polish Government and was so elastic that it could be stretched to suit any Soviet interpretation. The communiqué included provisions for free and unfettered elections as soon as possible.

In spite of the rejection by the Polish Government-in-Exile of the decisions made at Yalta, a Provisional Government of National Unity was formed on June 28, 1945. The key positions were held by Communists and fellow travellers. Bierut was President, left-wing socialist Edward Osóbka-Morawski, Prime Minister and Communist Władysław Gomułka, First Deputy Prime Minister. Although opposed by most Poles connected with the Polish Government-in-Exile, Mikołajczyk entered the Government as Second Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture and Land Reform. Other focal points of power, the Ministries of the Interior and

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[1] DPSR, II, 520.

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tional Defense, were also in Communist hands. On July 5 the ited States and Great Britain recognized the Provisional vernment of National Unity.

Mikołajczyk was seen as the rallying point for anti-mmunist elements in the promised elections. The elections re postponed as the Communists tightened their grip on the ountry by murder, violence and arrests. On June 30, 1946, a onstitutional referendum took place. The first of three questions as: "Are you in favor of the abolition of the Senate?" Although the Peasant Party thought that the Upper House was superfluous, they decided to make the question a test case and told their supporters to vote "No." Mikołajczyk relates that the more or less impartial Popular Voting Commissions from fourteen out of the sixteen Polish provinces saved the ballot boxes and the results indicated that 83.54 per cent of the electorate voted "No" and 16.46 per cent voted "Yes." The ruling regime was embarrassed; ten days later it announced that 68 per cent had voted "Yes" and 32 per cent had voted "No."[1]

The date for the long-promised elections was set for January 17, 1947. Mikołajczyk protested to the Soviet, American and British Ambassadors about the reign of terror the Communists were directing under the protection of Soviet bayonets. Laws were introduced to disenfranchise "persons, who during the German occupation, extracted benefits from economic collaboration" and "persons collaborating with underground Fascist organizations

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[1]Mikołajczyk, op. cit., p. 183.

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or bands striving to overturn the democratic structure of the state." In neither case was a judicial verdict necessary for disenfrancisement. Rather, the decision rested with the PPR-dominated presidia of the provincial national councils.[1] It was estimated that more than 1,000,000 perople were excluded from the voting in this manner.[2] One week before the election Peasant Party candidates were struck from the ballot of ten out of the fifty-two electoral districts, containing about one-quarter of the nation's population. Only thirty-six witnesses of the Peasant Party were allowed to be present during the counting of the ballots at the 5,200 polling places, and in those thirty-six places the Peasant Party claimed that it received between 65 and 85 per cent of the votes.[3] The results of the election were announced on February 22, 1947. According to the official statistics, the PPR and its dependent Parties received 80.1 per cent of the votes and Mikołajczyk's Peasant Party only 10.3 per cent. In November, 1947 Mikołajczyk and a few of his friends, fearing for their lives, escaped from Poland. Political liberty in Poland had ended.

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Mikołajczyk had attempted to follow Sikorski's policy of creating an independent Poland, having friendly relations with the Soviet Union and also maintaining ties with the Western Powers. The policy failed. In evaluating Sikorski's policy it

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[1] Dziewanowski, op. cit., p. 203.

[2] Ibid., p. 349.

[3] Ibid., p. 204.

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ould be pointed out that he was killed at the critical moment len his personal influence was absolutely essential. Sikorski s a politician with wide experience and was held in high epute among Western leaders. Neither Churchill nor any other estern leader would have dared to attempt to browbeat Sikorski n the crude, vulgar manner which Churchill had treated Mik-ajczyk at Moscow. Although Mikołajczyk was an honest and onorable man, Fate had selected him to play a role for which e lacked the experience and the political depth. When Churchill irst met Sikorski in June, 1940, he promised that he would not etray Poland.[1] Commenting on Churchill's attitude towards ikołajczyk, Retinger notes:

> . . . He [Churchill] did not treat Mr. Mikołajczyk with the courtesy which one would have expected. He showed little sympathy for his feelings, or understanding for his lack of international experience. He acted like a kind of steam-roller, hating any obstacle in his path and trying by sheer force of personality to remove all hindrance in the way of his wishes and views on Polish-Soviet relations. He felt that he owed nothing to Mr. Mikołajczyk. The words uttered to General Sikorski in 1940 did not seem to apply to his relationship with the General's successor.[2]

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[1]Retinger recalls the meeting:

> . . . He [Churchill] wondered why the Poles were coming here. General Sikorski replied that first and foremost we had to fight the Germans, and that we could no longer fight in France because the French had betrayed his and his countrymen's hopes. He then said "As the leader of the Poles I must ask you, the head of the British Government, whether you are not going to betray us."
>
> General Sikorski put this question very earnestly, and with tears in his eyes Churchill replied: "I trust you and yours can count on me for ever. England will keep its faith with the Poles." Pomian, op. cit., Chap. IX, p. 14; supra, pp. 79-80.

[2]Pomian, op. cit., Chap. XII, p. 19.

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Yet, Sikorski's untimely death in itself was not the reason for Poland's subjugation to Soviet rule after the war. Sikorski, Mikołajczyk and Poland were merely part of a much larger drama over which they had, at best, only limited control. Stalin was determined to have his way with or without Sikorski. Sikorski's death only simplified his task. Stalin's policy had begun to crystallize long before Sikorski's fatal flight from Gibraltar. Soon after the Treaty of July 30, 1941, the Soviet Government started to undermine the Polish Government-in-Exile. On the eve of Sikorski's meeting with Stalin in Moscow the nucleus of the UPP gathered in the Soviet Union. And about the same time the PPR was formed in Poland. In spite of Sikorski's influence with Western leaders, the Soviet Government boldly destroyed the Polish relief system and arrested Polish diplomats and representatives in the Soviet Union. He could not prevent the consequences of the Soviet Government's Note of January 16, 1943 by which they unilaterally forced Soviet citizenship on all Poles still in the Soviet Union. Although they scrupulously avoided attacking Sikorski personally, the Soviet Government carried on a scathing propaganda campaign accusing the Polish Government of virtually every misdeed and malicious intention possible, including even direct relations with Nazi Germany. At the time of Sikorski's death the prestige of the Polish Government-in-Exile had plummeted drastically as a result of Soviet propaganda. Sikorski was still alive when the Soviet Union severed diplomatic relations, when the UPP assumed quasi-governmental control over the relief system in the Soviet Union

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and when the UPP's military arm, the Kościuszko Division, was founded.

If Sikorski had lived, perhaps an arrangement comparable to the one Beneš had reached could have been made, whereby Sikorski would have headed a coalition with Communists, rather than have to accept a secondary post under mediocrities as Mikołajczyk had done. Yet even Beneš who had done his best to come to terms with Stalin and still maintain Czechoslovak independence saw his policy end in shambles when local Communists effected a coup d'état with the Soviet Army looming in the background. The chief advantage which Sikorski had over Beneš was that he was a fighter. But then, he might have "committed suicide" as Jan Masaryk did.

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A key determinant of the larger plot was Stalin himself. The Soviet dictator had an authoritarian personality which could not willingly deal with equals unless he was faced with no other alternative. Throughout his political career, relationships with Stalin either deteriorated into abject servility or acrimonious hostility. After the Revolution he patiently collected all the strings of power into his own hands. One by one, rivals were demoted into oblivion. Then, when he had complete control, he brought a few of them back and staged spectacular purge trials directed by his cronies, such as Vyshinsky, but in which he himself played no role whatsoever. Trotsky escaped and carried on polemics until Stalin had him murdered.

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A similar pattern developed in his relations with the Western Powers. From the correspondence and conversations between the Big Three, we can see that Stalin never trusted Western leaders, but could be flattering and most charming when it was expedient. When the War ended and the reason for the Alliance had vanished, the relationship broke down almost immediately. Stalin could not dominate his former Allies, so he resorted to bitter hostility. As for Sikorski, there is no doubt that he would never play the grovelling role of Bierut and his colleagues. Because of their independent temperaments, neither Sikorski, Mikołajczyk, nor even Beneš had a place in Stalin's concept of personal-political relationships.

* * * *

The only real hope for Sikorski's policy lay in effective Western support. For a variety of reasons Sikorski, Mikołajczyk and other east European leaders never received it.

First, there were geopolitical considerations. Poland was a matter of the utmost concern to the Soviet Union, having been the avenue of three invasions in less than thirty years. During World War I the Germans marched through Poland to defeat the Russian Empire. In 1919-20 the Poles themselves had fought with the newly created Soviet Republic. And Hitler's attack had pushed the Soviet Union to the brink of disaster. Stalin felt that he could not risk allowing such a strategically vital area as Poland to be independent. In the interests of the Soviet State, Poland had to have a government which was not only

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lendly but completely reliable. Sikorski's formula for Polish-
'iet relations did not fit this need.

By contrast, Poland was merely of peripheral interest
the Western Allies. The only segment of Western society which
ewed Poland as an area of vital concern was the Polish American
mmunity. The Western Powers had gone to war for Poland in
39 because it had become clear to them that Hitler's imperialist
bitions could never be appeased and would only grow with each
w success, so that sooner or later they would have to face
n anyway. Otherwise, throughout modern history--in the
ghteenth and nineteenth centuries, in 1920, 1938, 1948, 1956,
68--there has been sympathy for the tragedies of the small
tions of eastern Europe, but the Great Western Powers have
ver considered the area of sufficient significance to their
tional interest to justify going to war with a powerful
gressor. In 1945 the Soviet Army was in occupation of all
stern Europe. If the Western Powers wanted the Soviet Govern-
nt to evacuate the region, the threat of war was the only
oice. But France had been beaten and Great Britain was ex-
usted. The United States was at the peak of its relative
litary power, with a giant army still under arms, a towering
onomic superiority fully geared to war and the atomic bomb.
t everywhere there was the mood to "bring the boys home."
ce again, the West was prepared to let eastern Europe solve
s own problems.

Secondly, the success of Sikorski's policy was tied up

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with Western war aims and the relative contribution of Poland and the Soviet Union to these aims. Until the end of the War the Western Powers' primary aim was to defeat the Axis Powers, first Germany and then Japan. All other considerations were considered secondary on the list of priorities. The Soviet contribution to this aim was a decisive factor in the final victory. The Soviet Army had delivered stinging and then mortal blows to the Wehrmacht on the Eastern Front--the victories on the snows before Moscow in 1941 and Stalingrad in 1942-43, followed by a series of triumphant campaigns which ended with the Soviet Army on the Elbe in the heart of Europe. And not only was the Soviet contribution enormous; it was also largely independent. Although Stalin received a mass of material aid from the West, he cautiously maintained a free hand. The Commands and forces of the United States and Great Britain were integrated. The Soviet Government never worked too closely with the Western Allies and, in effect, there were almost two separate wars against Germany--the Anglo-American and the Soviet. Stalin used his independence as a lever to force concessions from his Allies. He had dealt with Hitler in 1939 and when he wanted to pressure them, mysterious rumors sprang up that he was contemplating a separate peace which would leave them in a most precarious position.

The Polish Government enjoyed no comparable strength and independence. Although the Polish Armed Forces gave an excellent account of themselves during the Battle of Britain,

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n North Africa and at Monte Cassino, they played a very small ole when viewed beside the Soviet war effort. With Poland ccupied by the Germans, the Polish Government had no independent ome base whence it could draw reserves and was dependent on the estern Allies for everything. Even in theory, the Polish overnment had no other alternative than its relationship with he Western Allies, given the facts of the September campaign, erman atrocities in Poland and the general German attitude owards the Polish Untermenschen. Hence, the Allies were sure of their small Polish Ally, but they were never sure of their iant Soviet Ally.

Thirdly, the nature of the Polish Government's tie with the Western Allies made the questions of the post-war aims and the quality of supreme Allied leadership matters of crucial importance to Sikorski, his successor, and their colleagues. Stalin was the master political realist with very clearly defined post-war aims. The leaders of the Anglo-Saxon Powers did have war aims, but they were not to prove operative in practice. In August, 1941, they defined their post-war aims first in the nebulous, idealistic principles of the Atlantic Charter. In addition, they developed a policy, based to a large extent on wishful thinking, of creating a post-war situation in which the United States, Great Britain, the Soviet Union and China would cooperate to maintain peace in connection with the international organization, the United Nations. After the Battle of Stalingrad the theories of the Atlantic Charter broke down under the

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blows of Stalin's concrete demands backed up by spectacular military victories. Churchill had a clearer grasp of European problems than Roosevelt, but by an ironic twist of history he fell into the same error as his predecessors, the appeasers of the late 1930's whom he himself had criticized so severely: at first he thought that by dealing reasonably with Stalin it would be possible for the Western Powers to get along with the Soviet Union in the post-war world.[1] When the United States entered the War its leaders were much more firmly committed to the principles of the Atlantic Charter than the British. But after the Teheran Conference Roosevelt fell under Stalin's influence. The President lacked background in the subtleties of international power politics. He and his subordinates believed that democracies could not be imperialistic. They considered the Soviet Union to be a democracy, which could possibly evolve towards the American concept of democracy. Roosevelt felt that Stalin was a realist with whom he could deal. Only in the later period of the War, as Stalin perpetrated increasingly audacious faits accomplis, did Churchill fully appreciate Soviet imperialist tendencies. By this time, American power dominated the Anglo-American Alliance and Churchill was in no position to veto Roosevelt and his entourage. When Roosevelt, Stalin and Churchill met for the final time at Yalta, the War had reached a point and sweeping decisions had to be made about the peace. Relations between Churchill and Roosevelt were strained and the

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[1]Feis, op. cit., p. 120.

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lcan President was a dying man with only two months to live. dent on Allies who thought in these terms and facing such acious and brilliant politician as Stalin, the Polish rnment were in a most precarious position.

Finally, a hope for Sikorski's policy lay in the libera- of Poland by Anglo-American and Polish Armies rather than he Soviet Army and its dependent Polish units. After the le of Stalingrad it became increasingly probable that the let Army would be Poland's liberator. The definitive deci- to invade northern France rather than the Balkans, as Orski had suggested, made it almost inevitable. The AK resented Polish power on the spot which could oppose a Com- list take-over and was loyal to Sikorski and Mikołajczyk. ring the catastrophe of the Warsaw Insurrection, Stalin, by roit inactivity and ignoring Western pleas, let Hitler destroy e last institution which could have prevented the creation of Polish Communist regime.

* * * *

Thus, from the vantage point of hindsight it is easy reject Sikorski's policy as hopeless from the beginning. Yet, ther than abject servility to Stalin, there seems to have been o other alternative than trying to create an independent Poland hich would have friendly relations with the Soviet Union, while aintaining relations with the Western Powers. After the German ttack in 1939 and their policy of extermination Sikorski and oland could only be implacable foes of Nazi Germany. In 1939

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e became an Ally of the Western Democracies and increasingly dependent on them. When Germany invaded the Soviet Union, Stalin became Sikorski's Allies' Ally. Sikorski could have reacted in one of two ways to Soviet aggressive policies against the Polish Government. Since the Soviet Union was making such an enormous contribution to the common cause, Sikorski would be taking a great risk, if he became belligerent and spoke out when the Soviet Government attacked the Poles. He would have alienated and isolated himself from his Western Allies upon whom he was dependent. Therefore, he had to turn the other cheek and hope for the best. Yet, he could never go so far as to accept the Curzon Line without being repudiated both by Polish civilians and military abroad and the Underground in Poland--i.e., almost the entire bases of support for his Government. Being basically an optimist and knowing that the fickle fortunes of war could change the political position in an instant, Sikorski was willing to cooperate with the Western Allies in the hope that he would be able to reestablish an independent Poland. Although his policy failed in the end, in the final analysis, Sikorski followed the only logical path which Fate had left open to him.

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APPENDIX

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Much ink has been spilled on the tragic demise of General Sikorski. Many questions about the cause and circumstances of the crash have never been answered and probably never will be answered. The mysterious cloud surrounding Sikorski's death, coming as it did at the crucial juncture in Polish history, has given rise to many rumors. Was Sikorski murdered? And if so, by whom? His Polish political opponents, the Germans, Churchill and Stalin have all been accused. The most spectacular allegation is Churchill's responsibility. A mediocre play, "The Soldiers" by Rolf Hochhuth, has stirred up a controversy by attributing Sikorski's death to Churchill's direct and personal orders. Unfortunately, he does not offer one solid piece of evidence and bases this aspect of his plot on a mysterious document which he claims to have but which he cannot reveal to the world out of fear for his life. In addition to offering no proof, Hochhuth's play is full of historical inaccuracies which bear witness to his superficial knowledge of his subject. The hypothesis of Churchill's responsibility seems to be pure nonsense. If anyone had a motive, it was Stalin. Sikorski's prominence and his resolute oppostion to Stalin's plans were motives. And it has since been learned that the chief of the Iberian sub-section of M. I. 5 (British Military Intelligence--counter-espionage division) at the time, Kim Philby, was a Soviet counter-agent. Even so, many thousands of air miles were flown by prominent personages. And airplanes do crash. Therefore, this historian, with his grave suspicion of the melodramatic and the plot-theme in his discipline, is inclined to believe the most natural explanation until definite evidence is produced to prove otherwise. Although almost anything is possible in history, it seems most probable that the Liberator which carried Sikorski to his death crashed due to some mechanical failure that resulted not from deliberate manipulation but from accidental breakdown.

A detailed study of the various theories surrounding the mystery of General Sikorski's death was made by the British author, David Irving in his book, The Death of General Sikorski: Accident (London: William Kimber, 1967). His conclusion appears in his final paragraph:

> The mystery remains therefore: what caused the crash in which Sikorski died? (P. 194.)

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The most valuable source of material for this study was the archival collection of the General Sikorski Historical Institute where many of the Polish Government-in-Exile's documents were deposited after World War II. The collection includes: first and foremost for the purposes of this work, the documents of the Prime Minister's (i.e., Sikorski's) office; many documents from the Ministry of External Affairs; the Anders collection; and records of the Polish General Staff.

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