




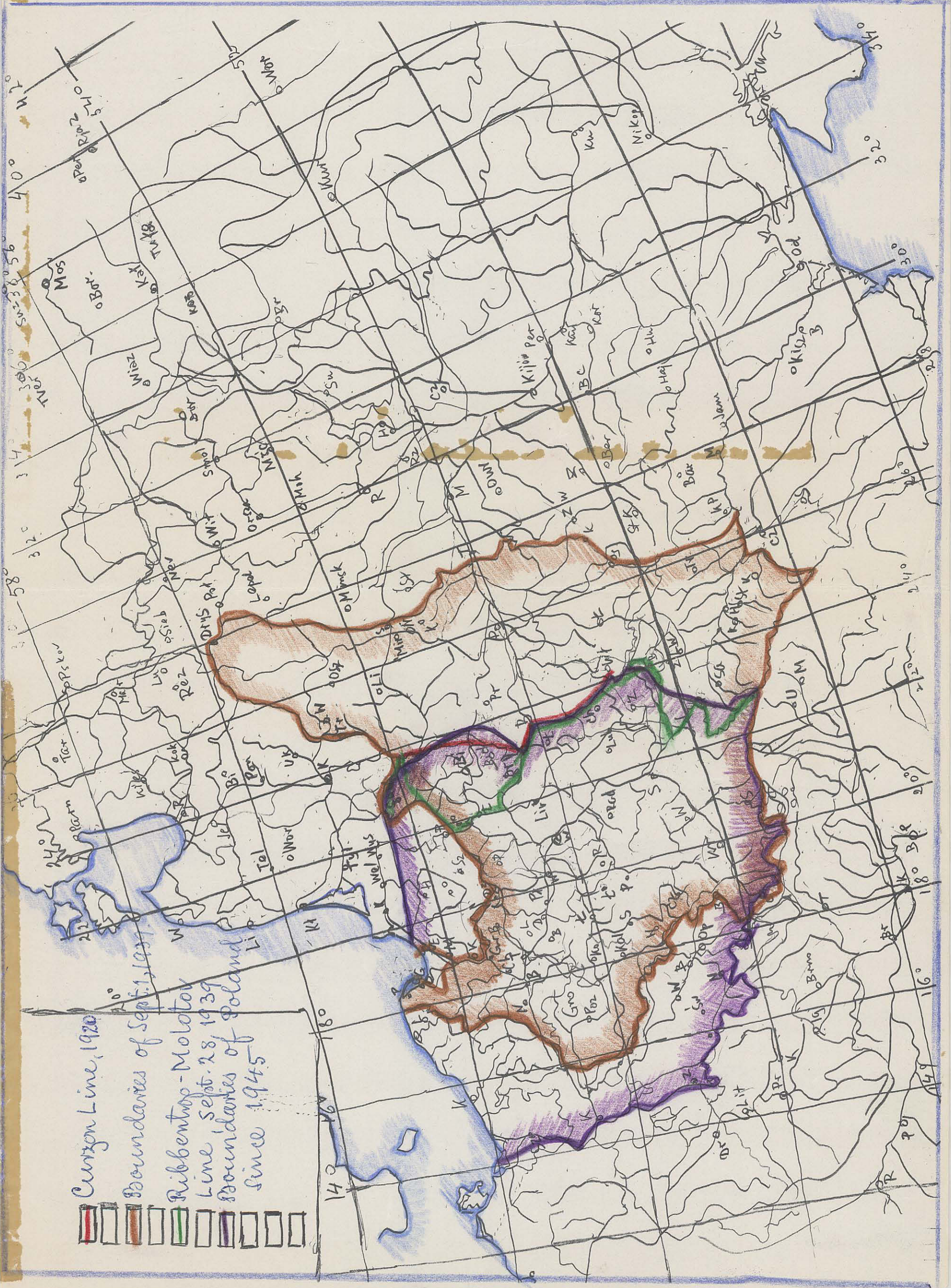












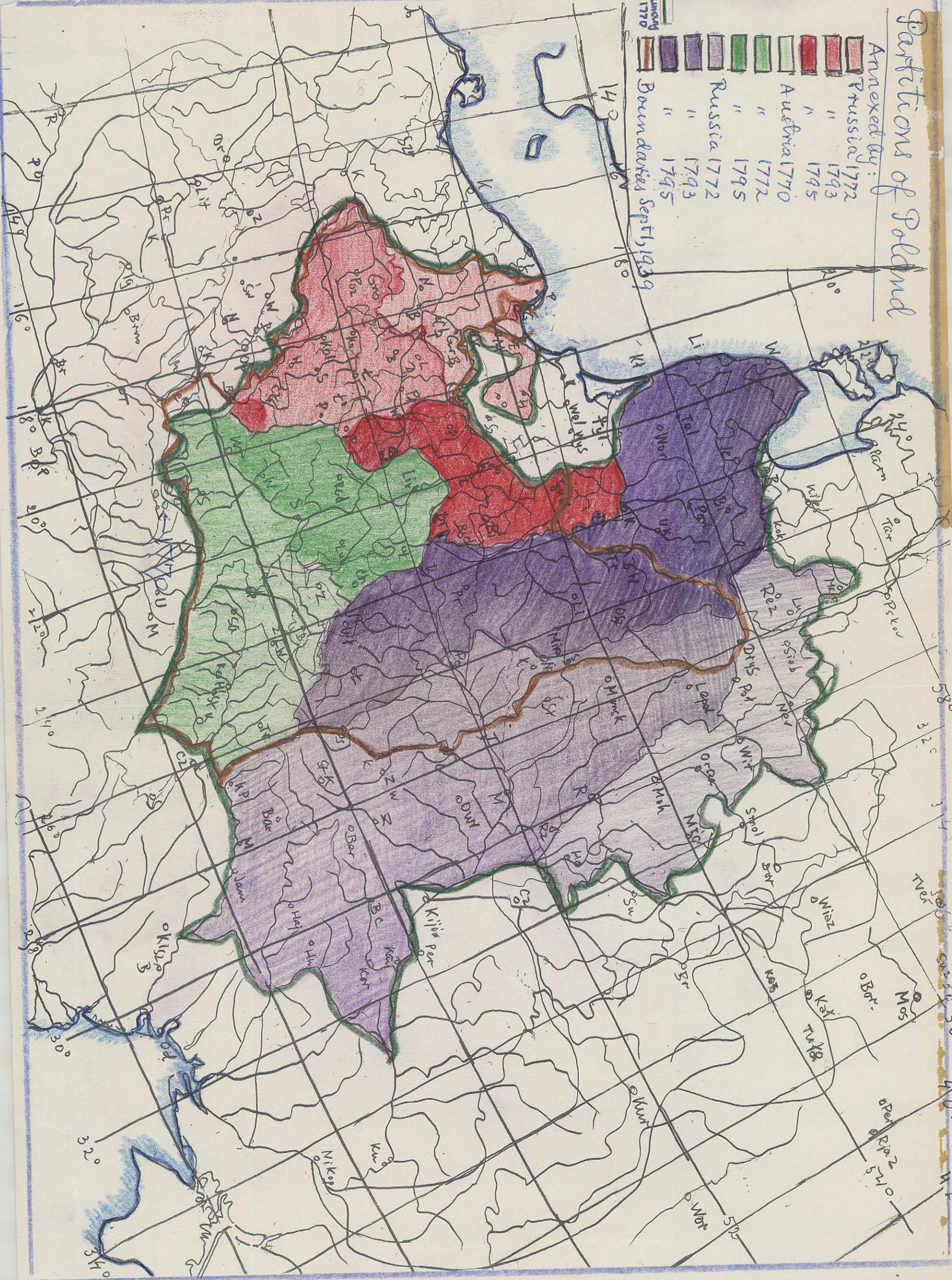
-  Curzon Line, 1920
-  Boundaries of Sept. 1, 1939
-  Ribbentrop-Molotov Line, Sept. 28, 1939
-  Boundaries of Poland since 1945
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Partitions of Poland

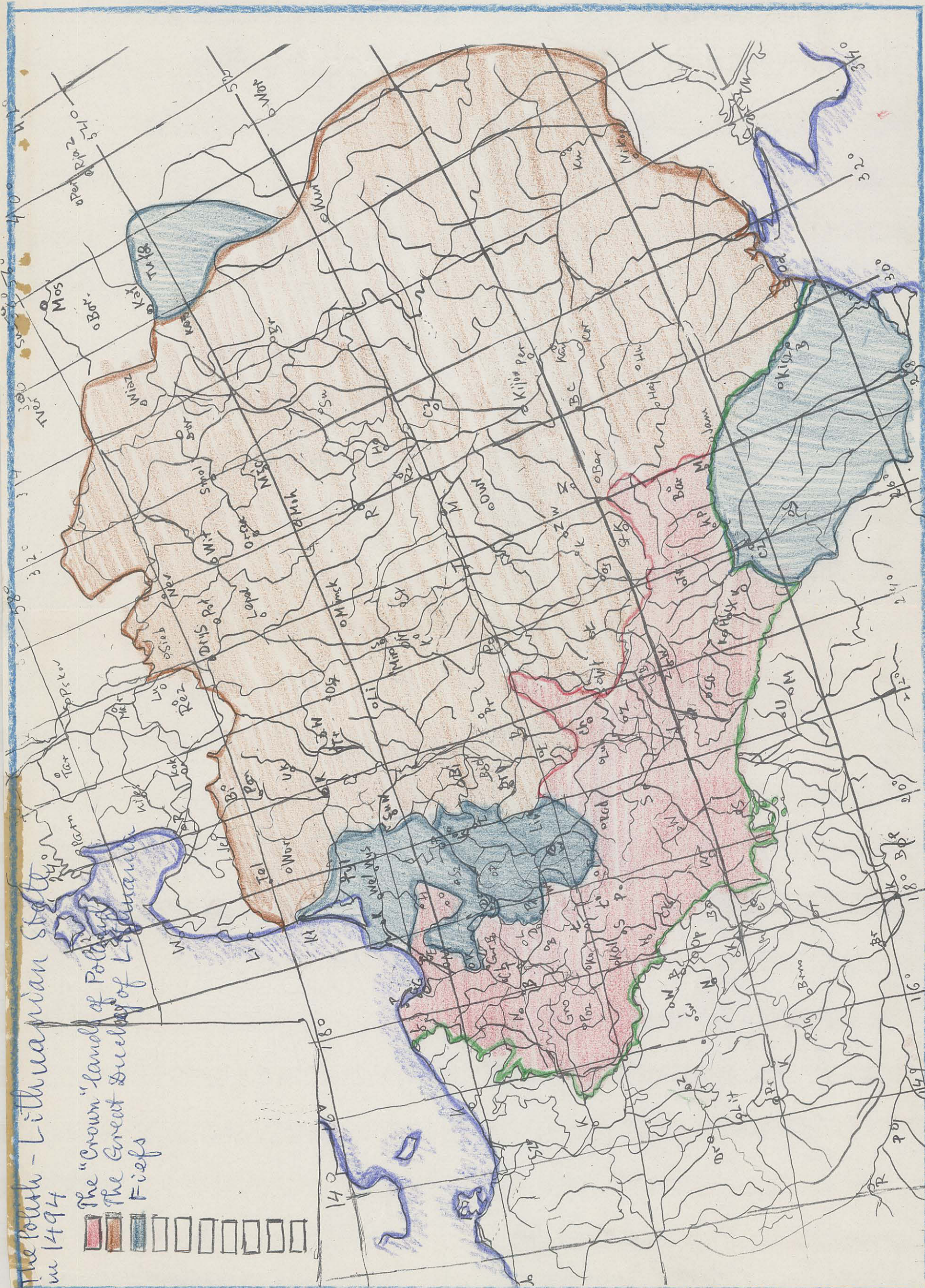
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	Prussia 1772
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	Austria 1770
	" 1772
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	Russia 1772
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	Boundaries Sept, 1939








The Polish-Lithuanian State in 1494

The "Crown" land of Poland
 The Great Duchy of Lithuania
 Fiefs

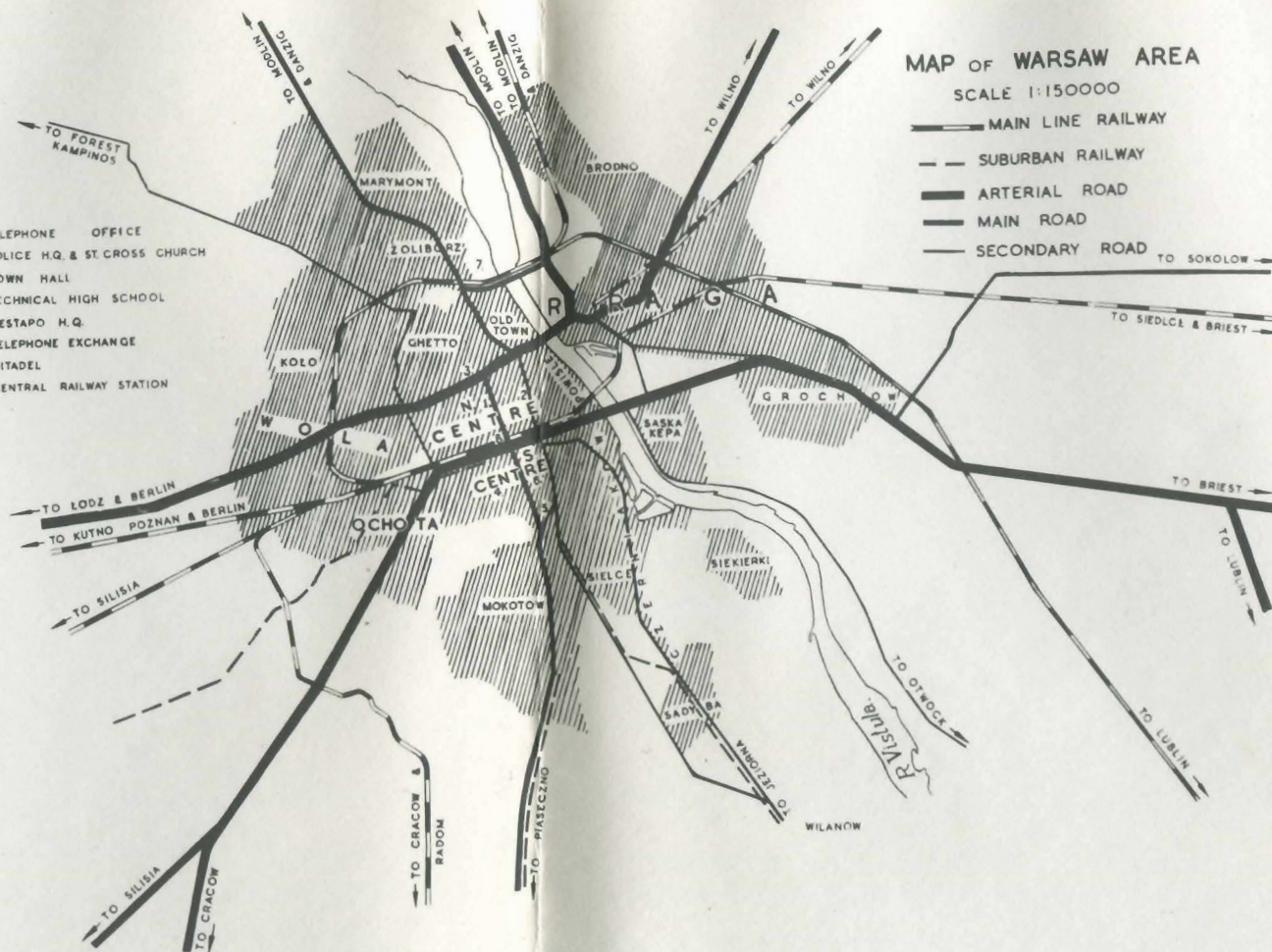


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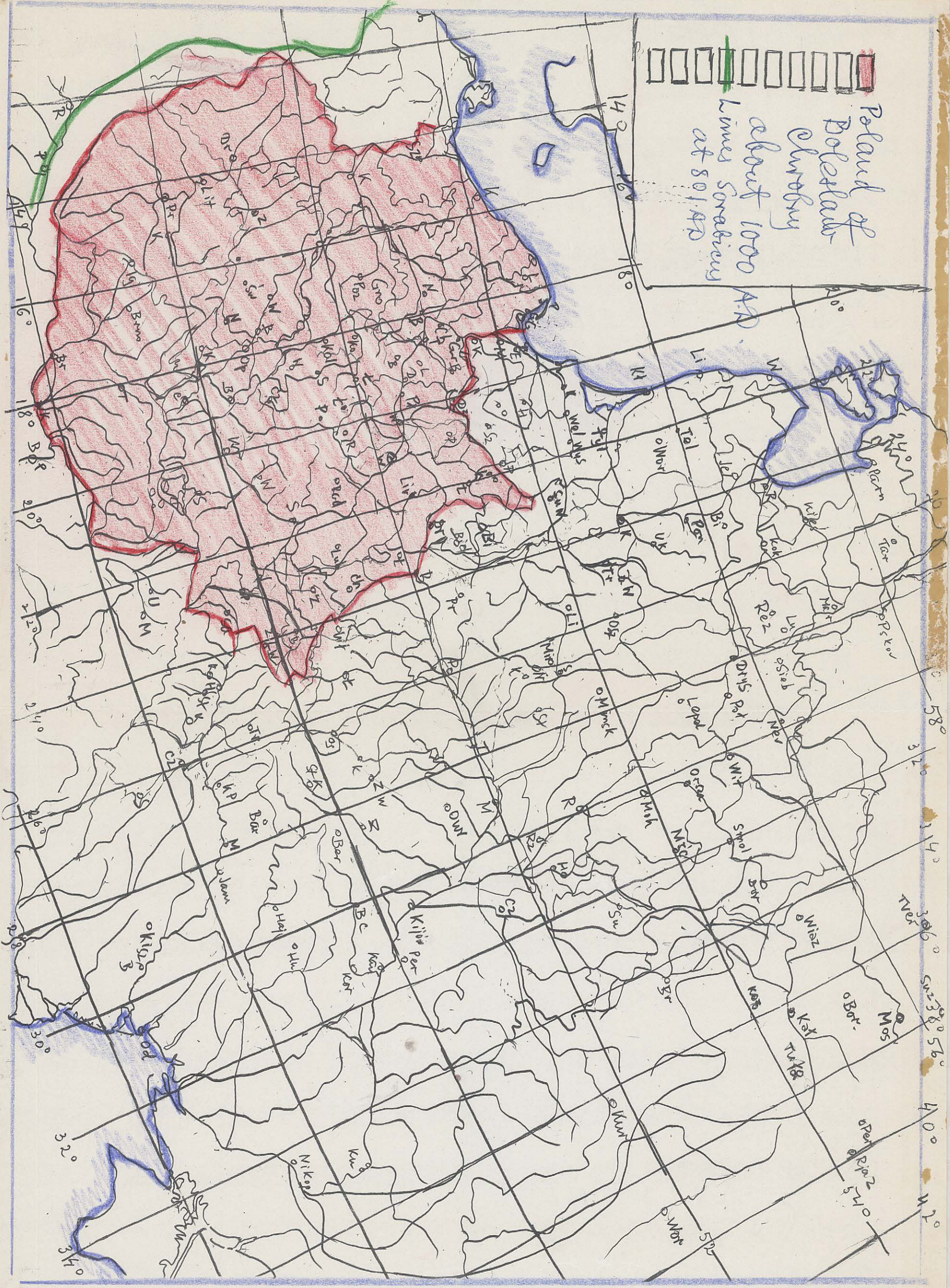
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-  MAIN LINE RAILWAY
 SUBURBAN RAILWAY
 ARTERIAL ROAD
 MAIN ROAD
 SECONDARY ROAD





1. TELEPHONE OFFICE
2. POLICE H.Q. & ST. CROSS CHURCH
3. TOWN HALL
4. TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL
5. GESTAPO H.Q.
6. TELEPHONE EXCHANGE
7. CITADEL
8. CENTRAL RAILWAY STATION

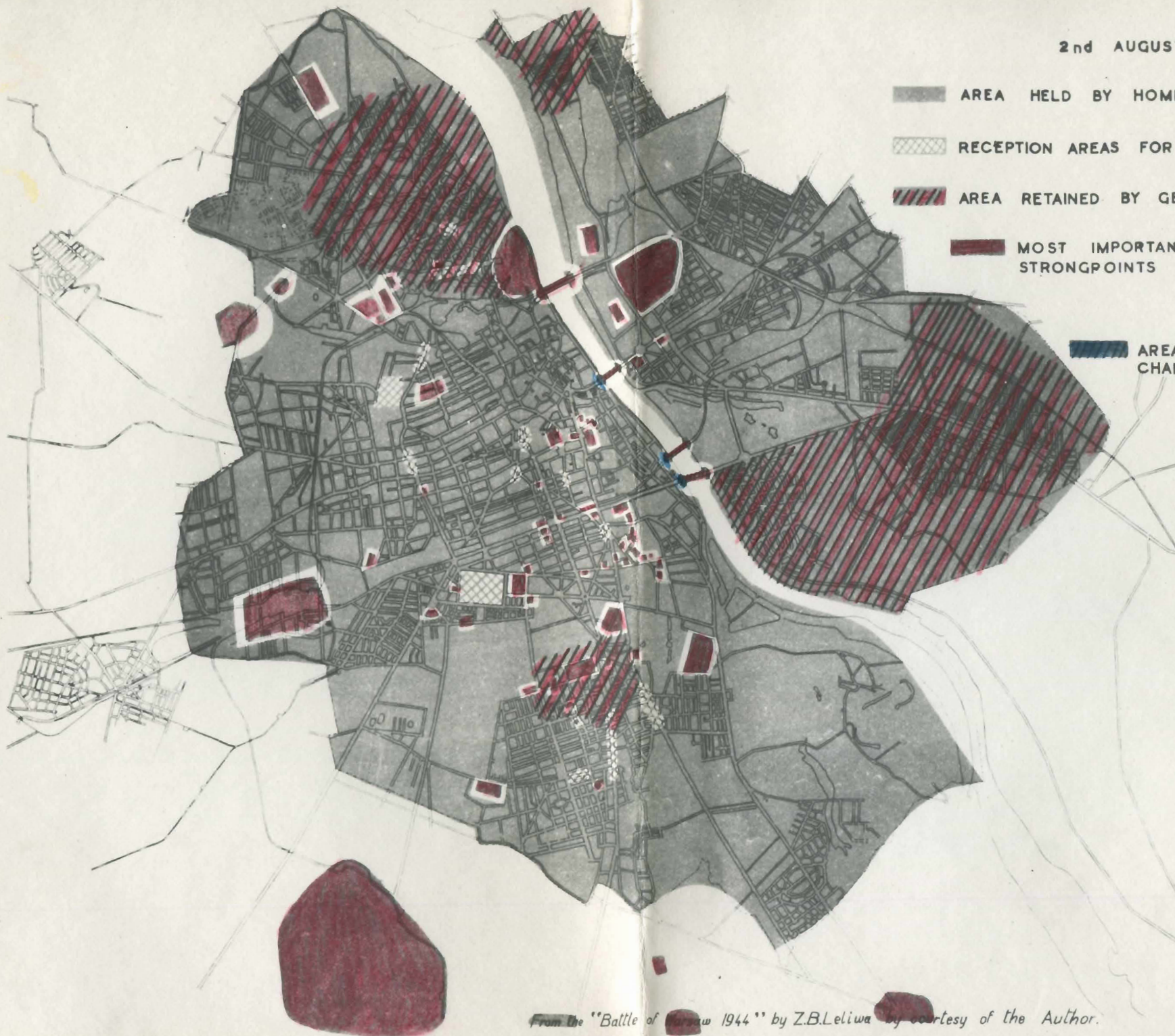


Poland of
 Poleslaw
 Chrobry
 about 1000 A.D.
 lines Sarmians
 at 801 A.D.



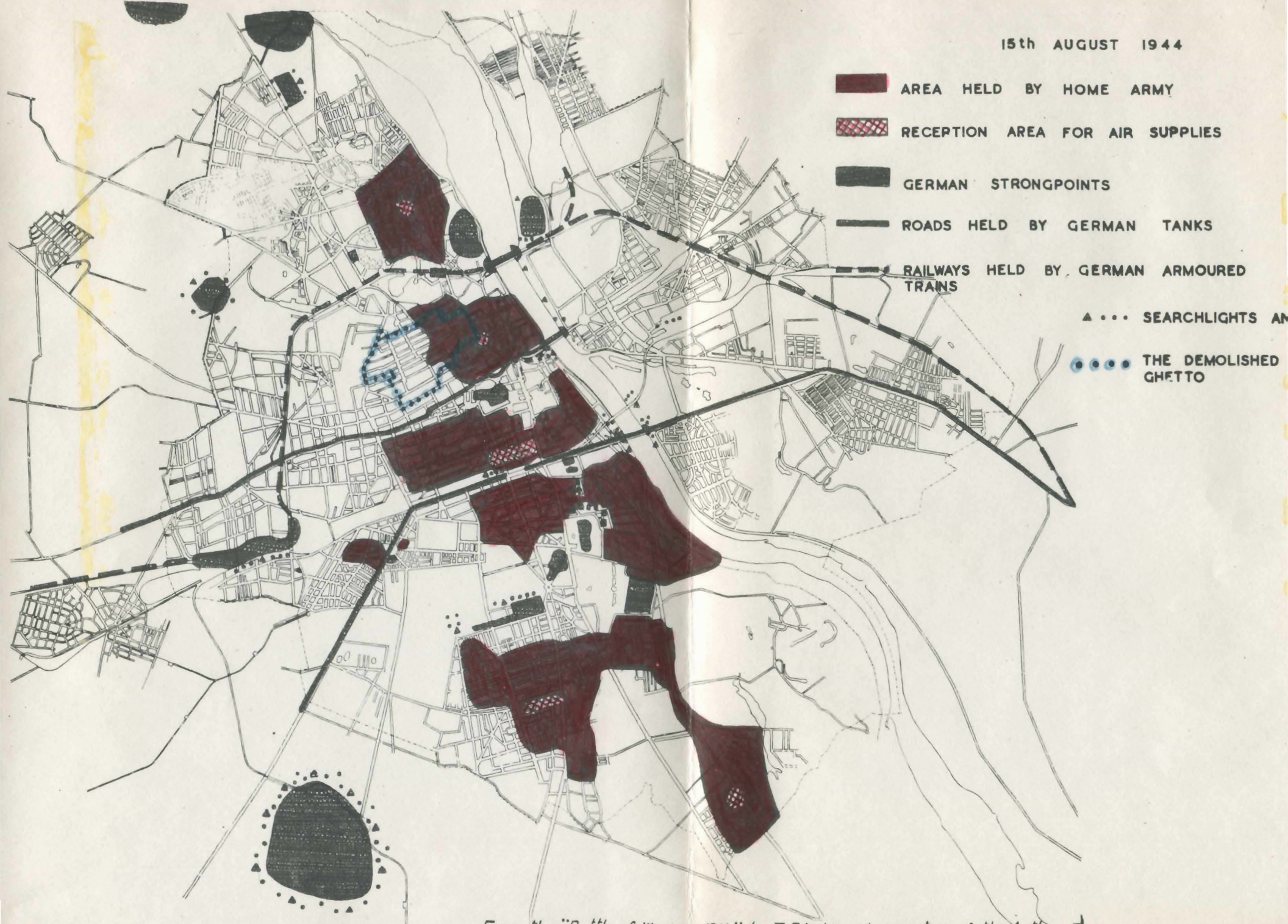
2nd AUGUST 1944

-  AREA HELD BY HOME ARMY
-  RECEPTION AREAS FOR AIR SUPPLIES
-  AREA RETAINED BY GERMANS ON 2nd AUGUST
-  MOST IMPORTANT GERMAN STRONGPOINTS
-  AREA CONSTANTLY CHANGING HANDS



From the "Battle of Warsaw 1944" by Z.B. Leliwa by courtesy of the Author.

15th AUGUST 1944



From the "Battle of Warsaw 1944" by Z.B. Leliwa by courtesy of the Author

1st SEPTEMBER 1944

AREA HELD BY HOME ARMY

AREA PROBABLY LIQUIDATED ABOUT WHICH NO DEFINITE NEWS RECEIVED

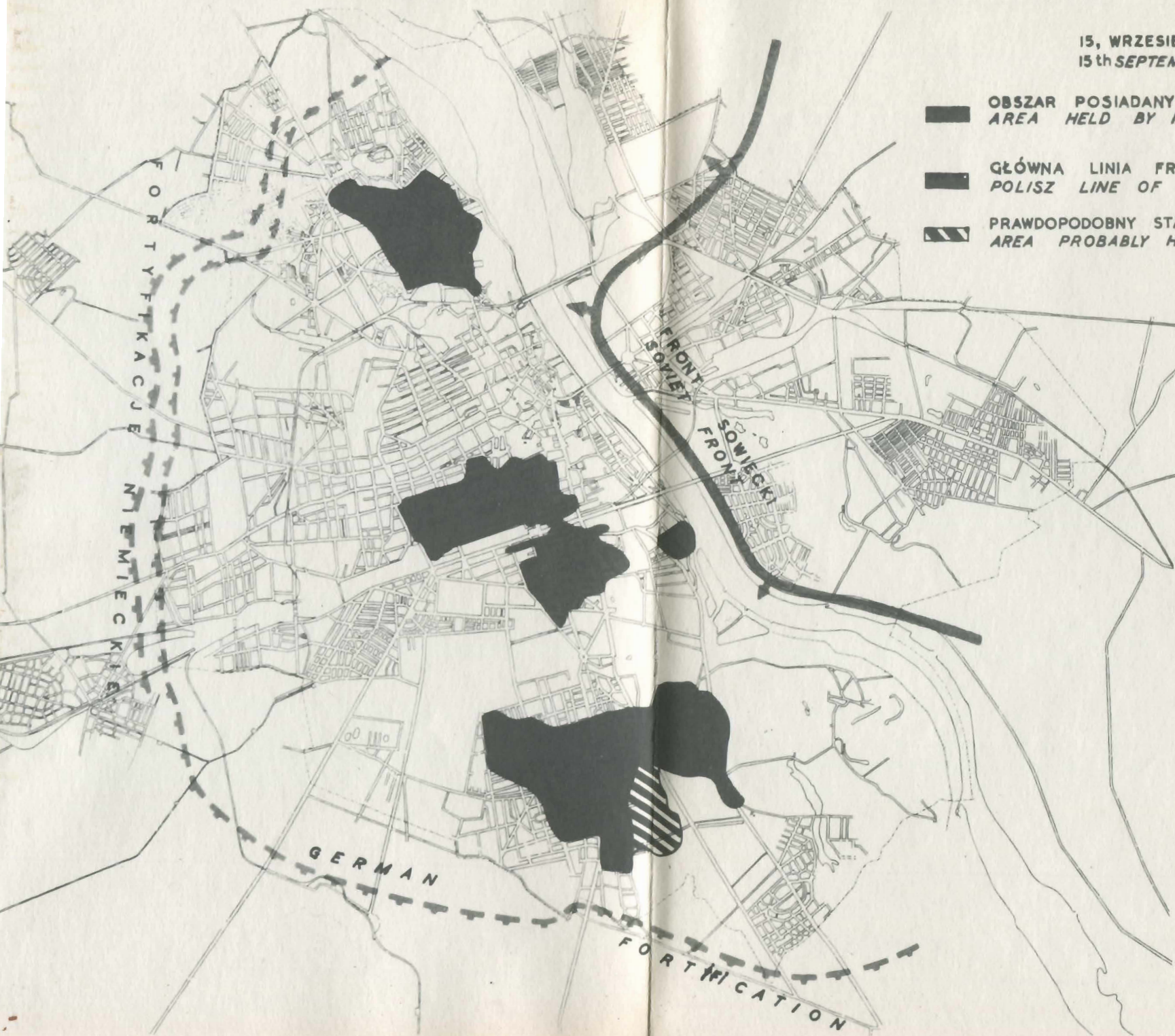


15. WRZESIEŃ 1944
15th SEPTEMBER 1944

■ OBSZAR POSIADANY PRZECZ A.K.
AREA HELD BY HOME ARMY

■ GŁÓWNA LINIA FORTYFIKACJI POLSKIEJ
POLISH LINE OF FORTIFICATION

▨ PRAWDOPODOBNY STAN POSIADANIA
AREA PROBABLY HELD BY HOME ARMY



2nd OCTOBER 1944

AREA HELD BY HOME ARMY

SOVIET FRONT



From the "Battle of Warsaw 1944" by Z.B. Leliwa by courtesy of the Author

THE WARSAW RISING OF 1944
IN THE LIGHT OF
POLISH-SOVIET RELATIONS DURING WORLD WAR II

by. Anna M. Cienciala.

THESIS PRESENTED FOR THE DEGREE OF M.A.
IN HISTORY.

UNIVERSITY OF MCGILL

August 1955

PREFACE

There is nothing in history which can be classified as an isolated event with no bearing on the whole. The Warsaw Rising of 1944 may seem to be a remote episode in the history of Polish-Soviet relations but it has, in fact, many aspects, not the least of which is its context in the history of twentieth century world relationships. It would have been beyond the scope of this work to analyze all these aspects. I have only attempted to present the genesis of the Warsaw Rising in the Polish underground struggle against the Germans and in the Polish-Soviet relations during World War II, of which it is also the climax and the last forceful expression of dissent. My aim in writing this thesis has been to prove, by means of the materials presented, that the reasons for the failure of the Warsaw Rising were not military but political and that politically its failure was the direct consequence of Polish-Soviet relations. The Warsaw Rising was an episode in the Soviet policy of expansion and historically it may be said to be a landmark in the Russian policy of expansion westward pursued since the time of Peter the Great. In its international context, as part of the Polish question, it shared its fate as a test-case in the stresses and strains of war-time relations between the USSR and its western Allies; in this role, it may

also be seen as a contributory factor in the fate of Eastern Europe.

I have not tried to describe the entire scope and variety of the Polish resistance movement, some aspects of which, for example the profusion of the underground press of all shades of opinion and on all subjects, deserve a study by themselves. I do not pretend by any means to have exhausted the materials on the Warsaw Rising. This would have been both physically impossible, since there is a mass of documents still unclassified in London and beyond reach in Poland, and beyond the scope of my work since I have tried to make a study of the background rather than of the Rising itself. I have attempted, within the limits and scope of this thesis, to give an analysis of published materials on the subject.¹ For this reason, and for other reasons beyond my control, I have not studied unpublished materials nor included records of personal conversations. I hope, however, that this work will provide a basis for further research. This thesis is presented as an analysis of printed material on the Warsaw Rising of 1944 in the light of Polish-Soviet relations during World War II.

The main documentary source used in this thesis

¹ With the single exception of "Leliwa"-Sójkowski's "The Battle of Warsaw, 1944", Typescript translated from the Polish; I have included it because it has been cited in Polish post-war publications abroad.

is the history of the Polish Armed Forces in the Second World War, vol. III, The Home Army, published by the Polish General Staff in London.² Unfortunately, official publications dealing with so recent a period are very scarce and this is most keenly felt, for obvious reasons, in political history. There are no documents on British Foreign Policy available for a study of war-time Polish-British relations, and no Soviet documents are available. I had hoped to be able to use Mr. Pobóg-Malinowski's "Recent Political History of Poland"³, which has been expected to appear for some time but, unfortunately, its publication has been delayed. I am sure that when it does appear, it will contain most interesting and revealing material from different Polish archives in London and that it will clarify many of the problems dealt with in this thesis. For lack of any official materials or history on the political aspect of my subject, I have made extensive use of personal materials published in Western Europe and the U.S.A. by leading British, Polish and American figures. For the military aspect, I have used, besides the Polish military history cited above, German histories of the Second World War, and relevant passages in English and French histories of the same. I believe that

² Polskie Siły Zbrojne w Drugiej Wojnie Światowej, Tom III, Armia Krajowa, Komisja Historyczna Polskiego Sztabu Głównego w Londynie, Instytut Historyczny Im. Gen. Sikorskiego, London 1950.

³ Najnowsza Historia Polityczna Polski, 1864-1945, Tom I, Paris, 1953, vol. II in preparation.

work is under way in West Germany on the printing of the OKW instructions to various fronts and when those relating to the Eastern front are published, we shall have as complete a picture as there is ever likely to be of the exact proportion of German-Soviet strength on the various sectors of the front in Poland.

All translations from the Polish in documents cited have been personally prepared, except in the case of works already published in the English language.

I should like to acknowledge the help I have received in materials and advice from: Dr. Berlstein, of the Slavic Department, New York Public Library; Dr. Adam Ciołkosz, PPS, London; the late Dr. Sójkowski - "Leliwa"; Mr. T. Sołowił of Montreal; Mr. Damian Wandycz of the Józef Pilsudski Institute, New York; Dr. B. Zaborski of McGill University, by whose courtesy the sketch maps of Poland have been included in this thesis, and the library of the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in America, Canadian Branch.

I should also like to express my gratitude for the financial aid I have received in my studies from: The University of McGill; The Polish National Alliance of Brooklyn, N.Y.; The Kosciuszko Foundation, New York; The Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences, Canadian Branch, and the generous help of anonymous donors as also of my uncle, Mr. W. Waisman, of Chicago, Ill.

Montreal, August 24th, 1955.

A.M.C.

TO

NINA

THIS WORK IS HUMBL Y DEDICATED

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I

THE POLISH UNDERGROUND

The Polish underground struggle during the second World War was the expression of the nation's will to independence. It was the first underground to be organized in Europe and, although its beginnings took place at a time when both Germany and the Soviet Union were occupying the country, it was, throughout the six years of its existence, directed against the Germans who were, after June 1941, the only occupying power. The secret struggle for independence was thus first of all a struggle against the German policy of racial and ideological extermination and had its roots in the history of the two countries. It is therefore necessary to look briefly at Polish-German relations from which the basic attitudes of the two peoples towards each other developed. Without this background, the immediate birth of Polish resistance, its strength, scope, development and unanimity of purpose are unintelligible.

The cornerstone of Prussian and then German power in Central Europe, lay in the provinces taken from Poland by Frederick the Great, that is in East Prussia and Western Poland. Their appurtenance to Germany was seen as a vital necessity by Prussian statesmen in the nine-

teenth as well as in the twentieth century. It was in the German-Polish struggles in this area that the mutual distrust and hatred of the two nations developed. Here the first organized policy of Germanization was applied by Bismarck's "Kulturkampf" in the 1870's, and here it was met by organized Polish resistance in the schools, towns and on the land. Special funds were set up to aid German settlement and for a time no Poles were allowed to buy land. A Prussian pastor wrote of the results of this policy:

Whoever lived through the latter /Kulturkampf/ amidst the Posen diaspora, knows how it welded together the various parties and classes of the Poles and strengthened the power of the Roman Church.¹

In the 1890's a new wave of Germanization flowed over Western Poland. German gentlemen farmers of West Prussia organized themselves into an association 'for the protection of German interests.'. This society came to be known as the "HKT", from the names of its founders - Hanemann, Kenneman and Thiedemann. It was responsible for bringing the East German lands into the consciousness of Germany as a whole. It also unearthed, for its propaganda purposes, the term "Eastern Marches" for these lands, a term in abeyance since Carolingian times.

¹

Cited by R.W. Tims, Germanizing Prussian Poland, New York, Columbia University Press, 1941, p.15.

In the nineteenth century, the rising military power of Prussia riveted the attention of German historians, and many made it their life's work to justify Prussian expansion. This justification was fused with the Prussian's arrogant conception of himself as a superior being. Even the great Ranke talked of "the German civilizing mission" in 'the East'.² Theories of racial superiority were not far behind and were very popular in Germany by the end of the nineteenth century. The most extreme aspect of the racial superiority complex was the contempt and hatred of Germany's Eastern neighbours - one has only to read Treitschke, Von Sybel or Mommsen on the Slavs. In a reassessment of German historiography after the second World War, a German expert on Polish affairs could write:

Most German historians had insufficient linguistic knowledge to be able to give serious consideration to the history of the Slav nations. Thus this task automatically slipped into the hands of those who themselves originated in Slav territory and therefore seemed to bring with them the necessary conditions for studying Eastern conditions. But this group of German scholars for the most part felt compelled to take part in the struggle of nationalities.³

It was not surprising therefore, that, with this psychological equipment, the Germans were unreconciled

2

Leopold von Ranke, Die Deutschen Mächte, I, p.21.

3

Dr. Elinor Puttkamer in, German History, Some New German Views, ed. Hans Kohn, London, George Allen & Unwin, 1954, p.185.

to their Eastern frontier as decided by the Versailles Treaty. The loss of the Polish provinces cut most deeply into German pride and the General Staff looked early to Soviet Russia for a renewal of the relations which had been based on the partitions of Poland.⁴

Stresseman refused to confirm the eastern frontiers at Locarno, in spite of the fact that: "in this case at least, the tendency of doing justice to one's enemies"⁵ prevailed. As far as Polish interests were concerned, strategic factors were ignored in favour of ethnographic principles. Thus, Danzig was not awarded to Poland, nor was East Prussia or Upper Silesia, but a "corridor" was left along the Baltic coast for ethnographic reasons.⁶ The unsatisfactory solution of these problems was largely due to Lloyd George's insistence on a special status for the city of Danzig and on the consideration of German demands in Upper Silesia; both these decisions were taken against the earlier recommendations of the Polish Commission. However, it would

⁴ see: J.W. Wheeler Bennett, The Nemesis of Power, London, Macmillan & Co, Ltd., 1954, p.126.

⁵ H.J. Paton, Poland at the Peace Conference, History of the Peace Conference of Paris, ed. H.W.V. Temperley, London, British Institute of International Affairs, 1924, vol.VI, p. 241.

⁶ "A glance at any ethnographic map, based as it must be, on German figures, shows at once that a definite belt of territory containing a majority of Poles extends to the sea West of Danzig and cuts off the Germans in East Prussia from the Germans in the West", H.J. Paton, op.cit., p. 255.

be sheer simplicity to think that Hitler went to war because of Danzig; he himself admitted at his conference of May 23rd, 1939, that an attack on Poland would not result from the Danzig question but quite simply because of Germany's need for expansion, as he saw it.⁷

It is clear from documents published after the second World War, that Hitler hoped to neutralize Poland or even gain her alliance against Russia so as to safeguard his rear when he felt ready to attack the West.⁸ This explains his conciliatory policy towards Poland from the signing of the Non-Aggression Pact in 1934 until her isolation at Munich. After Munich, Hitler changed his policy to one of pressure on the Danzig and Corridor questions. What really decided him for war, however, was the alliance with the Soviet Union which seemed to lay the old German fear of a war on two fronts. The talks, which began in April 1939, came to a head on August 2nd, when Ribbentrop told Astakhov, the Russian Chargé d'Affaires in Berlin, that there was room for both countries on the Baltic and that Germany was quite ready to come to an agreement with Russia as to the fate of Poland.⁹

⁷ Tribunal Militaire de Nuremberg, Nuremberg, 1947, vol. I, 211; Trial of Major War Criminals Before Intern. Military Trib. vol. I, 201

⁸ Hitler's Testament, November 5th, 1957, Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945, London, H.M. Stationery Office, 1949, , Series D, vol. I, pp. 29-39.

⁹ Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941, ed. R.J. Sontag & J.S. Beddie, Washington, U.S. State Department, 1948, p. 38.

Poland's ancient enemies united against her again in the German-Soviet pact of Non-Aggression of August 23rd, 1939, and the secret protocol attached thereto defining their spheres of interest.¹⁰ The northern boundary of Lithuania was fixed as a temporary frontier between Germany and Russia in the Baltic countries; in Poland, the frontier ran along the Narew, Vistula and San. This was later slightly altered on September 28th, when the Soviets received Lithuania into their sphere of interests.

There was some slight altercation on the motives of the rapine, with a show of conscience on the Russian side. Molotov said to the German ambassador Schulenberg that:

the Soviet government had intended to take the occasion of the further advance of German troops to declare that Poland was falling apart and that it was necessary for the Soviet Union, in consequence, to come to the aid of the Ukrainians and White Russians 'threatened' by Germany. This argument was to make the intervention of the Soviet Union plausible to the masses and at the same time avoid giving the Soviet Union the appearance of an aggressor.¹¹

The Germans naturally resented being put in such a light, especially since a line of division between the two occupations had been decided upon on August 23rd. To

10

see Nazi-Soviet Relations, op.cit. The secret protocol is not to be found in The Polish White Book; according to some sources, this omission was due to Anglo-French pressure - see T. Komarnicki in The Eastern Quarterly, July 1951, p. 65. See Map I for Ribbentrop-Molotov Line.

11

Documents on German Foreign Policy, op.cit., vol.VIII, no.46, p.44.

German objections Molotov:

conceded that the projected argument of the Soviet Government contained a note that was jarring to German sensibilities but asked us in view of the difficult situation of the Soviet Government not to stumble over this piece of straw. The Soviet Government had heretofore not bothered about the plight of its minorities in Poland and had to justify abroad, in some way or other, its present intervention.¹²

The final German-Soviet communique of September 18th, was a compromise between the claims of the two aggressors, it read:

In view of the incapacities of the Polish state and of the splitting apart of the nationalities living in its former territory, the Reich government and the government of the USSR, consider it necessary to bring to an end the intolerable political and economical conditions existing in those territories. They regard it as their joint task to restore peace and order in these, their national spheres of interest, and to bring about a new order by the creation of natural frontiers and viable economical organizations.¹³

In his decision to attack Poland, Hitler came back to the old German thesis of eastern expansion, a thesis which he had put forward himself in Mein Kampf. The fusion of this policy with the Nazi racial policy unleashed a flood of barbarity on Poland. A policy of extermination was decided upon even before the war

¹²,
underlining mine, Documents on German Foreign Policy, op.cit. p.77.

¹³
Memorandum of Hilger; ibid, Stalin's draft is enclosed also.

broke out and before the organization of the Polish under-
¹⁴ground. In October it was decided that the SS and SIPO
 were to operate independently of the military government.
 The civil governors were to be responsible for the exter-
¹⁵mination of the people. At a conference in Warsaw in
 June 1941, it was decided that: "Every civilian who impe-
 des or incites others to impede the German Wehrmacht is
 to be considered as a guerilla", thus, instigators, dis-
 tributors of leaflets, those disregarding German orders,
 arsonists, destroyers of road signs and supplies, could
¹⁶be condemned without trial. These directions were for
 use in the forthcoming campaign in Russia but they were
 based on actual practice in Poland and give a picture of
 life in the occupied country.

It is interesting to note that at the beginning
 there were some sponsors for the idea of a Polish rump
 state. Thus former ambassador to Poland, Von Moltke,
 wrote a memorandum to the German Foreign Office on Sept-
 ember 26th, 1939, suggesting the creation of such a state

¹⁴At his conference at Obersalzberg, on August 23rd
 1939, Hitler ordered his 'Death's Head Units' to kill and
 exterminate without pity - International Military Tribunal,
 Doc. I-3, cited by J.W. Wheeler Bennett, op.cit., p.448.

¹⁵ibid, pp. 461 & 462.

¹⁶see C.Aubrey Dixon & Otto Heilbrunn, Communist
 Guerilla Warfare, London, George Allen & Unwin, 1954,
 p. 87-88.

out of the territories of Central Poland and the territories east of the demarcation line. He hoped to find a Polish government which would swallow the bait of possible recovery of the Eastern territories. General Sosnkowski was suggested as Prime Minister in view of his opposition¹⁷ to the pre-war regime. Nothing came of this, however, and the idea made its last appearance in Hitler's speech of October 6th, 1939, when he proposed peace to Great Britain and France on the basis of his East European conquests and a German share in the colonies.

The German occupant divided Poland into two parts. The Western half was annexed to Germany and the Polish population was there subjected to severe oppression and deportation. The central part of the country was organized into a "General Gouvernement". It was to have the status of a colony with the difference that the economic extortion was to be accompanied by racial oppression and extermination. In Western Poland the liquidation of the educated classes began at once. In Cracow, the faculty staff of the university was arrested on November 6th, 1939 and deported. All schools except elementary and technical schools were closed down. On December 26th came the first mass execution of innocent people in Waver, a suburb of Warsaw, in retaliation for the accidental

¹⁷

Documents on German Foreign Policy, op.cit.,
Doc. no. 137, p. 138-139.

shooting of a German policeman by a Polish common-law criminal. One hundred and seven men and boys were taken off the streets and shot. By the beginning of 1940, mass arrests and deportations were common. On February 6th, Governor Frank could say, on hearing of the posting up of the news of seven executions in Prague, that: "Polish forests could not provide sufficient paper for posters if I ordered the news of every seven Poles executed to be published",¹⁸ while on May 30th he was able to tell a meeting of German police and security officials that he had "taken advantage of the offensive in Western Europe, which had turned world attention away from Poland, to liquidate thousands of Poles who were trying to oppose German domination, among them the leading representatives of the Polish educated classes".¹⁸ The result of such a policy was assessed in a report from Poland, dated January 14th, 1940. This report is indicative of the psychological atmosphere and developments of the first months of the occupation in which the first organization of resistance came into being.

18

Translated from: Polskie Siły Zbrojne w Drugiej Wojnie Swiatowej, t.III, Armia Krajowa, - Polish Armed Forces in the Second World War, vol.III, The Home Army, ed. Historical Commission of the Polish General Staff, London, Historical Institute of the Name of General Sikorski, 1950, p.20-21. /hereafter cited as PSZ III/.

For documents on the German occupation, see L'Occupation Allemande et Soviétique de la Pologne, London, Note Adressée le 3 Mai 1941 aux Puissances Alliées et Neutres, République de Pologne, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères.

After a period of complete apathy caused by the violence and extent of the catastrophe, political parties began to act already in the fall months.

After people had come out of their first depression, the dynamism of the struggle with the occupant increased greatly. The repressions - such as those enacted in Western Poland, mass deportations and executions, Anin etc., caused the growth of a deep hatred of the occupant in the masses...

The strong dynamism of resistance is evidenced by a wide development of underground work, of groups of five, organized not only by important political and social figures but also growing haphazardly, to the extent that we fear provocative Gestapo action in their formation. This dynamism is also evidenced by the appearance of numerous periodicals and bulletins some of which are the organs of important social-political movements, and others the result of the private initiative of active individuals. The Polish populations acts according to a widely applied system of passive resistance to the occupant and pays no attention to his orders. Against this background the desire for a possible participation in the war is understandable.¹⁹

The beginnings of the Polish underground organization date back to the last days of the September campaign. Even before the capitulation of Warsaw on September 27th, foundations were laid for underground opposition to the Germans. General Michael Karaszewicz Tokarzewski began the work on the building of a secret military organization: Służba Zwycięstwu Polski, "S.Z.P." - Service for the Victory of Poland. He based himself on the full powers conferred on him by the Polish C-in-C, Marshal Smigły-Rydz and by the Polish government, which he received through General Julius Rommel and Stefan Starzyński, Mayor

of the city of Warsaw, who was appointed Government Commissioner together with the military Commander.²⁰ The latter, sought from the beginning, the close co-operation of the leading political parties, the PPS,²¹ - Polish Socialist Party-, the SL²² - Peasant Party, and the SN²³ - National Democratic Party. He also maintained contact with the representatives of the smaller political groups. These parties, which had opposed the pre-war regime in the 1930's, had offered their co-operation to the Command of the Defense of Warsaw and their members immediately cast about to organize a political resistance to the invader.²⁴ Thus, from the very beginning of the occupation, Polish underground resistance developed both politically and militarily. The spirit of resistance was very general after the first shock of defeat, in fact the main difficulty in building up a united movement - apart from the obvious danger of work under occupation conditions - was the number and variety of separate organizations. The Commander of Z.W.Z., Związek Walki Zbrojnej - Union of Armed Struggle,

²⁰

PSZ III, p.99.

²¹

Founded in 1892.

²²

Founded in 1895.

²³

Founded in 1887 as "Liga Polska" - Polish League.

²⁴

see Stefan Korboński, W Imieniu Rzeczypospolitej, Paris, Instytut Literacki, 1954 - In the Name of the Republic, Literary Institute.

reported in April 1940, that he was in contact with fifty
²⁵ organizations! Some resistance organizations were purely
 military, others were para-military, yet others were poli-
 tical parties with their own military organizations. Al-
 though this state of affairs created difficulties in the
 way of building up a unified resistance movement, it was
 ample proof of the national determination to resist the
 German policy in Poland.

Meanwhile, the Polish government abroad was re-
 organized in France under General Sikorski as Prime Min-
 ister and C-in-C. It was based on a coalition of the
 pre-war opposition parties mentioned above. In November
 1939, the new Polish president voluntarily resigned from
 his extraordinary prerogatives under the 1935 Constitu-
 tion which had made him the greatest executive power in
 the government. The opposition parties recognized the
 constitution in its democratic application, as the basis
 for the legal continuation of the Polish government. In
 mid-January 1940, the statute of the S.Z.P. was sent to
 the C-in-C in France, outlining the aims of the organiza-
 tion. It was to undertake a decisive and unbending fight
 with the occupant in every field of his activity and main-
 tain it by all means until the liberation of Poland within

25

'Rakon's' Report No.17, 15.IV.1940, PSZ III, p.129.
PSZ III, lists 32 "more important" underground organizations
 most of which in time subordinated themselves to the Polish
 Home Army, ibid, pp. 161-168.

her pre-war frontiers. It was to reorganize the military cadres and improve their moral and physical readiness to fight. It aimed to create centres of provisional authority in the country, linked together on a hierarchical basis²⁶ and co-operating with each other.

While resistance was being organized in Poland, the Polish government in France set into motion special machinery for directing the struggle at home. A Committee of Ministers for Home Affairs - Komitet Ministrów dla Spraw Kraju, or KMSK, was organized²⁷, which recognized the direction of armed struggle with the occupant to lie in the competence of Z.W.Z.²⁸, whose organization and status it confirmed. General Sosnkowski was appointed C-in-C of ZWZ and²⁹ Chairman of KMSK, which was given the task of working out fundamental political instructions for the country.

In November 1939, the KMSK drew up instructions defining the principles on which work in home affairs was to be organized and which were simultaneously a statute for ZWZ.

²⁶ PSZ III, p.99.

²⁷ Cabinet decree of 8,XI,1939, Gen.Sikorski's directive of 13,XI,1939, PSZ III,p.101.

²⁸ The name of the central military organization was changed to ZWZ, in the winter of 1939/40. In February 1942, this in turn gave way to Ak, Armia Krajowa, - Home Army.

²⁹ The members of the KMSK were: Alexander Ładoś, Marian Seyda, Jan Stańczyk and Gen. Marian Kukiel, First Deputy Minister for War.

Work in Home Affairs was divided into two sections, A - General, Political and Social matters, and B - work on organizing a secret military organization under both occupations. Compared with the SZP statute drawn up in Poland, the instruction set out the aims of the military organization more specifically and confirmed the spirit of the SZP statute and its aims. The ZWZ was seen as the only and unified military organization in Poland and it was, under no circumstances, to be an association of kindred organizations. In February 1940, a clause was added specifying that ZWZ was "an all-national and above-party and class organization".³⁰ The statute also defined military territorial divisions and confirmed the creation of bases of communication between Poland and France, in Hungary, Rumania and Lithuania. The Chief of ZWZ in Poland was to be the deputy commander of the organization in German occupied Poland; a separate command was to be set up under the Soviet occupation. General Tokarzewski was nominated for the Soviet occupation, where he was immediately arrested, and General Rowecki became Commander in German occupied Poland. The ZWZ statute specified its task as "co-operation in the rebuilding of the Polish state by way of arms", it was thus to co-operate with the Polish Armed Forces

The text of the oath foresaw the omission of professions of the Catholic faith for those who were of other religions; for the ZWZ statute see PSZ III, pp.102-104.

abroad. After the evacuation of the Polish government and troops to England, the work of supplying the Polish underground with money, arms, radio sets and trained experts, was carried on with funds loaned by the British government and from American Lend-Lease. The British Ministry for Economic Warfare indicated useful aims for the underground and work was carried on with the idea of participating in the Allied war effort.

The political parties in Poland gradually subordinated their military organizations to the central military organization. This was not an easy task and it was only in 1943 and in the beginning of 1944 that all the more important military organizations had subordinated themselves to the AK - Home Army. The largest accessions came when the SL - Peasant Party, and the SN - National Democratic Party,³¹ subordinated their military organizations, the B.Ch., Bataliony Chłopskie/Chłostra - Peasant Battalions, of c. 50,000 men, and NOW, Narodowa Organizacja Wojskowa - National Military Organization, with c. 70,000 men, respectively, to the Commander of the AK. The number of AK soldiers, divided into active diversion units - Z.O., Związek Odwetu, Union of Vengeance, later Kedyw, Kierownictwo Dywersji, ie. Diversion Command, and special insurrectionary units, Baszta - Bastion, attained its highest

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NSZ, Narodowe Siły Zbrojne, a fraction of NOW, remained insubordinated to the end, fighting both Germans and Russians, see PSZ III, pp. 149-158.

point in the first half of 1944, reaching the number of ³² 380,000. It was thus the second largest underground movement in Europe - the first, numerically, was the Yugoslav - and the first to be organized in German occupied Europe.

The political underground was equal in importance to the military. At first, indeed, there had been a trend to subordinate everything to the military element. In his report of January 6th, 1940, General Rowecki's conception was to base the whole underground on a unified military organization. He suggested that the political organization should be headed by the deputy Commander of ZWZ who would act in close co-operation with the Civil Commissioner in the latter's capacity as Delegate plenipotentiary of the government in Poland. The Civil Commissioner was to be the Chairman of a special political body of three members and six deputy members delegated by the PPS, SL and SN. Rowecki suggested that this be called a Political or National Committee, or Council of National Defense, which would stand beside ZWZ. This organization would replace the Rada Główna - Chief Council - as he called the embryo political body which already deliberated with the SZP. ³³ As can be seen from this project, it aimed at the definite ascendancy of the military body and General Rowecki justified his propo-

³²

PSZ III, p.119.

³³

Report no.2., of Commander of District no.1., Enclosure C.D.E.F., of 6.I.1940, Ldz 1214, ibid p.51.

sition by pointing out that in an occupied country methods had to be adapted to the necessities of the situation. Moreover, all were concerned with one aim - the restoration of independence.³⁴

However, the political and social organization of the underground, though co-operating closely with the military, and in many respects acting in union with it, developed along its own lines and with time came to represent the leading political trends in the country. Maciej Rataj of the SL,³⁵ and Niedziałkowski of the PPS, were the first to set about organizing a political body and from the very beginning the aim was to base it on democratic ideals. On February 7th, 1940, the first meeting took place between representatives of the PPS, SL and SN, and the Commander of ZWZ, at which the tasks of fighting the occupant were discussed and the parties took on the pseudonyms they were to use during the war.³⁶ It was decided to have a delegate of the government in Poland. At the second meeting on February 26th, 1940, the aims of the underground struggle were formulated as the return of independence by way of armed struggle with both occupants, based on ZWZ as the only central, military organization recognized by the

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PSZ III, p. 51.

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Both shot by the Germans in 1940.

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PPS - "Circle"; SN - "Square"; SL - "Triangle",
PSZ loc.cit.

government abroad. This meeting also gave the political deliberating body the name of PKP, Polityczny Komitet Porozumiewawczy - Committee for Political Understanding - and the creation of a wider body proposed by General Rowecki was discussed. It was decided also that the political parties represented in the PKP, should volunteer their armed forces to the disposal of ZWZ. The parties in PKP wanted the latter, complemented by and united with ZWZ, to be a binding source of information and opinion for the government. It was to receive government instructions through the Delegate.³⁷ The Polish government abroad, however, did not approve of this scheme, just as later on, it disapproved of the Collective Delegation of the Government created by PKP members and ZWZ on 3,VII,1940.³⁸ Both these schemes would probably have caused much friction, resulting inevitably, in dual governmental bodies. A compromise was reached whereby the government abroad recognized the PKP on 18,VI,1940, as the politically representative body of the country, whose opinion the Commander of ZWZ was to seek in all matters of fundamental importance. The Delegate was to be a link between the PKP and the government abroad, not a director. In June 1940, the PKP made itself organically independent of the military

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Stefan Korboński, op.cit., p. 37 ff.

³⁸

PSZ III, p. 52.

organization and became the Główny Komitet Polityczny, GKP, - Main Political Committee - which included the PPS, SL, SN, and the Stronnictwo Pracy - Christian Labour Party.

Until mid 1941, the PKP was, in fact, the temporary representative and executive of the government in Poland. The first permanent government Delegate was nominated in mid 1941. The competencies of the PKP covered all spheres of life - political, social, economic, military and ethical. Its decisions spread throughout the country through the organizational network of the political parties and ZWZ. Departments were organized for Political, Internal, and Educational affairs. The first Delegate, Cyril Ratajski, took over the direction of these departments. He recognized the opinions of the PKP as binding in internal affairs and thus instituted the double dependence of the Delegate to the government abroad and to the PKP at home. Under the first Delegate also, additional administrative departments were created - for Justice, Information, Propaganda, Agriculture, Industry and Commerce, Finances, Railways, Posts and Telegraphs. A Main Control Committee - Naczelna Izba Kontroli - was organized and, above all, the already existing Ministry of Internal Affairs began work on the organization of future administrative cadres for the re-born Polish state. Finally, the military organization, which had also begun similar work, transferred its administrative staff and competencies to the PKP and

government Delegate in 1942. Thus in 1940 and 1941 were laid the foundations for a future Polish state, ready to rise again, fully organized, at the moment of victory.

The active organ of the PKP, was the Kierownictwo Walki Cywilnej, KWC -Direction of Civilian Warfare - whose director, from beginning to end, was Stefan Korboński, a leading figure in the SL. Some idea of the scope of its activities may be gathered when we note that it concerned itself with the administration of Justice, Sabotage and Diversion, the registration of German crimes, Information and arms production. A delegate from the General Staff of ZWZ was present in KWC thus assuring close co-operation between the two organizations. There were directors of Civilian Warfare in all the territorial administrative subdivisions. The KWC, like the ZWZ and later AK, had its own radio network with London. It was also through the KWC, that a wider political representation was attained in the organized underground. The central body of the KWC was the Komenda Główna, KG, - High Command - which came to be called the "small PKP". After a time this body came to include the Społeczna Organizacja Samoobrony, SOS - Social Organization for Self-Defense - which was made up of some twenty smaller political parties and groups. In 1943,

39

The PKP developed into the KRP, Krajowa Rada Polityczna - Home Political Council, and finally into the Rada Jedności Narodowej, - Council of National Unity, on January 9th, 1944.

40. see Korboński, op.cit, p.179, and PSZ III, pp.161-168.

KWC was replaced by KWP, Kierownictwo Walki Podziemnej - Direction of Underground Warfare - whose existence was proclaimed in a declaration of 5.VII.1943, signed by the Delegate and the C-in-C of AK.⁴¹ Its five leading members⁴² took the most important decisions and issued them in the form of orders to Kedyw and Opór Społeczny - Social Opposition. Thus active resistance to the occupant was unified.

Of course, the main aim of the whole underground movement, civil and military, was to prepare for the armed rising against the occupant at the crucial moment of his withdrawal and defeat. This did not prevent the underground from carrying out increasing sabotage and diversionary action; the latter was seen as necessary for three reasons: as co-operation in the war effort, as a manifestation of resistance against the occupant, and as training for the final action. The evolution of plans for the ultimate insurrection is indicative of the way the military leaders in Poland viewed their chances in the light of the changing situation; an analysis of the various plans made is, therefore, necessary if we wish to grasp the full significance of the Warsaw Rising which was in itself, the climax of the whole resistance movement.

The first plan for a General Rising was drawn up in

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PSZ III, p. 459 ff.

42

These were: Gen. Bor-Komarowski, C-in-C, AK; Gen. T. Pełczyński, Deputy C-in-C; the Commander of Kedyw; Col. Rzepecki, Chief of BIP, and Stefan Korboński - Op.cit. p.288.

Poland in the winter months of 1940/41 and several exchanges of opinion between Warsaw and London preceded its final formulation. Already we will note that this plan, like the others, had to take into account the Soviet factor as co-decisive with the German. We must remember that at this time, the Soviet Union was occupying half of the country and co-operating with the Germans in crushing the Polish resistance movement. The first plan consisted of four parts: Hypotheses regarding the possible situation at the end of the war; the rising against the Germans; the defense against the Soviets and Polish participation in the occupation of the Western frontiers of Poland.⁴³ Everything was seen to depend on the situation as it would exist at the end of the war. It was decided that a simultaneous rising all over the country against the Germans was possible only after the German military machine had been definitely broken and chaos reigned in Germany itself. It was thought that even if there was a revolution in Germany but the German army still existed, a rising would not be feasible. Both conditions of a military and a civil breakdown were seen as necessary.⁴⁴

The chances of success depended also on another vital factor - the strength of the Soviet Union. Three possible

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It was postulated that East Prussia and Upper Silesia would be incorporated into Poland and that the Western frontier should follow the line of the Oder- PSZ III, 182.

44

Ibid., p. 172 ff.

situations were envisaged in this respect. The USSR might remain a neutral power till the end of the war and then march into a revolting Europe - in such a case a Polish rising and opposition to the Soviets was pronounced as hopeless. The second alternative was seen as a war between the Soviet Union on one side, and Germany and Japan on the other. It seemed most likely to the Polish leaders in 1940, that the Germans would defeat the Soviets very heavily and penetrate deep into Russia. After the German breakdown, the Red Army would follow the retreating Germans into Central Europe and the Polish underground would oppose this advance, if necessary, concentrating on the natural line of defense provided by the Vistula. The Soviet aim was postulated to be a deep penetration into Germany before the arrival of the Western Allies. As a natural consequence of this, the Soviets were expected to oppose the existence of an independent Poland. This situation, envisaging the preliminary Soviet defeat by the Germans, was seen through the prism of the recent Soviet war with Finland in which that small country had successfully resisted the USSR. The third possibility, though it was seen as remote, was that the Soviet Union would be successful against the Germans and would drive them out of Poland. In this situation, no hope was seen for any opposition to the Soviets.

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In such an eventuality, the whole underground apparatus was to be kept in readiness for a rising when the Soviet state would crumble. Not much could be foreseen in 1940. - PSZ III, p.175.

The rising against the Germans was planned as an action against the German administration and police, who were to be liquidated, and against the army which was to be disarmed and sent home. The H.Q. of ZWZ saw a mass rising to be impracticable because of the scarcity of arms, and from the beginning the armed forces were organized in units of platoon strength - fifty men to a full platoon. These could be combined into larger units and used strategically when the time came. This calculation was proven correct since the arms drops made from Great Britain during the war years, covered only one third of the arms requirements of the AK - one third was taken from the Germans and one third was produced in the underground workshops. This shortage of arms and especially of armour, was always present in the plans of the AK.

The aims of the rising were seen as the liberation of Poland from the Germans and the securing of it from the Soviet danger. The base of the rising was to be the heavily populated General ~~G~~ouvernement. The aid of Polish troops from abroad was counted on because of the scarcity of arms and lack of armour mentioned above, and, for the same reasons, it was hoped that Polish bombers would raid German strongpoints and fortifications. ⁴⁶ Although we shall find

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On 8.III.1942, Gen. Sikorski cabled Gen. Rowecki that airborne help would be possible only if the Polish forces abroad obtained a large no. of transport planes - unlikely in the near future. Even if the transport were available, motorized help would be very limited - PSZ III, pp.187-190.

this help always included in further plans, it was inserted with full consideration of the limitations known to exist, rather as an eventual possibility than a factual estimation.

The first plan for a general rising reached the Polish High Command in London on the 25th of June, 1941, that is, three days after the German attack on the Soviet Union had forcibly arraigned the USSR among the enemies of the German Reich. Henceforth, the Soviet factor in the Polish plans grew to predominance in the political sphere, while the German remained in the first place in military considerations.⁴⁷

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As we have seen, the possibility of Poland falling into the Soviet sphere of operations was not omitted and it cannot be said that the "Polish Underground leaders simply preferred to ban it from their calculations and to operate on a set of unrealistic concepts" - Samuel L. Sharp, Poland, White Eagle on a Red Field, Camb., Mass., Harvard University Press, 1953, p. 160.

The same author claims that: "it is questionable whether the Nazis really were looking for a Polish Quisling. There was no room for a Polish unit in Hitler's Europe. With all due respect to Polish patriotism, the Germans could have unearthed enough scoundrels and weaklings if they had really tried...there is no trace of a concerted German effort to achieve more than the 'neutral benevolence' of the Poles in the war against Russia", ibid, p. 159-160.

Mr. Sharp can assert this in the face of printed documents to the effect that there was a German plan to establish a Polish rump state - see this work, p. 8-9 - and in the face of printed German affirmations that their attempts to get Polish collaboration against the Russians failed completely - eg. "The policy of Governor General Frank was such that he could not obtain Polish support against the Russians, even though the latter liquidated the Home Army as they came" - Walter Gorlitz, Der Zweite Weltkrieg, vol. 2. Stuttgart, Steingruben Verlag, 1952, p. 97.

These and other assertions show up Mr. Sharp's work for what it is worth.

II

THE CURZON LINE AND THE HORNS OF THE DILEMMA

The Soviet occupation of Eastern Poland was much more ruthless than the German. The "new order" imposed by the Soviet government consisted of "elections" expressing the 'will of the people' to belong to the USSR, and of mass arrests and deportations which attained the number of 1,500,000 people between September 1939 and June 1941. The "elections" were proclaimed by General Timoshenko on October 6th, 1939, that is, eight days after the signing of the final German-Soviet agreement on the partition of Poland. Two Committees were set up at Bialystok and at Lwów to organize and conduct the elections. Then, under military occupation, the vote was cast for one list of candidates for each Committee and attained, with the votes of the occupying forces, the figure of 90% in each district. At the beginning of November, the Supreme Council of the USSR, complied with the petitions of the National Assemblies of "Western Ukraine" and "Western White Russia" for incorporation in the respective Soviet republics.¹ On November 29th,

¹ see L'occupation Allemande et Soviétique, op.cit., Bronisław Kuśnierz, Stalin and the Poles, London, Hollis & Carter, 1949, pp. 50-56.

a decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the USSR, designated all those present in Eastern Poland at the time of the "elections" as Soviet citizens.²

The mass deportations from the incorporated territories were preceded by thorough screening of "anti-Soviet elements". A regulation enumerating these elements was issued by the NKVD Commissar for the Lithuanian SSR, Gusevicius, on November 28th 1940. It included members of student corporations, Youth sporting organizations, former police, ex-officers of any non-Soviet army, ex-volunteers to White and all other anti-Soviet armies, refugees, political emigrants, expatriates and smugglers, nationals and former nationals of foreign countries, representatives of foreign firms and officials of foreign governments, persons maintaining contact abroad or with legations and consulates, stamp-collectors, esperantists, ex-civil servants and Red Cross workers, members of religious communities, the upper classes in general and the upper middle class.³ In spite of the "unanimous" wish for incorporation, more than a million people were deported to the USSR from Eastern Poland in three great waves, in February, April and June 1940.⁴

²

Ibid, p.55.

³

Ibid, p.67-68.

⁴

Ibid, p.69. In 1941, the Polish government obtained information that of these 1,500,000 people, over 760,000 had died; one third of the total were children, PSZ III, 36.

This was the state of Polish-Soviet relations confronting General Sikorski's government in June 1941. The British government, anxious to establish the closest possible relations with the Soviet Union, exerted great pressure on the Polish government in London to come to an agreement with the USSR. The Poles wished, of course, to obtain a Soviet guarantee of their pre-war frontiers. Even at that crucial moment, however, Stalin refused to give up his gains in Poland and the Baltic countries. Ambassador Maisky insisted on the "ethnographic" principle⁵, that is, on the Ribbentrop-Molotov line. As a compromise, the Russians proposed the formula of annulling the Soviet-German treaties of 1939 regarding territorial changes in Poland. This was an empty gesture, however, for Maisky did not conceal the fact that the Soviet government connected this formula with three basic theses:

- a. The Soviet Union could not recognize the Polish frontiers of 1939.
- b. In the matter of frontiers, the USSR based itself on the "ethnographic" principle.
- c. The Soviet government desired an understanding with the Polish government while leaving the frontiers an open question.⁶

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"However, it was clear from the information obtained by Mr. Winant from Mr. Eden that, particularly in the case of Poland, the Soviets were already making certain reservations. While the Soviet government expressed its desire to see Poland independent, it had specifically added: 'within her ethnographic frontiers.'", - Jan Ciechanowski, Defeat in Victory, London, Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1948, p.41.

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Władysław Pobóg-Malinowski, O Układzie Polsko-Rosyjskim z 30.VII.1941, Kultura, no.4/42, April 1951, 124,
- On the Polish-Soviet agreement of 30.VII.1941.

General Sosnkowski, during the heated debates which took place in those days expressed the opinion of many when he said:

To those who would wish to say that, looking at things realistically, the matter of our Eastern frontiers will come up at the Peace Conference, whether we want it or not, and that this is all the more certain since now Russia is an ally of Great Britain; to those who say that at the cost of giving in, in the East, we can buy prizes a hundredfold more valuable in the West - to those we shall answer at once: Yes, it is possible that this will be so, but it is all the more important then to regain our legal titles of possession in the East before the Peace Conference takes place.⁷

This was, undoubtedly, a sound attitude, but the Polish government was unable to gain its point. Several factors contributed towards this. The British government exerted great pressure on General Sikorski, who for his part, saw the matter as one of concluding the best agreement possible, keeping the good will of Great Britain, and of saving as many Poles as possible from the USSR. This attitude of General Sikorski's, combined with his authoritarian methods and British pressure, brought about a split in the Polish coalition government. The British-Soviet project of the Polish-Soviet agreement was signed on July 30th, 1941, without the consent of the President and with a reduced Cabinet as also without the support of the SN, one of the leading political parties. The PPS was divided on the issue. Three ministers resigned as a

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Ibid.

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result of the agreement , which consisted of three main points:

- a. The Soviet-German treaties of 1939, regarding territorial changes in Poland, were declared null and void.
- b. Diplomatic relations were re-established and the Soviet government would permit the formation of Polish military units on its territory, composed of ex-P.O.W.'s and deportees.
- c. An "amnesty" was to be declared for all Polish subjects confined on Soviet territory, including P.O.W.'s.

Thus the Soviet government did not guarantee Poland's pre-war frontiers, and, by granting an "amnesty" to the Poles, it re-asserted its claims even further - since no government can grant an amnesty to the citizens of another country.⁹

Undoubtedly, it was British pressure and the British point of view which were the deciding factors in the agreement. Sir Winston Churchill writes of it:

We had the invidious responsibility of recommending General Sikorski to rely on Soviet good faith in the future settlement of Russian-Polish relations, and not to insist at this moment on any written guarantees for the future.¹⁰

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Gen. Sosnkowski, Deputy P.M.; Mr. Zaleski, Min. for Foreign Affairs; Marian Seyda, Min. of Justice.

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"The stark truth, however, is that we were completely unable to pin down Maisky on the matter of pre-war Eastern boundaries. We had asked for Russia's recognition of the 1921 boundaries by name, not just a dissolution of the Ribbentrop-Molotov line. In addition, we had fought against the inclusion of the word 'amnesty' in the Agreement, for this word made it appear that Russia was acting magnanimously in releasing 1,500,000 Polish citizens, who had in fact been carried off into slavery" - Stanisław Mikołajczyk, The Rape of Poland, Pattern of Soviet Aggression, New York & Toronto, Whittlesey House, McGraw Hill Book Co., Inc., 1948, p.17.

10

Underlining mine, Winston Churchill, The Grand Alliance, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co, 1950, p.391.

Although the weakness of the Soviets and their urgent need of supplies presented a unique opportunity to press for commitments, Churchill was afraid of the possibility of a separate German-Soviet peace - just as in 1939 he had been anxious to let the Soviet government know that Britain too, would be willing to pay what Stalin wanted. In his speech of June 22nd, 1941, greeting the Soviet Union as a new ally, Churchill mentioned that the first German-Soviet battles were taking place on "Soviet" soil.¹¹ In a broadcast speech as First Lord of the Admiralty, on October 1st, 1939, he had been even more explicit, formally accepting the Soviet claim that its occupation of Eastern Poland was dictated by security considerations.¹² He also pointed out that in South-East Europe, Russian interests "fall into the same channel as those of Britain and France" since neither of those two countries could afford to see it fall under German domination.¹³ It was not by accident that the London

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Zaleski protested to Eden who said that Churchill had made his speech without consulting the Foreign Office. Eden promised not to make any binding agreements with the Soviet Union without first consulting the Polish government, - Kultura, op.cit., p:121.

12

"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" -see Wacław Jędrzejewicz, Poland in the British Parliament, New York, Józef Pilsudski Institute of America, 1946, vol.I., p.300.

13

Ibid.

Times of August 1st, 1941, suggested a return to the frontiers of the Congress of Vienna and that the Manchester Guardian of the same month began to hint at the desirability of re-examining the pre-war Polish-Russian frontiers.

The British government, while it sent General Sikorski's government a note stating that it did not recognize any territorial changes in Poland since August 1939, did not, however, guarantee Poland's Eastern frontiers, thus leaving the question of their settlement open.¹⁴ On Mr. Eden's reading of the note in the House of Commons, a member asked: "Am I right in assuming that as a result of this Agreement, no guarantee of frontiers in Eastern Europe will be undertaken by His Majesty's Government?". The Foreign Secretary answered: "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".¹⁴ In this respect, Prime Minister Churchill's government was but following the policy of his predecessors. The government of Mr. Neville Chamberlain stipulated that it would aid

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"On the occasion of the signature of the Polish-Soviet Agreement of today's date, I desire to take the opportunity of informing you that in conformity with the provisions of the Agreement of Mutual Assistance between the United Kingdom and Poland of August 25th, 1939, His Majesty's Government have entered into no undertaking towards the USSR which affects 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" - House of Commons, vol. 373, pp. 1502-1504, cited by W. Jędrzejewicz, op. cit., pp. 473-475.

Poland if it were engaged in hostilities with a European Power - but specified in a secret Protocol that this applied to Germany only.¹⁵ Although this was not known then, Mr. Butler confirmed it by answering a query on October 19th, 1939, that:

During the negotiations which led up to the signature of the agreement, it was understood between the Polish Government and His Majesty's Government that the agreement should only cover the case of aggression by Germany.¹⁶

He then neatly avoided committing the government on the question of guarantees.¹⁷

The fateful "Curzon Line" came up in the House of Commons on October 18th, 1939, when the Prime Minister was asked how far the new German-Russian line conformed to it.^{17b} A pointed question. Viscount Halifax made a more explicit reference to it in the House of Lords when he said on October 26th, 1939, that:

..it is perhaps, as a matter of historical interest, worth recalling that the action of the Soviet Government has been to advance the Russian boundary to what was substantially the boundary recommended

¹⁵
Par.1,a. of the Secret Protocol: By the expression a 'European Power' employed in the Agreement is to be understood Germany.

Par.1,b.: In the event of action within the meaning of Articles 1 and 2 of the Agreement by a European Power other than Germany, the Contracting Parties will consult together on the measures to be taken in common. - ibid, p.347-348.

¹⁶
Ibid, p. 349.

¹⁷
...As Polish territory is in foreign occupation, no question of recognizing boundaries arises. - ibid,

^{17b}
Ibid, p. 345-346.

at the time of the Versailles Conference by the noble Marquess who used to lead the House, Lord Curzon, and who was then Foreign Secretary.¹⁸

Thus the attitude of the British government, even before the signing of the Polish-Soviet agreement, had been one of disinterest in Eastern Europe.^{18b} For the Polish government, however, the matter was not one of 'purely territorial concessions' - nor for that matter have territorial concessions ever been known to be devoid of political significance.

The Curzon Line, which was the focal point of Polish-Soviet relations during the second World War, has a history of its own which merits a summary mention, if only because of the distorted propaganda of which it was so often the object. This famous line, which was not initially drawn up

¹⁸

House of Lords, vol. 114, p. 1559-1566, cited by W. Jędrzejewicz, op.cit., p. 356.

^{18b}

On March 9th, 1939, Henderson writing to Halifax with advice to compromise with Germany, could say: "Germany's continental future lies eastward and it is probably not unfortunate that it should be so" - Documents on British Foreign Policy, London, H.M. Stationery Office, 3rd ser., vol. IV, p. 216.

Georges Bonnet had a better grasp of the situation when he said, on hearing of the German-Soviet pact: "We should on no account alter our decision in this respect out of a feeling that if Poland stood in the way of measures necessary for her defence we could claim freedom from any obligations to her; for it was not for Poland that we would be fighting, but for ourselves, since once she was engulfed and we had done nothing to prevent it Germany would be in a position to overwhelm us, more especially as her preponderance would appear so great to other European countries that they would throw in their lot with her" - ibid, Vol. VI, p. 131. By that time it was too late.

by Lord Curzon,-and certainly not at the time of the Versailles Treaty as Lord Halifax claimed,-came into existence on December 8th, 1919, in the form of a declaration by the Supreme Council of Allied and Associated Powers in which they recognized "from now on, the right of the Polish Government to proceed, within the terms provided by the Treaty of June 28th, 1919, with Poland, to the organization of a regular administration of the territories of the former Russian Empire" up to a line described in the declaration. This line corresponded to the Russian-Polish frontier as it existed from 1795 - 1807.¹⁹

The Peace Conference had not laid down any Polish-Russian frontier for the simple reason that Russia was in the throes of revolution and no one could know at the time who the final victor would be. In Paris, Russian opponents of the Revolution, some of them well-known and influential statesmen, formed the "Russian Conference" and pressed their claims to the pre-1914 Russian frontiers. In Russia, towards the end of 1919, Kolchak and Denikin came to an agreement and in the West "there were, indeed, hopes, that first Kolchak and then Denikin could succeed in establishing a Russian government with which it would be possible for the Poles and the Allied Powers to treat in regard to the ultimate fate of the disputed territories."²⁰ Since

¹⁹

See A. Żółkowski, The Border of Europe, London, Hollis & Carter, 1950, p.198 ff. See Maps I & II.

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H.J. Paton, op.cit., vol.VI, p. 246.

both these Generals and the Russian Conference were supporters of the "Great Russia" policy, their conceptions influenced the Foreign Office in drawing up the proposed demarcation line. The Polish representatives at the Peace Conference, on the other hand, did not claim all of the territories which had belonged to pre-partition Poland. Mr. Roman Dmowski, the leader of the SN - National Democratic Party - presented the first official Polish claims and plans in Paris in January 1919, claiming those territories only which had a sizable Polish or Catholic population and Polish urban centres. The frontier thus drawn up would have lain somewhat further East than the boundary after the second partition.²¹

The first Russian government after the fall of the Romanovs, that of Prince Lvov, recognized an independent Poland but postponed the definition of future frontiers till the calling of the Constituent Assembly. In Septem-

21

A. Żółkowski, op.cit., p. 194.
Mr. S. Konovalov cites Mr. Dmowski's statement supporting the "ethnographic", i.e., the third partition frontiers of Poland. Mr. Konovalov admits that Mr. Dmowski held this opinion in 1915, but he does not explain that at that time, Mr. Dmowski was pursuing a policy for an autonomous Poland within the bounds of the Russian Empire, nor does he mention Mr. Dmowski's change of policy towards these questions when the revolution swept away the Tsarist government. see S. Konovalov, Russo-Polish Relations, An Historical Survey, Princeton, University Press, 1945, p. 30.

ber 1918, the Soviet government for its part informed the German government that the Council of People's Commissars had decided to abrogate all the treaties between the Russian Empire and the Kingdom of Prussia and the Austro-Hapsburg Empire relative to the partitions of Poland.²² Thus, officially at least, the Soviets did not claim these lands as Russian.

Until 1920, Piłsudski had refused to aid the White Generals against the Soviet republic, since he well knew that the re-establishment of the Russian empire was not in the interests of Poland.²³ Piłsudski had his own programme of a federated or confederated state composed of Poland, White Ruthenia and the Ukraine, which would later confederate with the Baltic states. He considered the French system of "barrière" independent states as too weak; his plan was "to paralyse Bolshevism by splitting its territorial base, the former Russian Empire, by means of a strict, literal application of Wilson's and Lenin's principle of self-determination to all nationalities of the former Tsarist empire".²⁴ At first, however, he tried to see whether an agreement with the Bolsheviks was possible. He

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A. Żółtowski, op.cit., p. 179.

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The fact that Piłsudski did not co-operate with the Allied intervention in Russia, is acknowledged even by the official History of the USSR, ed. A.M. Pankratova, Moscow, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1948, Part III, p. 24

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M.K. Dziewanowski, "Piłsudski's Federal Policy, 1919-1921", Journal of Central European Affairs, vol. 10, no. 3., October 1950, p. 255.

contacted Lenin in October 1919, secretly so as not to antagonize Paris, but, by the end of the year the Bolshevik armies were pushing the Whites to the Black Sea. He realized the Bolsheviks were now too strong and started negotiating with the Ukrainian leader Petlura in December. In January 1920, the Soviet government proposed an armistice and negotiations to the Poles. The Russians proposed a Polish-Russian frontier running from Dryssa to Bar²⁵ - a frontier considerably to the East of that later fixed by the Treaty of Riga in 1921. The right wing parties in the Polish government were in favour of this proposal,^{25b} while others, like the PPS, were in full agreement with Piłsudski's federalist plans and therefore supported the project of aid for the liberation of the Ukraine from the Soviets. Marshal Piłsudski's General Staff, moreover, had intelligence of large Soviet concentrations, one of them around Borysov, and suspected that once the Red Army had crushed the last White forces, it would turn on Poland. Piłsudski therefore agreed to the Soviet proposal but asked for Borysov as the place of negotiations. The Soviet refusal of this request confirmed his suspicions and decided him to support Petlura; it also convinced the leaders of the right and centre in the Polish Diet who had hitherto opposed

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In substance this line ran along the course of the rivers Dvina, Beresina, and Płtycz, and in Podolia it ran c. 60 miles East of the Galician border.

25b

see St. Grabski, The Polish-Soviet Frontier, New York, Polish Information Center, 1945.

the Ukrainian project, of the insincerity of the Soviet proposals. Thus the alliance with Petlura was concluded. The terms of the agreement were that the Polish troops would withdraw as soon as a Ukrainian national government was in control. The Ukrainians in return, agreed to abdicate their claims to Eastern Galicia. The Polish campaign of 1920 cannot, therefore, be termed an attack on Russia - unless the Ukraine be considered as non-existent - nor, in view of the agreement with Petlura, can it be called an invasion of the Ukraine. ²⁶ At the same time also, the White Ruthenian People's Republic transmitted to the Peace Conference a request to be associated with Poland, on the basis of ethnographic limits and with a national constitution. ^{26b}

The Curzon Line as such, came up for the first time in July 1920, when the Red Army was approaching Warsaw and the Polish government, its back to the wall, appealed

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For this version, see Martin Wight, "Eastern Europe", Survey of International Affairs 1939-1946, The World in March 1939, Oxford, ed. Arnold Toynbee and Frank T. Ashton, University Press, 1952, p. 241. Mr. Wight makes no mention of Piłsudski's alliance with Petlura and its conditions. His version of the campaign is amazingly close to the official Soviet version in the history textbook for secondary schools: "...in the spring of 1920... the Entente launched another campaign against the country. This time the Entente chose for its tools gentry-ridden Poland and the Whiteguard General Wrangel"... - A History of the USSR, Part III, op.cit. p. 283.

^{26b}

K.M. Dziewanowski, op.cit.

for help to the Allied and Associated Powers. It is not without significance that in June of that year, Mr. Krassin, a Soviet representative, was in London for talks with the British government on the renewal of trade relations which was strongly desired by Great Britain. Mr. Krassin hinted strongly that the Soviet government did not wish to see British support of the Poles. ²⁷ The two governments drew up proposals for the re-establishment of relations and Mr. Lloyd George went to Spa where the Supreme Council received the Polish Premier, Mr. W. Grabski. In return for the offer of British mediation, Poland had to accept a provisional armistice line, which roughly followed the 1807 frontier with Russia, and to abide by the League of Nations decision on Danzig and Upper Silesia. On July 11th, 1920, a day after Mr. W. Grabski had signed his assent to these terms, Lord Curzon signed an armistice proposal to the Soviet government. It differed, however, from the line of December 1919, which it claimed to propose, by extending the demarcation line through Eastern Galicia - which had never been part of Russian territory and had not been mentioned in the 1919 document. It also claimed that the line of December 8th, 1919, had been a frontier line, which it was not, and it deviated from the agreement of July 10th, 1920, between the Polish government and the Allied Supreme Council, where it had been stated that in

Eastern Galicia, the Soviet and Polish armies should stand where the armistice found them. The note concluded that if the Soviet armies crossed the proposed line, the Allied Powers would lend their support to Poland. It also included proposals on trade negotiations between Britain and the Soviet government, and the proposal of a Soviet armistice with General Wrangel.

In view of the Soviet claims to these territories during the second World War, it should be noted here that the Curzon Line at the time it was drawn up, was only a provisional minimum line, and that both the French and the Americans believed that the final frontier should lie further to the East. The Inter-Allied Commission in Poland proposed a frontier almost identical with that which Poland²⁸ finally obtained at the Treaty of Riga. In a broadcast circular of July 18th, 1920, the Soviet government rejected the proposal and stated that it was willing to accept a Polish frontier further to the East than that proposed by the "Imperialistic Powers". The Soviets invited the Poles for direct negotiations but put forward terms which would have turned Poland into a political vassal of Soviet Russia. The Polish armed forces were to be limited to 50,000 men, of whom only 10,000 were to be regular troops and the rest a 'workers' militia. The whole equipment of the Polish army, except for the 50,000 was to be handed

over to the Soviet Union. Polish war industry was to be demobilised. The Soviet Union, on the other hand, was to maintain an army of 200,000 on the Polish frontier and have the right of free transit for persons and goods. The frontier itself was slightly more favourable than the Curzon²⁹ Line. The Polish delegates rejected these proposals and the Red Armies were defeated, due mainly to two causes: their over-extension which enabled Pilsudski to cut their supply and communication lines, and the total lack of support for the Communist puppet government which followed in the wake of the Red Army. Some of the pronouncements of the Soviet military and political leaders point to the fact that the Red Army aimed to break through Poland and carry the revolution to Germany.³⁰ Those days also saw the first Soviet proposal to Germany which involved the³¹ partition of Poland in return for German aid.

Poland had to face a difficult decision with regard to her Eastern frontiers. For geo-political and

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Ibid.

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eg. Gen. Tukhachevsky's Order of the Day, July 2nd, 1920: "In the West, the frontiers of world revolution are at stake. Over the corpse of Poland lies the way to world conflagration".

Lenin said later that a few more days of victorious Communist advance and the Soviets would "not have merely captured Warsaw; we should have shaken the Versailles peace treaty to its foundations. That is the international significance of our war with Poland." - Stefan Possony, A Century of Conflict, Chicago, H. Regnery & Co, 1953, p.99.

31

In August 1920, Enver Pasha urged Von Seeckt on behalf of Trotsky to intervene in Poland in return for the pre-1914 frontiers - J.W. Wheeler Bennett, op.cit., p.126.

ethnographic reasons, she could not abandon her Eastern territories to the Bolsheviks - the Soviet peace proposals of August 1920 showed Soviet intentions of dominating Poland. Moreover, there was a considerable Polish population living in these lands, about 1,000,000 of whom remained in Russia even after the drawing up of the 1921 frontier. The desire for the independence of the White Ruthenian and Ukrainian peoples was entertained by Polish Left Wing parties and Pilsudski who hoped to draw them into federative links with Poland. Independence, however, "without Polish help...would immediately fall before a Bolshevik invasion"³². A third alternative from the Polish point of view was to take these peoples under their protection. A British historian writing while these events were taking shape, wrote: "It is small wonder that the Poles preferred the last course, and it is a misconception to maintain that in so doing they were necessarily actuated only by blind folly and criminal ambitions"³³.

The ethnographic make-up of the Eastern territories

³²

H.J. Paton, op.cit., p. 276.

³³

Ibid. It is interesting to see what the Great Soviet Encyclopedia has to say of the Riga frontier:..."the Soviet-Polish frontier was far less advantageous for the White Poles than the one which was proposed to Poland by the Soviet government in April 1920; the frontier determined after the Polish-Soviet war runs 50 to 100 kil. to the West of the line which was suggested at the beginning of the war. This means that Soviet Russia emerged victorious even from this struggle against the forces of counter-revolution". - Soviet Encyclopedia, vol.46, p. 272.

was mixed. According to the 1931 Census, there were in

Eastern Poland:

34

4,794,000 Poles, ie. 39.9% of the population
4,139,000 Ukrainians and Ruthenians ^{34b}
993,000 White Ruthenians
1,045,000 Jews
120,000 Russians
76,000 Lithuanians
85,000 Germans
32,000 Czechs
728,000 Others and not given
<u>12,012,000</u>

In general, it can be said that the Ukrainians balanced the Polish population in Galicia and Volhynia, while in certain districts, Poles or Ukrainians predominated. The two greatest cities, Lwów and Wilno, were predominantly Polish.³⁵

These territories were also vital to Poland for

34

It is estimated that in September 1939, there were 13,199,000 Polish citizens under Soviet occupation - Polish Facts and Figures, New York, Polish Information Center, no.2., March 25th, 1944.

34b

Ukrainian estimates differ, eg. The Slavonic Encyclopedia, New York, Philosophical Library, 1949, gives the number of Ukrainians living in Poland before 1939, as 6,000,000 or 7,000,000, but this would only be possible by including the White Ruthenians and exaggerating the total. In 1910, Poles in Eastern Galicia, formed majorities in: Sanok, Brzozów, Przemyśl, Jarosław, Cieszanów, Lublin and Chełm in the North, and Lwów, Tarnopol, Skałat, and Trembowla in the South East. Areas of "Little Russian" majority were mainly in the Dniester Valley and Carpathians, also in Rawa Ruska, Żółkiew and Jaworów - see Austrian Poland, London, Handbooks prepared under the direction of the Historical Section of the Foreign Office, H.M. Stationery Office, 1920, no.46. This situation was largely the same in 1939 - St. Skrzypek, Ukraiński Program Państwowy na Tle Rzeczywistości - The Ukrainian State Programme and Reality - London, Związek Ziem Południowo-Wschodnich Rzeczypospolitej Polski, 1948, p. 27. Ukrainians formed the majority in Volhynia, again with the exception of certain districts. It is probable that due to natural increase, the Ukrainians in pre-war Poland, attained to 5,500,000, the increase of the Polish population was proportional - ibid.

35

In Wilno the Poles formed a majority of 65.9%,

economic reasons, the oil-wells of Drohobycz in Galicia, and potassium salt in this region - and for geo-political reasons, for Russia on the Bug had always meant a vassal Poland if any Poland at all. Moreover, Poland needed Eastern Galicia for contact with the Southern Balkan countries. As regards Ukrainian claims, it is true that there was no uniform policy towards the minorities, but educational and cultural facilities existed on a large scale, though the Polish government discountenanced Ukrainian claims to independence for reasons already noted. Consequently, when violence and arson were applied by Ukrainian patriots, Polish troops were sent in and this embittered the feelings of both sides.³⁶ During the 1930's, however, a Ukrainian party which aimed at cultural autonomy, was represented in the Polish parliament. It should be borne in mind when considering Ukrainian claims in Poland, that these extended to all territories where any Ukrainians were to be found, even in a minority - the same applies to their claims in Russia.³⁷ It should also be remembered that the Soviet Ukraine was not an independent country and that the famine during the first collectivization drive carried off millions of Ukrainians, while deportations carried off a large proportion of the population.³⁸

In Lwów, 63.5% - Polish Facts and Figures, op.cit.

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This is referred to by the Ukrainians as "The Polish Atrocities".

³⁷

Skrzypek, op.cit.

³⁸

W.H. Chamberlain and ibid.

Such was the problem of the Curzon Line as it appeared to the Polish government. It concerned Polish soil and Polish independence, fused into one territorial-political problem.

The Soviet refusal, in the agreement of July 30th, 1941, to confirm the Polish 1921 frontier "expressis verbis", was the inauspicious starting point of official Polish - Soviet relations during the second World War. Already in August 1941, the Soviet press and radio began denying the assertions of the Polish press in Great Britain and the United States which interpreted the Polish-Soviet agreement as recognizing the Polish frontiers of 1921. From this time onwards, the Soviet government carried on an unceasing and growing campaign against the Polish government in London, along four closely related fronts: In its official relations with that government; in its relations with the British and American governments where the Polish question was concerned; in its relations with Polish Communists in the USSR, and in the activities of Polish Communists in Poland.

It is significant that before the Polish and Soviet governments entered into direct negotiations, the Soviet government proposed that the Poles recognize the Ribbentrop-Molotov line and consent to the creation of a "Polish National Committee" in Moscow, in company with other Slav National Committees organized in the USSR.³⁹ The Soviet government

was unable, however, to obtain this point at the time, probably because of its very precarious military situation. It did not abandon the idea, but as we shall see, developed it in the background until the moment came for its practical application.

Besides the agreement of July 30th, 1941, the Polish and Soviet governments also signed a military agreement on August 14th, 1941. The Polish government expected to raise 300,000 men and no limits were set except those imposed by supplies. However, on November 6th, 1941, the Poles were told that the Russian High Command had made plans for feeding only 30,000 men; by this time the number of enlistments had reached 46,000. The Soviet government wanted all those drafted in excess of that number to be dismissed.⁴⁰ General Sikorski decided to fly to Moscow to try and clear the difficulty up with Stalin. It is significant that on the eve of his arrival in Moscow on December 1st, 1941, the Soviet government sent a note to the Polish embassy at Kuybishev stating that all former citizens of Ukrainian, White Russian or Jewish birth, who were on Russian territory, were now to be regarded as Soviet subjects. The note underlined the basis of such an attitude by stating clearly that these people could not be listed as Polish citizens "in view of the fact that the problem of the frontiers between the USSR and Poland has not yet been settled and is subject

to future consideration". Moscow thus made its attitude clear towards the drafting of Polish troops and created a new problem just before General Sikorski's arrival. At this time, too, in the first days of December, the Polish Communists reappeared on the scene. An official congress was held at Saratov at which they asserted their refusal, to recognize the official Polish government and voiced their readiness to co-operate with the Soviet government in forming a "Polish National Committee".

It was against this background that General Sikorski arrived in Moscow on December 1st, 1941. He had a series of talks with Stalin at which General Anders and the Polish ambassador Kot also assisted. The position of Polish troops in Russia was discussed and though General Sikorski proposed that they be moved to Iran where they would be supplied by the British and Americans; he also assured Stalin that he

41

B. Kuśnierz, op.cit., p.148; Ciechanowski, op.cit. p.91.

42

The Polish Communist Party was founded in 1918 out of the fusion of the extreme Left of the PPS and the SDKP i L Socjaldemokracja Królestwa Polskiego i Litwy - Social Democracy of the Polish Kingdom and Lithuania. These two groups took the joint name of "Komunistyczna Partia Robotniczej Polski" or KPRP - Communist Party of Working Poland - and changed it in 1923 to "Komunistyczna Partia Polska", KPP - Polish Communist Party. Never popular in Poland, it was dissolved by the Comintern in 1937 and most of its leaders perished in the USSR during the purges of 1936 and 1938, see Alfred Burmeister, "Tragedia polskich Komunistów" - The tragedy of the Polish Communists - Kultura, no.1/51, January 1952, p.101-109.

In 1939, some Polish Communists formed an "Alliance of Former Political Communists" and a "Union of Former Political Prisoners", while a political-literary group was organized at Lwów with its own monthly: "Nowe Widnokregi", - New Horizons in February 1940; its sub-title was: "Organ of the Soviet Writers of the USSR". The editors of the paper were

would be willing to leave the entire force in Russia if Stalin assigned the region for concentration and gave equipment and food supplies.⁴³ On December 4th, 1941, Stalin and Sikorski signed a joint declaration of Friendship.⁴⁴ At that time also, Stalin proposed the discussion of certain modifications of the Polish-Russian frontier to Sikorski, who, however, refused to discuss them since he had not come to Moscow empowered to do so.⁴⁵

Irrespective of British and American reservations, and probably because of their attitude of leaving the question of the Polish-Russian frontier open, by January 1942, the Soviet radio and press were listing Lwów, Wilno and Brześć Litewski - Brest Litovsk - as Soviet cities and openly claiming the inhabitants East of the Molotov-Ribbentrop line as Soviet citizens. In Poland, the Communists had not been idle. In the late autumn of 1941, work began in Warsaw on the organization of a Polish Communist party and just before its establishment, the Comintern organized a Polish broadcasting station named "Kościuszko" after the hero of the anti-Russian uprising of 1794. At the outbreak

Helen Usiyevich, daughter of Felix Kon, member of the Polish Communist government of 1920, and Wanda Wasilewska, a childrens writer before the war, who had accepted Soviet citizenship. The paper disappeared during the Soviet defeats of 1941 and reappeared in 1942. - B. Kuśnierz, op.cit., and Szwedova, A Study in Forgery, London, J. Rolls Book Co. Ltd, 1945.

44

Anders op.cit., p. 126; Mikołajczyk, op.cit. p.260-1.

45

Ciechanowski, op.cit., p.88-9.

of the German-Soviet war, a semi-Communist organization appeared in Warsaw under the name "Sierp i Młot" - Hammer and Sickle - with a paper of the same name. In August 1941, arrests ended its existence and it was replaced by "Stowarzyszenie Przyjaciół ZSSR" - Society of Friends of the USSR - with a paper called "Do Zwycięstwa" - On to Victory. It soon changed its unpopular name to "Związek Walki o Wyzwolenie" - Union for the Struggle for Liberation - whose abbreviated form of ZWW was reminiscent of ZWZ. It had its own paper, "Zwyciężamy" - We are Victorious - and at its head stood Marian Spychalski. In the autumn also, began the organization of local Communist groups with "Swit" - Dawn - in the Kielce region, "Zjednoczenie Robotniczo-Chłopskie" - Worker Peasant Union - in Radom, and "Polska Partia Robotniczo-Chłopska" - Polish Worker-Peasant Party - in the Lublin region. In January 1942, the Polish Communist Party was reconstituted as the "Polska Partia Robotnicza", PPR - Polish Labour Party. Although it disavowed its old name, it included Communists living in Poland and some who had for years been living in the USSR.⁴⁶ Among the founders of the PPR, were four experienced Comintern agents: B. Bierut, K. Hardy, Kubsza-Lutomski and Kwiatkowska. The Secretary of the Central Committee was Marcelli Nowotko, whose death in mysterious circumstances was suspected to have been due to

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Jan K. Kwiatkowski /pseud. for Nowak/, Komuniści w Polsce, - The Communists in Poland - Brussels, Polski Instytut Wydawniczy, 1946, Ch.III.

party orders. The AK could ascertain the name of one of the agents sent from Moscow to help organize the PPR, a Colonel Glebov, who was the real founder of the "Gwardia Ludowa" GL, - Peoples Guard - the military organization of the party.⁴⁷

Meanwhile, the Soviet government began dropping small, well-equipped parachute units in Eastern Poland. An officer of the Polish army reported to the AK about the Soviet school for Partizan leaders in Moscow. Here, Communists of all nationalities were trained to lead the large bodies of Soviet troops which had escaped into the dense forests of Eastern and partly Western Poland.⁴⁸ In the USSR, the Nowe Widnokreği reappeared as a fortnightly in Kuybishev, in May 1942. The PPR in Poland and the Polish broadcasts from Russia, spoke in high patriotic tones invoking the population to an all out struggle with the Germans. In December of that year, Polish claims to the Eastern territories were already linked by the Nowe Widnokreği to collaboration with the Germans.⁴⁹ The first all out propaganda attacks against Poland, however, came after the battle of Stalingrad when "The Germans

⁴⁷ Ibid; see also: J. Malara & Lucienne Rey, La Pologne, d'une Occupation a l'autre, Paris, Editions du Fuseau, 1952, p. 12, and Tadeusz Bór Komorowski, Armia Podziemna, London, Veritas, 1951, p. 125-126 - English ed: The Secret Army.

⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 123.

⁴⁹ Nowe Widnokreği, no.16, 20, XII, 1942.

lost their strategic reserve and with it, the possibility of ending the eastern campaign aggressively. The Battle of Stalingrad became the turning point of the war on the eastern front, and not only from a military point of view. Its political meaning must not be underestimated. Simultaneously with the beginning of the Red Army's march which was not to come to a stop before the Elbe, Stalin began a huge diplomatic and propaganda attack on Europe. The first object of that attack was Poland".⁵⁰

During the year 1942, there was an intensive exchange of correspondence between the Polish C-in-C in London and the Commander of AK in Poland, with regard to the all important Soviet factor in the AK plans for a general rising. In the light of the ambiguity of the Polish-Soviet agreement, General Sikorski considered the question of Russian danger as actual and foresaw that there might be a situation at the end of the war in which the Red Army entering Poland would proceed by "faits accomplis". In such a case, he instructed the Commander of the AK that the Soviets must be openly opposed to underline Polish rights to self-government before world opinion, stating that armed opposition was to be strongly marked on the Riga⁵¹ frontier and in the Lwów and Wilno regions. It should

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T.B. Komarowski, op.cit., p.126.

⁵¹

Chief of Staff for C-in-C Polish Armed Forces to Commander of AK, 20,XI,1941, Ldz. 3853, PSZ III, p. 185.

be noted that these propositions were made in the light of heavy Soviet defeats and on the presupposition that the Red Army would, at the end of the war, flow slowly into Poland in the wake of the retreating Germans.

By the beginning of 1942, the plan of resisting the Russians in any context of circumstances was given up. The Red Army had withstood the shock of the first German offensive and the position of the Soviet Union in the opinion of the British government was growing stronger. In March 1942, General Sikorski cabled the Commander of the AK that if the Red Army withstood the German offensive and counter-attacked and then entered Poland, there would be no possible chances of opposing it. Any anti-Russian movements would be misunderstood by the Allies and could lead to a break in Poland's international agreements. It would be, however, of the utmost importance that the Red Army, on entering Poland, should find the AK organized and fighting the Germans, with the administration and security of the country in its hands.⁵¹ Thus, the instruction of March 1942, cancelled the former plans to resist the Soviet Union on the Polish eastern frontier and replaced them with the principle of an organized taking over of the Polish territory. The decisive action in the Polish-Soviet dispute was transferred on to the plane of international politics.

51

Personal and Secret Instruction for the Commander of the AK; 8,III,1942. PSZ III, p.187.

The Commander of the AK saw matters differently. He outlined his opinion in a report on "The Attitude towards Russia and our possibilities in the Eastern Territories", in which he enumerated the causes for distrust of Soviet Russia as they were seen in Poland at that time. These were: The historic opposition of Russia to Polish independence since the eighteenth century; the German-Soviet agreements of August and September 1939 and Soviet crimes in Poland; the actual Soviet parachute-diversionary and Communist activity in Poland; the consciousness that the Polish aim of independence was contrary to the Soviet which aimed at expansion Westwards by means of destroying Poland, and the knowledge that the Polish-Soviet agreement of 1941 was only a function in the war with the Germans, that it was not concluded by the contracting parties of their own free will but that it had been forced on them by the German attack on Russia.⁵² General Rowecki interpreted the hypothesis of a Russian entry into Poland after defeating the Germans, by repeating the C-in-C.'s instruction as to taking over the administration in the country through the coming out of the Delegate of the Government with the administrative apparatus and security forces, but added that in his opinion, the AK ought not to come out unless sufficient guarantees were obtained that the Soviets

would stay loyal to their agreements and would not prevent the re-establishment of Polish independence. If sufficient guarantees were not obtained, General Rowecki foresaw the continuation of the AK underground. He still kept the possibility of resisting the Red Army if there should be a time lag between the retreat of the Germans and the entry of the Russians. Otherwise, he thought the Polish armed forces should be withdrawn to some part of Western Poland, possibly the coast, in which place they might offer resistance to the Red Army in the public eye of the world and see by its reaction whether there were any chances of regaining Polish independence.⁵³ These were General Rowecki's personal views; in the official plan for the general rising, drawn up by the High Command in the fall of 1942, no resistance to the Soviets was foreseen. The decisive action was placed on the level of international politics and the armed forces were expected to stay underground until ordered to come out by the C-in-C.⁵⁴

In November 1942, General Sikorski answered General Rowecki's report no. 132 with an extensive exposition of his own views, as he had formed them in the light of his experience in talks with representatives of the British and American governments. The C-in-C radioed that he had presented the problem of Polish-Soviet relations in the

⁵³

Ibid.

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Report no. 154. PSZ III, p. 198.

end phase of the war and the Polish request for an Anglo-American occupation of Poland up to her 1921 frontiers to Churchill, but that all decisions on this subject had been postponed. The British government had stated that it would have to take into consideration Russian participation in the war against Japan after Germany had been defeated - a consideration also, as we shall see, prominent in American plans. General Sikorski thought that the frontier question would depend on the distribution of armed forces at the end of the war. He hoped that this distribution would be favourable to Poland, but he also foresaw the possibility of the Red Army entering Poland in victorious pursuit of the Germans. In this case, his opinion was that armed Polish opposition would be madness. He also thought that if the AK remained underground, this might lead to open struggle with the Red Army, a struggle which the Soviets would be sure to present in their own light to Western public opinion. He therefore instructed the Commander of the AK that the latter should prepare to come out and by its open action, manifest its sovereignty and positive attitude of co-operation with the Red Army. He hoped to prepare the ground for this action on the international level. The AK and the country should present a picture of complete unity in the face of the Polish Communist troops and organizations which, following in the wake of the Red Army,

would be sure to attempt to split and disintegrate the underground. The AK was not to offer any resistance to the Soviet armies. This, General Sikorski hoped, would be the most convincing answer to Soviet propaganda.

If we carefully follow the events in the early months of 1943, the Soviet plan as regards Poland becomes clear. Already in 1942, the Polish embassy in the USSR had been prevented from fulfilling its mission of seeking out lost persons. Its delegates to Archangel and Vladivostok were arrested, despite their diplomatic immunity. Many thousands of persons and particularly officers, were unaccounted for. In 1942, the Polish army, in view of the difficulties of supply and the Soviet attitude already mentioned, moved to Iran with the assent of the Soviet government. It was later to fight in Italy; of the 1,500,000 deported, about 150,000 left the USSR. On January 16th, 1943, the Soviet Commissariat for Foreign Affairs further notified the Polish embassy that henceforth all people, regardless of national origin, who had been resident in Eastern Poland at the time of its occupation by the Red Army, were to be regarded as Soviet citizens. The Polish government protested strongly, stating in its note of January 26th that it could not accept any such illegal action. It was

55

C-in-C to Com. AK, 28.XI.1942, LDZ. 5060/Tj/42.
PSZ III, p. 194-196.

56

B. Kuśnierz, op.cit., p.156.

57 Ibid, p. 157.

significant that the Soviets saw their action "as a sort of reprisal for the refusal, as they put it, of the Polish government to recognize the 'sovereignty of the USSR,' over the Polish territories, which the note referred to as Western Byelorussia and Western Ukraine".⁵⁸ Thus, by 1943, even residents of Eastern Poland who were of Polish origin, were prevented from leaving the Soviet Union.

On January 20th, 1943, the Nowe Widnokreği published an anonymous letter proposing the formation of a Polish army on Soviet soil, and, on February 4th, the same paper published an appeal to all Poles in Russia to enter the ranks of the Soviet sponsored "Polish Army" which was to be formed in the Soviet Union. Thus, the Soviet government was taking steps to build up an exact counterpart to the Polish government in London and its armed forces in the West. On February 19th, came the first official and widely publicized Soviet claim to the Eastern territories of Poland. It appeared in the form of a long article by Alexander Korneitchuk - husband of Wanda Wasilewska - in the Radianskaya Ukraina. This article, conspicuously written by a Soviet Ukrainian writer, contained a long series of accusations against the Polish government in London, charging it with reactionary tendencies, Fascism, philo-Nazism, and an 'imperialistic' attitude towards the

'Soviet territories.' of the Western Ukraine. The article presented the frontier question in such a way as to make it appear that Poland was laying wholly unjustified claims to Soviet territory. It is significant that the Polish government in its answering note of February 25th, had to specify that "It is absolutely absurd to suspect Poland of intentions to have 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 further to the East".⁵⁹ Thus Soviet propaganda used the old trick of accusing its victim of precisely what it was going to do itself.

In view of these Soviet-Communist accusations, the Polish government tried to solve the problem by a conciliatory attitude. On the night of February 26th-27th, the Polish Ambassador to the USSR, Tadeusz Romer, had a conference with Stalin. He gave a detailed explanation of the activities and aims of the AK and informed Stalin of its latest achievements. He put forward the reasons, already mentioned, for which the Polish government was opposed to a mass rising for which there were not enough arms and which could only result in a massacre. At the same time,

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Mikołajczyk, op.cit., p. 261. This was an old propaganda trick borrowed from the Tsarist notebook. The chauvinistic journalist Katkov, wrote in the Ruski Vestnik in 1863, that the Poles fighting for their independence also wanted to annihilate Russia, that they wanted the Russians to become Poles, or "migrate beyond the Ural mountains"! - Jan Kucharzewski, The Origins of Modern Russia, New York,

Ambassador Romer presented a plan drawn up by the Polish General Staff, of simultaneously cutting all the railway lines running through Poland to the German-Soviet front, thus cutting off 85% of German food and supplies. The Polish government was ready to undertake this action on March 1st, 1943, providing the timing could be agreed upon with the Red Army. Stalin rejected these propositions and avoided committing himself on the project. Communist propaganda meanwhile kept on accusing the AK of inaction, an accusation plainly belied by its achievements.⁶⁰ On March 1st, 1943, the Soviet government published its answer to the Polish note of February 26th, in which it accused the Polish government of collaborating with the Germans and of not representing Polish opinion.⁶¹ This propaganda, assiduously and voluminously put out by the Soviet embassy in Washington and in London was meant to prepare the ground for a more pliable Polish government and receptive Western public opinion. It was also on March 1st that the Polish Communists in the USSR came out into the open as the "Związek Patriotów Polskich", ZPP - Polish Patriots' Union - with Wanda Wasilewska as Chairman and "Wolna Polska" - Free Poland - as its weekly organ.

Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences, 1948, p.297.

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T.B. Komorowski, op.cit., p.128-129; see Tables of AK activities, PSZ III, pp. 447, 448, 468 & 482.

⁶¹ B. Kuśnierz, op.cit., p. 162.

In Poland, meanwhile, the PPR had proclaimed its readiness to co-operate with the AK, but on two conditions: that the Polish underground renounce the 1935 constitution, and that it begin to fight the Germans immediately. Both these terms were unacceptable, of course, the first because the 1935 constitution, in its democratized form, provided the legal basis of the London government, and the other because it was an insult and a provocation. In his reply to the PPR, General Rowecki countered with his own conditions which were: that the PPR unconditionally recognize the Polish government in London, subordinate itself to the legal authorities in Poland, declare publicly that it was not an organization of the Comintern and not the agent of a foreign power. The PPR rejected these terms and intensified its attacks on the London government and the AK.⁶² The Soviet and Communist propaganda attacks were accompanied by hostility from large Soviet partizan units in Eastern Poland. As has been noted, the Soviets began dropping supplies, leaders and well-equipped small partizan units in these territories as early as the fall of 1941. The larger units had their own printing presses and directed a political campaign at the inhabitants. General Rowecki gave orders to his local commanders to establish contact in order to agree on spheres of action and exchange information. These talks came to nothing, however, since the Soviet commanders

refused to recognize the Poles as their hosts and subordinate themselves tactically to the AK. Instead, they demanded that the Poles subordinate themselves to them, though in most cases the Polish units were more numerous than the Soviet and the latter had their commands in Russia. Diplomatic intervention in London brought no results.

The exchange of opinions as to the attitude which the AK should adopt towards the Red Army, went on in the meanwhile between London and Warsaw. In his report of the 21st, January, 1943, the Commander of the AK accepted the November instruction from his superior, but he outlined again the suspicion of the Russians which existed in Poland, and the past and present reasons for it. He pointed out that the execution of General Sikorski's order demanded a disciplined public opinion, and that this could be attained only if the people knew that the matter of the Eastern frontiers was not prejudged and that Great Britain and the United States supported the Polish claims; if the Soviets showed even a minimum of loyalty to their Polish allies - for instance, if they ordered their partisans to change their attitude from an anti-Polish to anti-German one. He also stated that he would order a military uprising to take place against the Germans regardless of the developments, even if the Germans were not yet in a state

of disintegration as foreseen in the previous plans for a rising, in order to precede the entry of the Russians. However, he foresaw this only with the immediate support of Polish airborne troops from the West.⁶⁴ In order to safeguard the action, it would have to be planned regionally with the least possible time lag between the start of the action and the entry of the Russians.⁶⁵ General Rowecki confirmed this plan in his report of February 28th, 1943, in which he clearly stated that:

"In the event of the Russians entering Poland in pursuit of the Germans, the rising must not take place simultaneously all over the country, but by regions, one after another, beginning in the East".

The first region would include territories in the North-East with Wilno and in the South-East, with Lwów. The second region would end at Białystok, Brest-Litovsk and the line of the Bug and San. The other regions would include the rest of the country and General Rowecki asked for the C-in-C's authorization to begin the rising at least in the two first regions, because the beginning of the action would be simultaneous with the entry of the Red Army and not with the disintegration of the Germans. For it to be feasible to manifest Polish sovereignty on

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This support was foreseen tentatively in the plan of June 1942, where it was stated that a rising could break out before complete German disintegration only with extensive aid from the West, which, in view of the lack of information, could not be taken into account - PSZ III, p. 197.

65 PSZ III, p. 546.

the Eastern territories, and even in Wilno and Lwów, General Rowecki categorically stated the necessity of arms supplies and airborne troops from the Polish High Command in the West. He radioed that the conditioning of such help on the acquisition of bases on the continent, would make such risings at the time of the Russian entry impossible, while without airborne aid the greatest efforts would bring no results. He also thought that the basis for co-operation with the Red Army should be a Polish-Soviet agreement specifying the conditions of military and civil co-operation. If this were impossible, an instruction as to the Polish attitude ought to be issued. ⁶⁶ It emerges from this report that the Commander of the AK suggested changing the former plans for a general, simultaneous rising, beginning in the General Gouvernement, at the time of German military disintegration, to a wave of regional risings starting from the East and timed to ~~syn~~synchronize with the entry of the Red Army rather than with total German defeat. The AK was thus to stake Polish claims in the East. These suggestions came to be the basis of the final plan of October 1943; they came, however, originally at a time when Polish-Soviet relations were rapidly growing worse and when the British and American governments did not seem inclined to support Polish frontier claims. General

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Com. AK to C-in-C, 28.II.1943, Ldz. 950,
PSZ III, p. 547-548.

Sikorski therefore instructed the Commander of the AK to prepare a rising against the Germans in the two Eastern regions, but, in connection with the worsening of Polish-Soviet relations, he reserved the final decision for himself. If the Soviets turned out to be definitely hostile, then, in his opinion, only the civil administration ought to come out, while the armed forces should retreat into the centre of the country, to save themselves from destruction.⁶⁷ General Sikorski thus veered back from his idea of the AK coming out openly in co-operation with the Soviets, to the earlier plans suggested by General Rowecki, of their staying underground till further orders.

Against the background of these events in Poland and in the USSR, the official breaking off of diplomatic relations by the Soviet government on April 25th, 1943, did not come as a surprise to the Poles. The pretext on which the Soviets severed relations with the Polish government in London, was the matter of the "Katyn" graves. On April 13th, the German radio announced that thousands of corpses had been uncovered in a forest near Smolensk, that they were well-preserved and had been identified as Polish officers. The Germans charged the Russians with the mass murder of these victims. On April 15th, radio Moscow rejected the German accusations and intimated that

the graves were "historical" mounds and part of the famous Gnezdovo burial mound. On April 16th, the Polish Minister of National Defense, Lt.General Kukiel, issued an announcement summarizing the story of two years' search for thousands of Polish officers in Russia and explaining General Sikorski's decision of turning to the International Red Cross for an investigation. Although the official organ of the Red Army, the Red Star, had stated on September 17th 1940, that about 10,000 Polish officers had been taken prisoner in Poland by the Soviets, only a small group joined the Polish units forming in Buzuluk in August 1941. About 8,300 officers were missing. General Sikorski asked Stalin about them in December 1941 and the Soviet leader had replied that all Polish officers had been released. This was the stock Soviet answer to all Polish enquiries for two years.⁶⁸ On April 18th, the Soviet Information Bureau stated that there had been some former Polish prisoners in the area West of Smolensk and that the Germans had especially preserved most of them for a mass execution with faked papers. This was the first time the Soviet government had acknowledged that there had been some unreleased Polish prisoners, a contradiction of all their former answers to the Polish government. On April 19th, Pravda accused the Polish government of collaborating with the Germans in asking

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Anders, op.cit., pp. 105-125. For Gen. Kukiel's announcement, see Mikołajczyk, op.cit., p. 29-30.

for an investigation by the International Red Cross. The official Soviet note severing relations with the Polish government stated that:

Far from offering a rebuff to the vile Fascist slander of the USSR, the Polish government did not even find it necessary to address to the Soviet government any inquiry or request for an explanation of the subject.

A false statement, since the Polish government had addressed just such a note to the Soviet government on April 20th, asking either for news of the missing officers or for Soviet agreement to an investigation by the International Red Cross. This note remained unanswered. The Soviet note went on to calumniate the Polish government by stating that the hostile press campaign of the Poles and the Germans "leaves no doubt as to the existence of contact and accord in carrying out this hostile campaign between the enemy and the Allies - Hitler - and the Polish government". Then, it linked the Katyn murder with the territorial issue:

The Soviet government is aware that this hostile campaign against the Soviet Union is being undertaken by the Polish government by making use of the slanderous Hitlerite fake for the purpose of wresting from it territorial concessions at the expense of the interests of the Soviet Ukraine, Soviet Byelorussia and Soviet Lithuania,

thus accusing the Poles again of exactly what it was going to do itself. The note concluded that:

All these circumstances compel the Soviet government

to recognize that the present Government of Poland, having slid on to the path of accord with Hitler's Government, has actually discontinued Allied relations with the USSR and has adopted a hostile attitude toward the Soviet Union.

On the strength of the above, the Soviet Government has decided to sever relations with the Polish Government.⁶⁹

As far as the Polish government was concerned, it had turned to the International Red Cross to clear the matter up in view of the shock sustained by Polish public opinion and on the advice of the Commander of the AK, who, by April 14th, already had evidence from Poles on the spot.⁷⁰ The Germans transported members of the Polish Red Cross and medical experts to Katyn in the first days of April. The investigators dated the death of the victims to the spring of 1940. The Polish members reported to their authorities that the documents found on the bodies tallied with the men whom the Polish government had sought fruitlessly in Russia. It was also in the spring of 1940 that correspondence from these men had ceased reaching their relatives in Poland. The cord with which the men's hands were bound was made of material not to be found in Western or Central Europe. The method of execution, the shot in the base of the skull, was an official NKVD method.

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Mikołajczyk, op.cit., p. 263.

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Gen. Rowecki radioed to C-in-C, April 14th: The Germans have discovered, near Smolensk, the graves of several thousand of our officers from the Kozielsk camp, who had been murdered in March and April 1940. Several Poles from Cracow and Warsaw took part in the investigation; they had been specially transported there. Public opinion is shocked. I shall report the details in a few days.- T.B. Komarowski, 131.

The bullets were made by the German firm of "Geco"; the Germans did not conceal the fact; this particular firm had exported arms to Poland, the Baltic countries and Russia in the 1930's. A trusted AK man brought back diaries which described the arrival of the men at the station near the forest itself, and broke off in April 1940. The names tallied with the officers who had been known to be in the Kozielsk camp. The Polish Red Cross possessed detailed lists of them since they had prepared to receive them on a German-Soviet POW exchange agreement, which, however, had not materialized at the last moment. In the face of this evidence, it was obvious that the only way to ascertain who were the real criminals was by a neutral and impartial investigation. However, the International Red Cross did not send any investigators since the Soviet government did not invite them, and in view of this, the Polish government announced on April 30th that its appeal had lapsed. It is interesting to note that Goebbels, in his diary, complained that the army was trying to oppose him in publishing the news of the Katyn graves; apparently there were still hopes of reaching some secret agreement or separate peace with the Russians. But at last he had his way and could write:

The Poles are handled as coldly by the English and the Americans as if they were enemies. It is admitted that I have succeeded in driving a deep wedge into the enemy.⁷¹

⁷¹The Goebbels Diaries, trans. & ed. Louis P. Lochner, London, Hamish Hamilton, 1948, p. 271. For the Katyn murders

It is clear that, in view of the Polish-Soviet relations preceding it, the Katyn' affair was nothing more than a useful excuse for the Soviet government. It now went on with its plans for creating an army and government apparatus doubling that set up in Great Britain. On May 9th, 1943, three days after the Polish embassy had left Kuybishev, a Tass agency communique announced that the Soviet government had acceded to the request of the Polish Patriots' Union and consented to the formation in the USSR of a Polish infantry division, named after Kościuszko. On August 10th, Tass issued a communique on the Soviet assent to expand the Polish army in the USSR into a Corps. The second infantry division was named after General Dąbrowski, - who had fought against the Russians under Napoleon. Since there were no Polish officers left, or very few, the Corps was officered mainly by Soviet officers, as it was later admitted by General Rola-Żymierski. The composition of the Union of Polish Patriots, which was the political structure of the Polish Communists in the USSR, was in itself the best indication of its role. The Chairman, Wanda Wasilewska, was a member of the Soviet Ukrainian Communist Party, a deputy to the Supreme Soviet and a Soviet citizen.

see: T.B. Komarowski, op.cit., pp.129-136; B. Kuśnierz, op.cit., p.163; Mikołajczyk, op.cit., pp.28-30; J. Mackiewicz, The Katyn' Murders, London, Hollis & Carter, 1951.

The Presidium, or highest executive body of the Union, was composed of nine members, four of whom were Soviet nationals - Wasilewska, Jędrychowski, Sztachelski and Zawadzki- who were also Communists; General Berling, a Communist, and three non-Communists - Kupsz, Sommerstein and Witos - who were of no political importance.

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The ninth member, Dr. Drobner, had been struck off the PPS membership in 1936; in 1940, he had been deported to the USSR. Andrew Witos, was half-brother to the great Polish Peasant Leader, Vincent Witos. Andrew had been expelled from the SL and served the pre-war regime. Dr. Jędrychowski was a well known Communist from Wilno and became a deputy to the Supreme Soviet. General Alexander Zawadzki, was born in Warsaw, left for Russia in 1915 and fought in the ranks of the Red Army in 1920. After becoming a Colonel of the NKVD and suffering degradation in personal conflicts, he became a member of the War Council of the Polish Corps together with General Berling and General Swierczewski. Gen. Berling, Commander of the Kościuszko Division, had signed an oath of loyalty to the USSR and had been struck off the officers' list by the Polish Army Command in the Middle East. He was one of the small group of officers who had voluntarily undergone a course of Communist doctrine before the formation of the Polish army in the USSR in 1941. General Swierczewski, Commander of the Dąbrowski Division, had left Poland for Russia during the first World War, graduated from the Soviet Military Academy, and had been sent thence to Spain during the Civil War. Father Francis Kupsz had joined a Soviet guerilla detachment in Eastern Poland and, after reaching Moscow in June 1943, was made Chaplain of the Kościuszko Division. Dr. Skrzyszewski, was a well known Communist from Cracow. Dr. Emil Sommerstein, had been a Zionist deputy to the Polish parliament before the war. He was deported to the Soviet Union in 1939 and forced to accept Soviet nationality by virtue of his previous residence in Lwów.

After the Red Army's entry into Poland, the Polish Corps was expanded by the addition of two more divisions - The Traugutt Division, named after the head of the secret government set up in 1863 against the Russians, and the Kiliński Division, named after a Warsaw shoemaker who led the rising of 1794 against the Russians. The choice of these names is very significant of the "patriotic" policy of the ZPP. - see Scaevola & Kuśnierz, op.cit..

The British government was kept fully informed of the preparations being made in Poland for the final rising against the Germans,⁷³ and, as we have seen in Chapter I, the AK was co-operating with the SOE in weakening the Germans in Poland. If we add to this the efforts of the whole population in the form of sabotage in factories, railways and food supplies, and the fact that by the end of 1943 AK partizans were holding their own in entire districts, we get the picture of a united and harmonized war effort, far from the image which the Soviet Union, for its political aims, was anxious to impose on the West. It is against the background of the break in Polish-Soviet relations and the struggle on the international level, the formation of the Union of Polish Patriots in the USSR and of the PPR activity in Poland, that we must analyze the final plan for the general rising worked out by the Polish General Staff in London in October 1943.

Shortly before Eden left for the Moscow Conference of Foreign Secretaries in early October, he brought up the question of Poland's eastern frontiers for the first time on the diplomatic level with the Polish government. He hinted to Prime Minister Mikołajczyk that there was little possibility for the renewal of Polish-Soviet relations unless the Polish government agreed to cede Eastern Poland to the Soviet Union. He therefore asked Mikołajczyk for

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Mikołajczyk's note to Churchill, Nov. 16, 1943, Mikołajczyk, op.cit., p. 268.

permission to discuss the frontier question. The Polish Prime Minister refused - he had already given Eden a copy of the Polish declaration of August 15th, 1943, in which the political representation in Poland stated the integrity of the eastern frontier as one of the Polish war aims.⁷⁴ He now gave the British Foreign Secretary a memorandum on the Polish position.⁷⁵ Thus the Polish government knew that the Western Allies were considering the Russian demands; when the Polish General Staff was working out the final plan, it had to consider the possibility of lack of allied support in the Polish-Soviet dispute, and the attitude of the political representation in Poland and the AK which were opposed to any compromise on this issue. In the London government itself opinion was split. After the death of General Sikorski in July 1943, the leader of the SL, Stanisław Mikołajczyk, had become Prime Minister and General Sosnkowski C-in-C. The latter stood for the re-establishment of Polish-Soviet relations on the basis of Soviet recognition of the sovereign rights of the Polish republic; he did not believe in the possibility of any other kind of understanding. Mikołajczyk, on the other hand, hoped to reach an agreement with the Soviet government through British and American mediation and saw the AK

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See Appendix I, p. III.

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Mikołajczyk, op.cit., p. 44-45.

struggle against the Germans as an element in favour of such an agreement.⁷⁶ In AK HQ, in Warsaw, there were some voices for establishing co-operation with the Soviets on the basis of compromises in the East,⁷⁷ but in general, the leadership was united in resisting Soviet demands and the idea of armed manifestation of Polish sovereignty and independence grew in strength.

On October 27th, 1943, the Commander of the AK,⁷⁸ General Bór-Komorowski, asked the C-in-C for a decision, in view of the nearing German-Soviet front and therefore the unlikelihood of the Western Allies' occupation of Poland, as to whether the AK ought to rise at the moment the Russian entry into the country. He added that he noted from the C-in-C's instruction no. 5371 that the Polish question was an element in the political settlement between the Western Allies and Russia, and that he understood that Polish arms were too weak to play a decisive role, their significance being that of a demonstration. Nonetheless, the attitude of the military organization in Poland in facing the Russians would have to be united, decided and appropriate to the political situation.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ PSZ III, p.550.

⁷⁷ eg. Col. St. Tatar and Col. Jerzy Kirchmayer.

⁷⁸ Who succeeded Gen. Rowecki after the latter's arrest by the Germans in the summer of 1943.

⁷⁹ Com. AK to C-in-C, 27.X.1943, Ldz.6004/tjn Sp. 143. PSZ III, p.552.

The final government instruction for the AK, dated October 27th, 1943, was sent out on November 1st. It outlined all the possible hypotheses for the situation as it might exist at the time of the rising. Hypothesis A-I, repeated the assumptions on which the first two plans for the rising had been based, that is, if the Eastern front remained away from Polish borders and the British and Americans penetrated deep into Europe, the Polish government would order the rising whose aim would be: to strike at the Germans at the crucial moment, master as much of Polish territory as possible, and protect the country from destruction in the German retreat. In this case, the Allies were to support the rising with supplies, air-force and the dropping of the Polish Parachute Brigade or other help with British and U.S. liaison officers for the AK. The Polish government, or at least the Prime Minister and C-in-C, were to land in Poland or nearby allied countries. If there were no previous Polish-Soviet agreement, the Polish government would, with the help of the Western Allies, come to an understanding with the Soviet Union to ensure the security of the country and co-ordinated action against the Germans. In case the German Eastern front was broken and the German army disintegrated, the possibility of a rising with the aim of controlling at least part of the country was to be foreseen, even if the conditions listed above - arms supplies, direct support of the Allies - were

not yet fulfilled. The estimate of such a possibility lay in the competence of the AK and the final decision and timing belonged to the Government.⁸⁰

Hypothesis A-II was that, in case the Allies did not agree to A-I, or if their strategy did not foresee it, and the German front broke down but showed no signs of total disintegration, the Polish government would call the AK to undertake an increased sabotage-diversionary action against the Germans. Such an action would have the character of political demonstration and self-defense. The government would do everything in its power, in such a case, to obtain the necessary supplies for the AK and civilian population. This was the alternative, as the London government saw it, to a country-wide, simultaneous rising supported by the Allies.⁸¹ Elaborating further on this hypothesis, the instructions - II-B - foresaw the following alternatives if the Red Army entered Polish territory before its partial or complete liberation /by the AM/:

/I/ If Polish-Soviet relations were re-established, the Polish government would assume authority on all Polish territories; the underground administration would come out and start mobilizing the armed forces which were to stay underground until the government assumed authority. Under the German occupation, the AK would start intensive

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PSZ III, p. 552-3.

81 Ibid.

sabotage-diversionary action as in A-II. American and British representatives were to arrive with the government or its representatives; there would be co-operation with the Soviet High Command. In case the Soviets, in spite of diplomatic relations, proceeded to incorporate the Eastern territories, the Polish government would protest to the United Nations asking for their intervention. In case of arrests or repressions before the Polish government assumed authority, counter-action was permitted only in self-defense.⁸² Thus we see that the Polish government stipulated the AK to stay underground until the government assumed authority in the country.

In case Polish-Soviet relations were not re-established, the Soviet entry was to be preceded by armed action against the Germans as in A-II. The Polish government would protest to the United Nations against Soviet violation of Polish sovereignty in entering Polish territory without preliminary understanding with the Polish government, and would communicate that the AK would not co-operate with the Red Army. It would issue a warning that the AK and the civil administration were entitled to self-defense in case of arrests or repressions. The civil authorities in Poland and the AK were to stay underground and await further decisions of the government. In case of arrests and repressions counter-action was to be limited

to self-defense.⁸³ Finally, in Hypothesis C, in case of a German-Soviet agreement, the Home Authorities and the AK were to go deeper underground, limit action to necessary self-defense and await further decisions.

The High Command of the AK accepted the instruction of October 27th with some annoyance, because of the enumeration of all possible hypotheses, all of which except "B" seemed irrelevant in view of the possibility of the Red Army's entry into Poland at any moment without seeking the permission of the Polish government with which the Soviets had severed relations. Moreover, it was considered impractical and unrealistic to fight against the retreating Germans and then go again underground. The Commander of the AK issued instructions to the commanders of subordinate regions based on the instruction of the government but with one important change - the AK was to come out openly to the entering Russians, and thus document the rights of the Polish republic.⁸⁴ General B. Komarowski radioed:

In this respect my order disagrees with the instruction of the Government. I do not, however, see the possibility of causing a vacuum on Polish territory through the non-appearance of the military element representing the Republic and its legal authorities. Otherwise, all our actions will be credited to the agencies of the Soviet

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Instruction B-II, Ibid.

84

Com.AK - C-in-C, 26.XI.1943 - Ibid, p.556 & T.B. Komarowski, op.cit., p.187.

Union.

My opinion is shared by the Delegate of the Government and the Home Political Representation.⁸⁵

Thus the Commander of the AK took up again the leading idea of General Sikorski's instruction of November 1942 which the General had abandoned in March 1943 in favour of the AK's staying underground. The latter idea had the support of the new C-in-C, General Sosnkowski, and found its embodiment in the instruction of October 27th. General B. Komarowski radioed that in practice, he would limit the number of commands and units which were to come out to the minimum and would try to secure the rest through a formal disbanding.⁸⁶

On November 20th, 1943, the Commander of the AK issued final instructions for the rising in Poland. He emphasized that:

all our military preparations are aimed at armed action against the Germans. In no case can armed action be permitted against the Russians entering our territories in pursuit of the retreating Germans, except as necessary acts of self-defense which are the natural right of every individual.

The instruction continued that the armed action against the Germans would take on one of two forms:

- a. A general and simultaneous rising in the base,

⁸⁵

Ibid.

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He also said that in case of a new Soviet occupation, he would prepare an embryo skeleton command network for a new organization at the disposition of the C-in-C - PSZ III, p. 557.

with a protective screen in East - this was the plan of 1941 and 1942.

b. "Increased ^{or}diversionary action" on all territories of the Republic.⁸⁷

The "Increased Diversionary Action" was given the name of "Burza"-Storm. Its aim and tasks were defined as:

the underlining of our will to fight the Germans, even if the proportion of strength is unfavourable to us, that is, in circumstances which do not permit us to undertake a general rising, ..and.. self-defense against destruction by the retreating Germans.⁸⁸

The action of Burza was to consist of harrassing the retreating German rearguard and strong diversion in all the territories, especially on communications. The order to begin "Storm" would be given by radio password, the reception of which would authorize regional commanders to go into action. If the order to begin Storm had not been received at the moment of the German retreat in the given region, territorial commanders on all levels were to begin action on their initiative. The tasks of units participating in Storm were to cease with the moment of Soviet entry.

Section V of the instruction was taken up with defining the AK's attitude to the entering Russians. Soviet partizan units were not to be hampered in action against

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T.B. Komarowski, op.cit., p.189.

⁸⁸

Ibid, p.188. In this respect, the Com.Ak was repeating the idea of Gen. Rowecki in January and February 1943.

the Germans, and Polish units were to avoid any quarrel with them. Those units which were already on bad terms with the Soviet units, were to be transferred elsewhere. Polish units were allowed to act against the Soviets only in self-defense.

The AK was to receive the advancing Red Army as host on its own territory. The best rights to this title were to be obtained by prior action against the Germans. In such a case, as also when a locality would be liberated by the Russians alone, the local commander and the representative of the civil administration appointed to come out, were to report to the Soviet commander and act according to his wishes, remembering, however, that: The Polish High Command and not the Russians was the appropriate higher authority, and that the scope and character of Soviet authority ought, for the Polish citizen, to be defined by the legal authorities of the Republic. All attempts at incorporating Polish units into the Red Army or General Berling's Corps were acts of violence which were to be resisted.

The Commander of the AK explained his decision in the light of intensive Soviet propaganda which accused the Polish government in London, and especially General Sosnkowski,

of issuing secret orders forbidding the AK to fight the Germans, and simultaneously claiming that the AK was only a "bluff" of the London government. Molotov had levelled the well known accusations of inaction at the Moscow Conference; Soviet controlled agencies in the West and the press in sympathy with the USSR emitted the same accusations.⁹⁰ The radio of the ZPP accused The AK of planning a mass murder of Polish Communists. The situation as General B. Komarowski saw it was that, on the one hand, the Soviet government postulated its distrust of the AK as the main pretext for not re-establishing relations, and on the other hand, planned co-operation of the AK with the Red Army was impossible without the preliminary diplomatic contact. He was, as he saw it, faced with two alternatives - either to condition further armed action on the re-establishment of diplomatic relations, and cease all action until that time, or, continue to fight the Germans irrespective of the political and military attitude of Soviet Russia to the Polish question. The first alternative would undoubtedly have been exploited by the Soviets to support their charges of the AK hostility towards Russia. All the fruit of four years' effort would have been lost, and with it, the support of the Western Allies. The faith of the masses of the popu-

For an eg. of the former see: G. Audit, "Polish Conspiracy" pamphlet, London, Russia To-Day Society, 1943, and answer, same title, by H.W. Henderson.

lation in the help of the West was unfounded, as it later turned out, but at that time it was very strong and public opinion would have accepted an order to cease fighting the Germans as a capitulation. General B. Komorowski was to write later:

In these circumstances we had no choice. We had to take the risk of directing military action without co-ordinating it with the Red Army and with no certainty as to how it would behave towards our soldiers coming out in open battle. The highest values were at stake; Freedom and Independence were concerned. In our opinion, the decision to fight was unavoidable.⁹¹

The die was cast.

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T.B. Komarowski, Op.cit., p. 191.

III

THE POLISH QUESTION BEHIND THE SCENES AND OPERATION "STORM"

General B. Komorowski wrote after the war that:

As a result of the insufficient information received in Poland from the Government, especially at the time when Mikołajczyk was Prime Minister, as to the general political situation, and most particularly the change in the attitude of the Allies towards Poland in the face of the aggressiveness of the Kremlin, the responsible elements in Poland lived in 'a world of illusions'. There was a general belief that the Western powers would support our interests. People did not realize the extent to which the Anglo-Saxon powers had already given way to Soviet demands at the expense of Poland and her most vital interests.

Until an authoritative publication of documents or of a history dealing with the British and American propositions to the Polish government up to this time, that is, October 1943, it is difficult to judge General B. Komorowski's assertion. According to Mikołajczyk, the first official British proposal to deal with the Polish frontier question came on October 5th, 1943, or just before Eden was due to leave for the Moscow Conference. In the absence of official publications, we have, however, ample material on the second World War published in Great Britain and U.S.A. by leading political figures,

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T.B. Komarowski, op.cit., p.192-193.

from a comparative study of which there emerges a clear picture of the Allied policy which was adopted towards the Polish question in the face of Soviet demands. Much of it was suspected by Polish diplomats in the West, it cannot yet be ascertained how much was known to them. In any case, they did not, as we shall see, participate in the final policy decisions made about the fate of their country.

It is beyond doubt that the British and, to a lesser extent, the American attitude of leaving the question of the Polish Eastern frontiers open, contributed very substantially to the growth and realization of Soviet demands.² Already in December 1941, with the German army at the gates of Moscow, the discussion between Stalin and Eden centred on the shape of post-war Europe. Stalin even declared that if the British did not recognize his 1941 boundaries, that is, his annexation of the Baltic states and parts of Finland, Poland and Rumania, he would sign no treaty of alliance with Great Britain. Poland might be compensated with East Prussia; it was part of the picture of Stalin's post-war Europe which, at a critical moment

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Already in November 1941, Harriman told the Polish Ambassador in Washington, Ciechanowski that he "might be right in assuming that the absence of a more definite show of interest in the Polish question could have contributed to the way in which the Soviets were now dealing with /the Polish/ Government?" - Ciechanowski, op.cit., p. 74.

for himself, he saw as more important than military supplies.³

Although the British government had refused to guarantee Poland's Eastern frontiers, it was for a long time opposed to any transfers of territory to Russia before the Peace Conference. At that period, the Americans, though not pressing the Polish case, took a firm stand against any secret agreements and territorial settlements operated by force. At the time of the Moscow Conference, Churchill instructed Eden that the British could not commit themselves to any post-war European frontiers at this stage, "in view of our prior undertakings to the U.S. government", but he added in a note of December 20th, 1941, "the strategic security of Russia on her western border will be one of the objects of the Peace Conference".⁴ He thus left the question open and intimated that Great Britain would not be opposed to some version of Russia's 1941 frontiers.

Constantly in fear of a separate German-Soviet peace, Churchill pressed the U.S. government for its views on the matter. By March 1942, he was ready to accept the

³ He also suggested that Rumania be compensated with Hungarian territory, and Turkey to get Northern Syria and eventually some of Bulgaria; Czechoslovakia was to regain the Sudetenland - all these compensations in return for Russian gains. He also wanted an independent Austria and possibly a separate Rhineland and Bavaria. - see H.W. McNeill, America, Britain and Russia, 1941-1946, Survey of International Affairs, 1939-1946, Royal Institute of International Affairs, Oxford, University Press, 1953, p.166 ff.

⁴ Winston Churchill, The Second World War, Boston,

Soviet demands in principle. Whereas in January he had written to Eden that "we have never recognized the 1941 frontiers of Russia except de facto.../and/ in any case, there can be no question of settling frontiers until the Peace Conference",⁵ In March he wrote to the U.S. ambassador in London, Winant, that:

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.⁶

When Molotov was in London in May 1942, negotiating the treaty with Great Britain, the latter was ready to recognize the Baltic states, though not Poland, as part of the Soviet Union in the draft treaty. The U.S. Secretary of State, Hull, however, cabled categorically that if the treaty contained any territorial clauses, the U.S.A. might issue a statement disassociating itself from responsibility for its terms. Under this pressure the Soviet Union resigned from its claims, at least temporarily; it needed supplies and it was pressing the Western Allies for a second front. On May 26th, 1942, the Anglo-Soviet Treaty of Twenty Years' Alliance was signed and it specifically renounced territorial aggrandizement and mentioned the desire to preserve peace and resist aggression in the post-war period. This was the first public intimation of the

Houghton Mifflin The Grand Alliance, p.629.

5

The Grand Alliance, op.cit. p.695-696.

6

The Hinge of Fate, p. 327.

United Nations project. The attitude of the United States and the military position of Russia had saved the day. This again was a time to secure Russian commitments. No such steps were taken, however, and the Soviets did not take these clauses of the treaty too seriously. At the ratification ceremony in the USSR, delegates from the Baltic states spoke at the Supreme Soviet, thus reasserting the Soviet claim to these countries.

In the United States, meanwhile, a State Department Territorial Sub-Committee chose Poland, on March 14th 1942, as a "test-case". Unfortunately its conclusion was that "the vital interests of the U.S. lay in following a diplomacy of principle, of moral disinterestedness instead of power politics",⁷ hardly an effective answer to power politics. In November 1941, Harriman had told Ciechanowski that he had gone to Moscow

to encourage Russia to resist and all other matters had to be subordinated to this one aim... he could not afford to give the impression that there were any strings attached to American support of the Soviet war effort.⁸

This at a time when Russia was so weak that the Germans were expected in Moscow any day. Even before the United States abandoned its policy of not recognizing territorial changes brought about by violence, the Joint Chiefs of

⁷ P.W.P. pp.89,143, cited by John A. Lukacs, The Great Powers and Eastern Europe, New York, American Book Co, 1953, p. 468.

⁸ Ciechanowski, op.cit., p. 74.

Staff urged Roosevelt to "go soft with the Russians" and "not awaken any controversies with them".⁹ Cordell Hull admitted in his Memoirs that the U.S.A. abrogated its Consular representatives in Finland in July 1942, in order to please the Russians. Before Churchill left for Egypt and Moscow in August, Roosevelt made a suggestion that Stalin be coaxed into another plebiscite in the Baltic states and also suggested that the Polish-Russian frontier be drawn somewhat East of the Curzon Line, leaving Lwów to Poland. Poland was not, however, discussed at Moscow; another omission pregnant with consequences. In September, the Soviet air-force bombed Budapest, Bucharest and Vienna, although the German front was near the Caspian sea and in the Caucasus. This was the first Russian move in the contest for the Balkans.¹⁰ In November came the great turning point of the war on the Soviet front, the Russians checked the Germans at Stalingrad.

By 1943 "It was clear that both the British and American governments wished the Curzon Line to be the future frontier between Poland and Russia, and they were also confident that the acceptance of the frontier would basically solve the Polish-Russian problem.

Alas, this was not the case; for, almost simultaneously with the official Soviet announcement of territorial claims, the first steps were taken to reduce Poland to a Soviet dependency, a satellite.¹¹

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Sumner Welles, "Two Roosevelt Decisions, One Debit, One Credit," Foreign Affairs, January 1951.

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J.A. Lukacs, op. cit., p.476.

11Ibid, p. 506.

In March 1943, Eden had a very important series of talks in Washington. He told President Roosevelt and Mr. Hopkins that 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"; a careless statement since most of the Polish mineral resources and most of her timber were in the Eastern territories. The British Foreign Secretary also stated that he believed that "Stalin wanted a strong Poland, providing the right kind of people were running it and that Russian policy at the Peace Table would depend upon this".¹² Eden thus intimated that the Soviet government was already hinting at a possible change in the Polish government in London and his presentation of the Polish question was such that it gave no doubt of British agreement, in principle, to Soviet demands. He complained of the "aspirations" of the Poles. Roosevelt agreed with him that the Poles should have East Prussia, it was known that the Russians agreed to this too, but "privately" because they meant to use it as a bargaining instrument at the Peace Table".¹³ Roosevelt expressed the opinion that "after all, the big powers would have to decide what Poland would

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Robert E. Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins. An Intimate Story, New York, Harper Bros, 1948, p. 709.

¹³
Ibid, p. 710.

¹⁴ have". He was seconded in that opinion by the Russian Ambassador to the U.S.A., Mr. Litvinov, who told Hopkins on March 16th, that while Russia would agree to Poland's having East Prussia, she would insist on what he called "her territorial rights" and that Poland would make "outrageous" demands. He said he felt that Great Britain and the U.S.A. should decide what was to be done about Poland and "tell them rather than ask them".¹⁵ Roosevelt was still against ceding the Baltic states although Eden thought the Russians would pretty insistent on this point. Thus, by March 1943, the heads of the British and American governments agreed that some territorial changes should be agreed to in Poland.¹⁶

The British and U.S. governments were anxious to do all they could to "iron" out any difficulties with the Soviet government. The fear of a separate Soviet peace with Germany was now seconded by a fear of losing Soviet co-operation in the building up of post-war peace. This was especially true of Roosevelt who wanted full Russian co-operation in the United Nations Organization. The American Chiefs of Staff, on the other hand, were concerned with the length of time in which the U.S. would

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Ibid.

¹⁵

Ibid, p. 713.

¹⁶

Already in Dec. 1942, Gen. Sikorski had been unable to get any U.S. re-affirmation of the Atlantic Charter,

still be engaged in the war with Japan. President Roosevelt had to bear in mind that the war with Japan was nearer to American hearts and that pressure for total victory in the Pacific theatre was one of the chief weapons of the opposition. The attitude of high U.S. military circles is summed up in the "very high level U.S. military strategic estimate" which Hopkins brought to the Quebec Conference in August 1943. This estimate was of great importance and is indicative of the policy which guided the making decisions at Teheran, and even much later, at Yalta. It stated:

Russia's post-war position in Europe will be a dominant one. With Germany crushed, there is no power in Europe to oppose her tremendous military forces. It is true that Great Britain is building up a position in the Mediterranean vis-à-vis Russia which she might find useful in balancing power in Europe. However, even here she may not be able to oppose Russia unless she is otherwise supported.

The conclusions from the foregoing are obvious. Since Russia is the decisive factor in the war, she must be given every assistance and every effort must be made to obtain her friendship. Likewise, since without question she will dominate Europe on the defeat of the Axis, it is even more essential to develop and maintain the most friendly relations with Russia.

Finally, the most important factor the U.S. has to consider in relation to Russia is the prosecution of the war in the Pacific. With Russia as an ally in the war against Japan, the war can be terminated in less time and at less expense in life and resources than if the reverse were the case. Should war in the Pacific have to be carried on with an unfriendly or a negative attitude on the part of Russia, the difficulties will be immeasurably increased and operations might become abortive.¹⁷

with a view to obtaining a U.S. guarantee of the Polish Eastern frontier.

¹⁷ R.E. Sherwood, op.cit., p. 748-749.

Thus, by the end of 1943, the U.S. Chiefs of Staff took Russian domination of post-war Europe as an accomplished fact against which nothing was to be done. More, it was intimated that Great Britain would not obtain any U.S support if she tried to establish a balance of power in Europe.

It is obvious from what has been written by those participating in the decisions taken, that there were strong divergencies of view as to the running of the war and the future of Europe. The U.S. government seemed to accept the expansion of Russia and Russian influence as natural, while Churchill, though writing off Eastern Poland and the Baltic states, tried, first through schemes of regional federation and then by pressing for a Balkan invasion, to counteract the danger of complete Soviet hegemony in Central and Eastern Europe. He first raised the idea of the Balkan invasion after the landing at Algiers;¹⁸ he lost his battle for it formally at Teheran, although he was trying to deflect the invasion of Southern France to the Adriatic right up to the moment when the "Anvil" actually took place in August 1944. Chester Wilmot tells the story of the Churchillian struggle for a landing in North Africa, then Sicily and Italy and the Adriatic, pitted against the American preoccupation with the Far East, General Marshall's single minded determination to invade Europe only

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W. Churchill, The Hinge of Fate, op.cit., p.651-656.

through France and American suspicion that Great Britain was aiming to continue and expand her imperialistic foreign policy.¹⁹

As the preparations for the Big Three talks proceeded, preliminary problems were thrashed out in the Maisky-Eden-Winant conversations in London. The British were afraid that the Soviets might conclude a separate peace with Germany, and possibly make agreements with the "freedom committees" established in Moscow for Poland, Germany, Finland, Rumania and other East European countries.²⁰ The British government wanted to find a way of keeping the Soviets in the war against Germany, and so did the Americans who were even more concerned with Soviet participation in the U.N., but concessions to the Soviets were seen as necessary towards these ends. Poland and the Baltic states were marked down for this purpose. On May 1st, 1943, Goebbels was happily writing: "the Soviets at the moment are extremely insolent and arrogant. They are quite conscious of the security of their position. They have no consideration whatever for their Anglo-Saxon allies".²¹ He probably would not have believed that the Western Allies for their part, were putting up no resistance at all to this state of affairs. Meanwhile, the British and U.S. press and

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Chester Wilmot, The Struggle for Europe, London, Collins, Feb. 1952; J.A. Lukacs, op.cit., p. 550 ff.

20 Ciechanowski, op.cit., p. 223.

21 Goebbels Diaries, op.cit., p. 273.

radio treated the Polish-Russian dispute generally from the
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 Soviet point of view.

Although Mikołajczyk had not empowered Eden to discuss the question of Polish frontiers at the Moscow Conference, Mr. Churchill's instructions to Eden envisaged the surrender of the Baltic countries and Eastern Poland as a fait accompli, with the provision that final territorial transfers were to be settled at the peace table with due
²³
 regard to the interests of the population affected. Point 4, plainly stated that Eden was to reaffirm the principles of the Atlantic Charter

noting that Russia's accession thereto is based upon the frontiers of June 1941. We also take note of the historic frontiers of Russia before the two wars of aggression waged by Germany in 1914 and 1939.²⁴

Churchill was thus virtually proposing the 1914 frontier, that is, half of Poland and the Baltic countries, as a bait to keep Russia solidly on the Allied side.

On October 6th, 1943, Ciechanowski talked with Cordell Hull in Washington and put forward specific propositions for the Moscow Conference, on the basis of

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"In 1943, the behaviour of the British and American governments, albeit in extenuating circumstances, amounted to what is called in criminal law conspiracy to defeat the ends of justice", G.F. Hudson, International Affairs, April 1950.

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Point 3. W.Churchill, Closing the Ring, p. 282.

²⁴

Ibid.

instructions from London. He asked for British and U.S. help in restoring Polish-Soviet relations, with the postponing of the frontier question,²⁵ and for a British-U.S. guarantee of Polish independence, territorial integrity and the security of the population. To implement such a guarantee, he asked for U.S. and British troops, or at least small detachments, to be stationed in Poland. Mikołajczyk in London, was asking the British to help in establishing a Big Three Commission to be attached to the Red Army in Poland if relations were not re-established by the time of its entry.²⁶ Ciechanowski also confirmed the Polish government's interest in a programme of federation in Central Europe, and suggested that the "satellites" of Germany in the Balkans, should be treated as potential co-belligerents on the Allied side.²⁷ The secret negotiations which were going on between the representatives of these countries and the British and U.S. governments were evidence that such an attitude would have succeeded in drawing the Balkan countries and Slovakia away from Germany. Goebbels himself had no doubts as to

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He told Cordell Hull that Poles regarded Soviet propositions of compensation in the West as: an attempt on the part of the Soviet Government to make Poland dependent on Russia, and possibly to use her as a springboard for extended Soviet domination of Central Europe, and of Germany in particular.- Ciechanowski, op.cit., p.226.

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Mikołajczyk, op.cit., p.44.

27

Ciechanowski, p. 227.

the matter and the Germans were terrified of an allied invasion in the Balkans.²⁸ The Poles also wanted an official Allied Council for European strategy which would consider Polish problems, especially that of supplying the AK and the use of the Polish army with a view to its speedy arrival in Poland. Mr. Cordell Hull seemed to favour the Polish suggestions.²⁹

The Moscow Conference resulted in the signing of the Four Power Declaration - October 30th, 1943- for the organization of peace and security in the post-war world, in which the Soviets finally accepted China as a signatory. The importance of the Conference lay in the additional machinery for co-operation set up and in the agreement on strategy with regard to Germany. Molotov, however, rejected Eden's proposal for sanctioning federations of smaller European states, and the Soviet government also refused to resume diplomatic relations with the Poles. Molotov also made it clear that the Soviet Union expected to have a dominant voice in the affairs of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. The Poles were hard hit by the

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"If an invasion were to take place in the South-east, there would be cause to fear that large parts of the population would immediately desert us...It is to be hoped that the English and the Americans are not aware of the chances beckoning them there", April 29th, 1943, Goebbels Diaries, p. 272. For the secret negotiations between Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria and the Western Allies, see J.A. Lukacs, op.cit..

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Ciechanowski, op.cit., p.234.

trend of events. Immediately after the Conference, the Polish military mission was informed by COSSAC that the arrangements which had been made for the supplying of the AK with war materials for its scheduled rising against the Germans, had been revoked.

Mikołajczyk tried fruitlessly to see Churchill before the latter left for Teheran; he also asked to see Roosevelt. He wired both leaders at Cairo, but Eden wired back that any such meeting might prompt Stalin to put off the conference once again.³⁰ Mikołajczyk had to content himself with sending a memorandum to both leaders clearly outlining the Polish position. In this note he appealed again for guarantees and the safeguarding of the Polish government's right to take over the administration of Poland immediately after its liberation from the Germans. He also asked for the intervention of Great Britain and the U.S.A. towards the resumption of Polish-Soviet relations, and outlined the reasons for which the Polish government was unwilling to enter into a discussion of the frontier question. He stressed that besides the historical,

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Lt. Gen. Sir Frederick Morgan in his "Overture to Overlord", p. 127-128, says that COSSAC excluded Poland and Czechoslovakia from action in connection with the invasion plans, by the end of October 1943. Probably, therefore, this decision was taken in the course of, or just after, the Moscow Conference. There is no truth at all in the assertion that this withdrawal of allied military supplies took place in retaliation for an order of the Com. AK, to fight the Communists, see G.W. Strobel, "Die Polnische Widerstandsbewegung seit 1939", Osteuropa, vol. II, no. 3., June 1952, p. 192.

31 Mikołajczyk, op.cit., p. 46.

cultural and economic reasons,

The Polish Government could not see its way to enter a discussion on the subject of territorial concessions, above all, for the reason that such a discussion in the absence of effective guarantees of Poland's independence and security on the part of Great Britain and the United States would be sure to lead further and further to ever-new demands.³²

The attribution of East Prussia, Danzig and Upper Silesia and the strengthening and shortening of the Polish Western frontier, were in any case dictated by the needs of a lasting peace and could not be regarded as compensation for the Eastern territories which had, for the USSR, no value comparable to that which they had for Poland. Mikołajczyk stressed the fact that, according to the principles adopted at the Quebec Conference, the Polish government was entitled to exert sovereign authority over Polish lands as they were liberated and was therefore anxious to return to Poland immediately together with the C-in-C. If the Soviet armies entered Poland without previous resumption of Soviet-Polish relations, the army and the ~~admi~~ nistration in Poland would have to continue underground and the right of self-defense was granted to them in case of violence.³³

We know now that the attitude of the Polish government and of the underground was completely ignored at Teheran.

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Mikołajczyk, op.cit., p. 267.

³³

Ibid., p. 268.

Churchill brought up the Polish question and gave his own suggestion:

Personally I thought Poland might move westward, like soldiers taking two steps 'left close'.

He stressed that Poland was needed as "an instrument in the orchestra of Europe",³⁴ thus intimating that Great Britain wanted Poland to survive as a political unit. He was, however, determined to settle what he claims to have regarded as a 'purely territorial issue'. He asked Stalin: "Are we to draw frontier lines?", and on the Soviet leader's assent, the Big Three proceeded to examine the map of Poland. Churchill admitted that:

I have no power from Parliament, nor, I believe³⁵ has the President to define any frontier lines.

Stalin asked whether this would be done without Polish participation, and Churchill replied in the affirmative, adding that

When this was all informally agreed between ourselves, we could go to the Poles later.³⁶

When Roosevelt said he hoped that Polish-Soviet relations would be resumed so that the Polish government would accept any decisions made, Stalin repeated the crude accusations of Soviet propaganda that "the Polish government and their friends in Poland were in contact with the Germans" and "killed partizans".³⁷ He went on to state that he separated

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W.Churchill, Closing the Ring, p.362.

³⁵

Ibid.

³⁶ "

³⁷ Ibid, p.394.

Poland from the Polish government in exile which had joined the German slander campaign against him, and said that he would be willing to resume relations with any Polish government which fought the Germans. Although Churchill and Roosevelt were both fully informed of the activities of the Polish underground, neither of them made any protest to this egregious lie - at least Churchill notes none. Going back to the frontier question, Stalin said that "the Poles could not be allowed to seize the Ukraine or White Russian territory...according to the 1939 frontier the soil of the Ukraine and White Russia was returned to the Ukraine and White Russia".³⁸ Eden then asked if Stalin, by saying he adhered to the 1939 frontier, meant the Ribbentrop-Molotov line. "Call it whatever you like", answered Stalin, while Molotov remarked that it was generally called the Curzon Line. Eden then tried to put up some resistance by saying that there was a difference between the two lines - the Southern end of the Curzon Line had never been defined,³⁹ and suggested that it was intended to pass East of Lwów. Stalin, however, said that the line on Churchill's map had not been drawn correctly and that Lwów should be left on the Russian side. Churchill, who aimed to get a signed agreement which he would present to the Polish government,

³⁸ Ibid, p. 395.

³⁹ Ibid, p. 396.

proposed a formula:

It is thought in principle that the home of the Polish state and nation should be between the so-called Curzon Line and the Line of the Oder, including for Poland East Prussia /as defined/ and Oppeln; but the actual tracing of the frontier line requires careful study, and possibly disentanglement of population at some points.

Then he went on:

Why not a formula on which I could say to the Poles: I do not know if the Russians would approve, but I think that I might get it for you. You see, you are being well looked after.⁴⁰

Churchill did not obtain his formula, however.

Perhaps Stalin saw through the British intention - if it was such - to make an agreement on the Curzon Line, and at that price forestall more Russian penetration of and control over Poland.⁴¹ It is more likely that what he wanted was a recognition of his claims before the end of the war, and the British and U.S. governments could not afford to admit to their people that they had agreed to the partition of one of their allies.⁴²

There was one issue at Teheran which could have altered the face of events in Eastern Europe, even if the

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"I added that we should never get the Poles to say that they are satisfied. Nothing would satisfy the Poles." Stalin stated that he would want Königsberg.- Ibid, p.403.

⁴¹

see J.A. Lukacs, op.cit., p.560.

⁴²

In his instruction to Eden, of Oct.6th, 1943, Churchill asked him to remember that the agreement regarding the Western frontiers of Russia had been "sheered off" in 1942 and the Twenty Years Treaty substituted, because of the menace of a considerable division of opinion in the House of Commons. Territorial questions were to be reserved for the general settlement. - Closing the Ring, op.cit., p.667.

Soviets were established in Poland and the Baltic countries. That issue was Churchill's idea, already mentioned, of a secondary invasion of Europe through the Balkans - he made it clear that this invasion was not to be regarded as a substitute for the invasion of France. Although Roosevelt wavered for a moment, acknowledging the British arguments that such an invasion would tie up German forces which could otherwise be used in France, he gave in to the combined pressure⁴³ of Stalin and the American Chiefs of Staff. Although Churchill kept on trying to change this decision until August 1944, Soviet opposition to it was declared officially at Teheran. Perhaps it would be no exaggeration to say that⁴⁴ it was then that Soviet Russia won the second World War. A few American military leaders and experts saw the consequences of this course in 1944. General Mark Clark wrote:

Not alone in my opinion, but in the opinion of a number of experts who were close to the problem, the weakening of the campaign in Italy in order to invade Southern France, instead of pushing on into the Balkans, was one of the outstanding political mistakes of the war...Stalin knew exactly what he wanted in a political as well as a military way; and the thing he wanted most was to keep us out of the Balkans...It is easy to see, therefore, why Stalin favoured "Anvil" at Teheran...but I could never see why as conditions changed and as the war situation changed, the U.S. and Britain failed to sit down and take another look at the over-all picture...

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He said to his son, Elliott, during the conference: Our Chiefs of Staff are convinced of one thing. The way to kill the most Germans, with the least loss of American soldiers, is to mount one great big offensive and then slam 'em with everything we've got. It makes sense to me. -Elliott Roosevelt, As He Saw It, New York, Duell Sloan and Pearce, 1946, p.185.

44 J.A. Lukacs, op.cit., p. 556.

There was no question that the Balkans were strongly in the British minds, but...American top-level planners were not interested...I later came to understand, in Austria, the tremendous advantages that we had lost by our failure to press on into the Balkans... Had we been there before the Red Army, not only would the collapse of Germany have come sooner, but the influence of Soviet Russia would have been drastically reduced.⁴⁵

Thus, although the possibility to reverse this trend of events existed at least until August 1944, it can be said that:

as the year 1943 closed, much of central-eastern Europe's fate had already been decided in the two months between October 18th to December 12th. During this period Stalin achieved the limits of diplomatic success. The whole of Eastern Poland, the Baltic states, and the Carpatho-Ukraine were awarded to him in agreements of varying clarity but of unmistakeable practicability; the military decisions communicated to him at Teheran meant that at least Bulgaria and Rumania would fall into Russian hands; events at Jajce meant that Yugoslavia would do the same; the agreements with Benes meant that sooner or later Czechoslovakia would share the same fate. He certainly had reason to be proud. The whole tone of the Soviet press reflected this; instead of using dialectical arguments, it often spoke now with force and pride. As a Soviet newspaper wrote shortly after Teheran: In 1917 Russian weakness lost the Baltic States, but now Soviet Russia is so powerful that she simply takes them.⁴⁶

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Gen. Mark Clark, Calculated Risk, London, Harrap, 1951, pp. 348-351. The British General Fuller, was of the same opinion. He wrote of the invasion of Southern France in August 1944 that: ..the defeat of Germany was now certain in any realizable set of circumstances; therefore, the political problem had become paramount. /The politically decisive area was / Austria and Hungary, for were the Russians to occupy these two countries - the strategic centre of Europe - before the Americans and the British could do so, then the two Western Allies would have fought the war in vain; for all that would happen would be the re-establishment of a Russian Lebensraum in Eastern Europe instead of a German. -General Fuller, The Second World War, New York, Duell, Sloan & Pearce, 1949, p. 324.

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J.A. Lukacs, op.cit., p.564-565.

However, all these details were unknown at the time and took place behind the scenes. They are, nevertheless, essential to the understanding of the visible pressures, trends and decisions on the Polish question at this period.

It was after the Teheran conference that the Polish government was officially informed by Eden of the Soviet demands and of Churchill's belief that if it agreed to the Curzon Line, with compensation in East Prussia and in the West, there would be a good chance of an agreement with Russia.⁴⁷ Eden added that no agreements in this respect had been made and suggested that the Polish government draw up a memorandum on the previous efforts of the AK to coordinate its activities with the Russians and assert its will to fight the Germans. He made this suggestion in view of the Soviet accusations of AK inactivity and hostility made in Moscow and at Teheran. Mikołajczyk answered that he saw no possibility of settling the frontier question at that moment and that he planned to visit President Roosevelt. This visit was, however, postponed on British intervention.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ On Dec. 20th, 1943, Churchill wrote to Eden that he should now open the frontier question with the Poles, show them his formula and the rough outline of the Eastern and Western frontiers, presenting them as "only a broad and tentative suggestions" and advise them to put themselves in the hands of their British and American friends, even if they did not get Lwów - P.M. to Eden, Marakesh, Dec. 20, 1943. - Closing the Ring, op.cit., p. 450.

⁴⁸ Churchill wrote to Roosevelt, in good salesmanship style, on Jan. 6th, 1944: As soon as I get home, I shall go

Meanwhile, the Soviet armies were on the point of reaching the Polish Eastern frontier. At this dramatic moment, on January 1st, 1944, Mikołajczyk learned of the formation of a Communist National Council - Krajowa Rada Narodowa, KRN, in Warsaw. Its manifesto was obviously timed to coincide with the Soviet entry into Poland - this took place on the night of January 3-4th. The manifesto proclaimed that events on both fronts required Poland to choose a clear path into the future. This, it was said, was not the way of the reactionary 'emigré' government in London, or its representatives in Poland who were accused of having never considered 'the will of the people' but 'only their own reactionary aims and plans'. The London government was accused of following an anti-Soviet policy with the aim of sowing discord among the Allies. It was accused of doing this with the aim of returning to 'the old state of things in 1939'. In one and the same breath, the manifesto proceeded to state that the London government, based on 'the anti-democratic constitution of 1935' had subordinated the country to itself under a regime a hundred times

all out with the Polish Government to close with this or something like it, and, having closed, they must proclaim themselves as ready to accept the duty of guarding the bulwark on the Oder against further German aggression upon Russia, and also they must back the settlement to the limit.. If I can get this tidied up early in February, a visit from them to you would clinch matters - Ibid., p. 452.

more powerful than pre-war, and that, feeling the lack of support at home, it tried to bring about a war between the Western Allies and the USSR. The stock accusation of "moral support of the Germans on the Eastern front" and appeals for resistance at home, were levelled once again. Finally, the manifesto concluded that the London government represented "only a small clique of reactionary politicians" and that what was needed was "a new representative body to lead the decisive struggle against the occupant!" Therefore the undersigned called to life the KRN "as the real political representative of the Polish nation".

After making this claim, the manifesto went on to outline the main tasks ahead of it. The KRN arrogated to itself the direction of the military and civil struggle against the occupant and proposed to base its foreign policy on friendship and co-operation with the Allies and the taking of immediate steps to establish relations with the Soviet Union on the basis of good neighbourship. The frontier question was touched upon in point 3 in which it was said that the KRN would fight for a free and independent Poland and "the reunion of all Germanized Polish territory". The Eastern frontier was to be decided in accordance with the will of the inhabitants and on the basis of "a friendly understanding with the Soviets". The attitude of Polish public opinion on this question may well be judged by the fact that even the KRN, in which the PPR was the leading

group, did not dare to mention any specific frontier line. Finally, agricultural reform, the confiscation of large estates, the nationalization of heavy industry, banking and transport were stipulated as tasks in the reconstruction of the country - similar in this respect to the Home Representation Declaration of August 15th, 1943.

Most significantly of all, however, the manifesto announced that "at the right moment" it would call to life a "Provisional Government" which would include all "democratic" groups; this government was to rule until the calling of the National Assembly which was to draw up a new constitution. The KRN itself, was to function with the aid of ⁴⁹ district, country, town and village councils. On the basis of the above programme, the KRN appealed for support to Polish society. The declaration bore the names of fourteen committees and political groups, none of which except for the PPR possessed any official status. The debates printed with the declaration on the third anniversary of the calling of the KRN, openly acknowledged the political isolation of this body in the Polish underground. No agreement had been reached with the two main left-wing parties, the SL and the PPS/WRN. One speaker suggested this was because of the difficulties in establishing political contact in occupation conditions; another accused them of reaction. It was admitted that the only established party

co-operating with the PPR was the RPPS - Robotnicza Partia
Polskich Socjalistów, Polish Socialists' Labour Party -⁵⁰

but it was not, of course, elaborated, that the RPPS signatory of the KRN manifesto was not the party proper but a fraction of it represented by Edward Osóbka-Morawski and

⁵¹his paper. Władysław Gomułka admitted the isolation of the KRN quite openly after the war in the PPR's organ,

Nowe Drogi - New Paths - when he wrote:

The creation of the KRN, as a political representation of the nation and a kind of underground parliament was effected with a relatively meagre participation of other political and social groups besides our own party; .. it was the PPR which was the real and decisive force of the KRN.⁵²

In the spring of 1944, the extreme left-wing groups of the Polish underground, the Centralizacja Demokratyczna,

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For the above, see: Manifest Demokratycznych Organizacji Społeczno-Politycznych i Wojskowych w Polsce - Manifesto of Democratic Social-Political and Military Organizations in Poland - January 1st, 1944, and: Protokół Pierwszego Plenarnego Posiedzenia KRN - Protocol of the First Full Assembly of the KRN, Warsaw, 31.XII.1943-1.I.1944, published in Warsaw on the third anniversary of the formation of the KRN, 1946 /?/ trans./

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The left-wing Socialists were organized in Polscy Socjaliści, PS - Polish Socialists - led by Adam Próchnik. This group rejoined the PPS/WRN in June 1943 but a few of its members led by S. Chudoba, created a small group called RPPS; T. Głowacki and J. Mulak were two other prominent figures and Ed. Osóbka-Morawski was also in this group. In Dec. 1943, the RPPS refused Communist proposals for a united front, but E.O. Morawski agreed and took the party's paper, the Robotnik - The Worker - with him. For a time there were three groups with a paper of the same name - PPS/WRN, RPPS proper and Morawski's group. The majority group modified its name to PPS-Lewica - PPS Left. - see: Malara & Rey op.cit., p. 23-25.

52

Nowe Drogi, Sept-Oct. 1948, p. 50, trans.

-The Democratic Centralization - formed the "Centralny Komitet Ludowy Centralizacji Stronnictw Demokratycznych, Socjalistycznych i Syndykalistycznych"- CKL -Central Peoples Committee of the Centralization of Democratic Socialist and Syndicalist Parties. It had a small military organization at its disposal, the Polska Armia Ludowa, PAL - Polish Peoples Army. The seven small parties of the CKL had a programme of far-reaching nationalization and of close Polish-Soviet co-operation. The CKL's internal and external postulates prevented co-operation between it and the KRP and AK. Towards the end of the Warsaw rising, it was to recognize the Lublin Committee. ⁵³ Such was the picture of the extreme left-wing organizations of the Polish underground.

Prime Minister Mikołajczyk answered the KRN manifesto with a broadcast speech to Poland on January 5th, 1944. By this date the Soviet armies had crossed the Eastern frontier. Mikołajczyk repeated the stipulations of the instruction of October 27th, 1943, on the avoidance of conflicts with Soviet troops and made known the decree of September 1st, 1942, concerning the temporary organization of administration on Polish territories. This decree, said

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PAL came out of the Barykady Wolności - Freedom Barricades - military organization of the PS. The seven groups of the CKL were: the RPPS, Str. Polskich Demokratów, SPD, a fraction of the Str. Demokratyczne - Democratic Party; Polskie Str. Demokratyczne, PSD, - Polish Democratic Party- another fraction of the same; Związek Syndykalistów Polskich, ZSP - Polish Syndicalists; Unkon; Polska Ludowa Akcja Niepodległościowa, PLAN - Polish Peoples Action for Independence;

the Prime Minister, was the basis of the legal authority and competence of the Delegate who was simultaneously Deputy Prime Minister in the Government. He was to reveal his name and residence at the appropriate moment. Thus the Polish Prime Minister underlined the legality of the underground authorities as against the claims of the ⁵⁴KRN. Also on January 5th, the Polish government issued a formal declaration in view of the crossing of the Polish frontier by Soviet troops. It asserted its stand on the frontier question by stating that:

In their victorious struggle against the German invader, Soviet forces are reported to have crossed the frontier of Poland.

It affirmed the underground struggle against the Germans and mentioned the contribution to the war effort of the Polish forces abroad. It also emphasized that it was:

The only legal steward and spokesman of the Polish nation, recognized by Poles at home and abroad as well as by the Allied and free governments,

and that:

The conduct of the Polish nation in the course of the present war has proved that it has never recognized and will not recognize solutions imposed by force.

The note continued:

The Polish Government expects that the Soviet Union.....will not fail to respect the

Socjaliści Ludowi "Wolność"- Peoples Socialists, Freedom; Organizacja Syndykalistyczna "Walka Ludu" - Syndicalist Organization "Peoples Struggle", - PSZ III, p. 62-63.

54

Mikołajczyk, op.cit., p. 270-271.

rights and interests of the Polish Republic and its citizens.

The note recapitulated the instruction of October 27th, 1943, ordering the AK to fight the Germans and co-operate with the Soviet armies if diplomatic relations were re-established. It concluded:

If a Polish-Soviet agreement, such as the Polish Government has declared itself ready to conclude, had preceded the crossing of the frontier of Poland by Soviet forces, such an agreement would have enabled the Polish underground army to coordinate its action against the Germans with Soviet military authorities.

The Polish Government still considers such an arrangement highly desirable....⁵⁵

The Soviet answer came in a statement published on January 11th, 1944. In no uncertain terms it claimed the Curzon Line as the Soviet frontier with Poland, citing the "plebiscite" of 1939 as its justification. Poland, it said, would be compensated through the annexation of "age-old Polish lands taken away from Poland by Germany" and would thus "acquire a necessary outlet to the Baltic sea". The Soviet declaration also made the first official mention of the Union of Polish Patriots and the Polish Army Corps formed in the USSR. The note repeated the accusation that "the emigré Polish Government, cut off from its people, proved incapable of establishing friendly relations with the Soviet Union" and of "organizing an active struggle against the German invaders in Poland itself". However, the note

intimated that, on its own terms, an establishment of diplomatic relations was desirable.⁵⁶

In its reply of January 15th, the Polish Government quietly rejected the Soviet accusations, and in order to "safeguard the complete solidarity of the United Nations", it refrained from further public discussion of the disputed questions. It affirmed its inability to recognize "unilateral decisions or accomplished facts which have taken place or might take place on the territory of the Polish Republic" but expressed its wish to see a re-establishment of Polish-Soviet relations and stated that to this end, it was approaching the British and U.S. governments to secure, through their intermediacy and with their participation, a discussion of all outstanding questions with the Soviet government.⁵⁷

A Tass agency statement on January 17th, was the only answer. It interpreted the evasion of the Curzon Line in the Polish statement as a rejection of negotiations, and went on to state that the Soviet government could not open official negotiations with a government with which it had broken relations. The note reminded the public that these relations were broken off over the "alleged murders in Katyn". The Polish statement was said to "demonstrate

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Ibid; also London and New York Times, Jan. 12th, 1944.

⁵⁷

Ibid, Jan. 15th, 1944.

that the present Polish Government does not desire to establish good neighbourly relations with the Soviet Union".⁵⁸

Thus, once again, with the Soviet armies entering Poland, the Soviet government proposed that the Polish government officially recognize the Curzon Line as a preliminary to further negotiations.⁵⁹ On January 18th, against the background of this exchange of notes, Molotov cabled the U.S. government intimating that a reorganization of the Polish government in London to include "democratic elements" would create the necessary conditions for the settlement of the dispute. On January 24th, he suggested that Polish leaders from the U.S.A., Great Britain and the USSR, might be brought together to form such a government. On January 27th, when the American Secretary of State said he thought the Poles might agree to the Curzon Line, Molotov told him that the main issue was the composition of the Polish government.⁶⁰ Thus the Soviet Union was putting forward the idea of creating a new Polish government abroad made up of men agreeable to its demands.

Meanwhile, the British government was increasing

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Ibid., Jan. 18th, 1944.

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It is significant to note that on Jan. 17th, Pravda published a "rumour from Cairo" that British personalities were meeting Ribbentrop on the Iberian peninsula. This extraordinary 'report' was perhaps part of the Soviet pressure on the Polish question - see: H.W. McNeill, op.cit., p. 413.

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Cordell Hull, Memoirs, London, Hodder and Staughton, 1948, vol. II., pp. 1437 & 1442.

its pressure on the Poles. On January 20th, at a meeting attended by Eden, Cadogan, T. Romer and Mikołajczyk, Churchill urged the Polish Prime Minister to agree to the Curzon Line at least "in principle". He added that he did not support Stalin's demands for changes in the Polish government and that he thought the announcement of the Polish government's recognition of the proposed frontiers in the East and West, would dispose Stalin to drop his other demands.⁶¹ The Polish Prime Minister asked for time in order to communicate Churchill's demands to the Underground. While awaiting the reply, he sent a note to the British Foreign Office on January 23rd, putting forward a series of cogent questions as to the measures which would be taken to safeguard Polish independence and integrity if a Polish-Soviet agreement were reached on the basis of the Curzon Line. Having thus intimated, for the first time, that the Polish Government considered such discussion as possible, the note put forward the following queries:

a. Would the British government assure the taking over and administration of Polish territory to the Polish Government?

b. Was the British Government prepared to secure Soviet agreement to the participation of Polish and Allied contingents on an equal footing in the occupation of Polish territories - if such an occupation were necessitated by

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Mikołajczyk records that at this moment he said to Churchill: I suppose we must now take into account Britain's refusal to defend our position in the East - Mikołajczyk, op.cit., p: 52.

the course of military operations against Germany.

c. Would it assure the evacuation of this territory by the occupying troops and authorities, as soon as military operations against Germany on this front, were over?

The note asked, on the other hand, whether the Polish Government could expect:

a. A formal guarantee by Great Britain, and if possible, the U.S.A., of the territorial integrity of Poland and within her new frontiers, of her political independence and of non-interference in her internal affairs.

b. If the U.S.A. were unwilling to join in such a guarantee, Great Britain would undertake it herself.

The Polish Government also asked for assurance of the full consent of Great Britain to Poland's new Western frontiers and that these should be fixed at the same time as Poland's Eastern frontiers and embodied in one international document, to be enacted with the participation and consent of the British, Soviet and U.S. governments. No ulterior protests should be entertained and the severance of the Eastern territories from Germany should be declared a condition of the termination of hostilities. The Great Powers should assist Poland in the removal of unwanted Germans and give assurance of the repatriation of Polish citizens from Soviet territory.⁶² The Polish Government thus declared itself willing to treat of the modification of its frontiers - but on the condition of reasonable guarantees of Polish independence and territorial integrity within the new arrangement. The British Government, however, could

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not give them. As we have seen, Churchill had tried to obtain some written proposal, which to that extent could have been a guarantee, at Teheran. Now, to liquidate the annoying Polish-Soviet dispute which stood in the way of his getting Soviet assent to any balanced arrangement in post-war Europe, he tried to pressure the Polish government into accepting the Soviet proposals without any guarantees whatsoever.

On February 6th, 1944, the British Prime Minister again presented Stalin's demands to the Polish Government, as they were contained in a letter from the Soviet leader. Stalin demanded, as before, the recognition of the Curzon Line as a basis for frontier negotiations; the immediate order to the underground to co-operate fully with the Red Army, and the removal of General Sosnkowski, the C-in-C, General Marian Kukiel, Minister of National Defense, and St. Kot, Minister of Information, from the Cabinet. ⁶⁴ On February 15th, the Polish Government made its reply to Churchill in a note stating that it was ready to start conversations with the Soviet Government, with the co-operation of the British and U.S. Governments, on "all outstanding questions". It added here, significantly:

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Eden replied to the Polish note: Until His Majesty's Government have elicited the views of the other Governments concerned, and have more definite information regarding the basis upon which agreement might be reached between the Polish and Soviet Governments, they are not in a position to return any final answer to the detailed questions contained in your letter. - Ibid., p. 53.

64 Dziennik Polski I Dziennik Żołnierza, nr. 43, 21.II.1944.

We do not exclude frontier discussions relating to the East, West and North.

However, the Polish Government declared that:

The dictatorial demand by the USSR that we must agree in advance to the recognition of the Curzon Line as the future Polish frontier cannot be accepted by the Polish Government.... The result of conversations concerning frontiers can be realized only after the end of the war.

Thus, the Polish Government, though it agreed on the discussion of the frontier, precluded any practical changes before the Peace Conference. Most important of all, from the point of view of the current situation, the Polish Government proposed as a compromise:

a demarcation line running east of Vilna and Lwów to be drawn up during the hostilities. West of the line, after the territory was freed from the German occupation, it was to be taken over by the Polish Government. East of the line, Soviet administration, with the participation of representatives of the Allied Powers, was to be established. The Polish Government was thus taking up the precedent of the Curzon Line in its original form as a temporary demarcation line, while reserving the final decisions for the Peace Conference. Furthermore, it protested against the Soviet claim to Königsberg in East Prussia, since it would restrict Poland's access to the sea. Finally, it stated that no changes in the Polish Government or relating to the C-in-C, could be dictated by a foreign power.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Mikołajczyk, op.cit., p.277-278. There was a

The position of the Polish Government was more flexible than that of the Council of National Unity in Poland, which had categorically rejected any discussion of Polish frontiers.⁶⁶ In view of its position as a responsible government, being unable to obtain the guarantees it asked, it saw itself incapable of further concessions. Churchill submitted the proposal to Stalin and Harriman offered the services of the U.S.A. to the Soviet Union towards restoring Polish-Soviet relations. Stalin, however, rejected

struggle within the Polish government over this declaration. According to one source, in mid-February, Mikołajczyk read, at a meeting of the Political Committee of the Ministers' Council, the project of a cable which Churchill intended to send to Stalin on this matter. In this project, Churchill reported that after talking with some members of the Polish government, the Eastern frontier of Poland should run roughly along the Curzon Line. Poland should have Przemyśl and Russia, Lwów with the neighbouring oil-fields. He also foresaw the possibility of removing Ministers Kot and Kukiel and Gen. Sosnkowski from the Cabinet.

Mikołajczyk expressed his readiness to accept this project as a basis for discussion. Ministers Kwapiński, Kot and Seyda declared themselves against it. A split threatened as in the case of the Sikorski-Maisky pact. The British government pressed for agreement, threatening to send its cable anyway. Mikołajczyk threatened to resign if the alternative PPS project were accepted. Finally, the declaration of Feb. 15th, was accepted as a compromise, with Ministers Kwapiński and Grosfeld in the opposition. see: Jan Kwapiński, Kartki z Pamiętnika, 1939-1945 - Diary-London, Wydawnictwo Światowego Związku Polaków z Zagranicy, 1947, pp. 121-126.

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On Feb. 15th, 1944, Mikołajczyk; op.cit., p. 284-285.

both offers. Obviously what he wanted was unconditional surrender, and he certainly did not want to see the Polish Government administering even Western Poland. Before he received the reply from Moscow, however, Churchill, seeking to give as much public support of the Soviet claims as he could, made a fateful statement in the House of Commons on February 22nd, 1944, in which he admitted that he had personally raised the Polish question at Teheran and, mixing past disapproval of Polish policy with future hopes, gave it to be understood that he considered the Curzon Line a just frontier between the two countries. First of all, Churchill reminded the House that the British Government had not approved of the Polish occupation of Vilna in 1920 - though he did not mention that Great Britain had formally recognized the Polish Eastern frontiers, including Wilno, at the Conference of Ambassadors in 1923.⁶⁷ He went on to say that:

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

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This was pointed out by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. T. Romer, in his official protest on Feb. 24th.

The Soviet-Lithuanian agreement gave Wilno to Lithuania but in 1917 it could be said that: Polish influence and population "was strong enough to make the governments of Wilna and the adjoining northern districts form a Polish wedge between the Lithuanians in the north and the White Russians in the south and east" - Russian Poland, Foreign Office Handbook, op.cit., London, H.M. Stationery Office, 1920, p. 21. The Lithuanian government refused a League of Nations plebiscite. In a final plebiscite, the people voted for inclusion in Poland, as against federation projects supported by Pilsudski and some Polish political parties.

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. That is still the wish of His Majesty's Government. However, the advance of the Russian armies into Polish regions in which the Polish underground army is active makes it indispensable 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.⁶⁸

Churchill went on to justify his statement by claiming that the new frontier was necessary for Russian security against German aggression: "Twice in our lifetime Russia has been violently assaulted by Germany". He only omitted to say that in 1914 Russia occupied even more of Polish territory than she was now claiming, and that in 1941, even with the territory she had acquired up to the Ribbentrop-Molotov line, the German armies were only checked at the gates of Moscow by the onset of winter. He concluded:

I cannot feel that the Russian demand for a 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.⁶⁹

Churchill assured the House that "it was with great

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Hansard, February 22nd, 1944. As Mr. Pickthorn was to remark about this passage... my right hon. Friend said one or two things which I think were illogical. He said he was still in favour of...our principle...that annexation, territorial changes should all wait for the end of hostilities. But then he went on to say that anything in Poland east of the Curzon Line ought to go...I found a want of logic in that passage... - Ibid.

69 Ibid.

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".⁷⁰ Mr. Hore-Belisha, however, came to the core of the matter when he said:

the crucial question is, what does independence mean in this context?..Independence can be enjoyed on three precisely defined conditions. The first is, that these independent nations do not group themselves together in such a way as to form what is called a cordon sanitaire. The second condition is that their frontiers correspond with the requirements of Russia's strategic security. The third is that they have Governments which are well-disposed towards Russia.⁷¹

Having thus finally put into words what independence meant in the Russian version, Mr. Hore-Belisha went on to ask whether the British Government still stood "in favour of the principle of negotiation". He was answered by Eden that:"..the Prime Minister's words which he used yesterday were very carefully chosen...we are still in negotiation, the outcome of which all of us have very much at heart.." ⁷²

Churchill in his speech, did not suggest expressly that the Polish Government should accept the Curzon Line without any further negotiations. Most probably, he saw

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Ibid.

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Hansard, Feb.23rd,1944. Mr. McGovern was far more forthright when he said: ..We went to war ostensibly for the Polish Corridor. Now we see not only the corridor but the drawing-room, the dining-room, the bedrooms, the whole of the castle going, but going from another direction, and we have not got a Prime Minister who can state honestly that his illness at Teheran was not only a physical illness but the political illness of a man who knows that he is being driven remorselessly along a road on which he cannot stop.

⁷² Ibid.

his statement as a compensation for his stand on the post-war settlement of territorial changes. The difficulties he was faced with in this task of trying to satisfy both Stalin and the House of Commons, maybe surmized from Stalin's message to him of March 23rd, on this subject:

In your message of 21st March, you say you intend to make a speech in the House of Commons that questions requiring territorial change should be postponed until the peace conference and that till then, you cannot recognize any territorial changes made by force....You are free to make any speech in the House of Commons, that is your affair. But if you make such a speech, I shall consider that you have committed an act of injustice and unfriendliness to the Soviet Union.⁷³

Also in March 1944, Stalin talked with Oscar Lange and Father Orlemanski, two Poles whom the Soviet government found favourable to its views among the Poles in the U.S.A. In Poland, meanwhile, the KRN on March 15th, sent a delegation to Moscow; it included E. Osóbka-Morawski, Spychalski, Haneman and Sidor. Nothing, however, came of the attempts to establish a rival Polish government at this time. Stalin also rejected a repeated proposal by Churchill on the lines of the Polish statement of February 15th, 1944.

How did all these events influence the content of

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Admiral William D. Leahy, I Was There, London, Gollancz, 1950, p. 274-275. It may be of interest here to note that after Churchill's speech of Feb. 22nd, the Soviet Union, which had hitherto violently attacked Badoglio, suddenly established diplomatic relations with his government. Perhaps it considered this a concession to British interests in the Mediterranean, in return for British support of its claims in Poland? - H.W. McNeill, op.cit., pp. 417 & 419.

the Polish government's communications with the home country? Already during November 1943, the Polish General Staff in London elaborated "Commentaries" to the government instruction of October 27th. These Commentaries explained that Hypothesis A-I, for a general rising with the agreement of the Allies, was based on the principle that the general rising in Poland would be closely co-ordinated with British and U.S. action on the continent of Europe. It was admitted on this point, that the Polish government had been "unable to obtain a fundamental decision in this matter", due to "the distance of the Western front from Poland and political considerations.⁷⁴ The Commentaries foresaw that:

the disintegration of the German army could lead to the necessity of activating the general rising, even without aid from the outside.⁷⁵

They warned that in such circumstances the possibilities of aid

would undoubtedly depend on the nearness of the Anglo-Saxon front in Europe and on the means available, especially on the air-transport and the political situation.⁷⁶

The Commander of the AK was warned that:

you must take into your calculations the fact that for a certain period of time the home country will have to depend on its own resources.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Cited by Gen.St. Kopański, Orzeł Biały, no.14, 7.IV.1951.

^{75,76,77,}

Ibid.; These Commentaries were radioed from London to Warsaw on Dec. 2nd, 7th and 8th, 1943, having been first confirmed by the C-in-C who was then with the Polish troops in Palestine.

As can be seen from a comparison with the Instructions of October 27th, the Commentaries repeated its provisions with the admission that no decision had yet been reached on the co-ordination of the Polish general rising with Allied military operations.

In January 1944, when the British government started exerting pressure on the Polish government with regard to the Curzon Line, General Sosnkowski radioed the Commander of the AK commenting on the changes made by the latter in the government instruction of October 27th. Basing himself on his opinion that the AK should co-operate with the Red Army only if Polish-Soviet diplomatic relations were re-established, the General said, with regard to the decision for the coming out of the AK that:

In case of Soviet violence, the lack of reaction by Allied governments may lead /the AK/ to war on two fronts,

that is, both the Germans and the Russians. He commented that the Soviet Union maintained its claims to the territories East of the Molotov-Ribbentrop line, and that:

on those territories they do not intend, in any circumstances, to recognize our rights as hosts or that the character and limits of Soviet authority be defined by the legal Polish authorities. Finally, attempts to incorporate or annex your units to the Soviet army or Berling are more than likely.

General Sosnkowski also radioed that the Polish government had sent the British government an aide-memoire on December 31st, 1943, in which it affirmed the Polish will

to fight the Germans, the extent of this struggle and its costs and protested against Soviet accusations that the AK persecuted Communists and fought Soviet partizans. It concluded that the action of the AK should be included in the strategic plans of the Allies through an agreement between the Polish, Soviet, British and U.S. general staffs after the preliminary settlement of the political question. However, General Sosnkowski warned that although the British authorities were showing increased interest in the possibilities of the AK, this was not accompanied by any desire to increase arms supplies but with a clear tendency to treat Polish co-operation with the Soviets independently of the political problem. The C-in-C.'s opinion on this was that:

Such co-operation without a political understanding, must lead to dangerous complications and schisms, therefore the instruction /of October 27th/ foresaw that without the re-establishment of diplomatic relations, the Government would not co-operate with the Soviets.

General Sosnkowski also described British pressure on the drafting of the Polish statement to the United Nations on January 5th, 1944, in changing the excerpt on the return of Polish sovereignty from "over all the liberated territories" to "over the liberated territories" and in altering the excerpt: "the Polish Government expected that the Soviet Government, sharing its views on the necessity of future friendly relations between the two countries, will recognize the present rights of the Republic and its citizens" by

crossing out the word "present". The C-in-C concluded his cable with the warning that:

It is not out of the question that the Allies may exert pressure on the Polish Government to accept the Soviet territorial demands.

On his own part, he added that he considered any eventual compromise as aimless and disastrous. He radioed:

According to my opinion, the actual aim of Soviet policy is to make Poland over into a vassal Communist republic or into the 17th SSR, this is clearly evidenced by their interference in our internal and personal affairs.⁷⁸

However, General Sosnkowski did not change the order of the Commander of the AK to co-operate with the Soviets by coming out openly and fighting the Germans. In his cable of February 12th, 1944, he explained this by saying that:

The Government and I are of the opinion that the will of the home country cannot be disregarded.⁷⁹

The Polish government officially confirmed General Bór-Komarowski's order to the AK to come out openly to the Soviet troops, by its cable of February 18th, stipulating that in case of arrests the authorities in Poland should forbid any further coming out of the administration and armed forces. In any case, there was to be a deputy body of civil and military authorities which was to stay underground and communicate with the government as to the fate

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C-in-C to Com. AK, Jan. 11th, 1944, Ldz 281/tjn, PSZ III, pp. 560-562.

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C-in-C to Com. AK, 12.II.1944., PSZ III, p. 562.

of the Polish authorities and population and the policy of
⁸⁰ the Soviets. Also on February 18th, the Polish government
 declared that:

The Government Delegate and the Commander of the
AK will decide, depending on the circumstances, which
 administrative organs and military units are to come
 out and which are to stay underground,

and that:

In case the propositions of co-operation made
 by the Commander of a unit are rejected, the unit
 ought to be dissolved, the arms put in a safe place,
 and all conflicts with the Red Army avoided.⁸¹

Thus the Polish government intimated to the the-
 Home Authorities the way Polish affairs stood in the West.
 Nonetheless, the statement by Churchill on February 22nd,
 giving official British support to Soviet territorial dem-
 ands, struck the AK and authorities in Poland "like a bolt
⁸² from the blue". As we have seen, the RJN or Council of
 National Unity, categorically rejected any discussion of the
 matter. The official programme of the underground as con-
⁸³ tained in the RJN declaration of March 15th, 1944, confir-
 med this attitude. The civil and military authorities de-
 cided to continue fighting the Germans, simultaneously man-
 ifesting Poland's will to independence and thus actively

⁸⁰
 C-in-C to Com.AK, 20.II.1944, Idz 1427/167 -
Ibid, p. 564.

⁸¹
 C-in-C to Com.AK, 21.II.1944, Idz 1452/tjn/171-
Ibid.

⁸²
 T.B. Komarowski, op.cit., p. 195.

⁸³ see: Appendix II.

denying Soviet accusations of inaction and hostility. The Polish-Soviet frontier on the international stage remained unsettled through the Soviet refusal of the Polish compromise proposals. The British and U.S. governments, their official agreement to Soviet demands notwithstanding, were unwilling to form another Polish government in co-operation with the Soviets and to put their signature to any territorial changes without the participation of their Polish allies. Thus matters stood in the fateful spring of 1944.

Operation "Storm" in Poland, took place between January and October 1944, that is, from the entry of Soviet troops into the pre-war territories of Eastern Poland, till the stabilization of the German-Soviet front in October on the lower Narwa, Vistula and Visloka rivers. It was directly preceded by a period of diversion and partizan activity, its timing depending on the given region. Thus in the Wilno and Nowogródek regions in the North-East, strong partizan units were active from the winter of 1943/44. In the Lublin and Radom regions, partizan action had already begun in 1943. Smaller groups were concentrated into larger units at the end of 1943 in the Eastern territories, and directed to regions through which the German lines of retreat would have to pass. These regions were marked out along the railway lines in the previous plans foreseeing activity screening the main base in the case of a general

⁸⁴rising. During the year 1943, concentrations had also begun in order to protect the Polish population from Ukrainian partizans and police units which started to massacre the Poles with the intention of clearing those still left after the Soviet deportations.⁸⁵ The fall of 1943 also saw the first Soviet partizan action against the AK. In November, the Commander of the AK received news of the murder of several Polish partizan leaders who had gone for talks with Commanders of Soviet partizan units.⁸⁶ An order commanding⁸⁷ the liquidation of all Polish units met, was also found. The orders for operation Storm were received in this situation. Instructions to avoid conflict with Soviet partizans were obeyed, however, except by units of the NSZ which followed their own policy of fighting the Soviets as well as the Germans, and refused to subordinate themselves to the AK.

On March 15th, 1944, the Commander of the AK reported to the C-in-C that he had received news of the arrest, shooting and deportation of members of AK units in Volhynia, and of the enforced incorporation of young men into Soviet units. General B. Komarowski reported

⁸⁴ see PSZ III, p. 583.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 584.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 585; B. Komarowski, op.cit., p. 193-194.

⁸⁷ Mikołajczyk communicated it to the British government in his note of Jan. 16th, 1944 - Mikołajczyk, op.cit. p. 275.

that he had issued an order to the AK to refrain from further coming out in Volhynia - if the Soviets continued this policy.⁸⁸ In his order of March 23rd, 1944, the Commander of the AK issued complementary instructions for Storm in the Eastern districts of Wilno, Nowogródek, Polesie, Białystok and Lwów. General B. Komarowski underlined the political side of this action by saying that:

From the point of view of the advantages for the Polish cause, it is important that we take an active part in the liberation of the country through striking at the German rearguard. I emphasize that these blows ought to begin on our Eastern frontiers so as to underline that these territories belong to the Republic.

...The fight against the Germans will have great political importance and must be carried out irrespective of the Soviet attitude to us.⁸⁹

In section V, General B. Komorowski stipulated that, in view of the news he had from Volhynia, if the Commander of a district discovered the Soviets were "notoriously" disarming AK units and incorporating them into the Soviet or the Berling army, he was authorized to forbid further coming out without first contacting the Commander of the AK.⁹⁰ Thus, in spite of the clause in the Storm order of November 20th, 1943, that in case of such incidents the AK should stop coming out, the Commander turned this into a local

⁸⁸ Com.AK to C-in-C, Ldz 2481/tjn 44, PSZ III, p.590.

⁸⁹ Underlining mine; Com. Armed Forces in Poland, 23.III.1944, no.144/III/KSZ, Detailed order Ldz 6302/tjn.44, Ibid., p. 568.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 569.

decision depending on local conditions. The local commanders were to come out after a battle but leave a deputy commander hidden who, in case of the former's arrest, was to lead the unit underground. In case a Soviet commander rejected the Polish conditions for co-operation, the units were to disband avoiding conflicts with the Soviet troops. General B. Komarowski concluded:

The execution of Storm and the coming out of our units will allow us to obtain political advantages, if our government obtains detailed reports in the shortest possible time...⁹¹

The Polish forces in Volhynia were united in the 27th⁹² Infantry Division under Major "Oliwa" and numbered about 6,000 men. Although there were Soviet liason officers in the HQ of the division already in February, the first co-operation of the AK with the Red Army took place⁹³ in the capture of the town of Turzysk on March 20th, 1944. This was part of the Soviet action on the important town of Kowel. The commander of the 27th division radioed the Commander of the AK on March 27th, for permission to ac-

⁹¹

Ibid., p. 569.

⁹²

The Germans respected this small but compact force to the extent of proposing to re-arm the unit and give it a free hand with the local Ukrainians, in return for a united stand against the Soviets - Report of Inspector of Równe, Ibid., p. 589.

⁹³

An indication of the value of the 27th div., was the Radio Moscow announcement that Turzysk was taken by Polish units with Soviet artillery support - Drogi Cichociemnych, London, Veritas, 1954, p.228. /English version: The Unseen and The Silent./

cept Soviet propositions for the division's tactical subordination to the Soviet High Command and its re-arming, on the basis of Polish conditions as enumerated in the orders of November 20th 1943 and March 23rd, 1944. Hoping that this was a good augury for further co-operation, General B. Kom-⁹⁴arowski gave his permission. The reactions of General Sosnkowski and Prime Minister Mikołajczyk to this news typified their different attitudes on the matter. General Sosnkowski radioed that he doubted whether the Soviet High Command would carry out its promises loyally and foresaw attempts to incorporate the AK units into the Soviet or the Berling army. He went on to state:

The possibility of coming to an understanding in the matter of the tactical subordination of the 27th Division, between the Polish and Soviet governments, or between myself and the Soviet High Command, is at present non-existent, in spite of all the efforts of the Polish government...

adding that the date of the invasion of Europe was still⁹⁵ unknown. Mikołajczyk, on the other hand, radioed the Delegate of the Government expressing full approval for⁹⁶ the decision of the Commander of the AK.

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Com.AK to C-in-C, Ldz 2797/tjn.44, 4.IV.1944, Ibid, 591.

⁹⁵

C-in-C to Com.AK, from Italian front, Ldz 2880/tjn 44, 8.IV.1944, Ibid., p. 593. The date for the invasion of Europe had been fixed for May at the Quebec Conference, but the Polish C-in-C was apparently uninformed.

⁹⁶

He thought that perhaps the fear of the Polish units passing to the German side in face of the shooting and disarming of Poles by the Soviets, motivated the action of the latter in accepting Polish conditions - "Stem" to Delegate, Ldz 4046/tjn 44, 18.IV.1944, Ibid., p. 594.

The 27th Division fought in the region of Kowel for three weeks, during which time the German-Soviet front became stabilized. In mid-April, the Germans pushed back the Red Army which asked the AK to hold on to the last minute while it withdrew without giving supplies or notice, thus leaving the 27th at the mercy of the Germans.⁹⁷ At the cost of losses amounting to fifty percent of its men, the Division broke out of the encirclement in a North-East-erly direction - except for a unit which went due East and was disarmed by the Soviets - and penetrated into the Lublin region, where, after a rest, it fought the Germans again in July and was finally disarmed by the Russians when marching to the aid of the Warsaw Rising. Its story is typical of the fate of other Polish units. The political advantages mentioned in the order of March 23rd, 1944, did not materialize.

No allied military correspondents were allowed to cover the Soviet front at this period and the Allies apparently, in spite of SOE and previous co-operation with the AK, chose to doubt whether the units in the Eastern territories were acting on AK orders. In his answer to the report of General B. Komarowski on the action in Volhynia - report no. 350 - the C-in-C radioed that this information was difficult to use advantageously because the Allies,

under the influence of Soviet propaganda, suspected that the AK had no control over the entire underground organization.⁹⁸ Because of this, the C-in-C informed General B. Komorowski on March 11th, 1944 - Idz 1986/44 - of the necessity of action "Jula" which was to effect a break in the rail-transport movement on several lines simultaneously, or of a wider action,^{98b} "Ewa". It was decided to embark on Jula, since the larger action had been prepared to synchronize with the allied invasion of the continent. Jula was carried out on April 6th, 1944, and as a result, rail communication was cut for 33-48 hours in the Vistula - San triangle. London acknowledged the report on April 27th, and Lord Selbourne expressed his appreciation to General Sosnkowski in a letter of 13th May, 1944. This did not, however, have the effect of allowing the appearance of AK action in the British or American press.

Meanwhile, what were the developments in the Western plans? While the press was full of friendship and admiration for the Soviets, Churchill had told Eden in January:

Broadly speaking, the issue is: Are we going to

⁹⁸ PSZ III, p. 501. Gen. Kopański says that Gen. Gubbins of SOE asked him in mid-March 1944, whether the AK could destroy some communications in Poland. Gen. Kopański got the impression that the British wanted to see the extent of the Polish government's control over the AK - Gen. St. Kopański, "W Sprawie Decyzji Stoczenia Walki o Warszawę" - On the Decision to Fight for Warsaw - Orzeł Biały, no. 15, 14.IV.1951.

^{98b} PSZ III, p. 502.

acquiesce in the Communisation of the Balkans and perhaps of Italy? ... I am of the opinion on the whole that we ought to come to a definite conclusion about it and that if our conclusion is that we resist the Communist infusion and invasion, we should put it to them pretty plainly at the best moment that military events permit. We should of course have to consult the U.S.⁹⁹

The only way to do this, as Churchill saw it, short of the Balkan invasion, was to come to an agreement on spheres of military influence in the Balkans and Central Europe. He started a secret correspondence with Stalin to this effect in May, trying to bargain his support for the annexation of East Prussia to Poland, in return for Soviet agreement to the British occupation of Austria. After much reluctance, Roosevelt, without the knowledge of the State Department, agreed to Churchill's compromise proposition that the U.S.A. agree to a British-Soviet partition of military spheres of influence in the Balkans for a "trial" period of three months. By this means Churchill tried to save at least Greece and, he hoped, Yugoslavia, from falling into the Soviet bloc. As far as he saw, Poland and the Baltic states were already doomed - as indeed they were, with the Allied attitude to them during the war as a contributing factor.

Mikołajczyk was invited to Washington at the beginning of June and his visit, though it coincided with

D-Day, was filled with talks with President Roosevelt, while his military advisers talked with the Combined Chiefs of Staff. The Polish Prime Minister experienced a very friendly reception at the White House and the military experts¹⁰⁰ discussed aid for a Polish general rising. President Roosevelt assured Mikołajczyk that if contact with Stalin were satisfactorily established, he might help in getting^{100b} Lwów and the oil-fields for Poland. He also proposed that Mikołajczyk fly to Moscow for talks with Stalin, to which Mikołajczyk agreed. Stalin answered Roosevelt's cable, however, that considering his, Stalin's, views on the Polish question, he did not think any good results¹⁰¹ could be ~~obtained~~ from direct contact.

On the eve of Mikołajczyk's departure from London to Washington, President Benes once more presented the Soviet demands to the Polish Prime Minister. The Soviet government affirmed willingness to open "informal discussions" on the condition, as before, that the Poles accept the Curzon Line as the basis for the Polish-Soviet frontier and carry out personal changes in the Cabinet.¹⁰² These conditions were again rejected by the Polish government, while the Soviet summer offensive started on June 9th, on

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Ciechanowski, op.cit., pp. 312 & 318.

^{100b}

Ibid., p. 320.

¹⁰¹

Ibid., p. 332.

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 309.

the Karelian front. They were again tendered to Mikołajczyk by the Soviet ambassador to the exiled governments, Lebediev, on June 20th, after the Polish Prime Minister's return from Washington and three days before the beginning of the summer offensive on the White Russian front. Lebediev said his government demanded the dismissal of President Raczkiewicz, General Sosnkowski, General M. Kukiel and St. Kot. They were to be replaced by men from Great Britain and the U.S.A.; in addition, the reconstructed government was to denounce its predecessor for bringing the Katyn¹⁰³ murders to the attention of the International Red Cross. Thus the Soviet government pursued its policy of constructing an official Polish puppet government abroad, in spite of the existence of the KRN and ZPP - possibly because it still counted on much stiffer opposition from the Western powers once its aims became plain for all to see, with the hour of decision approaching in Poland.

Stalin's aim of creating a legal puppet government in the West, in preparation for a potential fusion with the elements already existing in Poland and the USSR, is clearly evident in the light of a KRN mission which set out to Moscow at about the same time. On May 22nd, 1944, it was received by Stalin, and frontier questions as well as

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Mikołajczyk, op.cit., p. 65.

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matters pertaining to military help, were settled. Not all Polish Communists were in favour of relying solely on the Soviet Union, however. On May 23rd, at a meeting of the Central Committee of the PPR in Warsaw, certain members, headed by W. Gomułka, were in favour of a common front with the left-wing Socialists. Gomułka saw in this a possible link between the KRN and the non-Communist RJN. In this he was strongly opposed by B. Bierut - the future President of Poland and Secretary of the Polish Communist Party. Bierut did not want to have anything to do with
 105
 the RJN.

After the experiences in Volhynia in the spring of 1944, the AK HQ and the Polish government in London were faced with the decision of whether to assert Polish sovereignty in Wilno and Lwów, and whether to carry on Storm West of the Bug. In both cases they decided to follow the policy of manifesting Polish rights through fighting the Germans and coming out to the entering Soviet armies. In the case of Wilno, it was decided at a conference in Warsaw on June 12th, 1944, to concentrate the united forces of the Nowogródek and Wilno regions near Wilno, and to strike at

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Ed. Osóbka-Morawski, who headed the delegation, gave an account of this mission at the meeting of Superior Socialist Council, on April 1st, 1946. This was scrupulously omitted in later reports of the meetings. - see Malara & Rey, op.cit., p. 290, note 7 to Chp. II.

105

Nowe Drogi, Sept-Oct. 1948. The PPS Robotnik of 18.VI.1944, still mentioned "discreet PPR desires of entering the RJN".

the Germans and occupy the city when the frontline reached it. Towards the end of June, the Commander of the region received the order to take Wilno. On June 23rd, the Soviet offensive moved with crushing weight on the White Russian sector.

The AK of the region, numbering 5,500 men, struck in Wilno on the night of July 7th, 1944. Meanwhile, in a cable of the same date, General Sosnkowski radioed that if, by a fortunate coincidence, in the last moments of the German retreat and before Soviet entry, there would be at least a chance of obtaining a temporary control of the cities of Wilno and Lwów and any other large centres or even small regions, the AK ought to do so and greet the Soviets as hosts of the country. ¹⁰⁶ In this, his advice was contradictory to his own comments of January 11th, 1944, on the changes made by the Commander of the AK in the government instruction of October 27th, 1943, in which he expressed his opinion that the Soviets would not recognize any Polish rights East of the Curzon Line. As we have seen, however, the Commander of the AK had already given such an order with respect to Wilno, at the end of June.

The fighting for Wilno took place between July 7th and 13th. On the fourteenth of July, the Commander of the Nowogródek region sent a report that relations with the

Soviet commander were good. The Russians were supplying the Polish units with liason officers and equipment. However, those AK units which had fought outside of Wilno, were prevented from entering the city and the Commander of the Wilno region cabled on July 12th that he feared the Russians would liquidate his force; a puppet Lithuanian government was outside Wilno. He asked for a commission of English and American liason officers to be sent by plane to regulate the situation.¹⁰⁷ The Russians promised the Polish commander that his units would be formed into a corps and a cavalry brigade independent of Berling's army, and that they would be equipped by the Russians. On July 16th, Colonel "Wilk" and his staff were invited to Wilno for talks with General Chernishevsky; his other officers were summoned to a conference elsewhere. News came soon that they were then all arrested; the remaining troops were threatened with destruction if they did not surrender. Some of the units managed to break away to the forests. The Commander of the AK reported this to the C-in-C on July 19th, 1944.¹⁰⁸ Of the fighting in Wilno, the London Times' Moscow correspondent wrote on July 11th, that is, while the fighting was still in progress:

substantial help by White Russian and Lithuanian

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Com. Wilno region to Com.AK, 12.VII.1944, Idz 13226
tjn 44, PSZ III, p. 613.

108

Idz 5881/tjn 44, 19.VII.1944, Ibid., p. 615.

partisans, including many Jews...is reported from the Wilna region,

/The Times, July 12th, 1944, p. 4/ and in the Times of July 14th, the Russian High Command was quoted as saying that Soviet troops had "liberated the capital of the Soviet Lithuanian Republic". Thus the efforts of the AK went unrecorded in the world's press and Russia asserted her hold on Lithuania.

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Around mid-July, but before the news from Wilno reached him, the Commander of the AK decided to carry on operation Storm West of the Curzon Line. In his order of July 11th, to the Commander of the Białystok region, he said:

Most of the territories in the 'Sarna' region /code name for Białystok/ lie to the West of the so-called Curzon Line, but to the East of the Ribbentrop-Molotov line. This circumstance, in the light of our complicated relations with the Soviets, may well constitute a precedent for the dispute over these territories. The good of the Polish cause demands a special emphasis on the Polish nature of the region. The largest possible Polish participation is necessary during the clearing of the region from the German occupation.110

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The Polish government received news of the participation of the AK in the liberation of Wilno, on July 18th, and Mikołajczyk told Churchill of this on that day. On July 19th, Minister Romer talked with Mr. Eden and the U.S. Charge d'Affaires in London. The Allies were asked for help in securing the AK in the Wilno region from destruction. On receiving news of the Wilno arrests on July 21st, the Polish government informed the British and asked again for Allied intervention. Churchill sent a telegram to Stalin on this matter, apparently to no effect and towards the end of July, Eden intervened with Gusiev, to no avail - St. Kopański, op.cit., Orzeł Biały, no. 18, 5.V.1951.

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AK HQ, 11.VII.1944, no. 1301/III, PSZ III, p. 572; It is not known whether the order reached the region in time.

At the beginning of July, while the AK General Staff were drawing up further orders for Storm, a radio instruction arrived from the C-in-C, dated July 7th, advising against a general rising, in view of the possible mass retreat through Poland of the German armies, and the Soviet reluctance to re-establish relations with the Polish government. General Sosnkowski radioed:

In these military-political circumstances, an armed rising of the nation would not be justified, not to speak of the lack of physical chances of success.

In the ever-changing situation, however, everything was possible. He added, therefore, that since theoretically, these conditions might still change, the possibility of activating the general rising should be maintained. Bearing the above considerations in mind, he ordered the Storm to be carried on, and, as has been seen above, advised the taking over of Wilno and Lwów if the occasion arose. ¹¹¹

On July 12th, 1944, the Commander of the AK issued a further instruction to regional commanders with regard to the AK attitude to the Red Army. In this order he tried to find a compromise manner in which to manifest Polish sovereignty through fighting the Germans and simultaneously maintaining political independence while in possible tactical subordination or contact with the Soviets. The order explained that in fighting the Germans, the Russians were

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C-in-C to Com.AK, Ldz 5480/44, Ibid., p.573-575.

the allies of Poland, while in claiming the territories East of the Curzon Line and in their active opposition to all representations of the Polish Republic and in the formation of the ZPP, of Berling's army and the pro-Soviet agencies in Poland, they were in fact aiming at the solution of the Polish problem in their own way and were thus hostile to the Republic. The order explained:

The Soviets are thus, on the one hand, a powerful combatant in our struggle with the Germans, and on the other, a dangerous enemy attacking our fundamental attitude of independence.

The AK was therefore ordered to co-operate with the Soviets only in fighting the Germans, while it was to oppose them politically, by a constant and unbending manifestation of the independence of the Polish armed forces and the administration. This opposition was to be "a collective manifestation of the will of the Polish nation to maintain its independence". In order to prevent this co-operation from giving the appearance of support for the Soviet claims to the Eastern territories and agreement with the political aims of the Soviets, the AK and the administration were to underline their complete subordination to the Polish government and C-in-C. In practice, the regional commanders were to fight the Germans as long as possible on their own, and establish contact with the Soviet units only in case of absolute tactical necessity. They were to stress their position by offering co-operation on the orders of the Polish

government and by stating that their unit was part of the AK; as before, action against the Red Army was allowed only in self-defense, as was also action against the units of AL.¹¹²

On July 14th, 1944, the Commander of the AK sent a report to the C-in-C in which he gave a highly important estimate of the military and internal situations and confirmed the decision to continue operation Storm. The military situation of the Germans on the central sector of the front - the Heeresgruppe Mitte- was desperate, cabled General Bór-Komarowski. Their defense had broken down, and their retreat on this sector gave all the appearances of a beaten army. The German northern front was threatened and there was a possibility that the Soviets could there cut off the German retreat to East Prussia. Besides this, the way to Warsaw lay wide open. The Soviet attack on the German North Ukrainian front was expected at any moment. The Commander of the AK said that, in view of the Soviet successes, he had to count on the possibility of:

- a. A German attempt to check the Soviet by a counter-attack between Grodno and Białystok and a battle in the Lublin region if the Soviets chose to strike from South to North, West of Polesie;
- b. A quick German retreat to the Vistula-San line.
- c. Perhaps a complete breakdown of the German forces and their headlong flight, although there was as yet, no clear evidence of this.

Politically, the Commander of the AK was of the

opinion that, on the basis of developments up till that moment,

the Soviets were aiming to provoke a general rising in Poland with the aid of the PPR.

They were counting on the will to revenge and the impatience of the population. General Bór-Komorowski radioed that "Soviet orders foresee the unleashing of the battle with the crossing of the Bug." They were dropping leaders' cadres and supplies to the AL units with this aim in view. He estimated that the Soviets could realize these plans unless the AK countered them with its attitude and action. He continued:

I realize that the success of such a rising would facilitate military operations for the Soviets, but its main value would be political. The country would create the appearances of a desire for co-operation with the Soviets and of subordinating itself to them, while the population would suffer very heavy losses and there would be a split in Polish society which would make it easier for the Soviets to carry out their political plans in Poland.

The AK units, he went on, were mainly in platoon strength and could carry out Storm through harrassing the rearguards of the retreating Germans; they would also protect the population. General Bór-Komorowski saw that "this action cannot have a large military effect and would only constitute an armed manifestation". In the actual military position of the Germans in Poland, and their fortifications, a general rising had, in his opinion, no chances of success. Taking into consideration the political and military situation and

the internal situation of the country, the Commander of the AK radioed that he had decided to carry on operation Storm, explaining his decision in the following manner:

In spite of the non-establishment of diplomatic relations with the Soviets, the AK cannot remain inactive in case of a German retreat and Soviet entry, or in case of the disintegration of the German forces and the threat of a Soviet occupation. The AK must give final battle to the Germans, and this may take the form of 'Storm' or of a general rising, or both; if in the course of 'Storm', the German forces are shattered in the Eastern territories, then a general rising would take place in the remaining parts of the country.

The guiding thought of our final battle is:

- a. To document to the world our unbending attitude towards the Germans and our unflinching will to fight them.
- b. To deprive the Soviets of the malicious trump card of calling us the silent allies of the Germans, or even neutrals.
- c. To take under our command that part of society which is desirous of revenge on the Germans and which is not part of the AK, with the aim of directing it towards independence and drawing it away from Soviet agencies...

Giving thus a minimum military aid to the Soviets, we shall create political difficulties. The AK underlines the will of the nation to independence. This forces the Soviets to break our will and creates obstacles towards their destruction of our aims from the inside.

The Commander of the AK concluded:

I realize that our coming out may bring about the destruction of the most idealistic elements in Poland, but the Soviets will be unable to do this in secret and will have to resort to open violence which may evoke the protest of our Allies.¹¹³

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Com.AK to C-in-C, Report no. 243, Idz 6302/44, Ibid., pp. 577-580. This report of July 14th, reached the General Staff in London on Aug. 8th - owing to delayed transmission - Ibid., p. 577.

IV

THE WARSAW RISING, 1.VIII. - 2.IX.1944.

Events moved fast in July. While the German front in Eastern and Southern Poland was crumbling before the onslaught of the Soviet armies, news came of the attempt on Hitler's life on July 20th, which, though unsuccessful, proved to what extent the German situation was unpredictable. Largely under the impact of this news, as also with the knowledge of the shattering defeat of the German armies in White Russia, the Commander of the AK sent a report on July 21st to the C-in-C, estimating that the Soviet offensive would soon cross the Vistula and reporting that, in view of this factor and of the attempt on Hitler's life as well as of the signs of disintegration in the German army, he had given the order to stand by for a general rising as from July 25th, 001 hours.¹ This order did not check operation Storm but was given out in case of a sudden German collapse.² The July 21st estimate of the situation also brought a

¹ Com. AK to C-in-C, Idz 5216/tj. This report was received in London on July 23rd, PSZ III, p.656-657.

² Gen. B. Komorowski writes of it: We did not want, for lack of foresight on our part, to leave the authorities without the means of activating a general rising on time, if the political situation required it. We ourselves, however, were not in favour of a general rising, but were preparing for the continuation of Storm. - Gen.B. Komorowski, op.cit., p.222.

problem of cardinal importance before the Command of the AK and the Polish government - was there or was there not to be battle for Warsaw itself?

On July 21st, General B. Komorowski cabled London:

The Soviet offensive which began last week South of the Pripet, has opened for itself a wide gateway for further progress Westwards. The Germans did not possess sufficient reserves nor had they prepared defensive positions to check the Soviet movement. I foresee that Soviet progress Westward on this sector will be swift and will reach the Vistula and cross it in a continuing movement West without larger and successful German counter action.³

Between July 22nd and July 24th, it was decided by the High Command of AK that Warsaw should be taken over by the Polish armed forces. The Delegate of the Government gave his assent to the decision and the Central Commission of the RJN also agreed that the Soviet entry into Warsaw should be preceded by the AK seizure of the city. It was decided that at least twelve hours were necessary to allow the civil administration to take over.⁴ Undoubtedly, the Moscow radio announcement of July 23rd, declaring that the National Committee of Liberation was to be entrusted with the administration of the liberated territories, was a factor of decisive importance in the decision. However, local considerations were equally as important. The atmosphere in Warsaw, the centre of the underground struggle with the Germans for five years, was tense. German troops in

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Com. AK to C-in-C, Ldz 5916/tjn, PSZ III, p.656.

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Ibid., p. 658.

disorderly retreat were flooding the city from the East, while German civilians were leaving in all haste for Germany. The German administration also left the city, but returned on July 26⁵th. People were itching to strike at least a few blows in return for the horror of five years of occupation. On July 25th, the Commander of the AK radioed the C-in-C:

We are ready to undertake the fight for Warsaw at any moment.⁶

Thus the initial decision to fight for Warsaw was taken between July 22nd and 24th. It was a change in the Storm plans inasmuch as it had not been originally intended not to use the mass of the AK in the city but to the West of it, so as to cut off German communications and hamper their retreat. However, Hitler's "festungsplatz" policy of making every larger city a fortress, as revealed in the cases of Minsk, Vitebsk and Wilno, pointed to the possibility of Warsaw becoming another such fortress with the ensuing destruction.⁷ For this reason, among others, it was decided that the AK should take the city.⁸ However, plans for action in Warsaw had been made as early as 1940 and had been continually

⁵ see Korboński, op.cit., p. 340; B. Komorowski, p. 225.

⁶ Idz 6024/tj, PSZ III, p. 662.

⁷ Guderian says that before ordering Warsaw to be razed to the ground on Oct. 11th, 1944, Hitler had declared /it/ a fortress, H. Guderian, Panzer Leader, London, Michael Joseph, 1954, p. 358.

⁸ Gen. B. Komorowski says: In the second half of July, on the opinion of the Chief of Operations "Niedźwiadek" /Gen. Okulicki/ the High Command of the AK changed this plan /of

re-adapted to the changing situation, so that from this point of view, the decision was no innovation.

The main elements of the decision were military and political. They should be examined on two levels - that of the Commander of the AK in Poland, and that of the Polish government in London. From the point of view of the Commander of the AK, there are two phases to be considered in the military situation, these are: The situation on the German-Soviet front between June 22nd and July 25th, when General Bór-Komorowski cabled his readiness to rise in Warsaw, and the situation between July 25th-August 1st, that is, the week preceeding the rising itself. Among the political elements of the decisions are: the creation of the Polish Committee of National Liberation in Poland, the attitude of the Polish government in London, and the attitude of the Soviet government and its policies in Poland just before the Warsaw rising.

On July 21st, the date of General Bór-Komorowski's cable that he had ordered a stand-by for a general rising, General Heinz Guderian was appointed Chief of the German General Staff. He wrote of the situation on the Eastern front in the following terms:

My predecessor had left me not only a disorganized staff but also a completely disorganized front. There were no reserves available to the O.K.H. The

fighting outside the city/ and ordered the Commander of the Warsaw-city region to seize the capital within the framework of operation Storm.- B. Komorowski, op.cit., p.219.

only forces immediately at hand were those in Rumania, behind Army Group South Ukraine...it was bound to take a considerable time to move them up.⁹

At the Nuremberg trials, Guderian told the Polish judge, J. Sawicki, that:

After my nomination, the whole front - if it could be called a front - was but a conglomeration of separate remnants of the armies which were retreating to the line of the Vistula.¹⁰

Months before the summer of 1944, the German armies had suffered a decisive defeat at the battle of Kursk in mid-july, 1943, when Hitler launched and lost his last offensive in Russia.¹¹ The Red Army flowed back to the Dnieper and crossed it in December of that year. The three Soviet offensives during the winter of 1943-1944 and spring 1944 had defeated the German armies before Leningrad, on the West bank of the Dnieper and in the Crimea; they had swept the Germans from the Ukraine, Moldavia, Moscow and Kalinin regions as well as from Eastern White Russia. The Soviets had retaken the metallurgical centres of Southern Russia, the minerals of Krivoi Rog and Nikopol and stood at the gates of Rumania. The 18th, 17th and 6th German armies had been totally destroyed. The biggest Ger-

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Guderian, op.cit., p. 354-355.

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Zburzenie Warszawy, - The Destruction of Warsaw - published by The Leading Commission Examining German Crimes in Poland, Katowice, Awir, 1946, p.116.

¹¹
After Kursk, the most violent German counter-attacks were only "soubresauts" and superiority in force, tanks, artillery and planes definitely passed to the Red Army - see Gen. A. Guillaume, La Guerre Germano-Soviétique, Paris, Payot, 1949, pp.112-114.

man effort at counter-attack in the Vinnica region showed their military weakness and inability to inflict a decisive defeat on the Soviet armies.

In June 1944, the German-Soviet front ran along the line: Narva, Pskov, Veliki-Luki, Mozir, Kovel, Orguliev, Tiraspol. The German forces were hopelessly outclassed; the Russian armies, divided into the three White Russian "fronts" and the Third Baltic front, launched an attack in the White Russian sector between June 21st and 23rd with 146 rifle formations and 43 Tank formations¹², that is, about 100 divisions, against the front of the Heeres Gruppe Mitte which, with the 2nd, 9th and 4th armies and the 3rd Panzer army, had just over 38 infantry divisions to cover its 1,000 kilometre front between Vitebsk and Kovel; of these, only 34 were up to standard with 4 sub-standard divisions in reserve.¹³ The air-force, of the HGM was so weak "that it was almost impossible to ascertain the enemy's dispositions",¹⁴ and matters were

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Guderian, op.cit., p. 336.

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Gen. Kurt von Tippelskirch, Geschichte des Zweiten Weltkrieges, Berlin, Athenaum Verlag, 1951, p. 531. W. Goerlitz says the HGM had 42 divisions; he probably includes the reserves, W. Goerlitz, The German General Staff, New York, Praeger, 1954, p. 451. Another source gives the Russians in this sector 130 infantry divisions, 17 motorized divs and 43 armoured divs; he probably includes the Russian 1st Ukrainian front - Werner Beumelberg, Jahre ohne Gnade, Oldenburg, Gerhard Stalling Verlag, 1952, p. 363. Guillaume gives the HGM 50 divs; 35 at the front and 10-12 in reserve; he bases himself on Russian sources & Guillaume, op.cit., p. 152.

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W. Goerlitz, op.cit., p. 450 and: The Luftflotte 6 had only 40 fighters in flying condition, therefore the Soviets had complete mastery of the air - Tippelskirch, op.cit., p. 533.

made still worse by the concentration of motorized and armoured divisions in the German North Ukraine sector where the OKW expected the first and strongest blow of the Soviet summer offensive.¹⁵ The Balkans were seen as the Soviet political aim before the Allies got there.^{15b} The main directions of the Russian offensive, however, were Vitebsk, Boguchev, Orsha and Mogilev; General Rokossowski's 1st White Russian Front moved on June 23rd in the direction of Bobruisk and Warsaw /see map/. Thus, on a front 600 kilometres began one of the greatest battles of the second World War, and the most important of the ten Soviet offensives of 1944.

The first phase of the unequal battle was over by June 30th. Rokossowski had in five days completely liquidated the German 9th army and was thereupon promoted to Marshal. "The fall of Vitebsk, Orsha, Mogilev and Bobruisk meant that the German defensive system in the Central Zone had completely crumbled".¹⁶ The German 9th army was reduced to about three or four dispersed and demoralized divisions; the German 4th army was in danger of being cut to pieces. The 3rd Tank army had lost most of its infantry. On June 30th, the Russians moved forward again in the second phase of the battle. Borisov fell on July 2nd and Minsk on July 3rd;

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Tippelskirch, op.cit., p. 530-531.

15b

Guillaume, op.cit., p.146.

16 W.E.D. Allen and Muratoff, The Russian Campaigns of 1944-1945, London, Penguin, 1946, p.111.

Polotsk on the 4th. On that day, the HGM reported that it was facing 126 rifle divisions, 17 motorized brigades, 6 Cavalry division and 45 armoured units of Brigade strength, to counter which it had only 8 units of division strength.¹⁷ The final phase of the battle of White Russia took place between July 4th - July 16th. Kovel fell on July 5th, Baranowicze on July 8th, Wilno on the 13th and Pińsk on July 14th. On that day also, the 1st and 4th Ukrainian Fronts moved against the Heeres Gruppe Nord Ukraine with the aim of reaching the middle Vistula and San. By July 13th, the HGM reported it could at most scrape up sixteen divisions¹⁸ against one hundred and sixty Russian divisions; the proportion there was 10-1. By July 15th the Russians were at Grodno, Olita and Kaunas; the 4th German army had been destroyed at Minsk. Between June 22nd and July 15th, the HGM alone lost about 380,000 men and twenty-five to thirty¹⁹ divisions. In the South, Marshal Konev started his attack on Lwów on July 16th, outflanking it simultaneously through Rawa Ruska and going up in a North-Westerly direction along the Kovel-Chełm-Lublin railway. On July 19th, the decisive attack in this sector suddenly switched Westwards towards the Western Bug. On July 22nd, General Kolpakchi's

¹⁷Tippelskirch, op.cit., p. 359.¹⁸Ibid., p. 541.¹⁹

Guderians says 25, op.cit., p. 336; W. Gorlitz, Der Zweite Weltkrieg, Stuttgart, 1951-1952, vol.II., p. 252.

columns captured Chełm on their way to Lublin. By July²¹st, the Russians "had advanced in what seemed irresistible strength" to the line of the Vistula from Sandomierz to Warsaw, Siedlce, Bielsk, Podlaski, Bialystok, Grodno, Kovno, through Poniewisch to Schaulen /Suwalki/ and Mitau. North of Mitau, the Soviets reached the coast of the Gulf of Riga and thus cut²⁰ off the Army Group North from the rest of the front. On July 23rd, the Russians reached the San and crossed it. On July 24th, they took Lublin and were at Biała and Żyków with the 1st White Russian and 1st Ukrainian fronts converging in the direction of Warsaw. Lwów was encircled on July 25th. Such was the military situation on the German-Soviet front when the decision to fight for Warsaw was taken. The High Command of the AK relied for its estimates on German, Soviet and British broadcasts as well as its own observers, and as we have seen, its estimate that the German front was broken²¹ was correct. The situation of those days is thus described by the Moscow correspondent of the London Times on July 25th:

The outstanding feature of the Russian offensive has been the progress of Marshal Rokossovsky's 1st White Russian Front. Two of his columns are enveloping Brest-Litovsk, but the spectacular achievement is the advance South of that town. Here, on Monday /July 24th/ for the second day in succession, he pushed forward 40 miles at one point, as well as capturing Lublin and Lukow... On Rokossovsky's left, Konev has reached the San on a 50 mile front and crossed it at several points. Correspondents speak of the armies in the sectors of Rokossovsky and Konev, accompanied by a mass of transport, captured German trucks mingled with Russian and

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Guderian, Op.cit., p. 354.

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Around July 22nd, High Command AK picked up un-

American, sweeping forward in the direction of the Vistula and Warsaw. /Times, July 26th, 1944/.

On this day, on July 26th, Warsaw first heard the broadcast of the Manifesto of the Polski Komitet Wyzwolenia Narodowego, PKWN, - The Polish Committee of National Libe-²²ration, which had been published at Chełm on July 22nd.

Behind the Manifesto stood a skeleton government, the Committee itself, consisting of seventeen departments and headed by Edward Osóbka-Morawski as President and Director of Foreign Affairs. His two co-workers were Andrew Witos and Wanda Wasilewska. The C-in-C of the Armed Forces and²³ Director of National Defense was General Rola-Żymierski, seconded by General Berling and General Alex. Zawadzki as political officer. General Korczyc, an ex-Soviet officer, was Chief of Staff. The Department of Public Security, that is, the all important police, was headed by Raczkiewicz. St. Jędrzychowski was minister of Propaganda and St. Skrzyszewski was minister of Education. Thus the Committee was made up of figures already well known from the Union of Polish Patriots with a home-grown "patriot" at its head.

ciphered orders of the Com. of the German 4th Armoured Army, ordering his units to retreat West across the Vistula - B. Komorowski, op.cit., p. 226.

²²

Radio Moscow announced on July 23rd, that the Committee was entrusted with the administration of liberated Polish territories, see Ibid., p. 229.

²³

Cashiered from the Polish army before the war for defrauding state funds.

Very little was, however, known of these people in Poland²⁴ and in the West.

The Manifesto of July 22nd was specifically timed to coincide with the entry of Soviet troops onto soil recognized by the Soviet government as "Polish". Chełm was the first large Polish town West of the Bug. The declaration contained several specific points. It appealed to the population to rise to arms and fight the Germans - its first words were: "Countrymen! The hour of liberation has struck". It called to all Poles: "To arms! Strike at the Germans²⁵ wherever you find them!" In this respect it answered General B. Komorowski's prognostic mentioned in his report of July 14th, that the Soviets would try to provoke a general rising under the leadership of the PPR, once they had crossed the Bug. Most significant of all, however, the Manifesto called the KRN - Communist Home National Council - "the only legal source of authority in Poland" and claimed that the Committee of National Liberation had been called into being by a decree of the KRN which was described as "the provisional parliament of the Polish nation". The

²⁴ The London Times' Moscow correspondent wrote on July 23rd, 1944: The arrival of the Red Army on territory that Moscow recognized to be under Polish sovereignty, has brought forward the question of relations between Russian forces and the local population. A delegation of the Polish National Council... has given the Russians confidence that there will be found elements in the villages - towns are few in eastern Poland - which, while maintaining their independence, will cooperate loyally with their liberators - ! - The Times, July 24th, 1944.

²⁵ See Appendix III, p.XVI.

Manifesto thus openly challenged the RJN, the AK and the whole organized non-Communist Polish underground which represented the Polish nation. The "emigré government in London" was called "illegal" and was accused of being based on the "unlawful, Fascist constitution of April 1935". It was also accused of holding back in the struggle with the Germans. The Committee of National Liberation and the KRN claimed to act on the fundamental principles of the "democratic constitution of March 17th 1921" although the "National Councils" through which they proposed to govern on all levels of regional government, were based on a Soviet pattern and had nothing to do with the 1921 Constitution. The creation of the Committee of National Liberation was justified in the following manner:

At the moment when Poland is being liberated, at the moment when the allied Red Army, and with it, the Polish Army, are chasing the occupant out of the country, at this moment there must arise a legal, centre of authority which will direct the nation's struggle towards final liberation.

Together with calls to fight the Germans, the Manifesto called Poles to fight for the return of Polish Pomerania, for East Prussia, Oppeln Silesia and Polish frontier posts on the Oder. The Eastern frontiers were to be settled on the basis of "mutual understanding", whereby the Ukrainian, White Russian and Lithuanian lands would be incorporated into these Soviet Socialist Republics. No line of demarcation in the East was specifically mentioned. An

agricultural reform - on the lines already proclaimed by the RJN - was promised, though dwarf farms of five hectares were taken as the basis for medium-sized farms, thus presaging future pressure on the peasant towards collectivization. There was, however, no word of collectivization, only of "model farms". Private enterprise was promised state support and artists and scientists were assured of aid. Key industries and larger enterprises were to be taken over provisionally by the government - there was no word of nationalization. All "democratic freedoms" were promised - except to "enemies of the democracy" who were left undefined. "Fascist and anti-nationalist organizations" were to be prosecuted. The Committee expressed a desire for the return of Polish emigrants from abroad, but added significantly that "Hitlerite agents and those who betrayed Poland in 1939" would not be admitted. Agents provocateurs who were trying to provoke fratricidal strife would be rejected. In view of the Communist attacks upon the London government it is clear who was envisaged in these terms.

The Manifesto was first broadcast on July 26th. On the same day, the Soviet government concluded an agreement with the Polish Committee of National Liberation with regard to the relationship between the Soviet C-in-C and the Polish administration. As soon as any territory ceased to be the sphere of military operations, the PKWN was to take over the complete direction of the civil administration.

Until then, except for separate Polish military jurisdiction, everything was subordinated to the Soviet C-in-C. The agreement was signed in Moscow by Edward Osóbka-Morawski and Molotov. In effect, it gave official Soviet recognition to the PKWN. There may have been more than coincidence in the fact that, on the same day, Mikołajczyk started out on his journey to Moscow with the hope of finally reaching some agreement with the Soviet government.

Urgent debates were meanwhile taking place in London on the problem of the general rising. According to the Polish government's Instruction to the AK of October 27th 1943, the decision whether a general rising should take place lay in the competence of the of the government, while the choice of the moment was up to the Commander of the AK. The Polish government in London was therefore faced with making the decision; let us see the elements which went into it. As has been noted above, the government still hoped in April 1944 that the general rising in Poland could be combined with Allied operations and thus be assured of allied support. The representative of the British General Staff wrote a note to the Polish Government on May 31st 1944, to the effect that General Eisenhower's General Staff were very interested in the possibilities of AK action on the German rear to disrupt communications in the period immediately following the invasion of the continent, adding that such

action over a period of two months would be regarded as a general rising. The Polish General Staff accepted the proposition but stated that such an operation, though much more extensive in scope than "Jula" and "Ewa", would not bear the character of a general rising. As we have seen, such an intensive diversionary-sabotage action had been differentiated from a general rising as operation Storm.²⁶ These plans came to nothing, however. According to one source, on June 6th, the British Chiefs of Staff agreed that whether or not orders be given for a general rising to take place, was a matter for the Polish government to decide, and, if it were agreed upon, the timing was to be left to the authorities in Warsaw.²⁷ On June 20th, General Gubbins, in the presence of General Tabor, stressed that the Chiefs of Staff had refused any large-scale military aid for the AK, restricting it to the support of diversion.²⁸ On June 21st, the Polish General Staff received from the High Command of the AK the plan of a wide diversionary action on German communication lines in Poland - "Bariera".²⁹ This plan had been prepared in view of the interest expressed by SHAEF in such an operation. However, on June 29th, General Gubbins

²⁶ Enclosure to note from British General Staff, of 31.V.1944, Idz 4354/44, PSZ III, p. 500.

²⁷ Zb."Leliwa" - Sujkowski, The Battle of Warsaw, 1944, The Attitude of the Anglo-Saxon Countries, Typed MSS, translated from the Polish.

²⁸ Ebid.,

²⁹ Com. AK, 21.VI.1944, Idz 5173/44, PSZ III, p. 504-505.

repeated that the decision of the Allied Chiefs of Staff with regard to the curtailment of aid to the AK for the support of diversion only, still stood, and expressed his scepticism as to the possibilities of American aid. ³⁰ On June 30th, the British government was informed that preparations ³¹ for the Warsaw rising were nearing completion. On July 10th, General Brooke informed General Kopański, in reply to General Sosnkowski's letter of July 4th outlining the Bariera plan, that the inclusion of this operation on an inter-allied level would be impracticable. He suggested that the timing of such an operation should be left to the Commander of the AK. ³² Thus, by mid-July, the Polish government had been unable to secure any promise of military aid from its Western allies; Poland was definitely adjudged to lie in the Soviet sphere of operations. The SHAFF proposition was abruptly withdrawn.

During this crucial period, the differences in outlook as to the general rising between the Prime Minister and the majority of the Polish government on the one hand, and General Sosnkowski on the other, reached a phase in which

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Leliwa, loc.cit.

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Ibid.; Leliwa probably meant here preparations for a general rising.

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PSZ III, p. 506. Gen. Kopański says he cabled this news to Gen. Sosnkowski, then in Italy, on July 21st - see Gen.St. Kopański, "W sprawie decyzji stoczenia bitwy o Warszawę, /2/" Orzeł Biały, no.15, 14.IV.1951. If the dates given by PSZ III and Gen. Kopański are correct, this leaves a time-lag of 11 days between Gen. Kopański's reception of the news and his cable to the C-in-C. Leliwa says that Gen.Kopański

the C-in-C found himself virtually isolated. On July 25th, General St. Kopański, Chief of Staff, told General M. Kukiel, Minister of National Defense, of General Tatar's opinion that a possible Soviet move from the South to Warsaw might deprive the AK of the use of its main radio transmitters which were located outside the capital, and thus disrupt communications with London. As has been seen above, /p.156/ the armies of Rokossowski and Konev were at this date sweeping on to Warsaw. The President and General Kukiel agreed that in such an eventuality, the authorities in Poland ought to be given definite instructions and full powers. A meeting of the Government in this matter was arranged for July 28th, and General Kopański informed General Sosnkowski of this arrangement. ³³ On July 26th, in the evening, the Polish General Staff received General Bór-Komorowski's cable of the previous day, with the message that he was ready to activate the rising in Warsaw. At the Cabinet meeting on July 28th, in the course of discussion on the final instructions to Poland, Minister Banaczyk suddenly said that he thought there was no necessity for the conference since he had, on the instruction of Mikołajczyk, sent a cable to the Delegate in Poland, just before the Prime Minister's depar-

informed Gen. B. Komorowski of this on July 21st - Leliwa, op.cit., Polish policy with regard to the rising. The Bariera plan was included by the Com. AK in plans for Storm - PSZ III, p. 506.

33

Gen. Tatar, head of Dept.VI of Polish Gen. Staff - Home Affairs. The C-in-C was on the Italian front, -Gen.St. Kopański, op.cit., /4/ no.16, 21.IV.1951.

ture for Moscow on July 26th, sending full powers to the home
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 authorities. The text of the cable was:

At the meeting of the Government a unanimous decision was made empowering you to proclaim a rising at the moment chosen by you. If possible, inform us beforehand. Copy through the army to the Commander of the AK. "Stem".³⁵

General Kopański gave the government decision of July 25th, upon which the above cable was purported to have been sent, as follows:

The Cabinet agreed on July 25th, 1944, to empower the Delegate of the Government to take all the decisions required by the tempo of the Soviet offensive, if necessary, without previous consultation with the Government.³⁶

However, it seemed to General Kopański that the Cabinet members were unprepared for this news on July 28th. General Kukiel explained that there had been no formal agreement on this subject, but that the decision might stem from
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 the opinion of individual ministers. In whatever manner

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Gen. St. Kopański, loc.cit.

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In Chief of Staff to C-in-C, July 29th, 1944, Idz 6112/tj, PSZ III, p. 664.

³⁶

Ibid.

³⁷

Gen. Kopański, op.cit., loc.cit. In cable Idz 6112, Gen. Kopański said neither he nor General Kukiel had any knowledge of the events preceding the meeting of July 28th - PSZ III, p. 664. Kwapiński writes that towards the end of June 1944, the Polish government deliberated on the cable of the Delegate of the Government, who, foreseeing a break in communications, asked the government for full powers for himself, the chairman of the RJN and the Com. AK. He thus transfers the initiative in the debate to the home authorities - see: Kwapiński, op.cit., p. 142. It is nowhere made clear whether the government cable granting full powers to the home authorities, was sent in answer to Gen. B. Komorowski's

the decision had been reached, the Polish government in London had, in effect, by transferring full powers to the home authorities, given its agreement to a general rising. As far as is known, the Polish government in taking this step, had no guarantees of military aid from the Allies³⁸ but had hopes for the support of the United States on the basis of Roosevelt's very favourable reception of Mikołajczyk at the beginning of June and his promise to support the Polish cause if relations with the Soviet Union were re-established. There was hope of this since Stalin had invited the Polish Prime Minister to Moscow for talks.

General Sosnkowski's position can be evaluated from the cables he sent from the Italian front in those days, which were in keeping with his previous attitude. On the evening of July 28th, General Kopański received a cable

cable of July 25th, or whether it was sent independently of it. As noted above, Gen.B. Komorowski's cable was received on the evening of July 26th. It is most likely, however, that the decision was made on July 25th. On that day, Mikołajczyk had a talk with Churchill in which he confirmed the news which had already been communicated to the British government, that the AK was standing by for a general rising - Report on Help to Fighting Warsaw, 6.X.1944, in: Stosunki polsko-sowieckie, -Soviet-Polish Relations- Documents collected and edited by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, London, 1946, no.172, also PSZ III, p. 842.

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Amb. Raczynski asked Eden on July 27th whether the Polish Parachute Brigade and four air-force squadrons with a fighter squadron could be sent to Warsaw from Italy. On July 28th, the British government replied in a note stating that operational considerations alone would preclude the granting of the Polish request. Bombing of Warsaw airfields could be carried out more appropriately by Soviet planes. The British government could do nothing in this connection - Stosunki polsko-sowieckie, op.cit., no.107, also PSZ III, p. 842-843.

from the C-in-C, dated July 25th, in which General Sosnkowski asked for his instructions to be sent to the Commander of the AK. In view of the Soviet advance on Warsaw, he directed that if a Soviet occupation of the capital seemed likely, the High Command and the General Staff were to be divided into two Commands - one, without coming out of the underground was to stay in the city where, together with the political command eventually left behind by the Delegate of the government, it would direct the opposition against the Soviet policy of force.

Coming out will have no sense in face of the formation of the Polish Committee of National Liberation and the perspective of Soviet arrest of the authorities, cabled the C-in-C. The second Command was to retreat in a South-Westerly direction to a series of points from which it could continue to direct the battle for the whole country. General Sosnkowski continued:

This action is to be followed also in case you succeed in taking over Warsaw before the entry of the Soviet armies.³⁹

The Cabinet, however, rejected the proposition of the C-in-C, in view of the decision it had taken on July 26th, confirming the decision of the home authorities that the Delegate, with two deputies, the Commander of the AK, and the Chairman of the RJN were to come out to the Soviets - the third deputy of the Delegate was to stay underground. The Cabinet

By this, Gen. Sosnkowski meant taking Warsaw if there were a time-lag between the German exodus and Soviet entry - C-in-C to Chief of Staff, Idz 6089/tj, PSZ III, p.663.

decided against changing this decision. The C-in-C's⁴⁰ instructions were, therefore, not transmitted to Poland. On July 29th, in another cable, General Kopański informed the C-in-C, as has been seen above, of the government decision sending full powers to the home authorities. On July 28th, the C-in-C cabled the Commander of the AK in reply to the latter's cable of July 21st, with regard to the possibilities for a general rising:

In the face of the Soviet policy of violence and accomplished facts, an armed rising would be an act bereft of political sense, which could lead to unnecessary sacrifice. If the aim of the rising were to be to obtain control over part of the Republic's territory, then you must realize that in such a case the necessity will arise of defending Polish sovereignty on the territories controlled against whomsoever violating this sovereignty.

You understand what this would probably mean, since the experiment of coming out and co-operating with the Soviets has come to nought in the face of their ill-will.⁴¹

This cable reached London on July 31st, but was not sent on⁴² to Poland on the decision of the President.

Another cable which the C-in-C sent to General Bór-Komorowski on July 25th, but which was modified in London, was in answer to the cable of the Commander of the AK of July 19th, reporting of the arrests after the liberation of Wilno. The C-in-C radioed that he respected the decisions of the Commander of the AK but that their political conseq-

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PSZ III, p. 663.

⁴¹

C-in-C to Com. AK, 28.VII.1944, Idz 6213/tj, Ibid, 665.

⁴²

Ibid.

uences were in the hand of God. /He advised again that conflict with the Soviets should be avoided and that the AK units should be withdrawn Westwards/. In comparing the Wilno incident with the published manifesto of the PKWN the C-in-C concluded that the Soviets were following a policy of violence, repressions and accomplished facts; he therefore expressed the wish to complement his previous directives. He considered the speedy development of the Polish Armed Forces abroad as particularly necessary, since Soviet policy might bring about the accentuation of certain differences between the Soviets and the Western Allies. One had to be prepared for possible changes in the political situation, as a result of the ill-will of the Soviets./ He then advised that in case of the swift advance of the Soviet occupation and its spread in Poland, the AK should aim at saving the biological substance of the nation in the face of the threat of dual extermination/. In case of absolute necessity, he authorized the Commander of the AK to pull out the most threatened elements of the AK, especially the youth,/Westwards and towards the Slovak-Hungarian frontier/. In extremis, he authorized the retreat of these elements from Poland to join the Polish Armed Forces abroad. General Kopański took the responsibility of eliminating the passages in brackets on sending the C-in-C's cable on to Poland.

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Gen. St. Kopański, op.cit., Orzeł Biały, no.18, 5.V.1951.

General Sosnkowski crystallized his attitude in a cable he sent to the President on July 28th, 1944. In it he radioed, among other things:

...As to the homeland, in the situation created by the development of events, by Soviet violence and accomplished facts, any thought of an armed rising is an unjustified motion bereft of political sense, which might cause tragic and unnecessary sacrifices.

I am cabling the Commander of the AK in this spirit. In my opinion, the authorities of the Republic ought, from the development of events, to draw the undeniable conclusion that the experiment of coming out and co-operation with Red Army has failed, and consequently return to the principles of the instruction of October 27th in its original form.⁴⁴

Thus we see that the Polish government in London, at least the majority, favoured a general rising and that the C-in-C was opposed to it. The march of events was too swift for all of them to realize that by July 25th the question was not of a general rising but of a rising in the capital. However, in so far as the Warsaw rising was seen to be part of the general rising, the Polish government in London may be said to have approved it, putting its agreement in the form of leaving the decision in the hands of the home authorities. It also agreed to the latter's decision of coming out openly to the Soviets. General Sosnkowski, on the other hand, supported the decision to continue operation Storm, but was opposed to a general rising and to the coming out of the home authorities. He foresaw the

This cable was received in London on Aug. 1st. Idz 6241/tj, PSZ III, p. 665. Gen. Kopański admits that in a series of cables, the C-in-C demanded that the government

possibility of the AK's liberation of the capital, but advised the home authorities not to come out in such an eventuality. In this, his attitude was diametrically opposed to that of the Polish government in London. Mikołajczyk made no secret of the preparations for the Warsaw rising. He saw it, together with the coming out of the Home authorities, as a factor in his favour, hoping that the Soviets would value active AK co-operation in the fight for the Polish capital. The time element involved in transmitting cables between the C-in-C in Italy and the Commander of the AK via London, also played an important role in the differences of opinion between the government in London and General Sosnkowski. It must also be borne in mind that, in view of the swift Soviet advance and the complete breakdown of the German front in Poland, as also the attempt on Hitler's life, the complete disintegration of the German military machine in the East was more than a possibility.

We have seen that in mid-July, while the General Staff of the AK were debating on whether to make a rising in Warsaw, they were faced with the formation of the PKWN, and the release of its manifesto. Soviet policy before the Warsaw rising was an important element towards the making

forbid the home authorities to launch a premature rising, - Gen. Kopański, op.cit.,/5/ Orzeł Biały,no.18, 5.V.1951. Both Gen. Kopański and the President cabled the C-in-C in mid-July to return to London, in view of the critical situation in Poland. The C-in-C, however, remained in Italy until the outbreak of the rising - Ibid.,/4/, Orzeł Biały,no.17, 28.IV.1951. Gen. Sosnkowski's cable of July 29th, Idz 6289/tj, expressing his opposition to a general rising, was sent on to Warsaw on Aug.3rd; by that time the rising had begun, PSZ III,665

of the final decision. Let us therefore see what turn it took between July 25th and July 30th. Its line at that time appeared by no means certain. On the one hand, there was the liquidation of the AK East and West of the Curzon Line, and on the other, the events which took place during the liberation of Lublin and the Soviet and PKWN radio appeals to the population of Warsaw.

The AK and civil authorities in Lublin received an order from Warsaw on July 22nd, to come out openly to the Soviet authorities and take over the administration. By July 25th, German opposition had been liquidated and the AK and civil authorities began to administer the city. For a couple of days they were allowed to continue their functions, then their units were disarmed and the regional commander forced to sign an order to that effect. The leading figures, the regional Delegate and commander and his deputy were, however, twice forced into talks with leading members of the PKWN, once in Chełm, and once in Lublin, where efforts were made to persuade them to enter the Committee of National Liberation. These representatives of the London government were even received by Marshal Zhukov in person, who proposed that they enter the PKWN. After the outbreak of the Warsaw rising, however, they were arrested and flown to Russia. Thus there was an attempt, West of the Bug, to

obtain the co-operation of the recognized Polish authorities, a tribute to their influence with the population and, perhaps, an indication of a willingness to reach some compromise which may or may not have been a conciliatory move in view of the possible Warsaw rising.

On the other hand, the Commander of the AK in Warsaw received news of the final disarmament of the Lublin AK by the cable of July 30th⁴⁶ and of the disarmament of the 27th Volhynian division by a cable of July 27th.⁴⁷ On July 30th, the Commander of the Lwów region where about 7,000 AK soldiers took part in fighting for the city, reported Soviet demands for disarmament and disbanding of the AK units with a choice of entering Berling's army or the Red Army.⁴⁸ The Commander of the region flew to see General Rola-Żymierski but his deputy radioed on July 31st that all AK officers had⁴⁹ been summoned for a staff meeting and had been arrested. Such was the picture of Soviet-AK relations by the end of July.

In the meanwhile, as the Soviet armies rapidly advanced on Warsaw, Communist radio stations repeatedly called for a rising of the population. On July 15th, radio Moscow

⁴⁶ Com.Lublin region to Com.AK., Ldz 6176/tjn 44, PSZ III, p. 627.

⁴⁷ Ldz 6043/tjn, Ibid.; there is a discrepancy in dates here, PSZ III, 627 gives 27.VII, while note 76, p. 940, gives 15.VIII. The 27th division was tactically subordinated to the Red Army, then ambushed and disarmed - Ibid.

⁴⁸ Com. Lwów region to Com.AK, Ldz 6257/tjn, Ibid., 619.
⁴⁹ " " " " " " Ldz 6268/tjn, " "

in a Polish language broadcast, claimed that the people were straining to fight and were dissatisfied with the supposed "restraining" orders of General Sponskowski and the Commander of the AK.⁵⁰ On July 29th and 30th, radio "Kościuszko" and radio Moscow broadcasts appealed in Polish urging the Warsaw population to rise. The people of Warsaw were reminded of their proud defense of the city in 1939 and called to fight in the streets, houses and factories to shorten the period of final liberation and save national treasures and lives.⁵¹ On July 29th Soviet planes dropped leaflets calling for the population to rise. On July 30th, there was this fiery appeal:

Warsaw trembles in its foundations from the roar of guns. The Soviet armies are attacking violently and are already nearing Praga. They are coming to bring you freedom. The Germans, thrown out of Praga, will try to defend themselves in Warsaw. They will attempt to destroy everything. In Białystok they destroyed everything for six days. They massacred thousands of your brothers. Let us do everything in our power to prevent them from repeating the same action in Warsaw.

People of Warsaw! To arms! Let the entire population stand like a wall around the KRN and the Underground Army. Strike at the Germans. Prevent them from carrying out their plan of destroying public buildings. Support the Red Army in its crossing of the Vistula. Send us information, show us the places for crossings. Let over a million inhabitants become a million soldiers who will drive out the German aggressors and win freedom.⁵²

Although such appeals were nothing new, "they could create

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see: J. Zych, Rosja Wobec Powstania Warszawskiego - Russia and the Warsaw Rising - London, Contemporary Life and Culture Ltd., 1947, p. 29.

51

Ibid., also: B. Komorowski, op.cit., p. 230-231.

52

Ibid., p. 231; Zych p. 30; PSZ III, p. 826.

the impression that the Russians considered the moment ripe for the AK to begin fighting. In any case, it was an indirect confirmation by Moscow that it considered the situation of the Germans as critical".⁵³ What the Russians actually meant by these appeals, in view of later events, is not sure. It seems very likely that, having formed the PKWN, and having included Polish units in the armies converging on Warsaw, the Soviet government had hopes of taking the capital and installing its puppet Polish government in Warsaw. If the AK, in view of the arrests and disarmament of its units East and West of the Curzon Line, refrained from a rising in Warsaw, there was every possibility that the PKWN could provoke a spontaneous rising in the capital. Placing itself at its head, it could then claim popular support. Such a turn of events was highly desirable and would have confirmed Soviet and Polish Communist propaganda on behalf of the PKWN and KRN as also its accusations against the London government and the AK. As has been seen above, the Commander of the AK was aware of such a plan with regard to the general rising. There is another pointer in this direction in the proclamation posted on the walls in Warsaw on July 29th, claiming that the Delegate of the government and the Commander of the AK had left Warsaw. It called the population to fight the Germans and subordinate itself to the Commander of the PAL

or Polish People's Army, Colonel J. Skokowski and its political officer, "Czarny", who signed the proclamation.

Although the decision to fight for Warsaw had been taken between July 22nd and 24th, the final order for its commencement was not given till late in the afternoon of July 31st. General Bór-Komorowski waited until the last possible moment to ensure that the Soviets would march into the city. Let us examine the military situation on the German-Soviet front in the second half of July and in the last days preceeding the final order. The state of the German front in Poland was rapidly deteriorating. The Times correspondent wrote:

North-Westward, towards Warsaw, Russian and Polish troops are advancing impetuously across level country. Before them, the ghost of an army is reeling back, joined here and there from the East by tired and shaken men escaping from the Brest-Litovsk trap.

/London Times, July 27th, 1944/. On July 26th, Białystok fell as also Puławy and Dęblin to the South of Warsaw. The Russians crossed the Vistula South of Puławy; in this sector fought the Polish army under General Popławski. The middle Vistula was almost empty on the German side and on the Warsaw bridgehead only guard units remained. Most of the Heim's armoured units had been withdrawn to the North and South. The general staff of the shattered German 9th army was given

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PSZ III, p. 694.

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Tippelskirch, op.cit., p. 546.

the task of holding the Vistula between Puławy and Warsaw. Besides these troops, there were in the capital, only a few weak and backward security units.⁵⁶ The Warsaw defense lines were "thin to the point of non-existence",⁵⁷ The German 2nd army had to withdraw its units from South of Brest-Litovsk to the Siedlce region. This was the only army which had survived the massacre of White Russia but, in view of the over-all situation, the destruction of the German 4th and 9th armies and the 4th Panzer army and the shattering of the 3rd Panzer and 8th armies, the AK High Command did not think it capable of a counter-action.⁵⁸ On July 27th, Soviet troops crossed the Pilica river at Magnuszew. On July 28th, the fall of Brest-Litovsk freed the bulk of Rokossowski's armies for the sweep on to Warsaw. General Zaharov's 2nd White Russian front had been advancing slower than Rokossowski, uncovering the latter's northern wing, until this was repaired by the fall of Białystok on July 26th. In the area of General Harpe's Army group North Ukraine, - from Modlin to Kashau- the Russians, that is, the 1st Ukrainian front, reached the line of the Vistula as

⁵⁶ "schwäche rückwärtige sicherungsverbände", Toppelskirch, op.cit., p. 544.

⁵⁷ W. Goerlitz, The German General Staff, op.cit., 452.

⁵⁸ see Com. AK's report of July 21st, 1944. However, Col. Iranek-Osmecki, head of the Intelligence, drew attention to its military capacities. It was the only army with any possibilities of action on the Warsaw sector: PSZ III, p.695. At least, this was so at the end of July.

far as Warsaw. The German Army group North Ukraine consisted of three armies - the 1st, 4th and 17th Panzer armies.⁵⁹ This army group was terribly beaten by Marshal Konev. In the North, the HGM was also given the task of holding the line from the Northern corner of East Prussia to the Narew river. Towards the end of July, the HGM situation was desperate.

The numerical relation of German and Russian divisions was one to nine, that of tanks one to six, and that of guns between one to ten and one to fifteen. Most German armoured divisions were at one third of their original strength, being reduced to about seventy to eighty battle-worthy tanks apiece. Only the SS panzer units were at full strength.⁶⁰

On August 1st, the Germans had, along the whole Eastern front, about 141 infantry and 33 armoured divisions, while the Russians had 486 infantry and 90 armoured as well as 58 cavalry divisions. On the HGM sector, the Germans had about 52 infantry and 9 armoured divisions, while the Russians had 147 infantry, 42 armoured and 32 cavalry divisions, that is, there were about 61 German divisions, most of them under strength, facing some 221 Russian divisions.⁶¹ On the Warsaw sector of the HGM, it was estimated that the proportion of Russian superiority to the Germans was about four to one in man power and three and one half to one in armour.⁶² By

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Guderian, op.cit., p. 374.

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Goerlitz, German General Staff, op.cit., p. 482.

⁶¹

W. Dziewanowski, "Sprawa Wstrzymania Ofensywy Sowietckiej Podczas Powstania Warszawskiego" - On the halt of the Soviet Offensive during the Warsaw Rising- Bellona, VI, Oct-Dec. 1947, p. 26.

⁶²

Jan Nowak, "Powstanie Warszawskie i rokowania moskiewskie" /3/ Dziennik Polski i Dziennik Żołnierza, no. 183, 4.VIII.1947.

August 1st, the Russians also had a number of bridgeheads across the Vistula, the most important was at Baranów, the others were at Puławy and Magnuszew.

By July 28th, the Commander of the AK had received reports that the Soviets had broken through the German defense lines on the bridgehead East of Warsaw. They occupied the localities of Otwock, Falenica and Józefów. Soviet tanks were reconnoitring up to Wawer and Miłosna. Russian patrols were coming from the Vistula crossing at Pilica up to Moszczonek. One of the AK's High Command's reconnaissance officers met a column of Russian tanks on July 30th at Radość - a locality 16 km. from the capital. On July 31st, the High Command received news that Soviet units were definitely at Radość, Wiązownia, Wołomin and Radzymin, - localities within a 12-16 km. radius of Warsaw. In the early afternoon, a German OKW news report informed them that the Russians had begun a general attack on Warsaw from the South-West.⁶³ On the same day, in Moscow, when Mikołajczyk told Molotov about the imminence of the Warsaw rising and the record of the AK, Molotov admitted that the Soviet armies were within 10 km. of Warsaw.⁶⁴ The Times,⁶⁴ Moscow

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B. Komorowski, op.cit., p. 232.

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Prime Minister to Deputy Prime Minister Kwapiński, 2.VIII.1944, Stosunki polsko-sowieckie, op.cit., no. 114; PSZ III, p. 827.

correspondent wrote on the same day:

It is clear that a bridgehead has been established over the river above the city, and the natural sequence would be a thrust north-westward astride its course, direct for the capital.

/London Times, August 1st, 1944/. Inside the city, meanwhile, the Germans had summoned 100,000 volunteers to dig the trenches, a call which, if obeyed, would have disorganized the AK completely. It was not obeyed, but repressions which would have the same effect, were feared. Evacuation of the city or its filling up with German troops retreating from the East, if they decided to make a stand, would also have made a rising in the capital impossible. The atmosphere in the city reached boiling point while gunfire was clearly heard from across the river. On the political plane, General Bór-Komorowski knew of the failure of Miko-⁶⁵łajczyk's June talks with Lebedev and of the fate of the AK in Lwów and Lublin. He also knew that the Polish Prime Minister was in Moscow. He heard daily radio appeals from the Soviets to the population of Warsaw. Locally, he had to consider the proportion of Polish to German strength. The AK in Warsaw numbered about 40,000, half of them armed; there were food and ammunition supplies for about a week. The German garrison numbered about 50,000 men with unlimited supplies. In this general situation, on the afternoon of July 31st, General Bór-Komorowski gave the order for the

Warsaw rising to begin on August 1st, at 5 p.m. There was to be a last bloody plebiscite for an independent Poland.

The story of the Warsaw Rising itself has been told many times and the tale of its tragedy and heroism is not within the scope of this work. In the first few days the insurgents held three-quarters of the city - see map- and, although too weak to hold the bridges and railway lines, they managed to prevent the flow of German troops through the city forcing them to fight bitterly for the arterial roads and making them unusable for weeks. Altogether, the Warsaw Rising tied up about seven German divisions or the equivalent of one army, with an enormous amount of armoured forces, tanks, air-force and artillery.

The sounds of battle on the outskirts of Warsaw died down on August 3rd and 4th and the Soviet advance came to a halt. This was totally unexpected, since even official Russian sources emitted the information that Rokossowski's men were "within ten kilometres of Warsaw". On August 1st, the London Times' Moscow correspondent wrote:

..an arch has been drawn about the city, from several points of which the Red Army and Polish allied forces are converging on their objective - the first foreign capital seized by the Germans in the present war.

/London Times, August 2nd, 1944/. The smoke over Warsaw was

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"Wochenlang war keine der durchgehenden strassen zu benutzen" - Tippelskirch, op.cit., p. 545.

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Leliwa, op.cit.

ascribed to "German demolition work".

While the Russian armies stood at the gates of Warsaw, the AK in the capital after initially seizing control over most of the city, gradually lost ground as the element of surprise gave way to German armoured superiority. The working district of Wola fell on August 7th and the city was soon subdivided into points of resistance separated from each other by the German forces. Communication between certain districts was maintained through the sewers while sometimes contact could be established only by radio by way of London. Food and medical supplies soon started to run out while the Germans bombed and shelled the Polish-held quarters night and day with the clear intention of leaving the city a mass of rubble. Although the Russians had air superiority and air fields, there were no Russian planes over Warsaw between August 4th and September 10th. Cossack, Uzbek, Ukrainian and Russian units and the German punishment unit, the SS. Dirlewanger Brigade, perpetrated horrible massacres upon the population and prisoners of war. General Kaminski of the ill-famed brigade, was shot by the Germans themselves in case he proved "a dangerous witness".⁶⁸ Women and children were driven in front of tanks⁶⁹ to unnerve the Poles. On September 2nd, after a heroic

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Guderian, op.cit., p. 356; Gen. von dem Bach said at the Nuremberg Trial that when he pointed out the brutality of Gen. Reinefahrt's units, the latter answered that he had definite orders from Himmler forbidding him to take any prisoners - Zburzenie Warszawy, op.cit.

69 - London Times, Sept. 11th, 1944, p.2.

defense, the Stare Miasto - Old City- fell, after weeks of sustained siege by bombing, artillery and mortar fire. From August 19th to September 2nd, this district which covered the space of 1sq.km. and was crowded with about 180,000 people, soldiers and refugees, suffered the onslaught of four infantry and two pioneer battalions, one company of "Tiger" tanks, twenty 75 mm. guns, two railway mortars of 280 mm. and two railway guns of 380 mm., that is, the same calibre as those used by the Germans in shelling Dover across the English Channel. On top of this, there was an armoured train, a platoon of flame-throwers, a platoon of mortars, and fifty "goliath" tanks. Two gun-boats supported the attack from the Vistula as did also the artillery of the German 9th army from the Praga suburb across the river. Every quarter of an hour, planes dive-bombed the district. Truly has the defense of the Stare Miasto become an epic in Polish history.

After the fall of the Old City, the Germans concentrated on seizing the Polish-held sections on the banks of the Vistula. On September 6th, Powisze was taken. General Bór-Komorowski had rejected the first German armistice proposals of August 18th in view of the atrocities perpetrated upon the population and the POW's, and had gone on

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A tank filled with time-fused TNT and driven onto Polish strong-points.

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B.Komorowski, op.cit., p. 304-305.

hoping for a Soviet attack on the city. This was also expected by military correspondents in Western and Soviet papers; In mid-August, moreover, came the allied invasion of Southern France. The situation after September 6th, however, was desperate. In spite of Stalin's promises of help, given⁷² to Mikołajczyk during the latter's stay in Moscow and the cables of a Soviet liason officer Kalugin giving data for air drops, no help came and no attempts to secure contact with Rokossowski succeeded.⁷³ Cables were sent from⁷⁴ Warsaw via London to Moscow with no result. The air supplies which came in sporadically from the West were insufficient in view of the Russian refusal to grant permission for the use of shuttle bases. It was therefore decided to accept German offers of armistice talks. On September 9th, two Polish officers went to the HQ. of General Rohr to hear the German proposals. However, on the evening of September 10th, the High Command of the AK had news of Russian permission for the Western Allies' use of shuttle bases, and therefore, the certainty of considerable aid. Moreover, sounds of battle came from across the Vistula; the Russians had decided to attack Praga and Soviet planes re-appeared over the city. In view of these events, the Commander of the AK decided to break off the armistice talks.⁷⁵ On Sep-

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PSZ III, p. 829, Mikołajczyk, op.cit., p. 74-75.

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PSZ III, pp. 830-834.

⁷⁵ For a discussion of the September crisis, see:

tember 14th, the Red Army and Polish units launched an attack on Praga, on the Eastern bank of the Vistula, which they took on September 15th. On that day, two battalions of Berling's army crossed the river, but, receiving no support, they were largely decimated while the Upper Czerniaków district in which they landed, fell on September 16th, as did Marymont. It was thus proved possible to cross the river, but artillery support was missing - this in spite of the fact that Praga provided the Soviet artillery "with high ground dominating all the principal German gun positions in and around Warsaw". /London Times, Moscow correspondent, Times September 22nd, 1944/. On September 18th, the great U.S. air-fleet which had waited a month for Soviet permission to land, appeared over Warsaw and dropped supplies. On September 24th, the last point of resistance fell in Upper Czerniaków while Mokotów fell on the 27th. At this point, armistice talks again started with the Germans. Żoliborz fell on September 30th, and the AK finally capitulated on October 2nd, with full combatant rights, after holding out for sixty-three days. The Russians, meanwhile, held the suburb of Praga and watched, separated by a few hundred yards from the dying capital. Their planes had dropped a few tons of supplies, without parachutes,

Tadeusz Stawski, "Wrześniowy kryzys Powstania Warszawskiego" - September Crisis of the Warsaw Rising" - Kultura, no. 9/35, Sept. 1950, 121-125.

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For the capitulation talks see: PSZ III, pp.868-874.

and on September 21st two liason officers were dropped in ⁷⁷
Sródmiście-Południe with radio transmitters. Contact was
 established but was used only for regulating air drops and
 artillery fire. Marshal Rokossovski's radio operators ack-
 nowledged Polish messages for help but sent no answer. ⁷⁸

There are several factors to be considered in studying the failure of the Warsaw Rising. The most important are: the German-Soviet military situation on the Warsaw sector of the front; the Polish government's attempt to reach an understanding with the USSR against the background of the rising, and finally, the key to the tragedy - the attitude of the Soviet Union and the PKWN.

It is notable that the Polish Communist press and apologia on the Warsaw Rising, claim as an ultimate argument, ⁷⁹
 that the Red Army was in no position to help the insurgents. There are several aspects of the military situation which have to be examined. Some Western historians and writers on the second World War have explained that the Warsaw Rising was "premature", because the Russian armies had to stop and ⁸⁰
 re-establish their supply lines. They do not, however,

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PSZ III, p. 773.

⁷⁸

Ibid., pp. 837-841.

⁷⁹

eg: J. Kirchmayer, "Powstanie Warszawskie i możliwości Armii Radzieckiej" - The Warsaw Rising and the Possibilities of the Red Army - Żołnierz Polski, no. 34/97/, 11. X.1947 ; Karol Malcużyński, "O Powstaniu Warszawskim, Fakty i Dokumenty", Trybuna Ludu, 31.VII.1954, 3-4.

⁸⁰

eg. Gen. Guillaume, op.cit., p.177; Allen &

seem to be aware of the fact that the rising lasted for sixty-three days, that is, nine weeks, which was ample time for the repair of communications and the bringing up of supplies. On August 19th, the Russians threw their great strength into the Balkans - unchecked by the distance and different railway gauges. Besides, although Rokossovski's communication lines were difficult, those of Konev were in good order, nor was Warsaw a difficult obstacle to overcome; we have seen how weak the forces in and around the capital actually were. General Rola-Żymierski estimated them at about twenty-two divisions, / London Times, August 30th, 1944/ but in actual fact, of these, four were defensive divisions stationed in the suburbs and three were Hungarian divisions on the West bank of the Vistula. Thus, General Model, in his counter attack of the first days of August, had at his disposal fifteen divisions, of which ⁸¹ two were Panzer and two Panzer Grenadier divisions. Moreover, it seemed possible in those days, that the Germans might abandon the city in the face of a Russian attack; on August 4th, there was even talk of giving up the Vistula line. The Stockholm correspondent of the London Times wrote:

..it is stated that even Warsaw will be held only temporarily...it is admitted for the first time that the whole German forces of the middle front here have been badly mauled and are unable to stay the Russian advance. /Times, August 5th, 1944/.

Muratoff, op.cit., pp. 141 & 146; Chester Wilmot, op.cit.; B.H. Liddell Hart, Strategy, New York, Praeger, 1954, p. 313.

The military explanation put forward by Stalin and the Soviet-Communist press and sympathizers - and, as we shall see later, this was by no means the first explanation - was that Model's counter attack of August 3rd, with his small Panzer Army, prevented the Russians from liberating Warsaw.⁸² Stalin told Mikołajczyk on August 9th, that he had previously expected his armies to take Warsaw by August 6th but that they had been prevented from doing so by the arrival of four German tank divisions from Italy,⁸³ This is a strange explanation when it is considered that the Germans on the Warsaw sector faced the combined 1st White Russian and 1st Ukrainian fronts of which the first by itself, numbered from sixty to seventy infantry divisions, ten Panzer and Mechanized Corps and three cavalry Corps including strong air power.⁸⁴ Moreover, Marshal Rokossowski's front was the most highly mechanized of all the Russian fronts in 1944. It is most likely that the divisions which Hitler managed to scrape up for the Warsaw sector in the first half of August, from Italy, Rumania and South-

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eg: Moscow correspondent, London Times, Aug. 21st, 1944: The Russians say, that the enemy reinforcements arrived in the Siedlce area in time and in enough strength temporarily to stem Marshal Rokossovsky's advance and to delay the liberation of Warsaw. Same, Times, Sept. 16, 1944: Perhaps if the SS Panzer Army that was rushed to the scene... had arrived a little later, the momentum of the Russian advance from the Bug might have carried them through the inner zone.

83

He added that he needed time to regroup the artillery - Mikołajczyk to Delegate, 10.VIII.1944, PSZ III, p. 828.

84 Tippleskirch p. 546; W. Dziewanowski, p. 27-31.

ern Poland, succeeded in temporarily checking the advanced Russian vanguard which was already in the outskirts of Warsaw.⁸⁵ However, this strengthening was only of local importance. Model's counter attack threw back General Chugaev's armoured vanguard, but the Germans could not regain Kałużyn and Siedlce and when General Zaharov moved from Białystok, Model had to retreat by August 12th. The Russian withdrawal here was purely local and had no important military significance.⁸⁶ It did, however, give the Soviets time to see what was happening in Warsaw, while the AK High Command had counted on a swift Soviet entry into the capital. The element of surprise on which its calculations were based, had been lost.⁸⁷ In this sense, the General Staff of the AK may be said to have made an error in their estimate of the German military situation.⁸⁸ The High Command of the AK also overlooked the possibility of the reformation of the German 9th Army; its reorganization, however, was of no significance until September. Until

⁸⁵ see: A. Pomian, "U Źródeł Błędu" - At the Source of the Error - Życie, no. 40/380/, 3.X.1954.

⁸⁶ Allen & Muratoff, op.cit., p.144; PSZ III, p.836.

⁸⁷ For one conclusion, see: By twelfth August, the Russian government had definitely come to the conclusion that the Warsaw rising was led by men antagonistic to the Soviet Union and decided to leave the insurgents to their fate... W.H. McNeill, op.cit., p. 432.

⁸⁸ In "Bitwa pod Warszawą" - The Battle outside Warsaw - the General Staff of the AK, explains that the rising failed because of the unforeseen concentration of German divisions in the Warsaw region at the end of July.

then, there were only three Hungarian divisions on the West bank of the Vistula South of Warsaw and remnants of the 4th Panzer Army opposite the Sandomierz bridgehead. Around September 1st, the new group "Wallenstein" was created in the Kielce-Radom district; it numbered about twenty divisions,⁸⁹ eight of which were armoured. Significantly, the Germans themselves admit that had the Russians pressed their front⁹⁰ on the bridgeheads, Warsaw would have been untenable, and, while the stabilization of the front was partly due to stiff German defense, it was mostly due to the fact that the Russians shifted the main weight of their attack on to other⁹¹ sections of the front - mainly the Balkans. It may be that Warsaw was not the strategic objective of the Soviet offensive⁹² - though no one thought so at the time - and that the Soviets' main interest lay in the Balkans. However that may be, it does not change the technical possibilities which the Russians possessed to take or help Warsaw, nor their vast superiority over the Germans. It is a fact that throughout the sixty-three days of the

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W. Dziewanowski, op.cit., p. 27.

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Hätten die Russen ihre Angriffe an der Front des Brückenkopfes fortgesetzt, so wäre die Lage in die Stadt wohl unhaltbar geworden - Tippleskirch, op.cit., p. 545.

⁹¹

..aber auch daran, dass die Russen das Schwergewicht ihrer Kräfte auf anderen Frontabschnitten eingesetzt hatten - Ibid., p. 546.

⁹²

Allen & Muratoff, op.cit., p. 144.

Warsaw Rising, the Russians held most of the triangle between the Narew, Bug and Vistula, and bridgeheads on the West bank of the Vistula at Magnuszew, Janowiec, Sandomierz and later, Pulawy.

Model's counter attack petered out by August 12th, and he was forced to retreat to the Małkinia-Tkuszcz-Praga line. Further German-Soviet battles on the lower Bug had the character of a slow prizing out of the Germans beyond the Narew river. On September 3rd, the 2nd and 1st White Russian fronts finally threw the Germans across the Narew and the Soviets built a deep bridgehead at Pulawy. On that day fell Wyszków, the last German defense point of the Bug-Narew triangle; Łomża fell on the 12th. Then, on September 14th, the Russians stormed Praga. The fighting in the Vistula-Bug-Narew triangle finally came to a stop after the Russians had brought up nine armies with seventy-one infantry and five armoured divisions, with Mechanized and Cavalry Corps to the Warsaw-Łomża region. After the taking of Praga it looked as if the fall of Warsaw were imminent, but the Russians did not cross the Vistula in the Warsaw sector till January 1945. The real key to the drama of Warsaw lies not in the military situation but in the attitude of the Soviet Union, as expressed in its dealings with the Polish, British and U.S. governments,

its reactions to the Warsaw Rising, and its press and radio comments in this crucial period.

Mikołajczyk arrived in Moscow on July 30th and on the 31st, he saw Molotov together with Minister Grabski and Romer. The first interview with Stalin took place on August 3rd, and when Mikołajczyk informed the Soviet leader that the Warsaw Rising had broken out on August 1st and asked for help, Stalin launched into an attack on the AK. He enumerated a long list of accusations against the AK and the Polish government, apparently with the intention of using the Rising as the background for another attempt at forcing Polish agreement to the Curzon Line. On August 9th, Mikołajczyk paid a farewell visit to Stalin and the latter told him that he had expected the Red Army to be in Warsaw by August 6th, giving the German counter attack from the Praga region as the reason for the halt. However, he promised help and asked for details with regard to air drops. On Molotov's advice, Mikołajczyk also had talks with the members of the PKWN who at first denied that there was any fighting in Warsaw. Bierut offered Mikołajczyk the post of Prime Minister in the future Communist-controlled Polish government.⁹⁴ The negotiations again came to nothing but there were hopes that some compromise would be worked out.

After his return to London, the Polish Prime Minister

made another effort to draw up a proposal for the renewal of diplomatic relations which would be acceptable to the Russians. His project was, however, opposed by the PPS which drew up its own suggestions and both were sent to the RJN in Warsaw for its decision, as projects A and B respectively. ⁹⁵ On August 18th, Mikołajczyk put his project before the Cabinet. The main points of Project A were: the reconstruction of the Polish government should take place immediately after the liberation of Warsaw on the principle of equal representation for the four "big" parties, the SL, SN, PPS, Christian Labour Party and the Communist PPR. Smaller democratic groups would be eventually considered too. Fascist and undemocratic parties and groups responsible for the pre-war regime were to be excluded. The Prime Minister would agree with parties, on the members of the government to be formed in Warsaw. This government would renew diplomatic relations with the Soviet government, take over administration of the liberated territories, and prepare to take over the new territories in the West. To this end, it would conclude an agreement with the Red Army as to military co-operation and the securing of its rear and supplies. Free elections would be held as soon as possible and a new Constitution would be enacted

Mikołajczyk had originally suggested that the Polish government resign in protest against the isolation of Warsaw, but relinquished this plan, apparently under British and U.S. pressure and persuasion - see: Kwapiński, op.cit., 150-151.

immediately after the calling of the Constituent Assembly. The President of the Republic would be elected on the basis of the new Constitution. The government would carry out social reforms, especially the agricultural reform, on the basis of the ideological declarations issued during the occupation. A National Council would be formed to assist the government as an advisory body, until the calling of the Constituent Assembly. The government would come to an agreement with the USSR with regard to the mutual conduct of the war against the Germans and the laying of firm foundations for a lasting Polish-Soviet friendship after the war. This friendship would have as its aim, close political and economic co-operation with the Soviet Union, always providing both countries would undertake not to intervene in each other's internal affairs. The alliance would also aim at the removal of all German influence in Central Europe and at the prevention of repeated German aggression. Alliances with Great Britain, France, and Czechoslovakia, together with the maintenance of close relations with the U.S.A. would also serve towards this end. Poland would participate in working for peace, in a world security system and in the occupation of Germany, especially of the Eastern territories belonging to the future Western frontiers of Poland. Poland would keep the main centres of her cultural life in the East /Lwów and Wilno/ and the raw materials she needed /the oilfields of Drohobycz and the Potash/. There would be a

voluntary exchange of the Polish, Ukrainian and White Russian populations; the final regulation of the Polish-Soviet frontier was to be made by the Constituent Assembly. The direction of the war and the leadership of the Polish Armed Forces would be transferred to the Polish government which would create a War Cabinet for the direction of military affairs. Thus, Mikołajczyk's project envisaged the setting up of a new government, with the participation of the Communists on an equal footing, in a Warsaw liberated by the Red Army.^{95b} Moreover, by the mention of an exchange of populations, the project intimated concessions in Eastern Poland, except in so far as Wilno, Lwów and the Drohobycz oil-fields and potassium deposits were concerned. Here, the Polish Prime Minister was probably motivated by President Roosevelt's promise to "fight" for these places. Lastly, the Polish-Soviet frontier was to be regulated by the Constituent Assembly - and not at the Peace Conference.⁹⁶

The PPS countered with its own project, B, which contained the following salient points: The first step to be taken ought to be a renewal of Polish-Soviet diplomatic relations and the conclusion of an agreement between the two countries on questions of policy, economics and war. The Polish frontiers ought to be regulated after the war by way of mutual understanding between the allied nations.

^{95b}

Churchill says Mikołajczyk told him on Sept. 1st, of his readiness to grant the Communists 14 seats - Triumph and Tragedy, p. 141.

⁹⁶ PSZ III, pp. 846-848; Mikołajczyk, op.cit., p. 287-289.

The Polish government would immediately proclaim a general mobilization on the liberated territories and the Polish army would co-operate with the Soviet High Command or with the High Command of any other Allied power, depending on the sphere of operations. The Soviet occupation of Poland would last only as long as the Soviet operations against Germany were conducted on Polish territory, and would be conditioned by the same principles as the occupation of France by British and U.S. armies. The Polish government would take over the administration of the liberated territories up to a "demarcation line" which was to be agreed upon.⁹⁷ Both nations would undertake not to intervene in each other's internal affairs and the Soviet authorities would immediately release all Poles arrested, deported and interned in Poland and in the USSR. Immediately after the renewal of diplomatic relations, the Polish government would inform the Soviet government that some of its members headed by the Deputy Prime Minister were already in Poland. The remaining members of the government would then arrive in Poland, inasmuch as internal and foreign policy considerations made this necessary. The PPS project proposed the admission into the Polish government of the PPR - but on conditions that it recognize the fundamental political aims enunciated in the RJN declaration of March 15th, 1944,

and subject to the agreement of the four leading political parties. This admission could only be made after the renewal of Polish-Soviet diplomatic relations. The PPS agreed that representatives of anti-democratic political groups should be excluded from the government. It did not recognize the PKWN, a foreign agency, as representative of even the smallest section of Polish society; proof of this was seen in its agreement to the cession of the Eastern territories. Until free elections to Parliament took place, that is, till the end of the occupation, the representation of the parties in the government would be based on equality. The Polish government would immediately announce that the binding Constitution of 1935 was already being applied in a democratic manner through the introduction of appropriate arrangements, and that it could be changed only by a freely elected Constituent Assembly. Thus, the PPS's project B was more in keeping with the policy of the Polish government during the war. Its only concession in the East was the "demarcation line". It put forward conditions for the admission of the PPR into the government. The main difference between the projects was that, whereas project A envisaged the reorganization of the Polish government in Warsaw prior to the re-establishment of diplomatic relations, project B saw the re-establishment of relations between the existing Polish government and the Soviet Union as the first step to be taken. Project B also

stipulated the release of arrested and deported Poles. Both projects intimated willingness to treat of frontier changes in the East; project A stipulated that Polish cultural centres and mineral resources in those territories should remain in Poland; Project B spoke of a demarcation line only. The PPS project also demanded that the Government immediately publish the prepared projects of decrees on legislations governing elections, freedom of societies, unions and meetings, freedom of the press and agricultural reform - which foresaw 50 ha. as the limit for private property. The Government was also to publish projects for the nationalization of key-industries and for planning in the main branches of economy. ⁹⁸ Mikołajczyk's project A was the more ⁹⁹ promising of the two.

It was decided on August 22nd, to send both projects to the RJN in Warsaw for consideration. The RJN discussing the projects in the heat of the fighting, accepted project A, noting that it marked a departure from the line which Polish foreign policy had hitherto followed in allowing the possible resignation of the Riga frontier and the interference of foreign elements in domestic affairs through the admission of the PPR. It complained of lack of information but accepted Mikołajczyk's project with a few minor amendments, the

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PSZ III, p. 847-850.

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Mikołajczyk claimed British support for the project - Mikołajczyk, op.cit., p. 92.

most important of which was the additions of the point relative to the freeing of Poles arrested in Poland and the USSR, from the PPS project. The High Command of the AK and the Delegate, however, did not share the attitude of the RJN on project A. On August 28th, when the answer of the RJN was being cabled to London, additional information, showing once more the difference of opinion which existed in the Polish government, arrived in cables from the President and the Foreign Committees of the PPS and SN. These rejected the policy of Mikołajczyk and advised against the acceptance of Project A. The President warned that the arrival of the Polish government in Poland, unrecognized by the Soviets and without the representatives of the allied powers, would spell a great advantage for the PKWN, which was officially recognized by the Soviets as the administrative authority in Poland. The conditions of Soviet occupation would not allow the government the necessary freedom of action. If the Polish government voluntarily agreed to the Soviet demands, radioed the President, Great Britain might consider herself freed from all her obligations towards Poland. He also mentioned the fear that the compensation in the West for the cession of territories in the East would not be approved by the United Nations which had hitherto taken no defined stand even in relation to East Prussia. ¹⁰⁰ He concluded that compromises might lead

to the loss of independence with no hope of its recovery. 101

On August 30th, the RJN cabled some complementary points to its earlier reply accepting project A. It stipulated that the project of reaching an understanding with Russia ought to have the formal sanction of all the United Nations and that an agreement with the Soviet government ought to be concluded in such a way as not to let the U.S. or Great Britain feel free from the guarantees and promises they had made to Poland. The arrival of the representatives of the government in Poland and the reorganization of the government was to take place after previous agreement on the principles of the compromise with Russia. The Soviets ought to recognize the AK as a combatant force and free all those they had arrested, as also all political prisoners. The government representatives going to Poland ought to be accompanied by representatives of the U.S. and British governments. Simultaneously with its reconstruction,

Polish question was reviewed at Marrakesh by Stettinius, Matthews, Hiss and Foote, previous to the Yalta Conference, it was noted that the U.S., while in agreement to the Curzon Line as the Eastern frontier of Poland, with the addition of Lwów and the oil-fields, was opposed to the Oder-Neisse line as Poland's Western frontier. The U.S. favoured limiting compensation to Poland to East Prussia - except Königsberg- and a small salient of Pomerania c.100 miles West along the Baltic coast to the Polish Corridor and Upper Silesia - Ed.R. Stettinius, Roosevelt and the Russians, London, Jonathan Cape, 1950, p. 46-47.

101

Władysław Raczkiewicz, President to the Delegate and Chairman of the RJN, 24.VIII.1944, PSZ III, p. 852-853. The Com. AK called project A "a complete capitulation" and "a deviation from the political line hitherto followed...a resignation from the platform of independence"- Com.AK to C-in-C, Aug.29th,1944, L ew 234/49/Zb, Ibid., p. 853.

the new Polish government ought to be recognized by the Allies and the USSR as the legal government of the republic. Elections should not take place until the armies of occupation had left the country.¹⁰² Thus did the RJN, stimulated by the cables of the President and the Foreign Committees of the PPS and SN, complement its agreement to the project of Mikołajczyk.

This message was received in London on September 1st. On August 29th, the Cabinet had taken note of the RJN's cable of August 28th and agreed on the final text of the memorandum according to project A; this was sent on to Moscow on August 30th without the benefit of the RJN's complementary observations with which General Sosnkowski expressed his entire agreement. Although project A went much further in its desire for compromise with the Russians than any other Polish proposals so far, the Soviet government did not find it satisfactory.¹⁰³ A Tass agency communiqué announced on September 6th that the Polish government had sent a memorandum to the Soviet government and to the Polish Committee of National Liberation, formulating its point view on the reorganization of the government and maintaining the 1935 Constitution. The Tass communiqué

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PSZ III, p. 856.

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Mikołajczyk says that on his visit to Moscow in October 1944, Stalin said to him that his project had two big defects - it ignored the PKWN and did not recognize the Curzon Line as an actuality, see: Mikołajczyk, op.cit., p. 94.

announced that the Soviet government had sent the memorandum to the PKWN since the problems treated therein could be solved only by Poles.¹⁰⁴ This meant, of course, that the Soviet government rejected the project.

While the Polish government in London debated projects of compromise with the Soviet Union, it received daily appeals for help from the fighting city. The members of the London government spared no effort to obtain aid, both by appeals to the Western powers and to the USSR. Churchill seconded Mikołajczyk's demands for help to Stalin. The first such appeal, carefully phrased, was contained in his cable of August 4th.¹⁰⁵ Stalin answered on August 5th, that the AK could command no serious consideration since it was ill-equipped. He conveniently forgot for the moment that no underground movement possessed artillery or tanks. He also emphatically denied reports that the AK had liberated Wilno, - showing thereby how much importance he attached to the

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Dziennik Polski i Dziennik Żołnierza, no. 213, 8.IX.1944.

105

Prime Minister to Marshal Stalin: At urgent request of Polish Underground Army we are dropping, subject to weather, about sixty tons of equipment and ammunition into the southwest quarter of Warsaw, where it is said a Polish revolt against the Germans is in fierce struggle. They also say that they appeal for Russian aid, which seems to be very near....W. Churchill, Triumph and Tragedy, p. 131.

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 subject. Churchill appealed again on August 12th; in his cable he cited an appeal to the Polish President, Government and C-in-C from the Deputy Prime Minister in Warsaw asking for immediate help. Churchill concluded: "Can you not give them some further help, as the distance from Italy is so great?"¹⁰⁷ On August 14th, he cabled Eden to ask Molotov that the Russians send help:

It will cause the Russians much annoyance if the suggestion that the Polish patriots in Warsaw were deserted gets afoot, but they can easily prevent it by operations well within their power. It certainly is very curious that at the moment when the Underground Army has revolted, the Russian armies should have halted their offensive against Warsaw and withdrawn some distance. For them to send in all the quantities of machine-guns and ammunition required by the Poles in their heroic fight would involve only a flight of 100 miles. I have been talking to /Air Marshal/ Slessor, trying to send all possible assistance from here. But what have the Russians done? I think it would be better if you sent a message to Stalin through Molotov referring to the implications that are afoot in many quarters and requesting that the Russians should send all the help they can. This course would be more impersonal than that I should do it through Stalin. Last night twenty-eight aircraft did the 700 miles flight from Italy. Three were lost. This was the fourth flight made from here under these quite exceptional conditions.¹⁰⁸

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 Marshal Stalin to Prime Minister: I have received your message about Warsaw. I think that the information which has been communicated to you by the Poles is greatly exaggerated and does not inspire confidence. One could reach that conclusion even from the fact that the Polish emigrants have already claimed for themselves that they all but captured Vilna with a few stray units of the Home Army, and even announced that on the radio. But that of course does not in any way correspond with the facts. The Home Army of the Poles consists of a few detachments which they incorrectly call divisions. They have neither artillery nor aircraft nor tanks. I cannot imagine how such detachments can capture Warsaw, for the defence of which the Germans have produced four tank divisions, among them the Hermann Goering Division-
Ibid., p.131

107 Ibid., p.133.

108 " " p. "

On August 16th, in Moscow, Vyshinski made a statement to the U.S. ambassador to the effect that the USSR objected to U.S. or British planes landing on Soviet territory:

The Soviet Government cannot of course object to English or American aircraft dropping arms in the region of Warsaw, since this is an American and British affair. But they decidedly object to American or British aircraft, after dropping arms in the region of Warsaw, landing on Soviet territory, since the Soviet Government do not wish to associate themselves either directly or indirectly with the adventure in Warsaw.¹⁰⁹

This statement was made in disregard of the fact that there were shuttle bases serviced by American staff behind the Russian lines, and had been used by U.S. bombers on raids over Gdynia, Bucharest and the Rumanian oil-fields. As a matter of fact, the Eastern Command of the U.S. Strategic Air Force announced on August 6th that heavy bombers of the U.S. 8th Air Force from England, attacked a German aircraft plant at Rehmel, ten miles North-West of Gdynia and landed safely at American bases in the Soviet Union. That was the twentieth operation in which Eastern Command bases, all in Russia, had figured, since the first American plane landed in Russia on June 2nd, 1944.¹¹⁰ The Russians themselves, possessed six airfields within a 200 mile radius of Warsaw, the nearest being at Dęblin, twenty minutes flight from the capital. The Soviet refusal to allow the Western Allies to use the shuttle bases in helping Warsaw, was made public

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Ibid., p. 133.

¹¹⁰

London Times, August 8th, 1944.

by Vernon Bartlett of the London News Chronicle on August 29th, 1944.

From the middle of August, a huge U.S. air-fleet stood by in Great Britain awaiting Russian assent to land behind the lines. On August 16th, Stalin cabled Churchill that the situation in Warsaw would have been different if the Soviet High Command had been informed beforehand of the action. ¹¹¹ Of course, such information had been given, both through the British General Staff and by Mikołajczyk, but the exact moment was not, since it depended on the decision of the Commander of the AK. On August 18th, Churchill cabled Roosevelt, asking for a joint appeal to Stalin:

An episode of profound and far-reaching gravity is created by the Russian refusal to permit American aircraft to bring succour to the heroic insurgents in Warsaw, aggravated by their own complete neglect to provide supplies by air when only a few score miles away. If, as is almost certain, a wholesale massacre follows the German triumph in that capital, no measure can be put upon the full consequences that will arise.

2. I am prepared to send a personal message to Stalin if you think this wise, and if you will yourself send a separate similar message. Better far than two separate messages would be a joint message signed by us both... ¹¹²

A joint appeal to Stalin was sent on August 20th. ¹¹³

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..Further, having familiarised myself more closely with the Warsaw affair, I am convinced that the Warsaw action represents a reckless and terrible adventure which is costing the population large sacrifices. This would not have been if the Soviet High Command had been informed before the beginning of the Warsaw action and if the Poles had maintained contact with it.

In the situation which has arisen the Soviet command has come to the conclusion that it must dissociate itself from the Warsaw adventure, as it cannot take either direct or indirect responsibility for the Warsaw action- Ibid., p.134.

112 & 113 Ibid. p. 135.

Stalin answered them on August 22nd, accusing the leaders of the Rising of being "criminals" who had instigated it in order to seize power. He added, for the first time, a tactical argument - German concentration was militarily unfavourable to the Soviets. Churchill suggested another message to Stalin, in a more forceful tone:

We earnestly desire to send U.S. aircraft from England. Is there any reason why the refuelling ground assigned to us behind the Russian lines should not be used by them to land on without inquiry as to their activities on the way? In this way your Government could preserve the principle of dissociation from this particular episode... Our sympathies are aroused for these 'almost unarmed people,' whose special faith has led them to attack German tanks, guns and planes, but we are not concerned to form a judgment about the persons who instigated the rising, which was certainly called for repeatedly by Moscow Radio... The Warsaw massacre will certainly be a matter fraught with trouble for us when we all meet at the end of the war. We therefore propose to send the aircraft unless you directly forbid it.

He continued:

In the event of his failing to reply to this my feeling is that we ought to send the planes and see what happens. I cannot believe that they would be ill-treated or detained. Since this was signed I have

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...Sooner or later the truth about the group of criminals who have embarked on the Warsaw adventure in order to seize power will become known to everybody. These people have exploited the good faith of the inhabitants of Warsaw, throwing many almost unarmed people against the German guns, tanks and aircraft..

From the military point of view, the situation which has arisen, by increasingly directing the attention of the Germans to Warsaw, is just as unprofitable for the Red Army as for the Poles. Meanwhile the Soviet troops, which have recently encountered new and notable efforts by the Germans to go over to the counter-attack, are doing everything possible to smash these counter-attacks of the Hitlerites and to go over to a new wide-scale attack in the region of Warsaw.. Ibid., p. 136.

seen that the Russians are even endeavouring to take away your airfields which are located at Poltava and elsewhere behind their lines.¹¹⁵

Roosevelt, however, refused Churchill's sugges-¹¹⁶tion; he did not want to irritate Stalin. He also refused Churchill's repeated proposition on this subject in the latter's cable of September 4th.¹¹⁷ The British War Cabinet sent a telegram to Moscow on September 4th, appealing to the Soviet government for help to Warsaw in view of the shocked British public opinion.¹¹⁸ Churchill admitted his helplessness in the following words:

I do not remember any occasion when such deep anger was shown by all our members...I should have liked to say, "We are sending our aeroplanes to land in your territory, after delivering supplies to Warsaw. If you do not treat them properly all convoys will be stopped from this moment by us". But the reader of these pages in after-years must realise that everyone has to keep in mind the fortunes of millions of men fighting in a world-wide struggle, and that terrible and even humbling submissions must at times be made to the general aim. I did not therefore propose this drastic step...¹¹⁹

The Russians finally gave permission for allied planes to land behind their lines on September 10th, at the time of their attack on Praga. A U.S. air-fleet had been waiting for this permission for a month. Their agreement, like their attack on Praga, coincided with the first serious capitulation talks between the Poles and Germans in

¹¹⁵

Ibid., p. 140.

¹¹⁶

Ibid.

¹¹⁷ & ¹¹⁸

Ibid., p. 142.

¹¹⁹ " p. 141.

Warsaw. Churchill concludes:

They wished to have the non-Communist Poles destroyed to the full, but also to keep alive the idea that they were going to their rescue.¹²⁰

Flights were made to Warsaw from Italy during the rising by Polish, British, American and South-African crews but they amounted only to a few machines a mission and for whole periods of time, ceased altogether. The losses were heavy on those round-trips; political and weather considerations made the help ineffectual.¹²¹ Meanwhile, news kept arriving in Warsaw of arrests of the AK and deportations. Units marching to help Warsaw were surrounded and disarmed.

The Soviet attitude towards the Warsaw Rising is the only key to the tragedy. We have seen that the Red Army did not go forward and take the city as had been expected and that the AK units which came out to meet it were arrested West and East of the Curzon Line. The same fate befell units marching to the relief of Warsaw. The Soviets gave no aid to the insurgents till September 10th and refused British and American planes permission to land till that date. There were two further aspects of the Soviet attitude to the Warsaw Rising; we have seen the arguments used by Stalin in his correspondence with Churchill on the subject of aid to Warsaw - they also had their place in

¹²⁰

Ibid., p. 144.

¹²¹

Altogether there were 296 flights in operation "Odwet" to help Warsaw, between 1st Aug. and 2nd Oct. 1944, dropping 233 tons of supplies - PSZ III, p. 405-406.

official Soviet and Communist propaganda.

In analyzing Stalin's correspondence with Churchill on the Warsaw Rising, as it is presented by the British Prime Minister, Stalin used four arguments in chronological order. To begin with, the Soviet leader stated that the AK was unworthy of serious consideration, since it had no tanks or guns - August 5th, 1944. Secondly, he claimed that the Soviet High Command had not been informed by the Poles of plans for a rising. The Soviet High Command, therefore, could not take any responsibility for it - August 16th. Thirdly, he blamed the Rising on a "group of criminals" who had "embarked on the Warsaw adventure in order to seize power", but also added a military argument - the Soviets were doing all they could to smash German counter-attacks, -August 22nd. As we have seen above, the last German counter-attack, that of General Model, had petered out by August 12th, and had been only of local importance. Such were the arguments of Stalin; they were in varying degrees echoed by the Soviet and Communist press as also, to some extent, by non-Communist Western papers.

It is significant that during the first few days of the Warsaw Rising, Moscow was silent on the subject. On August 1st, the Soviet paper "War and the Working Class", lavished praise on the PKWN which, it said, was bringing liberation to Warsaw. In Pravda, Makarenko described the victorious advance of the Soviet armies approaching Warsaw.

The Union of Polish Patriots,' radio stated that : "The hour when the Red Army will enter Warsaw is close at hand". On August 2nd, an article was published in Moscow, describing the victorious advance of the Red Army to the Polish capital.¹²² Then there was silence until Pravda came out with a statement on August 6th, that there was only one underground movement in Poland - that connected with the KRN, and the Polish Committee of National Liberation. When the rising had gone on for a week, however, and could no longer be ignored, the London Daily Worker on August 7th, pronounced the whole thing to be a "bluff" of "the emigré government". In spite of this, it is interesting to note that on August 8th, the Kościuszko radio station broadcast that the Germans were fleeing from Warsaw and that the population was collecting their arms.¹²³ The broadcast maintained that the Poles were annoyed with Sosnkowski's policy of expectation and specifically denied that there was any rising inside Warsaw. Perhaps the Soviets were counting upon the rising being crushed and were preparing the scene for a "spontaneous rising" of the population in favour of the PKWN on the Soviet entry into the capital. It seems that for the first week, the Soviets were waiting to see whether the rising would last and even denying its existence.¹²⁴

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For the above, see: Leliwa, op.cit., Russia's Game.

¹²³

Ibid.

¹²⁴

There are suggestions that a definite order was given to the Russian vanguard to stop and go no further on.

On August 13th, a Tass communiqué broadcast through Moscow and the BBC stated that Tass had information to the effect that the Polish circles in London, responsible for the Warsaw Rising, had not tried to co-ordinate this action with the Soviet High Command and that, in view of this, the responsibility for what was taking place in Warsaw rested with the "émigré government".¹²⁵ On August 14th, the Union of Polish Patriots repeated this statement, while on the same day, the London Daily Worker wrote: "the cynical émigré clique brought about the rising without previously consulting the Allies". On August 15th, Moscow repeated the statement that the rising had been launched without Russian consent and the Tass agency in Stockholm placed all the blame on the Polish government for allegedly not informing the Soviet government beforehand. By this time, Lublin radio admitted the existence of the rising but called it insignificant. These statements and accusations were repeated by Soviet and Communist organs practically everyday. Military arguments also began to be used, but only in second place. Thus, on August 19th, conveniently forgetting the cases of Lwów, Wilno and Lublin, Pravda wrote that: "no big town has been freed by concerted action between the

August 1st, 1944; see: Boris Olshansky, "The Rokossovski Enigma", The New Leader, Sept. 27th, 1954, p. 21. This article is, however, undocumented and makes unfounded assertions, eg. that Generals Bór-Komorowski and Rokossovsky had been in contact before the Warsaw Rising.

¹²⁵

As we have seen, this was Stalin's argument in his cable to Churchill on Aug. 16th, 1944.

army and the inhabitants...from the start the Warsaw venture was destined to miscarry with useless sacrifice of life".¹²⁶

On August 23rd, General Rola-Żymierski of the Polish Corps stated that "it was impossible to help Warsaw because of the small area held by the insurgents". As can be seen from the maps of the Rising, the area held by the AK until mid-September was considerable and the distance for Soviet planes small. On September 6th, the London Daily Worker actually claimed that General Bór-Komorowski had refused Soviet aid for Warsaw. On September 20th, the Polish Communist paper "Rzeczpospolita"- The Republic- at Lublin, attacked General Bór-Komorowski and the Lublin radio announced that if he fell into Russian hands he would be tried for treason. The next day, the PKWN arranged for propaganda flights over Warsaw dropping leaflets announcing that General Bór-Komorowski would be treated as a criminal and the leaders of the rising would be arrested and sentenced to death. Finally, the PKWN radio claimed that General Bór-Komorowski had not been in Warsaw during the rising at all.¹²⁷ On October 3rd, a Polpress communiqué from Moscow announced that the AK army commanded by General "Monter" - General Bór-Komorowski's Chief of Staff- had decided to surrender without previously consulting the Soviet commanders.¹²⁸ - another lie since General

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London Times, Aug. 21st, 1944, Moscow Correspondent.

127

" " October 2nd, 1944, " "

128

Leliwa, loc.cit.

Bór-Komorowski had sent a cable through London to Marshal Rokossowski on September 28th, informing him that without¹²⁹ help he could only hold out till October 1st. Thus, after threatening the Commander of the AK with punishment for leading the rising, then denying the fact that he was there at all, Communist propaganda finally tried to blame him for the capitulation.

It is not within the scope of this work to treat of the post-war Polish Communist literature on the Warsaw Rising, but some brief remarks should be made on it since it throws some indirect side lights on the problems involved. The Polish Communist government was faced with obvious difficulties in explaining the tragedy of the rising. It was all very well to blame the London government for the total destruction of a centuries' old capital and the death of a quarter of a million people, but, public opinion was so strong that the fighters of Warsaw had to be treated as heroes and it was also known that the AL and PAL had joined the AK in the rising. It had to be admitted that: "this popular and liberating character of the fighting decided the Command and units of the AL to join in, although they realized from the beginning the provocation behind the scenes".¹³⁰ If the people of Warsaw were innocent of the political game in which they played such an unselfish

¹²⁹

PSZ III, p. 841.

¹³⁰

K. Malcużyński, Op.cit., Trybuna Ludu, 31.VII.1954.

and heroic part, the question presented itself why the Russians did not come to their aid. The official version of the Warsaw Rising therefore came to consist of a synthesis of the political and military arguments already used during the rising. It is interesting to note that the granting of the ultimate voice to military considerations came later. On studying such works as "Powstanie w Warszawie, Fakty i Dokumenty"¹³¹- The Warsaw Rising, Facts and Documents - or Jerzy Kirchmayer's "Geneza Powstania Warszawskiego"¹³²- The Genesis of the Warsaw Rising - we see only ~~only~~ attempts to put the blame squarely on the shoulders of the London government and the High Command of the AK for "political games", uncoordinated and premature action, unwillingness to establish contact with the Soviet High Command, etc. Perhaps Jerzy Kirchmayer's article in 1947 - already cited - marked a change of direction in placing all the emphasis on the military inability of the Red Army to come to the aid of the insurgents, although even he prefaced the discussion of the military aspect with a statement that "the last bridges had been burned" between the Soviet and the London governments by the latter's refusal to discuss the Curzon Line¹³³ in January 1944. The official version of the

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Wydawnictwo Oddziału Propagandy Gł. Zarządu Polityczno-Wychowawczego Wojska Polskiego, May 1945.

132

Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza "Czytelnik", 1946.

133

J. Kirchmayer, op.cit., in Żołnierz Polski, no. 34/97/11.IX.1947.

Warsaw Rising in Poland is now that the London government nefariously instigated it for its own political purposes, and that it broke out without the Soviet High Command being informed about it, that no attempt was made to establish contact with the Soviet High Command, and that it was not possible for the Red Army to come to the aid of Warsaw for military reasons. The London government is still accused, *de règle*, of collaboration with the Germans; that preposterous assertion is indirect proof of the difficulties encountered by Communist propaganda. It is significant that, whatever the régime may do to blacken the London Poles and the High Command of the AK, the anniversary of the Warsaw Rising is a public holiday in Communist Poland.

The Communist accusations against the London government and the Leaders of the AK, as well as the veneration paid to the Warsaw Rising sum up its dual aspect of a struggle for independence against the designs of the Soviet Union, and of the mass participation of the people in a fight to the death with the hated German occupant. This double aspect is the essence of the Warsaw Rising and the key to its tragedy.

CONCLUSION

We have seen the Soviet attitude to the Polish question during World War II. Among other aspects of this subject, there is the policy of the Polish government in London and the place of Poland in the policy of the Western Powers.

The problem of Polish policy during the war has become and will doubtless continue to be hotly debated. It may seem from the vantage point of 1955, that there was no sense in maintaining an uncompromising attitude on the Eastern frontiers when there was abundant evidence even before 1943 that the Western Allies would not give their support to Polish claims. It is too early to pass judgment on these matters but the historian must consider the pros and cons of the question in the light of the time in which they took place and try to find some answer in ~~asking~~ trying to find out, in Ranke's words, "how it really happened".

To counter the criticism of the aimlessness of Polish foreign policy we must remember two things. One is that in January 1944, the Polish government was ready to discuss frontier changes but that its proposals were rejected by the Soviet Union, and the other is that the fear of the loss of Polish independence if the Soviet terms were accepted turned out to be basically correct. Even Czechoslovakia

which concluded a Treaty of Friendship and Alliance with the Soviet Union and was on good terms with the latter, finally had to submit to a Communist government. It is doubtful whether Poland could have subsisted as an independent country, even had it accepted the new Eastern frontiers, wedged in as it is between the USSR and a Communist East Germany. We have also seen that at the time when Mikołajczyk's government was ready to begin discussions, it could not obtain any guarantees for the new Poland it was asked to accept. Another factor which it had to consider was the public opinion at home. The world has seen how much emotion could be generated over Trieste; The Eastern territories were very dear to the Polish heart and the Polish government wanted to keep at least Lwów and Wilno. All negotiations, however, broke down on the uncompromising attitudes of both sides on the subject of these two cities. Finally, it seems as if there was no sense in activating a General Rising or even the Warsaw Rising, at least by the summer of 1944. But here again we have to consider several factors. Undoubtedly, the Polish government and the High Command of the AK miscalculated in their estimates that the Soviet government was anxious to reach Berlin before the Allies; had these calculations proved correct, the Warsaw Rising would have played the role it was planned to play - that of military cooperation with the Soviets at the price of their recog-

nition of an independent Polish underground movement with different political aims from the Communist organizations. If the situation of the summer of 1944 is borne in mind, the Soviet sweep on to Berlin looked the most likely consequence of the shattering defeat of the Germans in Poland. It may be said that the Russians would have stopped anyway, but it seems more likely from the materials presented in this thesis that had there been no rising in Warsaw, they would have taken it for their political and military reasons. The only alternative to Operation Storm and the Warsaw Rising would have been a disbanding of the AK and it is a debatable question whether this would have been possible. It would, of course, saved thousands of lives. Although Polish policy during the war was not perhaps the only and the best that could have been followed, it had its reasons. The best judgment of the matter is, in my opinion, Collingwood's dictum that:

A truly historical view of human history sees everything in that history as having its own *raison d'être* and coming into existence in order to serve the needs of the men whose minds have corporately created it. To think of any phase in history as altogether irrational is to look at it not as a historian but as a publicist, a polemical writer of tracts for the times.¹

The subject of Western policy towards Russia during the war has also been much debated in a spirit of partizanship rather than of history. George Kennan in his "American

1 R.G. Collingwood, The Idea of History, Oxford, 1951, Clarendon Press, p. 77.

Diplomacy, 1900-1950² maintains that in order to win the war, the Western Powers had to grant the demands of the USSR. He also thinks that the importance of the war-time conferences has been overrated and that if not much was gained at them, not much was given away. This, in face of the published material on these conferences is a strange statement to make. Teheran, as we have seen, was really one of the turning points of the war. But Mr. Kennan may be partly right in his opinion - though for another reason. The Western Powers could have used the few opportunities they had of exerting pressure on the Soviet Union, only if they saw Eastern Europe as a sphere of their strategic interests. This, however, was not the case. The tradition of British foreign policy which saw Eastern Europe as a sphere not connected with its interest, persisted until 1939. The entry of Great Britain into the war, on behalf of Poland, may have seemed the beginning of a new era when it had been realized that in view of the immense technical progress of the last fifty years, it was no longer practicable to divide the world into spheres of interest or non-interest. It is often said that the Western Powers could not have exerted pressure on the Soviet Union, even had they wanted to, since there was always a possibility of a separate German-Soviet peace. It is true that this possibility existed throughout the war, but it seems to me that there were two periods at

which some pressure could have been exerted successfully. Even if the Soviet Union had concluded peace with Hitler in 1941, it could not have obtained its objectives in Eastern Europe from him, and since it could be calculated that if it finally proved strong enough to attack him, it would try to take them anyway, a declaration and measures on the part of the Western Powers to guarantee the independence of Eastern Europe would not have pushed the Soviets into the arms of the Germans. The second opportunity came in 1944 when Germany was doomed anyway and when the allies would have reached Berlin in a matter of months. Then at least, it should have been possible to manifest a firmer stand on the fate of Eastern Europe. Of course, the most effective move would have been an invasion of Central Europe by way of the Adriatic. One conclusion which does emerge in view of the decisions of the second World War and the anxious peace that followed it, is that there is no longer any spot in the world which can be "written off" in the foreign policies of great powers and that Eastern Europe can no longer be allowed to pass under the sway of one of the two great powers which border the "Intermarium", that is, the lands between the Baltic and the Adriatic seas.

Appendix I

Agreement between Polish political parties of Home Representation:

Warsaw
15th August 1943

TO: The Polish Prime Minister:

We enclose herewith the contents of an important Agreement which was signed on the 15th August, 1943, by the four political parties. The Agreement is to be published shortly in the Underground Press.

DECLARATION OF THE POLITICAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE FOUR POLITICAL PARTIES FORMING THE POLISH HOME POLITICAL REPRESENTATION.

1. In view of the immensity of the task facing the Polish people at present, and which will confront them also at the moment of the liberation of the country from the occupying enemy forces:

- a. rebuilding the Polish State;
- b. establishing the frontiers and the restoration of internal order;
- c. active co-operation in determining new forms of international collaboration;

the undersigned parties, which represent the main trends of Polish political thought and the vast majority of the politically organized Polish community, have decided to co-operate closely /at least until an official announcement of elections to the constitutional legislative bodies/, at the same time observing the programs contained in the declaration of the Government. These parties will co-operate in Poland, in the Polish Home Political Representation, in the Council of the Republic, and they will collaborate in full solidarity

with the Delegate of the Polish Government in London.

The above-mentioned parties will approach their representatives in London with a united appeal, aiming at a similar observance of collaboration both within the Government and within the National Council.

While supporting the Government which represents the collaboration of the parties, and accepting their full responsibility for it, the parties are opposed, while this collaboration lasts, to any other form of Government.

2. The parties will ensure that the executive machinery of the Government authorities shall possess not only professional qualifications but also the character of an institution closely bound up with the social and civic factors in the Homeland; and shall be free from those elements responsible for the mistakes of the former regime, and also free from any totalitarian leanings.

3. The parties will give the full support of their organization and propaganda to the Polish Home Army, as an organ of national unity, which will be decisive in the open struggle for our future. At the same time, they will cooperate in establishing a harmonious collaboration of the civilian and military authorities, in preparing for coming action, which is the main object of the entire political administrative and military activity.

4. For the present, for the period of the Peace negotiations, and that immediately following the conclusion of hos-

tilities, the parties accept the following basic principles as their war aims:

- a. The basic principle of the foreign policy should be the collaboration with the Allies, based on equality with a distinct emphasis on self-determination in affairs concerning Poland, her sovereign rights and the integrity of her territory.
 - b. A constant watchfulness concerning Soviet influence, which is becoming increasingly marked in the Allied countries and a ceaseless recalling to their consciousness of the latent danger in Russian-Communist totalitarian peace aims.
 - c. The securing to Poland of a Western and Northern frontier, which would guarantee to her a wide access to the sea, together with integrity of her Eastern frontier, as well as suitable indemnities.
 - d. The formation of a confederation of states of which the Polish-Czechoslovak union might be the nucleus.
 - e. The solution of the problem of national minorities, along the principles of tradition, freedom and equality of rights and obligations.
5. In the transitory period, before the Legislative Assembly, which shall be elected according to a new democratic electoral law, is convoked:
- a. The Republican system of the State shall be preserved and its legal institutions shall not be changed without the approval of the parties.
 - b. The composition of the Government of National Unity shall not be altered or supplemented without the approval of the parties.
 - c. The existing legislation shall be freed from the influences of the former regime and those of the Government of occupation and extended in accordance with the following postulates:
 - c-1. Freedom of the citizens, equality of rights and obligations and the establishment of territorial economic, social and cultural self-government;

- c-2. Recognition to be given to labour, as constituting the greatest social value, and the foundation of the economic development and welfare of the country;
- c-3. The taking over, during the transitional period, by the Government in collaboration with the local social elements, of the industrial establishments, which during the period of occupation were administered by the Germans, as well as of all formerly German and ownerless property and credit institutions and the taking over by the local Government of public utility institutions;
- c-4. The taking of immediate steps to introduce agrarian reform in order to create such division of arable land as shall ensure the largest possible number of efficient, strong one-family farms, which would guarantee an adequate supply of food for the whole Nation; in this connection, during the period of lifting the occupation, the taking over and placing at the disposal of the State of all landed property destined for agrarian reform, and in particular of landed property formerly owned by the Germans.
- c-5. The ensuring of the supply of foodstuffs and of indispensable material for industrial production;
- c-6. The creation of suitable conditions for the development of cooperatives, which shall also be ensured the necessary position in the organization of economic local Government, and which, within the framework of the planning policy, will be used for the production of foodstuffs and especially their exchange and distribution;
- c-7. The working out of a plan of financial and monetary policy, and of the postwar reconstruction of the country;
- c-8. The repatriation of the ejected from their homes, the imprisoned and interned in German camps and in Russia, and of those deported for forced labour; the liquidation of unemployment in towns and in the country in accordance with the principles of universal employment.

6. The above Agreement of signatory parties shall not stand in the way of free development of their political ideals and programmes, as well as any propaganda they may undertake in the future. Nevertheless, in all their public statements in the press, the signatories shall be bound to observe that

loyalty which is the outcome of their mutual understanding and collaboration.

THE HOME POLITICAL REPRESENTATION OF POLAND¹

¹Cited by: Stanislaw Mikolajczyk, The Rape of Poland, Pattern of Soviet Aggression. /New York and Toronto: Whittlesey House, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1948/ pp. 264-266.

Appendix IIDeclaration of the Council of National Unity
of 15th March 1944. /Extracts/

The Polish Nation was the first to resist German aggression in this war and perseveres unflinchingly in the struggle together with its Great Allies. Victory, bought every day with streams of Polish blood and the unmeasured suffering of all classes of society, is at hand. For its final attainment, the continued selfless and common efforts of the whole nation are necessary; these efforts must be accompanied by a full consciousness of the aims of this struggle, for which we are sustaining the heaviest losses in the history of our people.

The programme of Polish aims in this war lies deep in the hearts of all Poles; it springs from our centuries' old national traditions and from the understanding of Poland's role in the European family of nations.

The two main canons of this programme are:

- a. The Freedom, integrity, sovereignty, strength, security and healthy internal development of the Republic.
- b. Durable international peace, international justice and the united co-operation of all nations for the common good of all mankind.

Taking its stand on the main principles cited above, the will of the Polish people represented by the legal state authorities in London, that is, the President of the Republic, the Polish Government and the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, and at home concentrated in

the Delegate Plenipotentiary, the Deputy Prime Minister and the Commander of the Home Army, and expressing its political will under occupation conditions in the Council of National Unity, formulates the following fundamental aims of the war:

The Conditions for a Lasting Peace

.....Positive action for the purpose of attaining a lasting peace ought to be undertaken by an international organization for the political co-existence of nations, based on democratic ideals, possessing a real executive strength which would guarantee obedience for its decrees. The basis of this organization ought to be a real equality of rights for the smaller nations and their participation in decisions for the future international system and relations.

A further pertinent and fundamental condition for assuring a lasting peace in Europe is the prevention of the hegemony of any one power in Central and South-Eastern Europe. One of the most important ways in which this hegemony can be prevented is the union of the countries in that part of Europe in federal organizations.

..... The re-born Polish State will base its foreign policy on a close alliance with Great Britain, The United States, France and Turkey, and on close co-operation with other allied countries; on these same principles, Poland

wishes to base her relations with her Eastern neighbour - the Soviet Union, on the condition that it recognizes the Republic's pre-war territorial integrity and the principles of non-intervention in her internal affairs.

The Frontiers of the Polish State

.....Poland should annex the whole of East Prussia..... the ancient port at the mouth of the Vistula, Gdansk /Danzig/, the wedge of coast-line between the Baltic and the mouths of the Oder and the Neisse /Noteć/, the land between the Neisse and Warta and finally, Oppeln Silesia with an appropriate security belt. On these territories immediate steps ought to be taken to safeguard the interests of Poland in a permanent manner.

The vital economic interests of Poland ought to be permanently ensured along the whole Oder and its harbours.

A wide belt of territories to the west of the new Polish frontier ought to be subjected to a long Polish occupation.

The Polish-Czech frontier ought to be regulated with mutual understanding between the two countries on the basis of the agreement of 5th November, 1918, between the Polish National Council of the Duchy of Cieszyn /Teschen/ and the Czech 'Narodni Vybor Pro Sleszko'.

The Polish eastern frontier ought to be maintained as defined at the Treaty of Riga.....

The Political Structure of the Republic

.....Parliamentary elections will be held as soon as possible on the basis of a new, democratic electoral law. This Parliament will change the constitution which will formulate the principles of all embracing civic freedom, the freedom of religion, of conscience, political convictions, of word, print and political meeting and the principles of the equality of civic rights, of the equality of duties and of the independent administration of justice ...

Attitude towards other Nationalities

The Polish nation will consider fully the interests of other nations inhabiting its territory. Requiring from them loyalty and faithfulness to the Polish State, and a well-intentioned attitude to the rights and interests of the Polish nation, Poland will base its relations with these nations on the principle of political equality and of assuring them the conditions for full cultural, economic and social development within the framework of a unified state and the common good of all its citizens.

The reconstruction of the Social-Economic Structure

Aiming at the lifting of the economic potential of Poland and at the removal of harmful social disproportions, the reborn Polish state will undertake a fundamental rebuilding of economic life which will satisfy the interests of the

broad masses in town and country. In this sphere, the most important task of the state will be to distribute property to the largest possible number of economic units. The second task of the state will be to increase the social wealth and distribute it justly. The state will take over the direction and control of the economy with the aim of ensuring the realization of the economic plan. The state will have the right of taking over or socializing enterprises of public utility, key industries, transport and large financial institutions - if this is required by the general need.....

Planned Economy

Polish national economy in all its spheres, that is, in agriculture, raw materials and manufacturing, in crafts, commerce and public and private finances, will be directed according to the principles of planned economy

The reconstruction of the agricultural economy

In the peasant masses we see the dynamic force of the future and source of national energy.

Poland, as a country in which the agricultural element is preponderant, must turn its attention especially to the creation of a healthy and productive agricultural system. The principle of action in this sphere will be the widest distribution of agricultural property and the building up of dwarf holdings to a size assuring productivity - An extensive

action of rebuilding the agricultural structure will be undertaken immediately on the following principles:

- a. The State will take over, immediately the war is over, all private estates over fifty hectares - in order to ensure the planned rebuilding of the agricultural system.
- b. From a land fund, one family peasant farms of a size from eight to fifteen hectares will be formed, depending on the quality of the earth, its cultivation, in order to facilitate rational and productive work satisfying the needs of the family.
- c. Dwarf holdings will be enlarged to this size.
- d. The forests will belong to the state.
- e. The State will devote special care to agriculture with the aim of improving the production and living standards of the countryside and of facilitating the exchange of agricultural produce. The countryside will receive all possible intermediate aid, in the form of roads, the regulation of rivers, melioration, electrification, the construction of grain elevators, the development of the co-operative network and finally the necessary professional education.

That part of village population which will not find occupation in the villages, will be assured of professional schooling and will be directed to work in industry, crafts, co-operatives, trade and communications.

In this way the Polish state will aim to abolish village poverty and the under-privileged economic and cultural status of the peasant millions, creating in this way the conditions for the general improvement of the social-economic level of the country.....

Social Policy

.....The worker, organized in trades unions and self-government in work, will participate in social and economic planning, in the supervision and control of economic life and in control over the distribution of social wealth.

His life and work in the workshop will be made fuller through the creation of workshop councils. The strengthening of regulations in the collective work plan will lead to the objective treatment of pay and prevent any unprincipled excrement. The spread of social insurance and medical health and the realization of social care, especially in help to the family and care for the mother and child, will complete the system of organizations securing the worker freedom from want.....

The re-building and expansion of Culture and Education

.....The action of the Polish state will undertake the following programme in this sphere:

- a. Quick and extensive rebuilding of the elementary, intermediate, high and technical school network, and will facilitate accession thereto to the youth of all classes and ensure free education for the unwealthy.
- b. Extensive help for the education of youth... especially those from the peasant and working classes to guarantee them equal opportunities.
- c. Extensive educational action outside the school.

.....The realization of this great work will be possible only when Poland obtains the territorial framework due to her,

when she will be strong.

Meanwhile the struggle continues. It has not yet come to an end with our traditional foe in the West, when our Eastern neighbour, neglecting the great effort which Poland has put into the struggle of the democratic nations for freedom, neglecting Poland's uninterrupted four years' war & struggle with the bloody occupant, reaches for the ancient eastern territories of the Republic and wants to enforce its pattern of government on Poland.

The Polish nation is united in a decided opposition to these unheard of pretensions of its Eastern neighbour, just as it is united in the struggle with its Western neighbour.

The Polish nation has deep faith in the victory of right and justice and decidedly refuses all notion of territorial concessions in the east.

The Polish nation, united in its love of freedom and aim for independence is also unanimously opposed to all attempts at forcing upon it the eastern /Russian/ patterns of government.....

Warsaw, 15th March 1944.
Council of National Unity.¹

¹Translated from: Polskie Siły Zbrojne w Drugiej Wojnie Światowej: Armia Krajowa /Polish Armed Forces in the Second World War; The Home Army, London 1950. The Historical Institute of the name of General Sikorski/. Vol.III pp. 65-74.

Appendix III

Manifesto of the Polish Committee of National Liberation -PKWN¹.

To the Polish Nation!

To Poles at home and abroad!

To Poles in German captivity!

Countrymen! The hour of liberation has struck. The Polish Army, side by side with the Red Army, has crossed the Bug. The Polish soldier is fighting on the land of his fathers. White and red flags are once again flying over martyred Poland.

The Polish nation greets the soldier of the Peoples
²Army, united with the soldier of the Polish army in the USSR. We have a common foe, a common struggle and common flags.

United to the glory of Poland in one Polish Army under a united command, all Polish soldiers will march side by side with the Red Army to further battles for the liberation of our country.

They will march through the whole of Poland to seek revenge on the Germans, they will not stop until the Polish flag flies over the capital of arrogant Prussia,

¹

Polski Komitet Wyzwolenia Narodowego.

²

Armia Ludowa, AL, military organization of the PPR.

over the streets of Berlin.

Countrymen!

The Nation fighting the German occupant for freedom and independence, has created its own representation, its³ underground parliament - The Home National Council. The Home National Council is made up of representatives of democratic parties - the Peasant Party, Democrats, Socialists, members of the Polish Workers' Party⁴ and other organizations. Polish organizations abroad, and in the first place, the Union of Polish Patriots⁵ and the army created by it, have subordinated themselves to the Home National Council.

The Home National Council, called into being by the fighting nation, is the only legal source of authority in Poland.

The "emigré" government in London and its Deputation in Poland, is a self-created, illegal authority, based on the unlawful fascist constitution of April 1935. This "government" checked the struggle with the Hitlerite occupant, and with its reckless policy drove Poland on towards a new catastrophe.

At the moment when Poland is being liberated, at the moment when the allied Red Army, and with it, the Polish

³ Krajowa Rada Narodowa, KRN, Communist organization formed December 31 1943- January 1st, 1944.

⁴ Polska Partia Robotnicza, PPR, Communist Party.

⁵ Związek Patriotów Polskich, ZPP.

Army, are chasing the occupant out of the country, at this moment there must arise a legal centre of authority which will direct the nation's struggle towards final liberation.

For this reason, the Home National Council, the provisional parliament of the Polish nation, has called into being

THE POLISH COMMITTEE OF NATIONAL LIBERATION

as a legal, provisional executive authority to direct the liberating struggle of the nation towards the attainment of independence and the rebuilding of Polish statehood.

The Home National Council and the Polish Committee of National Liberation are acting on the basis of the Constitution of March 17th 1921, the only binding, legal and lawfully enacted constitution. The fundamental principles of the Constitution of March 17th 1921 will be binding until the calling of a Constituent Assembly elected by universal suffrage, which will, as the expression of the will of the nation, draw up a new constitution.

Countrymen!

The Polish Committee of National Liberation considers it as its leading task to heighten the participation of the Polish nation in the struggle to crush Hitlerite Germany.

The hour has struck for revenge on the Germans for the martyrdom and suffering, for the burned villages and ruined cities, for the destroyed churches and schools, for

the mass arrests, concentration camps and executions, for Oświęcim, Majdanek, Treblinka and the mass murder of the Ghetto.

Countrymen!

The allied Red Army has, with bravery and selflessness, dealt crushing blows to Hitlerite Germany. The Red Army has entered Poland as an army of liberation.

The Polish Committee of National Liberation calls the population and all the authorities subordinated to it, to the closest co-operation with the Red Army and the fullest aid to it. The most fruitful participation of Poles in the war will reduce the sufferings of the nation and hasten the end of the war.

To arms! Strike at the Germans wherever you find them! Attack their transports, give us information, help the Polish and Soviet soldiers! Fulfill the orders for mobilization on the liberated territories and hurry to the ranks of the Polish army which will revenge the September defeat and will, with the armies of the Allies, prepare a new Grunwald⁶ for the Germans!

Rise up and fight for the freedom of Poland, for the return to the Motherland of old Polish Pomerania and Upper Silesia, for East Prussia, for a wide access to the sea and for Polish frontier posts on the Oder!

⁶ Grunwald, 1410 a.d., famous battle at which Polish and Lithuanian armies inflicted a crushing defeat on the Teutonic Order.

Come and fight for a Poland which will never again be threatened by the Germanic flood, which will be assured of lasting peace and of the possibility of creative work and the flowering of the country!

History and the experience of the present war have proved that the only salvation from the pressure of Germanic imperialism lies in the construction of a great Slav dam,⁷ based on a Polish-Soviet-Czechoslovak understanding.

For four hundred years there was constant conflict between Poles and White Russians, Poles and Russians, with damage to both sides. Now a historical turning point has been reached in these relationships. Conflict gives way to friendship and co-operation dictated by the vital interests of both sides. The friendship and co-operation in battle, began through the comradeship in arms of the Polish and the Red Armies, ought to be transformed into a lasting alliance and neighbourly co-operation in the post-war period.

The Home National Council and the Polish Committee of National Liberation which it has called into being, are of the opinion that the regulation of the Polish-Soviet frontier ought to take place on the basis of mutual understanding. The Eastern frontier ought to be a line between friendly neighbours and not a barrier between us, and ~~it~~ ~~ought to be~~ regulated on the following principle: Polish

⁷ Echoes of Russian nineteenth century Pan-Slavism.

lands to Poland; Ukrainian, White Russian and Lithuanian lands to the Ukrainian, White Russian and Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republics. A lasting alliance with our immediate neighbours, the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia will be the fundamental principle of Polish foreign policy realized by the Polish Committee of National Liberation.

Comradeship in arms, sanctified by blood, shed in the struggle against the German aggressor, will deepen still more the friendship and secure our alliance with Great Britain and the United States of America. Poland will aim to preserve her traditional friendship and alliance with a re-born France, as also co-operate with all the democratic states of the world.

Polish foreign policy will be democratic and will be based on the principles of collective security.

The Polish Committee of National Liberation will systematically evaluate the losses inflicted on the Polish nation by the Germans, and will take steps to ensure to Poland the payment of damages due to her.

Countrymen! In the Name of the Home National Council, the Polish Committee of National Liberation takes over the authority ~~of~~ the liberated Polish territories. Not for a moment can any other administration than the Polish exist on Polish lands liberated from the German aggressor. The Polish Committee of National Liberation exercises its authority by means of National Councils at the ⁸Województwo, Pow-

⁸ equivalent to a Provincial jurisdictional unit.

⁹iat, City and Village ¹⁰ level; and through its plenipoten-
 tiaries. In places where the National Councils are non-
 existent, democratic organizations are obligated to call
 them into being immediately, taking into them Polish pat-
 riots who possess the confidence of the people, irrespective
 of their political beliefs.

The Polish Committee of National Liberation orders
 the immediate dissolution of the occupant's administrative
 organs.

The Polish Committee of National Liberation orders ¹¹
 the immediate dissolution of the so-called "navy-blue" police.

The National Councils will immediately proceed to
 create a People's Militia subordinate to them, with the
 task of maintaining order and security.

The task of the independent Polish law courts will
 be the swift dispensation of justice. No German war-crimi-
 nal, no traitor of the nation can escape punishment!

Countrymen!

The Polish Committee of National Liberation begins
 the task of rebuilding Polish statehood; it solemnly declares
 the return of all democratic freedoms; the equality of all
 citizens without difference of race, religion and nationa-
 lity; the freedom of political and professional organizations,

⁹ Equivalent to County jurisdictional unit.

¹⁰ Gmina, jurisdictional unit of one or more villages.

¹¹ Native police under the German occupation.

of press and of conscience. However, these democratic freedoms cannot serve the enemies of democracy. Fascist and anti-national organizations will be prosecuted with all the severity of the law.

Countrymen!

The destroyed and famished country awaits a a great creative effort of the whole nation. The injustice inflicted by the occupant must be quickly repaired. Property taken by the Germans from certain citizens, businessmen, artisans, small and medium industrialists, institutions and the church, will be returned to its rightful owners. Germans' estates will be confiscated. The Jews, bestially persecuted by the occupant, will be assured of the rebuilding of their way of life and of legal and factual equality of rights.

The national wealth, concentrated to-day in the hands of the German state and certain German capitalists, that is, large industrial, commercial, bank and transport enterprises and forests, will be transferred to the provisional government for administration. Property will be returned as economic conditions are regulated.

Countrymen!

In order to hasten the work of national reconstruction and satisfy the centuries' old desire of the Polish peasant for land, the Polish Committee of National Liberation will immediately take up the task of realizing an extensive agricultural reform on the liberated territories.

With this aim in view, a LAND FUND will be created in the Department of Agriculture and Agricultural Reform. This Fund will be made up of live and immovable inventory and buildings, together with German lands, the estates of traitors and larger estates of over 50 hectares,¹² and on the lands annexed to the Reich, in principle estates of over 100 hectares. German lands and the lands of traitors will be confiscated. Large estates will be taken over by the Land Fund without the compensation dependent on their size, but with provision for their former owners.

Landowners with a patriotic record in the struggle with the Germans will be provided for as above. The land concentrated in the Land Fund, with the exception of that part of it reserved for model farms, will be distributed among small and medium peasants, those supporting large families, small lease-holders and agricultural labourers. The land distributed by the Land Fund will, for a minimum price, constitute private property on a level with previously owned land. The Land Fund will create new farms or ~~complement~~ small farms, taking 5 hectares of medium quality¹³ as a fundamental norm for a medium sized family. Farms which will be ineligible for this norm, will have the right to a share in re-settlement with government aid on to the territories

¹²

1 hectare - 2.5 acres.

¹³

This was smaller than the norm envisaged by the RJN Declaration of March 15th, 1944, see Appendix II, p.XI.

with unoccupied land which will be obtained from Germany.

Countrymen!

The Polish Committee of National Liberation sees as its immediate task the betterment of the existence of the broad masses of the nation.

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The Norm system of depriving the peasant of the fruits of his work, will be immediately abolished. To supply the needs of the army and the provisioning of towns, closely defined payments in kind will be introduced on the basis of Polish law on war payments; these will considerably ease the burden on the villages in comparison with the German norm system.

The working wage, forcibly maintained by the Germans on the pre-war level, will be legally raised to the minimum subsistence level.

The rebuilding and extension of Social Insurance Institutions for illness, invalids, unemployment, and insurance for old age, will begin immediately. These institutions will be based on the principles of democratic self-government. Modern legislation regulating the protection of labour will be introduced; work will begin to lessen the privations of the housing shortage.

The hated German regulations, stifling economic activity, the trade turn-over between town and village, will be

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German system of obtaining agricultural produce.

abolished. The State will give its support to a wider development of the co-operative movement. Private initiative, which hastens the pulse beat of economic life, will also obtain State support. The assurance of normal provisioning will be one of the fundamental tasks of the State.

Countrymen!

One of the most imperative tasks facing the Polish Committee of National Liberation, will be the rebuilding of the educational system and the assurance of free education on all levels in the liberated territories. Compulsory education will be rigorously applied. The Polish educated classes, decimated by the Germans, and especially the scientists and artists, will receive special care. The rebuilding of schools and hospitals will be immediately taken up.

Countrymen!

The Polish Committee of National Liberation will aim at the quickest return of the emigration to Poland and will take steps to organize this return.

The frontiers of the Republic will be closed only to Hitlerite agents and to those who betrayed Poland in 1939.

Countrymen!

We have gigantic tasks to accomplish. We shall continue to realize these tasks with unlinching will and decision. We shall throw out the adventurers and the agents of reaction, who, through splitting national unity, and attempt-

ting to provoke fratricidal strife, accomplish the policies of Hitlerism.

Our leading tasks are: to liberate Poland, to rebuild the Polish state, to obtain for Poland a place in world affairs meriting respect, to begin the rebuilding of our devastated country.

These tasks cannot be realized without national unity. We have been forging this unity in our underground struggle. The birth of the Home National Council was the expression of the realization of this unity. The creation of the Polish Committee of National Liberation is a further step on this road.

The Polish Committee of National Liberation appeals to you:

Do all to hasten the liberation of Poland and the defeat of the Germans!

Poles!

Arise and Fight! To arms!

Long live the united Polish Army fighting for the freedom of Poland!

Long live the allied Red Army, which is bringing liberation to Poland!

Long live our Allies - The Soviet Union, Great Britain and the United States of America!

Long live national unity!

Long live the Home National Council - the represen-

tative of the nation in arms!

Long live a free, strong, independent, sovereign,
democratic Poland!

The Polish Committee of National Liberation.

Chełm, July 22nd, 1944.

Translated from: Manifest Polskiego Komitetu Wyzwolenia Narodowego, Od Polskiego Komitetu Wyzwolenia Narodowego do Rządu Jedności Narodowej, Zbiór Dokumentów, - From the Polish Committee of National Liberation to the Government of National Unity, Collected Documents - "Książka", Warszawa, 1945.

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