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**BEHIND THE  
POLISH-SOVIET  
BREAK**

**By ALTER BRODY**

**Introduction by  
CORLISS LAMONT**

## Introduction

SOVIET RUSSIA'S severance of relations with the Polish Government-in-Exile, over the Nazi-inspired charge that the Russians murdered 10,000 Polish army officers, shows clearly the danger to the United Nations of the splitting tactics engineered by Hitler and definitely helped along by the general campaign of anti-Soviet propaganda carried on during recent months in Britain and America.

According to the London Bureau of the *New York Herald Tribune*,

"It is a safe assumption that the Poles would not have taken so tough an attitude toward the Soviet Government if it had not been for the widespread support Americans have been giving them in the cases of Henry Ehrlich and Victor Alter."

It is significant, too, to note, as Professor Lange of the University of Chicago has pointed out, that the American Friends of Poland, an anti-Soviet organization under the wing of the Polish Embassy, counts among its members some of America's foremost isolationists and America Firsters such as Colonel Langhorn, its chairman; General Wood, Mr. John Cudahy, Mr. Robert Hall McCormick and Miss Lucy Martin. These individuals have all been leading advocates of a negotiated peace with Hitler at the expense of Soviet Russia.

Mr. Walter Lippmann well sums up the matter in his column "Today and Tomorrow" when he states that the net effect of American public opinion has been "to mislead the Polish Government into taking risks it could not afford to take and to provoke the Russian Government into forcing a show-down." The bitter truth to which these various considerations point is that we here in the United States share the responsi-

bility for this grave situation. And we now have the obligation of avoiding any further action that will result in dividing us from our great Russian ally.

The Soviet-Polish situation constitutes a real test of the sincerity of America's claims of friendship for the Soviet Union. Influential persons and newspapers in this country have been placing equal responsibility for the crisis on the U.S.S.R. when it is perfectly clear that the blame rests on Nazi Germany and the reactionary, diehard Russophobes in the Polish Government-in-Exile. It is extremely important that we understand precisely where the guilt lies and that we make clear our confidence in the integrity of our Soviet ally and her devotion to our common cause, which has been sealed with the blood of so many millions of her people. Certainly the acts of the Polish Government have not been such as to warrant our confidence.

Soviet-Polish relations have unfortunately been marked by a long series of Polish provocations, official and unofficial. There was no move on the part of the Polish Government-in-Exile to repudiate or counteract anti-Soviet agitation by Polish newspapers and organizations. The agreement to leave the settlement of boundary issues until after the war was broken by Sikorski's statement of last December insisting on the terms of the compulsive Treaty of Riga, which is discussed in this pamphlet. This was promptly made the occasion for a rancorous campaign disruptive to Allied unity by Polish reactionary circles in England and their friends in other countries. The Polish army formed on Soviet soil was withdrawn on Sikorski's orders to Iran at the very height of the Stalingrad campaign, then hanging in the balance. Polish guerrilla activities were discouraged. The shameful anti-Soviet agitation around the Alter-Ehrlich case was followed by the collaboration with Goebbels' propaganda around the German mass murders of Poles.

The Soviet-Polish crisis further brings out the fact that the

new wave of anti-Soviet propaganda which has arisen recently in the United States should cause gravest concern to every patriotic American. For this campaign against the U.S.S.R., covering many different issues and stirring up old fears and prejudices, threatens to undermine American-Soviet friendship, which is so essential for victory over the Axis and for the establishment of enduring peace.

The anti-Soviet forces in our country have never abandoned the disastrous and discredited policy that culminated at Munich. They include all those elements whose hatred of Soviet Russia is greater than their hatred of fascism. These circles are willing to prolong the war indefinitely, even to risk our ultimate defeat, our own country's freedom and security, in the hope that Hitler will bleed to death the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The American people must be vigilant in identifying these disruptive forces in our midst, in exposing them, combating them, depriving them of influence and power by building an indestructible unity with our Allies.

To this all-important end this pamphlet by Alter Brody, issued by *Soviet Russia Today*, makes a notable contribution by telling the truth about the Soviet-Polish situation and developing its full implications.

CORLISS LAMONT

## STALIN ON POLISH-SOVIET RELATIONS

**R**EPLYING on May 4 to two questions put to him by *New York Times* correspondent Ralph Parker, Joseph Stalin declared that the Soviet Government unquestionably desires a strong and independent Poland after the defeat of Hitler's Germany, and that in his opinion post-war relations between the two countries should be based "upon the fundament of solid good neighborly relations and mutual respect, or, should the Polish people so desire, upon the fundament of an alliance providing for mutual assistance against the Germans as the chief enemies of the Soviet Union and Poland."

# Behind the Polish-Soviet Break

By Alter Brody

RECENTLY the American educational world was shocked by a survey which revealed how woefully ignorant our college students are of the most elementary facts of American history and geography. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the public as a whole should be even less well informed on the subject of Russo-Polish history and geography. Yet, much of the suspicion and hostility which have been engendered in American-Soviet relations by the ill-timed boundary dispute which the Polish Government has seen fit to launch at this most critical period of a war which, for the Polish as well as for the American, British, Russian, Chinese, and other United Nations, is a war for survival—could have been dissipated at once by a wider knowledge of the basic facts of Russo-Polish history. These facts are as indisputable and as verifiable as the fact that Abraham Lincoln was President of the United States during the Civil War and not Jefferson Davis, as many of our students thought; that William James was the brother of Henry James and not of Jesse James; or that California was not one of the thirteen original colonies.

It would of course be naive to believe that a mere recital of objective ethnographic and historic facts is all that is necessary to clear the air. There were political rather than ethnographic motives behind the Sikorski government's sudden reopening of the boundary controversy which, according to the Soviet-Polish treaty of 1941, was to have been postponed till after the war. And there are political rather than ethnographic motives for the lively interest which certain circles

in America are taking in the matter. The American public as a whole, however, has no political axe to grind in the dispute and to them this verifiable outline of the ethnographic and historic background of the controversy is submitted.

#### BEHIND THE POLISH CLAIMS

Polish claims to Western Byelorussia and the Western Ukraine go back, primarily, to the end of the 14th Century, when, as a state, Poland was more unified and, therefore, more powerful than Russia. In alliance with the similarly more unified Lithuanian State, Poland conquered parts of Russia.

The situation was reversed in the 18th Century. Its neighbors, Prussia, Austria, and Russia, had been unifying and centralizing their state power, outstripping Polish power. Together they absorbed Poland in a series of partitions of Polish territory.

Therefore, if historical precedent be used to justify Polish claims, similar historical claims could be advanced against her very national existence! And not only the three powers mentioned, but Lithuania and Sweden could also advance claims upon Polish territory.

But the ideas that move and condition the war efforts of the United Nations have no affinity with such "historic" claims. They are based on the principle of the self-determination of nations, to which the Soviet Union has subscribed. Russian revolutionary circles called for the liberation of Poland from Russian rule and when the revolution occurred, one of the first acts of the new Soviet Government was to acknowledge Poland's independence.

#### THE PARTITIONS OF POLAND

The most delicate chapters in Russo-Polish history are the partitions of Poland. In these partitions it is interesting to note that, whatever the reasons were, the territory taken by

Russia was not Polish. The Catholic Encyclopedia states: "In 1772-92-95 the territory of Poland was divided among the three adjoining states. Lithuania, White Russia, and Little Russia were given to Russia, *the purely Polish territory to Prussia and Austria.*" However, after the Napoleonic wars, Russia did acquire purely Polish territory as well, when the so-called Duchy of Warsaw, created by Napoleon, was re-divided. Then, as part of the European settlement made at the Congress of Vienna, a section of Poland was given to Prussia, a section to Austria, and the bulk to Russia as an autonomous Polish kingdom under Russian suzerainty, known in Polish history as Congress Poland.

It was, therefore, by the Treaty of Vienna and not by the partitions of Poland that Russia first acquired a Polish problem. The Catholic Encyclopedia declares: "The Poles under Tsarist rule are found chiefly in Congress Poland, also in small numbers in Lithuania, Volhynia and the Ukraine"; and it adds as to East Galicia, then under Austrian rule, "The San divides Galicia into an Eastern and Western half, the latter occupied by Poles, the former by Ruthenians" (Ukrainians).

#### TSARIST POLICY TOWARD THE POLES

It is illuminating in the light of the traditional Polish foreign policy to compare the treatment meted out to the Poles by the barbarous, autocratic government of fellow-Slavic Russia to that which they received from the enlightened constitutional monarchies of Prussia and Austria, both German states. To quote the Catholic Encyclopedia again:

"After Poland disappeared from the political map of Europe, each of the three states which absorbed it began to carry out its own policy in the annexed territory. . . . Austria and Prussia in particular sought to repress the Polish national spirit. Colonization of Polish territory with German colonists was begun systematically. In Prussia, all church lands were confiscated and the Catholic clergy as a whole were made answerable for the political crimes of individuals. Under Rus-

sian rule, hostility to the Polish national spirit was not entirely open but the persecution of the Uniats continued."

In other words, there was comparatively less official persecution of Polish nationalism or Polish Catholicism. Since the Uniats were not Poles but Ukrainian Greek Orthodox peasants whose clergy had been organized under Polish pressure into a semi-autonomous Catholic Church, Russian-Greek Orthodox counter-pressure to get them to re-enter the fold can hardly be termed persecution of the Poles. Raymond Buell in "Poland" notes:

"A Polish writer (Eugenjusz Kwiatkowski) calls attention to the essential difference between the Russian and German oppression of the Poles during the partition period. Russia had some sort of Pan-Slavic Union under Russian hegemony as its main creed. In this vague Pan-Slavic Empire, the Poles were to have their place as one of the Slav peoples. Russia opposed Polish independence. Always, however, in one form or another, the existence of an ethnically Polish territory was recognized. Not so Germany. There the fight against the Poles took the form of a systematic attempt to denationalize the provinces inhabited by Poles and transform them into purely German provinces. German policy tended toward domination and extermination, which even the more liberal Germans interpreted as a national necessity."

This difference in policy was as striking in the economic as in the ethnic sphere. In Germany government funds (100,000,000 marks in 1886) were appropriated to buy up Polish land and dispossess the Polish peasantry and particularly the Polish nobility so that the latter became extinct as a class in German Poland. In Tsarist Russia not only were the Polish landowners *not* dispossessed of their estates in Russian Poland but were permitted to hold on to their vastly larger estates in White Russia and the Ukraine, so that there was the anomalous situation of the "subjugated" Polish nobility owning and exploiting millions of "liberated" White Russian and Ukrainian peasants.

To this day the obstinacy of the Polish Government on the question of "Eastern Poland" is primarily based on the natural disinclination of the Polish ruling class, chiefly "East Polish" landowners, to surrender the right to exploit these millions of Russian peasants on their vast White Russian (Byelorussian) and Ukrainian estates. Tsarist industrial development was mainly in the West, and Polish industry was a chief beneficiary. The *Encyclopedia Britannica* testifies:

"The abolition in 1851 of the customs frontier between Russia and Poland laid the foundation for an extraordinary industrial expansion. The Russian Government took every possible means to assist this expansion. . . . The Polish upper and middle class achieved a well-being far superior to anything enjoyed by their cousins in Austrian Galicia."

The foregoing does not mean, of course, that the Polish people were not oppressed. The Tsar's Government had its own reasons for its special terms to the Polish landed nobility and manufacturers. It sought to base its rule of the subjugated Polish people on their support. But it is pertinent to note that Russian rule was less prejudicial to Polish nationhood in every sense than German or Austrian rule.

#### THE NEW POLISH EMPIRE

After a century and a quarter of political eclipse, Poland was reborn as a political state at the Versailles Peace Conference. It was made abundantly clear at the Peace Conference that it was not the intention of the Allied Powers to reconstitute a New Polish Empire. The forerunner of the Atlantic Charter—Wilson's famous Fourteen Points—specifically stipulated that "The Polish State shall include territories inhabited by indisputably Polish populations."

Despite pressure from Polish neo-imperialists and their French backers, British and American influence resulted in the Conference fixing the Polish eastern boundary on an ethnographic basis, on a line running through Grodno, Brest-Li-

tovs, Rawa Russka and Przemyśl, which came to be called the Curzon Line after Lord Curzon, the British representative at the Peace Conference. This ethnographic boundary line recognized by the Versailles Peace Conference was precisely the line at which the Red Army stopped when it headed off the Nazi occupation of "Eastern Poland," and is roughly the line which the Soviet Union now considers its boundary with Poland.

But the leaders of the new Polish State could not give up their dream of making Poland a World Power, a dream—given Poland's limited area and population—which could only be realized at the expense of its neighbors. Says Buell in his "Poland": "Pilsudski believed that Poland had to have a large territory. For historical reasons it was easier to get this base at the expense of Russia than of Germany." Pilsudski's grandiose ambitions fitted in with Clemenceau's scheme for a Cordon Sanitaire to hem in and ultimately to strangle the Soviet Union.

#### POLISH ANNEXATIONS

Fighting on a dozen fronts, exhausted by six years of war, revolution, Civil War, and intervention, the Soviet State was finally compelled to sign a compromise peace with Poland, surrendering the western part of White Russia and the western part of the Ukraine. Says the *Encyclopedia Britannica* of this infamous Treaty of Riga:

"On March 18, 1921, a treaty was signed on terms favorable to Poland which placed some four million Russians under the Polish flag (exclusive of another four million Russians in East Galicia which were not included in this transaction). Again (as at Brest-Litovsk) the Soviet Government had paid a heavy price for peace."

About the same time little fellow-Catholic Lithuania suffered the same fate as Soviet Russia at the hands of the intoxicated new Polish imperialism. Vilna, its traditional capital, had been awarded to Lithuania by the same Curzon Line decision which also denied Western White Russia, Western

Ukraine and East Galicia to the Poles. The day before the date set by the League of Nations for Lithuania to reoccupy its ancient capital, Polish General Zeligowski staged one of those "non-interventionist" affairs that Hitler was later to perfect, and seized the whole Vilna district.

This very first defiance of the League of Nations, antedating by eleven years Japan's aggression against China and by fifteen years Mussolini's aggression against Ethiopia, created such anti-Polish sentiment in the Allied world that Poland was constrained to nominally disavow the Zeligowski coup. Zeligowski nevertheless continued to occupy Vilna and three years later, when the world's conscience had lost its sensitivity, the Council of Ambassadors sanctioned the Polish seizure of Vilna. Lithuania refused to recognize this annexation of her capital. She severed all relations, including rail and postal, with Poland and for eighteen years considered herself in a state of belligerence with her neighbor until 1938, when a Polish ultimatum forced her to make "peace."

#### POLAND AND SELF-DETERMINATION

The conquest of Vilna rounded out the Eastern frontiers of the new Polish empire. As Pilsudski had planned, it had been created at the expense of Russia—one of the original Allied powers, which had sacrificed more lives in the war which liberated Poland than all the others put together—rather than at the expense of Germany, the vanquished enemy. Pilsudski, it should be noted, had been an enemy of the Allies and his "Legion" had been organized by the Germans. According to Polish statistics there were less than a million Germans in the territory annexed from Germany, whereas there were eight million White Russians and Ukrainians in the territory annexed from Russia.

From its birth in 1919 to its demise in 1939, the twenty-one-year record of the second Poland is a disheartening defama-

tion of the ideals of self-determination, the rights of small nations and international decency in general. Here is a nation which has suffered the tragedy of national dissolution, the bitterness of racial, religious and economic oppression. Suddenly, after more than a century of suffering, after many bloody but fruitless efforts to free itself, it finds liberty and nationhood handed back to it by a fiat of history. But no sooner was partitioned Poland liberated than it started to seize the territory of its neighbors; no sooner were the enslaved Poles emancipated than they began enslaving White Russians, Ukrainians and Lithuanians; no sooner were the Polish Catholics safe from religious persecution than they set about persecuting the millions of Jews and Greek Orthodox communicants who were at their mercy.

On June 28, 1919, the Versailles Powers which had created the second Poland made the new state sign a treaty accepting certain international obligations with respect to its minorities as a precondition of recognition. The treaty stipulated that . . . "All Polish nationals shall enjoy the same civil and political rights without distinction as to race, language or religion . . . equal opportunity to public employment, functions and honors and the exercise of professions . . . where minorities form a considerable proportion of the population, facilities for instruction in their own language, . . . etc."

The very same stipulations were cheerfully signed and put into practice by the new Czechoslovak state, but from the very first the second Poland showed its colors by brazenly balking at signing such a treaty. Finally even Poland's best friend Clemenceau, then President of the Peace Conference, lost patience and wrote a caustic letter to Paderewski, first Polish President, which has a reminiscent ring today:

"It is to the endeavors and sacrifices of the Powers in whose name I am addressing you that the Polish nation owes the recovery of its independence. It is on the support that the re-

sources of these Powers shall afford the League of Nations that, for the future, Poland will, to a large extent, depend for the secure possession of these territories." Poland reluctantly signed the minorities treaty but proceeded immediately to nullify it.

### THREE MILLION "SURPLUS" JEWS

Forty per cent of the population of the new Polish Empire were non-Polish—a much higher percentage than the non-Russian population of the tsarist Empire, termed "prison-house of nations." The four important national minorities were White Russians and Ukrainians, the Jews and the Germans. Since there was no Jewish State across the border to champion Jewish rights the nullification of the minority treaty, so far as Jews were concerned, was a simple matter. Accordingly the birth of the second Poland was celebrated by a wave of pogroms that swept the country. The official Morgenthau commission, appointed by the American Versailles delegation to investigate the massacres, reported that 280 Jews had been killed and may hundreds wounded. Between these intermittent outbreaks of violence there was always an unabated and less spectacular but far more effective "cold pogrom"—the publicly sponsored boycott of Jewish stores, industries and professions, the exclusion of Jews from all public or municipal employment and by *numerus clausus* (limited number) from the universities, climaxed by a licensing law which forced old Jewish tailors, shoemakers and other artisans to pass arbitrary written tests in order to "practice."

As the late Raymond Leslie Buell, President of the Foreign Policy Association, testifies: "The most visible form of anti-Semitism is an economic boycott which has been approved by courts, the government, and dignitaries of the Catholic Church. The head of the Catholic Church, Cardinal Hlond, in a pastoral letter in 1936, declared 'One does well to prefer one's own kind in commercial relations and to avoid Jewish

stores but it is not permissible to demolish Jewish businesses.' And Prime Minister Skladkowski declared in that same year 'Nobody in Poland should be harmed, but economic warfare—that's all right.' A Swedish authority, Hugo Valentin, writing in 1936 says: 'It cannot be said that the Polish Jews are subjected to the same physical torture as the German Jews but their material distress is far worse.' "

The object of this policy, as the leading Polish political parties made it clear in their platforms, was nothing less than the program which the Nazis are now carrying out in all of occupied Europe including Poland—not the suppression but the complete elimination of the Jew from Poland. Thus the Camp of National Unity, the party dominant at the outbreak of the war, declared: "The Jews are an element weakening the state . . . the best solution is emigration." Colonel Wenda, the Party's Chief of Staff, said: "The departure of the Polish Jews is a necessity on account of national defense." The National Democratic Party, the opposition party, urged that "Jews be prohibited from voting, holding any public office or owning land." The National Radical Party demanded that Jews be forbidden to work for Poles or employ Poles. "Elimination of the Jew from Poland is the ultimate solution of the Jewish problem." In view of this record it is difficult to suppress the suspicion that the authors of these statements, many of whom are now members of the Polish Government-in-Exile, must have a sneaking admiration and gratitude for the thorough job which Hitler is doing on the "Jewish Problem" in Poland.

In its anxiety to get rid of its Jews the Polish Government even turned Zionist and could always be counted on in a pinch to vociferously back the Balfour Declaration. Enlightened Polish statesmen complained euphemistically of Poland's "surplus" Jewish population, or more specifically of Poland's three million surplus Jews, *i.e.*, all of them. In 1938, shortly after Munich, when there was talk of redistributing the

colonial world, Poland actually demanded colonies on the basis of her need to export her "superfluous Jews." As Vice Premier Kwiatkowski declared plaintively: "The rich nations call upon the poor overpopulated ones to practice humanitarian principles while they themselves close the doors of their colonies before the superfluous Jews from Poland." When President Roosevelt called the first Refugee Conference at Evian, the Polish Government protested against the Conference concentrating on the victims of the Hitler terror to the exclusion of its own "superfluous Jews." It is this same Polish Government, which considered its three million Jews "superfluous," which is taking such an active interest in the fate of two Jewish traitors executed by the Soviet Union.

#### POLAND'S EASTERN COLONIES

Until the Soviet Union was admitted to the League of Nations in 1934 the White Russian and Ukrainian minorities in Poland were practically in the same helpless position as the Jews. The Soviet Union was a political outcast and since it was not a member of the League it was unable to invoke the minority treaty in behalf of its subjugated blood brothers in White Russia and Western Ukraine. There was therefore nothing to prevent Poland from treating Western White Russia and Ukraine as newly occupied colonies with a native population which was to make room for Polish settlers.

Since the land was largely the property of a few great Polish landowners it was easy to expel the White Russian and Ukrainian tenant farmers from their native soil and supplant them with Polish peasants, usually army reservists and their families, thus forming a network of military garrisons in the "occupied regions." By various electoral tricks familiar in our own South the White Russians and Ukrainians were practically disfranchised. The language provision of the minority treaty was largely ignored and in the universities of their own ancient cities Ukrainian students were subjected to

the *numerus clausus*, hitherto reserved for Jews. Buell, in his "Poland," states "Out of a total of 140 students in the Lvov medical school only two Ukrainians were admitted in 1931. As a result of this *numerus clausus* many Polish Ukrainians studied abroad, for instance at the Ukrainian University at Kharkov in the Soviet Ukraine."

In 1930 the Polish Ukraine broke out into an open revolt against the unbearable Polish yoke. Several Polish divisions were mobilized to crush the revolt and the "pacification" reached such a pitch of brutality that the League of Nations was forced to take notice of it with a gentle reprimand.

In 1934 when the Soviet Union was admitted to the League of Nations Poland was in a panic lest the Soviet Union initiate a League investigation of her minorities policies. Poland took no chances. In the fall of that year Foreign Minister Beck formally declared: "Poland was compelled to refuse cooperation with the international organization in the matter of supervision of the application by Poland of the system of minority protection under the agreement of June 28, 1919." Thus Poland unilaterally abrogated a treaty which was the diplomatic precondition of its independent existence.

#### HITLER'S GERMANS PREFERRED

The Polish Government's policy toward the German minority was characteristic. In the days of the weak, republican Weimar regime which, until 1926, was not a member of the League of Nations, the German minority was gradually edged out of the Western Polish provinces and its place taken by Polish settlers. When Germany became a Nazi dictatorship all this changed. The equality which the Polish Government refused to grant to the Jews and Ukrainians and White Russians in the name of justice was granted readily to the Germans in the name of brute force. Though the Nazis later used the persecution of the German minority as a pretext for their invasion of Poland it is an ironic fact that during the

Nazi regime the German minority enjoyed exemplary treatment in Poland.

#### POLAND'S FOREIGN POLICY

From its birth in 1919 to Hitler's advent in 1933, Poland's foreign policy was orientated almost exclusively on its plans to dismember the Soviet Union and replace Russia as Europe's eastern Great Power. On this grandiose program Poland's leading political parties were in essential agreement—some-what as Japan's leading political parties are in essential agreement on an even more grandiose program—the moderates, radicals and conservatives merely differing on the tempo of its execution. The Polish Government realized, however, that the scheme was too ambitious for its own unaided strength. But it looked hopefully for support from its neighbors of the Cordon Sanitaire, from Finland to Rumania, and for military, financial and industrial assistance from France, then the dominant military power on the continent. And always there was the hope of a "Second Front" from Japan.

The rise of Nazi Germany put the Polish government in a quandary. Not only its diplomatic but its military and industrial orientation had been based on an imminent war against the Soviet Union with an innocuous, disarmed Germany safely in the rear. Poland's army, with the largest percentage of cavalry in the world, had been organized with a view toward action on the plains of the Soviet Ukraine and not in the semi-urban, semi-wooded, semi-mountainous terrain of their German frontier. Its fortifications were inconveniently concentrated on its Russian border and its industry even more inconveniently concentrated on its "safe" German border.

It was indeed a perilous situation. All the dictates of reason and self-interest, all the lessons bitterly learned during centuries of Polish history, pointed to a reorientation of Polish policy toward an alliance with Russia against a foe whose avowed program was the subjection of all the Slav peoples.

Instead Pilsudski signed a ten-year non-aggression pact with Germany, which was in effect an alliance, though it attracted far less recrimination in certain circles than the Soviet-German non-aggression pact which was in effect only an armed truce.

#### POLAND DRIFTS INTO HITLER'S ORBIT

Very soon it became evident that Poland's non-aggression pact with Nazi Germany was very aggressive, not only against the Soviet Union but against its former allies including those to whom it owed its very existence. Raymond Leslie Buell commented: "Poland proceeded to go beyond the published version of the Non-Aggression Pact. It showed its hostility to the whole thesis of 'Collective Security' as compared to the German thesis of 'Bilateral Pacts.' This attitude may have been due to a secret agreement. A more plausible explanation for Poland's policy was its belief that the League had become an ideological alliance inspired by Russia and directed against the Fascist states, a belief reinforced by the withdrawal of Germany, Italy and Japan. In the autumn of 1938 Poland declined to stand for re-election to the League Council."

In the winter of 1938 when Hitler seized Austria, Poland followed suit by forcing Lithuania to make "peace" with her as a preliminary to its future annexation. In the final Munich crisis of September, 1938, while the crucified Czechoslovak people were debating resistance to the Nazi ultimatum, the Polish army mobilized and placed itself squarely between Czechoslovakia and its hopes of assistance from the Red Army. Simultaneously Poland served an ultimatum on Czechoslovakia demanding the immediate cession of the Teschen district. This Polish stab in the back played no small part in forcing the Czechoslovak Government to yield at Munich.

After helping the Nazi lion gobble up Czechoslovakia the Polish jackal suddenly realized that it was next on the Nazi menu. In the spring of 1939 Poland began shamefaced efforts to renew the ties it had dropped in the democratic camp and

reminded itself that it was still a member of the League of Nations. It even began to consider the question of coming to terms with the Soviet Union. But there was a cleavage in the Polish ruling class which stultified any decisive step in that direction. The Polish bourgeoisie, with industrial interests mainly in Western Poland, *i.e.*, in Poland proper, had most to fear from Germany and therefore pressed for a Soviet alliance. But the military clique of Marshal Smigly-Rydz and Colonel Beck, which was in the saddle, mostly East Polish landowners with vast estates in western White Russia and the Ukraine, had no stomach for a Soviet alliance. The dominant wing of the Polish ruling class preferred risking the independence of Poland rather than their private estates.

There is no doubt that the outbreak of this war was hastened by the disinclination of the Allies to accept the Soviet conditions for effective Allied-Soviet military cooperation, and that, in turn, was primarily due to the suicidal obstinacy of the Polish Government in refusing to permit the Red Army to occupy battle stations in "Eastern Poland." Nevertheless, when war broke out, the Soviet Union, if for no other than selfish reasons, was only too anxious for Poland's resistance to the Nazis to be as prolonged as possible.

#### POLISH-SOVIET BOUNDARIES POSITION

It was only when the Polish army was hopelessly crushed and the Polish Government had fled to Rumania and the Nazis were sweeping unopposed toward "Eastern Poland" that the Red Army moved in to stop the Nazis at the ethnographic boundaries of Russia and to rescue thirteen million White Russians, Ukrainians and Jews from Nazi enslavement. Shortly after, in accordance with the laws laid down by the Soviet Constitution, the population of Western White Russia and Western Ukraine voted in a plebiscite to join their brothers in the White Russian Soviet Republic and the Ukrainian Soviet Republic.

at that, cannot evoke the confidence of people possessing any amount of honesty.

The fact that the hostile campaign against the Soviet Union commenced simultaneously in the German and Polish press and is conducted along the same lines—this fact leaves no doubt as to the existence of contact and accord in carrying out this hostile campaign between the enemy of the Allies—Hitler, and the Polish Government.

While the peoples of the Soviet Union are bleeding profusely in the hard struggle against Hitlerite Germany and strain every effort for the defeat of the common enemy of the Russian and Polish peoples and all freedom-loving, democratic countries, the Polish Government, to please Hitler's tyranny, deals a treacherous blow to the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Government is aware that this hostile campaign against the Soviet Union was undertaken by the Polish Government in order to exert pressure upon the Soviet Government by making use of the Hitlerite slanderous 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.

All these circumstances compel the Soviet Government to recognize that the present Government of Poland, having slid 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 all the above, the Soviet Government has decided to sever relations with the Polish Government.

Please accept, Mr. Ambassador, assurances of my very high esteem.

## Vyshinsky's Statement

ON MAY 6 Assistant Commissar for Foreign Affairs Vyshinsky made a statement to the American and British press regarding hostile activities of the Polish Government-in-Exile.

He described how, in accordance with the military agree-

ment of August, 1941, which provided for the formation of a Polish army on Soviet soil, the Soviet Government financed the Polish army, provided it with the same supplies as Red Army units in training, and restored Polish citizenship to persons of Polish nationality from Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia to facilitate its formation. By February, 1942, the Polish army reached the agreed upon strength of 73,415 men.

Then, contrary to their commitments, the Polish leaders refused to send the Polish units into battle. The Soviet Government acceded to the request of the Polish Government to evacuate the army to the Near East, and by the end of 1942, 75,491 Polish army men and 37,756 members of their families had left the U.S.S.R. Additional members of their families were later evacuated. With the withdrawal of the army, provision for further recruiting was naturally denied, and the citizenship provision invalidated.

Mr. Vyshinsky then described the cooperation of the Soviet authorities in relief measures for Polish families evacuated from districts occupied by the Germans. The Soviet Government itself advanced funds for this purpose, as well as food, and transportation facilities, and arranged for the distribution of funds and supplies from abroad. The Soviet authorities permitted the Polish Government to set up a network of representatives throughout the Soviet Union, and assisted them in the establishment of dining rooms, children's and invalids' homes and other institutions to give relief to Polish citizens.

*But members of the Polish Embassy staff and their local representatives utilized their relief functions as a cover for espionage and disruptive activities.*

Vyshinsky named among those exposed and deported from the U.S.S.R. the former chief of the Polish military mission, Gen. Volikovski; the first secretaries of the Embassy, Arlet and Zalenski, and numerous other Embassy employees and agents.

In May, 1942, the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs warned the Polish Embassy of these findings, but the espionage and hostile activities continued, and accordingly on July 20, 1942, the Soviet Government informed the Polish Government that the provisions for Polish relief representatives were withdrawn.

## POLISH OFFICER EXPOSES TREACHERY

**L**IEUT. COLONEL Zigmund Berling, former chief of staff of the 5th Division of the Polish Army in the U.S.S.R., refused to take part in the evacuation of Polish armed forces to Persia. In an article appearing in "Free Poland" (May 5), published in Moscow, he exposes the true purposes of the Polish Government-in-Exile in forming this army:

"We were all overjoyed at the fact that finally there would be formed a democratic Polish army. . . . Unfortunately bitter disillusionment awaited us. The plans of the Polish Government in London regarding the organization of the Polish army in the U.S.S.R. were of an entirely different nature. When choosing the territory of the Middle Volga for the purpose (of training), General Anders in conversation with Polish officers expressed himself as follows:

"I am highly satisfied since this territory as yet is distant enough from the front and military operations won't hinder us during the training period. And when the Red Army collapses under German blows, which will be no later than within a few months, we will be able to break through to Iran via the Caspian Sea. Since we will be the only armed power on this territory, we will be in a position to do as we please."

Lieut. Col. Berling further related how anti-Semitism and hatred for the Ukrainians and Byelorussians were systematically inculcated in the Polish armed forces, while sabotage and espionage against the U.S.S.R. were carried out by the Polish Government agents. A secret anti-Soviet organization was permitted to exist within the Polish army which carried out execution of Poles suspected of being friendly to the U.S.S.R.

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