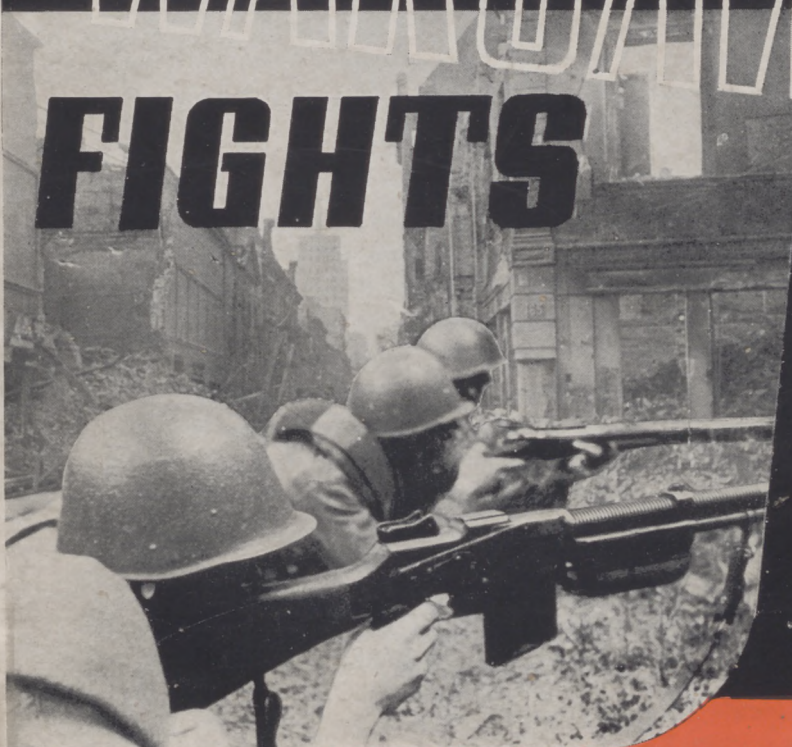


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WARSAW FIGHTS



ALONE

by Z. Nagorski jr.

WARSAW FIGHTS ALONE

by

Z. Nagórski, jr.

WARSAW FOUGHT ALONE IN 1939, SO DID IN 1943
THE DEFENDERS OF THE WARSAW GHETTO, AND
TODAY, AFTER FIVE YEARS OF WAR, ONCE AGAIN
WARSAW IS FIGHTING ALONE.

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STEFAN STARZYŃSKI, LORD MAYOR OF WARSAW
DURING THE POLISH CAMPAIGN IN SEPTEMBER, 1939,
CALLED UPON THE INHABITANTS TO RESIST. HIS
WORDS ARE JUST AS MUCH TO THE POINT NOW AS
THEY WERE FIVE YEARS AGO.

It is September 19, 1939, and the city is under fire.

“ Citizens! ”

“ A new day of military operations has passed, during which we have avoided mass bombardments. But we have seen women and children standing in queues before food shops, and falling under the rain of shells. These cruel methods will not give the desired results. They will only lay a terrible burden of responsibility on the German nation and its spirit. I do not know what need the German nation had to destroy works of art, pictures and splendid monuments of civilization. I saw today the Royal Castle, the Belvedere, St. John’s Cathedral, the Red Cross Hospital, monuments and churches—all in ruins. The bombardment of Warsaw cannot but have far-reaching results. Its ruins will disappear ; we shall rebuild the city. Warsaw has lain in ruins more than once before. Our vengeance, however, will be bitter.

“ We are grateful to the English nation for its words of recognition, but we continue to await material help. We shall remain at our posts. We believe that that help will be swift and effective, and that it will enable the lives of thousands of women, children, and old men to be saved ; persons who are remaining at their posts under the gravest conditions.

“ We are well aware that this help cannot come immediately, and so we wait patiently in the belief that the scale of victory must incline to our side, for the battle is being fought for the victory of right over force, of civilization over barbarism.”

After five years the press of the whole world is writing of the fate of Warsaw. After five years the voice of Starzynski is reinforced by the voice of Lord Vansittart :

“ A tragedy is being enacted before an insufficiently attentive world. The British and Russians stimulated the Polish Patriots to revolt in order to assist the oncoming Russian Army. The Poles did so ; then the Russian advance was halted and the assistance in arms and munitions sent to the Patriots seems to have been inadequate.

“ It is difficult to understand this. The unsupported Poles are being slaughtered and Warsaw is being obliterated.

“ A few days ago the whole population of Warsaw was ordered by the Germans to evacuate towards the West, holding white handkerchiefs. This seemed to portend not only the destruction of Warsaw, which is now taking place, but the deportation of one million people in circumstances where few could hope to survive.

“ In this dire extremity the Polish Socialist Party has appealed to the highest authority among their colleagues in this country ; but all Poland appeals to all humanity.

“ Is humanity going to allow this tragedy to be consummated, or will it appeal to the major Allies to act before it is too late ?

“ But more than the immediate present is involved. I have said for years that the Germans will try to destroy Europe before surrendering.

“ If we do not take the necessary deterrent action the fate of Warsaw may be that of Athens, Prague, Brussels, Amsterdam, Oslo.

“ President Roosevelt has assured the German people that they have nothing to fear. I would, on the contrary, tell the German nation that its cities have everything to fear if it so treats the cities of other peoples.”

* * *

WARSAW IS FIGHTING ALONE and has been since the beginning of the war. For fifty-four long hours the whole of Poland resisted the pressure of the German armies alone. The German army crossed the Polish border on September 1, 1939, at 5 a.m. Great Britain entered the war on September 3 at 11 a.m.

Fifty-four long, never-ending hours.

* * *

Polish mobilization in August, 1939, was on a small scale, on account of repeated British and French intervention. The endeavour was made to avoid provoking Germany at all costs. On August 20, scarcely 6 divisions of infantry were mobilized ; three days after that, as a result of ever-increasing German provocation in the Danzig area, twenty divisions had been mobilized, two of them only partially. On August 29, it was decided to order general mobilization, since the Intelligence Service revealed that the Polish State was in danger. In consequence, however, of fresh diplomatic representations by Britain and France, the Government put off the decree of mobilization till August 31—the eve of the German attack.

The completion of mobilization required at least a fortnight, owing to the large extent of the country (150,000 square miles).

Consequently on September 1, Poland had only 30 divisions at her disposal, and even these were incompletely mobilized.

A week before that it had been known in Poland that 63 German divisions were being concentrated on the frontier. Nevertheless everything possible was done to avoid a conflict. The maximum of goodwill was shown in carrying out the recommendations of friends from the West.

* * *

The first German tanks entered Warsaw on September 8, 1939. It was a patrol composed of three light tanks. None of them left the city again. But at that moment Warsaw realized the proximity and grave reality of the danger.

For three weeks the city of Warsaw was bombarded by fifteen hundred heavy guns and howitzers. On September 25, it was bombed by three hundred planes. There was no anti-aircraft defence, and there was not enough water to put out the fires.

Within the area of the capital at the moment of capitulation were a hundred and twenty thousand troops. The German forces were several times larger, their supplies were normal, and their fire-power immeasurably superior. The Polish columns marching to the aid of the Warsaw garrison were decimated from the air. Thousands of refugees blocked the main and side roads. The air-forces of the Allies did not yet exist. Bombs fell, killing soldiers and civilians and setting fire to villages and towns on the routes leading to Warsaw. There was no aid from any quarter.

The capital of Poland capitulated after twenty-seven days of fighting, when ammunition, light, water, and food supplies had given out.

In cellars people listened to broadcasts from London—in great hopes . . .

* * *

The Polish population paid dearly for its loyalty towards the Allies. Yet when Great Britain declared war on Germany, the streets of Warsaw were traversed by processions with banners inscribed with the words :

LONG LIVE ENGLAND !



A day in Warsaw during the siege of September, 1939.

- 6-7 a.m. Artillery fire, with aircraft spotting. Large-scale use of smoke bombs.
- 8 a.m.-6 p.m. Air bombardment.
Infantry and armoured attacks.
Artillery fire.
- 6-7 p.m. Artillery preparation for harassing and destructive night attack.
- 8 p.m.-6 a.m. Harassing and destructive artillery fire.



CHILDREN UNDER FIRE

So great was the concentration of artillery fire that in the centre of the city it took about half an hour to get across a space of 300 yards.

* * *

Left bank of the Vistula — 1,200 guns.
Right bank of the Vistula — 300 „

Then came the occupation of the city. It was to last long years, and it is not over yet. But it was not an easy or convenient occupation for the enemy. Fighting went on without a pause. During 1940, 1941, and 1942 it consisted of modest attempts to oppose the unparalleled strength of the German army and the terrorism of the German police. In 1943 and 1944 open war was already waged in the Warsaw streets. Rifle shots, the rattle of machine guns, and the bursting of grenades surprised no one. Poles perished, but Germans perished too. From the very outset of the war Poland was an insuperable obstacle in the way of plans for world conquest; Poland was the country most fiercely persecuted; and Poland remained a country without a Quisling.

Warsaw lost 11 per cent of its buildings during the September fighting. After the fighting in the Ghetto, carried on by persons condemned to death, by the remnants of the Jews who had been saved, the Germans in their frightful rage burnt down whole quarters, sparing the lives of none of the inhabitants. Over a hundred thousand living-rooms were destroyed, or 15 per cent of the buildings of Warsaw. In the Ghetto nothing but ruins was left.

Soviet bombardments followed, powerful and destructive. The streets of the formerly peaceful city became the scene of man-hunts, shootings, and murderous attacks. Both lives and property were exposed to destruction. Yet the population endured unshakably, with an obstinacy incomprehensible to the Germans, and with the one wish, to see British heavy bombers over their heads.

Warsaw fought on alone through five years of occupation in the hope that aid would come.
British aid.

* * *

If we are to realize the atmosphere in which the Warsaw Rising was prepared, it is necessary to look back and picture the work put into it and the great things accomplished by the organizers of this Polish Underground Army. In the underground chambers where conspiratorial work was carried on during five years of German occupation, under the most perfect and undoubtedly the most efficient police system in the world, the Poles managed to create not only the outline of a Polish State structure, not only the organs of civil authority, but also an Army, with its staff, studies, and first lines units. In Poland, in view of the maintenance of the legal continuity of the Republic, manifested in the highest authorities carrying on the Government from abroad, the organization of the Army, as the fundamental factor, essential to the existence of the State

in time of war, was brought to a very high level of perfection.

Having regard to the geographical situation of Poland and her key position in relation to transport passing to the eastern front, it was determined to utilize the existing organization principally for the prevention of German reserves and supplies reaching Russia. This task was carried out with a success out of all proportion to the means available.

But the final aim, the aim which was always kept in the foreground, was the fight to free the country from the invaders. So many towns, large and small, had accomplished this before Warsaw. So many soldiers had put on their uniforms again, so many divisions of the Home Army had gone into action. . . .

The Home Army is a unique creation, *sui generis*, looked upon with pride by Poles wherever they may be throughout the world.

The nucleus of the Army came into being immediately after the conclusion of the Polish-German campaign in 1939. The Poles, experienced in conspiratorial warfare through long years of slavery, began immediately to organize themselves in units. Before the Germans had established themselves in Warsaw for good, before they had set in motion their whole police and administrative machine of oppression, there already existed small units of Polish underground forces. Conversations took place between the various parties on the subject of the organization of the Army and its most effective utilization. Even then there was no difference of opinion over the conclusion that it must be utilized for a rising, to take place at the moment when the retreating enemy should endeavour to lay waste the country and deal the most painful blows to the Allies. It was then, accordingly, that the idea was born, the realization of which had to be deferred until August of the present year.

The Military Command of the Home Army, however, only came into existence in 1940, under the name of Leading Military Organizations of Underground Poland. This Command, however, did not dispose of all the elements necessary for the direction of the activities of the Home Army throughout Poland. There was a lack of liaison between particular units, there was a lack of unified orders, and there were the difficulties caused by the twofold occupation, German and Soviet—threefold, so far as the Vilno area was concerned since for a certain period of time, up to the moment of the incorporation of Lithuania into the Soviet Russia, this area was occupied by Lithuanian troops. Time and technical difficulties did not permit of the methodical execution of the whole plan in so short a period. Further, the recent defeat, the complete disorganization of life, and the blind faith in France and in the West, leading to a belief in the speedy

termination of the war, disinclined many for underground work.

It turned out, despite the belief of many that all would be over without Poland's taking part, that nothing was brought to a conclusion without the participation of Poland: neither in France, nor the Battle of Britain, nor the Narvik affair, nor, later on, the battles in Libya, Italy, and again France. Poles took part in many convoys to Russia and to Great Britain, and likewise in operations at sea and in the air, during the hardest days which the British Empire went through.

In view of the twofold occupation there were at first two organizations brought into being independently of one another and united only by their common aim of fighting the invaders. On the side occupied by the Soviets there was until 1941 a special C.O. in control of the organization there. At that time the Home Army attacked transports of war material passing from Russia to Germany with the same success with which some years later it attacked transports passing in the other direction. The aim was always the same: aid for the Allies, and assistance to the war effort of the British Empire.

It was not till 1942 that there arose a single military organization, uniting all the hitherto unco-ordinated cells and units. Simultaneously with it a Home Representative Body was created, and the foundations of a home administration were laid. Since that time there has existed an underground Parliament, underground administration of justice, and an army. The whole of this machinery was created in order that immediately upon the outbreak of a rising the organs of State authority might come to the surface and secure the freedom won by the sword in their own—Polish—hands. From accounts reaching us from Warsaw it appears that this organization, built up and maintained with such enormous effort, is still active amid the ruins of the city.

The Home Army is made up of the active Army and the Reserve. The active Army comprises those who are in a state of constant readiness, and are used for the performance of military tasks (such as sabotage, attacks on German administrative offices, rescue of prisoners of war, and attempts on the lives of collaborators). The Reserve is, of course, much larger than the active Army. There is a detailed plan of mobilization for the two together, suited to the conditions under which they have to work. This is, then, a regular army, a national army, having nothing in common with loose partisan organizations operating in the territory of other occupied countries. And it was this Polish Army, its core and its most war-hardened ranks, and its most experienced

leaders, who gave the order for the rising in Warsaw.

At the head of the Home Army is its Commandant, directly subordinated to the Commander-in-Chief, whose headquarters are at present in London. Its activities as a whole were directed to two ends: the weakening of the German war-potential on the eastern front, and the preparation of the terrain for future military operations in Poland. In this regard also the Warsaw rising was the result of years of preparatory organization. Further, the Home Army possesses antennae, as it were, with which it reaches the interior of the Reich—organized Polish labourers who were deported for work in Germany. They will prove a hard nut for the Germans to crack.



INSPECTION OF A DETACHMENT
OF THE HOME ARMY

The orders, preliminary activities, and operations of the Polish insurgent army are decided upon only in close agreement with the Allied High Command. Orders have come and do come from London, and are then transmitted further by the local authorities. It was presumed that without a picture of the military and political situation as a whole local action in Poland might not always attain the desired results. Accordingly, the decisions in the most important matters are left to the Polish Government and Commander-in-Chief in London. Accordingly, also, the Polish Government in its

turn harmonizes its proposals with the desires of the governments and leaders of Great Britain and the United States. It has for long endeavoured to harmonize them with those of Russia, but so far without effect. The Polish Prime Minister in his speech delivered on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the outbreak of war in Europe, stated clearly that the plan for the Warsaw rising was previously submitted for approval to the leaders of the United Nations.

Such, in a few words, was the background against which the rising stood out. Through years of occupation the army operated with clearly-defined purpose, striking at the enemy's sensitive points. Unnecessary activities were avoided; such as promised no military results and caused stern German reprisals against the civil population. This policy led to a breach with the Communist partisans who acted under the orders of Russia, and whose action was designed for show rather than for effect. Soviet parachutists were dropped, but knowing neither the terrain nor the people, acted blindly. There were killings of single German soldiers, which led to nothing save the deaths of hundreds of Poles in revenge; and there was political agitation. When the organs of the Home Army explicitly opposed this kind of action, they were called defeatists and accused of anti-Soviet sympathies. More than that, in consequence of these misunderstandings the Soviet broadcasting stations, which were continually calling upon the Polish population to rise against the Germans, proclaimed to the world that the Polish Home Army was unwilling to fight against the Germans. The answer to this reproach was given in Warsaw on August 1st. And then no aid came from those who had most loudly proclaimed their anti-German feelings.

It may be that by the time these words reach the reader the rising in Warsaw will be over. It may be that the flame which at this moment is devouring the capital of Poland will have been quenched. But for the sake of historical justice, and in order to furnish evidence of the unprecedented sacrifice of a single city for the common cause, we here give the communiques issued by the C. in C. Home Army, that by their simple words and their orderly sentences they may speak to the hearts of those who were indeed in a position to save the city and a million human beings.

* * *

On August 1, 1944, insurrection broke out in Warsaw.

* * *

SEPTEMBER 27th, 1939.



THE SIEGE OF WARSAW WAS OVER

The Polish Home Army in the region contiguous to the capital received the order: "To Arms!" The agreed sign was the one word *Burza* (Storm). The task of the insurgents was to clear the region of German forces, in order thus to facilitate the progress of the Red Army. At the moment when the insurrection broke out there was nothing which could be interpreted as a thoughtless act of despair, or of ill-considered, ostentatious display of heroism. The leader of the Home Army was faced with the alternative, either of watching the German-Soviet conflict without intervening, or of starting the insurrection, and thus, in view of the extraordinarily difficult political situation of Poland, giving clear proof, not only of its goodwill towards Russia, but also of its determination that Polish soil should be recovered by the arms of Polish soldiers. Vilno, Lwow, Pinsk, Lublin, Kowel and other towns were recovered by insurgents. It was therefore not in the least surprising that the capital should likewise desire to play its part in the liberation of the Country.

On the eve of the outbreak of the insurrection Germany ordered a general mobilization of men in Warsaw, after which

all males between 16 and 60 years of age were to be deported to the Reich. Thus the Home Army and its organization were to be paralysed. The Soviet Army reached Praga. The Polish insurgents emerged from underground.

General Bor's plan was simple: to obtain control of the three bridges over the Vistula at Warsaw. According to information which had been received, the Germans were expecting the arrival of considerable reinforcements. The bridges over the Vistula in the region of the city were the only ones by which they could come. General Bor accordingly decided to seize them and thus prevent the Soviet Army from being thrown back from the capital and involved in battle with the Germans at some distance away. It was a clear and obvious decision. By aiding the Red Army and by an act of political goodwill and sound military strategy General Bor was at the same time aiding the cause of the United Nations as a whole.

It was one more Polish contribution to the war—perhaps the most devoted of all.

* * *

The first communique from General Bor reached London by radio on the very day that the insurrection started.

* * *

1st Day.

Zero hour for the rising was Warsaw's afternoon rush-hour. Precisely at 17.00 hours Polish flags were run up on three houses adjoining the Saxon Garden. Passers-by saw in their midst armed men with red-and-white shoulder flashes, a few of them even wearing the old khaki uniforms which Warsaw had not seen since September, 1939. First centres of resistance were Pilsudski Square, the Palais Bruehl, (formerly housing the Polish Foreign Office), and Powazki Cemetery, but fighting soon became general. The G.P.O. was captured early in the fighting. The beginning was fairly critical, but the initiative remained in Polish hands, and the area of operations widened continually. The G.O.C. Home Army, General Bor, reported excellent morale amongst officers and men, and enthusiastic participation of the civilian population. Heavy tanks were used by the Germans, and a number were destroyed or damaged. Some of the latter were captured and brought into action by the Poles. General Bor also sent the following despatch:

"In connection with the lack of uniforms we ask you to cause the Supreme Allied Command to declare the Polish Home Army a part of the Allied Forces."

He further emphasised the need for ammunition and anti-tank guns to be sent and for the Russians to attack from outside.

The Germans replied with powerful counter-attacks. The Soviet Army suddenly stopped in the suburbs, and even with-

drew from Praga under pressure from the enemy. German tanks pushed into the city. Bombers with black crosses appeared in the sky. The siege of Warsaw became a reality for the second time in this war. The unhealed wounds left by the September struggles began to bleed again.

* * *

In the period preceding the issue of the order *Burza*, the Home Army had worked without a pause, and thanks to its efforts much Soviet war material had been saved and much Soviet bloodshed spared.



THIS WAS A TROOP TRAIN

The great war-effort of the Allies had been assisted by the following performances:

- 700 metres of railway-track completely destroyed.
- 7 railway stations completely destroyed.
- 54 trains derailed, forty-one of which were troop trains.
- 177 locomotives damaged.
- 956 wagons damaged.
- 38 interruptions of telecommunications lasting from 35 to 70 hours.
- 5 administrative offices working for the Germans completely destroyed.
- 57 machines, ditto.
- 379 Gestapo agents "liquidated."
- 3 attacks on prisons resulting in the liberation of all the political prisoners.

This is a statement of the activities of one month only, viz. June, 1944.

The issue of the order *Burza* was then a well-prepared and properly planned political and military act. The tragic course of military events caused Warsaw to have to fight alone,

despite the possession of powerful Allies. R.A.F. planes are endeavouring to bring aid and thereby save the lives of hundreds of thousands of people, the most faithful Allies whom the United Nations possess in the whole world. But the aid they brought was small.

* * *

The *Daily Telegraph* of 30th August, 1944, printed the following statement which has explained the lack of help :

"The Soviet Government has not so far granted the request by the British and American authorities for permission for planes conveying arms for the Polish Underground Army to land in Russia.

"Small quantities have reached Warsaw but they have been insufficient to tip the fighting balance in favour of the Poles."



Aleje Jerozolimskie, one of the main streets in Warsaw, on the eve of the insurrection. The trams are the only means of communication left in the City

General Bor further reports :

2nd Day.

During August 2nd, all attempts by the enemy to recapture lost points were repulsed. The enemy's main task seems to be to recapture and clean up the principal arterial roads of the City. Heavy fighting around the G.P.O. which we captured yesterday at 16.35

hours. Power Station, Gasworks captured, as well as the PRUDENTIAL building and many other objectives. Four assaults on Central Telephone Station gave no results. The enemy blows up pill-boxes which we can hold no more, and is burning buildings principally in the suburbs. We have caused great losses to the enemy in men and material—we took prisoners. We fear nothing except shortage of ammunition. We lack weapons for enlisting volunteers.—

"We are engaged in heavy fighting with the Germans in the whole of the City of WARSAW. We defeated part of their forces using armament captured from the enemy, but we have difficulties in securing ammunition."

2.VIII.44.

O.C. HOME ARMY.

"Extremely urgent that mass dropping of ammunition and weapons on WARSAW be done today—there is no anti-aircraft artillery."

2.VIII.44.

C.O. HOME ARMY.

3rd Day.

The battle for WARSAW goes on. Initiative in our hands. German morale weakened. We are very short of ammunition and wait for dropping operations. We can hear Soviet artillery—but do not feel their attacks. Morale of the population and of the Home Army high. Streets cut by barricades in many points. We are making large quantities of "MOLOTOV COCKTAILS" to use against enemy armour. Our units which had to withdraw from ZOLIBORZ back again at their tasks. We are short of weapons and lack commanders, many of whom were killed in the first stage of the fight. Areas in our hands in the Southern and Central parts of the City were enlarged. Western part of the centre almost entirely in our hands. The bridges on the Vistula and the Central Railway Station changed hands several times—with heavy losses on both sides. Areas including WILENSKI, (WILNO), and WSCHODNI, (EASTERN) Railway Stations held by us.

Enemy made vain attempts to secure the important thoroughfare LESZNO-WOLSKA and MARSZALKOWSKA.

After great efforts the enemy secured the important thoroughfare ALEJE JEROZOLIMSKIE-GROJECKA.

His operations within the City based increasingly on

heavy tanks—in front of which as well as on both sides of the column—groups of civilians are often driven. Great number of casualties among civilians. Germans burn houses along ALEJE JEROZOLIMSKIE from NOWY SWIAT to MARSZALKOWSKA. Inhabitants are made to leave houses, and divided into groups and led away to unknown destination.

News broadcast by the B.B.C. that the Soviet Army takes part in the battle for

WARSAW—*untrue*. Liaison so far not established. We do not feel any direct impact of the Soviet activities on our struggle.

Today German aircraft dropped messages “from the Allies” dated August 2nd, bidding to stop fighting and return to waiting points. Motives given : Mikolajczyk in MOSCOW has no real freedom of decision or speech—as result German authorities approached.

“Disastrous lack of ammunition for rifles, M.G. and anti-tank weapons.”

3.VIII.44.

C.O. HOME ARMY.



THE BARRICADES IN THE CITY

PLAN OF WARSAW

SITUATION ON 17TH AUGUST 1944.

GERMANS
POLES



“ Please broadcast following message to the Soviet Command in MOSCOW : In the first days of the battle for WARSAW we received notice about several cases of inhuman treatment by German soldiers of the Home Army and of the civilian population. Facts known so far : on August 1st at the beginning of the fighting, German units dragged out all male inhabitants of No. 20 OKOPOWA Street and drove them in front of their units. Luckily we recaptured the victims. August 2nd, 50 men captured, handcuffed, attached to tanks and dragged in this condition along the streets. August 3rd, in an assault on barricades in PONIATOWSKI Viaduct great number of captured were driven in front of attacking tanks to screen the latter from fire of defenders. The G.O.C. Home Army notified the German Command in WARSAW that ruthless reprisals will be applied to Germans who are in the hands of the Home Army.”

3.VIII.44.

O.C. HOME ARMY.

4th Day.

The character of the battle for WARSAW changes as we are exhausting local stocks of ammunition. We concentrate on main objectives and are grouping own forces to retain initiative in main centres.

During the night fires have been started by the enemy in many points. Germans are using bombing aircraft.

“ Request catagorically immediate assistance in ammunition and anti-tank weapons today and on following days. We are faced with fighting for at least several days and we must be supplied all this time.

We are doing our utmost to hold our Capital—you must do likewise on your side.

“ At all costs carry out dropping of ammunition.”

4.VIII.44.

O.C. HOME ARMY.

5th Day.

During yesterday we have taken the areas of PLAC TEATRALNY (THEATRE SQUARE), PLAC BANKO WY (BANK SQUARE), and the POLYTECHNIC School. Today owing to shortage of ammunition we mustre strain our activities to limited concentrated areas. We carried out an important operation against S.S. Barracks and military stores in the Ghetto. The latter taken—great quantities of arms and ammunition secured. Barracks—defended by several hundred troops—partly taken.

Germans incessantly starting fires in the City. All attempts by the population to extinguish the raging fires opposed by the enemy. More cases of murder civilian population. German bombers very active and operate *without any interference from the Soviet Air Force*. Since yesterday morning silence on the German bridgehead facing Red Army outposts.

Investment appeals to the Allies for sending ammunition addressed since the first day of the battle, have given no results as yet. Shortage of ammunition makes our situation difficult.

“The President of the Polish Republic,
The Polish Cabinet,
C.-in-C. Polish Forces.

“The following is a summary of the reactions of the population of the Capital during days of fighting. As to the course of the fighting itself the G.O.C. Home Army keeps the C.-in-C. Polish Forces constantly informed.

“The population of **WARSAW** is at one with the army in their fight. Even those unarmed, roused by the enthusiasm of the young are erecting barricades against enemy tanks. Women are competing with men in service and in open fighting. All are animated by a spirit of discipline and self-sacrifice.

“Lack of ammunition is a source of constant worry. Stocks are diminishing from hour to hour. Also lack of arms prevents the masses of volunteers from taking part in the action.

“On all objectives taken and on all houses in the streets where fighting is going on the Polish flag has been spontaneously hoisted. The whole Capital is pervaded by a fighting spirit—it expels the invader and destroys traces of years of bondage. Not one political organisation fights on its own, all have rallied round the Home Army. The presence of the Government Delegate and the President of the Council of National Union at the Headquarters of the O.C. Home Army expresses the unity of the Army and the Government.”

Deputy Prime Minister—Government Delegate.
President of the Council of National Union.

5.VIII.44.

C.O.C. HOME ARMY.

6th Day.

We are holding all areas previously captured. Our units have succeeded in getting back into **ZOLIBORZ**

where we have already captured **WILSON Square** and some of the adjoining streets. In some areas the enemy is taking the initiative attempting to force a passage through the main roads leading East-West. The fighting is being prolonged, and captured ammunition does not cover our needs. Lack of assistance from outside can shortly put us in a critical position, especially as the enemy is using ruthless methods setting whole districts on fire and pouring into the battle more and more heavy equipment. The sentiments of the population are turning against Great Britain. . . .



Soldiers of the Polish Underground
Army kneeling in prayer before
going into battle

C.-in-C. Polish Forces.

“The 6th day of the battle for **WARSAW** has begun. The Germans are introducing into the fight technical means we do not possess : armour, air force, artillery, flame throwers. That is their advantage. We dominate by the morale of our troops.

"Soviet attack on the eastern outskirts of WARSAW has slowed down and does not affect the military situation in the City.

"I state solemnly that in its fight WARSAW is not receiving assistance from the Allies in the same way as Poland did not receive it in 1939. Our Alliance with Great Britain has resulted only in bringing her our assistance in 1940, in repelling the German attack against the British Isles, in fighting in Norway, Africa, Italy and on the Western Front. We request you to state this fact to the British in an official demarche—it should remain on record. We do not ask for equipment—we demand its immediate despatch.

6.VIII.44.

O.C. HOME ARMY.

7th Day.

Judging from all messages received up till now, it appears that the fact of the Home Army fighting openly against the Germans in Warsaw has put the enemy in a difficult position, especially so far as his forces on the Eastern side of the VISTULA are concerned—which are in contact with the Soviet forces. The Germans have not succeeded in crushing the Polish forces, therefore they have directed their main effort towards opening up and holding communication lines leading through Warsaw to the Eastern side of the VISTULA.

In the first days of fighting, by ruthless methods, the enemy secured for himself the main communication line through GROJECKA and ALEJE JEROZOLIMSKIE to the PONIATOWSKI Bridge, with the aid of fighting. During August 7th, the enemy's main effort was directed towards the opening up of a second thoroughfare through WARSAW along the Axis WOLSKA-KIERBEDZ Bridge. The same drastic method as before has been employed—the enemy burns his way through. The prolongation of the fight, the lack of any help from the Western Allies, as well as the complete stalemate of the Soviet forces around the City renders the situation for the Polish forces in Warsaw more and more difficult.

As early as August 5th, a Soviet Officer reported to the Polish headquarters in the City, and after acquainting himself with the situation on the spot promised to try and get in touch with the Soviet Command in order to get some help from that side. The Soviet officer's message was received in London on August 7th and retransmitted to Moscow.

"Moscow 5.VIII.44.—Comrade Marshal Stalin.

"I am in personal contact with the Commander of WARSAW Garrison, who is leading the heroic parti-

san fight of the nation—against Hitlerite bandits. After acquainting myself with the general military situation I came to the conclusion that in spite of the heroism of the army and the entire WARSAW population—there are still needs which, if made good, would permit a speedier victory over the common foe. These needs are : automatic arms, ammunition, grenades, anti-tank weapons.

"German Air Force destroys the City and kills the civilian population. The heroic population of WARSAW trusts that in a few hours' time you will give them armed support. Help me to get in touch with General Rokossowski."

Capt. KONSTANTY KALUGIN,
of CZERNY Group."

8th Day.

The situation has not improved—which is due to lack of support from outside and to the lull on the Soviet front. Enemy holds previously secured thoroughfare to PONIATOWSKI and KIERBEDZ Bridges. During 8th August he began a cleaning up action to secure a third passage towards the railway bridge employing for this task two armoured trains and artillery, from positions on the Eastern Bank of the VISTULA. This enemy action divided the Polish Forces into several parts, without direct communication between each other; furthermore due to shortage of ammunition and equipment they are forced to restrain the action to defensive. The defenders of Warsaw again ask for help and suggest the sending to Warsaw of the Polish parachute Brigade. An attack on Warsaw from outside would be of paramount importance, both for effect on morale of the population and tactical reasons. The Polish Command in Warsaw has taken steps to get in touch with the Soviet Command and thus co-ordinate action.

"We are in a very difficult position. The dispatch of the parachute brigade might decide the fate of the Capital. There are possibilities for landing in the KAMPINOS forest which is firmly in our hands. An attack on WARSAW from WOLA direction would be of paramount importance to the tactical situation and morale. We demand this effort—the best solution at present stage."

8.VIII.44.

O.C. HOME ARMY.

Message from District Commander in command of **WARSAW** operations transmitted through **MOSCOW** to Front Commander **ROKOSSOWSKY**.

O.C. HOME ARMY,
8.VIII.44.

"Since August 1st, 1944, I am fighting the Germans in **WARSAW** with the help of the whole population and all military organisations united within the Home Army, as well as such organisations as the Worker's Militia, People's Militia, Polish People's Army and others, who joined us in the fight.

"We are fighting a strenuous battle. The Germans to ensure channels of retreat for their troops are burning the town and exterminating its population. At present we are still withstanding the pressure of a great force of German armoured units of infantry—we however, feel, already the scarcity of ammunition and heavy arms—a speedy relief, therefore, by your armies, Marshal, is necessary. I have in my Headquarters a Soviet officer, Cpt. **KALUGIN**, would you forward for his use instructions and technical equipment to enable him to communicate with you and in this way make it possible for me to co-ordinate our actions."

Commander—**WARSAW** District.

9th Day.

During the night great intensity of fire and fighting. Our units were compelled to retreat from **WOLA**.

In the course of the day the fighting somewhat subsided. Our units are holding their gains and making numerous sorties and attacking enemy lines of communication.

The Germans succeeded in securing for themselves three routes through the City westwards from **VISTULA** Bridges. On these routes a marked movement away from the front. One has the impression that the enemy has begun to evacuate the bridgehead in **PRAGA**.

The Central districts of the City have not received any supplies.

The O.C. **WARSAW** Garrison reiterates his demands for supplies of arms and ammunition to be dropped by air, as well as for bombing and sending of air-borne troops.

On the Soviet side—the lull continues. Among **WARSAW'S** working population bitterness increases in connection with this inactivity of the Soviet Forces.

10th Day.

No change in general situation in Warsaw. The position of Polish units increasingly critical. Suppositions as to the evacuation of the Eastern banks of the **VISTULA** seem to be confirmed.

The Germans are dropping leaflets demanding the evacuation of civilian population. The Polish authorities are reiterating their demands for help from the West and renumerating targets for bombing. The Polish Prime Minister sent through British channels information about Stalin's readiness to help Polish Forces in Warsaw. The Delegate of the Polish Government in the Home Country sent to the Polish authorities in **LONDON** a strongly worded message in which he describes the situation inside Warsaw and warns of the possibility of cessation of armed struggle—if **WARSAW** does not receive help—adequate and immediate.

A message received from Poland :

To : The President of the Republic.

The Government.

The Commander-in-Chief.

From : Deputy Prime Minister—Government Delegate.

We are conducting a bloody fight for the 10th day.

The town is cut by three routes. **PRAGA** is cut off. All these routes are held by German tanks. Their crossing is extremely difficult (the buildings along the routes are being set on fire). Two armoured trains on the Railway line from **GDANSK** Railway Station to the **WESTERN** Railway Station and continuous artillery fire from **PRAGA** with the support of aircraft are directed against the town. These are the conditions of the fighting. We received from you but one small drop. On the German-Russian front lull since the third. But for the exception of a short speech by the Deputy Prime Minister (from London) on the 8th nothing to comfort us. The soldiers and the population of the Capital look in vain to the skies expecting Allied help. They see but German aircraft against a background of smoke. The population feels surprised, deceived and begins to revile. Let us know if help for Warsaw was discussed in Moscow I emphatically repeat that without immediate support consisting in droppings of arms and ammunition, bombing of objectives held by the enemy and air landings our fight is liable to collapse in a few days. If we get help asked for above the fight will continue. I expect from you the greatest effort in this respect.

* * *

"German aircraft today dropped leaflets with an ultimatum signed by their Front Commander. The ultimatum urges the population to leave Warsaw and proceed westwards—holding handkerchiefs in their hands. Those unable to work will receive assistance in settling in the General Government (Western part), others will be provided with work. Who 'lets himself be exploited as a tool in Bolshevik hands' will be held responsible and can expect no mercy. The ultimatum expires on a fixed date."

Reply sent from London :

Deputy Prime Minister—Government Delegate.
10.VIII.44.

"Stalin promised to supply all help to WARSAW and particularly arms dropped immediately from aircraft. In order to establish contact a Soviet Liaison Officer must be dropped carrying ciphers. Please telegraph at once to the Soviet Authorities through British Ambassador MOSCOW the way of communicating with the Commander of WARSAW Garrison and where the Soviet Liaison Officer should be dropped also the way of receiving him.—

MIKOLAJCZYK."

11th Day.

At 3.30 hours, the enemy started an organised action which aimed at the annihilation of our defence in the sector STARE MIASTO-KRASINSKI Square. The main effort of the enemy was directed concentrically from North and South. He created an overwhelming power of fire making use among others of two armoured trains and numerous mortars.

All attacks repelled with great losses on both sides.

Till 14.00 hours our counter attacks recovered positions previously held in that sector—at the cost, however, of great quantities of ammunition. In other sectors no changes.

"After yesterday's continuous enemy fire today between 3.00-14.00 hours concentric attack on STARE MIASTO and STAWKI.

"Attacks accompanied by artillery fire from armoured trains, mortars, grenade throwers and anti-tank guns.

"Enormous—overwhelming superiority of enemy fire.

"Our counter attacks forced the enemy to withdraw and STAWKI was regained. Losses in wounded and dead. One anti-tank gun and ammunition captured. Some advance in ZOLIBORZ. Enemy aircraft shells the CITY."

11.VIII.44.

O.C. HOME ARMY.

12th Day.

"Today the enemy tried to annihilate our forces in the STARE MIASTO sector. The situation was serious—Objectives changed hands many times. Overpowering artillery fire. At dusk we controlled the situation by means of counter attacks. If no supplies of ammunition forthcoming—our situation will be extremely serious. On other sectors no change. On Soviet side lull continues. Great losses in men—great destruction."

No change in other sectors of the City.

12.VIII.44.

O.C. HOME ARMY.

13th Day.

Continued attacks on STARE MIASTO sector accompanied by great power of fire. Similarly to previous days—the attacks were directed on STAWKI from the South, every attack was preceded by waves of concentrated artillery fire. The defenders were able to hold their own owing to supplies dropped on the previous night.

In the attack on STARE MIASTO from the South, the enemy made use of a new weapon—fire from a gun-boat which appeared on the VISTULA. The forces in the central sector—owing to the supplies dropped in the course of the night were able to go over to offensive action aiming at to engage some of the enemy units attacking STARE MIASTO. Great losses in men—great numbers of wounded—especially among units fighting in STARE MIASTO. The enemy lost many tanks and much artillery equipment, which he uses from great distance and which is being destroyed by sorties of our patrols. The defending side is gaining skill in street fighting. On other sectors some local activity.

One has the impression that the enemy is especially concerned with gaining free use of both Northern Bridges against enveloping movement from the North by Soviet Armies.

14th Day.

The enemy's main effort directed again on STARE MIASTO. He tries stubbornly to annihilate our defences there. The first attack was made at 10.00 hours after concentrated fire. The fight grows stubborn and merciless. A barricade on TLOMACKI had to be abandoned. It could not be held any more—because of setting fire to houses on both sides of the streets. We make frequent sorties, and in other parts of this sector we hold our gains. In the course of two last days we destroyed there nine enemy tanks. Great destruction in STARE MIASTO

In the Central sector—which has been supplied from

the air during two previous nights—we made several attempts to attain control over the main lines of communication in hands of the enemy. We did not succeed but we secured some equipment.

Bombing from air stopped—but enemy artillery very active especially in STARE MIASTO sector.



FINAL PREPARATIONS, ON EVE OF ACTION. EXAMINATION OF EQUIPMENT

15th Day.

“Today diminished intensity of fighting in the Northern sector—where until now the fighting was heaviest. During yesterday’s fighting the enemy suffered heavy losses. The enemy’s attacks unsuccessful. As we hold the Town Hall the Germans are unable to use the thoroughfare leading through Theatre Square. In other sectors—no change. Lesser intensity of artillery and mortar fire.”

16th Day.

“During the whole of yesterday enemy shelled the

district of STARE MIASTO with heavy artillery and mortars.

“In this sector enemy infantry less active.

“In the centre of the City heavy fighting continues.

“Enemy uses mine throwers in great numbers.”

“The Germans have blown up from the cellar one of our strong-points in Nr. 1 PRZEJAZD Street.

“We hold all our gains.

“The Germans sent an armoured train to the outskirts of PRAGA.

“Artillery fire from the East is heard again.”

It appears from the news received from Warsaw that the fighting Capital has already received some help from the Allies—this is, however, inadequate. General Bor addressed on the 15th of August the following message to the airmen who took part in these operations :

“Fighting Warsaw sends to the heroic airmen words of gratitude and appreciation. We bow to the crews that have given their lives.”

* * *

Since then the voice of Warsaw has been heard again and again.

22nd Day.

The main part of Bielanska, Tlomackie and Przejazd is in our hands. Fighting is proceeding amongst the ruined buildings. More than 200 Germans have been killed or taken prisoner.

The enemy’s technical superiority has been thrown against the unprepared Polish Home Army.

We need your help—it may be our last moment.

26th Day.

Position inside Warsaw without much change—fighting is very hard. An urgent appeal was broadcast for the Army H.Q. for recognition of the Polish Home Army as a combattant Army.

No answer received yet.

30th Day.

Severe fighting in the Old Town. By the Warsaw bridges the enemy sent about 200 tanks to reinforce his front line.

Districts previously held by the Home Army still in our hands. There is deep resentment that the Allies help is not felt.

* * *

Amongst the soldiers of the Polish Home Army there are some Britishers. One of them, an airman, who escaped from a German prison camp sent the following message from the Capital to *The Times*. The message was received on 30th of August :

"Warsaw to-day is in a state of total warfare. Almost every street in the city has been a field of battle for the past 24 days. The enemy mine-throwers, artillery, and aircraft, are taking a heavy toll of human life, and are devastating much property. Nearly the whole population is engaged in some sort of public work. Thousands of people have been mobilized to put out the fires that are raging in many parts by day and night. Thousands more are engaged in clearing debris from the streets that are in the hands of the Home Army. Others are acting as couriers, field telephone workers, and in the Red Cross, which is working excellently under the most difficult conditions.

"The actual army—that is to say, the Home Army—is a queer mixture. Fighting in it are young boys of 16 years and old men of 70 years. Few have regular weapons to carry. They range from small automatic pistols to rifles. There are also few heavy machine-guns, but these are only used in emergency, as they need too much ammunition. Former colonels are fighting as simple soldiers under the command of young lieutenants.

"Weapons are being improvised. Hand grenades have been made from old gas pipes filled with some explosive mixture. These grenades are lit with an ordinary match before being thrown. Flame-throwers are in use that have been made in small workshops.

"Perhaps the most ingenious weapon of all was used two days ago. I personally saw 10 of them explode. In an old German store were found 120 80lb. artillery shells. At first it seemed they were useless, until a sapper, since killed, put two detonators in one of the shells and attached a 23-second fuse to each detonator. When the order for action was given the shells were thrown from a second-floor window near to the German positions, and then the company of the Home Army fled to cover. The weapons dropped by the R.A.F. have been of great value, but are inadequate in quantity.

"Food is a great problem. Warsaw has been starved by the Germans for nearly five years. The quantity of food in the city at the outbreak of hostilities was small. It has already lasted nearly a month, and at the moment we see no hope of a speedy end to the present state of affairs.

"As I write the fighting has continued bitterly during the past 24 hours. The amount of damage being done by the enemy mine-throwers is colossal. Heavy artillery was heard during the night at a distance of about 20km. from the city."

* * *

At the same time the Polish wireless station in Warsaw broadcast several times an appeal addressed to the International Red Cross :

"During the battle of Warsaw many members of the civilian population have been seized by the Germans. Women, children, and old people were taken to a concentration camp in Pruszkow, about 15 miles from Warsaw. The sufferings of the detained are

terrible. They are being tortured, and help and food must be supplied within 24 hours. For humanity's sake we repeat our appeal, and urge on the International Red Cross the need for speedy action. Thousands of innocent people are suffering in the concentration camp."

We do not know what was the answer. But WARSAW FIGHTS ON in spite of everything.

* * *

As late as the 29th August, the Polish Warsaw Station broadcast this :

"Polish soldiers who were taken prisoners in Warsaw were shot by the Germans."

It was not until August 30th that the Polish Home Army was officially recognised by the British and American Governments as a vital part of the Polish Armed Forces.

"His Majesty's Government have consistently done all in their power to ensure that all members of the armed forces of the Powers at war with Germany should be treated by the German military authorities in accordance with the laws and customs of war.

"They are, however, receiving numerous reports which show that members of the Polish Home Army, which is engaged in active operations in the struggle against the common enemy, are being treated by the German military authorities in a manner contrary to the laws and customs of war.

"His Majesty's Government therefore make this formal declaration "

1. The Polish Home Army, which is now mobilized, constitutes a combatant force forming an integral part of the Polish armed Forces.
2. Members of the Polish Home Army are instructed to conduct their military operations in accordance with the rules of war, and in so doing they bear their arms openly against the enemy. They operate in units under responsible commanders. They are provided with a distinctive emblems or with Polish uniforms.
3. In these circumstances reprisals against members of the Polish Army violate the rules of war by which Germany is bound. His Majesty's Government therefore solemnly warn all Germans who take any part in or in any way are responsible for such violations that they do so at their peril and will be held answerable for their crimes.

This declaration was published on the 30th day of a continuous struggle, after the creation by the Germans of the famous concentration camp in Pruszkow and after several thousands of Polish soldiers belonging to the Home Army had been shot, having been treated as guerilla bands.

* * *

In reply to the British Government the Germans refused to



GRAVE OF THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER

recognize the Polish Home Army as an integral part of the Polish Armed Forces.

* * *

During the four weeks of fighting in Warsaw just over 150 aircraft have taken off from Italian bases for Warsaw, half of them were manned by Polish crews. Only a quarter of these aircraft dropped their load over Warsaw, supplying in all 35 tons of arms and ammunition to the Home Army fighting in the capital. In addition approximately the same quantity of stores were supplied to units fighting round Warsaw.

In all these operations 24 bombers were lost, 7 with Polish crews.

Every day several hundred aircraft used to bomb the V sites in France, dropping thousands of tons of H.E.s. Twice within a week Königsberg, the capital of East Prussia, was bombed by a very strong force of British bombers, dropping more than a thousand tons of bombs on the town. Königsberg and Warsaw are the same distance from London—870 miles.

* * *

Warsaw awaits help.

On September 1st the fifth anniversary of the German attack on Poland the Polish Prime Minister said :

“While the inhabitants of Warsaw heard on the radio news of immediate assistance to Bucharest, of the bombing of Königsberg and of the oil refineries of Czechowicz, near the ill-famed concentration camp of Oswiecim, of the shuttle service of American airplanes which landed in Russian bases after bombing Gdynia, they received only very inadequate help or no help at all. . . .”

At the same time the Germans have dropped leaflets on Warsaw telling the civilians to leave the city as they are going to burn it to the ground to enforce its surrender.

According to the information received in London in the morning of September 1st continuous air attacks have been made by the Germans on those parts of Warsaw which are held by the Home Army.

* * *

In the meantime the Second Battle of London has been won. Polish fighter squadrons shot down 223 flying bombs—more than 10 per cent. of the total.

* * *

Such is the history of Warsaw in this war. At the moment when in Rome a new democratic Italy is beginning to rise, when in Paris the tricolour is again being hoisted, when Northern and Southern France are full of delight at the recovery of freedom, when other

European capitals are awaiting the moment of liberation and when Athens, Oslo, The Hague and Brussels are passing through moments of feverish excitement and joyous impatience—the capital of Poland is the scene of immeasurable bloodshed. In a spirit born of deep faith, in the enthusiasm of the struggle, when the goal to be attained is now so near, Warsaw does not hesitate, Warsaw is not inactive. From the first moment of this war, from that Polish September in 1939, until the present September, 1944, Warsaw, the city so beloved by every Pole, has paid its contribution to the war.

On August 20 of this year the Polish broadcasting-station at Warsaw, announced that the City was filled with fresh graves in streets, squares, and parks. Near Warsaw, the Germans are keeping a hundred thousand people in a camp behind barbed wire, without food or water. Dive bombers fly constantly over the City.

“You who wish to unite the Poles, look at Warsaw! Look at the unity of action and the unity of thought which prevails among all true Poles” calls the broadcasting-station. The whole people is united in the struggle, despite all the difficulties and dangers, despite the widespread destruction.

* * *

**WARSAW NEEDS ARMS, AMMUNITION, AND
FOODSTUFFS.**

AID FROM THE ALLIED NATIONS.

**MAINTENANCE OF BELIEF IN THEIR WAR-
AIMS.**

LONDON,

1st September, 1944.



The writer of this pamphlet is solely responsible for the opinions or proposals it contains, except where otherwise stated therein. The responsibility of the Polish Publications Committee for this and other publications issued by it and published under the names of particular authors is limited to commending it to readers as a contribution to the study of the subject.

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