

The Polish Review

VOL. II, No. 32

NEW YORK, N. Y., SEPTEMBER 14, 1942

PRICE TEN CENTS

S O L D I E R O F P O L A N D



POLAND SPEAKS . . .

Radio Address on the 3rd Anniversary of War, by Prof. Stephen de Ropp,
Director of the Polish Information Center in New York, N. Y.



IF THE great battles of this war, five were fought in Poland by unsung heroes whose sacrifices went unheeded. And yet these were basic battles in this second world war, the greatest struggle the world has known for the Soul of Man.

Five appeals were made by the Germans to Polish leaders during the three years ending today, for cooperation by Poland with the Axis. Five times they met with an indignant "No!" The refusals came from a Cracow University professor of world fame, from a factory workman who rose to be three times Prime Minister of Poland, from a landowner whose family is related to most of the ruling dynasties of Europe, from a former ambassador, and from an outstanding international leader of the cooperative agricultural movement. Thus every class of people in the Nation shared the privilege of saving and safeguarding universal values for the United Nations.

Two of the leaders were shot immediately. But after each refusal the nation paid generously in blood to seal its victory in a new democracy of suffering. It did not pay in tears, because it was exultant. It sang its faith in the Polish people. In the catacombs of the underground press it proclaimed its sublime faith in the four freedoms, it had thereby earned for the Polish nation. From the depth of its conscience and its will, it forged the creed of deeds, not words!

After the first refusal, the Polish nation lost 40,000 killed and tortured to death. Each of the second, third, and fourth battles for the soul of Poland and for the spirit of the United Nations, cost my country more than 30,000 killed, raising the total of the martyred dead to 140,000. There came the last desperate attempt. Desperate, the Germans were. The Poles were serene, after four victories, the only ones that will count in the final reckoning, when the world will be made clean and sweet again, when mind and heart will be freed from the moral filth of the German *infra-men*. German desperation, after their last bid for the soul of a nation, brought a terrible retribution. 260,000 persons were killed in five months when it became clear, even to the blunted vision of the German *infra-men*, that there are things of the human heart that are not for sale even at the cost of slavery, homelessness, planned starvation, tortures for children, mass executions.

The five battles were won! Our 400,000 dead have won for Poland a moral pre-eminence among the

United Nations. Each and every one of those killed fell, not to defend himself, but to lay the very foundation upon which a United Nations' world shall rise. They preferred the tortures of the body to the warping of principles for which American mothers are sending their boys to the Solomons and to Dieppe, for which American labor toils unending hours of the day and night, for which although deserted, Polish divisions fought to the last in France as they fought in the torrid deserts of Africa, on the icy heights of Narvik, in the clouds of enemy planes over London and Germany, on the angry waters of the Atlantic.

The Axis has coined a commentary to its five defeats in Poland. Said Gen. Best, Himmler's Deputy in "*Zeitschrift fur Politik*":

"It is always bad and fatal for a nation of overlords to attempt to deprive a subject nation of its national unity and its national characteristics, while simultaneously attempting to use the human element of this foreign nation for its own purposes. All nations that use foreign nationalities as servants and slaves, die out racially through fusion with them.

"Historical experience has shown that the destruction and extermination of a foreign nationality is not in the least against the laws of life, provided that such destruction and extermination are complete."

This answer has been translated into deeds. For the past five months the policy of complete extermination is being implemented. It was advanced as a learned theory by German scientists, professors of the numerous universities of the Reich, Alma Mater of the *infra-men*. From the technical pride of Germany, the *Diplomierete Ingenieure*, came the 10 experimental lethal gas chambers mounted on trucks, now used in Poland. From the vaunted medical profession of Germany, came an experimental study of dietary laws to determine the calorific and vitamin composition of rations on which Polish children are certain to die. From the jurists of the learned and ancient German schools of law, came the lawless justification of the principle of collective responsibility and hostages. Thus shoulder to shoulder, united, the *infra-nation* stands behind its enshrined leaders having brought to the unspeakable task: knowledge, experience, invention, and a psychology trained to merciless cruelty.

Having implemented the "policy, the horror of grinding a nation to naught began. The Poles are in possession of more than 400,000 documents of death. Each witnessed, each with the name of the perpetra-

(Please turn to page 8)

CULTURE KILLED BY "KULTUR"

THIS is how the Germans treat libraries, archives and art and historical collections in Poland. All the most valuable books, manuscripts, museum exhibits and archives are being removed to Germany. Collections left in Poland are for the use of Germans. A few Libraries with many centuries of existence, such as the Jagiellonian Library in Cracow, have been reorganized on German principles and turned into German institutions.

The destruction of libraries by the hurried dispersal of their contents, the breaking-up of collections has a devastating effect. The Warsaw National Library is now classed as an archival collection (not to secure its preservation, but to keep it out of service), while the University Library is officially closed, and only Germans can avail themselves of it.

In the Government General the only library open to Poles is the Municipal Library in Warsaw. However, the number of readers has fallen by fifty percent, the reasons being the elimination of books displeasing to the Germans, the closing down of higher education and the complete stoppage of all new publications.

The National and University Libraries, now German State Libraries and the "nationalized" Krasinski Library divided up between them, are inaccessible to Poles. The same applies to the Jagiellonian Library at Cracow and the recently opened State Library at Lublin. This library, together with the museum, a German reading room and the district office for films and pictures is housed in the building formerly used by the Lopacinski Library and the Lublin Museum, which was completed just before the war.

The Germans formed the Lublin Library by uniting, after complete expurgation, the library of the Catholic University at Lublin, the Bobolanum, a Jesuit library dating from the 17th century, and the Lopacinski Library. It now has 400,000 books. All the higher staff is German and the following rule is applied to the others:

"In the selection of new personnel it is advisable to select persons who have had no training in any Polish technical school, so that they can be trained from the very beginning in new methods binding in the Reich."

This library is to cater exclusively for Germans, by supplying material for the "Ostforschung" (East Research) being conducted in Germany, and as a modern scientific library meeting the needs of Germans in Poland.

Although the State Library in Cracow, housed in the new buildings of the Jagiellonian Library, re-



JAGIELLONIAN LIBRARY IN CRACOW — NOW INACCESSIBLE TO POLES

mains closed to Poles, it is allowed greater freedom than those in Warsaw. A large reading library has been developed, mainly with a view to meeting German needs, and extensive purchases are being made of German publications of all kinds, these being catalogued according to German instructions. Some of the art collections the Germans transported from Warsaw in 1939, "for reasons of safety," are still stored in the Jagiellonian Library. In June, 1941, before the German attack on Russia, part of these collections were transferred to Moravska Ostrava, in Bohemia. Poles are not allowed access to these collections,

which remain under the control of Watzke, the head of the Government General Department of Science and Instruction. However, it has recently been ascertained that part of the collections confiscated in Warsaw have disappeared, in all probability stolen.

After the occupation of Lwow, the University Library was turned into a lending library, the Ossolineum used as archives, and the Baworowski has been transformed into a special art book collection. In 1939 there were about 2,000,000 books in these libraries of which half have been stolen or destroyed.

In Poznan many of the valuable private book collections have been burnt by the Baltic Germans who occupied Polish houses, and a large number have been sent to mills for pulping. The collections and

(Please turn to page 4)

CULTURE KILLED BY "KULTUR"

(Continued from page 3)

library of the Society of Friends of Science have been plundered, the most valuable works being taken to Berlin, Breslau, Leipzig and elsewhere. The Seminary and Chapter Library from the Episcopal Library at Gniezno have been handed over to the University Library, as well as part of the Diocesan Library of Wloclawek. The diocesan archives at Poznan have been made available to the Baltic Germans, who preserve their documents there.

The Germans have established a special German Office of Archives, which is carrying out a re-allocation and division of archives according to their territorial reference. Thus all the documents of the towns in Western Poland are being collected at Poznan, while documents from Eastern Galicia are being sent to Vienna. So far as modern archives of local authorities are concerned, the Germans are collecting these also, but are destroying large quantities of these archives as waste paper.

In regard to the Government General the activities of the German Archive Office are not so clearly defined. After taking over the most important private collections, it set to work to carry out a re-allocation and consolidation of the material thus obtained.

The private archives of such ancient families as the Potockis and Branickis have been dispersed. But at the moment it is difficult to say what the real situation is.

So far as they have not been pillaged, museums in Poland are exploited primarily by German propaganda to demonstrate the alleged influence of German culture in Poland. Collections of prehistoric culture are particularly exploited as "proving beyond question" the existence of aboriginal German settlements in Polish areas. Recently the collections of the Lublin Museum were reorganized and opened to the German public and for German propaganda on January 18th last, have been exploited for this purpose. So, too, has the Radom Museum with its fine collection of pre-historic antiquities, which the Germans declare prove the prehistoric settlement of

German tribes in the Radom district. The same fate has befallen the Podhale collections in the Tatra Museum at Zakopane, which are alleged to demonstrate the separate nationality of the highland tribe and its bonds of kinship with the Goths. Other museum collections have either been confiscated, or looted by right of conquest, or have been dispersed in the whirlwind of war or have been packed away in warehouses slowly succumbing to destruction through lack of proper maintenance. This applies to all collections of no interest to the German kultur-bearers. The German attitude to Polish scientific collections is shown by the removal of all explanatory inscriptions on the exhibits of the Archeological Museum in Warsaw.



THE NATIONAL MUSEUM IN WARSAW
Its collections stolen by the Germans

A glaring instance of how these western barbarians treat museums is the pillaging of the new building of the National Museum in Cracow, and the use of the building as a casino. The museum collections were largely looted, the medieval collections being "removed" probably to Breslau, as "German kultur and art", while other valuable collections, such as the Jasienski collection, were rifled by the Gestapo, the German highest civil authorities in Cracow, and pettier German thieves. The remnants of these exhibits are now housed

in the restricted space of the former Czapki Museum. The new building of the National Museum, which was designed and built by Polish architects, was not finished on the outbreak of war. The Germans requisitioned it, and after its complete reconstruction opened the main part as a casino. Thus a modern, carefully planned museum building adapted to present-day requirements in this sphere has been turned by the Germans into a clubhouse for their officials.

The historic buildings ruined in Warsaw during military operations may still not be touched and it is forbidden even to secure the walls against the destructive action of frost and dampness.

HARVEST TIME IN POLAND

AS POLAND is chiefly an agricultural country harvest time is a happy and an important ceremony. This ceremony bears the Polish name "dozynki", "obzynki", or "wyzynki", meaning harvest home.

Harvest home is usually arranged by the Polish country manors. In certain provinces of Poland, viz. in Mazowsze and Pomorze, even the peasants arrange harvesting festivities and on such days all those taking part may rest assured that a hearty meal will be waiting them at home.

The ceremony itself starts with what is called "adorning the quail". The name "quail" is given to the last bit of corn to be cut, left in the middle of the field, in a conspicuous place. After all the corn has been cut the last bundle is divided into three parts, each part being then pleated and the three pleats being bound at the top, near the ear of the corn. Thus a kind of a tunnel is made under which they put a stone covered with some white linen, a piece of bread, a coin and some salt. These objects are to represent fertility of crops and symbolize the farmer's quiet and peaceful life.

After having "adorned the quail" (called a "goat" in some places) the harvesters "till" or "plough" it. This old custom is a relic of pagan days, and consists in taking the youngest girl, who used the sickle for the first time this year, by her hands and feet and dragging her across the stubble-field round the "quail" (this is the method of "ploughing the quail"). Sometimes, if they want more fun, they repeat the "ploughing" with the foremost and most clever girl of the lot, called in Polish "przodownica" — sometimes even the overseer himself or the "bailiff" is the victim.

In some parts of Poland a similar ceremony called "harvesting the stone" is performed. A stone, called in Polish "oblega", with corn growing on top of it takes the place of the "quail". The corn on that stone is supposed to be the last bit to be cut. The



HARVEST HOME

Painting by Zofia Stryjenska

last girl harvester, very self-confident, calls the boys to that cutting with a song:

*"I call you to the stone,
While I am alone,
I'll count one, two, three,
Who's not a fool will come to me."*

Then she cuts the corn as quickly as she can, before the boys can stop her, and the glory is hers. If she is not successful she becomes the object of the ploughing ceremony, previously described.

After the last sheaves have been cut the harvesters make a wreath of rye and a broad pleat of wheat. Flowers are entwined between the ears of corn.

The first girl-harvester then puts the rye wreath on her head. It is a sign of honor and shows that she was the most successful in cutting the corn. She must not be married; if the best worker happens to be a married woman she must cede the honor to the next best unmarried girl.

The broad pleat of wheat is carried by the next best girl, whose Polish name is "postacianka". Behind them gather all male and female harvesters and go ultimately to the mansion.

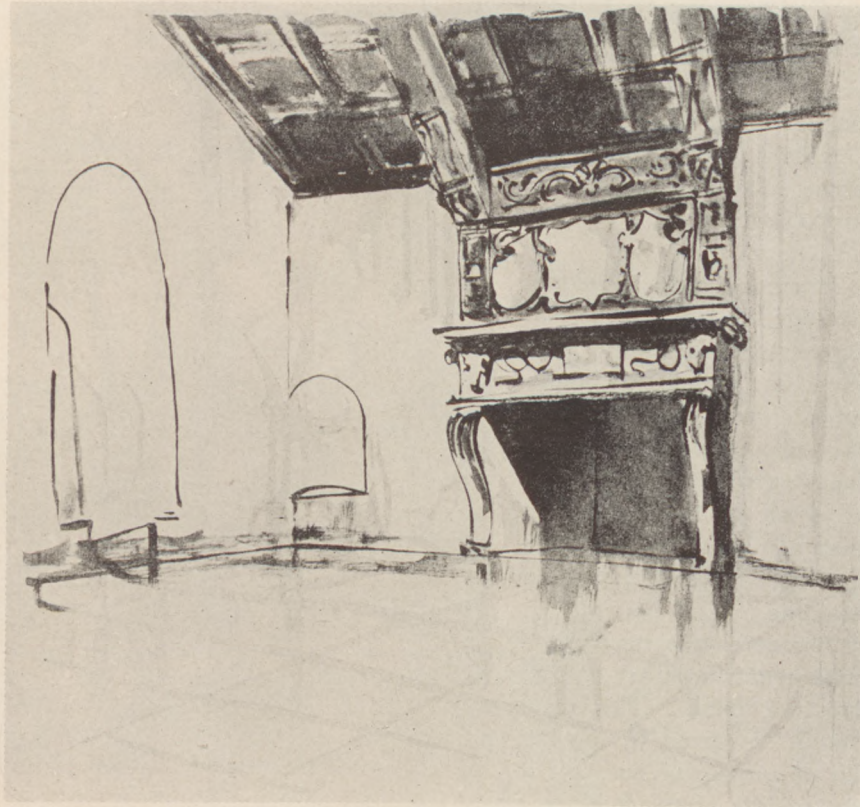
(Please turn to page 8)

THE FIREPLACE IN ANCIENT AND MODERN POLAND

*"O'er the lowland
The storm rages
Whirling the wet snow;
While the fire's
Crackling pages
Cast a lively glow.*

*Near the chimney
I stand spellbound
Puffing on my pipe,
And my memories
So long icebound
With the smoke take flight."*

— JOZEF PRZERWA-TETMAJER
(19th century)



POLISH RENAISSANCE FIREPLACE

Drawing by S. Noakowski

THE open hearth is by its very nature a thing of the North. Poland, a country of icy winters and chilly summer nights, has for centuries kept warm by the dancing flames of huge wood fires in open hearths. And since Poles like to make all that is essential to their comfort, pleasing to the eye, Poland has long had open hearths combining beauty and utility.

The principle of the open hearth is of course very simple — a fireplace with a chimney acting as a flue to draw off the smoke. But this seemingly rigid requirement offers ample scope for artistic treatment as regards general composition, shape, size, and materials used.

The earliest hearths in Poland were made of wood or brick. There was one in virtually every castle chamber and every palace room. Every manor house prided itself on these warmth-dispensers. In the days when the open hearth served as the only means of heating a huge room, it was of necessity very large. But as it assumed an auxiliary role, it diminished in size, and eventually became a fireplace, at times mainly decorative.

The yellowed pages of old inventories furnish quaint details about hearths in olden Poland. The Tykocin inventory of 1571 records that in one of the old wooden structures within the castle walls there was in the main hall "a white glazed stove and next to it a brick fireplace."

On the Rakszewski estate in 1691 there was "in the kitchen a spacious clay chimney and underneath it a huge open hearth to cook food, built of wood in the shape of a square."

The Rabina Wielkopolska inventory states that next to the open hearth stood "iron tongs, prongs, and a scoop, shapely and beautifully wrought."

An interesting feature of many old hearths is the arcade chimney — two chimneys, on either side of a central vestibule, uniting in an arcade over the vestibule to form a single flue leading up to the roof.

Fireplaces, plastered and whitewashed in the baroque style lent a cheerful note to Polish country estates in the 18th century.

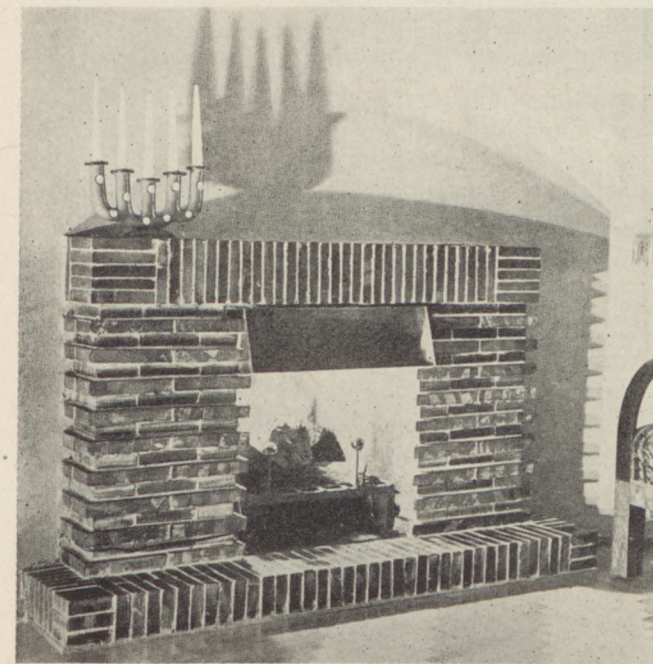
During the 19th century, the fireplace, following the dictates of a fashion then current in Europe, lost

much of its lustre. Inartistic and often merely an imitation, it seemed about to spell its own doom.

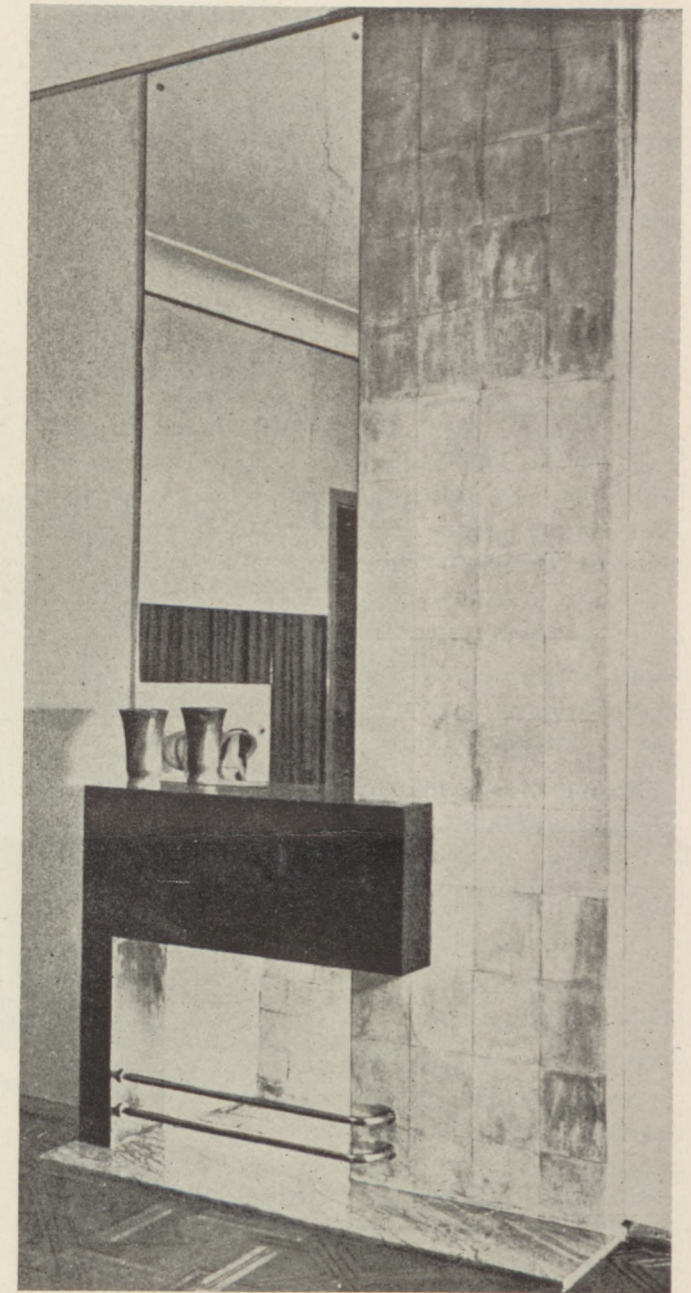
The Great War, however, introducing changes for the better in interior decorations and architecture, also changed the appearance of the decadent fireplace. The modern fireplace is now supposed to give a good fire and to present a charming picture.

Polish architects in the pre-1939 period delighted in creating original models for fireplaces meeting all the requirements of good taste and utilitarian function. Modern Polish fireplaces were for the most part medium sized, simple in line and neatly proportioned. Marked originality was displayed in the use and type of materials. These ranged from unpretentious burnt brick and heavier sandstone to the more elegant marble, mirror or tile. Especially interesting are fireplaces made of tiles bearing folk art motifs.

An essential feature of all open hearths and wood burning fireplaces are andirons. Poland can point with pride to its hand-wrought fire-dogs. Centuries ago they were fashioned by master craftsmen belonging to city guilds. In modern Poland they were hammered into shape by artists who sought to combine old-fashioned craftsmanship with new conceptions of execution. Henryk Grunwald, an outstanding young Polish metal worker, has created beautiful examples of wrought-iron fire-dogs, in keeping with the harmonious simplicity of modern Polish fireplaces.



MODERN POLISH FIREPLACE



FIREPLACE WITH MIRROR

During the past three years Polish fireplaces have remained cold and unheated. Poland has no coal for its stoves, let alone its hearths. But the fireplace is too bound up with Polish tradition not to come back into its own. The day is steadily drawing nearer when reunited though decimated families will once more gather around the cheerful warmth of the open hearth and make a fresh attempt to reconstruct their shattered family life.

HARVEST TIME IN POLAND

(Continued from page 5)

Upon reaching the courtyard of the mansion, they are sprinkled with water by boys in hiding. This sprinkling symbolizes the importance of rain for the crops, but is also a source of fun.

From the moment of "adorning the quail" throughout the wreath-making and during their procession to the mansion, they sing different songs.

The host of the manor awaits them in the porch: he takes the wreath off the first harvester's head and gives her some money. He takes also the wheat pleat off the second girl's hands and hangs both the wreath and the pleat in the mansion's porch where they will hang till the following year. Afterwards he invites those who took part in the festivity to a meal, music and dancing follows. The host has his first dance with the first girl, the hostess with the first male harvester.

A similar harvest festival, of which the Polish name is "okreznie," is held later in the autumn. The meaning of this festival is that all field labors, including sowing is finished.

Among the Cassubs on the Polish seaboard the harvesting ceremony is called "ozniwiny". It is run on the same lines as in other parts of Poland, with a wreath made of wheat and adorned with flowers, but the last sheaf is worked into the shape of an old man and given as a companion to the last girl. Sometimes this last sheaf is called a "hag", or "baba" in Polish.

It is worth while mentioning that the songs sung at harvest-making have certain features all over the country. Everywhere people are glad to have finished work. Everywhere the landlord is treated with kindness and due respect in song — compliments are poured on him and his family. Less kind songs are sung to bailiffs, land stewards and overseers, who are very often the objects of a biting and pungent criticism.

Here is a melody very popular among the harvest makers:

Do not spare, Sir, the white horses

And send for a band even to Torun.

We are carrying the crops.

Do not spare, Sir, the white foal

And send for a band even to Krolewicz.

We are carrying the crops.

POLAND SPEAKS...

(Continued from page 2)

tors, each precise in detail of place and time. Facing a disarmed nation of 35 millions, the Germany of Frederick of Prussia, of Nietzsche, of Bismarck, of Ludendorf, of Himmler, began the experiment characterized in the words of Gen. Best, "complete extermination of a foreign nationality is not against the laws of life". Whose life?

We, the United Nations, whose life is at stake, have a soul to lose without which life itself is meaningless. Close upon 2000 years ago a voice was heard saying: "What is it to a man if he wins all the world and loses his soul?" Twenty centuries later, the Polish nation in the hour of trial heard that still voice. It fought and won. This was the first United Nations' victory, the victory of the five battles.

Other victories will be won. Military victories, victories of endurance and heroism, victories of labor and invention. But unless we win the final, moral victory, for which all this suffering is borne, the struggle will have been in vain.

When the military effort shall have ended, the greatest of all wars will begin. This will be the struggle for spiritual values in the hearts of men, in the conscience of leaders. The selfishness of those in whose hands will be placed physical power, pitted against their own and the world's conscience. Democracy in words and slogans, against democracy in deeds and practice. Liberty for the great, against freedom for the small. Might of material power pitted against the rights of the weak. I pray to God from the utmost depth of an humble heart that we, the United Nations, may also win the ultimate struggle that will consume the hearts of men, when the shrieking battlefields are stilled over the grave-sown lands of our childhood and the ashen skeletons of our homes. A silent procession of human shadows will flock Polandward from all points of the compass, will flock to the land of the war's greatest martyrs. Answering the roll-call they will whisper: Kutno, Warsaw, France, Narwik, Battle of Britain, Greece, Libya, Battle of the Atlantic, Russia, Middle East, Victory of the Five Battles, Victory of the United Nations. Then the silent millions who made the last great sacrifice and won will gaze across the waters to this land of mercy and Christian vision, whence will have come the world's greatest moral victory, and, when peace is won, will pray with us the living:

"GOD BLESS AMERICA!"

POLAND AS BUTTER AND EGG EXPORTER

PRE-WAR Poland occupied a leading place as an exporter on the world egg market. This was due in part to the interest taken by the Polish Government in this sphere of Poland's economy. Thus, the Standardization Law of 1928, introduced uniform packing and processing, and raised the quality of exported eggs. Organization and regulation of Poland's egg export trade was completed in 1934 and resulted in a great improvement of commercial and processing methods, and enabled the export trade as a whole to be properly controlled.

In the years from 1934 to 1937 Polish exports of eggs in thousand 12-gross cases were as follows:

1934	297,754
1935	303,523
1936	328,279
1937	343,935

Because the Poles took special pains in feeding their chickens, Polish eggs enjoyed an ever-increasing popularity on the world market. Their superlative keeping qualities made possible their export to countries as distant as the United States and the Argentine.

Polish eggs also lent themselves to preservation by the chilling process. The cold-storage warehouse at Gdynia was installed with all the latest and most modern equipment, where exporters and foreign buyers kept stocks of from three to four hundred wagon-loads of eggs at one time. In 1938, Poland began large-scale export of frozen eggs from the Gdynia and Warsaw cold-storage warehouses; shipments of these eggs sent to Great Britain and Germany were declared by experts to be of first rate quality.

Polish exporters were successfully experimenting with powdered eggs when the German invasion of

1939 put an untimely end to all egg production in Poland.

The butter industry in pre-war Poland was for the most part concentrated in the hands of cooperative unions. These cooperatives owned a large number of warehouses and retail establishments in all the larger towns and operated their own cold-storage warehouses, primarily for the preservation of export butter.

Poland not only produced enough butter for her own needs but was constantly increasing her export of this product. She exported 130,000 hundredweight of butter in 1938 and expected to export at least 150,000 hundredweight in 1939.

In 1936, the Polish Government introduced strict inspection of all export butter, thus appreciably improving its quality. Already in 1937, at the International Butter Show, Poland was one of the nine countries whose butter was recognized as the best.

Poland boasted a network of public cold-storage plants. The enormous Gdynia plant, of world-wide reputation for egg storage, also served as a center for butter storage prior to shipment abroad.

Polish butter occupied a very promising position on the world dairy market. This phase of Polish economic life, however, like so many others, will have to await the end of the war before it can free itself from the mailed fist of German maladministration that slaughters Poland's best cattle to feed its pillaging army and leaves millions of Polish men, women and children to die of starvation.



FREEZING EGGS IN TINS

MEDAUER 209, by Lt.-Col.

WE WERE loaded by battalions on transports, and weighed anchor without the slightest idea of where we were going. And so the whole Carpathian Brigade found itself in besieged Tobruk, relieving Australian troops and inheriting their motorized equipment. What is Tobruk? A town built by Fascist Italy near a small harbor. What buildings there were are now a mass of rubble and ruins. As a town it has ceased to exist. The famous protective "perimeter" of Tobruk, is nothing but a chain of hills, all around Tobruk. Here and there the Italians built small concrete pill boxes, incapable of withstanding even field artillery, and faultily constructed. So we prepared to be anywhere except in an Italian pill-box. So much for the celebrated fortress of Tobruk, where for many months we stood our ground. At first my battalion manned the southeastern sector of the perimeter, facing the Italians. This was not the worst period of our stay in Tobruk. To be sure, the Italian lines were bristling with guns, mortars, first-rate small cannon of Swiss make and machine guns; but things were relatively quiet. In war all quiet things come to an end and after a brief rest, my Battalion was moved to the southwestern sector of the protective hills and we found ourselves facing the Germans!

The situation was none too good. One of the highest elevations in this area is called "Medauer 209" and is of strategic importance. Who held this hill dominated a large sector of the "perimeter" as everything below was well within range. Every man, every car or motorcycle was plainly visible. As luck would have it, the Germans had, before we took over this sector, pushed 500 tanks into an attack and had taken the hill. To my Battalion fell the honor of holding this sector. The Australians had held this "hellish" sector — as they called it — a maximum of 14 days without relief, and both they and the English were splendid troops. We held the sector for 71 days.

Our positions had a front of half a mile. When we first took over, I was none too happy. The Australians had not dug their trenches deep enough — and the rocky terrain made construction work difficult. Each soldier had simply built himself a small stone shelter and let it go at that. So the



MASCOT OF THE POLISH ENGINEERS IN THE CARPATHIAN BRIGADE



RIFLE AND SAND
10

losses had been heavy — we got to work at once. Necessity is the mother of invention. The men fashioned picks out of old steel automobile springs and began to dig day and night, soldiers and miners by turns. Finally every soldier had his deep shelter, and those lucky enough to hit a clay patch built himself luxury dugouts in which they could even sleep and where the devil himself could not reach them. The sector was plenty hot. It was a light day when only 10 to 15 thousand shells were fired at us by the Germans. It

S_ of the Polish Carpathian Brigade

was a bit worse when 30 to 40 thousand shells came over in 24 hours. Incredible, but true, our losses, thanks to the holes dug in the rock and clay were slight. The Germans dominated our positions from above, but we paid them back with heavy fire. And we certainly had a variety of equipment — English, captured German and Italian guns. Our mortars

did fine work. Occasionally the Red Cross was hoisted by the Germans. This was the signal for "cease fire" and we watched the sanitary squads go into action, removing the wounded and covering the dead with blankets. Then a new exchange of signals, and we continued to batter them from the same angle, happy in the thought that our aim was good.

In spots our sector was only from 100 to 150 yards from the German guns. In addition to artillery and machine-gun fire, we had frequent visits from German Stuka dive-bombers. They came in droves, by day they rained bombs on us, by night on the harbor to try to sink our supply ships. Fortunately, the German dive-bombers never did much damage in our ranks. Our lines were so close that the German pilots sometimes hit their own men and the Italians. It was rare to see the Red Cross appear over enemy positions to enable the Germans and Italians to garner the harvest of their own airmen.

Water and food were also quite a problem. The water was . . . well, it was salty. Tobruk has no water supply of its own. Water comes from Derna, and Derna was in enemy hands. So we drank salt coffee and tea, and somehow managed to persuade ourselves that these salt drinks were not too bad. The bread and meat situation could also have stood improving. But our shelters could not be reached in daytime without running the risk of a free ticket to the other world. Our first meal, such as it was, came after sundown. Many of our boys lost their teeth through scurvy. But we were able to stand all, even going without sweet water for 5½ months. At the start of the meal period red flares shot upward on both sides. "Attention! Chow is on its way" — war came to a brief standstill, for men must eat! Everybody ate in silence: Poles, Aussies, Englishmen, Czechs, Germans, Italians. More red flares, and the war started off again on fuller stomachs and in better humor. At Tobruk, day was turned into night and night into day. From 6 p.m. to 7 a.m. no one could sleep a wink. The tension was unbelievable. Each side sought to gain intelligence about the other, and anything could happen. Surprises and



CAMOUFLAGED ARTILLERY POST AT TOBRUK

Commander-in-Chief, paid a surprise visit to Tobruk. He made a deep impression not only on us, Polish officers and soldiers, but on the British High Command and all the units of the Tobruk garrison. For the first time in this war a Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief embarked on a dangerous voyage

(Please turn to page 12)



DIVINE SERVICES AT THE FRONT

(Continued from page 11)

to visit his soldiers, fighting at the edge of the Libyan desert. We strutted about happy and proud. English officers spoke words of praise and open admiration. General Sikorski did not content himself with a visit to Tobruk proper, he went to advanced outposts and the British staff trembled at the responsibility of guarding the General's life. Touched by his visit, the British officers were eager to get him away from such a hot sector of the Libyan front. Sikorski wanted to spend several days with the Carpathian Brigade, but the staff pleaded difficulty of communications. The Commander-in-Chief, who had visited Gibraltar and Malta, left Tobruk by sea, making the dangerous trip to Alexandria under the same conditions as we had on our way to Tobruk.

Finally news spread of the coming offensive of the 8th Army. Relief was on its way and so was the hope of leaving our trenches, and having a go at the Germans. The British offensive simply smashed the enemy besieging ring and, at the right moment, we stormed the Medauer Hill, driving out the Germans, who left more than 700 motorcycles in our hands. They certainly came in handy.

What next? Next was El Gazala and a page that will always shine in the annals of the Carpathian Brigade. El Gazala is nothing but a few old tombs, used to quarter successive units of opposing armies.



NECESSITY IS THE MOTHER OF INVENTION

On December 15, at 3:30 p.m., we began the attack. The New Zealanders had already tried their luck here but had been forced back with heavy losses. The position was held by the Italian Pavia and Trento divisions, old acquaintances of ours. Although Italian, these divisions had some Germans in their ranks, and their artillery was all German.

The initial assault of our first and third battalions won considerable ground, licking the daylight out of the Italians and taking more prisoners than we had men. The next day was even hotter. We had to take a heavily fortified rump, and chose meal-time for a surprise attack. It was completely successful, and we took prisoner virtually the entire 27th regiment of Italian "Bersaglieri

of Death" with their commanding officer. That day, strange as it may seem, the only casualties suffered by my battalion were one man killed and one wounded. And that despite heavy artillery and machine-gun fire.

Fate decreed that we should later defend this rump, where we were heavily bombed by German and Italian aircraft, who dropped everything they had upon us.

On March 24, 1942, the Polish Carpathian Brigade was withdrawn from Libya to be reorganized. Seasoned in desert warfare, possessing a fund of experience, it has become the nucleus and cadre of mightier army units, reinforced by tens of thousands of Poles from Russia. During this period of reorganization and training, our thoughts went out to Tobruk, El Gazala, and the hills and desert crossroads with strange Arabian names, where many of our comrades found their last resting place and where so much Polish blood was drunk by the thirsty desert sands.



POLISH COLORS IN THE DESERT