

THE POLISH REVIEW

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VOL. IV. No. 21
MAY 31, 1944

Polish signalman
in Italy.



Prime Minister Mikolajczyk Praises Gallant Defenders of Warsaw Ghetto

UNAVOIDABLY prevented from attending by important official business, Prime Minister Mikolajczyk sent the following letter to a meeting held in London to commemorate the defenders of the Warsaw ghetto and the sacrifice of Szmul Zygielbojm:

"Our thoughts turn always to our country, to the underground struggle against the inhuman invader, the struggle that from its very inception linked the workers of Poland with the Jewish workers of the Bund, one of the many instances of cooperation between all Polish citizens.

"From the outset of this terrible war we have had before our eyes a picture of the workers' battalions which fought in the defense of Warsaw in September, 1939, in which were Jewish volunteers organized and led into battle by the very Szmul Zygielbojm whose memory we honor today. The spirit of active struggle against the invader born then found its automatic continuation in the movement of underground workers, in cooperation and contact with the Polish Underground Organization.

"Although a year ago, during the fighting in the Ghetto, tortured Warsaw had to endure the same tragedy of temporary impotence, as she must always endure during the provocative executions of hundreds of Poles by the Germans before the entire population, nevertheless, this unity between the Polish underground movement and the desperate fighting in the Ghetto was then shown actively by the supply of arms and instructors, by maintenance of contact, by assistance given to the remnant that escaped.

"It is not for me to describe the Ghetto fighting, but may I be allowed to say that although up to now we have only the name of the engineer Michael Klepfisz—a name symbolic of the worker-leaders of Ghetto heroes—undoubtedly in the future we shall be able to pay fitting tribute to all those who fell in the streets of Warsaw, in both her battles—September, 1939, and April and May, 1943.

"We Poles in particular know that living together on the same land for many centuries created a bond a hundred times stronger than all others, just as a bond of blood shed in the same fight for the same ideals is stronger than all disputes and differences, exploited in whatever way. We have always referred with pride and reverence to every detail of the part played by Polish Jewry in our fights for independence during a century and a half—and we shall always continue to do so.

"I say with sorrow that everyone working in any way to decrease this joint Polish-Jewish brotherhood and unity bought at the price of blood shed in the inexorable struggle against the German invader, is not only making it more difficult for us to live together in Poland but is injuring both the Polish cause and the Jewish nation.

"My words will not be out of place at a gathering of Polish Jews who are fighting hard and irreconcilably for complete and real equality for Polish Jewry in Poland in accordance with our own unswerving political attitude, who see in our country their own homeland and who are shedding their blood together with us for this, our common country.

"That is why the memory of the heroes of the Ghetto is part of the memory and glory of all Polish fighters for freedom; the memory of the Jewish underground movement is part of the memory and glory of the Polish underground movement at the present time. There in the streets of Warsaw the standard of the Republic of Poland was raised in the fight by the side of the Socialist flag of the Jewish workers and we are here to honor the struggle of those who wish to fight by our side for a better future in common.

"Our purpose is common and consistent, and for this reason I should like, in conclusion, to give an extract from a letter Zygielbojm wrote to my predecessor on May 11, 1943. He finished the letter with the words: 'It is my wish that the remnants which yet remain of several millions of Polish Jews should live to see their liberation, together with the Polish people, and that they should be able to live in a Poland and in a world of freedom and justice and socialism in return for all their inhuman tortures and sufferings. I believe that such a Poland, that such a world will arise.'

"May I say here that those ideals and aims of Zygielbojm—of a Poland in which there will be social justice, equality of rights and duties for all citizens and the most far-reaching forms of democracy—are ideals which guide the Cabinet over which I have the honor to preside. Zygielbojm's voluntary death and dying appeal have not been in vain, for I have taken it to heart. I am working to carry out his appeal sent to my predecessor in the name of Jewish workers at the time of his voluntary and self-sacrificing death. And I steadfastly believe that Zygielbojm's call for a Poland of freedom and justice for all will be echoed by all my successors in independent Poland, freed from the enemy."

"This should be a proud day for Poland, and I salute the Polish flag which flies so proudly from the monastery fortress."

—General Sir Harold R. L. G. Alexander congratulating General Wladyslaw Anders, Commander of the Second Polish Army Corps for the "magnificent fighting qualities and tenacity" displayed by his troops in capturing Cassino.

INDOMITABLE POLAND FIGHTS FOR US ALL

by MARJORIE PITMAN HOINKO



TO be defeated and not to surrender—that is victory." Little did Pilsudski dream that only a few years after his death his beloved Poland would be the outstanding example of the victory his words described. Even as the world, in that fateful September of 1939, watched the crushing military defeat, when Poland fell before the invading armies of Germany, it recognized behind that defeat a moral victory. Even the realists, who pointed out the foolishness of resistance, in their hearts paid homage to the spirit which refused to capitulate. If that September campaign had marked the end of Poland's story, the world would still be left in Poland's debt.

The all too common idea that, because it was so short-lived, military resistance in Poland was a fiasco is quite incorrect. Actually, to quote a British commentator, "On the few occasions when infantry went into action, the Poles were victorious, only to retire later before the German machine, not the German soldier." In the air, the Poles, outnumbered nearly ten to one, still managed, according to German figures, to bring down 430 German planes, although the Polish front line planes numbered less than 400. This feat was accomplished mainly by direct fighting in the air, since Polish anti-aircraft defenses were virtually nil. The Poles were often victors in individual encounters, like the one when 15 Polish machines attacked a force of 45 Germans, including 18 Messerschmitts 110, then the latest German type. The German force broke after the first attack, four planes being shot down, while the Poles had only one machine seriously damaged. In the long run, however, the superiority of enemy equipment outweighed Polish man superiority.

Polish resistance is estimated to have postponed Germany's attack to the west some four or five months. Moreover, the preparations made by the western powers during these months were more intelligent because the technique of the German blitz had been revealed in the Polish campaign. Military observers commenting today on the lessons of the war have little to add to what they set forth in November of 1939, after studying the lessons of the German invasion of Poland. Without this short respite and the lessons that helped make wiser planning in that time, the entire course of the war might have been changed.

Poland's stand against the German invaders had another value more important, perhaps than the military one. By daring to oppose Germany, Poland roused the western nations from the hypnotic trance

in which they were held while they watched the serpent of Nazism advancing slowly, but surely, through the Ruhr, Sudetenland, Czechoslovakia and Austria. Against the policy of peace at any price (which seemed to work well for the western powers as long as someone else paid the price) Poland took a definite stand, proclaiming to the appeasers that no price, not even war, is too great to pay for freedom. That was Poland's first contribution to the ultimate freedom of the world. Yes, I repeat, if that September campaign had marked the end of Poland's story, the world would still be left in Poland's debt.

But that was not the end of Poland's part in this war—it was only the beginning. In proportion to her strength, possibly no one of the United Nations has done so much. I say this without minimizing in the least the tremendous contribution of the larger nations. Only the Big Four—United States, Great Britain, Russia, and China—have at the time of this writing a larger number of men in action than Poland.

The escape of large numbers of Polish soldiers after Poland's defeat, though their land was ringed about by Axis-controlled countries, or Axis sympathizers, is one of the wonder stories of this war. Eve Curie tells of one Pole who fled all the way from Poland to France in 1939 by way of the Carpathian Mountains, Hungary and Italy. He was sent to fight in Norway, then came back and in the Battle of France was taken prisoner. He escaped, recrossed all of Europe, paid a secret visit to his family in Poland. Not wishing to remain in German-occupied Poland, he stole out again by

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Street scene during the siege of Warsaw, September, 1939.

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INDOMITABLE POLAND

(Continued from page 3)

way of the Balkans and the Middle East and at last turned up for service with the Poles fighting at Tobruk. There were thousands whose stories resembled this one. Goebbels is said to have referred to them as "the tourists of General Sikorski." Heroic tourists, indeed. Reorganizing on foreign soil, Polish troops have never ceased for a moment to fight against the Germans wherever they could be found. It has been a surprise to German soldiers, and one not calculated to bolster their morale, to meet Poles again in France, in Norway, in Egypt and Libya, and over England, when they had been told that Poland had ceased to exist.

The most spectacular fighting, of course, has been done by the airmen. Since that day in February, 1940, when the flag of the Polish Air Force was hoisted for the first time side by side with the flag of the Royal Air Force in England, the Polish fliers have amazed the world with their skill and daring and their boundless energy. Figures of October 1, 1943 give the score of Polish fighter planes against the Germans as 605 certain, 159 probables, with an additional 208 damaged. Polish bombers, according to figures up to April, 1943, had flown 5,098 planes in 502 raids and dropped 10,970,000 pounds of bombs, besides being known to have sunk six enemy subs.

Concerning the Polish fliers, A. S. W. Done, Deputy Director of Allied Air-Cooperation in Britain, has this to say:

"The success of these Poles in air battles has become proverbial and their fanatical determination to kill Germans a legend. In the Battle of Britain a Polish Hurricane Squadron destroyed 28 enemy planes in three days. Many Polish pilots have flown an almost incredible number of hours in operational flying; even up to 3,000 hours on operations is not uncommon.

"Nor must the high technical skill of the Poles be overlooked. Many of their technicians are as highly trained and as competent as any in the world and their skill is now at the disposal of their squadrons and of the Royal Air Force.



Polish infantry at El Gazala, Libya, in December, 1941.



Polish Army in France in 1940. General Sikorski presenting Polish colors brought from Poland, to the newly formed sapper regiment.

The Poles have also helped with distinction in research, which is an essential of modern warfare."

Then there are the many Polish pilots, men usually too old for combat duty, under the British Ferry Command, flying planes from factories to airfields, from America to Great Britain and the Gold Coast, from Britain to Mid East and India. In this group are some women pilots, one the daughter of Marshal Pilsudski.

The latest issue of the United States Marine Corps Bulletin has just come to my desk as I write and I cannot forbear to include a further quotation from the article devoted to what it calls "that gallant group of greats—the Polish Air Force." "They have," the article says, "an uncanny aptitude for intercepting and downing enemy planes after nightfall," and "Polish fighter tactics are without doubt unparalleled for combining skill with complete disregard for personal safety." The writer continues: "To fighting men everywhere, on land, sea or air, their record of victory after defeat cannot be adequately extolled in pretty language. Rather, the Marine Corps should appropriately pay tribute, in the parlance of fighting men, to a truly magnificent display of guts. They have earned such a tribute and their continued performance typifies the indomitable will of a free people."

The exploits of fliers are by their very nature spectacular and readily counted. The infantryman is less conspicuous, but it is conceded that without his support the Air Force could never win the war. In the defense of France, in the mountains of Norway and on the African desert, and now in Italy, the Polish foot soldier has shown the same courage and skill, the same tenacity of purpose, which characterize the Poles everywhere.

When the war is over and the excitement dies down, I hope we shall pay proper tribute to an often forgotten but vitally important group of men—the heroes of the merchant ships and the naval units that escorted them in the task of getting supplies to Britain and to Murmansk. In bitter cold, with enemy planes bombing them time

FIGHTS FOR US ALL

and again on each trip, they made their long, dangerous journey with arms and munitions for the men on the fighting lines. Here, too, were found the Poles with their merchant ships and escorting destroyers. For the Polish navy had slipped out of the Baltic, at the outbreak of the war, under the very noses of German ships and planes, since it was evident that it could accomplish nothing by a suicide struggle with the superior German sea forces. Like the Polish army, the Polish navy has served with distinction on various fronts—at Dunkirk, in the Battle of the Atlantic, and in the Mediterranean—and the Polish navy is today larger than when the war began.

While the Polish army, navy and air force have been making this enviable record for themselves as they have fought beside their allies against Germany, another fight has been going on inside Poland against the same enemy. The fighters there are underfed and scantily clothed; they must work in secret; they have no uniforms or flags or reviews; they cannot feel the inspiration that comes to large groups of men going into action together; they receive no medals for bravery and when they die their passing is often unnoticed; they are the Underground.

Let no one think of them as just heroic or clever individuals who, in a hit-or-miss fashion, on their own initiative, are doing work against the Germans. The Polish Underground is well organized, and is directed, as are the armed forces, by the constitutional Polish Government in London, and its work follows a well thought-out plan. Since every act of sabotage or resistance is followed by the severest punishment from the Gestapo—punishment meted out not on actual perpetrators but on any Poles at hand—every act must be well considered and must be worth what it will cost.

The work of the Polish Underground divides itself into four main classes. First, the publication of secret newspapers. That it is possible, with the Germans controlling, supposedly, not only printing presses but every bit of paper and ink in Poland, for secret papers to be published, is almost unbelievable. Nevertheless, it is true. Over one hundred papers are printed and circulated by the Poles, and these papers are the means of keeping the whole nation informed about what is being done abroad by their armies and their government, of what is being done at home against the German occupational government, of what means they may use to resist German invaders. These papers give information and instructions, and, more than that, they bolster up the morale which must stand against such dreadful odds.

Nor do the papers deal only with the present. The underground press discusses problems of the future, when Poland shall once more be free, and its pronouncements are notable for a spirit of real democracy and for a lack of the narrow nationalism of which Poles are often accused. A thirty-two



Polish Navy carries on!
Canadian National Film Board Photo

page booklet, "The People's Tribune," which recently appeared in secret in Poland, says: "The problems of Europe must be solved jointly by the peoples of Europe. It is impossible to restore an independent Poland if freedom is not at the same time restored in France, Czechoslovakia, Belgium, Norway . . ." The motto of Poles today, as generations ago, is still, "We fight for our freedom and yours."

There is never a day when the Gestapo does not make some arrests of Poles suspected of conspiring against the German rule. It is part of the program of the Underground to set free as many of these victims as possible, not customarily by releasing them from the prisons but by capturing them while they are being transported to prison or concentration camp. It is not a matter always of open attack; often they succeed by various ruses in effecting the releases quietly. In the

year 1943, 642 persons active in the Underground were thus liberated and in the process 740 Germans were killed.

Underground Poland is not waiting till the war is over to punish the German criminals who have been carrying out the brutal Nazi "New Order" in Poland. In regularly conducted courts, whose judges are legally appointed, the high Gestapo officials who are responsible for the outrages against the Polish people are tried and sentenced to death. The defendants, obviously, are not present, but they are officially notified that sentence has been passed and, in spite of the

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Polish fliers "typify the indomitable will of a free people."

CONGRESSMAN KEAN EVOKES

On May 3rd, 1944 members of the American Congress paid tribute to Poland and the liberal constitution enacted 153 years ago. In the House of Representatives, Congressman Robert Winthrop Kean of New Jersey spoke on the activities of the famous Polish poet and patriot, Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz, one of the framers of the Polish Constitution, who later came to the United States, married Susan Livingston Kean, settled in Elizabethtown, New Jersey, and became an American citizen. The following remarks appeared in the Congressional Record for May 3rd, 1944 (Vol. 90, No. 78, pp. 4031-4032):

MR. SPEAKER, it is a particular pleasure for me to join with other friends of the Polish people in celebrating the one hundred and fifty-third anniversary of the Constitution of May 3, 1791, for it so happens that the second husband of my great-great-grandmother was a Polish patriot named Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz, who took a prominent part in the adoption of this forward-looking document. In fact, the New International Encyclopedia, published in New York, 1923, characterizes him as the "framer of the Constitution of the third of May." Verification for the characterization of the part which he took as so vital is not possible from a study of the few reference books available in this country, and the many letters which are preserved in our family from Niemcewicz were written at a later date and so do not shed any light on his activities at that time. However, there is no question that he did have a most important part in bringing about this memorable document of Polish history.

Therefore, a brief résumé of the activities of this Polish patriot does not seem to be out of place at this time.

Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz was born in 1757 at Skoki, Lithuania. He came from a noble Lithuanian family. After graduating from cadet school at Warsaw in 1777 he served for a time as adjutant to Prince Czartoryski, commander of the armed forces in Podole.

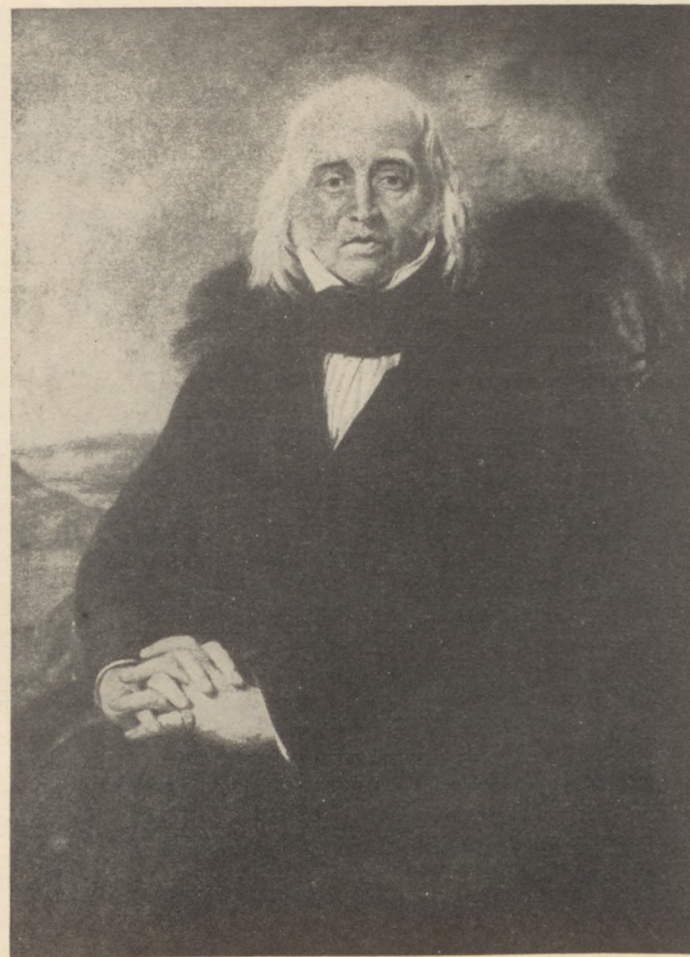
In 1788 he was elected to the Polish diet. He played an important role as a representative and as a playwright, for he was an author as well as a statesman, in preparing public opinion and the diet for the reforms contained in the constitution.

In this critical period immediately preceding the constitution he was an outstanding and active representative; one of the leaders of the general liberal and reformatory movement. His comedy, Return of the Representative, written in 1790, and successfully performed on the Warsaw stage throughout 1790 and 1791, contained artistic propaganda for the principles of the coming reforms. During the years 1790 and 1791 Niemcewicz delivered several speeches in behalf of the peoples rights, which later were incorporated in the May 3 constitution.

Especially strong was his contribution to those clauses of the constitution which aided commoners, for article III of the constitution merely ratified the rights which had been granted to the commoners by an act of the diet passed only a month before, in April 1791. Niemcewicz took a leading role in the campaign for this act, which aimed to grant to the commoners at least some of the privileges hitherto enjoyed by the gentry alone. He delivered a fiery speech in its support in which he said:

"How frequent are the instances when people whom we qualify as those without noble birth have saved and glorified their countries. No one knows the father of Washington or whom Franklin considers to be his grandfather, yet everyone knows and will always know that Washington and Franklin liberated America."

Bernard Newman in his Story of Poland has this to say: "The constitution of May 3, 1791, is a remarkable document,



By David

Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz.

for it preceded the French Constitution by several months. Nor were rivers of blood necessary to bring it into existence; its details were argued logically and clearly, and such privileges as had to be renounced were renounced voluntarily. A new principle of government was proclaimed. Hitherto the absolute freedom of the privileged citizens had been considered the ideal state; it was now replaced by a wider goal of the common good. But because the constitution opened the door to liberal forces and political freedom, it was doomed from the day of its making."

After the passage of the May 3 constitution, Niemcewicz campaigned for its strict enforcement. Some of the Polish magnates, such as Rzewuski and Potocki, openly opposed the constitution, refused to take the oath of allegiance and fled to Jassy, the Russian military headquarters. Niemcewicz was among the members of the diet who wholeheartedly seconded the motion to punish those who refused to take the oath of allegiance. The diet passed the motion, but it was never enforced. In January 1792, Niemcewicz himself moved to punish those who violated the constitution.

Finally, through pressure from the greedy nations surrounding Poland, he and other patriots who had been the supporters of the May 3 constitution were forced to leave the country. He joined Kosciusko in 1794 as his adjutant, was wounded and taken prisoner by the Russians with his chief in 1794, at the battle of Maciejowice. He was imprisoned in the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul, but was not idle during his imprisonment, and while there translated Pope's Rape of the Lock and Gray's Elegy. Released by the Emperor Paul in 1797, he came to the United States with

THE MEMORY OF NIEMCEWICZ

Kosciusko where he met and married Susan Livingston Kean, the widow of John Kean, my great-great-grandfather. He settled in Elizabethtown, N. J., and became an American citizen. However, in 1807, when the situation in Europe raised the hopes for restoration of Poland, Niemcewicz left his comfortable life in his adopted land and returned to Warsaw. Here he became the secretary of the senate as well as a member of the supreme council of public instruction.

When Poland came under Russia's control he was retained in office by Alexander I, but having taken a most active part in the Russo-Polish War of 1830, was forced into exile. From that time on he took no active part in politics, but devoted himself primarily to the writing of plays and historical poems, many of which, set to music, became very popular. He died in Paris in 1841 and is buried there.



Home of Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz at Elizabethtown, N. J. Drawn by Niemcewicz himself.

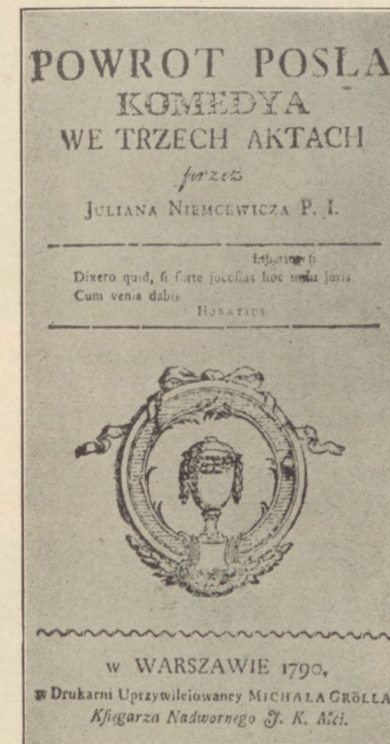
It is fitting and proper that on this day when we are celebrating the events of May 3, 1791, his memory be not forgotten.

In my family's home, which now belongs to my brother, may be found many of his relics and those of Polish history of that time, so that it might be said that since earliest childhood I was surrounded by objects connected with a free Poland. In fact, our family homestead is still named Ursino—the name given to it by Niemcewicz in memory of his ancestral home in far-off Poland.

Today, for the fifth year, this Poland stands under the yoke of a cruel despot. But though the clouds are still dark the light of ultimate victory shines behind them. Poland must and will be free again and stand in its rightful place as one of the great nations of Europe. For 200 years, in spite of partitions, in spite of attempts at suppression, the great spirit of the Polish people has stood firm. Poland has remained a nation even when its component parts were under the heels of the oppressor.

Why, we ask, have these attempts to wipe out Poland not been successful? We only have to look at our friends and neighbors of Polish origin who live among us to understand the strength of the Polish people. Law-abiding, industrious, Americans of Polish descent have made a real contribution to the American scene. What other peoples who immigrated to this country in fairly recent times can point to as many members of their race serving in the House of Representatives; doing their duty here, not as Poles, but as Americans who have fully absorbed the lessons of American history and our common inheritance.

We do not have to go back to Kosciusko and Pulaski, glorious as were their deeds, to find cause to celebrate this day. We only have to point to our neighbors and friends of this virile race who are justly proud of their ancestry. They add glory to the Polish race and on this special occasion all Americans should join with them in offering a silent prayer that the day be not too far off when that great people in central Europe may again take their rightful place among the nations of the earth.



Return of the Representative. Comedy by Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz, Warsaw, 1790.

AMERICA AND GENERAL WASHINGTON

by Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz

*With my wounded commander compelled to depart
From thee, oppressed Poland, the pride of my heart;
An asylum I sought o'er the dark rolling sea,
In the land of the noble, the brave and the free;
But e'en there the sad thought of my country would rise,
And the tears of deep anguish would roll from my eyes.*

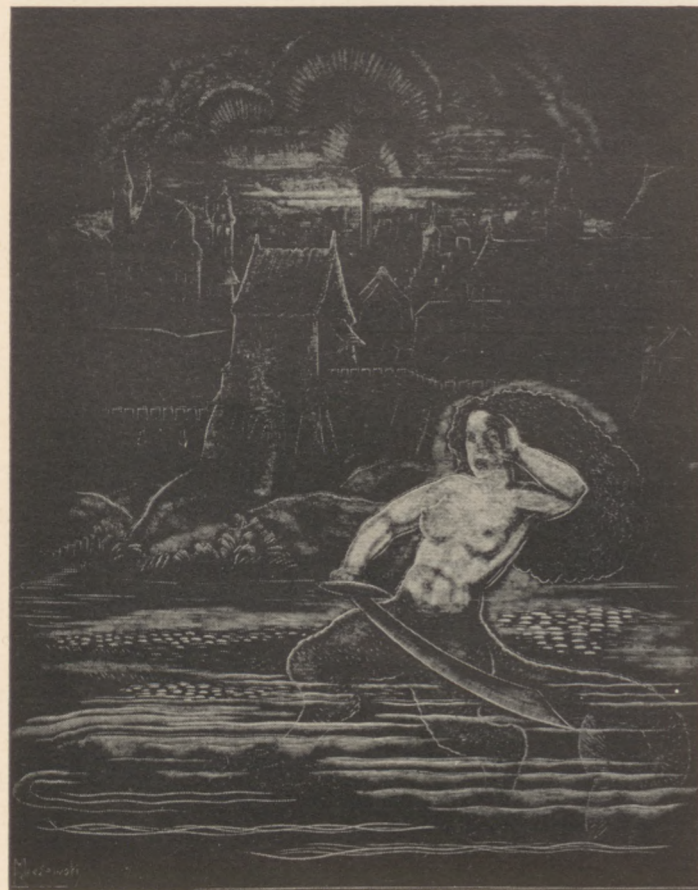
*Full of bliss to my heart is the thought of that day
When to Washington's mansion I wended my way;
To visit the warrior, the hero and sage,
Whose name is the day-star to each coming age;
By his valor the new world rose happy and free,
And her glory his endless memento shall be.*

*How oft on his accents with rapture I hung,
While wisdom and kindness distill'd from his tongue;
And when'er the sad tale of our fall I'd relate—
How brilliant our struggle, yet awful our fate—
A sweet tear-drop of sympathy stole down his cheek—
Better pledge of affection than language could speak.*

*Precious tear! a rich proof of his sorrow for thee,
Loved home of my fathers! once peaceful and free.
And oh, could I that gem which so peerlessly grows,
In some costly and beautiful crystal enclose,
So priceless a treasure a witness I'd keep,
That o'er Poland's sad ruin a great man could weep.*

WOODCUT, THE MOST NATIVE OF POLISH ART FORMS

by DR. IRENA PIOTROWSKA



Legend of the Mermaid of Warsaw. Wood engraving by Stefan Mrozewski.

FROM the early 15th century until now Polish artists have excelled in many forms of graphic art, such as engraving on copper and steel, etching and lithography. But the most daring and typical works of Polish artists have been woodcuts and wood engravings. This is not due to mere chance, but lies deep in Polish traditions, in the very essence of Polish art. Wood is the medium closest to the Polish heart. In wood, the prehistoric ancestors of the present Poles created their homesteads and their temples; in wood, many beautiful country churches and wayside shrines have stood for centuries throughout Poland; in wood, Wit Stwoszcz created his masterpiece for the Church of Our Lady in Cracow, and many religious figures have been wrought in wood by Polish sculptors before and after him; in wood, the Polish peasant carved his most expressive "holy images." No wonder that the hands of the Polish artists felt more "at home" incising woodblocks than engraving or etching metal plates, or drawing on the stone.

And contrary to what occurred in many another European country, the evolution of Polish wood engraving was never interrupted, its technique was never lost and rediscovered, it has a long continuous and glorious history.

As in other parts of Western Europe, the printing of pictures from an engraved woodblock is older than typography in Poland. However, the oldest extant Polish woodcuts date only from the end of the 15th century. The old wood engravers invariably employed semi-soft woods cut length-wise to the trunk. This precluded the use of very thin or sharp lines or of lines that were too angular, and the medium forced the artist to some restraint. He could not incise freely

in all directions. Because of this, these woodcuts always had a certain decorative character and were not a more or less artistic reproduction of seen reality. This was neither expected nor looked for. On the contrary, it is probable that the inherent decorative quality of the woodcut contributed greatly to make it so popular with Polish artists, who have always been distinguished by intense feeling for the decorative in art.

During the first decades of the 16th century, the old Polish woodcut was at its best and all through the remainder of the century was profusely used for the title pages and illustrations of many Polish books, published in Cracow, Poznan, Lwow and in other cities. Indeed all book illustrations of the period were done in wood as the artists realized that the lines cut in wood harmonized admirably with the shape of the printed letters. These woodcuts ranged from ornamental motifs, to representations of contemporaneous events, religious and mythological scenes, portraits of Polish kings and dignitaries. In style they corresponded to the woodcuts of Western Europe during the Renaissance.

But with the exception of Poland, almost anywhere else in Europe, the woodcut had lost its significance in the 17th century, owing to the realistic tendencies of European art, a movement which lasted with few interruptions until the end of the 19th century. Since the rather thick lines of the woodcut were unsuited to render realistically conceived scenes and portraits, the woodcut gradually was displaced by copper and steel engraving, etching, and other techniques. Although Poland in the 17th and 18th centuries produced many first class metal engravers and etchers, some indeed of international fame, yet it is characteristic that book illustration from woodblocks persisted well into the 18th century, especially in provincial art centers. It can-



Janosik Celebrating St. John's Eve. Woodcut by Wladyslaw Skoczylas.

supplemented his paintings on canvas or glass, and like these, presented saints full of expression. Most important of all, the peasants faithfully followed the style of old woodcuts and showed traces of designing characteristic of the late 15th century.



Oxen. Woodcut by Edmund Bartlomiejczyk.

not be denied, however, that the artistic standard of woodcuts of the Baroque period can not be compared with that of the Renaissance.

Of still greater importance for the continuity of the evolution of the Polish woodcut art was the fact that during the second half of the 17th century some self-taught artists, living on the outskirts of larger cities, had taken up wood incising as a medium of their art expression. Soon this technique captivated popular artists of smaller towns, whence it reached the villages. On wood the peasant began to create pictures of saints patterned after those he saw in churches or after old prints he happened to come across. His woodcuts, executed by means of soft poplar and linden tree blocks, colored by stenciling, were hung on the walls of his hut. These woodcuts

supplemented his paintings on canvas or glass, and like these, presented saints full of expression. Most important of all, the peasants faithfully followed the style of old woodcuts and showed traces of designing characteristic of the late 15th century.

The two oldest folk woodcuts we know of, the only two that date back to the 17th century, are of a lay character. One is known as the *Image of a Faithful Servant*, the other as the *Lament of People of Various Social Degree on the Death of Credit*. As their subjects indicate, these two earliest folk woodcuts were not done by a peasant but by some unskilled city artist. They form a direct link between 17th century guild art of more or less popular style and the peasant woodcuts which date from the beginning of the 18th century to about the year 1840.

Only one of these from the first years of the 19th century presents a lay subject: the initiation of a new comrade to the band of the legendary Janosik, the Polish Robin Hood of the mountains.

After the middle of the

19th century, the woodcut seemed to have been abandoned by the peasants, but in recent years one of the last peasant carvers of "holy images," Jędrzej Wowro, living in the Western Carpathians, encouraged by the well-known Polish poet, Emil Zegadłowicz, executed a series of expressive religious woodcuts that in striking manner bind the distant Middle Ages to the present.

While 20th century poets and other artists showed great understanding of the peasants' primitive art productions and



A Highlander Woman. Woodcut by Tadeusz Kulisiwicz.

even derived inspiration from them—as we shall see later—this had not been the case in the 19th century, when peasant and professional wood engravers worked side by side, unaware of each other, unaware that some day they were destined to meet.

The evolution of 19th century Polish woodcut as practiced by professional artists was for many years unjustly neglected by Polish art critics, because it was so completely overshadowed by the mastery it had attained in centuries long past, and the still greater heights to which the art had risen

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WOODCUT, THE MOST NATIVE OF POLISH ART FORMS



Peasant Girls. Woodcut by Wladyslaw Skoczylas.

most of his mature life in France, at a time when the "discovery" of Japanese prints from wood, became the starting point in Europe for the interest in the Japanese woodcuts. It seems to me that in the simplified drawing of Jasinski's landscapes, in the human figures and in his composition Japanese influences are discernible. But these influences by no means deprive his woodcuts of an absolutely individual character, especially as he availed himself of this medium for self-expression and his own aesthetic pleasure.

While the prints of Smokowski and Jasinski are conceived in pure woodcut style, a larger group of artists made use of this technique about the same time for reproduction purposes. It happened that toward the end of the 18th century, an English metal engraver, Thomas Bewick, specializing in making engravings of paintings, began to use woodblocks for the same purposes. But he realized that he would not be able to make satisfying reproductions of the more or less naturalist paintings of the period, by engraving on soft wood. So he replaced it by hard blocks made of pieces of boxwood cut not lengthwise, but crosswise to the grain. This enabled him to incise thin lines in all directions. Bewick's method soon spread all over Europe and became the favorite technique for reproducing pen and pencil drawings destined as book illustrations. These boxwood engravings have little in common with original woodcuts. They served a purpose later filled by photo-mechanical processes, and as soon as these were perfected, reproductive wood engravings, so popular toward the middle of the past century, went out of use. It would be unfair, however, not to point out that some of the wood engravers specializing in the reproductive boxwood technique attained to great mastery, among them Jozef Holewinski (1848-1917).

But the renaissance of original woodcuts was then close at hand. The first recognition of the qualities proper to wood engraving coincided with the rebirth of new understanding for the beauty of stained glass and various other crafts. The "discovery" of the Japanese prints from wood referred to

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in quite recent days. Fortunately during the few years that preceded the invasion of Poland, the 19th century Polish woodcut has been rehabilitated and many a fine specimen brought to the attention of the art-loving public. At the same time, some enlightening facts were added to our knowledge of the evolution of the Polish woodcut, that most native of Polish art forms.

Of great importance was the work of Wincenty Smokowski (1797-1876) who, apart from folk engravers, was the first Polish artist since the great engravers of the 16th and 17th centuries, to recognize the true value of woodcuts. His woodcuts were conceived in the true woodcut style and it is interesting to note that they often represent simple peasant people. He is a real precursor of Skoczylas. Somewhat isolated in Polish art stand woodcuts of Feliks Stanislaw Jasinski (1862-1901), world famous for his reproductions of paintings and photographs in copper and steel engravings, but who in his spare hours and for his own pleasure, created original and deeply expressive woodcuts of great beauty. His life and artistic production have been described by Leopold Wellisz in his beautiful volume devoted to this master's work, published in Paris in 1934. Jasinski spent



Kazimierz-on-the-Vistula. Woodcut in color by Janina Konarska.

The Underground Exhibition At Freedom House

EVERY phase of the unrelenting struggle carried on by Europe's undaunted millions against their German oppressors is shown in an exhibit of Underground Activities now being held (May 10-June 8) at Freedom House, New York City. The exhibit is sponsored by The American Labor Archives and Research Institute.

The exhibit is divided into eight parts: Underground publications; guerrillas; forced labor; the resistance of workers; children; Jews; sabotage and food.

Original copies and photostats of Polish and other underground newspapers are on display. Hundreds of these papers are now in daily circulation throughout Occupied Europe. The difficulties under which they are written and printed are illustrated by a model Norwegian print shop set up for the exhibit.

"The workers do not surrender, the workers continue their fight!" This statement made by Mieczyslaw Niedzialkowski, a Polish labor leader, has become the watch-word of Europe's workers. Niedzialkowski who was murdered by the Germans, made this statement when he refused to sign the declaration of Warsaw's capitulation after the three-week defense of the city. According to latest statistics, 12,000,000 of Europe's unconquerable workers have been deported to forced labor in the Reich. From Poland alone, nearly 2,000,000 have been taken.

Not alone adults, but even children are the victims of German bestiality. Their fate is graphically illustrated at the exhibit. Germany is using food control for the scientific extermination of the coming generation. The minimum daily average of calories according to American physicians is 2,800. American children average 3,400, German children now get more than 3,000, but children of occupied countries receive only the following: Poland and Belgium, 800 calories, Polish



Display of Polish Underground Press at Freedom House.

Jews, 400, other countries average 1,400. Pictures of skeleton-like children with the bloated stomachs characteristic of starvation bear out these statistics.

Pictures of Germans destroying statues of great Poles, such as Chopin and Jan Kilinski, show that the uneasy conquerors are still afraid of their victims and failing to exterminate them or break their spirit, now try to wipe out their culture.

At the opening ceremonies, on May 9th, Matthew Woll, vice-president of the American Federation of Labor, reminded guests of the gallant defense of Warsaw, of the equally heroic Battle of the Warsaw Ghetto, and of the leading part played by Poland in Europe's underground resistance.

Other speakers were Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt; Professor Henri Gregoire, editor of the Belgian magazine FLAMBEAU; Rex Stout, chairman of the War Writers' Board; Adolph Held, chairman of the Jewish Labor Committee; Lieut.-Comm. Herbert Agar, special assistant to Ambassador John G. Winant, who spoke by radio from London, and Jan Masaryk, deputy Prime-Minister of Czechoslovakia.



Illustrated chart of forced labor in Germany. The photographs show how Polish civilians are rounded up in street man-hunts, placed in camps for training and "indoctrination" and then sent to forced labor in the Reich. Conscripted Poles are forced to wear an armband with the letter "P".

SETTLING OLD SCORES: POLES ME ET UP WITH GERMANS IN ITALY



Polish machine gunners command a mountain position along the 8th Army Italian front.



During winter weather Polish sappers helped to clear roads of the deep snow to enable troops and transports to go forward. Here is part of a village which the Germans demolished before retreating.



Polish transport parked at a village on the 8th Army front. In the foreground are Italian women washing clothing in the river.



A Polish Bofors gun and crew ready for action on the Italian front.



A welder at work in a Polish Brigade Workshop on the 8th Army sector.



Polish troops loading a mule with equipment during a realistic demonstration in which live ammunition was used. The demonstration was watched by General Leese, G. O. C. 8th Army, who paid a visit to a Polish battalion.

INDOMITABLE POLAND FIGHTS FOR US ALL



In September 1939 the squares of bomb-torn Warsaw were filled with hastily dug graves of soldiers fallen in battle, the symbol of the capital's stirring resistance. The grave of the unknown Polish officer shown above was in the very center of the city, at the union of Jerozolimka Avenue and Marszałkowska Street. As the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier was barred to the Poles, this humble little grave became the new Grave of the Unknown Soldier of the War of 1939. All who passed by would stop to pay tribute to the memory of the dead. On November 2, Polish "Memorial Day," the grave was visited by so many thousands of Warsaw residents that the Germans ordered it destroyed.

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extra precautions they take to protect themselves, the sentences almost never fail to be carried out. There were 18 higher German officials and 1,163 Gestapo agents thus sentenced and killed in Poland in 1943.

So efficient is the Underground in its work against German officialdom that the Germans in Poland have a distinct case of "the jitters." Germans in higher positions are warned against living alone or going about alone on the streets; German soldiers are even forbidden to leave the barracks except in groups.

The most important underground work, of course, is the destruction of German military material and of transportation facilities needed to get those supplies to the front. This is done in many ways. It may be that a Polish farmer, having harvested his crop, will burn his barns, since most of what he has raised will be confiscated by the Germans. Or Polish workmen in factories taken over for German production will use various means of slowing down the work. In one district, the offices containing German records of agricultural quotas to be furnished by the farmers of the vicinity were burned.

One of the largest powder mills in eastern Poland was blown up by underground agents in the early days of the war. Most effective is the direct destruction of trains of military supplies and troops, which has gone on regularly since Germany attacked Russia. In vain attempts to prevent all these

destructive measures, approximately half a million German troops have been constantly maintained in Poland. Just the immobilization of these troops, which could otherwise have been used at the front, has been a Polish contribution of no small value to our common war effort.

Total figures are not at hand for the sabotage carried out by the Polish Underground since Germany marched east against Russia, but German sources officially admit that in 1943 there were:

Railroad derailments	83
Attacks on trains of war material.....	474
Ammunition trains blown up.....	3
Bridges blown up.....	6
Railway stations destroyed.....	19
Locomotives damaged	2,013
Trucks destroyed	9,980
Tankers damaged	212
Gallons of gasoline burnt.....	562,000

Such figures make it easy to believe that the people in Poland may not be far wrong in claiming, as I am told they do, that the victory of Stalingrad was 80% due to the work of Soviet soldiers and 20% to the work of Polish soldiers in Poland. "If all the German transports had arrived and had arrived punctually," they say, "the history of the war in the east might have taken a different turn."

Every account has its debit and its credit side, its goods received balanced against the price paid. In recounting the achievements of the Polish Underground, it is necessary, also, to think of the price the Poles have paid. Few figures can be compiled; no one keeps track of the men and women, boys and girls, who die—because they were caught circulating the forbidden Polish papers, because they posted anti-German placards on a wall, or worked too slowly to suit the German employer, or were thought to be agents of Underground officials. When an oil reservoir burns, it may be 20, it may be 50, or 150 of the people in the nearest village who are shot in reprisal—or it may be the whole village that pays. There have been 364 Polish villages that have met the same fate as Lidice—the entire obliteration of people and buildings.

At least 6 million Poles have been murdered or have died directly as a result of this war—6 million from a population of 35 million.

But still the Poles fight on. Not only the soldiers and sailors and fliers—not only the underground agents. It is the whole Polish people who fight. There has been no puppet government collaborating with the Germans in Poland. The people of Warsaw in that tragic September—the men and

women and children who defended their city under the leadership of their heroic mayor—were typical of the whole nation. When Starzynski was warned to flee the radio station from which he was broadcasting, because the Germans would be there in 10 minutes, he said to the pianist at his side: "Play as you have never played before. We have ten minutes to tell the world that Poland still lives." Four years and a half have passed; Starzynski has been silenced; but Poland still lives—lives because the Polish people are still daring, as he did, to pay the price required to keep Poland alive. For the German planes their fliers shot down over Britain, for the troop trains wrecked, for submarines sunk, for all the exploits of their men and women abroad, the Polish people at home are paying. Polish men in concentration camps, Polish girls in German brothels, Polish children starving—they are paying the price of resistance. The choice was with them to surrender or to suffer, and they chose to suffer. The chance has been given them many times during these bitter years to turn against their allies and receive consideration at the hands of the enemy, but always their choice has been the same. Every Pole that lives today is truly a soldier and his fight is for the freedom of us all.

WOODCUT, THE MOST NATIVE OF POLISH ART FORMS

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above was the result of the new aesthetic orientation. A further impulse, this time decisive, was given to the development of original woodcuts by the spread of abstract and anti-naturalist art movements at the beginning of this century. These movements recognized the artistic possibilities of the proper woodcut technique. Small wonder that in Poland it was the peasant woodcut, so close at hand, which became a source of inspiration for the generation of artists that began to take its stand against conservative Realism and against Impressionism.

The initiator of this trend toward folk lore in Polish graphic art, was the unforgettable Wladyslaw Skoczylas (1883-1934). Like so many other Polish artists he was chiefly inspired by the art of the Polish mountaineers of Podhale. His work is native in character through choice of folk themes and folk art motifs, as well as in execution and technique. The color schemes of his colored woodcuts remind one both of colored peasant woodcuts and old peasant kilims.

Contemporaneously with Skoczylas, Edmund Bartłomiejczyk (b. 1885), who died in a German concentration camp in 1940, played an important part in the renaissance of the Polish woodcut. But Skoczylas was the more influential. He was followed by a throng of pupils and admirers who were able to unite the native qualities of the Polish peasant woodcut with the international so-called modernistic principles of composition and drawing in a most masterful manner. They practiced the technique of wood engraving along with that of the woodcut. But in contrast to the 19th century wood engravers who used boxwood blocks and sharp burins for their reproductions of drawings, paintings and photographs, they brought out the true wood engraving style. To the best of the artists devoting their talent almost exclusively to black and white prints belong Stefan Mrozewski (born 1894), Stanislaw Ostoja-Chrostowski (born 1897), Maria Dunin (born 1899), Tadeusz Kulisiewicz (born 1901) and Tadeusz Cieslewski, Jr. (born 1895), who was also a prominent etcher. On the other hand, Bogna Krasnodebska (born 1900), Janina Konarska (born 1902) and Wanda Telakowska excelled in color woodcuts, uniting old Polish traditions with certain perfectly assimilated Japanese influences. Finally, a number of Polish distinguished painters, like Polish Impressionist Wojciech Weiss (born 1875) and the two adherents of the Polish Formistic trends, Wladyslaw Wasowicz (born 1891) and

Wladyslaw Lam (born 1893), who later turned Neo-Classic, as well as a number of other younger artists, like Wladyslaw Taranczewski (born 1902), practiced the art of woodcut and attained remarkable results.

Modern Polish woodcuts and wood engravings are well known to American lovers of graphic art. Polish prints are to be found in many private and public collections in the United States, in the Art Institute of Chicago, the Brooklyn Museum, the Baltimore Museum of Art, the Woodcut Society of Kansas City, the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Memorial Art Gallery in Rochester, the Library of Congress in Washington, D. C., the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia, etc. The most comprehensive collection of modern Polish woodcuts and wood engravings is owned by the Print Department of the New York Public Library.

The American public has also had an opportunity to get acquainted with Polish woodcuts at the numerous Polish art exhibitions which have been touring this country during the past fifteen years. Many of these exhibitions were devoted exclusively to Polish graphic arts, some—ten, to be exact—to Stefan Mrozewski's work. Besides, Polish graphic artists have often received rewards and honorable mentions at international exhibitions.

American art critics are unanimously recognizing the national flavor of Polish prints. "Intense nationalism may or may not be commendable in many phases of human activity, notably in economics and politics, but where art is concerned such promulgation is entirely admirable and worthy of enthusiastic appreciation. It is then an ardent setting forth of a Nation's creative ability and when one discovers in such art a happy combination of individual technique and the representation of wholly native subject matter, there is a genuine cause for rejoicing" writes C. H. Bonte in an article entitled "Strongly National Polish Prints." And, to conclude, let us cite these beautiful words of another American art critic: "Chopin has represented Poland to us as far back as we can remember, not all of Poland, but the country's creative impulse, which happens to be one founded upon the expression of ideas restricted to one medium—the piano. In the realm of art the print is a piano solo, the color print a chamber work. Hence we evolve the theory that Poland's high place in contemporary print-making proceeds directly from the Polish mind—the mind that gives Chopin the piano and Chrostowski-Ostoja the woodcut."

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The Most Valiant This War Has Produced...

WOND GRAM SWING broadcasting over the Blue Network
at 10 p. m. on May 18, 1944, said:

“THE ALLIED offensive in Italy already has its first great victory behind it and is moving on to the next task, to take the Adolf Hitler line and open the road to Rome. Cassino, which had withstood the greatest air bombardment ever given a key point in a land line and then repeated frontal attacks, was subdued by a flanking operation.

“That’s the right strategic description of what happened, but the human description is to say that the flanking movement was made possible by assault by Polish troops which are among the most valiant the war has produced. It was the first assignment for Polish troops in the war on the continent since the fall of their country. No tougher assignment was given in the Italian offensive. They were against the hardened First German Paratrooper Division. The terrain they had to cover was almost pure rock where they couldn’t dig in. They had to fight uphill against entrenched positions. They took those positions but were thrown back time and again. Four days they struggled back and forth until they were maddened by frustration.

“Yesterday morning some of the heavy artillery of the Germans had been silenced by air attacks, and the Poles opened their final offensive in full daylight at 7 in the morning. They advanced from boulder to boulder. They reached stone walls which they scaled with ladders while under heaviest fire. By noon they captured three positions: Mt. San Angelo, Phantom Ridge, and Point 593 on Peal Ridge. They were driven from San Angelo and Point 593 but they came back and by nightfall they had regained them both. And with the aid of Allied tanks they stormed Mount Albeneta from three sides. This morning the Poles had the historic task of taking the heights of the monastery after the German lifeline beneath it had been cut by the British. So these tragic ruins finally have come into Allied possession. The Poles included many Jews whose relations have been massacred by the Nazis in the Warsaw Ghetto, and they fought with special frenzy. All the Polish forces were driven by hatred, the correspondents on the front report. And it induced those Germans able to flee, to escape from the Poles so as to surrender to the British.”

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