

THE POLISH REVIEW

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Anthony Eden
Pays Tribute
to Sikorski



A Thousand
Years of German
Aggression



Hitler—Latest in
Long Line of
Teutonic Liars



Crushing Defeat
of Germans
at Grunwald
the 15th of July
1410



From the Polish
Front in Italy



"In the Name
of the Republic"



Hero of the
Ghetto Awarded
the Virtuti
Militari

VOL. IV. No. 27
JULY 19, 1944

Jagiello at Grunwald.
Sculpture by Stanislaw
Ostrowski, Flushing
Meadow Park, Long
Island, New York.



Anthony Eden's Tribute to Sikorski at a Memorial Meeting for the Late Polish Prime Minister

"I HOLD it an honor that you have invited me to come here today to pay tribute on behalf of the British government to an outstanding allied leader of this violent war. Our own Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, regarded General Sikorski as a tried and trusted comrade-in-arms and he has sent the following message on this occasion: 'General Sikorski's name will long be remembered in history. His faith sustained Poland's spirit in her darkest hour. His courage inspired the Polish people to continue their long and relentless struggle against the German invader. His statesmanship had always in view, Allied unity in the common action against Germany and restoration of Poland's independence and greatness. So long as his memory is cherished, accomplishment of this great work for which he gave his life will be assured.'

"I, too, was privileged to enjoy the close friendship of General Sikorski and his death in active service in the course of one of his journeys to encourage and stimulate Polish resistance was a personal loss to me and to my colleagues, as well as an inestimable loss to Poland.

"Of Sikorski as a Polish patriot, it is not for me to speak. No one but a Pole could adequately value and express all that his faith and courage meant to his country. He strove for Polish independence before the last war. He worked for the consolidation of Poland after her independence had been secured. Then in the dark days of 1939, fully knowing all the difficulties ahead, he unhesitatingly answered the call of all Poles who without exception determined to fight on. He accepted the post of responsibility at the head of his countrymen and soon assured for himself an honored place in the counsel of Allied nations.

"It is of General Sikorski as a resolute ally and a good European that I wish to speak today. It would be hard to overestimate the value of his example and leadership to the cause of European freedom. During the years before this war, he clearly foresaw the menace of Germany and urged the countries of Europe in the East and West to combine against it. His advice like that of others was not heeded and it was only after the disaster of 1939, that he was called upon again to guide his country's destinies. Poland's place, he said, is where the fight against Germany continues. First in France, and then again in this country, he formed Poland's armies. Soldiers and sailors and airmen of Poland, our first ally, never ceased to fight at our side against the common enemy. For us then in name, he will always stand as a symbol of Poland's unswerving loyalty.

"But he never lost sight of the wider community of European nations suffering under the German yoke.

For him, it went without saying that when Russia joined in the fight he should seek and reach an agreement with her so that Poles, then in the Soviet Union, could be fully mobilized against the Germans. In the anxious days of December, 1941, when German armies were thrusting towards Moscow, Sikorski and Stalin proclaimed their conviction that no compromise was possible with Hitler's Germany and declared that their two countries would fight on together until victory and work for a just and lasting peace thereafter.

"Sikorski saw clearly that the greatest measure of Allied unity in action against the common foe was essential not only to our common victory and to the restoration of Poland to her place among nations but also to the creation and maintenance of peace and security in the postwar world. Without this, he well understood that Poland's future independence must always be in peril.

"Sikorski is no longer with us but results of his work live on. The Polish government under the wise leadership of Mikolajczyk with the full support of His Majesty's government has pledged itself to the continuation of Sikorski's enlightened and farsighted policies. His work as the first commander-in-chief of the Polish armed forces reformed abroad has now borne fruit in the brilliant and hard-won triumphs of the Polish Second Corps in the Cassino battle. In Poland itself, the entire nation, fortified by the example of Sikorski and his successors and undismayed by its long and terrible sufferings, continues to oppose all efforts of the German invader to break its spirit. By daily acts of heroism, Poles in the homeland make their contribution to the steady weakening of German power.

"From the very first, General Sikorski rightly attributed the greatest importance to establishing and maintaining close contact with Poland. He actively encouraged building up the Polish underground organization which has caused so much trouble to the German forces of occupation and which now stands ready to coordinate its activities with the incoming Soviet forces in what will be for Poland a decisive liberating phase of the war. Abroad, Polish armies many times more numerous than the gallant band of twenty-four-thousand whom Sikorski brought with him to these shores in June, 1940, are now taking their place in the fight on all three main fronts of the great final battle which will liberate Europe and make possible the restoration of strong and independent Poland. The present Allied victories on all these fronts justify our hope that this restoration is no longer far distant.

"That is the picture which would gladden the heart of Sikorski were he with us today. I join with you in paying tribute to a great son of Poland, a wise statesman, a brave warrior and a farsighted European."

"The Teutonic Python none can pacify
By prayer, or presents or hospitality.
Ravenous, despite all he has devoured,
He opens his wide jaws to swallow us all . . .
Naught but our united forces can save us."

—Adam Mickiewicz (1798-1855),
Grazyna (1822).

A THOUSAND YEARS OF GERMAN AGGRESSION

by S. M. MARVEY



Teutonic Knights plunder Polish village. From the "Prussian Spirit" series.

By Wojciech Kossak

NEARLY 2,000 years ago Caesar and Tacitus called attention to the Germans' lust of conquest, and their later history shows that this is still the essential trait of the German mind. Only in wars of conquest does it find satisfactory expression. Such wars have been the natural element in which the German people have felt most at home. War has become for them an absolute imperative. Although many a war of conquest was contrary to the real interests of the German people, it was none the less waged for its own sake.

To this lust of conquest was bound that other essential of the German spirit: the cult of force. This cult expressed itself not only in efforts to create force, but in the urge to impose it upon neighboring peoples. The greater their consciousness of force, the keener the Germans' desire to make their neighbors feel it. This could best be done by conquest. How

strong the German lust of conquest was is shown by the fact that when conquest proved impossible, they sought to compel their neighbors to give legal recognition to their predominance.

This imposition of themselves on their neighbors by force was often attempted under some ideal mask. German knights rode into foreign lands to convert the pagans, to bring German culture to the East, to expand the "Holy" Roman Empire. Never was the ostensible motive real. They were but masks to hide from the world Germany's real aim: conquest.

German expansion is stark aggression, unjustified by national need, and dictated solely by atavistic lust of conquest for conquest's sake. Such a cult of aggression is a permanent psychological phenomenon, independent of time and space, but always extremely dangerous to neighboring states.

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Albert, Duke of Prussia, swears fealty to King of Poland in market-square of Cracow, 1525. From the "Prussian Spirit" series. By Wojciech Kossak

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For a thousand years this threat has hung over Europe. Above all, it has hung over the Slavonic nations, the next neighbors of the Germans. For centuries the Slavonic world has had to bear the main weight of German aggression; for centuries it has had to fight the Germans in defense of its independence and indeed, its very existence. It is an endless struggle that goes back to the tenth century, when on the ruins of Charlemagne's Empire, Prussia emerged to the east, and it still goes on today. In the course of time German imperialism has changed its watchwords, but not its essence. The old lust of conquest, the old cult of brute force remain. Nor has it changed its methods.

The German lust of conquest is best revealed by historical documents. The following quotations tell of the continuity of German imperialism through the ages.

In the tenth century, Adelgast, archbishop of Magdeburg, issued a proclamation to the Saxons which included this cynical passage:

"... The pagans" (i.e. the Slavs) "are the worst people in the world, but they inhabit the best lands, which produce more meat, honey, flour and poultry than others. Saxons! Conquerors of the world! There you may save your souls and at the same time conquer the best lands for settling on..."

Even in those remote days German methods had a familiar ring. German princes incited one Slavonic tribe against another, and used deceit as an honorable weapon. The tenth-century Saxon chronicler, Widukind, tells how margrave Gero, unable to overcome the Slavonic dukes, assumed the

mask of peace and invited thirty of them to a banquet, at which he "murdered them when they had feasted and were overcome with wine."

This taught the Slavs to put no trust in German faith, and to reject other offers of peace, for fear of treason and deceit. Widukind says of their attitude to the Germans:

"... But none the less they" (the Slavs) "chose war rather than peace, putting liberty before every kind of misery. For this breed of men is hard and patient of labor, accustomed to the plainest food, and what our men consider a grave burden the Slavs regard as almost a pleasure. The majority of days are spent, by one people in fighting for glory and a great and wide empire; by another for liberty and to avoid ultimate servitude..."

The Germans carried on the struggle in a peculiarly cruel and relentless way: "The King led his armies through those regions, laying waste and burning everything." Nor did prisoners fare better: "On the next day at dawn the head of the chieftain was exposed in the camp, and round it the severed heads of seven hundred captives..."

The subjugated Slavonic lands were incorporated in the Germanic domain. That their population might be kept down and effectively Germanized, marches were instituted: i.e., large territorial units administered on military principles, and garrisoned by bodies of German warriors, settled in strongholds about the country. The Slavonic population was forced to live in "servile" settlements near to these strongholds and to perform various services for the garrisons.

The German scheme of conquest produced results fatal to the Western Slavs. Within three centuries, from the tenth to

the twelfth, the Germans made themselves masters of the Slavonic lands between the Elbe and the Oder.

In its advance towards the East, German expansion in the tenth century reached the borders of the young Polish State. From the first moment, the Germans strove to subjugate it, to assimilate its territory as thoroughly as they had assimilated that of the Western Slavs. But the Polish dukes succeeded in resisting the annexationist designs of their powerful neighbor. Loving freedom above all else, they strove to maintain their country in complete independence of Germany.

Mieszko I, Boleslaw the Great, Boleslaw the Bold, Wladyslaw Herman, Boleslaw Wrymouth, Wladyslaw the Short—all these Polish rulers felt the impact of the German *Drang nach Osten*. When the Polish State became unified under Wladyslaw the Short in 1320, a turning point came in the relations between Poland and Germany. The united Polish Kingdom was now so strong that even the Holy Roman Empire was forced to recognize its independence.

The removal of the danger of imperial expansion by no means ended the German threat to Poland. As early as the thirteenth century it took on a new and more threatening form. Simultaneously with the expansion of German principalities, a fresh and powerful foe, the Mark of Brandenburg, appeared at the western gates of Poland. Founded in 1134, it had grown swiftly at the expense of the neighboring Western Slavs, and from the middle of the thirteenth century began to stretch a mailed fist towards Poland. Simultaneously there arose on Polish territory a second center of German might: the Order of the Teutonic Knights of the Cross.

The Teutonic Knights were invited to Poland in 1226 by

Conrad, duke of Mazovia, who, unable to secure his borders against attacks by the Prussians, or to convert them to Christianity, decided to entrust both these tasks to the Teutonic Order. He failed to foresee that the Order, instead of propagating the faith, would become a center of ruthless conquest, served by a policy of forgery, intrigue and violence.

In 1308 the forces of Brandenburg suddenly burst into East Pomerania, devastated the country and laid siege to Danzig. Unfortunately, Ladislas the Short was unable to aid the threatened Pomeranian capital, so with his knowledge the Castellan Bogusz turned for help to the Teutonic Knights.

This was what the Knights had been waiting for. They had long turned greedy eyes on the territory of Pomerania. Readily they agreed to help. They promised the deluded Bogusz to send troops to his aid in return for payment of the costs of maintaining a garrison in the castle at Danzig for one year. They omitted, however, to specify the amount.

Then, as the 15th century Polish chronicler Dlugosz nar-

rates: "... After such an agreement, confirmed by his solemn oath and in writing, the Prussian Master, Henry, full of cunning and deceit, sent troops under the pretence of supporting duke Ladislas the Short and expelling the margraves, but in actual fact with the aim of making himself master of the land of Pomerania, for which he had long been in burning lust..."

The aid given by the Teutonic Knights was effective, but after the repulse of the margraves:

"... The Teutonic garrison, which on its first entrance into

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A Prussian military band plays the forbidden Polish National Anthem, tricking Poles drafted into the German army to charge the French at the battle of Gravelotte, 1870. From the "Prussian Spirit" series. By Wojciech Kossak



Prussian policeman reads German expropriation decree to Polish peasants, 1907. From the "Prussian Spirit" series.

By Wojciech Kossak

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Danzig had been quite modest in size, few in numbers, and insignificant, had so increased and strengthened itself by a constant influx of men-at-arms and the continual manoeuvres of the Master, that the Crossed Knights, swollen by pride, started frequent quarrels with Bogusz, judge of Pomerania and castellan of Danzig; and instead of occupying themselves with the faithful and conscientious defense of the castle, reached such a pitch of conceit and such a degree of lawlessness that, being stronger and more numerous, they dragged off to prison the aforesaid Bogusz and the more eminent Pomeranian lords and knights, and had the hardihood to assume the mastery over the whole castle of Danzig . . ."

The criminal audacity of the Teutonic Knights went even further:

" . . . They laid siege to the city of Danzig on St. Dominic's day, when the country people usually resort to it in great numbers because of the fair which is celebrated on that day. The city held out for ten days or a fortnight, since the knights and nobles defended it valiantly; but at length it was betrayed by some of the citizens, of German origin, who had secretly come to an agreement with the Crossed Knights to surrender it; one of the gates was opened at night, and the enemy was let in and made themselves masters of the place. They actually murdered with all kinds of tortures all the Pomeranian knights, barons and nobles, and—what was still more shameful—all the common people; none of the Poles was let go, and neither rank nor sex nor age was spared, but they cut down without mercy alike youths and children and infants; in order that the report of such sternness might terrify all, and discourage other towns and fortified posts

from offering them resistance, and likewise that, after the extermination of the lords and nobles of the district it might be easier for them to seize the whole land. There have been but few examples in Poland of such a massacre; and but seldom has so much blood flowed at the taking of any fortified place. There was no kind of violence and cruelty which the hand of the enemy did not use to extirpate the Poles . . ."

When Ladislas the Short, alarmed by the news from Danzig, arrived in Pomerania, the Knights declared that they would not surrender their conquests until they had, according to the agreement, been repaid the costs of maintaining their garrison; and these costs they assessed at a total sum of a hundred thousand marks: more than the worth of all Pomerania. Ladislas indignantly appealed to the Apostolic See, but in the meantime the Knights continued their policy of violence and subjugated the whole of East Pomerania. In this way the Order took possession of the mouth of the Vistula, and pushing the borders of its own State to the West, brought them near to those of Germany.

The century-long struggle between Poland and the Teutonic Order was brought to a head in 1410. Ever since their occupation of Pomerania the Knights had turned their eyes on Lithuania as the next object of their expansion and, emphasizing the paganism of the country, proclaimed a new Crusade to attract the predatory knighthood of Germany. But in 1386 Poland and Lithuania had entered into a voluntary union, so that when the Teutonic Order declared war, it was against the combined forces of Poland and Lithuania. The allied armies inflicted a crushing defeat upon the Germans at Grunwald on July 15, 1410. Unfortunately, the vic-

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HITLER—LATEST IN LONG LINE OF TEUTONIC LIARS

"NO fresh European war would be capable of putting something better in the place of the present unsatisfactory conditions. On the contrary, the use of force, no matter by whom, in Europe, would be unable to create either from the political or from the economic aspect a more favorable situation than that which exists today."

Hitler's Speech to the Reichstag, May 17, 1933.

"Attached by a boundless love and loyalty to our own people, we respect also the national rights of other peoples in virtue of the same state of spirit, and from the bottom of our hearts we wish to live with them in peace and good friendship."

Hitler's Speech to the Reichstag, May 17, 1933.

"That is why we no longer recognize the principle of Germanization. The mentality of the last century, which thought it possible perhaps to make Germans of Poles and Frenchmen, is foreign to us. For this reason also we are passionately opposed to any converse tendency. We consider the nations round us as facts. The French, the Poles, etc., are our neighbors, and we know that no imaginable historical event could change this reality."

Hitler's Speech to the Reichstag, May 17, 1933.

"Germany is ready to take part in any solemn pact of non-aggression, for Germany has no thought of attack, but thinks solely of her security."

Hitler's Speech to the Reichstag, May 17, 1933.

"It is not our intention to interfere with the right of any nation, neither do we wish to restrict the vital possibilities of any people nor to enslave, oppress or subjugate them."

Hitler's Speech at Lemgo (Lippe Detmold), January 14, 1934.

"I have to repeat again and again: Germany wants to live in peace with all her neighbors, and she is prepared to agree with magnanimity to all that is necessary for this end . . ."

Interview with Hitler for the "Gazeta Polska," January 26, 1935.

"The racial idea of National Socialism and the racial conscience on which it is based do not in the least lead to contempt of other peoples, nor to considering them as inferior."

Hitler's Speech to the Reichstag, January 30, 1934.

" . . . In consequence, it leads necessarily to natural respect for the life and character of other peoples. Thus it removes the temptation in foreign policy to enslave foreign populations, to be able to dominate or even to assimilate them, to number them in one's own nation, compelling them to use a foreign language. This new idea obliges us to show a great and fanatical devotion to the life, and therefore to the honor and the liberty of our own people, and also to respect the honor and liberty of others."

Hitler's Speech to the Reichstag, January 30, 1934.

"The new German Empire presents itself to the peoples, animated by one sole desire: to live in peace and friendly relations with them."

Hitler's Speech to the Reichstag, January 30, 1934.

"No matter what divergences may exist between the two countries (Germany and Poland) in the future, to attempt to settle them by military action would have such mournful results that they could not be compensated by any gain whatsoever."

Hitler's Speech to the Reichstag, January 30, 1934.

"In consequence, the bourgeois belief in the possibility of 'Germanization' also goes by the board. That is why we have neither the desire nor the intention of robbing the elements of the foreign population of their national character, their language or their culture, in order to impose on them others which are German and foreign to them. We issue no instructions to Germanize names which are not German; on the contrary, we do not even wish to do so. Consequently, our racial

doctrine regards any war undertaken to subjugate and dominate a foreign people as an event which, sooner or later, will modify and weaken the internal structure of the victor State, and thus will ultimately make of it a vanquished State."

Hitler's Speech to the Reichstag, May 21, 1935.

"We no longer believe that in Europe, during an epoch dominated by the principle of nationality, it is still possible to deprive peoples, whose national character is firmly fixed, of their national character. During the last 150 years there have been enough examples to put us on our guard."

Hitler's Speech to the Reichstag, May 21, 1935.

"The blood which has been poured out on the continent of Europe in the past three centuries is in no way proportionate to the result of those events viewed from the national aspect. In the last resort, France has remained France, Germany has remained Germany, Poland has remained Poland, Italy has remained Italy, and so on. All the apparently profound political modifications which dynastic egotism, political passion and patriotic blindness have achieved at the cost of torrents of blood have only superficially affected the peoples, viewed nationally, and they have hardly modified their profoundly impressed ethnic frontiers. If these countries had devoted even a small part of their sacrifices to wiser ends, the success would certainly have been greater and more enduring."

Hitler's Speech to the Reichstag, May 21, 1935.

"If National-Socialist Germany desires peace, it is from a profound doctrinal conviction. She desires it also because she has understood the simple and elementary fact: no war could put an end to the general misery of Europe, it could only add to that misery . . ."

Hitler's Speech to the Reichstag, May 21, 1935.

"Germany has need of peace, Germany desires peace."

Hitler's Speech to the Reichstag, May 21, 1935.

"We have in Europe no territorial claims to put forward. Above all, we know that in Europe it is not possible to solve by war the tensions which result either from erroneous territorial provisions or from disproportion between the numbers of a population and the space which they occupy."

Hitler's Speech to the Reichstag, March 7, 1936.

On November 5, 1937, Hitler made the following statement to Mr. Lipski, then Polish Ambassador in Berlin:

"There would be no changes in the legal and political position in Danzig."

"The rights of the Polish population in Danzig would be respected."

"The rights of Poland in Danzig would not be impaired."

During the conversation Hitler twice emphatically remarked "Danzig is bound up with Poland."

On January 14, 1938, Hitler repeated the above declaration to Mr. Beck in the presence of the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs, Baron von Neurath, and the Polish Ambassador Mr. Lipski, stating that the declaration he had made on November 5, 1937, was binding upon him.

" . . . since the League of Nations finally gave up its continual attempts to unsettle Danzig and appointed a man of great personal attainments as the new commissioner, this most dangerous spot from the point of view of European peace has entirely lost its threatening character. The Polish State respects the national conditions in this State, and both the city of Danzig and Germany respect Polish rights."

Hitler's Speech to the Reichstag, February 20, 1938.

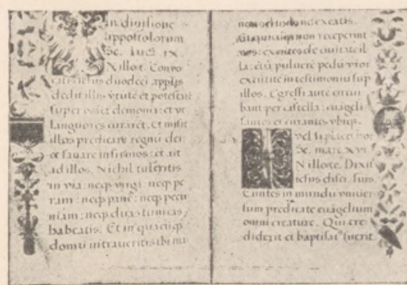
"The Polish State respects the national conditions in this State, and both the City of Danzig and Germany respect Polish rights."

Hitler's Speech to the Reichstag, February 20, 1938.

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Crushing Defeat of Germans at Grunwald, the 15th of July, 1410*

by BRIGADIER-GENERAL J. E. EDMONDS, C.B., C.M.G. (retired R.E.)



Description of Grunwald Battle in *Liber Evangeliorum* (1534).

LUDENDORFF in his "War Memories" says of the engagement between the German Eighth Army and Samsonov's Army in August 1914—

"On my proposal, the battle was called the battle of Tannenberg, as a reminder of the battle in which the Teutonic knights [*der*

deutsche Ritterorden, literally the German Knights Order] were defeated by the combined Polish and Lithuanian Armies."

Curiosity prompted me to seek out some information with regard to this earlier Tannenberg (Grunwald), of which I had never heard, but it was not until I came across "Histoire de l'Ordre Teutonique par un Chevalier de l'Ordre," published in Paris in four volumes in 1786, that a really intelligible account of the fighting, and the events leading to it, was obtained. The substance of it will now be given.

The Order of the Teutonic Knights was founded at Acre in 1190 A.D., and recruited from German knights. It apparently had its origin in the Hôpital des Allemands formed at Jerusalem in 1128 A.D. The distinctive dress of the Order was a white cloak with a black cross. This cross was centuries later adopted as part of the flag of Prussia and of the German Empire, and eventually, as is well known, became the distinctive mark on German aeroplanes.

Affairs in Palestine at the beginning of the thirteenth century were going ill and Herman de Salza, the ambitious Grand Master of the Order, and a figure in European politics, began, no doubt, to consider the possibility of some other sphere of activity and power. He obtained at any rate gifts of land on the frontier of the Empire from the Emperor and from the King of Hungary. In 1226, on the Duke of Masovia asking his assistance against the heathen Prussians, he received the Emperor's order to conquer Prussia.

Henceforth the operations of the Order were in that country, and its first foothold was secured by fortifying Marienburg (50 miles south-east of Dantzic). With the end of the Crusades, it became fashionable to make a tour to Prussia, and take part in the fighting against the heathen. To recall some instances:—of Chaucer's Knight it is said:—

"Ful ofte time he hadde the bord bygonne
Aboven all nacions in Pruce
In Lettowe hadde reyced and in Ruce."

The blind King of Bohemia, who fell at Crecy, lost his sight whilst campaigning with the Teutonic Knights. Gaston de Foix had his great adventure at Meaux as he was returning from a trip to Prussia.

Gradually by arms or by guile the Knights acquired East and West Prussia, Courland, Livonia and Esthonia. On a dark night, for instance, in 1308, Dantzic was stormed by surprise, and its inhabitants massacred. The Order made treaties with surrounding Powers and carried war as far east as Wilno. Its activities constantly brought it

*From the "Army Quarterly," Vol. VI, no. 2, July 1923. London.



Teutonic banner captured by Poles at Grunwald.

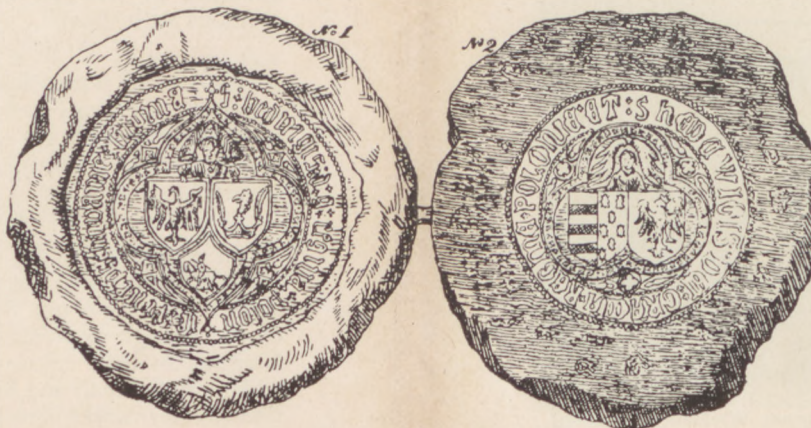
into antagonism with the Kingdom of Poland, and with this Power it finally came to blows over the succession of Pomerania and the rights to the possession of Samogitia, which lay on the coast, convenient for linking up the two main portions of the possessions of the Order.

At the instance of the King of Bohemia, the Order and Ladislas Jagellon, the then King of Poland, agreed to arbitration;

but, so far as can be gathered from the accounts of both sides, neither of them played fair. The Grand Master bribed the arbitrator,

the Marquis of Moravia, and the King of Poland gave two forms of powers to his representatives—full power to accept the decision

if it went in his favor, and limited powers requiring them to submit the case to him, before accepting, if it was unfavorable. The Poles found out in good time that the arbitrator was against them, and refused to accept the Marquis of Moravia's award. Thus, one of the earliest attempts at arbitration came to naught. Both adversaries, therefore, prepared for war and endeavored to



Seals of 15th century Polish Kings.



Battle of Grunwald. Drawing by Juliusz Kossak.

Collection of Warsaw National Museum



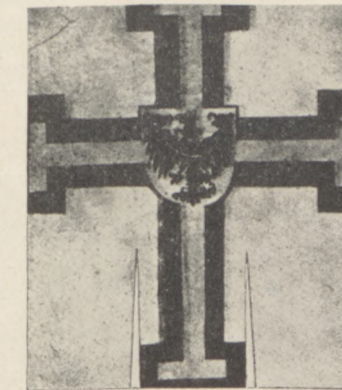
King Wladyslaw Jagiello. Woodcut from Marcin Bielski's *Chronicle* (16th century).

obtain assistance. The King of Poland gained as an ally the Grand Duke of Lithuania, Vitolde, besides engaging mercenary troops from Hungary, Silesia and Bohemia. The Order was supported by various German Dukes; but at the last moment the King of Hungary, on whom it greatly counted, stood neutral.

In June, 1410, the Poles and their Allies marched northward to Soldau, as did Samsonov in 1914, moving on Marienburg, the capital of the Order. The number of combatants on either side is placed by various historians as high as 160,000 for the Poles, and as low as 83,000 for the Knights. There seems no doubt that the latter were inferior in numbers, though superior in fighting quality, at any rate, to Vitolde's contingent. The Grand Master as the Poles approached on the 15th of July, drew up his forces on Tannenberg hill in three lines, with his flanks secured by ravines, so that the advantage of numbers could not be used to surround him. He flew as his banner a black cross, with a black eagle superimposed, on a white ground.

One must imagine, no doubt, a combat very much of the type of Agincourt, fought five years later:—The princes and the richest knights in plate armor, which was

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Banner of the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order, captured by Poles at Grunwald.

CRUSHING DEFEAT OF GERMANS AT GRUNWALD

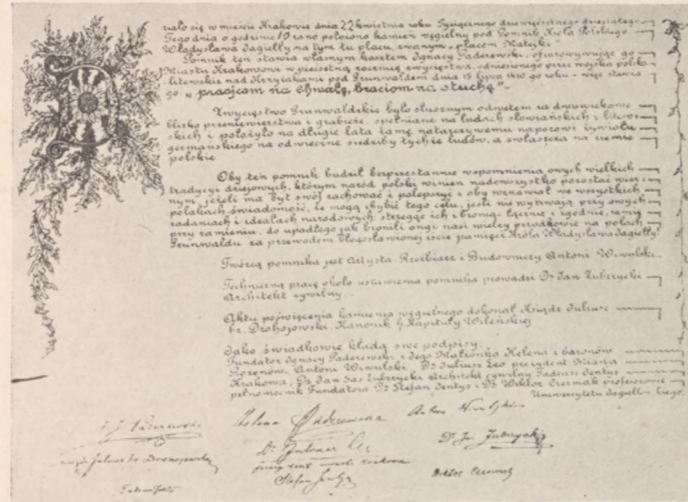


Grunwald monument in Cracow. Erected in 1910, destroyed by Germans in 1939.

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just coming in; the majority of men-at-arms in hauberks of chain mail, with possibly breastplates; the rest of the force in leather jackets and such second-hand armor as they could procure. Both sides had a few cannon, and after the opening discharge of these, under a cloud of arrows, the first line of the Order advanced, threw javelins, and closed.

The Lithuanians, who were on the right, appeared to have been driven back by this onset, and, to utilize the advantage gained at a weak spot, the favorite tactics of his Prussian successors 500 years later, the Grand Master shifted some "banners" there from his right. The reduction of force enabled the Poles, who were on this wing, to press the Knights, and their advantage was accentuated by a party of 800 Bohemian men-at-arms, who had at first stood aloof, charging in from the flank. Possibly this gave the Grand Master an idea of envelopment, most unusual in those days but again much favored 500 years later. He led his third line by a wide circuit, entailed by the ground it is said, to come down on the Polish left flank. The movement seems to have taken some time and was delayed by the Knights coming in sight of the King of Poland, who with an escort had by the wishes of his Council, stationed himself behind the battle. Mistrustful of the strength of this party, the Grand Master on seeing it cried "About" and partly retraced his steps. During his absence from the battle, affairs seemed to have gone ill, and as he drew near it again, he was himself killed, and "his fall was the signal of the complete defeat of what remained of the German Army." Forty thousand of the Order and their allies are said to have been slain, and most of the rest were taken prisoners.



Above is the official document of erection of the Grunwald monument in Cracow. A translation follows:

In the city of Cracow, on April 22nd of the year One Thousand Nine Hundred and Ten, at ten in the morning, this cornerstone was laid under the monument of King Wladyslaw Jagiello of Poland, in the square called Matejko Square.

This monument was erected by Ignacy Paderewski who presented it to the City of Cracow on the 500th anniversary of the victory won by the Polish-Lithuanian forces over the Teutonic Knights of the Cross at Grunwald on July 15, 1410. He erected it: "To the glory of our fathers and that the spirit of our brethren may never flag."

The victory at Grunwald was just retribution for almost two centuries of plunder and perfidy against the Slavonic and Lithuanian peoples. It put a stop for many years to come to the insistent pressure of the German hordes against the age-old sites of these peoples, especially against Polish lands.

May this monument always evoke the memory of the great historic traditions to which the Polish nation must ever remain faithful if it is to preserve and better its existence. May it arouse all Poles to the consciousness that they may fail in this, if they do not meet their national responsibilities and ideals; they must guard and defend those in unity and harmony, shoulder to shoulder, to the last man, as our great forefathers did on the field of Grunwald, under the command of King Wladyslaw Jagiello, of truly blessed memory.

This monument was designed by the sculptor and architect Antoni Winulski.

Technical work in connection with the erection of the monument was done by Dr. Jan Zubrzycki, Civil architect. The cornerstone was consecrated by the Rev. Juliusz Drohojowski, Canon of Wilno Cathedral.

Signed in witness thereto: Ignacy Paderewski; his wife Helena, née Rozen; Antoni Winulski; Dr. Juliusz Leo, Mayor of Cracow; Dr. Jan Sas Zubrzycki; Tadeusz Jentys; Professor Stefan Jentys; Professor Wiktor Czermak.



Grunwald memorial medal. Designed by Ignacy Wroblewski, executed by Michal Mankielewicz in Warsaw, 1910.

Letter From John Huss To Ladislas Jagiello, King of Poland, After The Battle of Grunwald, 1410.

REDEMPTION and Grace, Peace and Victory from God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ.

Most brilliant Prince and exalted King,

When Onesh of Huorka, Your Majesty's Envoy, brought definite news of the victory and most auspicious truce he made my heart rejoice in a way that neither my pen nor my tongue can adequately express. I know, however, Most Christian King, that not your exalted might but the Peace of the Highest humbled the enemies of Jesus Christ and Your Majesty's haughty foes and crushed Your rivals and removed them from the high throne of pride, and lifted up those who were lowly, so that both shivered before the eyes of the Almighty King and invoked His help in their need and knew that there was no victory except from Him whom no man can overthrow and who gives victory to the humble and at last lifts them up because of their humility. Thus he often taught, saying "For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." Both have been fulfilled. Where then are the twin swords of the enemy? Verily they have perished through those whom they tried to keep low. Where are the swords, the armored horses, the arms in which they placed their trust? Where their money and their treasure? Indeed all has disappeared. The arrogant had not believed that those were held poor who had no faith in Jesus Christ. Therefore, Most Noble Prince, considering this in the depth of your wisdom, hold on to humility because humility itself exalteth. Follow the King, the King of Peace, Jesus Christ. Make peace with the Most Noble Prince King Siegmund your goal and should he want something out of arrogance in which with the Lord's help he shall not succeed, yet may Your Majesty at all times keep to the right measure of humility so that no Christian blood be shed nor our souls placed in peril.

Meanwhile I, Jesus Christ's most unworthy servant together with all the people shall not cease to invoke the Grace of Almighty God for such harmony as the Lord will be pleased to vouchsafe. From the depths of my heart, however, O Noble King, I wish to see your Person with my own eyes and I hope the Lord Jesus will grant me this if He is willing to further Your Majesty's success or my preaching as it may please Him. God Almighty, help Thou His Majesty for the sake of Our Saviour, Who intercedeth between God and men, the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.



Battle of Grunwald. Woodcut from Vaclav Hajek's Kronika Ceska, Prague, 1541.

The Order never recovered from this disaster. It had eventually to cede West Prussia to Poland, and hold East Prussia as a fief from the Polish King. Dantzic again became free, and allied itself to Poland.



Teutonic banner captured by Poles at Grunwald.

"And so the war with the Teutons Finished by that battle of fame Won by Poland, Lithuania, Ruthenia Made immortal the Grunwald name.

Though its heroes will live in story THEY did not win the war. It was the united will of the nations From the Tatras to the Baltic shore." —Marian Hemar



Grunwald Diorama in Cracow. By Tadeusz Popiel and Rozwadowski.

Hero Of The Ghetto Awarded "Virtuti Militari"

by LUCIAN BLIT



ON February 18, 1944, the Polish Commander-in-Chief posthumously awarded the silver cross of the "Virtuti Militari" to Michal Klepfisz, a young Warsaw engineer who took a leading part in the Battle of the Warsaw Ghetto last April and died fighting at a machine-gun post.

This cross will never hang above his tomb, for like most soldiers of the Polish Under-

ground, his last resting place is not known. Fate had seemed to favor young Michal. Although neither he nor his family sought the limelight, I knew them all well. His father was a teacher in a Warsaw public school. His mother, Maria, was head mistress of another school and for years before the war, a director of the Association of Jewish Teachers. Prior to the rebirth of Poland, his parents devoted themselves to quiet but often dangerous work in the Socialist Movement directed against the Czarist Regime. In this simple, self-sacrificing atmosphere, young Michal grew up.

He was a brilliant student, graduating with honors just before Hitler's unprovoked aggression against Poland in 1939. I knew him as a student. Every Thursday we used to attend meetings of "Ogniwo," a student organization. He was no great speaker, but was always ready to give his time and energy whenever they were needed. He was level-headed and quite mature for so young a man. His friends were legion. He was a Jew and a Socialist, but spiritually had little in common with the Ghetto. He believed in a Poland without Ghettos. Also he had a deep sense of civic righteousness and an abiding faith in the common man.

In 1934 with fellow students of the Young Workers' Bund he set up a summer camp near Nowy Sacz on the banks of the Dunajec. In July, a flood swept through the region. From his camp young Klepfisz saw the swollen river sweeping down peasants' huts, bodies of cattle, dogs, and other farm animals. On the high banks of this, the loveliest of Polish rivers, people prayed for deliverance. Once part of a ruined hut swept by, with a tiny child in a cradle.

Young Klepfisz and his mother stood on the high bank, and without a word Michal jumped into the swift stream to rescue the child. That evening the Polish Radio mentioned Michal Klepfisz. The county administration thanked him for his brave deed. He was only twenty.

A second time his name was broadcast in May, 1943, when the Polish Underground radio station "Swit" reported the beginning of the Battle of Warsaw Ghetto on April 18, when the Jews, weak from starvation and mistreatment, armed themselves and attacked the better equipped enemy to sell their lives as dearly as possible rather than go willingly to be exterminated in the "death camps."

We now know that this epic struggle which left neither wounded nor prisoners, was planned months ahead by Jewish workers in German munition factories within the Ghetto. We know how afraid Hitler's hangmen were of these oppressed people, how they tried to confuse them with empty promises. The heroism of the Jewish fighters compels admiration. They were isolated with nothing but their own moral stamina and what help the Polish Underground could give from outside the Ghetto. They knew what the inevitable end would be, yet they never wavered. "Swit" named only one of these fighters, Michal Klepfisz, of the Jewish Workers Bund, the man who planned and led the attack.



Michal Klepfisz, hero of the Warsaw Ghetto Battle.

Full details of Michal Klepfisz's part in planning the second battle of Warsaw only reached London recently. It was he who organized the secret collection of arms, and the report emphasized that "without the aid of Michal Klepfisz, the uprising would have been impossible."

Michal Klepfisz was killed at the very outset of the seven-week battle, just when is not known. Some 6,000 soldiers, S.S. guards and Gestapo men fought on the German side, retreating at dusk and at first not daring to enter the Ghetto after dark. Against the Jews armed only with machine guns and handgrenades they had to use tanks, regular artillery and even airplanes. They burned down entire streets before they dared enter them.

As late as the beginning of June, more than six weeks after the first resistance the Battle of the Ghetto continued. When it ended, the Gestapo chief of Warsaw, von Stammer, was removed, because of the moral

defeat suffered by the Germans. He had full command of Hitler's forces in Warsaw and was held responsible for the death of the 1,000 Germans who fell during the battle. During those awful days, posters appeared on the streets of Warsaw bearing these words:

"We send brotherly greetings to the Jewish workers and assure them that their heroic deeds will never be forgotten. This great battle will become a legend of Fighting Poland.

After the war the banner that hung over the Ghetto will be carried alongside the Polish flag in a victorious parade down the streets of Warsaw. The souls of Michal Klepfisz and other heroes will be among us.

"It is a bitter thing to us that this has to be obtained at the expense of a corridor through German territory, but we realize what it means for the Poles."

Mr. Ward Price's interview with Hitler, March 14, 1938.

"As a strong State we are prepared at any time for a policy of understanding with our neighbors. We have no demands on them. All we want is peace."

Hitler's Speech at Saarbruecken, October 9, 1938.

A THOUSAND YEARS OF GERMAN AGGRESSION

(Continued from page 6)

tory was not fully exploited by Poland. The Teutonic Knights used every possible intrigue to rob Poland of the fruits of her victory and to strengthen their own tottering walls.

Strong opposition to the Order arose in Pomerania and Old Prussia, and soon took organized shape. In 1440 a kind of confederacy was founded, under the name of "Prussian Union," composed of towns and nobles without distinction of nationality, for the purpose of resisting the oppression of the Order. In 1453 a delegation from the Union presented itself before King Kazimierz at Cracow, begging him to incorporate in Poland the lands of Prussia, Pomerania, Chelmno and Michalow, and in support of its request described in detail the deeds of violence and crime committed by the Order. Thus we get a vivid picture of Teutonic administration and jurisdiction:

"The commanders and possessors of castles were not ashamed, without legal trial, without setting up a court, to take away our goods and property, to carry off wives under the eyes of their husbands and daughters in the presence of their parents to satisfy their wanton lusts. And instead of doing justice to those who dared complain of such wrongs, they beheaded them, or stripped them of their goods . . . Oppressed by such great misery, we have all made a Union among ourselves, in order that we might protect ourselves from so many sufferings."

In its petition to the King the delegation from the Union expressly called attention to his rights over the territories in question, and emphasized their own voluntary submission:

"If, then, Your Majesty, as all know and as the Master and the Order have themselves admitted in plain writings, is founder, endower and benefactor of this Order, and the lands of Pomerania, Chelmno and Michalow were torn from the Polish Kingdom by violence and excess of force, we approach Your Majesty with the prayer that You may deign to receive us as permanent subjects and homagers of Yourself and Your Kingdom, and incorporate us anew with the Polish Kingdom from which we have been torn. We submit ourselves voluntarily and with fealty to Your suzerainty and government . . . May You be moved by our prayers and tears . . ."

In the centuries that followed Polish-Teutonic relations did not improve. There were merely periods of greater or lesser hostility as the Hohenzollerns and later the Electors of Brandenburg strove to gain power at the expense of Poland.

When Poland's three autocratic neighbors committed that great crime of European history, the dismemberment and partition of Poland in the 18th century, the Germans used the methods that had brought success in their past aggressions. Already in 1722 King Frederick William I of Prussia instructed his successor:

"It is good to live in good friendship with the Republic of Poland and show it good confidence, and always to make a party for yourself in the Diet, so that you may be able to break the Diet when you find it in your interests to do so. You must work with all your might that a republic may remain and that there may not be a sovereign king, but always a free republic."

Thirty years later Frederick II wrote in his political testament: "Polish Prussia: This land it would be better not to conquer by force of arms, but to eat up in peace-time, like an artichoke, piece by piece . . . Poland's elective monarchy will provide the opportunity. Let Prussia sell its neutrality in the Polish disorders, at the price of one town after another, one district after another, with Danzig last of all, for as emporium of the grain trade it will cause the greatest outcry among the Poles."

Having annexed the Polish territory, Germany was determined to Germanize it: "We want to take German men from the Reich, as many as ever we can get and provide for, that

we may rid ourselves of the Polish stuff and also bring more Germans in," declared the King. When colonization by the Germans failed to bring results, other and more drastic means were tried. Polish schools were closed, all Poles who held any kind of public appointment were compelled to learn German, even prayer books were printed in German, the higher offices were filled with native Prussians, Poles were dispossessed of their property. The tradition of Frederick the Great was continued by the Iron Chancellor, Bismarck. "Beat the Poles till they lose their desire to live," he wrote to his sister in 1861. "Personally I sympathize with their position, but if we are to live, we have no other course than to extirpate them. The wolf is not responsible for God's having created him what he is."

Later, Bismarck expressed himself thus:

" . . . Every success of the Polish nationalist movement is a catastrophe for Prussia. We cannot wage war against that element according to the principles of civil justice, but according to the canons of war. The Polish spirit with all its particular manifestations should be regarded by us not from the point of view of impartial humanitarianism, but as an enemy . . . There is no possibility of peace between us and any attempt at the resurrection of Poland . . ."

This philosophy had the backing of the German nation. The great politician Arndt stated that ". . . the German who works for the restoration of Poland is either a fool, a madman, or a scoundrel . . ."

The great socialist leader, Engels, who had so much sympathy for the sufferings of mankind, did not hesitate to write in a letter to Marx in 1851:

" . . . We must take everything we can from the Poles in the West, occupy their fortresses, and particularly Poznan, with our army under pretext of defense, allow them to manage their own affairs, push them into the fire, eat up their country, feed them with visions of Riga and Odessa, and, should it prove possible to rouse Russia, ally ourselves with that country and compel the Poles to give way . . ."

When the civilized world was outraged by the beating of school-children in Wrzesnia for answering in Polish to their teachers' questions on religion, and messages of sympathy and encouragement poured in from all sides, the German Press foamed at the mouth. "It is a superstition," wrote one of its leading organs, "to claim that religion must be taught in Polish."

Even German scholars lent their support to the ruthless persecution of the Poles. This is what Professor Hasse wrote shortly before World War I:

"The Germanization of the eastern marches is the historical task of the German Reich . . . The aim of the Reich is to promote the prosperity exclusively of the German nation . . . The Poles must be Germanized not merely by means of the schools, for that does not lead to the goal, but by means of chicanery and the systematic crushing of those who resist . . ."

In spite of every legal device and persecution the Polish nation held out until the hour of historical justice struck in 1918, when freedom was restored to part of the Polish lands that Prussia had annexed. But in the twenty years of Polish independence Germany gave ample evidence of her insincerity toward the Poles. Germany's treatment of the large Polish minority in the Reich violated all the canons of international law, while the long list of broken German promises is too well-known to bear repetition. Now Poland's western lands have again fallen under the German yoke. Nevertheless although they are again suffering the most terrible oppression and persecution known to history, the Polish people refuse to be crushed. Today, as for a thousand years, they resist Teutonic might and carry on.

The next number of *The Polish Review* will appear on August 9th.

HITLER—LATEST IN LONG LINE OF TEUTONIC LIARS

(Continued from page 7)

"Relying on her friendships, Germany will not leave a stone unturned to save that ideal which provides the foundation for the task that lies ahead of us—peace."

Hitler's Speech to the Reichstag, February 20, 1938.

"I am a realist. Look at my relations with Poland. I am quite ready to admit that Poland—a country of 33,000,000 inhabitants—needs an outlet to the sea.

President Raczkiewicz on Anniversary of Sikorski's Death

"In the terrible trial that Poland is going through to an even greater extent than other nations, General Sikorski became the most prominent personality in our country's struggle for freedom. He trusted in Poland, in her victory, her great future. It was this trust that was the source of his untiring energy and which never allowed him to be downhearted, even at the most difficult times—and these were not infrequent.

"During the eight months which we may term 'the French period,' he strengthened the position of Poland among the Allied nations and reconstructed the Polish Army in France. As soon as we formed a Government of National Unity, he established its secret contact with the occupied homeland. A secret agency led by the representative of the Government was then set up in Poland and gradually developed into an efficient, strong organization, covering the whole Republic and concentrating around the Government Delegate, in harmonious cooperation, all the principal movements of Polish independent political thought.

"From the very first moment, General Sikorski set about organizing the secret, underground Home Army. By her Underground Army Poland gave an example unprecedented in the modern history of warfare. Sikorski flew to Britain to seek the aid of an ally whom no force could break, to rescue the Polish Army after the collapse of France, if only to be given the opportunity to struggle for the future of their country on hospitable British soil.

"General Sikorski's greatest political activity then began in Britain. He strengthened the bonds of friendship uniting Poland to Great Britain and the United States of America. He established close contact with the governments of the other occupied European countries, with whom, after a conference at St. James Palace, he initiated close cooperation. It was then that he suggested a plan for a Central European Federation with Poland and Czechoslovakia as a nucleus, as a factor of security and peace among the nations, after the war.

"Then the Germans attacked the Soviet Union. Sikorski, seeing the opportunity to find a basis for a lasting and friendly collaboration with our Eastern neighbor in the future and immediate cooperation in the struggle against the German aggressor, was the first to extend, on behalf of Poland, an invitation to reach an understanding, despite the events of 1939. The agreement with the Soviet Union concluded by General Sikorski made possible a substantial increase in the strength of the Polish Armed Forces and save from their plight those Poles who found themselves in distant regions of the Soviet Union. Unfortunately, the agreement did not yield the full results that General Sikorski had the right to hope for.

"A sincere democrat, he endeavored to base the activities of the government on the cooperation of the principal currents of political thought. His vision of the future Poland was of a well-governed state based on democratic ideals, in which the cooperation of all classes of citizens, equal in rights and obligations would lead to increasing prosperity of the masses and, for the State, to peaceful development in friendship with its neighbors and the whole world. I often collaborated with Sikorski during his twenty years of political life in independent Poland, but our collaboration during four years of the present war, in a period of common concerns and hopes created between us a relationship of close friendship. Any difference of opinion that we may have had was always bridged by our common disinterested attitude toward the Polish cause and our common unwavering faith in the future greatness of Poland. That is why his tragic death was to me not only a painful loss to Poland but also the loss of one very near to me."