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Poland: the only Ally to lose World War II

by David Kilber

Forgotten Holocaust: The Poles under German Occupation 1939-1944

by Richard C. Lukas

University Press of Kentucky, January 1986

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Poland—1939-1947

by John Coutouvidis and Jaime Reynolds

Holmes & Meier Publication, New York, 1986,

Leicester University Press, 1986

\$59.50 hardbound, 393 pages.

Poland has been much in the news recently as the impoverishment caused by combined looting of the Eastern European nations by the Soviet war mobilization, *perestroika*, and usurious Western financial centers have caused explosions of revolt in these captive nations approaching 1956 levels. Will the fraud of Gorbachov's *glasnost* now collapse as Soviet tanks again move in to crush the revolt? One certainly sees in Poland a spirit of freedom which has never been crushed by Russia over centuries of oppression or by the combined genocidal assaults of Hitler and Stalin during World War II.

Richard C. Lukas, in *Forgotten Holocaust*, amply proves his thesis that the Nazi holocaust in Poland in 1939 was aimed not only at the Jewish population, as much of current historiography would have one believe, but also at the nation of Poland as a whole. He also exposes as fraudulent the accu-

sations against the Polish exile government in London and the underground Home Army, of complicity in anti-Semitism. The Polish government, in fact, often acted alone against the murder of Polish Jews, while the United States and Britain did nothing.

What makes the book more useful in the current world crisis, however, is its documentation of the Soviet role in the "forgotten holocaust." The September 1939 Nazi invasion of Poland, followed two weeks later by the Soviet invasion from the East, crushed the Polish Army, divided Poland along the Hitler-Stalin Pact Curzon Line, and began a partnership to destroy the nation of Poland forever and exterminate its national leadership and culture. The author documents in part, but does not draw the conclusions, that this partnership to murder Poland was a fundamental shared interest of Russia and Nazi Germany which continued *even after* the German invasion of Russia in June 1941. This is not surprising, considering the common roots of the Nazi and Bolshevik movements, put into power to destroy Western Judeo-Christian civilization by barbaric Russian and Western oligarchies.

Poland had been, from the late 14th century through the Renaissance and after, a bastion in defense of Western Judeo-Christian culture against the barbarism from the East. As one of the most culturally advanced nations in the world, Poland had acted as an important arm of Cardinal Nicolaus of Cusa's grand design for Christianizing the East through the Council of Florence. The shared hatred for Poland by the Nazis and Bolsheviks was expressed in the satanic rage against Christianity and the Renaissance by the 19th-century idols of these totalitarian movements, Friedrich Nietzsche and Fyodor Dostoevsky. It was not just the geographical existence of

Poland which stood in the way of Hitler and Stalin, but the cultural existence of Poland which had to be razed to the ground, if either a Third Reich or a Muscovite "Third Rome" were to rule the world.

Murdering Poland

As Lukas relates, the Nazi policy of destroying Poland involved "eliminating anyone with even the least political and cultural prominence. Hitler gave the green light, placing responsibility for this campaign on Himmler's SS and police forces. The bespectacled Nazi leader told his officers, 'You should hear this but also forget it again—to shoot thousands of leading Poles.' Frank told his collaborators the same thing: 'The Führer told me: What we now recognize in Poland to be the elite must be liquidated; we must watch out for the seeds that begin to sprout again, so as to stamp them out again in good time.' " Testimony of the success of this campaign "is revealed by the fact that during the war Poland lost 45% of her physicians and dentists, 57% of her attorneys, more than 15% of her teachers, 40% of her professors, 30% of her technicians, and more than 18% of her clergy."

Meanwhile, the Soviets had captured 200,000 Polish troops during the Hitler-Stalin Pact invasion. From these, over 15,000 Polish officers and prominent citizens were separated out, put in special prison camps, then later, under orders from the Soviet gestapo (the NKVD), were shot in the head and thrown into mass graves. One of these graves was uncovered in April 1943 by the Germans at Katyn Forest. This was not a onetime incident, but a consistent policy of the Soviets throughout the war and after.

One of the most wrenching tragedies in *Forgotten Holocaust* is the chapter on the Warsaw uprising of the Polish underground army against the Nazis in late 1944. As the Red Army approached Warsaw in July 1944, rapidly advancing against the Germans, General Bor-Komorowski, commanding general of the Polish underground army (AK), gave the order to prepare to launch a military uprising against the Nazis which would liberate Warsaw as the Russians came in, thus establishing the authority of the Polish government over the Polish capital city. The AK rightly feared that if they did not move then, one occupation army would simply be replaced by another. Few Poles had any illusions about Soviet intentions.

The AK made its move on Aug. 1, and the Soviets stopped their advance. Lukas reports, "The German response to the long, successful Soviet drive was counterattack, resulting in a temporary setback for the Soviets near Warsaw. After that, the Soviet government continued to claim, unconvincingly, that it was unable to give any military aid to the Poles, and even refused to allow the United States to use Soviet airfields to aid the beleaguered Poles." The Soviets waited for two months, while one of the most heroic and desperate battles of World War II was fought from street to street and house to house. Himmler told the SS to annihilate the Poles and "erase"

Warsaw, and they attempted to accomplish that with incredible brutality. After it was certain that the AK would be smashed, the Soviets allowed Allied supply flights and even dropped some food themselves; but, these were insufficient and too late.

Finally, starved and exhausted, what was left of the Warsaw AK surrendered. Shortly thereafter, the Nazis were driven out by the Red Army, and Warsaw was "liberated." The doomed uprising, as Lukas relates, "destroyed the heart of the political and military institutions of the Polish underground, a goal that Stalin needed to accomplish before his armies occupied Warsaw and installed his own political protégés as the rulers of Poland."

Treachery

Another recent book on Poland during the war years is *Poland—1939-1947* by John Coutouvidis and Jaime Reynolds. Although the book attempts an apology for the treacherous sellout of Poland by Churchill and the British Foreign Office, enough of the truth seeps through to make a mockery of the authors' insipid and duped conclusions. Reflecting the attitudes of the Foreign Office, they tend to assert that the Polish exile government was "the only Ally to lose the Second World War" because the Poles, while passionate and dedicated to their nation, were fragmented and unrealistic, and could have played the "game" better. They state, "Apart perhaps from the brief period when Poland was Great Britain's major ally, from the defeat of France in mid-1940 until the German invasion of the Soviet Union in mid-1941, the London Poles' influence with the Allied Powers was not based on a true commonality of interests. Beyond the immediate overriding objective of defeating Hitler, the perceived interest of the Allied Powers lay in achieving a stable and peaceful postwar relationship with the U.S.S.R. rather than in meeting Poland's national aspirations. Poland's influence therefore depended critically on limiting her own claims to those that were consonant with the interests of the Western Powers, and exploiting to the full the debt of honour that Churchill in particular felt towards the Poles."

This statement, of course, has a big splinter of truth stuck in it. A lack of a "true commonality of interests" did exist as the Teheran, Yalta, and Potsdam conferences sold the nations of Eastern Europe into slavery. Better if the authors were to accuse the Poles of being "stupid and unrealistic" not to perceive the "Anglo-Soviet Trust" control of Churchill and Roosevelt and the treachery that would entail. But then the question is, what were the Poles to do about it even if they did perceive it? They had an ally in Charles de Gaulle, but he was also largely shut out of the decision-making.

The book does contain some interesting material that illustrates that treachery. From the beginning, Britain refused to carry out its treaty with Poland and attack the Nazis when Hitler invaded Poland. Then, when the Soviets also invaded, the cries from Britain were for Poland to accept the new

Soviet borders in the middle of Poland. "The answer to the question about the areas His Majesty's Government intended to recognize as the boundary of Poland was not then given. However, speaking on 26 October [1939], Halifax said that 'the Soviet frontier with Poland now coincided with the Curzon Line.' The Polish government were taken aback by this. They expected consultation as an ally and this must have been foremost in Sikorski's mind as he and Zaleski left for London on 14 November." The British had been insisting that the Soviet invasion of Poland did not violate Britain's

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treaty pledge to defend Poland from aggression. To add insult to injury, in the London *Sunday Express* of Sept. 24, 1939, Lloyd George "wrote an article under the heading 'What is Stalin up to?' in which he criticized the 'class-ridden Polish government' and praised the Soviet government for 'liberating their kinsmen from the Polish yoke.'" Then, "Similar statements reappeared in the press in mid-1941. Now the Polish government was also being portrayed in an unfavorable light over the issue of anti-Semitism."

An oft-repeated line one hears from conservatives is that Roosevelt sold out to the Russians and Churchill did everything he could to save Poland. *Poland—1939-1947* contains a number of interesting revelations that Churchill and the British were ready from the get-go to give Stalin everything he wanted. Churchill, for instance, wrote to Roosevelt on March 7, 1942, suggesting that the Atlantic Charter not apply to Poland. "The increasing gravity of the war has led me to feel that the principles of the Atlantic Charter ought not to be construed so as to deny Russia the frontiers she occupied when Germany attacked her. I hope therefore that you will be able to give us a free hand to sign the treaty which Stalin desires as soon as possible." Then later Churchill is quoted, "As regards the frontier problems, I must declare on behalf of the British Government that the sacrifices made by the Soviet Union in the course of the war against Germany, and its effort towards liberating Poland entitle it, in our opinion, to a Western frontier along the Curzon Line." So eastern

Poland was to go to the Soviets.

In 1943, the British had forced Poland to reenter into treaty talks with Stalin which they hoped would see Poland agree to the Curzon Line. The talks broke down when the Katyn Forest grave was discovered. Polish Prime Minister Sikorski asked the International Red Cross to investigate, and Stalin immediately severed relations. Several months later, in July, Sikorski died in a plane crash in Gibraltar when the controls of his plane jammed. The authors admit, "The matter is of sufficient notoriety to call for some comment here on the charge that the British were responsible for Sikorski's death." Was it done as a favor to Stalin? Impossible, they insist. Churchill "liked" Sikorski. Earlier in the book, the authors did include one interesting reference to a British Foreign Office letter dated July 30, 1940, mentioning Sikorski's close associate Kot saying that he was a lot of trouble and it might be best to have him "bumped off."

Apparently, Churchill did not like Sikorski's replacement, who kept insisting that the Poles would not agree to give Stalin the Polish territory he wanted. Finally "Churchill exploded: 'You are no government if you are incapable of taking any decision. You are a callous people who want to wreck Europe. I shall leave you to your own troubles. . . . I will have to call on the other Poles and this Lublin Government may function very well. It will be the Government.'" The Lublin Government was Stalin's hand-picked stooges established in January 1944, and accepted by Churchill and Roosevelt. The Polish government in London was left hanging, cut off from support and the quisling government the Nazis were never able to set up in Poland was now placed in power by the Red Army with the support of London and Washington. Thus, the end of the only Ally to lose the war.

Defeat the New Yalta

After all this the authors ask, "Why was the Government-in-Exile unable to salvage something from the difficult situation in which it found itself? And what was it that compelled it to intransigence so stubborn that it rendered itself politically impotent?" Of course, Poland was sold out from the start.

Poland—1939-1947, which is part of an Eastern European study series published by Leicester University in Great Britain, puts forward nothing useful in its conclusions. The question is not what was wrong with Poland, but what was the horrible defect in Allied strategic policy and thinking which turned over Poland and the other Eastern European nations to Russian slavery. We betrayed the heroic Polish people. Why? Useful conclusions need to be drawn, as the NATO alliance is about to betray what is left of Western civilization in a "New Yalta," unless a patriotic faction now emerges in the West with the power to prevent it. That requires a clear distinction between Churchill's geopolitics of empires to which Poland was sacrificed, and a statecraft based on a community of sovereign republics where a nation's freedom to progress is sacred and can never be sold.