

EDWARD J. ROZEK

Allied Wartime Diplomacy

The Provisional Government of Poland

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In 1939 Britain pledged assistance to Poland in the event of aggression. By our declaration of the 3rd of September we did associate ourselves with her cause, although we could afford no material support. This declaration of war was made when her western frontiers were overrun by Germany, but no similar declaration was made when on the 17th of September her eastern defenses were stormed by Russia. A delicate question. Our action, if hardly logical, was at least indicative of the realistic trends of British diplomatic machinations.

This first issue, virtually a test case, if not honorably settled will rout any hope we may have of a balance of power in Europe. It will constitute a flagrant disregard by the U.S.S.R. of all treaties ratified by her and a virtual admission by Britain of the U.S.S.R. as the supreme power in Europe. A sorry tribute to Britain and to her Empire, which stood alone during those dark and crucial days after the fall of France.

You raised the question in your speech of British approval of the Russo-Polish frontiers. But, surely the guarantee of these frontiers and our frequent re-affirmation of our intention to restore them was sufficient indication of our approval of them. The League of Nations set up after the last war was admittedly a failure, but what hope can we have of establishing any similar institution, the existence of which in some form will be essential to safeguard post-war Europe from the disasters of this first part of the twentieth century—if the U.S.S.R. assumes the role of European dictator even before the peace is won?

Let it not be recorded for posterity how the descendant of the glorious Marlborough was diverted from his path of honor and justice by the ruthless leader of a terror regime, and we can hardly consider that of the Soviet as other than terrorist, when to maintain order it required to detain in captivity twenty millions of its one hundred and eighty millions subjects.

Let it not be said of the one-time invincible Churchill: "Were it not better had he gone down in his glory at Teheran before the pass was sold, rather than live to associate his name and that of the Empire with such ignominy and shame."

(Signed) E. J. CAMBELL.⁴⁵

As the Polish press in England indicated, undoubtedly many Poles would have identified themselves with the spirit and the wording of this communication.

It was rather difficult, however, to sway Churchill from a policy, once he had adopted it. And apparently Churchill was determined to carry out his Teheran commitments loyally.

On February 29, 1944 the British Ministry of Information sent the following note to the higher British clergy and to the BBC.

Sir,

I am directed by the Ministry to send you the following circular letter: It is often the duty of the good citizens and of the pious Christians to turn a blind eye on the peculiarities of those associated with us.

But the time comes when such peculiarities, while still denied in public, must be taken into account when action by us is called for.

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We know the methods of rule employed by the Bolshevik dictator in Russia itself from, for example, the writing and speeches of the Prime Minister himself during the last twenty years. We know how the Red Army behaved in Poland in 1920 and in Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Galicia, and Bessarabia only recently.

We must, therefore, take into account how the Red Army will certainly behave when it overruns Central Europe. Unless precautions are taken, the obviously inevitable horrors which will result will throw an undue strain on public opinion in this country.

We cannot reform the Bolsheviks but we can do our best to save them—and ourselves—from the consequences of their acts. The disclosures of the past quarter of a century will render mere denials unconvincing. The only alternative to denial is to distract public attention from the whole subject.

Experience has shown that the best distraction is atrocity propaganda directed against the enemy. Unfortunately the public is no longer so susceptible as in the days of the "Corpse Factory," the "Mutilated Belgian Babies," and the "Crucified Canadians."

Your cooperation is therefore earnestly sought to distract public attention from the doings of the Red Army by your wholehearted support of various charges against the Germans and Japanese which have been and will be put into circulation by the Ministry.

Your expression of belief in such may convince others.

I am, Sir, Your obedient servant,

(Signed) H. HEWET, ASSISTANT SECRETARY

The Ministry can enter into no correspondence of any kind with regard to this communication which should only be disclosed to responsible persons.⁴⁶

It is unknown how many recipients of this communication complied with the above instructions.

On March 9, 1944 Mr. McLaren, the Head of the Political Desk of the Political Intelligence Department in the British Foreign Office, informed Mr. J. Zaranski, the counselor to the Polish Prime Minister, that he had received a specific order to prepare a series of broadcasts to Poland in Polish and other languages in order to prepare Polish public opinion about the necessity of giving up a considerable part of its eastern territories without mentioning, for the time being, the Curzon Line. These broadcasts were almost ready in the BBC, and they would go on the air without any delay. Upon being informed of this proposal, Mikołajczyk categorically rejected the plan, as a result of which the Foreign Office temporarily abandoned it.⁴⁷

At the same time, the democratic organizations which were fighting the Nazis and suddenly were faced with a new terror, sent an urgent appeal to the peoples of the world through their Government in London, asking for help and implying that they had lost faith in Western leaders.