

Churchill's portraits were thrown out from their tents and huts, and a feeling of despair besieged the people.⁴³

On February 24, 1944 the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Romer, saw Foreign Minister Eden to express the sorrow of the Polish Government at Churchill's speech in the House of Commons on February 22, in which he supported Soviet territorial demands against Poland. Romer asked why Churchill declined the serious pleas of the Polish Government to omit the Polish question in that speech if he could say nothing favorable about Poland. Eden replied that Churchill's speech was the expression of His Majesty's Government's policy for the information of the British public. Romer interrupted to say that it was a proclamation which would attract the attention of the world and would be utilized by the Soviet Union.

Eden observed that Churchill was anxious to create the best possible impression in Moscow and to suggest the best solution of the Soviet-Polish dispute.

Romer replied that Churchill's tactics would prove disappointing because they would not persuade the Soviets to be compromising, but instead would stiffen them in their determination to get what they wanted. He pointed out that the reaction of the Soviet press to Churchill's speech was such that they greeted it warmly as a symbol of British-Soviet solidarity and expressed the hope that this solidarity would have influence on the Polish Government.

Eden suggested that no importance should be attached to the reaction of the Soviet press. Then Eden added that Churchill's speech was carefully prepared and approved by the whole Cabinet. "Poles have to control their emotions and learn how to subordinate their interests to the common fundamental objectives."

Romer described the difficulties in which the Polish Government found itself after that speech and recalled the various moves made by the Poles to reach a compromise solution with the Soviets, who were adamant in their determination to get the full acceptance of their demands.

Eden remained unmoved by these arguments.⁴⁴

Many British citizens were also reacting vigorously to Churchill's speech. One of the typical letters sent to Churchill read as follows:

I read with profound regret your address to the House incorporating your statement as to the possible solution of the Russo-Polish frontier dispute. Stricken Europe is looking to the United Nations for the liberation of her territories and the restoration of her international status. A mere switch of power from Nazi to Soviet could hardly satisfy a country such as Poland, who has staked all in her gallant stand against the forces of evil, converging from both East and West.

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.

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, Mikolajczyk 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.

To the Peoples of the World:

On the eve of the decisive blow of the Allied forces, and of their conclusive battles with the Germans in which, on the side of our Western Allies, Polish forces in Poland and abroad will also play their part, the world should realize the situation of the Polish nation, as it is after four years of German occupation, the part it has been playing in this war, its moral strength, and its aims and its hopes.

We opposed the Hitlerite invader, fully aware of the heavy responsibilities that this would entail, and we do not ask for sympathy when we state the price we paid for our love of freedom. During this war some five million Polish citizens were killed in Poland by the enemy. About three millions were deported for slavery to the East or West. Hundreds of thousands were put into prison or concentration camps where the majority of them have perished already. Many thousands were shot or tortured to death in Gestapo torture chambers. Hundreds of villages were burnt down and razed to the ground, and their inhabitants massacred. There is not one family which could not mourn the death of one of its members; there is not one home that could not grieve over some next of kin.

We have paid this heavy price because we remained true to our country and to the terms of our alliance, and would not accept any form of collaboration with the invader. We remained Poles, citizens of our country, loyal to our Government which, though in exile, has maintained its bonds with the home country. Here, in Poland, we have rebuilt underground all the forms of our public life: an Executive of our Government, an Underground Army, Civil Resistance, a representative body of our political parties, numerous clandestine newspapers, and a secret cultural life. The Home Political Representation, formed a couple of years ago, is composed of the representatives of four main political parties, representing all the strata of society and all the principal trends of Polish political thought, acting on the basis of the sovereignty of the Polish State.

From the very beginning the invaders met these manifestations of our independent political existence and everywhere strove to break us by cruel terroristic methods. We return blow for blow. Though disarmed since the end of 1939, we do everything possible to make the Polish soil insecure for the enemy. Nazi tyrants fall by the hand of the Polish Underground, trains are blown up, detachments of the S.S. and other police formations are being destroyed.

A stubborn, constant, unwavering struggle against the Germans is taking place on the Polish soil. In order to keep down the country, the enemy has to maintain in Poland thousands of soldiers, policemen, and administrative officials necessary for the Eastern Front. This struggle is uneven. The nation, almost defenseless, opposes an enemy armed to the teeth. In consequence, over 14% of the Polish population perished in this struggle. This sacrifice is all the greater when we consider the fact that the enemy persecutes the most active and valuable elements of the nation. Scientists, clergymen, artists, teachers, technicians, officers, intellectual workers of all kinds and the great mass of socially and politically active peasants and workers are the principal victims of the invader. The enemy deals his blows in order to ensure that their consequences will be felt for many years. He applies everywhere the terrible principle of collective responsi-