

# **The Moscow Trial**

**of the 16 Polish Leaders**

**by unknown Author**

**Published:**

\*\*\* \*\*

## **Table of Contents**

**LEADERS ARRESTED BY SUBTERFUGE  
FULL TEXT OF COLONEL PIMENOV'S LETTER  
THE POLISH GOVERNMENT'S DECLARATION  
WHO ARE THE ARRESTED LEADERS?  
THE ORGANISATION OF POLITICAL LIFE IN THE POLISH  
UNDERGROUND STATE  
THE UNDERGROUND COALITION AND UNDERGROUND  
PARLIAMENT  
THE UNDERGROUND ARMY AND THE UNDERGROUND WAR**

**HELP FOR THE RED ARMY  
HELP TO THE ALLIES  
THE DEFENDANT UNDERGROUND POLAND  
THE AIM OF THE TRIAL  
THE INDICTMENT—EVIDENCE OF FALSIFIED DOCUMENTS  
100 OR 600 SOVIET SOLDIERS KILLED?  
DID THE ORGANISATION „NIE“ EVER EXIST?  
THERE WERE NO TERRORISTIC DIRECTIVES  
„COLLABORATION WITH THE GERMANS“ MANUFACTURED IN  
MOSCOW  
EAST AND WEST OF THE CURZON LINE  
PROCEEDINGS BEFORE THE COURT—TWO DAYS WERE ENOUGH  
NO WITNESSES FOR THE DEFENCE ALLOWED  
DID THE ACCUSED PLEAD GUILTY?  
LACK OF EVIDENCE  
FALSEHOODS OF THE PROSECUTION  
POLAND’S GEOGRAPHICAL POSITION—A „PROOF“ OF  
COLLABORATION WITH GERMANY  
THE ATMOSPHERE DURING THE TRIAL  
THE LAST WORD OF THE ACCUSED  
THE VERDICT  
THE „HISTORIC“ VIEW OF THE TRIAL**



The British Delegation to the San Francisco Conference of the United Nations issued, on May 5<sup>th</sup>, 1945, the following official communiqué:

*„The British and the U.S.A. Governments have been making persistent inquiries of the Soviet Government about a group of prominent Polish democratic leaders who were reported to have met the Soviet military authorities in Poland for discussion at the end of March.*

*"They have now been officially informed by M. Molotov on behalf of his Government that these leaders have been arrested on a charge of diversionary activities against the Red Army.*

*„Mr. Eden and Mr. Stettinius immediately expressed grave concern to M. Molotov at receiving this most disquieting information after so long a delay, and asked him to obtain a full explanation concerning the arrest of the Polish leaders, a complete list of their names, and news of their present.*

*„The Foreign Secretary reported 'this most serious development to His Majesty's Government and has informed M. Molotov that meanwhile he cannot continue discussions on the Polish issue“*

A similar communiqué was issued by the United States Delegation.

## LEADERS ARRESTED BY SUBTERFUGE

According to reliable information the details and development of the events were as follows:

During the second half of February, 1945, the Polish Government in London disclosed to the British and American Governments the names and whereabouts of the Polish Vice-Premier and Governments Delegate for the Homeland and of the three members of the Government forming the Home Council of Ministers, for transmission to the Soviet Government. The Governments of Great Britain and U.S.A., in turn passed on the information to the Soviet Government, at the same time giving an assurance that they would do everything to ensure the safety of the Polish leaders.

At the end of February the Polish Vice-Premier and the last Commander of the disbanded Home Army received, through indirect channels, an invitation from Colonel Pimenov, of the Soviet N.K.V.D., to attend a conference with Colonel-General Ivanov, a representative of the High Command of the First White-Ruthenian Front. This invitation was confirmed in writing on March 10<sup>th</sup> and the letter containing it stressed „the absolute necessity and the exceptional importance of that meeting.“ In the final passage of his letter Col. Pimenov gave **the word of honour of a Soviet Officer guaranteeing the personal safety of the invited leaders.**

A similar invitation to a conference was addressed by Col. Pimenov to the leaders of the Polish political parties. It transpired later that these invitations were issued without the knowledge of the British and American Ambassadors who, in accordance with the Crimea declaration, together with M. Molotov, formed a Commission of Three in Moscow, to consult with Polish democratic leaders on the formation of a new Polish Government.

In the course of the introductory conversations with the Vice-Premier of the Polish Government it was declared by the Soviet side that among the political aims of the meeting were to be „**the clarification of the atmosphere and the coming into the open of the democratic Polish parties in order that they may take part in the general current of the democratic forces of independent Poland.**“ When Vice-Premier Jankowski asked Colonel Pimenov where lay the boundary line between the competence of the Lublin Committee on the one hand and the Red Army on the other, he received the reply **that the Committee must comply with the directions it received from the Command of the First White-Ruthenian front, which it must consider as binding.**

After the Polish representatives had expressed a desire to hold direct consultations with the Polish Government and Polish political circles in London, Col. Pimenov announced, on March 20<sup>th</sup> that the Soviet authorities had agreed to permit twelve of the Polish leaders to travel by air to London. The delegates were then to return to Poland for further conversations.

In accordance with the Soviet invitation the Vice-Premier Jankowski, the Chairman of the Council of National Unity (the Underground Polish Parliament) Puzak, and the last Commander of the Home Army, Gen. Okulicki, presented themselves at Gen. Ivanov's Headquarters on March 27<sup>th</sup>. The following day the three members of the Polish Government forming the Home Council of

Ministers and eight representatives of the main Polish political parties accompanied by an interpreter, also went to see Gen. Ivanov. None of these men ever returned from the conference with Gen. Ivanov and nothing further was heard from them.

It was only after the British and American communiques announcing the interruption of the Polish negotiations, that the official Soviet Tass agency issued a statement concerning the missing leaders. In this statement, published on May 5<sup>th</sup>, the Agency revealed that 16 Polish leaders had been arrested and taken to Moscow on charges of „**preparing diversionary acts against the Red Army, and possessing illegal wireless transmitters in the rear of the Soviet Armies, which is contrary to the law.**“ As a result of these activities „**more than 100 officers and men of the Red Army lost their lives.**“ The Soviet communique alleged that the arrested group of political leaders was led by Gen. Okulicki. This former Commander of the disbanded Home Army had little to do with politics. The real heads of the delegation were Vice-Premier Jankowski and the Chairman of the Underground Parliament, Puzak. The communique failed to explain why, for five whole weeks, while the British and American Governments were repeatedly inquiring about the fate of the missing Polish leaders, the Soviet Government appeared unaware of the acts of sabotage of which these men were to be accused. On the contrary, during that period pro-Soviet circles were either hinting at negotiations or denying that Moscow knew anything of the Polish leaders.

The preliminary negotiations between the representatives of the Red Army and the Polish leaders are in complete contradiction of the Soviet accusations. It was only five weeks later that the groundless charges were framed, and a new version of the Moscow Trials promised.

A proof of the manner of these arrests can be found in the last cable sent by Gen. Okulicki to the Polish Government in London dated March 25<sup>th</sup>, 1945, i.e., two days before he was arrested. It reads as follows:

„(1) *The Governments Delegate and the political parties belonging to the Council of National Unity have already committed themselves vis-a-vis 'the Soviet military authorities to come into the open and to legalise their activities. On March 27<sup>th</sup> a conference is to take place on these matters between Col.-Gen. Ivanov and the Government's Delegate, the Chairman of the Council of National Unity and representatives of political parties.*

„(2) *In consequence of general and categorical demands by the Soviet side I have to take part in this conference.*

„(3) *The Russians have promised to enable the Governments Delegate and two representatives of each of the political parties to get directly in touch with you. On March 29<sup>th</sup> they are to furnish us with an airplane. I may be able to come with them.*

„*We have guaranteed to the Russians to keep the negotiations and the air journey secret.*“

The Soviet Authorities failed to keep their promise to place an airplane at the disposal of the Polish leaders, and arrested them when they presented themselves at Gen. Ivanov's Headquarters.

The so-called Lublin Government has played a miserable role in this tragic affair. It was only from abroad that the news of the arrests reached them.

Before M. Molotov's statement in San Francisco, M. M. Bierut and Osobka-Morawski, at a press conference in Moscow, flatly denied even the very fact of negotiations and arrests of the Polish leaders, just as they denied the outbreak of the Warsaw Rising in 1944. Following upon the Tass communique, the News Agency of the Lublin Group issued a communique announcing for the first time that, on the basis of an agreement between the Lublin Committee and Moscow, signed on July 26<sup>th</sup>, 1944, the Soviet Authorities were entitled to arrest Poles in Poland even without the formal consent of the Lublin Committee. The passage in the Lublin communique demanding that, after the termination of the Moscow trial, the 16 leaders should be brought on a new trial before Lublin courts for „**high treason against the Polish Nation**“ requires no comment.

### **FULL TEXT OF COLONEL PIMENOV'S LETTER**

**To the Governments Delegate in Poland, M. Jankowski**

**My good intentions and modest aims which I hope will meet with your full support and appreciation are limited to one thing only—namely, to help you to meet in the next few days the representative of the High Command of the First White-Ruthenian Front, Col.-Gen. Ivanov. I am, of course, aware, of the difficulties of this action. But realising its absolute necessity and its immense importance—I cannot show this at length in this short letter—I am of opinion that this meeting between you and Col.-Gen. Ivanov may, and, of course, should, settle matters which it is altogether doubtful can be settled quickly in any other way. Mutual comprehension and confidence will allow the settling of very important problems and will prevent their becoming more acute.**

**I also request M. Jankowski to excuse the difficulties in bringing about this meeting, as, indeed, the dates fixed for this purpose with Col.-Gen. Ivanov have long since passed. But I do hope that Col.-Gen. Ivanov will be courteous and will take into consideration my arguments for holding this meeting and that it will take place in the next few days. For my part, AS AN OFFICER OF THE RED ARMY WHO HAS BEEN ENTRUSTED WITH SUCH A GREATLY IMPORTANT MISSION, I GUARANTEE TO YOU, UNDER MY WORD AS AN OFFICER, THAT FROM THAT MOMENT YOUR FATE WILL BE IN MY HANDS AND THAT AFTER YOUR ARRIVAL AT OUR QUARTERS YOU WILL BE ABSOLUTELY SAFE.**

**I reckon on our early meeting and I send you my regards. Please inform me immediately of your decision.**

**On Order,  
PIMENOV, Colonel of the Guards,  
Pruszkow, March 6<sup>th</sup>, 1945.**

A similar letter was sent by Colonel Pimenov to Gen. Okulicki.

### **THE POLISH GOVERNMENT'S DECLARATION**

The Polish Government in London issued the following declaration after the arrest of the Polish leaders:

„(1) During the German occupation the arrested leaders stood at the head of the Polish Underground Movement. They were responsible for the underground administration existing in Poland and they directed the whole of the armed activities of the Polish nation against the Germans. They represented all Polish political parties and commanded the full obedience of the whole nation, which executed their orders, issued in close consultation with the Polish Government in London. On their orders the Polish nation made great and bloody sacrifices, the greatest of them the Warsaw Rising.

„(2) The accusation of the arrested leaders of committing acts of sabotage against Russian Armed Forces is completely groundless. The Home Army in Poland no longer exists. It was dissolved on January 19<sup>th</sup>, 1945, by the Polish Government in London acting on the suggestion of Gen. Okulicki and Cabinet Ministers in Poland. The decision was announced publicly. It will be recalled that, during the Warsaw Rising, the Soviet Authorities made serious accusations against the Home Army and threatened with court-martial Gen. Bor, then its Commander and leader of the Warsaw Rising.

„(3) The Polish leaders were arrested on the 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> of March. In spite of many indications of the disquiet of public opinion throughout the world, despite press articles, questions in the House of Commons and inquiries by the British and American Governments, it was only on May 5<sup>th</sup> that the story of the arrests was made public. Until that time the Soviet Government kept it secret and even denied it.

„(4) In spite of Soviet denials, the arrests and even executions of Polish political and social leaders continue ...”

## **WHO ARE THE ARRESTED LEADERS?**

The arrested Polish leaders represent the main Polish political parties.

(1) **JAN JANKOWSKI** (pseudonym Sobolewski), Vice-Premier of the Polish Government and its Delegate in the Homeland is a distinguished representative of the National Workers' Party which later merged with the Christian Democrats adopting the name of the (Christian) Labour Party. Originally he was in charge of the Department of Labour and Social Welfare of the Polish Underground Administration. He was appointed Government's Delegate two years ago, after the Germans had arrested his predecessor. He was the third person to hold that office but the only one to survive the German occupation. He was awarded the Virtuti Militari Cross, the highest Polish military decoration, for bravery during the Warsaw Rising.

(2) **KAZIMIERZ PUZAK** is one of the most outstanding leaders of the Polish Socialist Party. During the five and half years of German occupation Puzak was the life and soul of the Polish Underground Movement. Under his leadership the Socialist Movement, thanks to its old tradition and experience, became the vanguard of the Polish Resistance. During his whole life, Puzak has fought for freedom. Even before the last war he was sentenced to eight years hard labour for revolutionary activities by Czarist Russia. Puzak was put in irons and thus

spent seven years in solitary confinement in the fortress prison of Schlisselburg which was notorious as the most terrible Tsarist prison. Released by the Russian Revolution in March, 1917, he returned to Poland, where he became a leading organiser of the Polish Socialist Party. Since 1921 he has been Secretary-General of the National Executive Committee of the Party. After Pilsudski's coup d'état Puzak fought the Government relentlessly and opposed Beck's policy. After the outbreak of war he took a leading part in the heroic defence of Warsaw in September, 1939. When the Council of National Unity, the Underground Parliament of Poland representing the main political parties was formed, Puzak was elected chairman. He played a leading part in the epic 63 days' Warsaw Rising in August and September, 1944.

(3) **ANTONI PAJDAK** (pseudonym Traugutt) is a representative of the Polish Socialist Party. A barrister by profession, he was particularly interested in local government, and was elected Deputy Mayor of Cracow. In September, 1939, he fought against the Germans in the ranks of the Polish Army. Having escaped from German hands he was active in the Underground Socialist Movement, which he also represented as a member of the Underground Government of Poland.

(4) **ADAM BIEN** (pseudonym Walkowicz) is a representative of the Peasant Party and also a member of the Underground Government. Before the war he was a judge in Warsaw.

(5) **STANISLAW JASIUKOWICZ** (pseudonym Opolski) is another member of the Government residing in Poland. He is a member of the Executive of the National Party and a former Member of Parliament.

(6) **GENERAL LEOPOLD OKULICKI** was the last Commander of the disbanded Home Army. He is a professional soldier. During the German invasion in September, 1939, he was in Lwow. After the entry of the Soviet forces into the city he was arrested and deported to Russia. Released in 1941, he became the Chief of Staff of the Polish Army in Russia. He left that country at the same time as the Polish forces. At the beginning of 1944 he parachuted into Poland where he joined the Staff of General Bor, and later took part in the Warsaw Rising. After the capture of General Bor by the Germans, Gen. Okulicki took over the command of the Home Army, but remained at this post for only a short time until on January 19<sup>th</sup>, 1945, the Polish Government was compelled to disband the Home Army.

(7) **KAZIMIERZ BAGINSKI** was the Secretary-General of the Peasant Party. He is a leading Polish Democrat and parliamentarian. Together with other opposition leaders he was imprisoned by Marshal Pilsudski in the fortress of Brest Litovsk. After his release he went, in 1933, to Czechoslovakia together with Wincenty Witos and Wladyslaw Kiernik, but returned to Poland shortly before the outbreak of war. He was Deputy-Chairman of the Council of National Unity.

(8) **STANISLAW MIERZWA** is a member of the National Executive of the Peasant Party and a well-known leader of the peasant youth organisation "Wici."

(9) **JOZEF CHACINSKI**, a known parliamentarian, was the Chairman of the Christian Democratic Party and is one of the leaders of the Christian Labour Party.

(10) **FRANCISZEK URBANSKI**, a representative of the Christian Labour Party, is the Secretary-General of the Christian Trade Union of Farm Labourers.

- (11) **KAZIMIERZ KOBYLANSKI**, a representative of the National Party, is a former Senator and a well-known journalist.
- (12) **ZBIGNIEW STYPULKOWSKI**, is a representative of the National Party, a former Member of Parliament.
- (13) **EUGENIUSZ CZARNOWSKI** is a representative of the Democratic Party.
- (14) **STANISLAW MICHALOWSKI** is a representative of the Democratic Party and a former Member of Parliament.
- (15) **ALEKSANDER ZWIERZYNSKI**, former Member of Parliament, one of the leaders of the National Party and deputy-chairman of the Council of National Unity.
- (16) **JOZEF STEMLER-DABSKI** is an interpreter and does not represent any political party.

Speaking at a press conference at San Francisco on May 10th, the British Foreign Secretary, Mr. Anthony Eden, described the arrested Polish leaders in the following words:

„I must emphasise that the list of 16 Poles reported as having disappeared, and about whom we inquired of the Soviet Government more than a month ago, included **nearly all the leading figures of the Polish underground movement.**

„**These men maintained an excellent record of resistance against the Germans throughout the war.**

„Four have held office for some time in Poland as Ministers of the Polish Government—Ministers of the Sikorski and Mikolajczyk Government as well as the present one.

„One of them was Chairman of the Underground National Council, and the rest were prominent leaders of the principal democratic parties in Poland.

„**Most of these men were just the type who should, in our view, have been consulted about the new National Government in Poland, if such a Government was to be truly representative of Polish democratic political life, in accordance with the Crimea decision.**“

## **THE ORGANISATION OF POLITICAL LIFE IN THE POLISH UNDERGROUND STATE**

The Polish Underground Movement was the biggest and best organised in the whole of Europe. Under the German occupation there existed in Poland an underground State with its own Government and Parliament, with a considerable Army, its own administrative machinery and courts of justice, and the largest clandestine press of all the occupied countries.

The underground administration was headed by the Council of Ministers in the Homeland under the chairmanship of the Vice-Premier and Government's Delegate. Its members represented the main Polish political parties. This Council of Ministers was a part of the Government in London and had full powers to act for it in all matters concerning internal administration. The Government Delegated Office was divided into departments corresponding to Ministries in London, and there was a nation-wide network of branch offices



with more than 30,000 officials, which is quite unique in an underground administration.

This machinery was quite ready to take over the administration of the country at the moment of the expulsion of the Germans, thus avoiding chaos. In each province, district and locality there was a complete administrative network ready to go into action. Soviet authorities however imposed on Poland the Lublin regime and imported leaders from Russia, recruiting them mostly from among people who appear to have become aware of the German occupation of Poland only on June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1941, and whose main virtue was complete obedience towards Russia. The Polish underground administration was liquidated, often not without bloodshed. The underground Mayor of Minsk Mazowiecki, was for instance, murdered together with six other leaders during the night of 2<sup>nd</sup>—3<sup>rd</sup> March, 1945, and their bodies were left lying in the street.

## **THE UNDERGROUND COALITION AND UNDERGROUND PARLIAMENT**

Political life in Poland was led by coalition of the four main parties—the Polish Socialist Party, the Peasant Party, the Christian Labour Party and the National Party. This coalition represented at least 80 p.c. of the Polish Nation. The four parties signed a political truce to remain in force until the first parliamentary election in reborn Poland. In a declaration issued by the coalition parties, they expressed their determination to establish a democratic system in Poland. The four parties have also signed a common minimum political and economic programme which guarantees full political freedom, based on equality of rights and duties. It proclaimed complete equality for national and religious minorities and promised full and swift agrarian reform.

Representatives of the four coalition parties formed the Council of National Unity—the Underground Parliament. Smaller political groups also sent their representatives to this Council. Kazimierz Puzak was the Chairman of this Parliament since its establishment.

## **THE UNDERGROUND ARMY AND THE UNDERGROUND WAR**

The Armed Forces of the Underground Movement in Poland were called the Home Army. This formation, which was unparalleled in Europe, consisted of 400,000 men and 100,000 women, 300,000 of them being soldiers of the first line. After the German invasion, the Home Army began an unequal struggle against the whole might of the enemy. **„The working class does not surrender—the working class fights on“**—these words, spoken by the leader of the Polish Socialist Party, Mieczyslaw Niedzialkowski (who was later shot by the Germans) became the slogan of the Home Army, which consisted mostly of workers and peasants. Home Army Divisions were named after the heroes of the proletariat. The Okrzeja Division was the last to cease fighting in the Warsaw Rising.

For five and a half years this army has fought a relentless struggle against the Germans. Here are some figures to illustrate the achievements of this force:

6,988 locomotives destroyed or damaged; 17,037 railway waggons destroyed; 721 German troop trains attacked or derailed; 1,133 German transports destroyed; 885 acts of sabotage to railway lines with traffic interruptions lasting up to 192 hours; 38 bridges destroyed. Units of the Home Army killed scores of thousands of Germans, set fire to German stores, disorganised German supply lines, destroyed roads, organised acts of sabotage even in Germany itself, and raided German frontier localities.

The activities of the Home Army compelled the Germans to concentrate in Poland more than half a million regular troops and 60,000 Gestapo men in addition to S.S. formations. All this was of considerable help to the Red Army. According to official German reports one in every eight German transports for the Eastern Front never reached its destination. In addition, the intensive sabotage campaign made the German supply situation acute in the vital communication zone behind the Russian front.

## **HELP FOR THE RED ARMY**

When the Red Army crossed the Polish frontier at the beginning of 1944, the Home Army, acting on orders from the Polish Government in London, began open warfare against the Germans. During the subsequent operations **the Home Army supported the Red Army with all its strength. During 1944 Home Army units liberated 250 localities, fought hundreds of skirmishes with the Germans, and 15 major engagements—the most important being the epic 63 days of the Warsaw Rising, the battles of Vilno, Lvov, Lublin and Zamosc, and the operations of the 27th Volhynian Division.**

In almost all the operations in Poland the Red Army had the advantage of the co-operation of the Home Army. During the fighting for Cracow, one of the last battles in Poland, the Home Army occupied all the public buildings in the city before the Russians could enter, thus preventing the Germans from destroying public utility services.

This co-operation had tragic consequences for the Home Army. The former Premier, M. Mikolajczyk, revealed that during the first months of this co-operation in 1944 **Soviet authorities had hanged twenty Polish commanders and shot three of them for the sole reason that they had declared their loyalty to the Polish Government in London.** In some cases, as for instance after the fighting for Vilno and Lvov, the Soviet authorities thanked the Home Army for their help, recommended Polish commanders for Soviet decorations and later invited them to meetings from which the Poles did not return. As time went on relations deteriorated still further and reports from Poland told of arrests, deportations and persecutions of members of the Home Army and leading Polish circles. **In the province of Lublin alone more than 50,000 persons had been arrested up to the end of December, 1944.**

In these circumstances the Polish Government felt compelled to disband the Home Army. The Home Army, the first to fight Nazism, was not only not honoured when the German invader was expelled from Poland, but was slandered and persecuted, because it always remained faithful to its democratic ideals and never gave up its fight for a truly free and independent Poland.

## HELP TO THE ALLIES

The help given by the Polish Army abroad to the Allied cause, is so well-known that it does not need recalling. That Army has been fighting „**for your freedom and ours**“ on all the battle fronts of the world, and Polish soldiers' graves testify to it in Great Britain, France,, Belgium, Holland, Germany, Norway, Italy, the Near and Far East, the deserts of Africa and the immense territories of the Soviet Union. But what is comparatively little-known is the contribution of the Home Army to the Allied cause. First of all, the Home Army compelled the Germans to concentrate in Poland many divisions of regular troops which were badly needed on the Eastern Front; secondly, the Home Army was for London and Washington one of the main sources of information about the movements of German forces in Eastern Europe. It was the Home Army Intelligence that sent to London the first information about the German secret weapons, VI and V2, and was the first to report the existence of the experimental German station at Peenemunde. Thanks to this information the R.A.F. could destroy the station and delay considerably the secret weapon attack on Britain. During the Warsaw Rising the Governments of U.S.A. and Great Britain declared on August 29th, 1944, that the Home Army had full combatant rights. Two days earlier, the Labour Party and Trade Union Congress had adopted a resolution concerning the Home Army, stressing that „**these gallant and disciplined Polish fighters have fully established their right to be recognised by all concerned as combatants with full combatant rights.**“

Speaking in the House of Commons on October 5<sup>th</sup>, 1944, Mr. Churchill said about the Warsaw Rising:

„**When the final Allied victory is achieved, the epic of Warsaw will not be forgotten. It will remain a deathless memory for Poland and the friends of freedom all over the world.**“

After the final Allied victory, the epic of Warsaw, the epic of the Polish Underground Movement, was indeed not forgotten. It found itself on trial in Moscow.

## THE DEFENDANT UNDERGROUND POLAND

The trial of the 16 Polish leaders took place between 18<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> June, 1945, in the October Hall of the Palace of the Soviets in Moscow. It was the first trial of „war criminals“ since the defeat of Germany. But the accused here were not Goering, Ribbentrop, Paulus or Frank. They were the leaders of Underground Poland, and their crime was their fight for the independence of their country. They were tried in Moscow, in the very city which in September, 1939, was decorated with swastikas to greet Ribbentrop, while the Polish nation was engaged in a deadly struggle against the Germans.

Those watching the trial might have got the impression that it was Poland and not Soviet Russia who in the course of this war had collaborated with the Germans; that it was the Red Army and not the Polish nation who had first undertaken the fight against German Fascism; that it was not Russia who had attacked Poland in 1939, but rather the Polish Home Army who had murdered Soviet soldiers in the Ukraine, White Russia and Lithuania (as the prosecution

described the annexed half of the Polish Republic). And the words of M. Molotov of October 31<sup>st</sup>, 1939, seem to have been, forgotten, the words which said: „**It is not only senseless but criminal to wage such a war, as a war for the destruction of Hitlerism camouflaged as a fight for Democracy.**“

## **THE AIM OF THE TRIAL**

There is no doubt that the trial was „*par excellence*,“ a mere show with very definite political aims. The sentence shows that what mattered was by no means the punishment of the alleged criminals. What then was the real aim of the trial?

The first and foremost aim was the liquidation of all the basic elements of independent Polish life: the Government, the Underground Movement and the authentic political parties. The Polish Government itself did not figure among the defendants, in a similar way as Trotsky did not appear at the bar during the trials of the Trotskyites in the 1930's, nevertheless the whole indictment was obviously directed against faraway London.

The trial took place at the time when MM. Mikolajczyk and Stanczyk were negotiating about their inclusion in the Lublin Government, and this synchronisation was to clear the ground for the formation of a vassal Government of a vassal country which subsequently would be legalised by Britain and America.

At the same time the trial was aiming at compromising and belittling the five and a half years of the bloody struggle of the Polish Underground against the German invader. This was to be achieved by untrue allegations of Polish collaboration with the Germans.

A still further aim was to show in a suspicious light the information obtained by the Polish Government in London about the situation in Poland, for reports about the unceasing terror, executions, deportations and arrests had created a deep impression abroad. In order to discredit any further reports from Poland some of the defendants had to „confess“ during the trial that they had sent false information to London.

The trial was also aimed against Great Britain as the alleged protector of the Polish Government and the Polish Underground Movement. It was to compel Britain to withdraw her recognition from the Polish Government because of its alleged anti-Soviet activities. At the same time, the fact that prominent Polish leaders and members of the Polish Government which was recognised by Britain and America could be arrested and tried in Moscow, without being effectively defended by the British or Americans, was to discredit in the eyes of Central and Eastern Europe the value of the international obligations and of the moral principles of those two Powers. This was to strengthen the already preponderant Soviet influence in that part of Europe, and discourage the democratic national movements from creating centres organised on the Western pattern and working in collaboration with the Western democracies.

However, contrary to the intentions of the organisers, the Moscow trial has shown the predominant influence of the Polish Underground Movement among the Polish people. If such a great and widespread movement could continue to exist even after the breakdown of the Warsaw Rising and the destruction of the

main forces of the Home Army, it was thanks only to the fact that the great majority of Polish people supported it.

It is impossible to discuss the Moscow trial in detail because only one-sided reports are available. News Agencies and the Moscow Radio gave detailed accounts of the depositions of the witnesses for the prosecution, ignoring almost completely the defence of the accused, or entering into polemics with them, without quoting what they actually said. Even on the basis of the incomplete evidence, however, the following points concerning the indictment, the trial itself and the verdict can be made.

## **THE INDICTMENT EVIDENCE OF FALSIFIED DOCUMENTS**

The indictment, which was based on the Soviet penal code, and on the assumption that the Soviet court was competent to try Polish citizens, is full of misrepresentations of facts, false allegations and accusations. Here are a few examples:

One of the main points of the indictment is the instruction of the Polish Government, number 11,869, allegedly issued from London on December 8<sup>th</sup>, 1944. This instruction—said to be adopted by M. Mikolajczyk's cabinet on October 14<sup>th</sup>, 1944—foresaw the dissolution of the Home Army in view of constant Soviet reprisals, while at the same time preserving a skeleton force. According to the prosecution this force was to undertake an armed struggle against Russia, but no evidence has been offered for this allegation. Instead of simply quoting the instruction, the indictment commented on it. It was only during the trial, when General Okulicki demanded that the instruction should be read in Court, that the prosecutor, instead of giving the full text, read out the following passage:

*„In view of the situation, it is essential that the underground work should continue. The Lublin Committee is an illegal body and will be liquidated together with the occupying forces“*

The Polish Government has declared categorically that **there was no instruction of December 8<sup>th</sup>, 1944**. The Government's instruction concerning the dissolution of the Home Army was issued much earlier by the Mikolajczyk administration, and in the whole of this document there was not even a shadow of implication of any struggle against Russia. The passage quoted at the trial **was doctored in Moscow**. In the original, there was **not a single word about liquidating the Lublin Committee and the occupying forces**. Anyway, it would be sheer nonsense to order an underground army to liquidate the powerful and well equipped Red Army.

In its allegations concerning the spying activities of the Polish Underground Movement, the indictment contains an obvious falsification of the Polish order number 7201/1/777 of November 11<sup>th</sup>, 1944 (which was issued during M. Mikolajczyk's premiership). According to the indictment the order ran as follows:

**„On the liquidation of the Warsaw centre the reconnaissance ceased to send exhaustive monthly photographic reports. As the knowledge of SOVIET military intentions and potentialities in the East is of basic importance in foreseeing and planning the further development of events in Poland, you must liquidate the gap, transmitting reconnaissance reports in accordance with the instructions of the Reconnaissance Department of the H.Q. Detailed instructions follow as to what information to collect about military units, transport, fortifications, air fields, arms, situation at the front, data on war industry and such like.“**

The prosecution has falsified one word in this instruction: the original, instead of Soviet, mentioned GERMAN military intentions. The intelligence exclusively concerned German and not Soviet forces.

It should be recalled that in November, 1944, **the whole of Poland west of the Vistula river was still under German occupation**, and that instruction, according to the reports from the trial, referred to the filling of the gap caused by the liquidation of the Warsaw centre. Now, this Warsaw centre was liquidated by the Germans and had all the time been in German-occupied Poland, thus it could obviously conduct intelligence work **only against German forces**. What is more, however, the text of the instruction quoted in the indictment proves the falsification, as the instruction speaks of collecting data concerning war industries and fortifications, and in that period **only the Germans and not the Russians could have had, and actually had, war industries and fortifications in Poland**.

It is also worth while adding that the Home Army conducting its intelligence work behind the German lines in the East sent in reports on German military movements, industries and secret weapons not only to London, but through the British Government also to the Soviet military authorities.

In another despatch from the Polish High Command in London to the Home Army quoted in the indictment, the most important passage was omitted. This included a recommendation to **refrain from any anti-Soviet activities**.

## **100 OR 600 SOVIET SOLDIERS KILLED?**

The indictment stated further that in consequence of „the criminal activities“ of the Home Army, 594 Soviet soldiers lost their lives; this figure being divided into 277 killed from July 28th to December 31<sup>st</sup>, 1944, and 317 killed from January 1<sup>st</sup> to May 30<sup>th</sup>, 1945.

On May 5<sup>th</sup>, however, the TASS Agency, commenting on the arrest of the Polish leaders, stated that in consequence of their activities **100 soldiers of the Red Army lost their lives**. Two questions remain to be answered: first, if nearly 300 Soviet soldiers were killed before the end of 1944, why were the Soviet authorities aware of only 100 victims on May 5<sup>th</sup>, 1945; second, how could the accused, who were arrested at the end of March, 1945, be responsible for the alleged murders committed as late as May of that year, two months after the arrests?

## **DID THE ORGANISATION „NIE“ EVER EXIST?**

In its accusations against the Polish Government and the Polish authorities at home of anti-Soviet activities, the indictment lay stress on the above-mentioned alleged instruction of December 8<sup>th</sup>, 1944. In consequence of this instruction, claims the indictment, the Polish underground authorities held conferences in December, 1944, in January, 1945, in Cracow and in February, 1945, in Milanówek, near Warsaw. During that last conference in February, says the indictment, General Okulicki suggested the creation of the Political Centre „Nie“, which was to become an allegedly anti-Soviet organisation. In another part of the indictment, however, it is made plain that on General Bor's orders, issued on the instruction of General Sosnkowski, an organisation called „NIEpodleglosc“ [independence] had already been created in Poland in July, 1944. That leaves two alternatives open: either the organisation was created in July, 1944, without an instruction from the Polish Government, or it was formed following such an instruction but not earlier than December, 1944. In addition, it transpired quite clearly from the indictment itself that as late as February, 1945, the alleged anti-Soviet plot directed by the Polish Government in London and the Polish underground authorities was in a very early stage of development, actually in a stage of discussion. As the Polish leaders were already arrested in March, it would be open to doubt if they would even have had time to start the activities of such an organisation, if it existed at all. The authors of the indictment, however, show a contempt for logic, and calmly say that the alleged organisation „Nie“, set up as a result of the Polish Government's instruction of December 8<sup>th</sup>, 1944, and still merely in a preparatory stage in the Polish Underground in February, 1945, had already committed acts of terror in the autumn of 1944, i.e., long before it had supposedly been created.

## **THERE WERE NO TERRORISTIC DIRECTIVES**

The special methods used in the preparation of the indictment are most striking when one analyses the parts most incriminating to the accused which were those which the defendants denied most categorically. This applies first of all to the allegations of terrorist activities, and of collaboration with the Germans.

In the whole of the indictment one cannot find a single trace of any instructions from the Polish Government, from the Polish Underground authorities, or from anybody else, ordering any terroristic activities. The prosecution, in spite of all its efforts and all the various methods used, has not been able to prove the existence of any orders or directives from any Polish authorities instructing the Underground Movement to fight the Russians in any way.

According to the indictment the chief defendant, General Okulicki, was supposed to have made the following deposition during a preliminary hearing:

**„Having acquainted myself with the documents of the subversive activities of the Home Army in the rear of the Red Army, with which I was confronted, I hold myself responsible for diversionary acts, committed by members of the Home Army.“**

It transpires, therefore, from the indictment itself that General Okulicki, who was accused of organising and conducting terrorist and diversionary activities against the Red Army, not only did not issue any orders in that respect, but it was only during the preliminary investigations and hearings that he discovered that such acts had allegedly taken place. The public prosecution passes over this issue of first importance. Incidentally, the acceptance by General Okulicki—during a preliminary hearing—of responsibility for deeds which he had not ordered and of which he was not aware, bears a striking resemblance to the former notorious Moscow trials.

### **„COLLABORATION WITH THE GERMANS“ MANUFACTURED IN MOSCOW**

The revolting accusation of collaboration with the Germans was not supported by the prosecution with even a shred of proof. The indictment quotes only a document allegedly found on General Okulicki at the moment of his arrest. The prosecution claims that this document **proposed the creation of an anti-Soviet bloc in Europe, including Germany, formed under the aegis of Great Britain.** General Okulicki and his colleagues were arrested by subterfuge, having accepted an invitation from Colonel Pimenov to attend a conference with General Ivanov. **One can hardly believe that, going to meet representatives of the N.K.V.D., General Okulicki thought it necessary to take with him such a document so that it should conveniently fall into Soviet hands!** What is more, according to the prosecution, General Okulicki conceived the idea of such a Polish-German bloc just at the time of the Warsaw Rising. Few people in the free world will believe that during the 63 days-long battle of the Home Army and the Polish population against the Germans who fought with unparalleled barbarism, one of the leaders of the rising should have conceived the idea of forming a joint bloc with the Germans.

The indictment claims further that Colonel Boguslawski, who, on behalf of General Bor, negotiated with the Germans the surrender of Warsaw, brought back with him the following statement from the German General von dem Bach:

**„It is essential for the Poles to cease armed struggle against the Germans, since the common enemy of Poland and Germany is the Soviet Union.“**

Allegedly „General Bor agreed“ with this opinion.

The truth of the matter is that General Bor **rejected** all the proposals made by the Germans. Should one, however, accept the indictment which said that General Bor agreed with that opinion, it is difficult to understand why he didn't join the Germans—as the Russian General Vlasov did—and why did he not fight the Russians at the head of some Polish units. Instead General Bor spent the rest of the war in a German prison camp in conditions which, as hundreds of British prisoners of war can testify, were **not at all easy.** It is worth while stressing one more detail in this monstrous accusation of the Polish Underground Movement of collaboration with the Germans. The Polish nation, and with it the Underground Movement, started its struggle against the



Germans in September, 1939, and continued the fight throughout the war, through the defeat of France, through the period of isolation of Britain and the peak of Germany's military power, and **during all that time the Poles invariably rejected all offers of collaboration with the Germans.** The same nation and the same Underground Movement was now accused of entering into collaboration with the Germans on the eve of their defeat in March, 1945!

## **EAST AND WEST OF THE CURZON LINE**

The indictment quotes a number of alleged acts of terror committed East of the Curzon Line, but does not give one single instance of terrorism West of that line. Should some of these accusations be true, it would only show that West of the Curzon Line people were probably grinding their teeth and waiting for a chance, hoping that at least that part of Poland would be free. In spite of heavy blows the idea of self-defence was rejected and possible out-bursts controlled.

East of the Curzon Line there was nothing to wait for. There could be no outside help. The Allies were not meant to get there and no solution seemed possible. East of the Curzon Line there were no considerations which would impose brakes on excited and desperate people. Even communications with the Headquarters of the Home Army were cut. There was nothing that could stop individual acts of self-defence or despair, and such acts as did take place could only have been of this type.

When analysing the indictment one more characteristic detail must not be omitted. It is the style of the depositions alleged to have been made by the defendants and witnesses during the preliminary hearings. These men, members of the Home Army, were accused of not recognising the annexation of the Eastern part of Poland by Russia, and of describing the Soviet forces in Poland as forces of occupation. At the same time, their supposed depositions refer to the Soviet forces entering Poland as forces of „liberation“; to Eastern Poland as „Western Ukraine“ and „Western Byelorussia“ and to Vilno as being in Lithuania; and they were alleged to have called the Polish Government—the „Emigre Government“.

In other words, these people did not speak the language which they should have used according to the indictment.

## **PROCEEDINGS BEFORE THE COURT TWO DAYS WERE ENOUGH**

**The whole proceedings before the court concerning the existence of a tremendous diversionary organisation comprising tens of thousands of people, with an indictment mentioning 600 murders and many acts of sabotage, with 16 accused, lasted only two days.** Two days were enough for the Tribunal to get a clear and complete picture of the crimes and to consider the accusations as proved. It is enough to compare this with the normal criminal procedure in the courts of any democratic country to get an idea of the methods used in Moscow.

As far as the most serious accusations were concerned, that is the organisation of diversionary activities and collaboration with the Germans, the

evidence consisted exclusively of depositions of a few witnesses for the prosecution of unknown origin. As **the accused did not plead guilty on these charges, the whole controversial matter was settled without any material evidence.** How far the witnesses for the prosecution were truthful one can judge by a deposition made by a certain Janson, who was allegedly the commander of the Home Army in the Lwow district. He claimed that between January, 1944, and January, 1945, he had received from General Bor sums of money for „diversionary activities.“ It is worth while remembering that Soviet forces entered Lwow only in July, 1944, and thus **„the diversionary activities“ before that time must have been directed against the Germans.** It is difficult to understand, however, **how it was possible for General Bor, in a German prison camp since October, 1944, to continue sending money to Janson across the front line till January, 1945.** During the trial, however, nobody questioned such details, and on the basis of such depositions of witnesses for the prosecution both the public prosecutors and the Soviet counsels for the defence considered the whole matter sufficiently cleared up after two days.

Perhaps it would be also worth while noting that some of the witnesses for the prosecution (Stankiewicz, Kuzminski, Urbanowicz) were alleged to have themselves committed murders of Soviet officers and soldiers. In this way the actual criminals were in the witness box, while the men whom the Soviet prosecutor did not even cause of personally committing murders or acts of sabotage were defendants at the bar.

## **NO WITNESSES FOR THE DEFENCE ALLOWED**

General Okulicki demanded the hearing of six witnesses for the defence. The presiding judge decided to admit only three of them, because two of the men named by the defendant „could not be found“ on Soviet territory, and a third one was on his way to a camp. (It was not explained to what sort of a camp he was going, and why a witness could not be brought from a camp). Later, however, the presiding judge announced that even the three witnesses he had originally admitted could not come to Moscow „owing to bad atmospheric conditions.“ Thus, in a trial in which the supreme penalty was threatening the defendants, the proceedings were neither adjourned nor was any attempt made to examine the witnesses at their place of residence. **The trial ended without any witnesses for the defence being heard, and with the accused thus being deprived of their right to present a full case.**

The only thing that was left to them was their own statements, without even a possibility of substantiating them with documents, witnesses, etc. In addition, even those small possibilities were limited by the presiding judge. When, e.g., General Okulicki asked Janson what had happened to units of the Home Army who, having revealed themselves to the Russians, fought the Germans together with them, the presiding judge interrupted him. **He explained to the witness that he need not answer the question, and indeed Janson did not come forward with an answer.** According to European standards, the accused were thus deprived of the possibility of suitable defence. Some of them, but not the main defendants, had Soviet counsels for the defence, but in accordance with Soviet tradition, **those counsels accepted the indictment fully and limited**

**their defence to the question of penalty.** Even in this respect they did not go counter to the line of the public prosecutor, who himself demanded a comparatively lenient verdict. During the whole of the trial the counsels for the defence hardly ever spoke, and did not display any activity to counter the indictment. It was reported that Gen. Okulicki told in Court the well-known Soviet defence counsel Braude: „You were of small use to us. You may have been working for the prosecution.“

## **DID THE ACCUSED PLEAD GUILTY?**

If one is to believe the indictment, during the preliminary hearings, eleven of the accused pleaded guilty to all the charges; four of them pleaded guilty to some charges; and one pleaded not guilty. During the trial, **the same defendants who allegedly had pleaded guilty, energetically denied all the most serious charges (organising terrorist activities, issuing orders to carry out acts of terror, collaborating with the Germans, intelligence with foreign powers, etc.)** This divergence remains a mystery of the whole proceedings.

## **LACK OF EVIDENCE**

Should one accept all the doubtful evidence produced in the indictment the trial itself showed the same shortcomings and contradictions in the statements made by the prosecution. During the proceedings before the court **no proof was produced of the existence of any terroristic instructions issued by the Polish Government or Polish authorities at home, no proof was produced of collaboration with the Germans, or of acts of terrorism** which, according to the indictment, had taken place in Poland.

The charge of collaboration with the Germans was supported only in the depositions of the above-mentioned Janson. He declared that together with another member of the Home Army he conducted in 1943 and 1944 negotiations with the Hungarian and German commands **„as to the joint diversionary and subversive activities against the Red Army. The Home Army leaders undertook to detail sufficiently strong detachments of men, while the Hungarian and German commands promised to supply arms and to organise the transport of diversionary gangs against the rear of the Red Army. These negotiations were reported to Bor-Komorowski in Warsaw.“** This statement by Janson has been fully contradicted by events. **One can hardly understand, how it happened that after the alleged agreement was concluded, Himmler arrived in Poland, German terror increased and the Underground Movement, including the Home Army, started open warfare against the Germans all over the country.** Still later, the Home Army under the command of the same General Bor, fought the Germans in Warsaw for 63 days, gaining the recognition of its full combatant rights by the Allies.

In other words, the „Polish collaboration with the Germans" is known only to the authors of the Moscow trial. The Home Army and the Polish Underground Movement continued to fight the Germans to the bitter end.

Nevertheless, this sort of evidence formed the basis of the verdict.

## FALSEHOODS OF THE PROSECUTION

The task of the prosecution, able to present only such „evidence“ against the defendants would be quite hopeless in any independent court where normal procedure is observed. The Soviet prosecutor, however, short of real evidence, and being able to produce only some false proofs, based his whole accusation **on interpretation.**

Thus, discussing General Okulicki's order of the day of January 19th, 1945, the Soviet prosecutor Afanasiev described it as „an order to intensify the struggle against the Red Army.“ He went on to quote the order, in the following terms:

**„The developing Soviet offensive might soon lead to the occupation of the whole of Poland by the Red Army which would, in fact, mean exchanging German for Soviet occupation. The war, forced upon Poland in 1939, will not end now as a Soviet victory, but will end for us only when we achieve our aim. In the changed conditions of the new occupation we must direct our activity towards restoring independence and defending the population in the face of danger. The Home Army having been disbanded, the commanders' status will not be legalised, soldiers must be absolved from their oath of allegiance, paid two months' grant and absorbed in the underground, and arms must be hidden. Men who have in any way compromised their position, are to be transferred to other areas and also sent underground. The balance of the financial funds and what is left of the equipment is to be reported to Rubnik. Staffs, H.Q.s and the radio network is to be thoroughly camouflaged. Keep up communication with me and operate in accordance with the Government Delegate's organisation.“**

This Order of the Day by General Okulicki, which was to strengthen the case of the prosecution **does not even mention any fight against the Red Army.** In this secret document, in which General Okulicki would undoubtedly have expressed himself frankly, we find the following details: **the General, who allegedly collaborated with the Germans, speaks of the „German occupation“; he was accused of disbanding the Home Army only formally, but he states in a secret order of the day that the army had really been disbanded, and gives detailed orders for its liquidation; he was supposedly preparing an armed rising against the Soviet Union, but he mentions only the defence of the population in the case of danger.** In other words, the quoted order not only does not strengthen the public prosecutor's thesis, but at the same time weakens several other accusations.

## POLAND'S GEOGRAPHICAL POSITION A „PROOF“ OF COLLABORATION WITH GERMANY

The prosecution did not fare much better when it was trying to prove the existence or the planning of a Polish-German bloc. They could support this accusation only by the compromising depositions of the above-mentioned Janson and his tales of negotiations with the German Command in 1943 and 1944. The rest is pure speculation. According to the prosecutor, Poland, owing

to her geographic position, had only one choice; either Germany or Russia. "The Polish Underground," said the Prosecutor, wholly directed by the emigre Government, chose the bloc with Germany." In this way the geographic position of **Poland is to be a PROOF of Polish-German collaboration and of the guilt of the accused**. While making this statement, the Soviet prosecutor admitted that the Polish Government, which according to the Soviet thesis had no support in Poland and no contact with the country, was wholly directing a widespread Polish Underground Movement.

All this was sufficient for the prosecutor to declare that the guilt of the four chief accused had been **wholly proved**.

Another prosecutor, Rudenko, who conducted the case against the remaining defendants, made a speech which was reported only very briefly, and did not bring anything new. Irrespective, however, of what Rudenko proved and of what he did not prove, he declared that the indictment was „fully founded and proved“ by the findings of the preliminary and judicial examination. This included probably the pleading guilty by the accused during the preliminary hearings, either on all the charges or on some of them. It is interesting to note, therefore, that when speaking of three of the accused (Kobylanski, Michalowski and Stemler-Dabski) the prosecutor declared that sufficient proof of their guilt had not been collected, and therefore he dropped the charges. Now, according to the indictment, two of those accused pleaded guilty on all the charges, and one of them guilty on some charges. It remains a mystery why in the case of some of the accused their pleading guilty is regarded as sufficient proof, while in the case of others it is not; and also why if some of the accused plead not guilty it does not even weaken the case for the prosecution, while if others plead guilty they are released.

## **THE ATMOSPHERE DURING THE TRIAL**

Before discussing the verdict, it is worth while to pay some attention to the atmosphere in which the trial took place, and to the activities of the Moscow radio and press. In an article in „Izvestia“ broadcast by the Soviet radio on June 20<sup>th</sup>, 1945 (that is, **before** the verdict), Vsevolod Ivanov wrote:

**„One feels stifled and short of breath looking at these leaders and participants of the Polish black underground now in the dock, these criminals who hand-cuff themselves to the cause of Fascism.“**

Speaking of the Polish Vice-Premier, Jankowski, Ivanov said:

**„Tied to Fascists corpse, he can only hate, lie and deceive.“** General Okulicki was described as **„the murderer and traitor to the cause of his people and Slavdom ... an odious, scandalous figure, well-known in the sphere of espionage and diversion.“**

On the same day the Moscow radio quoted a „Pravda“ article by Zaslavski entitled „The Polish-Fascist Bandits Under the Mask of Democrats“. Here is a quotation from this article:

**„Only Fascists could perpetrate such foul murders. The brand of Fascism lies on these crimes ... Pro-Fascist journalists in various countries praised the „democratic“ leaders in Poland. They said there were democratic parties in Poland which supported the Polish émigré Government in**

**London, that these elements must be drawn in to form a Polish Provisional Government. This foul mystification has now been exposed.**“

On the epic of the Polish Underground Movement and the Polish Home Army, which according to Mr. Churchill was to remain „a deathless memory for friends of freedom all over the world,“ Zaslavski of the Moscow »Pravda« has to say the following: **„All the empty jabber about the Home Army’s alleged struggle against the Germans is now exposed ... The Home Army heads were negotiating with the German S.S. Gruppenfuehrer von dem Bach, on the possibilities of a common struggle against the Red Army. One line runs from top to bottom of the Home Army.**“

And here is a Soviet sample of describing the defendants while the trial was in progress: **„And to think that these same odorous human refuse, these political swindlers from the Polish reactionaries, posed to public opinion as real men, as democrats, as people influential in Poland. There has never been such a shameless swindle ... The old bandit—Okulicki, an organiser of murder, the old Jesuit Jankowski, who is ready to betray his own father, not only Poland, and other such bandits, tricksters, and village Metternichs who thought to deceive all Europe and America.**“

This concentrated hatred, combined with the elimination by a foreign Power from the life of Poland of anything that was truly Polish, and with a brutal travesty of the most daring Polish achievements in the fight against the Germans—all this formed the background to the Moscow trial.

## **THE LAST WORD OF THE ACCUSED**

It is no wonder that in those circumstances some of the accused did not wish even to make a final speech in their own defence. One of those who did however speak was General Okulicki. Here is a fragment of his speech which characterises the trial:

**„This trial has a political character. It concerns the punishment of the Polish Underground. You cannot prove that we did not fight the Germans for five years, but, as in all political trials, you want to deprive us of this political asset. The best Polish patriots and democrats took part in the fight. Do not accuse us of collaborating with the Germans. That means taking away our honour. You accuse 300,000 members of the Home Army—the Polish people.**“

## **THE VERDICT**

On the basis of the „evidence“ discussed above, the Soviet Tribunal declared that the guilt of 12 of the accused had been fully proved, and sentenced them to „deprivation of freedom“ ranging from four months to ten years. The remaining three were acquitted in accordance with the wishes of the public prosecutor.

The Tribunal accepted as proved the accusation of diversionist and terrorist activities (**which were denied by the defendants and by the documents**), the accusation of General Okulicki of creating the organisation „Nie“ (**which was**

**still in its preliminary stage in February, 1945),** the accusation of the murder of soldiers and officers of the Red Army up to December, 1944 (**thus before the organisation „Nie“ was ever formed**) and finally the accusation of „planning“ a Polish-German military bloc directed against Russia (**for which there was absolutely no proof**).

The sentences were as follows:

General Okulicki: Ten years' deprivation of freedom.

Vice-Premier Jankowski: Eight years.

Members of the Government, Bien and Jasiukowicz: Five years.

Chairman of the Council of National Unity, Puzak: Eighteen months.

Vice-Chairmen of the Council of National Unity, Baginski: One year, and Zwierzynski: eight months.

Czarnowski: Six months.

Mierzwa, Stypulowski, Chacinski, Urbanski: Four months.

Michalowski, Stemler-Dabski and Kobylanski were acquitted.

It was announced that the trial of the member of the Government, Pajdak, who was ill, would take place separately. According to later rumours Pajdak was dead already at the time of the trial having allegedly committed suicide.

## **THE „HISTORIC“ VIEW OF THE TRIAL**

To conclude, the following „historic“ view of the trial, published by the Moscow »Izvestia«, should be quoted:

**„Before the court stood the wreckage of old Poland, which for five centuries has conducted a sanguinary eternal strife against the Russian people.“**

This reported Soviet attitude to history is worth a moment's attention. The Soviet journalist has forgotten the partitions of Poland; the Praga massacre by Suvorov; the risings; the executions; the deportations to Siberia; the Russification of Poland. All that period of Russian oppression of Poland during nearly 150 years which had been condemned by Lenin and the young Bolshevik revolution, has now been completely forgotten.

The Soviet journalist at the same time admitted that the trial was in reality directed, not only against the Warsaw Rising and the five years of Poland's underground struggle, but also against five centuries of Poland's history which could inspire future Polish generations with new strength and faith. All this was to be compromised, destroyed and removed from the consciousness of Poles, who would be mere vassals in the years to come. The struggle of the enslaved Polish nation against Tsarism is to be utterly forgotten, and so, too, is Poland's struggle for freedom and independence which, in this newest Soviet interpretation has been condemned as „the sanguinary eternal strife of old Poland against the Russian people.“

---