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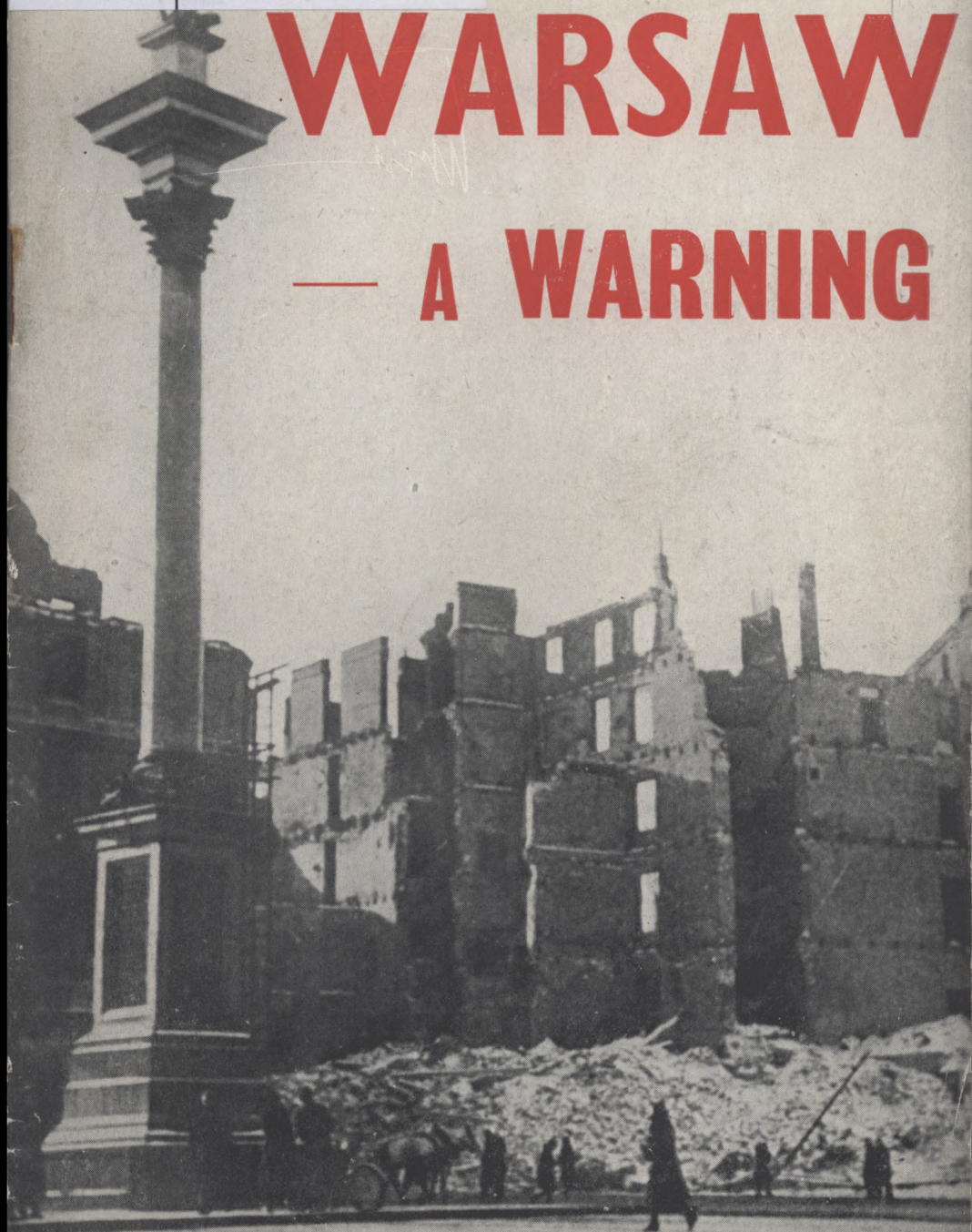
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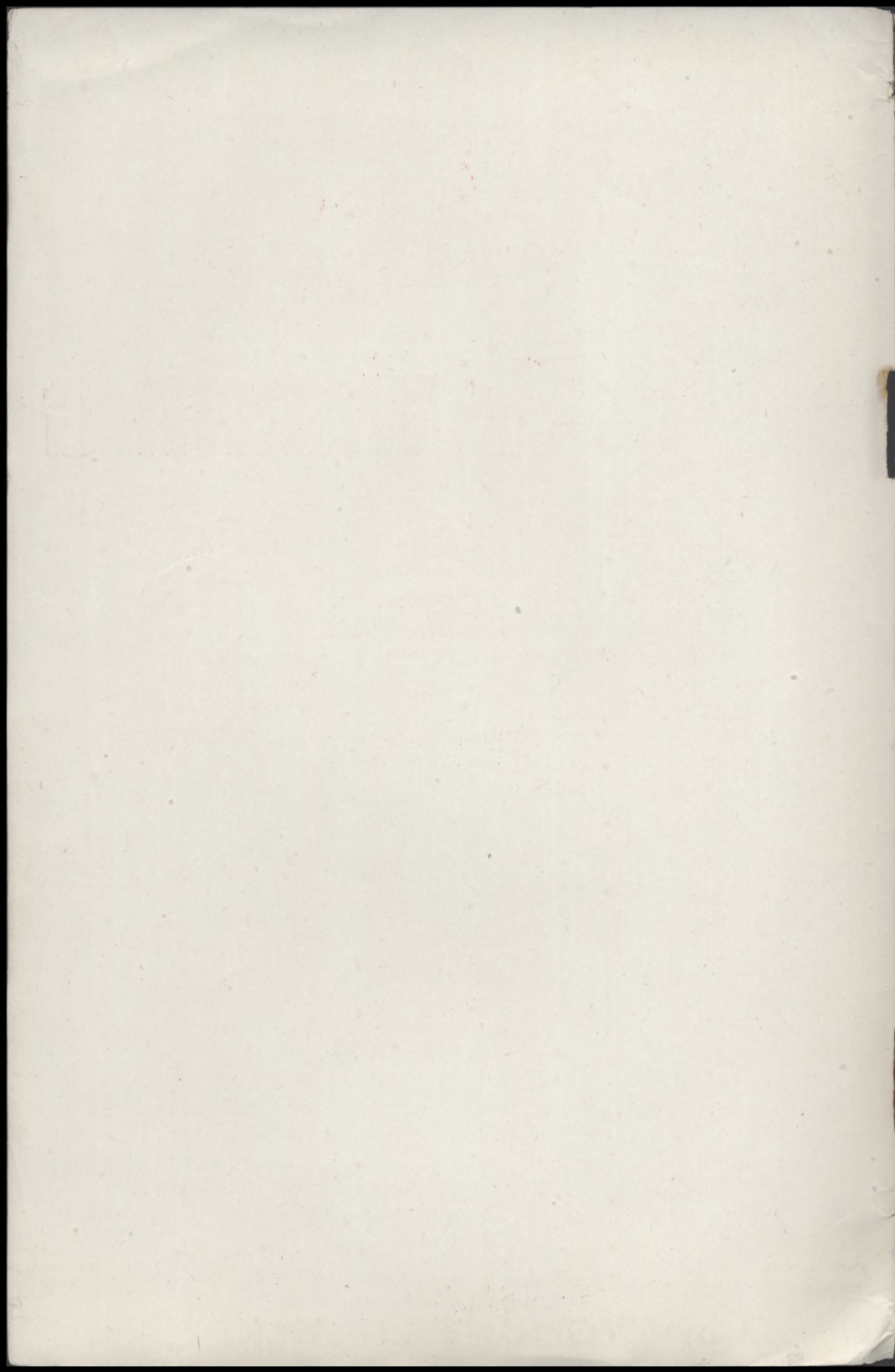
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# WARSAW

## — A WARNING



by ZYGMUNT LITYNSKI



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## WARSAW—A WARNING

By Zygmunt Litynski

**Big News in London.**

Big news hit the London papers in the first days of August, 1944: "Americans Racing to Exploit Coast Gains in Normandy," "Russian Armies Converge on East Prussia," "Stiff Fight Ahead—Nazis Mass to Defend Florence"—these were some of the headlines which stared from the papers of Tuesday, August 1, 1944. Those of Wednesday were slashed across eight columns: "Germans West Flank in Normandy Nears Collapse," and others that day ran: "Two Suicide Armies in North Cut Off by Russians," "Finns Sack Ryti—Make Peace Move," "Hitler Plot: £50,000 on Man's Head." On Thursday, August 3, a 20-mile break-through in Northern France was announced, while the Russians opened a big drive for East Prussia.

During those early days of August, the big London papers found space to publish, under striking headlines, a host of other different news items of interest to Londoners: "Experts Decide on our Post-War Menu," "Bank Holiday Train Crowds Looming," "Delysia Off to Normandy—Wins Her Case."

On August 4, the attentive reader might have discovered a secondary news item in a few of the papers, stuck on to the end of an article announcing that the Red Army had already reached a point 15 miles west of the Vistula. Pretty well bereft of headlines, it told that, according to a radio message received in London from Poland, patriots had seized parts of the centre of Warsaw, as well as some of the southern and western districts of the capital. The Polish forces in the city, the message ran, were under the command of General Bor, who had sent out an urgent request for supplies of ammunition and anti-tank weapons.

It was only on Saturday that the news of the Warsaw battle in the "Street of Death" achieved so much as a

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double-column heading in some of the London dailies. People learned that General Bor's Underground Army had captured the main Power Station and Gas Works, the General Post Office and other important buildings, as well as the Old Town. They must have been somewhat surprised to read, in these same articles, that the rising had already begun on Tuesday, August 1 and that the Polish flag had been flying for no less than five days over the greater part of the Polish capital. Those who read the story through to the end probably found the descriptions of how the Germans were using scores



Before the war: The Royal Palace  
and statue of King Sigismund III.

of civilians—men and women—and forcing them to act as screens for tanks attacking the Polish barricades, rather unpleasant, even grim.

## Unimportant ?

Obviously something was wrong with this Warsaw story.

On Sunday, August 6, the rising in the Polish capital made front page news in the *Observer*, but on Monday, August 7, Warsaw did not appear in the news at all. Very occasionally a few words here and there quoted General Bor's latest communique announcing that the greater part of the city was in his hands,



The same view as that on the left, taken after the first Battle of Warsaw in 1939.

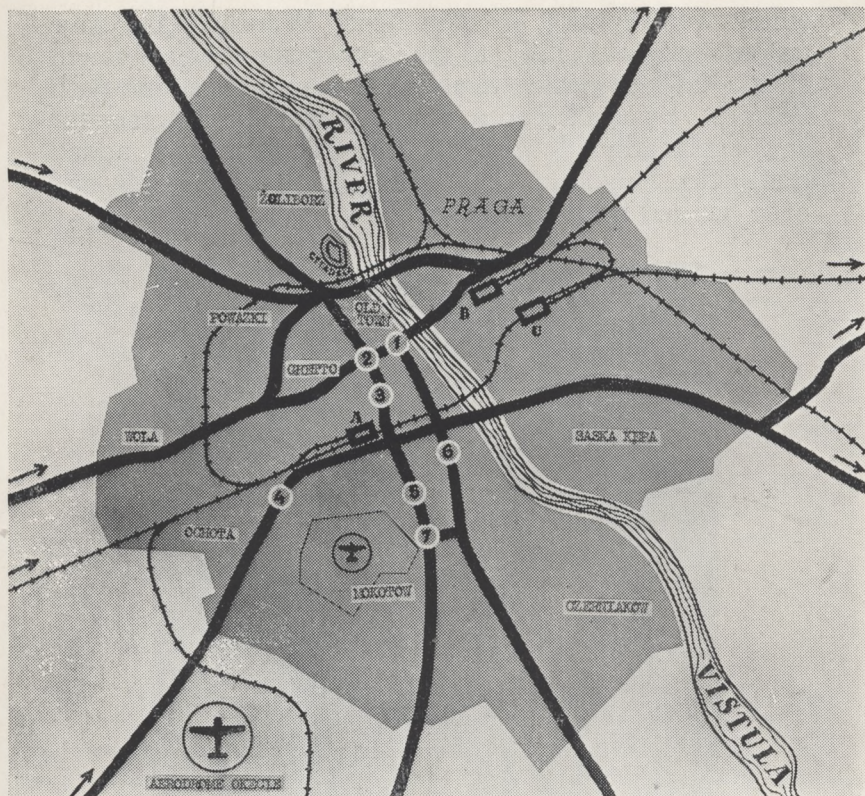
although the Germans were attacking in increasing strength. Judging from the place to which the Warsaw news was now relegated—if indeed it was published at all—the fact that for the first time in this war underground forces were fighting to retake one of the greatest

European capitals was incomparably less important than the news that American troops had reached the Loire, that some of the flying bomb stores had been attacked, or that during the weekend the platforms of Paddington Station were packed with Londoners going off for holidays on the Thames or in the west country. When all is said and done, the fact that the Loire would be reached had been perfectly obvious for several days, the V-1 depots had been bombed every day for some time, and the crowds on Paddington Station had little influence on the future of the world. On the other hand, Warsaw was a city of 1,300,000 inhabitants, the capital of the country, allied to Britain, which had been the first to say "no" to Hitler and, in accepting the fight, had given to her ally nine priceless months in which to prepare herself for the coming conflict with Germany. For five years now, Poland had never once ceased to save British lives by continuing, on every front, a struggle which could only seem hopeless, and "unrealistic," too. And now, at the end of the fifth year of this, the news of the rising in Warsaw was eclipsed in London by every secondary success in Northern France (where Poles, yet again, were fighting and dying beside their British comrades) by a couple of doodle bugs and by the Paddington holiday crowds.

Yes, undoubtedly something was wrong.

On Tuesday, August 8, I went to the Polish G.H.Q. to see the Polish Chief of Staff, one-eyed General Kopanski, who, with General Morshead, defended Tobruk in 1942, and whom I had known in the Middle East. I went to ask him about the Warsaw affair. In a quiet, matter-of-fact voice and without comment, he gave me the facts about the rising. They staggered me.

I am more of a European than a Pole. I was born abroad and have lived the greater part of my life in France. I never really knew Warsaw since, between 1922 and 1937, I only went there for a few short visits. Yet, listening to the General, as a journalist used to dealing with dramatic events, I felt that this was surely one of the most amazing stories which had ever come my way. I asked the General if I might see the messages



### WARSAW FIGHTING ALONE.

Four big thoroughfares divide Warsaw, two from North to South and two from West to East. They are marked on the above Map, which also shews the main centres of resistance. The chief aim of the Polish Underground Army was to cut the two main West to East Roads so as to stop German supplies flowing through to the German-Russian Front, some seventeen miles East of the suburb Praga. During the first six days the initiative was in Polish hands, but since then, owing to disastrous lack of arms and ammunition they are on the defensive. Local attacks are made, mainly in order to capture supplies. The town is bombed and shelled without interruption and its total destruction now seems unavoidable.

which were coming in daily from Warsaw. He gave an order to his A.D.C. to take me to the special branch of the G.H.Q. which deals with communications with Poland. I was allowed to read everything and to ask for any explanation I wished. General Kopanski added that, since August 2, daily bulletins about Warsaw had been handed to the British press.



The Church of the Visitation, built in the 18th Century. Now in ruins.

**“ Request Categorically Immediate Assistance.”**

Here, in the order in which they were received, are direct translations of the greater part of the messages I handled. Unless otherwise stated, they are signed by the G.O.C., Underground Army in Warsaw. Passages have been deleted, where necessary, for reasons of security. The italics are mine.



### August 1.

" On August 1, at 17.00 hours, we started to fight for Warsaw. *Send ammunition and anti-tank weapons urgently.*"

\* \* \*

" In connection with the lack of uniforms, we request you to cause the Supreme Allied Command to declare the Polish Home Army a part of the Allied Forces, as has been done in the case of the French Army of the Interior."

\* \* \*

" In view of the beginning of the fight for Warsaw, we request you to cause the Russians to help by attacking from outside."

### August 2.

" We are engaged in heavy fighting with the Germans in the whole of the city of Warsaw. We defeated part of their forces with the use of armaments captured from the enemy, but *we have difficulty in securing ammunition.*"

\* \* \*

" *Extremely urgent that mass dropping of ammunition and weapons on Warsaw be carried out today.* There is no anti-aircraft artillery."

### August 3.

" *Disastrous lack of ammunition. . . .*"

\* \* \*

" Please broadcast the following message . . . : ' In the first days of the battle for Warsaw, we received information of several cases of inhuman treatment of the Home Army and of the civilian population by German soldiers. Facts known so far : on August 1, at the beginning of the fighting, German units dragged out all the male inhabitants of No. 20, Okopowa Street and drove them in front of their detachments. Luckily we recaptured the victims. August 2, 50 men captured, handcuffed, attached to tanks and dragged in this condition through the streets. August 3, in an assault on the barricade in the Ponia-towski Viaduct, a great number of captured were driven in front of attacking tanks to screen the latter from the fire of the defenders. The G.O.C., Underground Army, has notified the German command in Warsaw that ruthless reprisals will be applied to Germans who are in the hands of the Underground Army.' "

### August 4.

" *Request categorically immediate assistance in ammunition and anti-tank weapons today and on the following days. We are faced with fighting for at least several days and we must be supplied all this time. We are doing our utmost to hold our capital—you must do likewise on your side.*"

\* \* \*

" *At all costs, carry out dropping of ammunition.*"

### August 5.

"The following is a summary of the reactions of the capital's population during these days of fighting. As regards the course of the fight itself the G.O.C., Home Army, keeps the C.-in-C. of the Polish Forces constantly informed. The population of Warsaw is at one with the army in their fight. Even those unarmed, roused by the enthusiasm of the soldiers, are erecting barricades against the enemy tanks. Women are competing with men in service and in open fighting. All are pervaded by a spirit of discipline and self-sacrifice.

*Lack of ammunition is a source of constant anxiety. Our stocks are diminishing from hour to hour. Also, lack of arms prevents the masses of volunteers from taking part in the action.*

On all objectives taken, and on all the houses in the streets where fighting is going on, the Polish flag has been spontaneously hoisted as a symbol and a true and heartfelt expression of the attachment of the capital to the Polish Republic. The whole capital is pervaded by a fighting spirit—it expels the invader and destroys all traces of years of bondage. Not one political organisation fights on its own, all have rallied round the Home Army. The presence of the Government Delegate and the President of the Council of National Union at the H.Q. of the G.O.C., Home Army, expresses the unity of the Army and the Government."

Signed : Deputy Prime Minister Government Delegate  
and President of the Council of National Union.

### August 6.

"The sixth day of the battle for Warsaw has begun. The Germans are introducing into the fight technical arms which we do not possess : armour, air force, artillery, flame-throwers. That is their advantage. We dominate by the morale of our troops.

*Soviet attack on the eastern outskirts of Warsaw has slowed down and does not affect the military situation in the city.*

*I state solemnly that Warsaw in its fighting is not receiving assistance from abroad from the Allies in the same way as Poland did not receive it in 1939. Our Alliance with Great Britain resulted only in bringing her our assistance in 1940, in repelling the German attack against the British Isles, in fighting in Norway, Africa, Italy and on the Western Front. We request you to state this fact to the British in an official demarche. It should remain as a document. We do not ask for equipment—we demand its immediate despatch."*

### August 7.

The following message, written by a Soviet officer, was sent from Warsaw by General Bor for retransmission to Moscow :—

"Moscow. Marshal Comrade Stalin. August 5, 1944. I am in personal contact with the Commander of Warsaw Garrison who

is leading the heroic partisan fight of the nation against Hitlerite bandits. After acquainting myself with the general military situation, I came to the conclusion that, in spite of the heroism of the army and the entire Warsaw population, there are still needs which, if made good, would permit a speedier victory over a common foe . . . (the specification of arms and ammunition follows). . . . German air force is destroying the city and killing the civilians. The heroic population of Warsaw trusts that, in a few hours time, you will give them armed support. Help me to get in touch with General Rokossowsky."

The message is signed with the name and rank of the Soviet officer.

#### August 8.

"We are in a very difficult position . . ." (specification of aid required follows).

\* \* \*

The following message was addressed by General Bor to Marshal Rokossowsky : "Since August 1, 1944, I have been fighting the Germans in Warsaw with the help of the whole population and all military organisations, united within the Home Army, as well as such organisations as the Workers' Militia, People's Militia, Polish People's Army and others, who join us in the fight.

"We are fighting a strenuous battle. The Germans, in order to secure channels for their troops, are burning the town and exterminating the population. At present, we are still holding the pressure of a great force of armoured units and infantry. We feel, however, already the scarcity of ammunition and heavy arms. A speedy relief, therefore, by your armies is necessary." (A special request follows).

#### August 9.

The G.O.C. Warsaw categorically reiterates his demands for arms and ammunition, as well as for a bombing attack. On the Soviet side the lull continues. Amongst the Warsaw working population, bitterness increases.

#### August 10.

"For the tenth day we continue our deadly fight."

The town is cut by three roads: 1. Poniatowski Bridge, Jerusalem Avenue, Grojecka Street ; 2. Teatralny Square, Elektoralna Street, Chlodna Street and Wolska Street ; 3. Zoliborz Viaduct and Gdansk Railway Station. The suburb of Praga is cut off. All these three routes are held by German tanks. Their crossing is extremely difficult as the buildings along the roads are being set on fire. Two armoured trains on the railway line from the Gdansk Station to the West Station, and continuous artillery fire from Praga with the support of aircraft, are directed against the town.

These are our conditions of fighting. We have received from you but one small dropped supply. On the German Russian front, lull since the 3rd. But for the exception of a short speech by the Deputy Prime Minister from London on the 8th, nothing to comfort us. The soldiers and the population of the capital look in vain to the skies expecting Allied help. They only see German aircraft against a background of German smoke. The population feel surprised, deceived and begin to revile. Let us know if help for Warsaw was discussed in Moscow. I emphatically repeat that, without immediate support consisting in supplies of arms and ammunition and the bombing of objectives held by the enemy, our fight is due to collapse in a few days. If we get the help, asked for above, the fight will continue. I expect from you the greatest effort in this respect

"The German aircraft today dropped leaflets with an ultimatum signed by their Front Commander. The ultimatum urges the population to leave Warsaw and proceed westwards holding handkerchiefs in their hands. Those unable to work will receive assistance in settling in the General Government, others will be provided with work. Who 'lets himself be exploited as a tool in Bolshevik hands' will be held responsible and may expect no mercy. The ultimatum expires on a fixed date."

Signed : Government Delegate.

#### August 11.

"After yesterday's continuous enemy fire, today, between 03.00 and 14.00 hours, concentric attack on the Old Town and Stawki. Attacks accompanied by artillery fire from armoured trains, mortars, grenades and anti-tank guns. Enormous, overwhelming superiority of enemy fire. Our counter attacks repulsed the enemy and Stawki was regained. Losses in wounded and dead. An anti-tank gun and ammunition captured. Some advance in Zoliborz. Enemy aircraft bomb the city."

#### August 12.

"Today the enemy tried to annihilate our forces in the Old Town sector. The situation was serious. Objectives changed hands many times. Overpowering artillery fire. At dusk we controlled the situation by means of counter attacks. *If no supplies of ammunition forthcoming, our situation will be extremely serious.* On other sectors no change. *On Soviet side, lull continues.* Great losses in men. Great destruction."

#### August 13.

The G.O.C. informed that the enemy had burned out, and occupied, Stawki. In the attack from the south on the Old Town, the enemy made use of a new weapon—fire from a gun boat which appeared on the Vistula. The forces in the central sector—*owing to the supplies dropped in the course of the night*—were

able to make an offensive action aimed at engaging some of the enemy units attacking the Old Town. Great losses in men. Great number of wounded, especially among units fighting in the Old Town. The enemy lost many tanks and artillery equipment.

#### **August 14.**

"The enemy stubbornly attempts to liquidate the sector of our defence in the Old Town. Today his main efforts are again directed on that region. After severe fire from mortars and other guns, attacks made in succession. Fight obstinate and merciless. Barricade on Tlomacki Street abandoned after houses on both sides set on fire, and position heavily shelled. In other parts of this sector, we counter-attacked and succeeded in holding opposition.

"During the last two days, nine enemy tanks destroyed in that sector. In the central part of the city, sorties made trying to cut through the enemy's arteries of communication. Enemy's attacks repelled. Equipment captured. Incessant artillery fire. The Old Town severely damaged."

The following is a message sent out to Poland from Warsaw :

*"The battle for Warsaw is being prolonged. It is carried on against the overwhelming supremacy of the enemy forces. The situation demands immediate despatch of reinforcements for the capital. I request all the available well-armed units to proceed hastily towards engaging the enemy forces situated on the outskirts and in the suburbs of Warsaw, and to join in the fight inside the city."*

General Bor addressed also the following message to the airmen who took part in supply operations to Warsaw :

*"Fighting Warsaw sends to the heroic airmen words of gratitude and appreciation. We bow to the crews who have given their lives."*

#### **August 16.**

No essential change in the situation during the day. The lack of equipment makes any offensive action in the Old Town impossible. Artillery fire heard again from the east.

#### **August 17.**

"The fighting in the Old Town is decreasing. We made a successful night attack on Stawki. The main effort of the enemy is now domination of the centre. Strong points and barricades changed hands often but we did not yield. In other sectors, local fighting. Throughout the city terrific salvo of fire from flame-throwing mortars and artillery. Big fires. 494 German Infantry Battalion has, since August 3, lost 50 per cent of its effective strength. A platoon of the Infantry Regiment 'Ost Preussen' surrendered in strength. Several tanks and armoured cars have been destroyed."

### August 18.

"Enemy attacks aim at central area especially around Towarowa Street ; attacks repelled. For several days permanent fighting at the Politechnique. Splendid defence put up by our units holding a strong point on the corner of Zelazna Street and Sikorski Avenue.

"On other sectors no important change. Some offensive and defensive activity. Harassing enemy fire from mortars and artillery. Also bombing from the air. Increased use of robot tanks for demolishing houses."

The same day, the following message was sent by the Jewish Bund in Warsaw :

*"For 18 days the population of Warsaw has carried on an unequal struggle against the barbarian aggressor and, with all Warsaw, the remnants of Jewish youth are fighting. We are battling for our common Polish cause against the enemy. Do all in your power to get help sent as soon as possible."*

### August 19.

"In the Old Town today, the heaviest day as regards bombardment from the air, mortar and artillery fire. Few houses escaped destruction. Enormous number of wounded. The enemy infantry attacks which followed the heavy concentration of fire were repelled everywhere but, owing to systematic mass bombing, the enemy penetrated some of our strong points. In the centre of the city, heavy fighting at the barricades accompanied by mortar fire. All attacks withstood.

"In Zoliborz area the enemy forces have been reinforced by a battalion of the 608 Infantry Regiment.

*"Owing to the lack of air bombardment, for which we asked, the enemy can freely use his technical superiority over us."*

### August 20.

"The region of the Old Town under heavy artillery fire and incendiaries throughout the day. Enemy infantry and tanks attacking since this morning especially in the region of Leszno and Nalewki. In the course of an infantry attack, three of the four enemy Tiger tanks supporting the attack were destroyed.

"Three robot tanks destroyed a barricade in Nalewki. In the centre, enemy pressure in Chopin Street and Koszykowa Street. Heavy fighting in Krochmalna Street.

"The enemy detachment holding the buildings of the University and the former seat of the Polish Cabinet are being supplied from the air. German air force very active in the forenoon hours."

### August 21.

*"The enemy has shelled, with artillery, mortars and aircraft, the region of the Old Town. We recaptured the Bank of Poland."*

Strong attacks by enemy S.S. units were repulsed near the Radziwill Palace. We hold Bielanska Street, Tlomackie and Przejazd. We lost the tram depot on Muranowska Street. Our positions are mainly in the ruins of houses. Hand to hand fighting frequently occurs. . . . The immense technical superiority of the enemy gives a bitter flavour to the resistance of our soldiers and civilians.'

**August 22.**

" Three weeks have gone by without substantial help from outside. In the opinion of the fighting man, the conviction that the Allies have abandoned us to the enemy is hardening. . . . "

### " The Insufficiently Attentive World "

On August 8, immediately after my talk with General Kopanski, I rang up a friend of mine, Mrs. H., the feature editor of one of the biggest London dailies, telling her how amazed I was that so great a story as that of fighting Warsaw had found no echo in the British Press. I suggested to her that I should at once write an account for her paper, based on the information given me by the Polish Chief of Staff or, rather, to make accessible to one of their correspondents the messages received by the Poles from Warsaw. My friend replied that it was a matter of importance and would have to be discussed with the Editor. Next afternoon, she phoned and apologised. She was very sorry indeed but, in the present circumstances, her paper could not publish a story about Warsaw fighting a death struggle against the Germans. . . .

On the day following, however, the silence was broken by the military correspondent of the *Evening Standard*. After describing the first week of the battle, he stressed that the defenders were appealing to the British for help : " They say that this is not 1939. Britain has thousands of day and night bombers that in a single mission could change the situation by attacking the Germans and dropping supplies. They point to the Polish Paratroops, fighting fit and ready in this country. They point to the pledge of 1939.

" Warsaw fought in 1939 when there was no hope. The Ghetto fought this year when there was no hope and now come the tragic messages of the fighting men in the city. Left unaided they are being overborne by the

enemy. It is all the more tragic with the dawn of liberation so near—and yet so ineffective.”

The next day, David Scott, the man who is never absent when there is a just cause to be defended, published a dramatic interview with the Commander-in-Chief of the Polish Forces, in the *Daily Telegraph*. The same day, the *Daily Telegraph* published a leader and an article of mine on the same subject.



September 1939: Ruins in the centre of the City.

The following day, the *Daily Mirror*, under the title “Warsaw Tragedy,” stated, in heavy type; “And there was no outside aid. The Polish Commanders sent appeal after appeal for arms. Nothing was sent. They fought the third battle of Warsaw as they fought others—alone.”

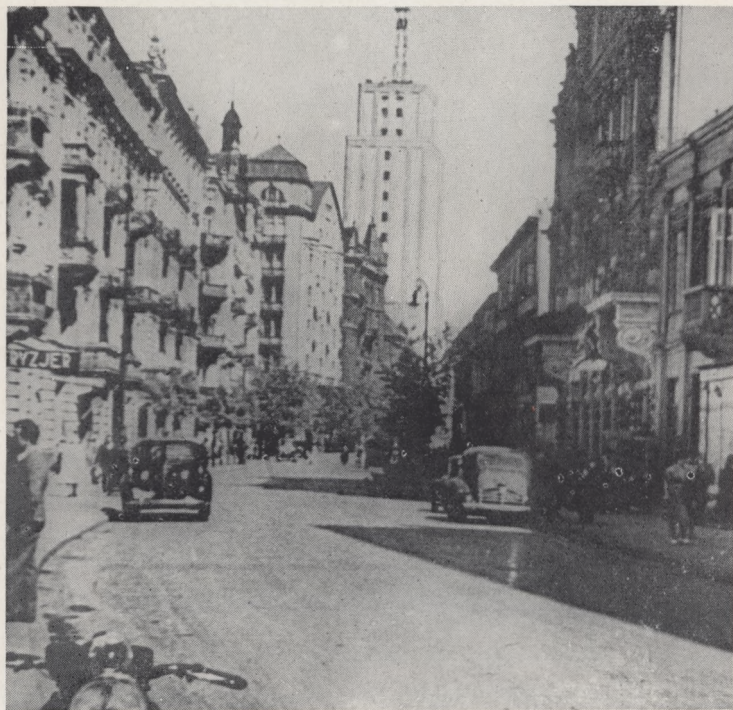
On the 14th, Lord Vansittart sent the following letter to the Editor of the *Daily Mail* :

“A tragedy is being enacted before an insufficiently



attentive world. The British and Russians stimulated the Polish Patriots to revolt in order to assist the oncoming Russian Army. The Poles did so; then the Russian advance was halted and the assistance in arms and munitions sent to the Patriots seems to have been inadequate.

“It is difficult to understand this. The unsupported Poles are being slaughtered and Warsaw is being obliterated. . . . Is humanity going to allow this tragedy to be consummated, or will it appeal to the major Allies to act before it is too late? . . . ”



Szpitalna Street and the seventeen floor "Prudential" building, centre of very heavy fighting in August, 1944.

More articles on the same lines appeared in the *Manchester Guardian*, the *Daily Herald* and in political weeklies like the *Tribune*, *Time and Tide*, and so on.

### The "Daily Worker" Explains. . . .

Yes, it was obvious now that something was wrong with the whole affair—and British public opinion had begun to realise it.

Then, on August 14, the *Daily Worker* came into line with an attempt at an explanation. Under a double-column title: "Poles did not Consult U.S.S.R. on



Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Now ruined.

Warsaw Rising," the very same paper that, a few days previously, had pretended that there was no such thing as a rising in Warsaw, gave the following Tass Agency statement:

"Recently reports appeared in the foreign press emanating from Polish radio and press about a revolt begun in Warsaw on August 1 by order of the Polish

emigres in London. The Polish press and radio of the emigre Government in London state that the people revolting in Warsaw are in contact with the Soviet Command and that the latter is not sending them any help. Tass is authorised to state that these statements of the foreign press are either the result of misunderstanding or a libel on the Soviet High Command. Tass is in possession of information that the London Polish circles responsible for the Warsaw uprising made no attempt to co-ordinate the revolt with the Soviet High Command. The responsibility for the Warsaw events thus lies entirely with the Polish emigre circles in London."

The Diplomatic Correspondent of the same paper thought fit to add that "the Polish reactionaries' gamble with the lives of tens of thousands of Warsaw citizens has now been fully exposed." A week later the *Daily Worker* published a cartoon representing General Sosnkowski and General Anders (who commanded the victory of Monte Cassino) washing their bloodstained hands over a map of Warsaw. Even in high official British circles, the opinion was now voiced that the Warsaw rising was ill-timed, that the Allies were not consulted and that therefore the men who gave the order to fight were responsible for the fate of the city.

### **An Appeal from Moscow.**

Before I started writing this account, I talked to many people and I saw many documents which showed the Warsaw tragedy in a very different light.

First, it must be stressed that the Polish Underground Army was organised by, and acted in collaboration with, the proper British authorities. I have reason to believe that it was mainly on British suggestion that the G.O.C. of this Army gave, in several Polish towns like Lublin, Wilno and Lwow amongst others, the orders to rise against the Germans in order thus to help the advancing Russian troops. On July 26 and 28, the Polish Government in London took a decision which left to the G.O.C. of the Underground Army in Poland the choice as to when and where a rising should take place. This decision

was taken for two reasons. Events were moving very swiftly on the eastern front, while difficulties in secret radio communications between the Polish Underground and the Polish Government in London were liable to involve delay. It was therefore thought to be preferable for the men on the spot, in possession of the last-minute information, to take the final step.

Repeated appeals to the Polish population to take up arms and rise against the Germans came to them from Moscow. Some of them in the last days of July were directly addressed to the people of Warsaw. Here is the text of the most important of them broadcast in Polish by the Moscow Radio on July 29 at 8.15 p.m., as it was picked up and translated by the Monitoring Service of the B.B.C. :

*“ No doubt Warsaw already hears the guns of the battle which is soon to bring her liberation. Those who have never bowed their heads to the Hitlerite power will again, as in 1939, join battle with the Germans, this time for the decisive action.*

*“ The Polish army now entering Polish territory, trained in the U.S.S.R. is now joined to the People’s Army to form the corps of the Polish Armed Forces, the armed arm of our nation in its struggle for independence. Its ranks will be joined to-morrow by the sons of Warsaw. They will all, together with the Allied Army, pursue the enemy westward, wipes out the Hitlerite vermin from the Polish land, and strike a mortal blow at the beast of Prussian Imperialism.*

*“ For Warsaw, which did not yield, but fought on, the hour of action has already arrived. The Germans will no doubt try to defend themselves in Warsaw, and add new destruction and more thousands of victims. Our houses and parks, our bridges and railway stations our factories and our public buildings will be turned into defence positions. They will expose the city to ruin and its inhabitants to death. They will try to take away all the most precious possessions and turn into dust all that they have to leave behind. It is therefore a hundred times more necessary than ever to remember that in the flood of Hitlerite destruction all*

is lost that is not saved by active effort, that by direct active struggle in the streets of Warsaw, in its houses, factories and stores we not only hasten the moment of final liberation but also save the nation's property and the lives of our brethren."

### Maybe it was " Unrealistic."

On August 1, 1944, gun fire was heard in Warsaw, and it was known in the city that the Russians were about 17 miles east of the suburb of Praga. The G.O.C., Underground Army, also knew that the Germans had prepared a scheme for the deportation of a great number of Warsaw's male population. The scheme was to commence on the following day. On August 1, too, some German units went through the capital from east to west, giving the impression that they were starting to evacuate. For five terrible years, the people of Warsaw had waited for that moment. It is not difficult to imagine their enthusiasm when suddenly, at 5 o'clock that afternoon, the streets echoed to the splutter of machine-gun fire, when the red and white flags reappeared in the place of the detested swastika, when men in Polish uniforms went out once more openly to the attack.

Maybe all this was " ill-timed and unrealistic." But then—was it not far more ill-timed and far more unrealistic when, in September, 1939, the Poles decided to fight instead of collaborating ?

General Bor and his men knew the power of their British Allies, at least as well as Marshal Ridz Smigly ought to have known their weakness in 1939. The Poles of 1944 had been told every day by the B.B.C. of the fantastic strength of the R.A.F. ; more than once they had seen swarms of British planes over their country. General Bor and his men knew by heart the text of the Anglo-Polish Alliance of Mutual Assistance, stipulating that " the two contracting parties are bound to afford, one to the other, all the support and assistance in their power." They knew, too, that up till now this Treaty had been fulfilled by one party only—by the Poles who, in 1939 without any help from outside, supported a disastrous war against the whole might of Germany and

had fought on afterwards for five years underground, weakening German strength at every opportunity ; that, beside the British, Polish troops had fought and died in Narvik, in the battle of France, in Tobruk and at Monte Cassino, and were still doing so in Northern Italy and in France ; that the Polish Navy, accustomed to patrolling the confined Baltic, had gone forth and patrolled the seven seas with the Royal Navy, with whom she had



Men from the 27th Division of the Polish Underground Army. They wore pre-war Polish Uniforms.

fought in many an engagement, large and small ; and finally, they knew that about 1,800 Polish airmen had lost their lives in the blue uniform of the R.A.F. ; that more than 40% of the total number of Polish pilots engaged in the Battle of Britain and the Defence of London were killed.

No, one really cannot blame General Bor and the Poles of Warsaw that, in view of all this, on August 1, 1944, they started one more battle not just hoping, but feeling absolutely confident, that this time they would not fight alone.

### Once More—Alone.

Yet, after all, Warsaw has fought her final battle in August, 1944, alone, just as in September, 1939. Despite the daily appeals for arms and ammunition, as I write, 25 days of battle have gone by, and no arms or ammunition in any quantity have been sent to her. Was it impossible to do so?

I have discussed this question with many British and Polish friends but, to get the proper answer, I went to an airfield. There I talked, not to people who are making plans, but to the people who are carrying them out—to pilots of heavy bombers. One of them, W/Cdr. Pozyczka, a Pole who knows the map of Germany so well that he can draw it in detail from memory, gave me a simple reply: "More difficult things have been done and, as a matter of fact, are being done. A few weeks ago, a strong force of Americans flew over Warsaw in daylight without losing a single plane. Today, it is only a question of organisation."

All the efforts made by the Polish authorities in London to get something organised by the British would fill a large volume. After endless discussions, the supplies of Warsaw began on the 8th, when three Polish crews were allowed to drop the first containers on the Polish capital. Since then further supplies were occasionally dropped by the R.A.F. as well as by the Poles. Too little and too late. . . .

"We have done everything that is humanly possible," a member of the Polish Government told me, "in order to get assistance for Warsaw from the Allies. From the moment we received news of the rising, not one day has passed without interventions being made by us in London and Washington. The Soviet Government has also been approached. I still hope that these efforts will not prove vain."

As far as I know, the Poles never received a negative answer from the British side. The Poles have been assured of aid, as far as technical conditions would allow. The Americans addressed mid-August a message to Moscow. On the answer to this note depended whether or not they could use their base in Russia to carry aid to Warsaw. I failed to confirm that a reply had been received. Although there are no diplomatic relations between the Polish Government in London and the Soviet, it is obvious that during his visit to Moscow the Polish Prime Minister, Mr. Mikolajczyk, raised the question of relief for the Polish capital. Nothing has been yet published about the two conversations he had with Marshal Stalin on August 3 and 9. Yet, I have good reason to believe that the Polish Prime Minister impressed on Stalin the plight of Warsaw's defenders and stressed the need for immediate help.

If the British were reluctant, why did not the Poles, who had 12,000 airmen in Britain do something themselves, you may ask. The answer is simple. Despite this imposing total, the Poles had only a relatively very small number of crews on heavy bombers and these had been decreased by high losses in the spring and summer. Still, if British authority and orders had been given, immediately when asked, this small force would maybe have turned the tide in Warsaw, even without the participation of British crews.

Instead of this, from August 8 onwards, some material was sent, carried by British and Polish crews, but in such small quantities that it could not greatly influence the actual fighting. When the figures are published they will prove to be far lower than the number of planes used in these days against the most negligible target. The press and the B.B.C. have talked about heavy losses. Compared with those sustained in other operations, these casualties were numerically small indeed.

### **Warsaw—A Warning.**

I hope that when this account is published some decision will have been reached. I know that it will be too late. As I write, 70 to 80 per cent of Warsaw is already



completely destroyed. The defenders are doomed. But will this sacrifice be of any use—not for Warsaw, not even for Poland, but for that better world that we are hearing so much about? I wonder.

A few days ago, I went to Southern England to visit a Polish Fighter Squadron. Twelve of its pilots had won a nice victory that same morning. In a 14-minute fight, they had brought down over Beauvais 16 German aircraft for the loss of only one of theirs.

As they told their story, one of them suddenly asked me: "And now, Mr. Newspaper Man, could you explain to us just what we are fighting for?"

I made no answer. There was none.

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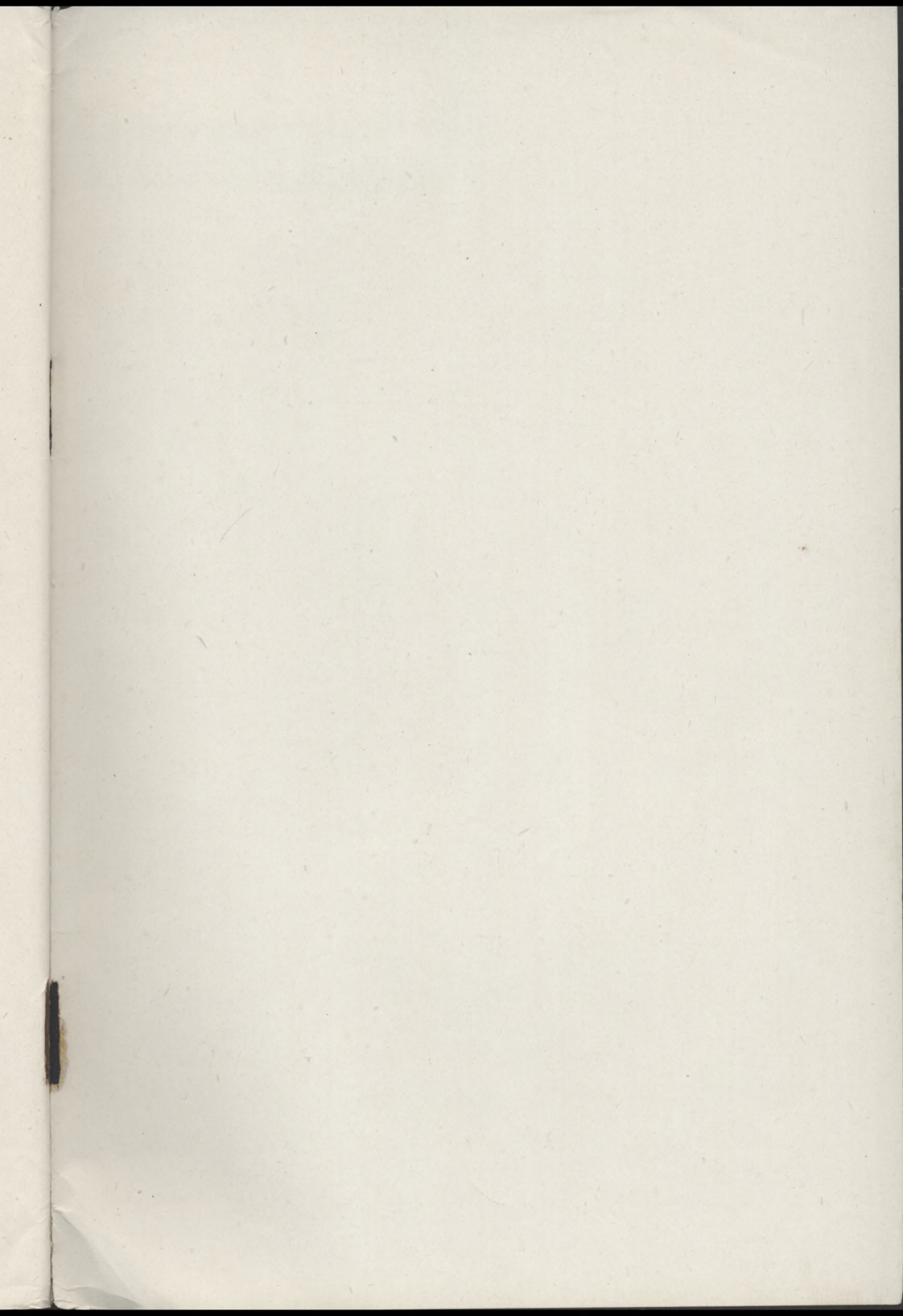
LONDON,

25th August, 1944.

By the same Author  
"I WAS ONE OF THEM."

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