

THE COMMON CAUSE

FORTNIGHTLY OF THE POLISH SECTION OF THE "SWORD OF THE SPIRIT"

EDITORIAL OFFICE: 27 GROSVENOR STREET, LONDON, W.1

Telephone: MAY 2928

Vol. II No. 10

SUNDAY, MAY 16th, 1943

Price 3d.

JAN REMBIELIŃSKI

BEFORE THE INVASION OF EUROPE

BRITISH PUBLIC OPINION WAS unanimous in stressing that the case of the Polish officers lost in Soviet Russia meant a considerable success of German propaganda. Nevertheless, the greater part of the public of this country has not yet realized what was the nature of the German success and what were the benefits derived from it by the Third Reich.

It was commonly said that "German propaganda managed to instigate discord among the Allied powers." This statement was hardly correct, for the campaign of Goebbels had mostly failed in its endeavours to cause such discord. The British press, particularly its more popular organs, mainly confined itself to repeating the Soviet point of view, without so much as hinting at any divergence of views between the "great allies." With adroitness that was astounding if not admirable, the press advocated at the same time two mutually contradictory points of view: that it was "beyond any doubt" that the Polish officers had been massacred by the Germans themselves; and that the whole matter should be hushed up and minimized, that it was in very bad taste to bring it up at all. The idea of carrying out an investigation by neutrals of the Red Cross, who would give their opinion after returning to neutral territory, was considered by some popular paper so funny that they dealt with it in cartoons instead of articles.

Where was, then, the success—if any—and the real aim of the German campaign? Perhaps the time at which the grim story was revealed may serve as a clue.

Anyone acquainted with the technique of German propaganda knows that discoveries and items of information are released by it not necessarily as soon as they are available, but at a politically appropriate moment. In this case the timing was obvious: the story was launched on the eve of the generally expected Allied invasion of the Continent.

Looking at the whole problem in the light of the timing and purpose of the German propaganda campaign, we may be able to see it in a different perspective and to discern the relative proportions of the elements of the situation. The German propaganda did not intend at all to act on the public opinion of the Allied nations, nor did it hope to achieve any serious split among them. It was addressed mainly to the nations of the European Continent awaiting an Allied invasion. The real subject of the campaign was, therefore, neither Poland nor Russia, which merely served as an excuse and starting point. The actual intention was to discredit the British in the eyes of the continental nations, just when they are about to land in Europe.

The European nations, suffering, humiliated, maltreated for over three years, expect a British invasion with hope mixed with anxiety. They hope to see the end of their present condition and of all that it means, but at the same time they are afraid to see their countries become again a battlefield and the scene of new savage fighting for a future that is still shrouded in mystery.

It is natural that these nations listen with the keenest interest to any news about the island which seems about to send millions of soldiers to land on the mainland of Europe. They are very sensitive to any reports about the ideas of the expected invaders, about their code of conduct and the treatment which might be expected from them. They want to know which are the principles or rules which will be respected and which ones may be disregarded.

But one thought is foremost in the minds of the European nations. Ground to dust by the fierce antagonisms of the great powers, they want to keep their independence and their individuality. These nations, equal to any in the world by cultural achievement, historical glory and contemporary sacrifice, hope that the great powers, richer in men and raw materials than they are, may respect their freedom and integrity.

That is why the treatment by Britain

of Poland, her first and most faithful ally in this war, is the object of the particular interest of all the continental nations. They judge the attitude of Britain without taking into account the daily proofs of sympathy, friendship and respect extended by the British public to the Poles in this country. They form

their opinion on the basis of quotations from the popular London daily press. They estimate the loyalty of the British as allies not by comparing the attitude of the London press towards Poland with the treatment of the Poles by the Germans, but by setting it against the tone used by the Germans when they speak

about their allies, such as Hungary, Bulgaria, Finland, etc. That is how they form their views and make their decisions.

That is why the eagerness with which some of the cheaper London dailies attacked Poland did not render a good service to the Allied cause. It seems that

no one caught Goebbels's bait more easily than the editors of those newspapers. Curiously enough, those very organs that clamour most loudly for a "second front" did their best to jeopardize the success of such an invasion of Europe. News from the continent naturally takes a long time to come to us, but even in the London press we could read on May 1st that:

"The dominant note of the articles in the French press is preoccupation with the fate of Poland, the faithful ally of Britain. France—according to the Radio Paris commentator—would have received similar treatment if she had not been saved by Marshal Petain."

The *Sunday Times* (May 2nd) reported from the other most likely scene of invasion, the Balkans, that German propaganda proclaimed there that "since Britain intended to hand over all the Balkans to Russia, resistance to all Allied attack was essentially in the interest" of the nations concerned. "Even among occupied countries" — adds the *Sunday Times*—"with representatives in London the Germans hope to have some success."

✱

The more we realize the political damage caused by the unrestrained behaviour of the popular press, the better we can appreciate the wisdom — from the point of view of diplomatic expediency as well as from others — of the attitude of the British Catholic press. We quote the more important articles on this subject on page two.

It is noteworthy that the difference in the attitude of the Catholic press and its originality are due, in the last analysis, to one factor: the Catholic writers could not fail, when appreciating the problem of the murder of Polish officers from all possible tactical and political angles, to put moral considerations first and to regard the whole matter mainly as a moral issue. This respect for moral standards served as a safeguard against the trap set by Goebbels — and it also provided the tone of sincerity and genuine honesty, which appeals to the nations of the continent more than anything else and inspires them with confidence.

Europe is torn apart. It desires unity and a common language. But that does not mean that everyone wants to speak Esperanto. It is a common ethical standard, not a common speech that is needed.

It is necessary to be agreed on what is good and what is evil, and to know what to praise and what to condemn, irrespective of whether it happens on this or the other side of the fighting line. We need a common code of conduct which, like the code of the medieval knights, should override all other considerations and apply equally to friends and foes. Conduct conforming to that moral code should be respected even in our enemies and its violation despised even in our friends. The wider the scope of such a code and the stricter its rules, the stronger and more united will be our civilization. But there must be in any case a certain minimum of decency that everyone must observe in any circumstances — if we are to have any reliability in international and human relations, and therefore any security. Otherwise there can be only permanent war, until final extermination of one or both sides.

These facts are widely known and all the plans for the post-war reconstruction of the world include the re-establishment of such commonly accepted rules and principles as the basis of security and order. But every peace is shaped and influenced by the war which preceded it, by the experience acquired and the opinions formed during that war by the nations participating in the peace.

That is why the respect for ethical standards in dealings between nations should not be looked upon as something that can wait until after the war. We should begin already today to follow the advice of that great statesman, Winston Churchill, and to act as "good Europeans" if we want to witness an actual reconstruction of Europe.

J. A. Ż.

SAINT JOSEPHAT KUNCEWICZ BISHOP OF POLOCK

THE UNION WITH THE GREEK CHURCH — divided from Rome since the time of Focius — concluded in Florence in 1439, did not give full results at first. It was designed to save Byzantium, a bastion of Christianity, from Turkish conquest. After the fall of the Eastern Empire, it lost ground. The Union was not forgotten by the Holy See, but a hundred years had passed before an opportunity for its revival occurred in Poland.



One of the old Jesuit Churches in Eastern Poland (Pinsk).

On the back page: St. Josephat Kuncewicz, from a seventeenth century painting.

After the Union of Lublin, which associated closely Lithuania and the eastern provinces with Poland proper, Catholicism flourished in the Polish Commonwealth. The troubles and difficulties of the period of Reformation seemed to be over, the Jesuits were extremely active everywhere and it was quite natural that some thought was given to the problem of recapturing for the Church of Rome the masses of population in the east, which had remained attached to the schism for centuries and were generally backward in culture.

King Stefan Batory established a Ruthenian section at the university of Wilno immediately after its foundation. The famous Jesuit preacher, Peter Skarga, published in the same city the book "About the Unity of God's Church" (1595). These first attempts were, however, opposed by the Ruthenian magnates, like Konstanty Ostrogski and Alexander Czartoryski, who were in favour of political union with Poland, but against a union of the churches.

The religious union was favoured by the schismatic bishops Hipacy Pocij and Cyril Terlecki, who went in 1595 to Rome, to Pope Clement VIII, to pay him homage on behalf of the Ruthenian episcopate. They desired a reform and the emancipation of their clergy, which was completely dependent on the parish benefactors and had declined to a low level of morals and culture. These bishops were anxious to secure spiritual benefits for their flock, but they did not realize the strength of the prejudice created in the minds of the masses by centuries of schism. The Roman Catholics, rich in the splendid tradition of the Middle Ages and Renaissance, looked upon the schismatics as practically barbarians. The latter, somewhat conscious of their cultural inferiority, hated the Catholics and were prepared to defend their customs and rites with fanatical fervour. There were in some towns Orthodox

fraternities maintaining schools and printing offices, which enjoyed the support of such magnates as Konstanty Ostrogski, as well as that of the Polish protestants.

The strong separatism of the Orthodox Ruthenians was encouraged by outside influence. Just as the defenders of La Rochelle had been assisted by the English, who wanted to oppose Richelieu, so the Ruthenians were helped in their resistance by the Turks of Constantinople, who were interested in weakening Poland.

It was a difficult and complicated situation, which required a great spiritual influence that could move the conscience of the masses and enlighten the minds of the powerful lords. Jan Kuncewicz, known as Josephat since he had entered the Basilian Order, achieved by his holy life and martyrdom what had seemed impossible.

He was born in Włodzimierz in Volhynia, as the son of a well-to-do merchant. He was sent as a young boy to Wilno, to learn the trade of his family. He obeyed the orders of his parents, but he also displayed strong interest in religion and attended regularly the Basilian church of the Holy Trinity. He visited the Jesuits of the Church of St. John, and he was already at that time inspired by the motto of his future struggle: "I detest the synagogue of evil men."

He was concerned at first mainly with the improvement of his own mind and after entering the Basilian monastery of Wilno in 1603 he practised an ascetic life, sleeping on bare boards, fasting, scourging himself and following the example of the ancient hermits. The monastery was at that time in a state of neglect and the young monk was mostly left to himself in his lonely cell. He had little contact with the outside world, and yet the fame of his holiness began to spread in the city. Kuncewicz did not know Latin, but he endeavoured to learn it from the Jesuits Fabrycy and Gruzewski, besides studying liturgy, Greek and Old Slavonic manuscripts. His research convinced him that the truth of the original unity of the churches was falsified and distorted in the publications of Prince Ostrogski's printers. This discovery intensified his devotion and he was heard to pray, kneeling on snow in the monastic cemetery: "Reduce the schism, O Lord, and grant the return of the unity of Thy churches."

Jan Welamin Rutki, born in 1573, in the manor of Ruta near Nowogrodek, was a contemporary of Josephat Kuncewicz. His origin, upbringing and character were quite different, but he formed a strong attachment to the saint and remained his closest friend and collaborator. Rutki was a rich nobleman, born as a protestant. He originally attended the Calvinist college of Wilno, but he was soon converted by the Jesuits of St. John's, and he went to the university of Prague, thence to Rome. He felt himself destined for Divine service. Pope Clement VIII actually ordered him to embrace the Greek rite, and after his return to Wilno Rutki called on the Orthodox Metropolitan Hipacy Pocij, who received with some mistrust the young man of typically western education, obviously strongly influenced by "Latinism." Pocij was in favour of the Union, but he also desired to maintain the outward customs and tradition of the schism.

While Rutki became the archimandrite of the monastery of the Holy Trinity in Wilno, a young man, Mielecy Smotrycki, was terminating in the same city his studies in Orthodox theology, at the expense of Prince Ostrogski.

Loathing the Catholic Church, he went to Germany and then returned to Wilno after his foreign studies, to publish the book "Lament of the Ruthenian Church," in which he defended the schism. The separatists were active and an attempt was even made on the life of the metropolitan Hipacy Pocij. The Union movement, spread by Saint Josephat Kuncewicz and Rutki, made considerable progress,

especially after Rutki became metropolitan of Kiev and Josephat Kuncewicz archimandrite of Wilno. They founded five reformed Basilian monasteries in Wilno, Bytyn, Zyrowice near Slonim, Nowogrodek and Minsk. In order to accelerate the reform, they sent young monks to study in Latin colleges and they held annual meetings in Ruta, the family estate of the metropolitan of Kiev.

Many miraculous events marked the term of office of Josephat Kuncewicz as archimandrite of Wilno, and conversions multiplied wherever he went. Unfortunately he left few writings, but it is known that he was co-author of the book "Defence of the Unity of the Church, proving that the Eastern and Roman Churches must be United," published by Leon Momowicz in Wilno.

In the years when Kuncewicz was Bishop of Polock (1617-1623), he renovated the cathedral of Polock and built churches in Witebsk, Mscislaw, Orsza and Mohylew. At the annual meetings of the clergy he particularly endeavoured to propagate the abbreviated catechism of Trident. At about the same time Mielecy Smotrycki was mixed up with activities hostile to Poland. Teofan, metropolitan of Jerusalem, who was in the service of the Turks, consecrated him schismatic bishop of the same Polock, which Smotrycki never reached on account of the wars which were then fought in Eastern Poland. His agents, however, were active in Polock, and they, according to reliable evidence, instigated the riots in Witebsk during which Bishop Josephat Kuncewicz met a martyr's death.

St. Josephat's friends and subordinates, aware of the plot against him in Witebsk, urged him to leave that town. The bishop refused to go — perhaps he wanted to die, hoping to become the patron of unity with Rome, as Thomas Cantuar had become the patron of the freedom of the church.

Among the miracles which followed his death one of the most touching was the conversion of his sworn enemy, Mielecy Smotrycki. He went to Palestine and Constantinople and saw the miserable condition of the Greek Church under Turkish rule. He discovered too that the patriarch Cyril Lukoris was a Calvinist at heart and he realized that the conditions in Poland were infinitely better and that they could be further improved by the Union. He prayed to St. Josephat to let him return to his native country. After writing to Pope Urban VIII he obtained permission to return and he even secured a meeting in Dubno with the metropolitan Rutki. Thus, praying for the forgiveness of his former enemy and victim, he died in 1633, faithful to the Union. His death was soon followed by that of Rutki, the Athanasius of the Ruthenian people, who was surrounded on his deathbed by eight Uniate bishops. The Union, according to the testimony of Don A. Guepin, the Benedictine, took root in Poland for two centuries, saving twelve million people from the schism and securing the religious and political unity and homogeneity of the Kingdom. "It also postponed by two centuries the triumph of the Focian schism in the Eastern Church and it extended the boundaries of the Catholic Church and of true civilization beyond the rivers Dnieper and Dvina," adds the Benedictine chronicler.

The first new attack on the Union was the work of Peter the Great of Russia. During a visit to Polock in 1705, being drunk, he killed the archimandrite of the Basilian order with his own hands, while his courtiers murdered four monks, after which they burnt the bodies, for the Tzar had cried, "There shall be no more Josephats." Realizing on the following day the folly of his drunken outrage, the Tzar expressed his regrets and promised to give to the monastery a rich compensation — a promise which, Russian fashion, was never honoured.

ENGLISH CATHOLIC PRESS ON POLAND AND RUSSIA

"CATHOLIC HERALD" (No. 2983):

"The breaking of diplomatic relations between Poland and Russia is a deplorable business. It is Germany's first purely diplomatic victory since the war began. . . . But the present situation is not an accident; it is the culmination of a long story of tension whose grounds are to be found in the earliest days of the war when Russia took advantage of Nazi aggression to occupy the eastern half of Poland. Poland had no option at the time but to regard this as an act of war. After Hitler launched his invasion of Russia, however, the Poles under General Sikorski's leadership did everything in their power to put Russo-Polish relations on a co-operative basis. This was plain common sense then, as it remains plain common sense today, for Poland's future must depend on satisfactory relations with Russia. . . . Under the pressure of self-interest and because Poland shared with the other Allies the common admiration of Russia's heroism and the common understanding of the exceptional difficulties of Russian administration, she was willing to postpone any serious investigation of many matters which gave rise to acute Polish anxiety. It was not only a question of the uncertainty of Russian political intentions; it was also a matter of the fate of large numbers of Poles who remained persistently missing as a result of the Russian occupation of Eastern Poland and the deportation of Polish people into the Soviet. Apart from any political propaganda we ourselves must remain particularly impressed by the evidence of Bishop Gawlina who is known to us and of whom it can certainly be said that he would not countenance any accusations that were not very well grounded and very important. Among the Bishop's worries is the treatment of Polish priests and the inability to get permission for spiritual administration to the civilian Poles.

"Such serious matters, however, were not pressed until it became fairly clear that Russia's attitude to Poland was undergoing a notable change. The indications were that Russia was no longer finding it advisable to maintain friendly relations with the Poles, but was seeking rather to criticise the Sikorski administration with the presumed intention of 'rectifying her frontiers' after the war without reference to Poland's claims. Imagine the feeling of Englishmen who knew that perhaps two million of their fellow citizens, men, women and children, were held by a foreign Power under suspected conditions and who were being asked at the same time to submit after victory to the loss of vast areas of their own country!

"It was in the midst of such a situation that the Germans launched their own clever attack, namely the story of the discovery of the bodies of ten thousand Polish officers alleged to have been killed by the Russians in 1939. The fate of these officers has long been unknown, and despite repeated Polish inquiries of their Russian allies no satisfactory information has been vouchsafed. Even at the last moment it lay within Russian power to offer that information and undermine the German coup. Instead of this Russia only took the occasion to renew its attacks on the Polish administration. The obvious and only course for Poland was to appeal to the International Red Cross whose job it would be to discover the truth and to nail down yet another German propaganda lie, if such it was. To this the Russian answer has been a note breaking relations between the two countries, a note which moreover alludes to 'Soviet Lithuania,' as well as 'White Russia.' Yet in the face of all this, a Liberal journalist is able to comment: 'The moment has come for London and Washington to address a plain-spoken remonstrance to the Polish Government before its ill-timed manifestations plunge an unhappy country into very deep waters.'

"THE CATHOLIC TIMES" (No. 3844):

"The Soviet rejection of the International Red Cross as a body competent to investigate a

matter in dispute between nations cut off from normal communication, means that there is now no organization capable of acting as an acceptable mediator between nation and nation.

"It is the contention of the Soviet Government that the Polish Government should have dismissed out of hand the German allegation that the Russians had executed the thousands of Polish officers, whose bodies are said to have been found near Smolensk. Had there already been, from the Russians, some satisfactory explanation of the fate of 8,300 Polish officers who have been missing since they were taken prisoners by the Red Army in 1939, then doubtless the German story would have been rejected instantly as pernicious propaganda. But, as the Polish statement had pointed out, no explanation had been given by the Russians, and, lacking definite news, what could the Poles do but seek an inquiry? What body other than the International Red Cross was there available for such inquiry? The rejection of this one surviving, hitherto acceptable, non-national organization is almost as great a gain for German propaganda as the actual split made in the Allied forces. . . .

"The Soviet note which severs diplomatic relations seems to protest over much. To suggest that the Polish Government is acting in conjunction with Hitler and 'in deference to Hitler's tyranny deals a treacherous blow against the Soviet Union,' is not only negated by the whole of Polish policy since 1939, but must read very curiously to those who recall the autumn of that year, and the treacherous invasion of Poland by a Russia allied to the now hated Hitlerite regime. To suggest that the Red Cross would not act impartially is to insult that organization, and to discredit in advance its possible findings."

"THE TABLET" (No. 5373):

"We have a very particular obligation towards the Poles, who resisted the Germans and accepted war against great odds in 1939. The Poles did not say that Stalin's pact with Hitler made Polish resistance out of the question. Some of the criticism, like that in the 'News Chronicle' for example, to which the Polish Government is being subjected for showing any independence of mind towards Moscow, invites the reflection that we were profoundly thankful that the Poles were not cowed into defeatism in August 1939, and did not then say that their first principle must be to keep in step with Moscow. It is their proud record,

and it is an immense record, that no leading Pole has been found to make himself the champion of collaboration with Germany. Laval talks ceaselessly of the Bolshevik peril, although his country is happily situated in the far west of Europe. But the Poles have resisted the temptation to listen to the German blandishments, as they consistently refused, before 1939, German suggestions that they should go hunting together in the East. There is thus a singular injustice when General Sikorski's Government is accused of being in collusion with Hitler, and we were very glad to see even 'The Times' declaring editorially that such a charge, if seriously intended, is to be justly and indignantly repudiated. . . .

"But the difficulty about accepting the Soviet version, that the Germans committed the murders, is that when first, in 1941, Polish visitors to Russia began making their fruitless and increasingly anxious inquiries about the whereabouts of these thousands of Polish officers, they were not then told, at any point, that the explanation of the disappearance was that the officers had been captured by the invading Germans. It would have been a complete explanation, if it had been advanced at the time. As it is, while the whole Western world has learnt to find nothing unbelievable about the ingenuity, cruelty and deceitfulness of Hitler and Goebbels and their associates; the more responsible English journals must and do hesitate to echo and adopt the Moscow explanation. They feel a responsibility for future lives which may or may not be sacrificed precisely according to our attitude today."

"THE UNIVERSE" (No. 4294):

"It is a tragic business that one of our Allies—Soviet Russia—should have severed diplomatic relations with another—Poland—in circumstances which can benefit nobody but the common enemy. So much is common ground. Whatever some so-called realists may do, Catholics cannot allow themselves to approach such questions as these with a conviction that the more powerful or useful ally must be assumed to be in the right. We do not know the truth about the alleged mass-graves in the Katinski forest. It may never be known. We do, however, know enough to make it clear that no government with the least claim to represent its people could have acted otherwise than the Polish Government in London has done. Ever since the Russo-Polish Treaty of 1941 the Poles have been asking for information about the

thousands of officers and other prisoners taken into Russia when Stalin, as Hitler's ally, invaded Poland. They have never got an answer. It is a travesty of the facts to say that they accepted a German story without attempting to ascertain the Russian view."

"THE WEEKLY REVIEW" (Vol. 37, No. 5):

"Over and over again in this paper during the last three and a half years we have repeated that the test of this war will be the complete restoration of Poland as a strong and independent nation.

"Both the justification of Great Britain in taking up arms and her success at the conclusion of hostilities will be measured by that fact. If Poland, through our fault or our weakness, emerges from this struggle subjected to the will of another Power, or with her territory truncated or even returned to her with the artificial, uneconomic and indefensible frontiers within which the treaties of the last war confined her, Great Britain will have failed, not only to accomplish the task she undertook, but also to justify herself for undertaking it at all. . . .

"The Soviet Government has broken off relations with Poland, ostensibly as the result of the Polish Government's request to the Red Cross to investigate a story about the murder of Polish officers by the Soviet; but in the note handed by M. Molotov to the Polish Ambassador in Moscow the following statement occurs: 'It is known to the Soviet Government that this hostile campaign has been undertaken by the Polish Government with the aim of exerting pressure on the Soviet Union and thereby snatching territorial concessions at the expense of the Soviet Ukraine, Soviet White Russia and Soviet Lithuania.'

"The words we have italicized are ominous. On the one hand, neither the Ukraine nor Lithuania is a part of Russia; and on the other, if this statement means that the eastern half of Poland, overrun at the beginning of the war by Soviet armies acting strategically with the German Reich, is now claimed as Soviet territory, then the Soviet Government is directly violating the principles for which Great Britain and her Allies are fighting. We hope that such a supposition may prove unfounded and that the rupture of relations with Poland by the Soviet Government may be only temporary.

"But for us there is only one honourable course open. The integrity of Poland must be maintained."

THE COMMON CAUSE

(An open letter to the Editor of "Sprawa")

Sir,—The miscellany of absorbing, interesting and devotional articles to which we are treated fortnightly in the columns of your splendid paper have frequently stirred a lazy but appreciative reader to wield an untalented pen in peans of praise, gratitude, or friendly criticism; but alas, "the spirit indeed is willing." I beg of you, therefore, if procrastination is a sin, to allow a penitent reader to make reparation through the medium of "SPRAWA."

After receiving Holy Communion this morning, the first Sunday of May, my meditations wandered into somewhat unorthodox but inspiring channels.

May—the month of Mary. May—month of dialectic materialist demonstrations. May—in England, the month of birds, flowers and nature at her loveliest. What contrast and what more natural than that these thoughts should lead to Poland and Polish friends in their present distress? To Mary's Kingdom torn by anguish and sorrow both physical and mental; to the common danger and the common cause, and to England, Mary's Dowry.

Another link in my chain of thought brought the flush of shame to my cheeks, for I dwelt on our daily press and its shameful campaign of malice, garbled half-truths and deliberate suppression, misleading to our own people, and to use the mildest term, disheartening to our brave Polish allies.

I would like this opportunity to express to you that the thoughts and sympathies of some millions of Catholics in England are with you all during this fresh sorrow, and I can safely say not alone of Catholics but of a vast concourse of earnest Christians of all denominations whose real feelings the daily press can by no means claim to represent.

But sympathy is not enough. We all realize that the poisoned shafts aimed at Poland are directed from the same

quarters which aim to dictating England's educational policy with detriment to our Christian schools. From the same quarter which recently erased all reference to Christian home-building and prayer when reporting the broadcast of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth. From quarters which at all times have waged relentless war against all things Christian.

That Poland suffers so much at the hands of all the enemies of Christianity, Nazi, Bolshevik, and those who although having their existence in this fair land I will not describe as British, can be for one reason alone—namely, that Poland is essentially and profoundly Christian; has been and always will be the eastern bastion of Christian culture and civilization.

What means have we to combat this anti-Christian propaganda, which, if it brings sorrow to you, dear Poles, most certainly spells disaster and dishonour to our own dear country unless we shall gather about Poland, the champion of Christianity with an even greater enthusiasm than the upholders of atheism and modern materialism have gathered to the standard of the country which is the Mecca of those ideas?

The number of Communists in this country is but a very small handful when compared with the several million Catholics and the many million sound Christians of other denominations; but what the Communists lack in numbers, they make up for in loud and spirited enthusiasms. I see many people bearing the badge of the "Young Communist Friends of Russia," but I eagerly await to see the badge of the Christian friends of Poland. Surely if we can only emulate the zeal of our opponents we can by weight of numbers and the use of a powerful weapon denied to them, namely, of unified prayer, achieve a resounding victory over the forces of evil.

I, therefore, make a suggestion that through the medium of "SPRAWA" a great "League of Prayer" for our "Common Cause" should be fostered, an Anglo-Polish society which will pledge itself to pray daily, to communicate often, and to propagate by word and example the ideals which will mutually benefit each of our countries. A society which will remain in being long after the misery of war has passed away: let us place our society under the patronage of Our Blessed Lady under her titles of Czestochowa and Walsingham, and let us promise to her, that after she has obtained for us the victory over all our enemies, which without doubt she will do, we will express our gratitude by honouring her in pilgrimage to her respective shrines in both Her Kingdom of Poland and Her Dowry, England.

I feel quite certain that such a project would have been dear to the heart of our late dear Cardinal Hinsley and will have the benefit of his prayers before the throne of God; I am sure too that the Hierarchy of Great Britain will readily grant their blessing and patronage, and I do not doubt that the Catholics of this country and especially of my native county of Lancashire will more than vie with the Poles in applying for membership.

I would lastly suggest that a badge by which we can recognize our members and which we would proudly wear, although not essential would be an asset which the Communist does not neglect to use.

Perhaps your readers will write and give their views and, if approved, suggest a title for the organization.

My sincere wishes to you, "SPRAWA," and all readers.

PETER GILBERTSON,

3 Pembridge Square,
London, W.2.

IGNACY BALIŃSKI

THE PROBLEM OF CLERGY IN LIBERATED POLAND

IT IS GENERALLY REALIZED that one of the greatest obstacles to the reconstruction of Poland after its liberation from foreign oppression will be the lack, in the first few years, of trained men—especially in the professions and callings requiring a fairly long period of education and training.

The shortage of qualified personnel is due mainly to the extermination or deportation of the educated class, as well as to the closing down over a period of several years of all the universities and secondary schools.

That is why various Polish schools and colleges have been founded in Great Britain. They will train a number of people who will be ready to start work immediately after the return to Poland of our armies.

The Polish nation, which comprises about 29 million Catholics of all rites, will need not only technicians and professional men, but also spiritual leaders, that is priests qualified to administer the Holy Sacraments and to teach the principles of Catholic faith. The population of Poland has been cruelly deprived of religious services since the beginning of the war.

Many churches will have to be rebuilt, reconsecrated or returned to their proper use after desecration by the enemies of Christianity. The work to be done by the clergy in that respect will be very considerable.

Although the total population of the country may be painfully reduced, the number of priests and members of religious orders will be curtailed even more. Those who will survive the terrible trials of the present war will be weak and exhausted by their sufferings. At least two or three years will be needed for training and consecrating new priests.

Several thousand priests have been lost, either by execution, by deportation, or by death caused by privation and disease. Practically all the monasteries have been closed down and confiscated, while the monastic clergy have been dispersed or maltreated.

The theological faculties at the universities exist no longer, since the universities themselves are closed down. It is understood that only three of the ecclesiastical seminaries, which existed in all the dioceses, are still active—namely those of Warsaw, Cracow and Sandomierz. No new alumni are admitted to these seminaries.

★

This situation makes it incumbent upon the Poles abroad to take steps to supply their country, as soon as it is liberated, with an adequate number of Polish lay and monastic clergy, or at any rate clergy familiar with the Polish language—even if they should be of nationality other than Polish.

No doubt the priests who left Poland as a consequence of the war will return there at its end, but they are not numerous.

It would, therefore, appear advisable to establish a Polish ecclesiastical seminary in one of the Allied countries, for the purpose of training young candidates for Holy Orders, who might even be granted deferment of military service for the time of their studies. It would be understood, however, that they would return to the ranks if they should fail to qualify for priesthood.

As many as possible of the Polish clergy of America, or of American priests of Polish origin, should offer their services—at any rate for the most difficult initial period. The Polish bishops in the United States should encourage their clergy to volunteer and assist younger priests in learning Polish.

There are also certainly many priests of other nationalities who should be willing to undertake what will be almost a kind of missionary work in Poland after the war. I have heard about several British priests who have already started to learn the Polish language with that aim in view and who study the psychology of our people, especially its religious tradition. This generous initiative deserves encouragement.

I believe that the Polish ecclesiastical authorities, acting in collaboration with the Polish Government and the ecclesiastical circles of other countries, should deal with this matter—for instance, by granting scholarship to foreign priests or alumni wishing to offer after the war religious service to the people of Poland.

Men do not live by bread alone, for the Word must be there.

Printed by Letchworth Printers Ltd.,
Letchworth Garden City, Herts.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Sir,—In the issue of the "Common Cause" of April 4th, the author of the article "Polish Toleration" was described as "a member of a family which has been long prominent in Polish protestantism. The author himself, however, is a Catholic convert."

I should like to explain that I have never changed my religion. One of my parents was a Catholic and the other was not; but I was baptized in the Catholic Church. I was educated, however, in the Protestant School of the Evangelic-Augsburg Church in Warsaw—which had, incidentally, a majority of Catholic pupils. Observing since childhood the close relations between the members of these two Christian churches, which affected me personally, I thought myself qualified to write objectively about the mutual attitude of the Catholics and Protestants in Poland.

The difference of religious dogma did not prevent the existence of harmonious relations, based on mutual respect and fraternal feelings, reinforced by the family ties which played such an important part in Polish life.

W. RAWICZ.