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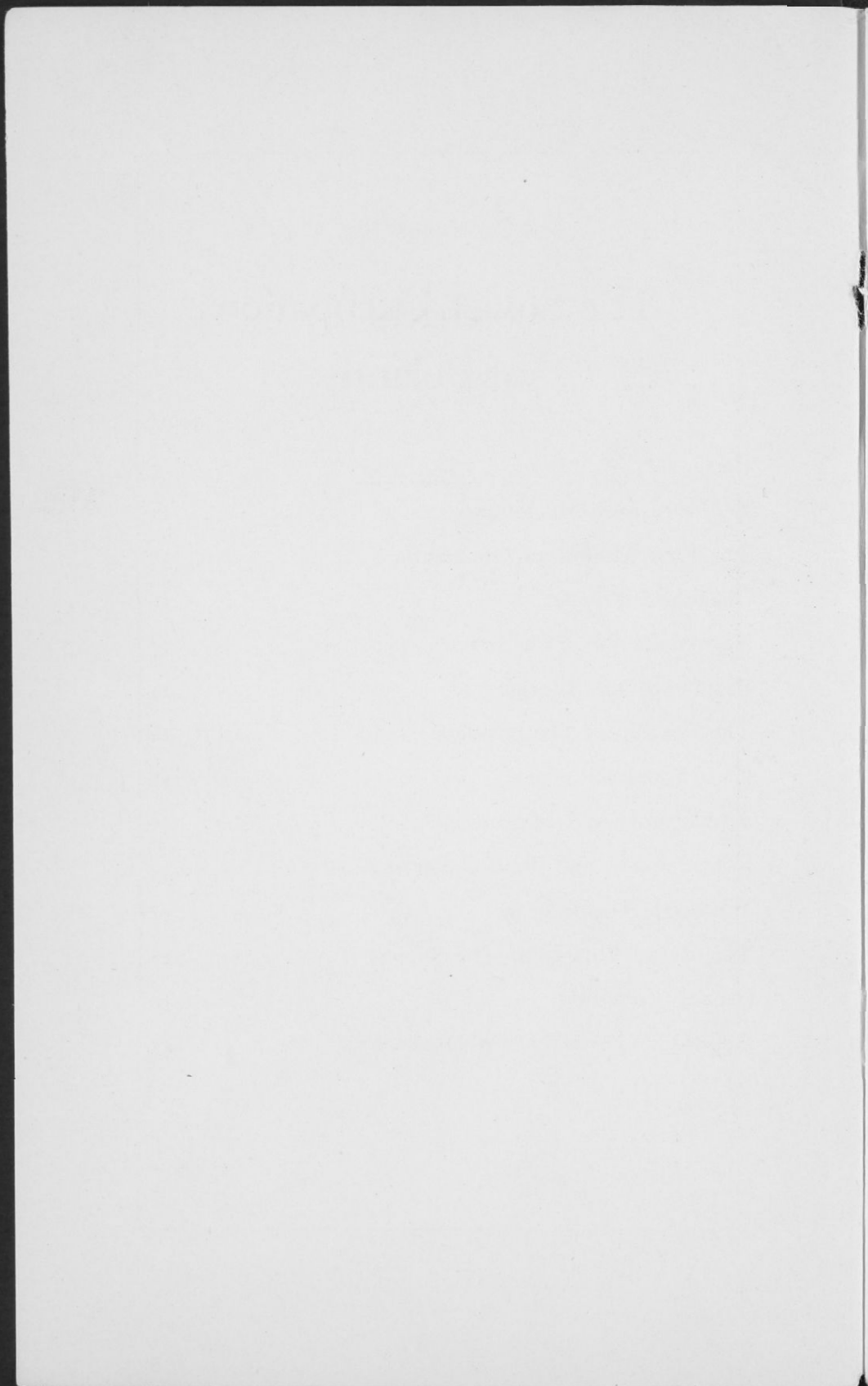
**The Soviet Occupation
of Poland**

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The Soviet Occupation of Poland



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PREFACE.

On September 17th, 1939 the Polish Ambassador to the U.S.S.R., Mr. Grzybowski, was summoned to the Soviet Foreign Office. On arriving at the Kremlin, he was received by Mr. Potemkin who read him a Note to the effect that the Soviets regarded the Polish Government as disintegrated, and the Polish State as having ceased to exist. All agreements concluded between Poland and the U.S.S.R. were in consequence declared to have ceased to operate. Poland bereft of leadership had become a suitable field for all manner of hazard and surprises constituting a threat to the U.S.S.R. Furthermore, the Soviet Government could not view with indifference the fate of the kindred Ukrainian and White Russian people living on Polish territory, and, in existing circumstances, left defenceless. Accordingly, the Soviet Government had ordered its troops to cross the Polish border and take under their protection the life and property of the population of Western Ukraine and Western White Russia. At the same time, the Soviet Government proposed to extricate the Polish people from the unfortunate war into which they were dragged by their unwise leaders, and enable them to live a peaceful life¹.

There existed between Poland and the Soviet Republic a pact of non-aggression dated July 25, 1932, which on May 5, 1934 was extended until December 31, 1945.

Notwithstanding the strong misgivings aroused in all quarters by the new pact concluded on August 23, 1939, between the Soviets and Germany, in the first days of the war between Poland and Germany a general impression

¹ The Polish White Book pp. 189-190.

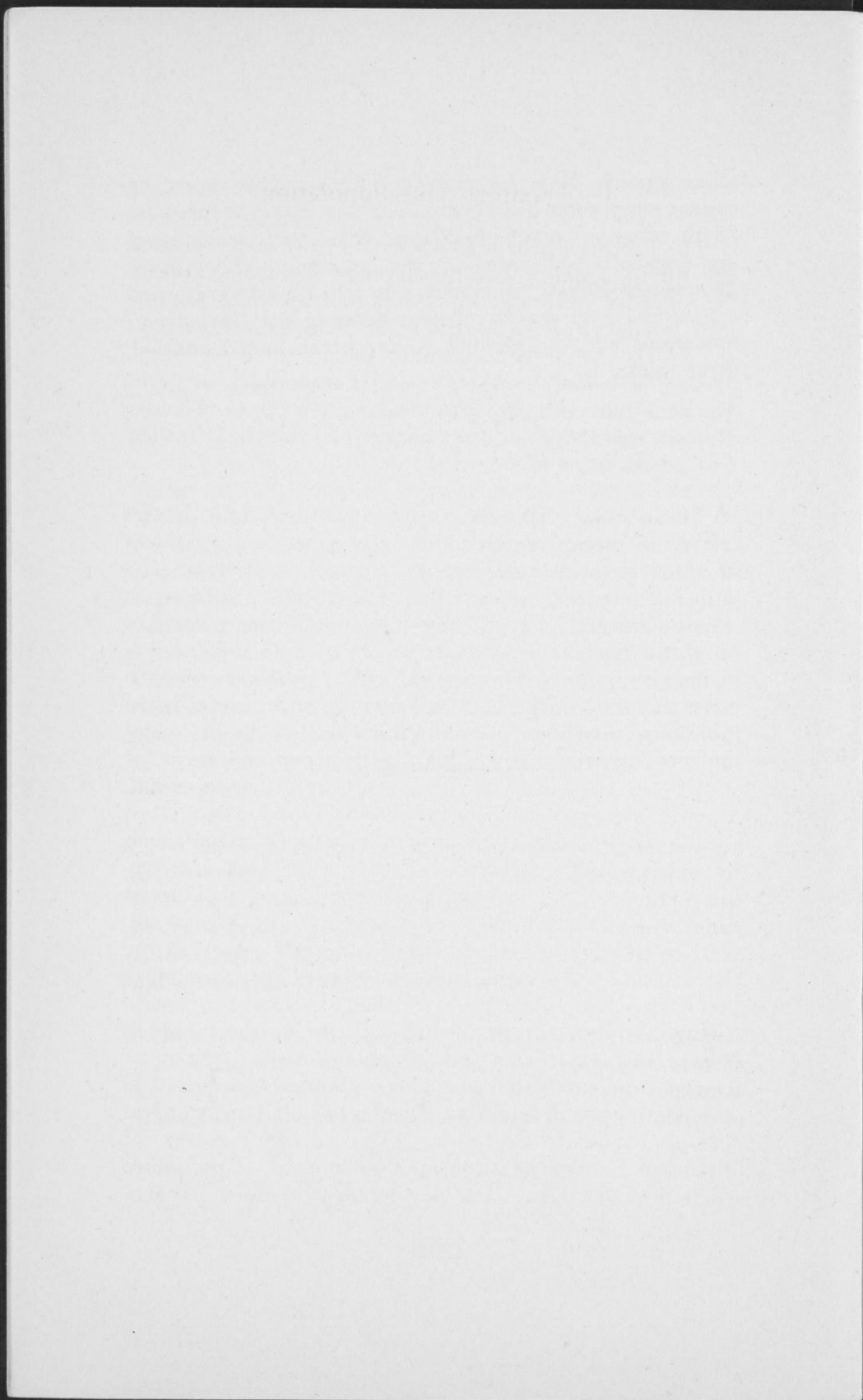
prevailed of a certain good will on the part of the Soviets towards Poland. On August 27th the IZVIESTIA published an interview with marshal Voroshilov who stated that the new understanding with Germany would not prevent Russia from supplying raw materials and even war materials to Poland.

Along the entire Russian border it had been noticed that the tone of Russian broadcasts was not at all unfriendly towards Poland, and on certain frontier stations—much to the amazement of those who were informed—special arrangements were being made in great haste in order to facilitate the transport of goods into Poland. At Molodeczno it was rumored, a large convoy of lorries had been rushed over the frontier by night early in September. The Polish Government certainly had difficulties in keeping in touch with its local representatives. Since September 5 it was constantly moving owing to German bombing. But complete tranquility reigned in the Eastern provinces of Poland. Mobilisation had taken place under normal conditions and perfectly smoothly; all public authorities were functioning without interruption.

In the light of events it is unnecessary to stress the evident bad faith of the Soviets. The perfidy of Moscow's diplomatic language was vividly reminiscent of many similar documents of the XVIIth Century, when Russia, with Berlin as chief accomplice, undermined the old monarchic Commonwealth of Poland.

In any event, the entrance of the Russian troops was such a surprise, not only to the population but also to the civil and military authorities, that in many places it was thought that the Bolsheviks had entered Poland as

allies against Nazi Germany. These doubts were, of course, very soon dispelled. In many places communist "fifth columns" made their appearance with accompanying incidents of violence and plunder. The more determined Polish commanders swerved Eastwards, and a new phase of warfare began between the Carpathian mountains and the Dzvina River, which lasted another three weeks.



I—Territory and Population.

The northern provinces involved in the invasion knew the Russians well. The provinces of Volhynia, Polesie, Novogrodek, Wilno and Bialystok had been incorporated into Russia after the partitions of Poland in the end of the XVIII Century and remained so until the First World War. But Lwow, Stanislavov and Tarnopol had seen the Russians but once, in 1914, and had never been under Russian rule: they had been annexed by Austria after the first partition of Poland in 1772.

The territory invaded and incorporated into Russia after the farcical referendum of October 29, 1939 was the poorer and more backward part of Poland. Its mineral resources are smaller than those of Silesia; in Polesie the vast Prypec marshes exclude the possibility of cultivation of large tracts of land. The soil there is rather poor too. The South-Eastern provinces wedged between the Carpathian mountains and the Russian border were always the most neglected of the provinces of the Austrian empire. After the reestablishment of Poland in 1918 conditions in the Eastern provinces had greatly improved. Artificial frontiers had disappeared and a natural exchange of goods between neighboring territories had developed. Roads were built, railway lines improved. Education was promoted. About eleven thousand public schools were opened. The Wilno university was reinstated. Owing to the new outlet on the Baltic there was a remarkable development of the timber industry. Marshlands were drained, pastures reconditioned and fisheries established. In the northern section the production of flax and the manufacture of linen received a potent stimulus. The oil-fields of Boryslav in the South were developed; oil refineries built and mineral gasses rationally exploited. The textile industry of Bialystok underwent a considerable revival. Agriculture started to progress. The development of dairy produce

was remarkable. A wide system of cooperative organisations was established and the standard of living of the population was rising slowly but steadily. In short, the Eastern provinces of Poland, when the war broke out on September 1, 1939, represented a vast agricultural area dotted here and there with industrial centres, not devoid of decided elementary prosperity, though hampered to some extent, as the rest of Poland by lack of investment capital.

The present condition of these provinces cannot be understood and equitably judged without reference to their political history. This must be kept in mind when considering the ethnographical aspect and the psychology of the population.

Of the territory at present occupied by the Soviets every square mile had belonged to the Polish Commonwealth ever since the XIV Century. The Southern part was conquered from the Hungarians by King Casimir the Great (1340-1352). The Northern was included in the union of Poland and Lithuania in 1386.

The two countries after a period of purely personal union became a homogeneous state in 1569. For centuries the whole political and cultural life of these countries has therefore been essentially Polish. It is an anachronism to speak of nationalist movements when referring to bygone centuries, as Poland was ever a country of outstanding tolerance. Whereas the religious conflicts of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries led to bloody wars in the whole of Western Europe, in Poland they remained entirely within the spiritual sphere. It is largely to be attributed to this tolerance that in the south-eastern provinces of Poland adherents of the Greek-Orthodox Church remained very numerous.

The Polish territory at present under Soviet occupation represents some 74,700 square miles, with about

twelve million inhabitants, thus almost exactly one half of the area of pre-war Poland and roughly one third of her population.

According to the census of 1931, 5 million of the inhabitants were Poles, 5 million Ruthenians and Ukrainians, over 1 million White Russians, over 1 million Jews, about 150,000 Russians, 90,000 Germans, about 40,000 Czechs and about 40,000 Lithuanians.

The entire Ruthenian and Ukrainian population is grouped in the four provinces of the South-East, whereas the largest part of White Russians is to be found in the provinces of Polesie and Nowogrodek and in the Eastern part of the province of Bialystok. The northern territories adjoining the district of Wilno (handed over to the Lithuanians), though eccentrically situated, contain a very high percentage of Poles, reaching 90% in some parishes. The whole Polish population is Roman Catholic. The White Russians are mostly followers of the Greek Orthodox Church. The Ruthenians in Volhynia are also on the whole Greek Orthodox, while in the former Austrian territories the Ruthenians belong almost exclusively to the Greek Catholic (or so-called Uniate) Church. It is therefore an outstanding feature of the situation that not less than eight million Catholics of both rites are to be found today under Soviet domination.

The Jews are fairly uniformly scattered over the whole Soviet-occupied territory, but chiefly in cities and small towns.

II—The First Months of Occupation.

The first contacts between the population of Poland and the Red invaders aroused mutual astonishment. The Bolshevik troops entering this part of Poland (admittedly much poorer than the Western provinces seized by the

Germans) were amazed at the wealth and abundance of the country. On the other hand even the poorest peasants were startled by the appearance of extreme misery of the invading troops. They possessed many tanks, long columns of lorries, numerous anti-tank and anti-aircraft guns, the troops themselves were generally well disciplined—but the soldiers were in rags, they looked underfed and were rather low-spirited. The shops in the invaded area—three weeks after the mobilisation and diverse passages of troops and refugees—were certainly not well supplied, but watches, sweets and various trifling objects as fly-paper, etc., seemed to delight the invaders particularly. Yet though limited if compared with normal times, the supplies were sufficient, in the first two months at least. Scarcity appeared and grew steadily worse with the nationalization of large stores, reglementation of the stock in smaller shops, Soviet requisitions of food without any imports from Russia and the increasing demands on the part of Germany. The situation was quickly becoming acute, and when winter came Lwow was facing famine. The prices were soaring. A kilogram of sugar cost 75 rubles, a liter of milk 5 to 6 rubles. Bootlegging trade developed. After several months of such conditions the soviet authorities were compelled to give up their methods and tolerate private trade to some extent at least. This concession on the part of the Bolsheviks brought quick though partial relief.

The first period of the Soviet occupation was one of preponderant military influences in the administration. There was a relative tolerance in administrative and political matters. Even a few cultural organizations were permitted—to exist. State and municipal offices followed Polish administrative methods. They were, of course, headed by local communists or by men sent from the Kieff area. A workers militia replaced the former police. Schools were temporarily permitted to

work. All languages: Polish, Ukrainian, Jewish and Russian enjoyed equal rights. Later in the fall things began to change. Elections were ordered—a farcical referendum, open and compulsory, in which people of the so-called Western Ukraine were ordered to express their desire to be incorporated into Soviet Russia. From that time on Soviet pressure and Soviet methods in all walks of public and private life became gradually more severe. People who, in the beginning, had nourished the hope that the Russian invasion will be limited to a military occupation, leaving country and people more or less in the situation which had previously existed, were soon disappointed. Officers' families, civil administrators, commissars of various ranks, made their appearance, and above all the OGPU, the dreaded political police, undertook its familiar tasks. Trouble started when accommodation for the newcomers had to be found. For the use of the Soviet bureaucracy lodgings were seized, already overcrowded. The Bolsheviki applied their doctrine that every room should accommodate at least two persons. The inhabitants were also subject to strict regulations concerning their clothes and underwear. One change was enough. Everything in excess of this was liable to be confiscated. The Soviet officials and their families produced an impression of extreme poverty. Women wore rags wrapped around their feet or slippers instead of shoes. Bedding was an unknown luxury to them. Bathrooms and kitchens they considered uncanny inventions. The population of the occupied provinces especially that of the cities looked at them with contempt. People slighted even army officers and civil officials in public. This happened especially after the outbreak of the invasion of Finland when news of Soviet defeats were coming daily. A panic had seized the Red soldiers and officers when transfers to the Finnish front grew more frequent. Desertions of Soviet army officers, sporadic before the war, became now a mass phenomenon. They were buying civilian clothes and disappearing often with

their wives. The situation changed radically after the peace with Finland. The invaders, thus far rather meek, became arrogant and insolent. A new era of oppression and persecution had begun.

III—Organized Plunder.

As time went on, under the pretext of reorganisation, nationalisation or any other formula in which Bolshevik terminology abounds, the occupied territory was subject to a most ruthless plunder. Public property as well as personal belongings were seized. Everything transportable was carried away into Soviet Russia. In the town of Czortkow iron beds were taken away from hospitals and military barracks. From hotels furniture, from banks and business offices all fixtures were removed. Apartments and even poor dwellings were pillaged. From the city of Luck in one day 180 carloads of furniture were shipped to Russia.

Poland had experienced Red pillage in 1920. In those days however, it was common robbery performed by a barbarian soldateska. Now it was a systematic, legalized confiscation.

The destruction of works of Art, of Museums and Archives was another phase of that war against Western civilization. When winter came the Russians used books from Polish scientific libraries as fuel. Archives had their unique documents frequently bearing the signatures of Poland's kings, sold by the pound as old paper.

Poland had to be brought to the same level as Soviet Russia culturally and economically.

Most Polish State employees had received three months salary in advance before the withdrawal of the army. Here then the Soviets considered themselves as having simply taken the place of the former authorities. They made these people work without pay for three months at the expiration of which they were dismissed.

Trade was allowed to be carried on as long as stocks lasted and Polish currency was maintained as legal tender, the zloty having been given par value with the Soviet rouble. As the current rate was 12 to 1, all transactions were carried on in zlotys and the merchants came into possession of considerable cash. Then suddenly—on December 21, 1939—the zloty was declared as withdrawn from circulation, no equivalent whatever being provided for the unfortunate possessors. Simultaneously all bank deposits above 300 zlotys (\$56) were seized. The amount thus wantonly suppressed reached 1,500,000,000 zlotys or about 290 million dollars. The sudden abolition of the zloty meant the destruction of such humble remnants of well-being as still existed in the country. Prices soared and the markets showed a sudden lack of many commodities as the people would not sell their produce for a currency which they distrusted. It was then that a system of barter began to develop on a large scale, and the standard of living experienced a violent depression.

The United States dollar was officially quoted as five roubles. It could be bought in the Soviet "Gesbank." In the Spring 1940 it was sold on the so called "black stock-exchange" for 400 roubles. It is now obtainable for 60-70 roubles, which results from the utter destitution of the people. No saving is possible. Even if it were, it would be against Soviet laws. The Soviet currency loses its value about every three years, and a new currency is being issued. People have no trust in roubles and chervonetz. Peasants refuse to accept Soviet money and only barter trade is possible.

IV—Nationalization of Property.

More or less simultaneously the process of nationalization of commerce was put into practice. In reality it amounted to the seizure of all available stocks of goods, especially in the wholesale trade where some supplies

still existed. And these were promptly carried off to Russia. The value of merchandise thus seized in the city of Lwow alone amounted to about 400 million zlotys or \$75,500,000, and in the whole Soviet occupied area to 320,000,000 dollars. Of the 8,500 shops of Lwow 6,500 were closed. Of the remaining 2,000—500 were left in the proprietor's hands, and 1,500 were transformed into cooperative societies of all kinds subject to incessant inroads by the Soviet authorities, and carrying on in a most precarious way. At the same time all buildings were declared to be the property of the people. Only in exceptional cases the owners of small houses succeeded in preserving the use of them. All dwelling houses were subjected to district supervision called "rajrady." There is a special manager for small groups of houses. He collects the rentals and the dwelling as well as eventual luxury taxes (if any one occupies more rooms than foreseen by the Soviet regulations.) Apartments are allotted by the aforesaid "rajrady." Only working persons may obtain such an allotment. The size of the apartment depends upon the character of the work done by the tenant, by the number of members of his family, etc. The "rajrady" allot also wood for fuel. Coal is unobtainable.

The position of the house janitor has been declared an official one. He belongs to the lowest rank of state employees. Special lectures for janitors are being given in the individual city districts, where they receive political as well as spying instructions. Thus the janitor is under orders to control strictly who enters his house. In case a person enters more than once a house not inhabited by him, the janitor must report the fact at once to the police. He is also instructed to enter under some pretext the apartments of the tenants, to observe their attitude, to make notes of their conversations and of the objects they possess. Special rewards are given janitors for the discovery of any counter-revolutionary activities or sabotaging plots.

Not all houseowners, however, have been expropriated. But those that were permitted to keep their houses have been so heavily taxed that they cannot pay those imposts. And for non-payment they are threatened with heavy penalties. Besides, the rumor is being spread by the Soviets that the names of house-owners will be placed first on the list of persons to be deported. No wonder that applications for expropriation are daily growing.

A woman who left Lwow in September 1940 reports what follows on the methods used by the Soviets to liquidate private property. Thus for instance, the owner of a tinkers-workshop had been ordered to pay a daily income tax of ten roubles. The owner of a locksmith-shop must pay four roubles daily. An average city dwelling house is burdened with a yearly tax of 10,000 roubles. The lot of the farmers is by no means different. A peasant owner of an average size farm had a yearly tax of 25,000 roubles imposed upon him. And besides he must pay in kind.

To make bad things worse the Soviet have introduced compulsory insurance, in cities as well as in the country, against fire and other elementary disasters. The insurance rates are simply exorbitant.

Industrial establishments fare no better. But they are subjected to special proceedings. Thus in Wilno the workmen employed in the well-known factory of wireless receivers "Electrit" were induced to carry unanimously a resolution that the whole establishment be transferred to Smolensk. The same thing happened in the Courland Oil factory. The plant was actually removed to Russia.

In accordance with a motion passed by the "National Assembly of Western Ukraine and White Russia" a similar fate was in store for many of the 9,000 factories of different kind and sizes in the occupied area. Naturally the largest and best-equipped establishments were first to attract the attention of the Soviets. The plants of the up-to-date and important sugar factories of

Chodorow and Horodenka, those of the electric works in Czortkov, Kolomyja and Stanislavov, the fine spinning jennies and looms of many concerns in Bialystok have disappeared. The railway workshops in Lwow, Stanislavov and Przemysl were emptied and not even the equipment and furniture of the Agrarian Bank in Lwow and of many other public institutions were permitted to remain.

The independent craftsmen of different trades who possessed 67,000 workshops in the Soviet-occupied provinces with an annual output estimated at over 200 million dollars, were ruined. The currency they possessed was suddenly abolished and they were thrown out of work because they were unable to replenish their stocks. In exchange for the goods carried away from Poland the Soviet national stores contrived after four months' intense efforts to offer the public some very inferior matches, dirty salt and soap and herrings reeking with cod liver oil.

The food stuff trade has been centralized in the Soviet chain stores called "Bakalie" and "Gastronomia." The prices there are lower than in the few remaining private stores. Long lines of would-be-buyers are awaiting their turn day and night. A card system has not been introduced. Goods, however, are often missing—some articles are unobtainable for months. This is especially true of sugar. Bread is plentiful. A two kilogram loaf costs 1,60 roubles. Meat in Soviet stores costs 7 roubles per kilogram; fifteen in private butcher stores. Butter is 30 roubles a kilogram. Coffee is not for sale. If a supply of it unexpectedly appears it costs 150 roubles per kilogram. "Ersatz" coffee is being generally used. Hides and leather are lacking. Local shoemakers sometimes succeed in finding a piece of leather from pre-war stocks. They ask for a pair of shoes 600 roubles.

Coffeehouses and restaurants have also been nationalized. They are being managed by directors appointed

by the Soviets. The same was done with barber shops. Here the former owner is permitted to work with scissors and razor but receives a lesser percentage from the daily revenues than the other workers, and does not belong to the "Prospilka" (trade union) which entitles them to social insurance.

Among all the nationalized enterprises there is but one which met with the general approval of the population and these are the so-called "policlinics." Anybody is entitled to avail himself of them, without any limitations, even without showing his papers. Polish physicians are serving in the policlinics. Medical advice is free. The doctors are paid. Independently from the policlinics Polish physicians are permitted to practice as before. Soviet authorities do not apply any special repressions against doctors. On the contrary they are in great demand and if they wish, they always may obtain professional positions in the interior of Russia. Quite recently news was received from physicians who had been deported shortly after the Soviet invasion, that they have been permitted to practice.

V—Position of The Workers.

The 120,000 workmen employed in the few industrial centres of the Soviet-occupied provinces may have expected that they would be a favored group of society since a "government of peasants and workmen" had taken over control. But even this minority met with bitter disappointment. The Soviets boasted that they were going to suppress unemployment and raise production. As a rule workmen were not dismissed unless they happened to displease their new masters. On the contrary, the hours of labor were at first reduced to six or seven and considerable numbers of hands were taken on. Theoretically there is no unemployment under Soviet rule. The Bolsheviks have created many new positions, engaging several workers where there was one before

the invasion. Thus for instance in the domain of railroads, every passenger car has its conductor. In one train there may be a score or more of them. The wages are very low and quite out of proportion with the prevailing prices. The Soviets employ many women too, to demonstrate their adherence to the principle of equal rights for both sexes. The average wages of a worker amount to some four roubles daily.

To be entitled to any rights, that to live not excluded, one must possess a certificate of employment. To obtain such certificate new positions must be created and this is why, officially, unemployment does not exist. To have been imprisoned by the Polish government on the charge of Communist propaganda was a first-class qualification regardless of knowledge and ability. Soon it became evident that the much advertised achievements of "shock workers" "order wearers" and other "heroes of labor" in Soviet Russia were considerably inferior in their efficiency than those of the less pretentious workers in other countries.

In any case the general collapse of trade could scarcely result in any benefit to the working class. What happened in reality was a precipitate decline in the standard of living to a level which people in other countries can hardly imagine. As a result of the substitution of the rouble for the zloty, the monthly earnings of workmen in Soviet-occupied Poland amount to 100-150 roubles, whereas all prices have reached an unprecedentedly high level.

In February 1940 the free market price in Lvov of one kilogram of potatoes was 5-6 roubles, that of bread 5 roubles, of meat 30-50 roubles, of butter and lard 70 roubles. In Bialystok 50 kilograms (about 100 lbs.) of rye cost 700 roubles, one kilogram (2,25 lbs.) of sugar 50-75 roubles; one kilogram of tea 700 roubles. One kilogram of butter cost in Luck 30 roubles, in Bialystok 75 roubles. A pair of shoes can easily be sold in Lwow

for 500 roubles. Of course, the official prices in the "national" stores are considerably lower, but there the supply is so insufficient that it never satisfies the demand. Nothing can be purchased without the drudgery of standing endlessly in queues.

The life of a working-man's family may be easily imagined when they must live on his earnings of 150 roubles a month. Women have to secure jobs at all cost — an additional hardship which the Soviet regime entails.

The exploitation of the worker under Soviet rule and notwithstanding the phraseology of its propaganda, is evident. Of late, working hours were raised to eight. This is however but a theoretical norm for the "Stachanoff" minimum can not be achieved within those eight hours and the workingmen are compelled to work longer. Independently from that work the workers, especially in larger industrial establishments, have to attend political meetings in the shops and factories. These meetings last often as long as four or five hours, so that the workingman returns home in a state of utter exhaustion. Rules and regulations in the factories are very stern. For being late a worker may be sentenced to jail.

A refugee who recently left Soviet-occupied Poland, tells of a woman who having a sick child had to wait in line before a drug store for the much needed medicine. She reported to work twenty minutes late. She was punished by having her earnings of 125 roubles monthly reduced by 30 roubles, and she was ordered to work longer hours. The punishment was comparatively mild because she had been only twenty minutes late.

In November 1939 in the city of Lwow posters appealed to skilled workers to register for work, especially in the metallurgical line, in the Caucasus and the Don River basin. Within a month about 3,000 went, Poles as well as Jews. Only local workers were accepted. Refugees were excluded. After two months one by one these men

began to return bringing hair-raising reports on the working conditions, lack of most primitive hygiene, lack of housing facilities, inimical attitude of the local population towards the new arrivals. The word "Don basin" became a nightmare. No one volunteered anymore. The "Don basin" had utterly discredited the Soviet regime with the workingmen in Lwow.

VI—The Position of The Peasants.

According to current ideas the workmen and the peasants should have drawn some benefit from the Soviet occupation. Nothing of that sort happened. The disappointment of the peasants was as complete as that of the workingmen. It is a great mistake to over-estimate the area of agricultural land in Poland, belonging to large estates. As a matter of fact, it averaged in 1939 at about 16% of the entire cultivable area and it was still being parcelled out rapidly. Even a complete distribution of this land among the peasants could not have had a decisive influence on the state of the peasants as a whole. Their holdings numbered about three million farms, half of which is under Soviet occupation. The destruction of large agricultural enterprises by the Soviets was an additional blow to the welfare of the countryside. Not only did many laborers lose their work, but tremendous waste occurred. Horses are scarce where armies have passed; the harvest was destroyed or confiscated by the Bolsheviks. Livestock was actually distributed among the peasants, but was killed by them before the winter set in, partly owing to lack of fodder, partly to forestall Bolshevik regulations which were soon to be enforced. All livestock was registered and the sale of it forbidden without the consent of the local committee which was in its turn subject to control of higher authorities.

It also became clear soon that the distribution of land was in fact illusory. The greatest pressure was being

exercised on the peasants to pool their allotments and go in for collective farming along "Kolkhoz" lines. All reports agree that many estates have remained in the hands of the administration and become State enterprises.

But the actual condition of the country people was influenced for the worse by the ruin of the natural and necessary exchange between town and country, even more than by the effect of these chaotic measures. The country folks had nothing to sell, and there was nothing to buy in the city. Clothes, shoes, underwear had become an unattainable luxury, ironware an expensive and rare thing.

Apart from purely material wants the life of the Polish country population has been profoundly troubled by many other causes. Lavish words and fine promises have not prevented the Soviets from imposing enormous taxes exceeding by far the taxpayers possibilities, taxes which in some cases amount to 230 roubles per acre. Among other the peasant has been ordered to deliver to Soviet agencies 44-62 lbs. of meat per acre, 200 quarts of milk per cow annually, and 150 eggs per hen!

Having killed most of their cattle for fear of Soviet requisitions the peasants were able to till but parts of their farms. The result was a decrease of more than 50% in grain production.

Not satisfied with the ruin of the landlords and the intellectual classes the Soviets have made the extermination of the richer peasants (kulaks) one of their aims. To achieve that end they do not refrain from using the most drastic methods. The "kulaks" wantonly accused of sabotaging the Soviets' plans for the formation of large collective farms were seized and deported to distant districts in Russia.

The radical agricultural "reform" was inaugurated simultaneously in all Polish Eastern provinces—in the South as well as in the North where the Wilno voyvod-

ship was incorporated into a Lithuanian Soviet republic. Here too the soil became State property. Individual estates known for their progressive managements have been converted into "Sovkhozy"—some others into "kolkhozy," and the rest was to be distributed among poorer farmers and agricultural laborers at 15-25 acres per head. But that parcellation was delayed. Owners of farms which they had inherited, were evicted. Those who had bought them, could retain the usufruct of a maximum of 75 acres upon recommendation of communal committees approved by county committees and by Soviet authorities in Kovno. They were however obliged to repay the entire indebtedness of their estates in their previous size and increase the wages of their agricultural laborers by 200%. It goes without saying that even these "fortunate" ones will not be able to stand the economic pressure and will have to surrender.

VII—Church and Religion.

In the first months of occupation the Soviets attempted to use the most brutal methods in their fight against religion. Communist agitators were conducting a violent propaganda especially against exterior symbols of religious faith. Churches and chapels were then frequently converted into restaurants, moving-picture theatres, clubs, arsenals, etc. But the Communists soon became aware that their methods will not amount to much. Under the influence of the national disaster crowds were filling Catholic and Greek-Orthodox churches, listening to sermons and looking for hope and solace in religious practices. The population defended its churches with great courage. In the city of Kolomyja in December 1939 when the Soviet authorities attempted to close the church of the Jesuit Fathers, people began singing the hymn "God Preserve Poland" and assumed such a threatening attitude (especially the women) that the Red militia withdrew and left the church open. In the village of Michalovka peasants opposed the closing of an Ortho-

dox monastery. A battle ensued wherein four peasants and three soldiers of the Red army were killed.

After a series of such failures the Soviets changed their tactics and inaugurated an indirect struggle against religion. To make the maintenance of churches impossible they raised their taxes to an unheard of level. Yet the faithful contributed the needed sums with great self-sacrifice. A tax of 36,000 zlotys (about \$7,000) was imposed on the church in the Lwow suburb Brzuchowice, one of 80,000 zlotys (about \$15,000) on the Mary Magdalene Church in Lwow. Yet the taxes were paid.

All monasteries were closed and monks and nuns dispersed. One often meets them doing physical work in civilian clothes. Sermons in churches are permitted. The attitude of the Soviets is the same towards all denominations. When proposing to close a church the Soviet authorities attempt to lay the blame upon the church committee, apparently elected by the population, but in reality formed by communists and even criminals. Yet even such committees are afraid to assume the responsibility for closing a church. In some cases they have made investigations among the parishioners with most unfavorable results to the Reds. To prevent the schooling of a young generation of priests the Bolsheviks have closed all theological seminaries of the Latin as well as of the Greek-Catholic rite. The seminarists were deported wholesale except those who succeeded to hide themselves. The situation of the regular clergy has been made worse by the confiscation of all monasteries and cloisters. Nuns were particularly exposed to chicanes and vexations.

All ecclesiastical acts like marriages, the issuing of birth certificates, etc., have been declared legally invalid. All churches of all rites were ordered in April to deposit all marriage, death and birth registers before the 5th of May with the Soviet authorities. After that date the clergy was forbidden to baptize, to perform marriages,

etc. A further laicisation of public life was achieved by an oukase abolishing Sunday as a holiday and day of rest. A day of rest is now obligatory every six days.

Simultaneously the powers in Moscow have allotted three million roubles for the spreading of atheist propaganda among the population of the occupied provinces. The propaganda busies itself mainly with schools. School programs have been entirely changed and their character, previously national and religious, has become communistic and atheistic. Religious teachings and prayers in schools have been abolished. Pupils are forbidden to attend mass on Sunday which has become an ordinary working day. A co-educational system has been introduced in all schools. Crosses in schoolrooms have been replaced by pictures of Lenin, Stalin and Voroshiloff. In some schools,—especially in high schools—the pupils have strongly reacted against that “new order” and have again suspended crosses between those pictures. The saying went around on this occasion that “Christ has been again hung between two bandits.”

Instead of religion atheism is now being taught. Children in public schools are being told that God does not exist and that it is Stalin who rules the world. The teaching methods are most rudimentary. Thus, for instance, it is being shown that a prayer to Stalin for a candy is being immediately granted while a prayer to God does not bring any results. The child is told to pray God and gets nothing. Then it prays Stalin and immediately after Stalin sends him a candy through the teacher.

To demoralize youth, marriages between school boys and school girls have been introduced. It has been long ago abandoned in Russia but was reintroduced in Poland to demoralize youth and break down its moral force of resistance.

As a matter of fact, atheist propaganda meets with a furious opposition on the part of the population. In

the city of Tlomacz, to quote an example, the Reds announced a series of lectures on atheism in the local monastery building. In the night preceding the inauguration of the courses the population burned down all buildings of the monastery.

It often happens that pupils recite prayers before a lecture on atheism begins.

In Kolomyja all participants of a meeting of the Catholic Association for boys were arrested and sentenced to prison terms from two to eight years. Their parents were deported to Siberia.

To make a long story short, one may say that under Soviet occupation adults are being sentenced to physical death, and the youth to moral destruction.

It is most characteristic, however, that these very same Bolsheviks who make boast of the aforesaid theories, are being married in churches, baptize their children in churches and sentimentally relate the fact that the homes of their parents were adorned with holy icons.

VIII—Propaganda and Education.

Culture as understood in the Western world does not exist under the Soviet regime. The communist policies are based before all upon liquidating existing cultural institutions, or at least upon depriving museums, libraries, theatres, etc. of their "counter-revolutionary" character. All of them were subsequently subordinated to the Soviet Academy of Science. The Politechnical Institute and the faculty of medicine of Lwow are subordinated to Moscow—other schools to the Ukraine. The educational level is very low. The salaries of the professors amount to 1,000 roubles monthly, those of assistant professors to 400 roubles. The Soviets want to have an average of one thousand medical students matriculated every scholar year. They have appointed an undergraduate student

and a Soviet army sergeant as heads of the Politechnical Institute. A few former Polish professors continue teaching, many more were deported.

The departments of law, of philosophy and of theology of the Lwow university were closed. A new law department was established where the Stalin constitution, Soviet civics and Soviet penal law are being taught. Russian and Ukrainian are the official languages at the Politechnicum and at the university but inasmuch as they are understood by a minority of students only, the Polish language is tacitly admitted. Anybody who can read and write is permitted to register as a student of the aforesaid two institutions.

Public and high schools are in a state of complete disorganization. The pupils have their own "rady" (councils) and committees, and have the right to criticize their teachers and to ask for their removal. It is an aprioristic Soviet conception that every student is capable and that it is the teacher's fault if he does not progress. A great deal of time is being wasted in preparing and celebrating various revolutionary holidays. General and Polish history is not being taught. The teaching of foreign languages, according to the published school program, will soon be entirely abolished.

All schools are under the supervision of a Soviet director who is being assisted by "politruks" or political commissaries watching the orthodoxy of the teachers and of the pupils.

The school children are being demoralized—so to say, officially—by a continuous political agitation, by deriding of ethical principles, by an intended awakening of sexual instincts.

The public school in the country is of the seven years type, that in cities of ten years. All meetings of pupils are forbidden unless convoked by the teachers for the reading of communist papers. Children showing special

communist ardor are being rewarded by 150 roubles scholarships.

Seeing their incapacity of making headway in their endeavors to win over the adult population the Soviets direct their main effort towards inculcating their principles in the young generation. As they have absolute power and no scruples, their methods may easily be imagined. The teaching is intended to destroy in the children's minds their faith in anything they had hitherto been taught to love and to respect. Immediate impressions and recent experiences did not appeal very strongly to the children in favor of Bolshevism as the shortest cut to happiness, and they often gave spirited answers or put embarrassing questions to their teachers. But fair play is not something to be expected from a totalitarian regime. Courageous boys and girls were often arrested. Boys of eight are known to have been flogged in prison to induce them to give away their school-fellows who inspired them in their opposition. It is not uncommon for school children to disappear like any adult suspected of political heterodoxy. Not only is every imaginable method of spying and trapping applied to the children themselves, but the greatest efforts are being made to induce them to spy and denounce each other or members of their families. Apart from more drastic methods employed, this is represented to the children as "heroism in the service of the working class."

But the Soviet propaganda is not limited to children. It embraces just as well peasants and factory workers. In a recent letter from Soviet-occupied Poland we read:

"In the initial stage, local factory committees were formed to win the workers over. But very soon, after a short period of demonstrations, the workers who were to assume control themselves were assigned to their real task of keeping the zeal and the state of mind of their comrades under observation. Actual control was taken over by Party commissars sent from distant parts, men

who never work themselves and form a sort of a privileged upper class in the Soviets. Lavish of attractive sounding catchwords, they were in unrestrained control of the toil and way of thinking of the workers and could interfere even with their outward appearance. It was highly characteristic that in one of the Lwow factories the first order of the commissar was that all men had to shave off their moustaches."

In a short time people came to see that although under the Soviets the working classes are declared to occupy a privileged position, their privileges in reality are limited to forming delegations to various unions and councils, where they are called upon noisily to approve the decisions of the governing group and to give them wide publicity as truly revolutionary measures. Labor meetings have no other choice than to express opinions in strict keeping with the course steered by those in power, and to carry motions for raising the output of work for the benefit of "socialist construction." Any attempt at true independence of judgment and genuine criticism is soon stifled. The ordinary workman is, as a matter of fact, much less important than in any country governed by the "middle classes."

The peasant is even worse off. There is no question of any self-government for him. The collective farms are made to work for the delivery of assigned quotas, and the country committees take orders from the bureaucrats without having the slightest chance of discussing them beforehand.

As the intellectual worker does not belong to a privileged group, his lot is, if possible, even harder and the claims on the complete surrender of his critical faculties are more absolute. Flattery and servility are prevalent everywhere, and anybody wishing to succeed and secure any position has to resort to them. "Our life is happy and joyful," "Our army is heroic and invincible," "Comrade Stalin is the leader of the proletariat, the sun

of humanity," "Nothing can be happier than to live under the Stalin constitution, the most democratic in the world"—these phrases have to be repeated on every occasion. Otherwise one is immediately suspected of being a "Trotskyist dog," or "an agent of the criminal West European capitalism." To secure or to retain a job, one must submit to the ordeal of being schooled in Communist doctrines, generally in the form of evening classes. These are mainly concerned with the defilement of everything Polish, everything connected with democratic culture or the Christian faith—as well as blasphemy and atheism.

In general it must be stated that there is no education under the Soviet regime, which is not reduced to propaganda. A person who recently managed to send a letter abroad says:

"The Red circles and clubs, the new posters, the debating societies for promoting education, the workmen's universities, the different ways of raising and developing the masses intellectually—all these lead in reality to nothing more than the obliteration of truth and a distorted picture of real life by putting it into the frame of officially organized opinion. As a result of this kind of education the Bolsheviks strike one as being like little children, monkeys or parrots, who have acquired mechanically the art of reading and certain strangely contorted pieces of knowledge. They give the impression of being absolutely incapable of reasoning in the simplest way, of criticising intelligently, of drawing a logical conclusion or of associating ideas in a way familiar to any brain which functions normally."

IX—Forced Labor and Political Persecution.

It was generally remarked that on first entering Poland the Bolsheviks proceeded with relative gentleness and moderation. The army was not used for measures of political repression. It was only when they got a strong

grip on everything, when the entire personnel of their administrative offices had arrived from Russia, when local elements, well adapted to the job they were to carry out, were sufficiently organized and above all, when the dreaded political police was well in control, that the full blessings of the new order began to be showered on the population. The first step was the arrest of many persons active in public life. In Lwow the mayor, the deputy mayor (a Jew) two other members of the municipality, three members of the Polish Diet (one Jew and two Ukrainians), and two old university professors who had been the leaders of the Polish National Party, were among the first to be arrested. Some of them have died in prisons since. In Wilno the proceedings were similar. A former rector of the university, a director of the Agrarian Bank, the president of the Court of Appeal, a well-known member of agricultural organizations, a barrister of repute and the director of a large fishery concern were among the first victims. It was also a striking feature of the Soviet methods that they turned with special malice against persons who had been known for their Communist sympathies. It appears that the divergence between the creed of Stalin and Trotsky was the underlying cause.

After that in many places strong pressure equivalent to constraint was brought to bear on specialists of all kinds, doctors and nurses, engineers and fitters, university professors and assistants, to prevail upon them to offer their services to the Soviet government. At the same time certain categories of people were singled out for reprisals. In this way the remnants of the Polish police were exterminated, while the whole personnel of the administration of justice—judges, public prosecutors and prison inspectors—were carried off to unknown places. The same fate overtook the entire forestry service, whether private or State, although at first these men had been encouraged to remain at their posts. Soon it became known that any person suspected by the Soviets

would disappear in this way. To be suspected it sufficed to be prominent in any sphere. And this appears to be a method which Bolsheviks and Nazis have in common:—to paralyze the community they want to enslave by striking at the nerve centres even of a local or subordinate type.

The persecution in villages and cities grew relentlessly. People were arrested under the slightest suspicion. Among those subject to imprisonment were especially: Jewish political leaders and speculators, people suspected of anti-soviet feelings or denounced as such, former prominent merchants, industrialists, bankers, Polish State officials, army officers, policemen, Polish and Ukrainian former political leaders, and finally those suspected of being eager to escape abroad.

Those arrested were kept in jails for months. Twenty or thirty people were crammed into cells which formerly were used for two or three prisoners. The hygienic conditions in the prisons thus packed were beyond any description.

Although circulation in the interior of the Soviet-occupied area was not subject to any limitations, no one was permitted to visit the border areas abutting to German-occupied Poland where fortifications were being constructed and whence the population had been either deported or compelled to dig trenches and moats. A special permit was required to travel to Russia. Even civil and army officers were bound to have it unless traveling on official business.

X—Wholesale Deportation.

The Soviet authorities were aware that the Soviet regime and mode of life will not be willingly accepted by a population of much higher cultural and living standards than their own. They therefore decided to exterminate that population or at least its elite, especially

people possessing political and social influences, Poles as well as Ukrainians,—more than that, even those local communists and communist sympathizers who were not brought up in the Soviet school of poverty and human degradation. As a matter of fact the disappointment of the latter was great. One of them speaking of his imprisonment by the Poles said: "Instead of imprisoning us the Polish Government should have sent us to Russia for a brief sojourn. This would have been for us a radical cure."

The Ukrainian nationalists are persecuted too. The Soviet invasion under the slogan: "We are bringing you liberty"—quickly proved a cruel bluff. Ukrainian members of the nationalist party "Undo" were arrested and their leaders shot.

In December 1939 and January 1940 deportations were of a sporadic character. Wholesale deportations started in the memorable night of February 8-9th. Hundreds of villages were surrounded by the O.G.P.U. and Soviet militia, and old people, women, children were not more spared than able-bodied men. Trains after trains carrying separate loads of men, women and children were running East. Thousands of families had been torn asunder.

The motives of such wholesale deportations were purely political. To the wild steppes of Kazakstan not agriculturists were exiled but the intelligentsia of the cities, white collar men, aged people, women and children, Poles as well as Ukrainians, unable to till the soil. It is being estimated that in February 1940 alone over 100,000 have been removed from their native country. Some 2,000 priests have voluntarily accompanied the exiles.

People crammed in cattle cars, suffering from heat and hunger in the summer months, from hunger and cold in the winter, were transported into Asiatic Russia. The trip took weeks. Often trains were left standing for

five or six days on a side track in some desolate station. People were ill, a great many were dying—according to some estimate 35 percent of those unfortunate people died before reaching their destination. The bodies of the dead were thrown out of the car windows.

At the station of departure parents were separated from their children, husbands from wives. They were forbidden to communicate with each other. One of the Soviet employees seeing the despair of thus separated deportees tried to console them:—"Why do you cry?" he said, "We are being transported every five years or even more often from one end of the Soviet Union to the other. We have no houses of our own, no business retains us; wherever we arrive we get the flat of some one who went somewhere else. And after some time we too go elsewhere. One gets used to it. True, you are being separated from your wife. You will find another one. You abandon your children—well, you will have others. . . ."

This is the psychology, the resignation of the people of Soviet Russia, incomprehensible to Westerners.

But the trains run Eastward. Their tracks are marked by frozen corpses. Four hundred of them have been buried in one of the Lwow cemeteries alone.

The trains run. They go to the North, to Archangelsk, to Siberia, to Irkuck, to Central Asia, to Kazakstan and Turkestan. The voyagers are unloaded in the Asiatic steppes hundreds of miles from any larger inhabited centers.

The prisoners of war and those arrested for political reasons are confined in forced-labor camps. The other deportees have to till the soil or cut timber in the Siberian forests. They get 3 to 5 roubles per head daily, while the minimum required for meagre subsistence is fifteen roubles. They live in mud hovels—several families in one. They sleep on the bare floor without undressing.

The mortality among them is very high. They lack proper nourishment and clothing. In the Asiatic steppe they have no wood. They use dried manure for fuel.

Deportation which started on a large scale in February and was interrupted but for the short period of compulsory elections—continued again after the people had voted for whom they had been ordered to vote. The climax came in June, when in one night, the 29th of that month, 60,000 people were deported. These were mostly refugees from Western Poland, who could not return to their homes. They were shipped to the Turkestan region where they work in "kolchozes" under the most pathetic conditions. Mass deportation lasted until the first half of July 1940. In its last phase it embraced many Jews and Ukrainians. According to the latest reports over one million and a half people have been deported thus far.

XI—The Racial Policies of The Soviets.

The racial policies of the Soviets in occupied Poland had three distinct phases.

The first two months of the occupation were a period of a relative political tolerance. The administration of the occupied territory was almost entirely in military hands. Municipal and State offices were working along the lines of the former Polish administration. Polish employees of lower rank were kept in their positions. Higher officials were recruited mostly from among the local Communists.

After the 15th of November and up to January 1940 the occupied provinces went through a period of Ukrainization. These were the days of elections to the Supreme Council of Western Ukraine under the slogan of an incorporation into the U.S.S.R. The election was a farce. It was public and compulsory. Immediately after that a violent Ukrainization began. Poles were removed

from offices which were now filled by men from Russia. The Russian and Ukrainian languages were declared official. Yiddish was tolerated, Polish barred.

The Ukrainization was carried into effect with the active assistance of Russophile Ukrainians and Soviet sympathizers. Their attitude towards the Poles was less tolerant than that of the Russian Bolsheviks imported from Russia. Polish signs disappeared from offices and thoroughfares.

Ukrainian became the teaching language in schools. The few Polish schools which were left had in their program compulsory teaching of the Ukrainian language.

That Ukrainization period was however of short duration.

For political reasons—chiefly because of the growth of Nazi influences among the Ukrainians—the Soviets changed their tactics and their policies. Civil administration was reorganized; Ukrainian officers were discharged and replaced by Russians. Soviet economic policies, the collectivization of agriculture, were inaugurated and a general ruthless era of russification began. The frontier between Soviet-occupied and German-occupied Poland was closed. All inhabitants were ordered to apply for Soviet passports. Without that document no one could obtain work. Many people however were refused passports—mostly former Polish State employees and members of the bourgeoisie and the once well-to-do classes. Thus a new proletarian class was created, deprived of any civil rights. The problem was quickly solved: by mass deportation of those people to the interior of Russia, chiefly to Siberia. But terroristic methods were applied to Ukrainians too. The change of Soviet policies did not put an end to Nazi sympathies among the Ukrainians. On the contrary it made them stronger. Actually but few Ukrainians collaborate with the Soviets. Those who do, have opportunistic motives. The Ukrainian peasants oppose the nationalization of

the land and the organization of "Kolkhozes." They are being promptly eliminated by mass deportation.

Deported too were several hundred Ukrainian nationalists known for their pro-Nazi sympathies—and several scores of wealthy Jews, mostly Zionists.

It must, however, be stressed that while the deportation of Ukrainians and Jews has the character of a preventive measure, that of the Poles, many times more numerous, is aimed at the denationalization of the country, at the destruction of the nation's very substance.

The political and economic policies of the Soviets are subject to frequent changes. One part of their program however remains unchanged. It is analogous to the German "ausrotten." It is immutable:— extermination of the Poles.

XII—General Conditions.

The Soviet army which occupies Eastern Poland is controlled by political commissars. The officers and the soldiers are a passive element. They are afraid to express their opinion. They do not feel well, especially in larger Polish Cities like Lwow. They are conscious that they are being despised by a population which is culturally their superior.

The Red army makes a rather poor impression. The soldiers are badly fed and badly clad. Equipment is considered good by experts but they lack technical knowledge. Recruits brought from Turkestan, Mongolia and Trans-Caucasian republics are wearing rags. Immediately after their arrival in Poland they are submitted to delousing and to a compulsory bath. These transports from the interior of Russia speak volumes about the conditions prevailing in the U.S.S.R. The Russians have a panicky fear of the Germans. They are aware that in case of a clash with them the Russian army would go to pieces.

The relations between officers and soldiers are rather cold. The officers form their own social class, though their general education is much below that of the Polish non-comms.

It is most characteristic that the families of army officers are often being influenced by what they hear and see in Poland. There have been cases of army officers' wives being denounced by their husbands of counter-revolutionary views.

The attitude of the Red army towards the population is not inimical. The reprisals and persecution are the work of the Soviet bureaucracy and of the dreaded OGPU.

Polish administration of justice having been abolished, Soviet judiciary methods are absolutely arbitrary. As a rule any accused man is being found guilty. The Soviet judge is a puppet. His only duty is to pronounce the sentence. The prosecuting attorney is the deciding factor in Soviet courts. People are arrested by him, accused by him and sentenced according to his demands. He works hand in hand with the OGPU who mark out the victims to be arrested.

Persecution and destitution is what the Communist invaders have brought to Poland.

The whole population of the country is now beggared. And still it is a fact that great many Poles who have found themselves in Russia have used every possible device to return to Poland, preferring a shattered existence at home to life in a country laid waste by twenty years of Bolshevik sway.

A newspaperman who was one of them and had succeeded in returning to occupied Poland, writes:

“ . . . A man accustomed to a certain measure of liberty cannot endure existence in a totalitarian country. . . In Warsaw we had no adequate idea of the horror of life

in such countries. We wrote about it, we talked about it, but we were far from understanding the real state of things. We did not know how totalitarianism can debase a human being. Spies at every corner, arrests, the everlasting threat of being sent into the depths of Russia, being searched in the streets, endlessly standing in queues to get bread, sugar, shoelaces—that was a normal working day of our 'happy and joyous life.' And what is worse, the everlasting declarations, the applause, the greetings, the carrying of motions! When certain words were pronounced one had to rise and applaud. And then the Press wrote of 'frantic applause.' Under these conditions there is not a sound instinct in human nature, which is not made to suffer, not a nerve which is not put to special agony. . . ."

The plight of Poland, as all available information shows, is pathetic beyond expression. Not only has she again been torn in two by hostile and aggressive neighbors, but she exemplifies before the world the effect of the gigantic but soulless machinery contrived by totalitarian states, when directed against the body and the soul of a living people. On the German side there is the monstrous conception of national interest which has turned the German nation into a savage horde coveting the spoils of an enslaved world. On the Russian side a relentless system built up on ruins and blood for the alleged happiness of mankind, is blindly crushing all human happiness, and waging a fierce war on those very things which heretofore have been looked upon as the honor and nobility of man.

There is something fatal—or providential—in the history of nations. Long ago, the great poets of Poland announced that she would have to suffer cruelly for a better future of the world. Generations of Poles have striven to convince the Western statesmen that her cause and the cause of European freedom were one. This point at least seems to be clearly established by now.

APPENDIX.

(Excerpts from letters written by Poles deported into Asiatic Russia).

Palatinskaya Oblast May 15th.

(1) . . . Please let all our friends know that we are alive. Alive—that's all. After 22 days of an infernal journey they ordered us to alight in Central Asia in the Khirgiz steps. . . Hundreds of kilometers of a grey desert, no grass, not a tree. We have already moved three times. Now we have just arrived to this farm having travelled two days in an ox-driven cart. We spent four nights in the open air. In day time the sun is scorching and the wind cuts one's skin. We have here a few mud-hovels in the steppe. We live in one of them which is very damp. We sleep on the bare floor. Our poverty is terrible. No vegetables, no potatoes. One may get in barter a few eggs. But we have nothing to exchange. . . Anything I could write you would seem pale when compared with the ghastly reality. When it rains our hovel is inundated. No chair, no table. It is very far to the nearest city from here and besides we are not permitted to go there. One drudges all day long and comes home at night utterly exhausted. But fleas and bedbugs do not let one sleep. Mrs. X. went to work at gathering manure. She has to carry it in her own hands for eight hours. No wages. Every ten days one kilogram of a very dark and bitter flour. I cook the meals for five people, do the washing and scrubbing. We have no linen, no summer clothes and the summer heat is approaching. Since we came here we did not see bread, sugar, tea, fats, candles, cereals, soap. We can't get anything here. Should you not succeed in sending us a food parcel, then, perhaps you could send some linen, some summer clothes, some old slippers. I have no shoes and my feet are swollen and bleeding. . .

(2) . . . We are in Asia, in Kazakstan. The journey lasted four weeks. The railroad does not run further

than Pawlodar. After three days spent in the open in an encampment in an awful heat and dust they shipped us over the Irtysz river in a ferry; then two days in ox-driven carts. During a terrific thunderstorm we had to cross a little river. When we finally arrived here the children got the measles. Lili was drenched to the bone and had high fever for several days. For about a week we lived in a so-called club house. Thirty-six persons in one room full of vermin. Now we live in barracks. The children are getting wild. What will become of them here? . . .

(3) . . . Our last farewell to Lwow. We are in a crowd being deported to the East. We go the way the best of our nation went. . . Grandmother, three children and myself. . . The girls were not permitted to go. I close my eyes in that inferno which surrounds me and put my trust in God. . . Remember, death does not separate people. It brings them nearer to each other. . . As long as I live none of the children will starve. Have hope. If hope were a calculation it would not be a heroic virtue. . .

(4) . . . We are here in Eastern Asia after an indescribable trip. The farm is called Michalowskaya, 80 miles from the nearest railroad station. They put one of my children on a different cart when we were leaving the station. Hope I shall recover it. I lost one already. I pray in my bottomless grief and misery. Pray you too that God may have pity with us. . . We live in a hovel where sheep lived before us. It is so hard to live without religious solace. . . The children were ill. I carry manure to use as fuel. . . Please, send food, clothes. . . We are here not far from the Gobi desert. . . And yet even here miracles happen: I got back my child. I searched for it through 100 miles of steppe accompanied by Khirgizes. . . I knew my prayers would not be in vain. I believe we shall endure. . . God has been good to me. . . I found wild garlic. . .

(5) . . . God is over us. Evidently he wants us to go through this hell . . . through the tears of the hungry children. . . Excuse my handwriting. My hands are full of wounds. I fear the winter. . . They say the cold here reaches sixty below. . . Remember that our destiny is never below us. We just have to grow up to it. . .

August 29, 1940.

(6) . . . You probably heard of what happened with us. They sent us on a 3000 mile trip. Here we are near the Chinese border. The trip lasted 18 days. . . We have a little room in a Khirgiz hut. The girls work all the day in the fields, carrying manure, digging potatoes, tending sheep. The temperature here goes up to 140 in the summer and to 60 below in the winter. . . Many of our people are here. . . The only thing that makes us endure is faith. . . Pray for us. . . We live in the past which was like a marvelous dream and which perhaps will never return. . . Father got very thin. He lost twenty kilograms in weight. . . He cannot work. We all got thin, and are tanned like Kosacks. We are selling the rest of our belongings. . .

May 25th, 1940.

(7) . . . We are in Siberia so well known in our history, beyond the Ural mountains, between the rivers Tobol and Ural. Nothing but steppes, not a tree, not a shrub. . . The sun shines but gives no warmth. In the evenings we are bitten by swarms of mosquitoes. We live in clay hovels. No fire wood. We use grass from the steppes or manure as fuel. The trip from home here took seventeen days. During the journey we got hot dirty water to drink and a quarter of a loaf of bread every second day per person. . . During the long days we had every opportunity to see this land supposed to be flowing with milk and honey. We reached the conclusion that seeing it is the best cure for communism. The population here is gloomy. A general dissatisfac-

tion with the regime prevails. You can not buy anything, not even a candle. . . Tea, coffee, vinegar, sugar, yeast, rice, oil, chocolate do not exist. . . There are no shops, only so-called cooperatives, the whole stock of which consists of black and red pastes, and the pictures of their gods. . . People wear only cotton clothes and go about half naked. . . They curse their fate and pray for a change. Even among the youth one seldom finds an adherent of the Soviet regime. Every thing is lie and bluff. . . The giant with clay feet would quickly topple over if there were only somebody to give him a push. . . The officials are feared and hated. The exploitation of the working people is terrible. . . There are over 24 hundred of deportees from all over Poland here. . . Though religion has been declared by the Soviets a dope for the people, faith has not disappeared. . . The peasants here keep cows, poultry and sheep. They feed them on the steppes. From each cow the peasant must deliver 240 pints of milk yearly to the local dairy which pays him one kopec per pint—also 18 lbs. of butter. From every sheep 2 lbs. of wool. He trades eggs for clothes or rather rags. . . At every step one is struck by negligence, dirt and a complete lack of any public conveniences. Human excrements lie on the floor of the railway stations. . . Looking at that one asks oneself how can the world look passively on and permit 135 million people to be thus wronged, abused and tortured. . . We have been put here to hard labor and many of us are ill. The people we stay with are forbidden to give us any food. We have to exchange our last rags for potatoes. We live on potato soup and crumbs of bread. Sometimes a peasant gives us secretly some milk or cheese. But they are afraid—lest the dreaded O.G.P.U. may appear in their village. . . We Poles have not given up in despair. For generations we have suffered and died in prisons, in Siberia and on battlefields fighting for the freedom of Poland. We hope, we believe that we shall win. We shall never give in. . .



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