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IS POLAND DOOMED?

*“And we drank the cup of anguish to the
pardon of the Czar,
To the Nations that remember and the
Empires that forget.”*

—G. K. Chesterton.

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THE brilliant successes of our Allied Armies has, unhappily, brought no ray of hope to the war-scarred people of Warsaw. Only yesterday—it seems—they were hailed as the bravest Knights of Christendom. Their valiant deeds were hourly praised in the great daily organs of the World Press. To-day, alas, the same Press has little or no space to recount the epic struggle of the Underground Army to win back their City. The profound and ominous silence on events in that beleaguered Citadel of civilisation may well portend that the hour of darkness is indeed upon us.

Twice in a few years the Polish Capital has been the prize in battle. The crusade against “the evil things” started there. Some think it may end there. Perhaps, however, some lasting good for mankind will come from the sufferings of a tortured people who, alone of all captive Europe, have now no definite promise of salvation or friendly succour in their hour of need.

POLAND—BRITAIN’S ALLY

It is essential that we should recall the words of our then devoted Prime Minister broadcasting on the night of 4th September, 1939, when he spoke thus to the people of Germany:—“Your Government has bombed and invaded the free and independent State of Poland which this country is in honour bound to defend . . . You may ask why Great Britain is concerned. We are concerned because we gave our word of honour to defend Poland against aggression . . . May God defend the right.

This fearless outspoken declaration of a Nation’s fixed determination to stand by its little “Scrap of Paper” can neither be ignored nor regarded lightly. This was no casual statement of an irresponsible Premier. It was the voice of a united people. In like manner did we pledge ourselves to the other small Nations of Europe and, at a time when we were ill-prepared, we gave what aid we could. We sent our gallant sons to France, Belgium, Holland, Yugoslavia

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and Norway. Later, when Greece was attacked, we sent what was regarded as a token force. We knew our assistance could not stem the tide but that was not the main consideration when our honour was at stake. These bonds with our Allies had to be sealed in blood.

To-day our position has improved beyond our wildest dreams. Gone are the bitter memories of Dunkirk. Far behind us lie our strenuous and herculean efforts in the Battle of Britain. Laid at rest is the fear of invasion. Providence indeed has been good to us, giving us time whereby we might become strong and mighty in arms.

POLAND'S RESISTANCE—AN EXAMPLE TO THE WORLD

The spectacle of the courage of this Nation in the dark days of 1940 when we stood alone against aggression—stood as the acknowledged moral champions of all oppressed Nations—was indeed an incentive to a world which, in its secret heart, loved liberty, truth and justice but could not make up its mind to pay the price for defending these treasures of mankind.

To-day, a united Empire, armed in a manner beyond all human conception, stands forth—the acknowledged champion of Europe. But afar off, from Warsaw, there comes to our ears the stifled cry of an ill-armed, hungry, desolate but undaunted band of heroes craving in vain from their sworn Allies supplies of food and ammunition whereby to sustain them in their last dire battle against the Nazi. Within a few miles of the City walls, the massed legions of another Allied State stand by—awaiting orders. No concern of theirs is the plight of Warsaw. And that must unfortunately be stressed. It is no answer to say that it implies a slander on the Red Army. The duty of its soldiers is to obey orders.

WARSAW BETRAYED !

For months past the Moscow Radio has dinned into Polish ears the clamant need for a National rising. Even on 30th July that Radio demanded that the Poles of Warsaw rise in their might. Many Poles distrusted these appeals but, notwithstanding the repeated refusal of the Soviet Government to co-operate with the Polish Underground Army, that Army rose. It has since achieved miracles of endurance. But what use is endurance when food and ammunition fail? It is increasingly clear that not only the soldiers but even the entire population of Warsaw are in danger of extermination. It is also becoming increasingly difficult to resist the conviction that this ghastly possibility was very much in the minds of the Soviet Rulers—when they induced the insurrection in Warsaw.

The Soviet Government has decreed that no assistance be given to the Poles in their death struggle in Warsaw.

What may be worse—and here we touch unfathomable depths of misery—Russia may have directly or indirectly prevented Britain and the United States of America from rendering the assistance which the great hearted people of these two Nations would ardently wish to give to their Polish Allies. The deliberate starvation of the population of a great Capital involving over a million lives cannot be regarded in the light of political manoeuvring. It is nothing short of a dastardly crime against humanity.

BRITAIN'S RESPONSIBILITY

On the other hand, we in Britain must shoulder our own responsibility for the part we play in this fateful hour. It is known that the Allied leaders have not furnished Warsaw with that help to which it was legitimately entitled. It is known that many Poles volunteered to go to Warsaw to fight and die alongside their brothers. These offers were rejected. The situation is not only one of the most perplexing episodes of the whole War. It fast promises to rank as the most humiliating one. The incredible gallantry of the abandoned garrison has become a standing reproach to every Allied Nation whose Statesmen have steadfastly proclaimed Poland as the typical example of a staunch Ally.

Poles are fighting with distinction in France—in Italy. They fought in Norway—in Greece. Hardly any theatre of war could be mentioned without its tale of Polish gallantry. Today they ask bitterly "What, in Heaven's name, are we Poles fighting for? Are we just fighting for every country but our own?"

MUST POLAND DIE?

The leaders of the Allied Nations must answer now. Delay is dangerous. Even the children of Warsaw are reproaching us for our cold indifference to their fate. There may be reasons of expediency prompting our Statesmen to deny this aid but we are not in the secret. We can only surmise and, in such an unhappy predicament, it is not to be wondered at that a terrible fear is growing of the possibility that Sentence of Death has been passed on the Polish Nation and that the extermination of the entire populace of Warsaw is only the first step in the execution of this judgment. Should Warsaw suffer that fate—which to-day appears inevitable—then a decisive blow will have been struck at the heart of Christian Europe.

Growing also is the fear that, by denying assistance to Warsaw, the Russian Government is deliberately attempting

to force the Poles to take a line of action which would ultimately drive them out of the Allied Camp. The stage is indeed set for the murder of a Nation.

OUR PLEDGE TO POLAND MUST BE KEPT

Our duty in Britain is to see that our pledge to Poland is honoured and that every assistance possible is given to Warsaw.

This generous-hearted Nation must not—under any circumstances—become even indirectly a partner in this mass murder of the citizens of Warsaw. To remain silent at this juncture will inevitably involve us and the United States of America in a charge not only of cowardice but also of complicity. The evil that is being done against lion-hearted Warsaw is a crime calling to Heaven for vengeance. Are we to shut our eyes to the horrible sight and to stop our ears to the cries of the dying? Or have we the courage to face the stark naked truth and try and save our honour even at this last hour?

The story of the fortitude and courage of Britain in this War must not be tarnished by any stain on our honour in the hour of Victory. If, which God forbid, a decision is secretly contemplated—behind our backs—to throw Poland to the wolves, then we should say so now and not encourage the Polish Underground Army and the war-weary heroes of Poland to persist in a useless struggle which can lead only to final destruction and extermination.

To valiant Warsaw we send a message of our heartfelt grief and sympathy in its dreadful trials coupled with the hope that the hour of deliverance may, by God's mercy, be near at hand.

And if Warsaw is to persist—then at least let the funeral pyre serve as a beacon which will expose to mankind—and unmask even for the blind—the evil things we set out to destroy when our sword was unsheathed for freedom and justice.

Glasgow, 29th August, 1944.



J. J. CAMPBELL.

Today—in the *News Chronicle*—Mr. Vernon Bartlett reveals that Soviet Russia has definitely refused facilities to Britain and the U.S.A. to bring supplies by air to Warsaw.