

# THE POLISH REVIEW

Bibl. Jęq.

## MAIN FEATURES

Poznan's  
Notorious  
Concentration  
Camp

Germans  
Exterminate  
the Karaims

St. Francis  
of Assisi  
as Conceived  
by Polish Artists

"Blessed Are  
the Meek"

Getting Through!  
Be the Cost  
What It May!

"The Wall  
of Silence"

War Comes  
Again to  
Poland's  
Tatar Pass

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Valley of the  
Czeremosz River,  
Carpathian Mountains.  
Site of fighting in  
Southeastern Poland.





# ***Commander-in-Chief's Order of the Day to the Polish Second Corps in Italy***

"Your desires have been realized, the Polish Second Corps is at the front in a section of its own, under Polish command, taking part with our Allies in the final conflict with the Germans, our mortal enemies and eternal aggressors.

"Operations in this territory began well. Your comrades in arms of the "Commando" companies, who were first under fire had already distinguished themselves many times, their brave bearing winning the admiration of allied troop commanders. Fighting in difficult mountain terrain patrols of the Carpathian Division displayed the staunch military qualities that have made them famous.

"The Kresowa Division and other units of the Corps also took up positions in the Polish sector. I need not tell you in detail how important for the Polish cause, is your active participation in the battle and how much depends on what you achieve with arms in hand. Our contribution to the war is the best defense of our just rights. Your deeds on the battlefield form an invaluable moral asset indispensable to Poland's life in the future.

"The Polish Nation which for centuries has gloried in feats of arms watches with bated breath the progress of this campaign. Brotherhood in arms forged in the fire of battle and cemented by blood shed together with British, American, French, Canadian, New Zealand, South African and Indian troops will bring glory to Poland's name in both hemispheres. We rejoice to see beside us Italian units fighting against the common enemy. After the Polish, Norwegian, French and Libyan campaigns, after the Battle of Britain, you are Poland's battlefront of the Polish underground forces, of our Navy and of our air force. Today it is your turn. This campaign will be your campaign in Poland's military history.

"In far-away London where every day brought so many cares and worries, I longed with all my heart to be with you in the purely military atmosphere of the front line. I desire to visit you with increasing frequency as your military activities develop.

"May military luck attend you, may you succeed with your splendid training and excellent equipment in winning great glory for Poland and for yourselves, always remembering the value of soldiers' blood, so precious to us."

KAZIMIERZ SOSNKOWSKI,  
General, Commanding-in-Chief  
the Armed Forces of Poland.

"Ye exiles, roaming through the world so helplessly and long,  
When will your weary feet find rest, O broken-hearted throng!  
The wild dove finds its hidden nest, the worm its native clod,  
But Poland's son can only claim of earth a burial sod!"

—Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz (1758-1841)

## A Night in Poznan's Notorious Concentration Camp



**F**ORT VII in Poznan is the greatest den of torture for Poles in the so-called "Warthegau," the Western Provinces of Poland illegally incorporated in the Reich. Its very name evokes a shudder of fear. Horror, grim mystery and the silence of death surround it. Here were executed the most famous intellectuals of Western Poland. Here died a geographer of world-wide fame; here was done to death a physicist honored by all

civilized nations; here fell before the firing squad a venerable physician and social worker. Many of those thrown into the fort's dungeons were never heard from again. Murdered? Executed? Tortured? Deported? Who can tell?

Here is a story of conditions within this house of death by one who was fortunate enough to be released from it after a brief confinement there and who told what he saw in the underground-published "From the First Front Line" (Warsaw, 1943):

The somber sight of prison dungeons. Low vaults held up by pillars—like in the catacombs. On either side stand people in two rows. How horrible they look! Of different ages. Unshaven. Pale and haggard. Blackened eyes. Swollen and battered faces. They stand at attention, motionless like statues. A prisoner stands in front of each row.

We new arrivals are placed next to one of the double rows and addressed in this vein:

"You are now in a concentration camp. You must be obedient, that is, you must listen to what you are told to do. Because if you don't, you will be beaten. Should you try to escape, you will get a bullet in your head, you and every tenth man in the camp. We have order here. I am the senior in this cell and responsible for discipline. You must listen to me or you'll get it in the jaw. Understand?"

Our eyes wandered around our cell and our fellow prisoners. The cell had once been white. A low vaulted ceiling. The pillar in the center divided it in two. Our part was called "Cell X." It was some 15 feet wide by 27 feet long. Straw strewn at the foot of the left and rear walls served as bedding. Hooks projecting from the walls supported boards on which stood a row of bowls and pots with spoons stuck through the handles. Near the entrance stood a bucket. To the ceiling was fixed a single electric bulb, shedding a dim light over the cell. There were no windows, no stove.

Thirty of us were huddled here. But our number grew steadily, sometimes reaching half a hundred.

The priests among us were pointed out. It was hard to recognize them, as they were in civilian clothes and just as bearded, ragged and battered as everyone else. I went up

to one of them and learned that with him were two other priests in this cell. Also, there was an agricultural engineer—he had been a captain in the air force during the last war, but he was put in a concentration camp anyway. Then there was an official of the Social Security Bureau, a bitter anti-clerical and old Socialist fighter. And several students, an editor, an apothecary. The rest were for the most part people from the provinces. Inhabitants of villages and towns. Local social or political leaders. Our motley company was completed by thieves, cut-throats, a counterfeiting gang and others from whom we could learn nothing.

Age varied as much as the range of occupations and social class! Sixteen-year old boys shared the fate of men in their seventies. But we were united by one bond. In good or bad fortune we were Poles. Even those who hitherto had not paid too much attention to this, now found their country in their hearts and souls.

The lights were put out and dull silence settled over the cell. The roars, shouts and singing of the drunken Gestapo feasting in the canteen echoed more and more clearly.

We could not sleep. A series of revolver shots kept us starting from our straw. And perhaps instinct told us that something was afoot, that the night would not be an easy one. The hours went by in nervous excitement and vigilance. Finally, the roars seemed to draw closer. A sign that the drunken hangmen were going out into the corridor. Tumult, the creaking of doors, commands, imprecations, curses, the dull sounds of beating, the moans of the tortured, the laughter of Gestapo men, revolver shots—all fused into a hellish cacaphony, difficult to describe.

There was no doubt but that they would come to us. Time and again the cries were repeated: "Zelle X! Zelle X!"

We threw aside our covers and waited in readiness for the light to be turned on and for the call to assemble. More than one of us silently recommended his soul to God. We felt today's night would be awful.

A moment later a light shone in the cell.

—Antreten!

We jumped from our beds and rushing like mad, bumping into each other, fell into double file. The gates to the cell opened and a group of Gestapo police staggered in. The Commandant, the lieutenant, the *oberscharführer* and other non-coms. The *stubenaltester* (prisoner responsible for order in the cell) made his report to the semi-conscious *Hauptsturmführer*.

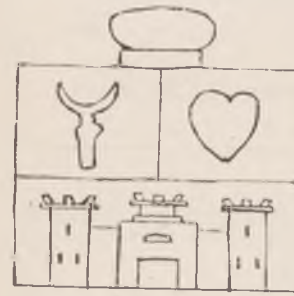
The rest of the hangmen, showering us with insults, checked to see whether the rows were even, whether the covers were according to regulations. No infraction was found. Their commands were carried out quickly and correctly. Finally, the Commandant stammered that "a dirty trick had been played in the camp." As if according to pre-arranged signal, a man standing first in line was called out. He had to lower his pants and they began to beat him with a cane. He was ordered to count the blows out loud. When he made a mistake or groaned, they would begin all over again. They called us out one after the other. When one of

(Please turn to page 15)



# Germans Exterminate the Karaims—the Smallest Minority in Poland

by DR. ALFRED BERLSTEIN



Karaim coat-of-arms.

**K**ARAITES, or Karaims as they like to be called, are a Jewish sect. They reject the Rabbinic tradition expressed in the Talmud and base their teachings on Holy Writ alone.

Among the many accounts of mass murders by the Nazis in Poland, the wholesale extermination of the Polish Karaims passed almost unnoticed, yet this tragedy is proved by reliable eye-witness

accounts by the underground movement!

The Karaites, although of doubtful Semitic origin and recognized by the Germans as Aryans several years before the present war, met the same fate as the people of the Ghetto. This small religious and racial minority had been living in Poland for more than 500 years.

Its story goes back to the first centuries of the Christian era. The origin of Karaism is shrouded in darkness, as earlier records are still unpublished. In its relation to Judaism Karaism might be compared to the Protestant reformation with regard to Catholicism. It was a reaction against Talmudism. In maintaining that the written Law or Scripture was the only source of divine authority it gave Judaism a healthy impulse to renewed Bible study and research. Karaism was a merging of various ancient Jewish currents. A longing for the past glory of Zion and for the rebuilding of the Temple of Solomon with its ancient laws of purity, lent Karaism of the early days a somber and ascetic character. Rules of cleanliness, marriage and dietary laws were in many respects stricter than the Jewish ritual.

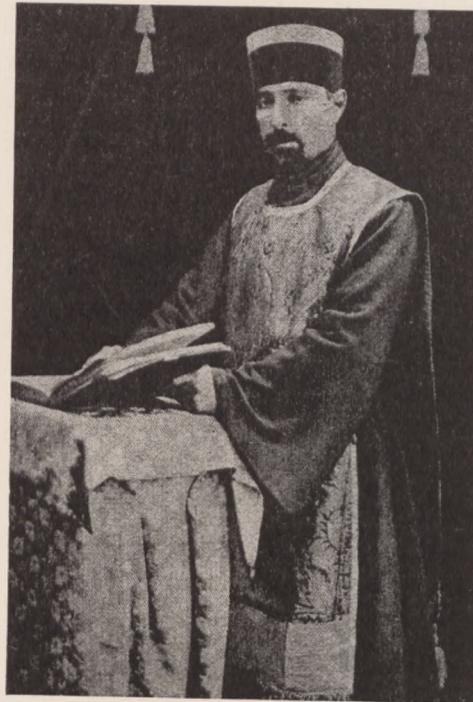
In course of time these religious rules were greatly altered and many

rabbinical customs adopted.

The real founder of Karaism was Anan ben David of Bagdad. Many dissenting groups were unified by him in the 8th century A.D. "Search diligently in the Law and rely not upon my opinion . . ." said Anan. And let us realize that "kara" is the Hebrew word for reading. Read the Law—that is the essence of Karaism.

The amazing political success of Islam was of great importance in the foundation and spread of the Karaite doctrine. The new sect soon took root in Syria, Palestine, Armenia, the Caucasus and the Crimea. Karaism sought to spread the faith among Moslems, mainly among Turkish tribes and mixed Jewish and Turkish communities. The Karaites became something more than a Jewish sect: a racially distinct religious community.

The Crimea was then the cultural and religious center of the Karaites and tradition has it that after a Crimean campaign, Grand Duke Witold, cousin of Ladislas Jagiello of the Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth, brought 383 Karaite families to Troki in Lithuania. They were soldiers, merchants, and peasants, many of them gardeners who even brought seeds from the Crimea to their new country. They kept their traditions and customs and maintained relations with their Crimean brethren through Tartar merchants. From the end of the 14th century Karaite settlements existed on Polish-Lithuanian territory. The Jagiellonian Kings freed the Karaites of all taxes and burdens, and imposed on them only the defence of the border against all enemies, particularly the Tartars. In the Karaite museum of Wilno old medieval weapons and armor bore witness to their warrior tradition. Part of the city of Troki was assigned to the new settlers and some of them migrated to other Polish towns, mainly in Volhynia and in the province of Lwow. The Karaites provided the bodyguard for Grand Duke Witold; in



Head of Karaite Church, Wilno.

1410 they fought valiantly in the battle of Grunwald against the Teutonic Knights. Hardly any secular Karaite literature is left, but from Polish sources we know that a Colonel Iljasz Karaimowicz died on the battlefield in 1648 fighting against rebellious Cossacks. The Karaites were given land and privileges of noblemen by Polish kings. So a bond of mutual confidence was created between the Polish Republic and the Karaites and for centuries Poland's traditional policy of tolerance preserved Karaite culture up to our own day. In a world of religious wars and persecutions they enjoyed perfect freedom of religion. The Karaites of Troki achieved distinction among their co-religionists in Poland and abroad as theologians, scholars, and poets. Their language transplanted in the 14th century into Slavonic surroundings and completely isolated, preserved the purity of old Turkish, its archaic features distinguishing it from the language spoken by the Crimean Karaites full of Tartar and Osman-Turkish idioms.

In the 18th century a terrible disease decimated the Polish Karaites who survived only in four communities: Troki, Wilno, Luck, and Halicz. They managed to live through Russian occupation during the partition period.

After the rebirth of Poland in 1918 all the old privileges of Karaites were again confirmed. Their numbers had shrunk considerably. For religious reasons they were not allowed to marry outside their own group and the process of intermarriage seriously affected their natural growth. The few members of educated Karaite in Poland sought to achieve a spiritual revival. They became conscious of the fact that ethnically they were Turkish. Their folklore was distinctly of oriental origin. Many attempts have been made to establish their origin. The theory that the Crimean Karaites are descendants of the Chazars—a Mongolian tribe that lived between the Black and Caspian Seas in the early Middle Ages and were partly converted to Judaism—has not been established.

The Polish Karaites had their own scientific magazine "Mysl Karaimska" published in Wilno and the literary quarterly "Karaj Awazy," "The Karaite Voice," the former published in Wilno, and the latter in Luck. Polish scholars rediscovered Karaite culture and one of them, Professor Tadeusz Kowalski, made a thorough study of the Karaite language and culture.

In Troki on the shore of the lake of that name, in the spiritual "capital" still stood the ancient cemetery and the oldest Karaite temple, the "kienesza," a modest wooden building with beautiful oriental carpets. The "shamash" (warden) would receive you, tell you old stories and show you around. Most of the visitors went to see Szemaja Firkowicz, the priest of the community, an inspired poet and translator of Polish literary gems



Castle ruins in Troki, near Wilno.

into the Karaite tongue. But the greatest attraction was His Excellency Hacham Seraja Bej Hadzi Szapszal, the spiritual leader of the Polish Karaites and the protagonist of their national renaissance before the present war. Born more than 70 years ago in the Crimea, son of a noble family, he studied oriental languages, especially Turkish, Persian and Hebrew in St. Petersburg. While a candidate for a chair of Turkish language and literature, he became on the recommendation of the Russian government the tutor of the heir-apparent to the Persian throne, and after his pupil became Shah, a minister of the Court of Teheran. But this position was not to

his liking, and after a brief period as a Russian government official, he returned to the Crimea where he was appointed "hacham," Chief Priest, of the Crimean Karaites. During the Bolshevik revolution he left his country, spent some time as an emigre in Constantinople, and finally accepted a proposal to come to Poland. In September, 1928, his solemn inauguration as the new ecclesiastic head of the Karaites took place in Troki. The new Hacham was inducted into office by the governor of Wilno, Wladyslaw Raczkiewicz, now President of the Polish Republic. The Hacham headed the Karaite consistorium, the central organization of the four communities in Poland. He was very popular and highly respected by all classes in Wilno.

Before the present war there were barely 700 Karaites in Poland, mostly farmers, artisans, civil servants, and a few merchants and scholars. Many foreign visitors, especially scholars, were attracted to this exotic minority, an Oriental oasis on the bank of the Wilia. The peaceful life of the Polish Karaites was terminated by the terrible ordeal of war. The Soviet occu-

(Please turn to page 15)



Kienesza, Karaite temple in Troki, near Wilno.

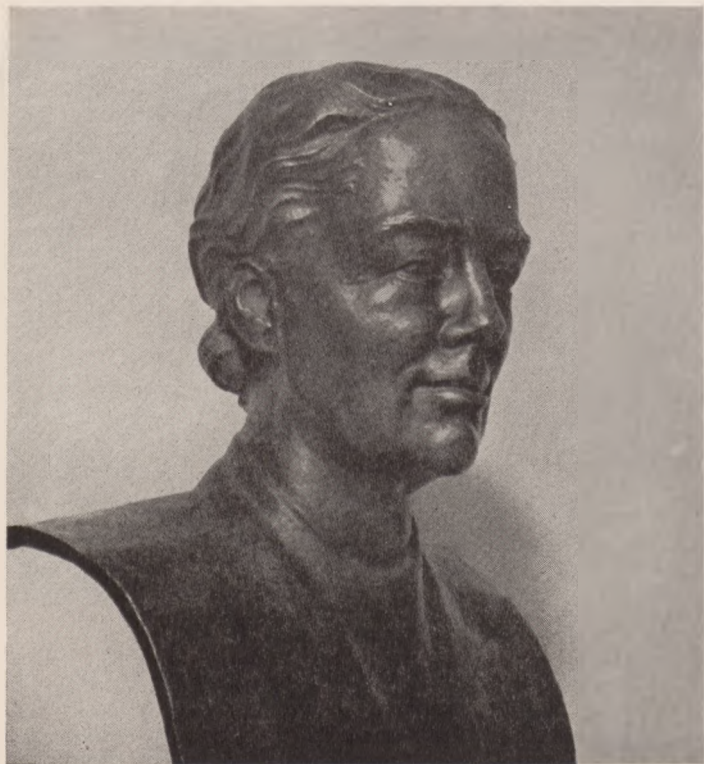


Karaim temples in Troki (left) and Luck (right).



# ZOFIA KOSSAK AND *Blessed Are the Meek*

by MARION MOORE COLEMAN



Zofia Kossak.

Bronze by Zofia Trzcinska-Kaminska.

**Z**OFIA KOSSAK is an impressive person, and whatever she writes has scope and magnitude. How could this not be so? Does she not come from that dauntless and large-living border race whose destiny throughout the centuries has been to stand guard athwart the frontier of the Latin West, its eyes ever trained on the distant, shimmering horizon of the East, whence foemen constantly appeared without sign or warning? Moreover, did she not herself experience, in early womanhood, the East's eruptions into the West, when the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 and 1918 devastated her Volhynian homeland and subjected the landowning class from which she sprang to horrors such as make *Gone With the Wind* read like a personal diary for those who went through them?

For too long Zofia Kossak has been unknown to the world beyond Poland, though within that country she never lacked appreciation, and was more than once referred to by responsible critics as a contender for the mantle of Sienkiewicz and Reymont and for the Nobel Prize. Until now, none of Kossak's longer fictional works has been available in English. Only by the autobiographic *The Blaze*, in which she describes the very experiences mentioned above, has she been known abroad. Now, thanks to Roy, the Warsaw publishers now of New York, the culminating work of her *magnum opus*, the long cycle known as *The Crusaders*, has been translated and published under the suggestive title *Blessed Are the Meek*.

With this—*Bez oreza* [literally, *Without Weapons*] in Polish—Kossak accomplished the final fusion of the two ends of a circle she began way back in the early '20's, soon after she took up residence in Polish Silesia. Silesia, like Kossak's own Volhynian homeland, was border country. Here, almost as often as there, East and West had clashed on the field of battle, only here,

perhaps, with slightly less violence, since Volhynia had been the one to receive and break the first shock.

Kossak quickly became interested in the lore of Silesia and absorbed in its martial chronicles. Especially was she fascinated by the figure of Silesia's beloved patron saint, Hedwig, or Jadwiga, as she is known in Polish, and by Jadwiga's son Henry the Pious, whose arms halted the Mongol incursion of 1240 on the field of Silesian Lignica (Liegnitz). It is with rumors and forebodings of this very incursion, warnings heard in distant Acre and Egypt and Rome, that *Blessed Are the Meek* ends.

Kossak embodied the results of her Silesian studies in the novel *The Field of Liegnitz*. But now she found herself dissatisfied with fragments and yearning to unveil not only this tiny segment of the great Christian epic but its whole panorama. She dreamed, in a word, of painting the Crusades complete and entire. So she started at the beginning, and soon had made her own the whole revolutionary epoch that opened with Pope Urban's historic proclamation at the Council of Clermont in 1095 and closed with the victory of Lignica. The four years between Clermont and the delivery of Jerusalem into Christian hands she depicted in the four volumes entitled *The Crusaders*, the liquidation of that heroic enterprise by Saladin in 1187 in *The Leptous King* (1937). In 1938 Kossak completed the cycle with the work now translated into English: *Blessed Are the Meek*, a tale of the attempted retaking of Jerusalem by the knights of the Fifth Crusade.

That Kossak was peculiarly well equipped, both by temperament and tradition, to perform the task she set for herself goes without saying. Of deeply religious nature and sincerely believing in the mission of the Roman Church in eastern Europe, Kossak entered readily into the feelings not only of the armored knights whose deeds are woven into the canvas of those crusading centuries, but of the simple folk with their inarticulate but authentic religious ecstasy and their

(Please turn to page 14)



*The Children's Crusade.*

By E. Kanarek.



# The Watch of the Holy Land

by ZOFIA KOSSAK\*

WHEN Francis entered with that serene smile of his, de Brienne's first impression was that he had not changed at all. He was always the same. Slight, grey and joyous. The realization gave the King a jolt. The last few years had brought so many changes and bitter blows; he himself had changed so completely, that unconsciously he had come to believe that time could not have left anyone unaffected. Deep in his heart he felt a shadow of a ridiculous grudge. For a while they looked at each other in silence.

"You are coming from Jerusalem, brother," said de Brienne at last. "Tell me what did you see there? In what condition is the Holy Sepulchre?"

"The Tomb of Our Lord is intact, only the basilica over it has been ruined. All the churches in the Holy Land have been destroyed, and just to look at these ruins wrings your heart. Not a single one remains, save the Shrine of the Nativity in Bethlehem."

De Brienne sighed heavily and began to pace the chamber. "I don't know why," he confessed, "in the old days those things did not affect me so much as now . . . I lived here and ruled, yet somehow I accepted the fact that the Holy Land belonged to the Moslems. I had other cares. Now, I am bowed down by the thought of it. It wrings my heart to think that the holy places remain neglected and ill-fated."

"Not completely neglected," Francis exclaimed, "for I left a goodly garrison which will neither fail nor surrender!"

"You left what?" asked de Brienne, thinking he had not heard right.

"A garrison . . . A handful of Brothers Minor who joined me there. At present there are but ten of them, but God willing, their number will increase by and by. It is they who will guard and protect the Holy Sepulchre."

De Brienne shrugged his shoulders indolently.

"Much they would accomplish, those brethren of yours! The Moslems will disperse them to the wind!"

"They will not," Francis said with conviction, "They will stay. Do not worry over the Holy Sepulchre, Sire. It is not deserted, Oh, no!"

"But you said yourself the temple over it is sacked and ruined."

"Our Lord cares nothing for splendor, only for human love. The Brothers Minor will love Him as much as they can. Their prayers will replace the dome."

"I still can't believe they will hold out," sighed de Brienne.

"They will hold out, for no one will wish them ill. Only a weapon challenges a weapon, and might challenges might, while that which cares not for wordly protection is the safest and lasts the longest . . ."

"You have an answer to everything," remarked de Brienne. "Maybe you could explain to me some things that trouble me sorely . . . Life is not easy for me . . . I live in torment."

"The first time I saw you, Sire, you were in sore torment, too . . ."

"The first time?" de Brienne mused. "Where was that? Oh yes, I remember, I saw you swinging on a board . . ."

"That was not the first time. To be sure I remember that swinging, too. I behaved most unseemly then and was ashamed of it for a long time afterwards. But we had met before. You, Sire, could not see me, but I marked you well. It was in a hostelry, near Rome. You were on your way to the Holy Father to obtain the Jerusalem crown, and I and my companions were also going our way to the Holy Father to get his approval of our Rule . . . I saw you through the window," Francis went on. "You walked about vehemently, throwing your head and arms about. I thought then, 'How this knight suffers! How I'd like to help him.'"

"Then help me now. I suffer far more today than I did then. I am not an evil man nor a murderer at heart, yet so many crimes weigh upon my conscience that the thought fills me with terror. The last is the worst; a certain woman, whom I brought to sin, died by her own hand . . . I told her we had no right to go on sinning and she rebelled and cried: 'Why not? We are free!' I could not explain to her why, and . . . I did not save her!"

"The thing to do was to show her love and indulgence as one does to a child, for only a child would not see why. Only a child will say: 'I prefer to crawl rather than to walk, for it is very hard to learn to stand upright.' If an ox puts its head into the yoke, it will plow the soil which in turn will bear grain. But if the ox were to roam as it pleases the field would lie waste and would not bear its crop. Our Lord has created us to achieve great and glorious things, but we cannot achieve them without effort."

"When one listens to you, everything seems too simple," smiled de Brienne. "Yet in reality this eternal constraint under which we live breaks a man."

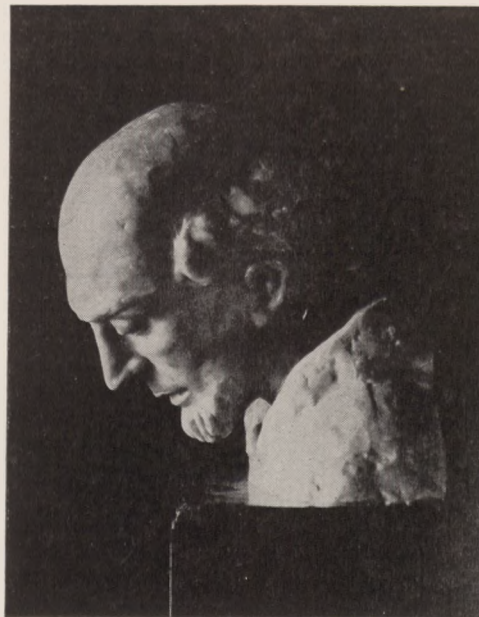
"Why break, Sire? It releases him."

"Releases him? . . . I don't know . . ."

I must consider . . . It is getting late . . . You are surely tired, brother . . . Time you had some rest . . . But promise me you will not leave before you see me once more . . . I would like to continue this conversation and ask you . . . ask you . . ."

"I will come, indeed," promised Francis. "May Our Lord's peace be with you, Sire."

After he left, de Brienne stood for a long while motionless. And suddenly he felt that his restless, desperate pacing had brought him to his goal; that he had arrived. The goal was here . . . right here . . . where but a moment ago Francis had stood.



Head of St. Francis.

By Maryla Lednicka.

In connection with the publication of Zofia Kossak's "Blessed Are the Meek," Columbia University arranged an exhibit in South Hall devoted to her works. This display which closed on April 22 included a number of Polish titles by Mme. Kossak, among others the Polish originals of "Blessed Are the Meek" and "The Blaze," both of which have been translated into English. Also featured were reviews of the Book-of-the-Month-Club's choice for April, from the Polish and English press.

\*From: *Blessed Are The Meek* by Zofia Kossak, translated by Rulka Langer. Roy Publishers, New York, 1944.



# ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI AS CONCEIVED BY POLISH ARTISTS

by DR. IRENA PIOTROWSKA



Stigmatization. Fresco in Szadek, 1451.

POLISH religious art always placed a vivid accent on the element of love and feeling, always displayed deeply poetic qualities, and so produced many a masterpiece devoted to St. Francis of Assisi, the Saint who is the very embodiment of love, meekness and virtue.

Polish religious art, both modern and medieval, best expressed itself in the sweetness of the Christ Child and emphasized above all deep religious emotion even in the subject of Christ's Crucifixion. It was thus attracted by the compelling lyricism of St. Francis' life and preachings. Thus as in one of the most beautiful

modern Polish novels—*Blessed Are the Meek* by Zofia Kossak—the deeds and holy love of this great Saint, have

inspired many an admirable modern Polish painting, engraving, and sculpture, that brings out the spirit of devotion and humility of the barefoot Italian mendicant who seven hundred and forty years ago left home and went out among men and beasts with nothing but love in his heart.

While the best Polish works devoted to St. Francis are products of modern art, their roots—whether the artists were conscious of it or not—reach far back into the Middle Ages, indeed to St. Francis himself.

The teachings of this Saint brought about a decisive change in the personal relation of man to God, as well as in the representation of God in art. While in Byzantine, Romanesque, and early Gothic art, Christ, The Madonna, as well as the saints are shown as unapproachable sovereigns—since St. Francis' days The Madonna is shown as a loving mother, Christ either as a child or suffering for mankind, the saints in adoration and ecstasy, or showing compassion to the afflicted.

The life of St. Francis himself soon became a favorite

subject of Italian artists. The most beautiful and sincerely emotional paintings depicting scenes from the Saint's story are by Giotto (1276-1337) one of the greatest artists of all times, who not long after St. Francis' death and under the direction of Minorite friars, painted with love and devotion, with God inspired genius, with deep insight into the Saint's teachings, with utmost simplicity, the entire life of the Saint on the walls of the so-called Upper and Lower Churches of Assisi, St. Francis' hometown. For centuries these paintings remained the inspiration of artists who treated the same subject.

Especially popular became the supreme moment in St. Francis' life, the receiving of the stigmata, the nailmarks of the Crucifixion on his own body, while in ecstasy on Mount Alvernia. The *Stigmatization* had been painted before Giotto, ever since the Saint died in 1226,



Stigmatization. By Wacław Taranczewski. Modern Woodcut.

but Giotto's conception came to be regarded as classical and was repeated by all other artists, both in Italy and north of the Alps, at least up to 1500. Giotto himself painted the *Stigmatization* three times. Aside from the fresco in the Upper Church of Assisi, he depicted the scene on a small panel now in the Paris Louvre, and finally, in 1320, in the Capella Bardi of Santa Croce in Florence.

The cult of St. Francis arrived in Poland with the Franciscan monks who settled in Cracow as early as 1228, only two years after the death of their founder. A practical result of St. Francis' teachings, was the introduction by them



Stigmatization.

By Maria Dąbrowska

Modern Handcolored Woodcut.

While iconographically these two frescoes are similar, there exist differences in form and detail. The Polish mural shows weakness in the treatment of anatomy and perspective, but attracts by the sweet expression on the Saint's face. The minute execution of the Cracow *Stigmatization* seems to indicate that it was not directly inspired by Giotto's painting, but through an Italian miniature.

Still another medieval *Stigmatization* exists in Poland. More primitive in style than those at Torun and Cracow, it is of great interest. Executed in 1451 by a provincial master it decorates a wall of the Parochial Church in Szadek, Central Poland. It also is based iconographically on Giotto's model, showing the youthful Saint kneeling and the Crucified Christ with Seraphic wings. But it has unusual independence of form, as well as a peculiarly hard, linear facture. Color is used

of the custom to erect Bethlehem Mangers in Polish churches at Christmas Time, which brought the Savior and the Holy Family near to the people. A similar spirit of intimacy was soon to be introduced in Polish religious art.

The first painting in Poland devoted to St. Francis that has come down to us dates from the end of the 14th century. It is a *Stigmatization* in one of the altars of St. Mary's Church in Torun, Pomerania, and its composition is based on Giotto's masterpiece in Santa Croce in Florence. The same is true of the fresco decorating one of the walls of the Franciscan Monastery in Cracow. It dates from the second half of the 15th century.

In the Cracow fresco as in Florence, St. Francis kneels with face uplifted and hands raised. Above him appears Christ Crucified, with the triple wings of a Seraph, an angel of the highest. Rays issuing from Christ's five wounds reach St. Francis's hands and feet and his side, leaving the holy stigmata. In both frescoes the face of the Saint is youthful and beardless, and the background is the same: a hilly landscape and to the right a church.

with great restraint. The landscape and some architectural motifs are rendered by geometrical forms that remind one of modern Cubism. Christ occupies an almost horizontal position and fills the upper part of the picture. This decorative treatment, the linear character, the strong simple contours, the wide dark bands that connect Christ's wounds with St. Francis's Stigmata—are all reminiscent of stained glass. So it is possible that the Szadek fresco was based on some earlier *Stigmatization* executed in stained glass, and decorating one of the many Gothic churches in Poland! Last, but not least, the lyrical mood pervading this unusual picture, the almost cheerful expression of the Saint's face turned toward the spectator, its truly Franciscan spirit, are worthy of study.

After the 15th century, when the wealth loving Renaissance set in, the life of St. Francis, who practiced poverty and austere simplicity, became an almost forgotten subject in European art. It reappeared, however, in the Baroque age when reaction to the Reformation made itself felt and the religious orders renewed their activities to revive the true faith. But the *Stigmatization* received a new treatment. In perfect accord with the Baroque spirit, it was the pathos of St. Francis's experience that began to interest the artists. The narrative style of Giotto, depicting as simply as possible what

(Please turn to page 10)



Stigmatization. Handcolored Peasant Woodcut. Early 19th century.



Conversion of the Wolf of Gubbio.

By Maria Wolska Berezowska.

Aquatint.



# ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI AS CONCEIVED BY POLISH ARTISTS

(Continued from page 9)

happened on that eventful day on Mount Alvernia, no longer sufficed. Late sixteenth and seventeenth century artists cared little for the details of the story. In their *Stigmatizations* even the Seraphic Christ is omitted, replaced by a light effect, as on the famous paintings by Baroccio and El Greco. The accent is all on the expression of the Saint living through the miracle. St. Francis no longer appears as a beardless youth. Baroque artists give him a pathetic, even exhausted look, often he is represented on the verge of collapse, supported by one or two angels.

This new approach to the *Stigmatization* soon reached Poland from Italy. But Polish artists, especially those from the provinces, most faithful to local traditions, modified it according to their own predilections. These local creations, on the outskirts of Polish folk art, form a connecting link between the medieval paintings and the somewhat later Polish peasant productions. Among the most striking examples of this 17th century national art is a *Stigmatization* from the middle of the century, a large altarpiece executed in *tempera* and found less than ten years ago; forgotten but well preserved, in the attic of the Franciscan Church in Warsaw.

This *Stigmatization* combines in a wonderful manner the traditional iconographic conception of the subject with that of the Counter-Reformation. The whole composition—with the figure of Crucified Christ as a Seraph painted on a gilded background, with rays from the wounds of Christ to the stigmata of the Saint, with detailed landscape scenery filling the lower left corner—links this picture to Polish medieval art. On the other hand, the principal figure St. Francis displays



*Stigmatization.*

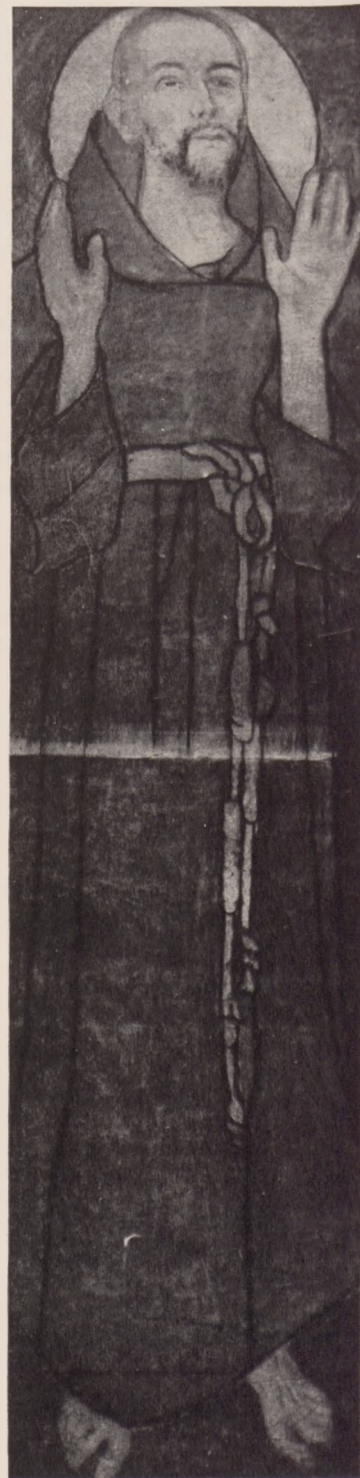
Detail. By Antoni Michalak. Oil.

the true Baroque spirit. Occupying a large part of the picture, he leans back from his knees, supported by an angel, his arms are spread down, and not raised, his mouth half-open in ecstasy. In contrast to all earlier representations, his face is bearded. This figure is much akin to the images of St. Francis of the contemporary school of Bologna in Italy.

Of great interest also is a Polish handcolored peasant woodcut, depicting a *Stigmatization*, signed M, dating from the first years of the 19th century. It is primitive art *par excellence* and bears all its marks. At the same time, it is one of the most beautiful, forceful, and expressive works primitive art has ever produced. Iconographically, like in the middle-17th-century Warsaw painting, Crucified Christ appears, but characteristically enough, without the traditional Seraphic wings: the peasant artist did not know what they meant, so he omitted them. Like the Crucifix, so the rays that mark the stigmata on the Saint's body, and the hilly landscape with a church and another building, must have been suggested to the folk artist by some Polish medieval painting seen by him in one of the churches. However, the dark beard of the Saint, his large dimensions, the gesture of his hands, as well as his expression, point to the influence of some Italian Baroque painting. Or did the peasant artist see the Warsaw *Stigmatization*, before it was removed into the attic?

Stanislaw Wyspianski (1869-1907), who during the last decade of the past century designed a most magnificent stained glass window devoted to St. Francis—see last number of THE POLISH REVIEW—for the Franciscan Church in Cracow, was a great admirer of Polish peasant art. But while he was well acquainted with the Polish peasant's decorative arts, especially the floral motifs, it is doubtful whether he ever came across the old and rare peasant woodcuts. No indication of this is shown, for instance, in his famous stained glass work. Neither did this artist, so individual and original in everything he touched, rely on tradition for his *Stigmatization*. The ascetic, most inspiring figure of St.

(Please turn to page 11)



*St. Francis.* Stained Glass by Stanislaw Wyspianski.



# THE WALL OF SILENCE

by ALEKSANDER JANTA

*Better they say of no-one news to seek;  
That yet they live, suffice the promise made—  
They wait for us, though this they may not speak,  
To come with shield, or on the buckler laid.*

*Silence extends its kingdom's distant bound;  
Behind the borne our country waits, entreats,  
A prison wall whose hearkening bricks, the sound  
Of groans devour, as though they cried defeats.*

*Pain and despair are amply satisfied  
In those who lack the strength to last the fight,  
In those who doubt till first they have descried,  
Who live long, fettered days of fear and night.*

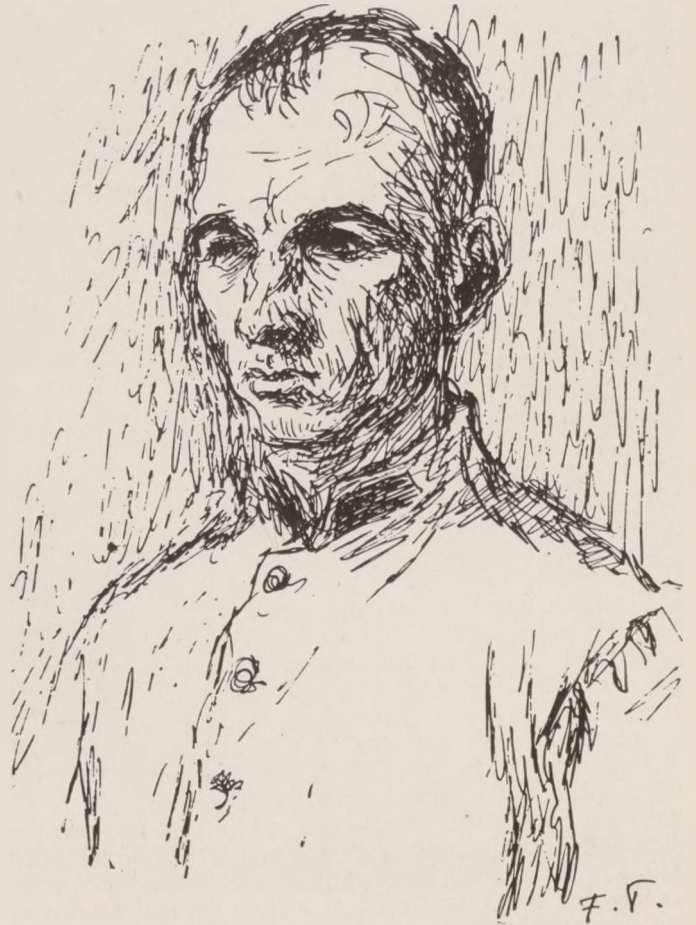
*More great the chasm, the gorge then deeper yawns.  
The dusk more starless, wider spread death's pall;  
On guard must wait more steadfast till day dawns  
The doers of high deeds, for deeds are all.*

*Such deeds dumb men perform with sullen eyes;  
The silence fills our house as though a tomb—  
The tongue of Warsaw's underground of spies,  
The voice that fights on, stealthily in the gloom.*

*A mask obscures the face, cheeks sunk and spare,  
An empty sound alone escapes the dumb,  
It's dangerous with words complaints to share  
When none wants favours, none expects a crumb.*

*Sufferings's law is grown in anger strong,  
Not words, though even these might conquer slow:  
The silent wall will crumble at our song  
Of power and courage. So fell Jericho.*

English by NOEL E. P. CLARK.



*Aleksander Janta as prisoner of war in Germany.*

A drawing by Feliks Topolski.

Aleksander Janta has just published in England "The Wall of Silence," a volume of poetry in Polish. Some of these poems were written in captivity, as the author, a well known writer, poet, and the first Polish war-correspondent of this war, spent more than two years in a German prisoner-of-war camp. He recently escaped to England and is now in the United States.

## ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI AS CONCEIVED BY POLISH ARTISTS

(Continued from page 10)

Francis in ecstasy, is shown standing contrary to tradition, while above him, amidst resplendent flowers and large Seraphic wings half of the figure of Christ is visible, not crucified, however, but with his wounds distinctly indicated. The entire composition is of unforgettable beauty, delicacy of expression, and deeply moving poetry.

Soon after the premature death of Wyspianski in 1907, the old religious peasant woodcuts were discovered by the remarkable Polish wood engraver, Wladyslaw Skoczylas. He and a number of wood engravers who came after him, devoted many a print to religious subjects. These modern artists were struck by the charm, directness and sincerity of the peasant creations and were inspired by them. Most of the engravers of religious scenes however conceived their creations in a more naturalist style than the folk artists. Yet, they did not forget the lessons of primitive peasant art. While imparting a modern form to their creations, they retained the expressive qualities of the peasant's religious works—qualities inherited by the peasant from times when Christian faith and the religious spirit had reached their greatest intensity.

For the most part modern engravings of St. Francis of

Assisi, while imbued with truly medieval religious fervor and displaying Franciscan simplicity and piety, are iconographically independent of any traditional models. As in the case of Wyspianski they reflect in inventiveness of composition the age of individuality. Among many beautiful modern creations, constituting with Wyspianski's *St. Francis* in stained glass, the flower of Polish religious art, mention must be made of *St. Francis and the Birds* by Skoczylas, of the *Stigmatization* by Maria Dunin, of that of unspeakable beauty by Wladaw Taranczewski, all engraved in wood, and of the aquatint representing the *Conversion of the Wolf of Gubbio* by Maria Wolska-Berezowska. While in all these prints some medieval echo may be discerned, the famous *Stigmatization* executed by Antoni Michalak in oils on canvas reflects the style of some Italian Baroque masters, which by no means deprives this painting of individual features. Of great beauty is also the wooden figure of *St. Francis* by Maryla Lednicka, now living in New York. This is in the Forli Museum in Italy. An expressive head of St. Francis by the same artist, now in the Sacre-Coeur Chapel in London, won a medal at the International Exhibition of Religious Art in Padua a few years ago.



# Getting Through! Be the Cost What it May!

**D**URING the African campaign, when mastery of the Mediterranean had not yet been won by the Allies, the important route from Alexandria to Tobruk was fraught with danger.

The S.S. *Warsaw*, one of the Polish ships carrying supplies to the Carpathian Brigade, met a glorious end in an attempt to get her precious cargo, cost what it may.

On Christmas Eve in 1941, flying the White Eagle of Poland, the *Warsaw* started out on what was to prove her last voyage. As she lay off Alexandria under a leaden Egyptian sky, there was nothing but her red and white ensign to distinguish her from the rest of the convoy assembling under the protection of Britain's Mediterranean fleet.

Hers was already a long and proud record of service, carrying arms and airplanes to French ports for shipment to Poland, her distant motherland, transporting volunteers to Syria for the Carpathian Brigade, evacuating Polish exiles from Messina and Cyprus. She was a veteran of the Greek campaign, and had withstood innumerable sea and air attacks. Then she had been in General Wavell's offensive, and had taken Italian and German prisoners from Tobruk to prison camps. To every Allied port on the Mediterranean, she had carried arms, ammunition, provisions.

All this was in the log of the S.S. *Warsaw* in December, 1941, and was supported by hundreds of holes she bore in her sides from machine-gun bullets and bomb fragments. According to the official Italian radio, she had already been sunk several times. Her crew, recalling her two-year record of almost miraculous escapes from submarines, and scores of attacks by German and Italian airplanes, took all such reports in good part.

The strangest thing about this Polish ship was her crew. Unlike the old sea dogs who filled the neighboring ships in the harbor, she was manned almost entirely by exiles—people of many professions—gathered together by a common desire to serve under the banner of the White Eagle; a Warsaw physician was in the stoke hold, a famous wrestler from Lwow acted as ship's boy, among the able-bodied seamen were scholars and merchants, students served as stewards. The ship's doctor was a woman—a young medical student driven from Poland by the war, first to France, later to England, and now to her present position. Following the call of her heart, she wanted to help, to prove that not only men but women—unconquerable Polish women—could serve on all fronts, in almost all positions, during this war of liberation.

Her devotion and courage were famous among the sailors of the Allied fleets in the Mediterranean, and she won the title of "Queen of Tobruk."

Master of the ship was Captain J. Meissner, a man of great culture, tact and courage, who was both scholar and navigator. During the heaviest air raids, he could be seen on the unprotected deck, calmly giving orders as captain of the ship.

Orders came that Christmas Eve, destroying the crew's hopes of a holiday spent ashore. The British Navy, with which the Polish ships were serving, was sending the S.S. *Warsaw* to Tobruk as part of an important convoy. Several hundred soldiers came on board and as much cargo as possible was stowed away. The noise and ordered turmoil of these hurried preparations drove thoughts of Christmas from the hearts of the crew. They had no time to think that somewhere in Poland families and friends were sitting down to the straw-strewn tables always set in Polish homes on Saint



S.S. *Warsaw* (Warszawa) at home port of Gdynia.

Sylvester's Night, and were breaking holy wafers.

Slowly, almost reluctantly, the S.S. *Warsaw* moved from her moorings and passed out of the roadstead, through the minefields and finally reached the open sea where she dropped her pilot. Almost as if the ship herself had a presentiment that this was to be her last voyage.

Christmas Day! Spent on the blue Mediterranean, passing along the Libyan coast, past Sollum, past Bardi, on to Tobruk. The day went calmly and almost without emotion, moving along the sun-baked sandy coast just beyond range of the German shore batteries.

The next day, a storm blew up, and many of the soldiers felt the effects of the rough sea. So rough indeed was the water that the other ships of the convoy rose and fell from view in the dip of the high waves. A lazy atmosphere pervaded the ship, caused by the monotonous rolling and dipping. Most of the sailors rested up for the strenuous night watch ahead.

Suddenly a terrific jar, a muffled explosion came from somewhere deep in the ship's bowels. Sailors were thrown from their bunks, and rudely awakened by the detonation. The lights winked out, the engines stopped. Those below deck heard the footsteps of many men running about on deck and of soldiers making for their lifeboat stations.

To those on deck, a startling and terrifying sight presented itself—the entire stern of the ship had completely disappeared, leaving only a wild medley of boards and other odds and ends on the water. The S.S. *Warsaw* was left without its rudder, completely at the mercy of the waves.

And what of those in the stern when the torpedo hit? Most of the crew had their quarters there. The doctor had seen what had happened.

"Four of the crew are missing," she reported to the captain; the Warsaw physician, a young Jewish boy, a fireman, and Jacob, oldest of the crew, who was called Grandpa by all.

Trawlers and destroyers hurriedly laid depth charges, and  
(Please turn to page 15)



# WAR COMES AGAIN TO POLAND'S TATAR PASS

**O**N April 8, the advancing Red Army reached the famous Jablonica or Tatar Pass in Southern Poland.

This ancient pass—one of several through the 900-mile range of the Carpathian Mountains that links Poland with Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Rumania—has for centuries been the scene of invasion and bloodshed.

The Tatar Pass got its name in the Thirteenth Century when the Tatars first swept into Poland from the East, burning and pillaging as far as Sandomierz and Cracow. Since then it has often witnessed clashes of East and West. During the last war the Carpathians proved an impassable barrier to the Russian armies, and Germany's retreating Eastern Army has now split upon them.

The Polish Carpathians have none of the rugged peaks, great snowfields or high waterfalls of the Swiss Alps, but they are one of the most picturesque mountain ranges in Europe, and a favorite resort of tourists in summer and winter alike. Rising to more than six thousand feet, they are dotted by mountain villages, pastures and meadows. They are covered with thick forests of beech and oak and at higher levels, with fir and pine. Bears, wolves, lynxes and birds of prey still roam their remoter regions.

West of the Tatar Pass four torrential rivers rush by every spring, swollen with melting snow. Nestling at the Polish end of the Pass is the village of Jablonica, with a population of eight thousand. The pictures shown on this page are typical scenes of this vicinity.



Howerla peak, Czarnohora Mountains in Eastern Carpathians.



In the valley of the Czeremosz River, Carpathian Mountains.



## AMERICAN-POLISH BROTHERHOOD IN ARMS

Polish Lt. Col. J. Sokol, Commanding Officer of a Carpathian Brigade, accompanies Lt. Col. Kitcham on an inspection tour of American gun positions in Italy.



U. S. Official Photo

## ZOFIA KOSSAK AND BLESSED ARE THE MEEK

(Continued from page 6)

humble martyrdom. Nowhere in all her works is Kossak's ability to identify herself with the lowliest of God's creatures seen more strikingly than in *Blessed Are the Meek*. Her description of the little children, whose mystical and inexplicable uprising provoked as she sees it the Fifth Crusade, is moving and tender beyond description.

In *Blessed Are the Meek* two figures are cast in stellar roles and two threads, at times intertwined, more often running parallel to each other, carry the burden of the narrative. The two figures, historic and vividly drawn, are that most engaging of Christian heroes, the mystic Francis of Assisi, and Jean de Brienne, the worldly and ambitious but most engaging knight. From the outset the threads of their two destinies intertwine. Francis with his little band of twelve has sought lodging for the night on the courtyard stones of the Inn of the Good Guardian near Rome. He is on his way to seek the Pope's approval of his rule of poverty. Jean de Brienne, also on his way to Rome, but seeking to obtain from the Holy Father "the crown of Jerusalem," stops at the same inn and his men chase the poor monks from the court.

Thereafter the two proceed on their divergent ways, in accordance with their divergent characters: Jean to squander his talent and power, ultimately to stake everything and ruin his career for a foolish and unworthy love; Francis to prove by his radiant life that love does indeed conquer all, that sheer, absolute goodness may move not merely mountains but the world. The two come together at the end. Jean, bitter, forlorn, disillusioned, has failed, ignominiously, to recapture the holy city of Jerusalem. Francis is happy, simply and glowingly happy, as of old. Magically as it were, his way has succeeded, his life triumphed in the very domain of the earthly where Jean's way might have been expected to be victorious. The guard of St. Francis stands watch over the

Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, not the soldiers of Jean de Brienne.

*Blessed Are the Meek* is a timely and a timeless novel. How well does its author know, how strikingly does she point out, the peculiar dangers of protracted war! With what rapture the Fifth Crusade was entered upon, with what spontaneous ecstasy, sprung from the pure faith of little children—yet with what lust for gold and power, did it sink to its inglorious end! Forgotten the holy impulse that sent it forth! The children's rising was but four short years ago . . . "yet already none remembered it. The circles on life's surface had closed again, the memory had vanished in the dust. Perhaps here and there a mother still continued to weep . . ." . . . that was all. Is there not a parallel here, and a warning for ourselves? Have we not, in *our* four short years, forgotten the bombs falling on Warsaw, the cry of doomed women and children, and the ecstasy with which we first espoused their cause? How changeless is human history and how unvarying human motive!

It is to be hoped that other translations of Zofia Kossak will follow *Blessed Are the Meek*. When I saw Madame Kossak herself in Warsaw, in the summer of 1939, at the home of Marian and Hanna Kister of Roy Publishers, I was impressed by her force and sincerity and her utter dedication to her life work. She was working on a variety of projects, always with two themes in mind: the old one of Latin culture rooted in the soil of eastern Europe with particular reference to its history in Sandomierz, the heart of Poland; the new one of Poland and the sea. What has befallen Madame Kossak in the chaos that overwhelmed Poland immediately after that pleasant meeting, who can say? Let us feel hope rather than despair: perhaps she will emerge from the holocaust with something worthy of her master Sienkiewicz, some *Trilogy*—even in our own day—of "fire and sword."



## A NIGHT IN POZNAN'S NOTORIOUS CONCENTRATION CAMP

(Continued from page 3)

the hangmen grew exhausted from his efforts, he was replaced by another. Others, evidently impatient with the long duration of the game, began to wallop us at random.

In the end, they broke one man's jaw. The poor devil could neither talk nor eat after that. When he fell over during the torturing they kicked him. His head bleeding and his eye blackened, he did not have the strength to get up.

Another had his nose bashed in and an eye cut by a punch. Still another leaned forward during the beating, whereupon the lieutenant kicked him in the head. He was lucky to get away with a gash and bruises.

A sixty-year old priest fainted twice and received 45 blows.

A boy from Leszno received an equal number.

My portion was 30 lashes.

It was a terrible night. When in their fury, they had maltreated more than thirty of us and many lay unconscious, they continued on their way. The lieutenant and *oberscharführer* did most of the beating.

No one slept a wink the rest of that night. The yells of the drunken Germans and the cries of the beaten reached us from other cells. In our cell, too, the moans of the victims were heard all through the night.

Why did they beat us? What "dirty trick" had been played in the camp? Thus far, no one has learned about it and I am sure no one ever will.

## GERMANS EXTERMINATE THE KARAIMS—THE SMALLEST MINORITY IN POLAND

(Continued from page 5)

pation of Eastern Poland rendered most of the Karaites destitute. The Hacham took two small rooms, unable to pay the rent but unwilling to part from his Persian carpets and weapons.

German bestiality solved the Karaite problem at one stroke, the slow historical process of decline of the smallest minority in Poland was accelerated. The bulk of the Karaites outside Poland (four-fifth of them) still live in the Crimea. Nobody knows how many will survive this war. There are small Karaite communities in Constantinople, Cairo and Jerusalem. Even in the United States about 100 families may be living; some of them migrated after the last war from Lithuania and the Crimea. As most of them are prosperous they have extended relief to Karaite groups in foreign countries, mainly in the Crimea. Men predominate and many American Karaites take rabbinic Jewish wives. Some speak Yiddish. They have no synagogue and gather for prayers without priest or cantor in the house of one of their number.

In her beautiful novel "Meir Ezofovitch," the great Polish writer Eliza Orzeszkowa created an unforgettable type: the old Abel Karaim. He stands on the market square of the little town in Lithuania surrounded by baskets of all shapes and sizes. In the hubbub of voices, amid the bargain and

quarrels, his quavering voice unremittingly in endless recitations . . . "When Moses descended from Mount Sinai . . . the people fell down on their faces and called out as in one voice: Moses repeat to us the words of the Eternal . . . When the people heard the commandments of the Lord they called out as in one voice: We will do *all that that the Lord commandeth* . . . Few people listened to the echoes of the distant past. Abel's eyes shone brighter . . . the fur cap pushed back on his head, his long white hair falling upon his breast and shoulders, gave him the air of a half-blind bard, who with his national songs, rouses and gladdens the spirit of the people . . . He went on: When the Israelites crossed the Jordan, Joshua raised two great stones and wrote upon them the ten commandments of the Lord . . . The voice spoke to all men: He breaks the covenant of the Lord who worships false gods, who does not honor his father and mother. He breaks the covenant who covets his neighbor's property and leads the blind astray. He breaks it who wrongs the stranger, the orphan or the widow; who putteth a lie into his brother's ear and sayeth of the innocent: 'let him die.' And when the people of Israel heard it they called out, as of one voice: 'All that thou commandest, we shall do . . .'

The cruel fate of the Polish Karaites, innocent victims of German terror, will be avenged as will be that of their Jewish brethren.

## GETTING THROUGH! BE THE COST WHAT IT MAY!

(Continued from page 12)

then raced to rescue the survivors. The S.S. *Warsaw* was sinking very slowly, almost imperceptibly. All the soldiers were transferred to other ships in the convoy, leaving only the captain and his crew aboard the wave-washed Polish vessel, now glowing blood-red in the rays of the setting sun.

In the hushed silence, the captain's voice rose, telling of his decision—to say with the ship in the hope that the precious cargo for Tobruk, still several hours distant, might be saved.

After an exchange of signals, a trawler took the S.S. *Warsaw* in tow. Throughout the night watch was kept over the waterlevel in every part of the damaged ship. But, out of the dark of the early morning, a second explosion blasted what was left of the S.S. *Warsaw* with an undeniable finality. This time there was no hope for the ship or its cargo. A feeling of impending doom pervaded the members of the crew. As if moved by a common impulse, each one made his way to the sole remaining lifeboat. The captain called the roll—only one sailor was missing.

Jumping into the lowered lifeboat, bobbing on the high waves, everyone grabbed the oar nearest to him and helped to pull with all his might for the nearby trawler. In a few seconds the *Warsaw's* funnel disappeared, and the trawler's

spotlight played on a stretch of empty ocean. A second later and the light picked up the missing seaman swimming for the trawler, whose crew waited by the rail to pull him aboard.

Next day the *Warsaw's* crew rested in Tobruk hospital, but five days later, aboard a Belgian merchantman, they returned to Alexandria, where they were greeted by the Polish consul and their Polish comrades in arms. Quarters in a comfortable hotel and much-needed rest soon restored their strength so that they were again ready to take up the fight that some day would lead them back to Poland, this time on a new ship but still under the same red and white flag.

As told to ANN ANIELEWSKI.

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## Easter Message of Bishop Gawlina to Polish Refugees

Bishop Jozef Gawlina, Chaplain of the Polish Armed Forces, in an Easter message to exiled Poles, especially to those who were released from Russia to Teheran — 22,183 of whom have since been sent to Africa, 2,598 to India and 1,500 to Mexico—recalled their first Easter Sunday on free soil, and comforted them with the thought that God seeing the suffering and Calvary of the Polish nation will also raise her from her grave as He did His Beloved Son on Easter morning. His message reads:

*My dear countrymen!*

*I vividly recall that beautiful moment when I met you for the first time at Teheran. You had just arrived from Russia after a long journey across the Caspian Sea to the Persian capital. It was Easter Sunday. The soldiers had arranged an Easter procession. I walked in awed silence carrying our Lord Jesus between the long columns of soldiers standing at attention, as the band played our traditional Polish Easter hymn: A JOYFUL DAY HATH COME UPON US. Civilians from the neighboring camps sat on the walls and rooftops to take part at least as onlookers in the ceremony they had not witnessed for so long. Many had tears in their eyes. Today you are free. Our soldiers are well armed, and again fight the enemy on the Italian front. Our British Allies have given you the opportunity to order your lives suitably until the hour to return home strikes. But how many of our brethren are still suffering in prisons and concentration camps anxiously looking forward to our country's resurrection and to the day when their sorrows will end? As your shepherd I beg of you to thank the Lord for your own freedom, and to pray for those of our countrymen who still suffer in chains. I address words of particular respect and gratitude to my venerable fellow-*

*priests who are your spiritual fathers and guides in foreign lands. For I know that their example leads you to love God and your country, and that they are as shining beacons on your way. I rejoice in the knowledge that a spirit of great faith lies among you, my dear Brethren and Sisters. I know that your little children are learning their prayers and catechism, that their mothers are full of Christian virtues, that men are aware of their duties towards their faith. I long to meet you in person as soon as I am able to do so, and to rejoice in your righteousness. Easter reminds us of God's greatest victory—victory over death. He Who vanquished the forces of evil, Who conquered His enemies, and Who brought mercy to the unhappy, will not forget you or your country. He sees your sorrow, He hears your prayers and takes them to His blessed heart, He will raise our homeland from her grave. Then it will not be beneath palms, but in the shade of our own trees that we shall walk in our Easter procession, then we shall really and truly sing that the JOYFUL DAY HATH COME UPON US for which we have all longed. I sincerely wish that your prayers and earnest supplications may soon be answered. May the Blessing of the Father, the Son and of the Holy Ghost be upon you. Amen.*