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# THE POLISH REVIEW

VOL. V

JULY 4, 1945

No. 22





# Polish Premier Tomasz Arciszewski's Statement on the Moscow Trial

"The Polish Government cannot recognize the legality of the trial and condemnation of the leaders of the Polish Underground organization. There is no precedent in international law for the trial of the members of a foreign Government for alleged acts committed on their own national territory. The manner in which the sixteen Polish leaders were lured into captivity proves both the singular and political methods of the Soviet Government and innocence of the men who stood in the Moscow dock.

"... Stanislaw Mikolajczyk was fully satisfied as to the absolute loyalty to the Allies and the democratic convictions of these men. Some of them have already played a leading part in the resistance movement at the time when Sikorski was Premier. After being invited to the Moscow talks on March 16, the leaders vanished, and nothing was known about their whereabouts for a long time until the Soviet Government announced that they had been arrested and charged with various imaginary crimes for which they were tried by a Soviet court-martial.

"There is no precedent in the history of relations between civilized nations for inviting delegates of high standing for political conversations, and then placing them in jail as alleged criminals. Another fact, proved beyond a doubt by the circumstances of the arrest of the sixteen Polish leaders, is their innocence of any anti-Soviet intentions. If the charges brought against them by the Soviets were true, and if they were as was alleged plotting against the Soviet Union, would they have had voluntarily accepted the invitation for the Moscow talks, and come into the open freely? The Polish Vice-Premier and his colleagues believed in the good faith of the Soviet Government invitation.

"... As to the charges brought against them, they are too fantastic to be refuted here in detail, though this will be done in due time. The most monstrous of them was the allegation of connivance with the Germans. The Polish Underground organization directed and inspired by the legal Polish Government has been fighting the Nazis for five-and-a-half years without a respite, and at the cost of enormous casualties. It rendered great services to the Allies in general, and particularly to Russia by acting in the rear of the German armies on the Eastern Front. In fact, a major part of the operations of the Polish Home Army were designed as a direct help to the Russians by sabotaging transports to the Eastern Front, and attacking the Germans in the rear. This incessant fight against the Nazi invaders was carried on by the Polish Home Army, also before 1941 when the Communist elements in Central Europe were still collaborating with the Germans.

"The Poles never produced a Quisling, and they fought the Germans without mercy, even at a time when Hitler's fortune was at its peak. Is it likely that these men, who went on fighting after France's collapse, after Dunkirk—when Russia was still neutral, would turn traitors and collaborators with the Germans in 1944, when their doom was obvious? And yet, that is precisely what the Soviet accuser alleged—a monstrous impudent charge. Neither the Polish Government in London nor its executive organs in Poland itself, have ever issued any instructions of an anti-Soviet character. On the contrary, ever since Russia was attacked by Germany, the Polish Government regarded the Soviet Union as an Ally in the common struggle, and lent her all possible assistance within its power. When the Red Army entered Poland in pursuit of the Germans the Polish Home Army received orders to assist the Soviet forces, and did so at the cost of heavy losses.

"In many cases the Soviet commanders expressed their appreciation for help received in the field from the Polish Home Army. The divisional commanders of the various units of the Polish Home Army reported in person to the respective Soviet commanders, revealing themselves and offering active help. This was done on orders from the Polish Government in London, which has never wavered in its determination to collaborate with Russia on terms of mutual respect and friendship. Unfortunately, collaboration of the Soviet forces with the Home Army lasted only as long as actual operations were in progress. Afterwards, the Soviet secret political police—NKVD—established its rule in Poland and began to hunt and arrest the very same men who had only a few weeks earlier, fought side-by-side with the Red Army against the Germans. Many of the officers and men of the Polish Home Army were arrested, and even executed by the NKVD while thousands were forcibly deported to an unknown destination, or were held in concentration camps in horrible conditions. At this stage there may have been cases of spontaneous self-

defense on the part of the victims of this persecution. Occasional clashes which were not a result of any orders from above, but merely acts of despair of brave men unjustly maltreated on their own native soil, have been described by the Soviets as 'terrorism.'

"The present Moscow trial was staged for certain political purposes, namely: 1: An attempt to discredit by slanderous allegations the legal Polish Government and the mass of Polish people who owe their voluntary allegiance to this Government.

2: The elimination of leaders of the Polish Underground movement who have fought against the Germans for five-and-a-half years, and who are the true representatives of the Polish nation. This is required, if the Soviet appointed rulers are to have any chance of governing Poland.

3: The intimidation of Poles who are, at present, discussing in Moscow the proposed formation of a new Government. The technique of staging political trials and securing confessions of alleged guilt has been brought by the Soviets to such a fine point of perfection that they feel confident in using them as a political weapon, even when dealing with men of a proved character.

4: An attempt to discredit throughout Soviet controlled Central Europe all movements and organizations which are not exclusively inspired and directed from Moscow. The fact that the leaders of the Polish Underground, who have remained loyal to the great Allies ever since 1939, have been condemned in Moscow without any defense being put in by their former supporters, is likely strongly to discredit, in the eyes of all Central European nations, the value of international pledges and moral standing of the powers which made them. This may strengthen the already preponderant authority of the Soviets over that part of Europe, and discourage independence movements aiming at establishing Governments on a model of Western democracy, based on the respect of Western standards of conduct.

"Neither the men tried in Moscow nor the legal Polish Government have ever been or intend to be anti-Soviet in their policy. Their hopes were based on the belief that Russia would respect Poland's independence and would accept the friendship of a free Poland, represented by a democratic Government inspired by Western European political principles and loyal to all her Allies."

—LONDON, JUNE 22, 1945.

## THE POLISH REVIEW

Illustrated Magazine Published by The Polish Review, Inc., with the assistance of the Polish Government Information Center. Stanislaw L. Centkiewicz, Editor, 516 Fifth Avenue, New York 18, N. Y.

VOL. V. NO. 22

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Front Cover: General Tadeusz Bor-Komorowski, his Chief of Staff General Pelczynski and other Polish officers accompanied by one of the American officers who freed them at Itter Castel, Austria, walk down a mountain road near Innsbruck, Austria, to freedom. These heroic leaders of the Polish Home Army were imprisoned by the Germans when Warsaw fell last October following the 63-day Uprising.



"I had the opportunity of personally becoming well acquainted with General Sikorski. Through my associations with him I learned to admire his integrity, his patriotism, and those great qualities of leadership which so fully justified the confidence which the Polish people placed in him. His high sense of statesmanship and devotion to the cause of liberty and democracy made him one of the outstanding leaders of our times. His passing represents a severe loss to all freedom-loving people."

—FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT.

## GENERAL SIKORSKI'S FAITH IN POLISH INDEPENDENCE NEVER FALTERED

**T**WO years have passed since General Wladyslaw Sikorski, great wartime Prime Minister of Poland and Commander in Chief of her Armed Forces lost his life in a tragic airplane crash off Gibraltar at a moment when his leadership was most needed to guide his martyred country through the difficult war years to victory.

That his was a truly democratic, liberal spirit is best seen in the many speeches he made in various parts of the world during his years as leader of Poles fighting abroad as well as in Poland for the liberation of their country.

When on June 22, 1941, Germany attacked the Soviet Union, Sikorski whose country had suffered at the hands of the Soviets as well as of the Germans, was one of the first to realize that the U.S.S.R. had to be accepted into the family of United Nations. In a historic broadcast on that day, General Sikorski stated:

"We are entitled to assume that in these circumstances Russia will cancel the Pact (Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact) of 1939. That should logically bring us back to the position created by the Treaty concluded in Riga on March 18, 1921, between Russia and Poland, recognized on March 15, 1923, by the Conference of Ambassadors and on April 5 by the United States of North America. This treaty was considered to be founded upon a sound and reciprocal agreement. The political and moral significance of such an act would be tremendous.

"Will it not be but natural, even on the part of Soviet Russia, to return to the traditions of September, 1918, when the Supreme Soviet Council solemnly declared null all previous dictates concerning the partitions of Poland rather than actively to partake in her fourth partition?"

Only because General Sikorski took this stand was the Polish-Soviet accord of July 30, 1941 made possible. This agreement formed the basis of co-operation between the two states that fought a common enemy.

Even as late as 18 months after the Soviet Union had severed diplomatic relations with Poland, thus repudiating Sikorski's good will for a genuine understanding, the Polish Premier still believed that such an understanding could be



The late General Wladyslaw Sikorski, Polish commander-in-chief, greets a young Polish "Junak," symbol of Poland's future.

reached, although he firmly stated that he would never "barter Polish soil." He presented his position on May 4, 1943 in a speech broadcast to Poland:

"No one can reproach us if, after having accepted all alone the challenge of the whole military might of Germany, staking the entire heritage of a thousand years of our history in defense of the integrity, sovereignty and honor of the Polish nation, we do not want to sacrifice the same values in favor of one of our allies. We believe that our martyrology and our struggle for the common cause will spare us untimely reproaches and render impossible the putting forward of claims to our lands, so painfully redeemed in blood.

"We are carrying on with our duties. It is beyond human strength to do more. We have given of ourselves all that materially and morally can be given, for victory and solidarity. Accordingly, the securing of friendly relations with Soviet Russia has been and continues to be one of the main guiding principles of the Polish Government and of the whole

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# T A D E U S Z K O S C I U S Z K O \*

by JOSEPH WITTLIN



Lwów Municipal Gallery Collection  
Tadeusz Kosciuszko. Bronze medal by  
David d'Angers.

**A**NDRZEJ Tadeusz Bonawentura Kosciuszko Siechnowicki was blessed not only with a long and difficult name but with a long and difficult life as well. He was born on February 12, 1746, in a village hitherto unknown and with a name probably chosen with the deliberate purpose of preventing any foreigner from ever uttering it. The name—with the indulgence of all Anglo-Saxons—was

Mereczowszczyzna.

Our hero passed the years of his childhood at Siechnowicze, on his father's estate, and from here he was sent to the school of the Piarist Fathers in Lubieszow in the province of Wolyn. At the age of nineteen he joined the recently organized Cadet Corps in Warsaw. Contemporary documents prove that Kosciuszko was a leading student in the School of Knights where, in addition to the humanities, the basic principles of tactics and military architecture were taught. He also enjoyed a certain esteem, so that upon graduation he remained with the school as a paid instructor with the rank of captain. He even drew to himself the attention of the king, whose court receptions the cadets often attended. It was the king who sent Kosciuszko abroad to study; of course, at the king's expense. The intellectual atmosphere of prerevolutionary France brought immeasurable gain to Kosciuszko's intellectual development. His sensitive mind was drawn to the movement of the Encyclopedists, to the works of Voltaire and Jean Jacques Rousseau.

Kosciuszko returned to Poland after the first partition. He attempted to join the army hoping to serve his country, which had been dishonored. But even for a person with the rank of captain, and a royal protégé at that, it was not easy in those days to join a regiment. For the entire Polish army had been reduced by the partitioning treaty to the absurd number of 11,000 soldiers, and if one wished, a rank it was necessary to buy it from another officer, usually for the exorbitant sum of 18,000 Polish zlotys. Kosciuszko had no such sum at his disposal, in fact, he had no money at all.

Kosciuszko, like Lafayette, was among the first of those who came from Europe to aid the American revolutionaries; and he came at his own expense without the help of Rodrigo Hortalez et Compagnie, the Paris firm which in behalf of the French government busily supplied Washington with men and ammunition.

On September 31, 1776, Kosciuszko sent a memo to the

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Battle of Saratoga, October 17, 1777.

Congress assembled in Philadelphia, offering his services to the Revolution. On October 18th he received a commission from John Hancock, President of Congress, as "an Engineer with the Rank of Colonel."

Thus began the seven-year service of a Polish volunteer in the American fight for independence. And so he sketched and drew diligently. He drafted fortification plans for Billingsfort near Philadelphia. Kosciuszko's work on these fortifications was his baptism of fire, true, a christening without fire or smoke. From here on Kosciuszko's activities in the American campaign link him closely with the person of General Horatio Gates, who quickly recognized the outstanding talents of this Polish engineer.

General Gates has taken command of the so-called Northern Army in the "land of hills." Kosciuszko came up in May recommended by General Patterson as a "capable engineer and one of the best and finest draftsmen." Gates's adjutant, Wilkinson, also has a high opinion of him and describes him as "timidly modest." Out of the shadow in which his modesty kept him he emerged into

the light only after the decisive battle of Saratoga on October 17, 1777. Here his engineering superiority finally made itself felt. When General Schuyler was removed and the command resumed by Gates, Kosciuszko worked out an excellent plan of fortification for Bemus Heights. This was his contribution to the victory over the English general Burgoyne. The victory at Saratoga had reverberated around the world and brought official recognition of the independence of the United States. With the name of Saratoga the difficult name of the Polish engineer will always be linked. After this victory Washington himself spoke of Kosciuszko in a letter to the president of Congress, Henry Lawrence, on November 10, 1777, as "a gentleman of science and merit."

In March, 1778, we find Kosciuszko at West Point, where under the command of a French engineer, Colonel du Portail, he is extraordinarily active strengthening the defenses of the Hudson River. Colonel Robert Troup, chief of staff, reported to General Gates, now chief of the Board of War in

Philadelphia: "The works in West Point are in a great state of forwardness. Kosciuszko is very much esteemed as an able engineer, and has made many alterations in the works, which are universally approved." In August, Washington himself rode down to inspect the fortifications at West Point. Kosciuszko remained at West Point from March, 1778, to the summer of 1780. And his achievements there? Here is what George Bancroft has to say: "West Point was a solitude, nearly inaccessible, now it was covered with numerous redoubts, constructed chiefly under the direction of Kosciuszko as engineer, and so connected as to form one system of defense which was believed to be impregnable."

At the instigation of General Gates Kosciuszko was appointed chief engineer of the Southern Army by Washington. In 1780 the Southern Army was placed under the leadership of General Nathanael Greene, one of the great figures of the American Revolution. Kosciuszko struck up an even friendlier relationship with Greene than he had held with Gates. Under Greene, Kosciuszko was not simply chief engineer; his duties included the selection of strategic positions in a difficult terrain, the draining of swamps, and the construction of pontoons for river crossings. He stayed in the south until the end of the war. The entire year of 1782 he spent on the battlefield at Charleston. More and more frequently the American papers of that year referred to Kosciuszko's bravery and valor; his legend had already begun to grow. On December 14, 1782, he rode into Charleston with the triumphant American army just a few hours ahead of Greene.

During his stay in the Black District, Kosciuszko's sensitive soul was touched by the fate of the colored people. Possibly, in advocating the cause of the Negro, Kosciuszko was thinking of the Polish peasants whose emancipation later became one of his primary objectives. In Polish eyes, the figure of Tadeusz Kosciuszko is visualized not in the resplendent uniform of a general, but in the white linen peasant blouse which he wore at the time of the insurrection in memory of the battle of Racławice fought against the Russians on April 4, 1794. Here, for the first time in the history of Poland, complete peasant formations appeared in battle with scythes for weapons—and these peasants won a decisive victory over the regular Russian infantry and artillery.

At the end of the war Kosciuszko decided to return to Poland. He had been promoted to brigadier general. It was a great honor for Kosciuszko to be admitted into the Society of Cincinnati, one of the only three foreign officers admitted to this fine group of veterans. He left America in June, 1784, passing through France to Poland, where he was



Philadelphia's Independence Hall as it looked in 1776.



The New York City Hall in Wall Street which Kosciuszko visited in 1797.

soon to play one of the most tragic, though most beautiful, roles in the history of his country.

The shock of the first partitioning had produced great changes in Poland during Kosciuszko's absence. An extraordinary flowering of arts and sciences and the intellect had occurred. At the same time trade and industry had flourished, bringing relative prosperity to the land. Brilliant political writers and statesmen came to the fore with demands for radical social reforms, proclaiming that annihilation could be averted only by a nation whose people were free. In 1788 the four-year Sejm assembled and in 1791 the famous Constitution of May 3rd was passed.

Let us look back at the first year of the four-year Sejm. This year was significant for Kosciuszko. For a bill was passed increasing the army to a hundred thousand men. As a result, after several years of public inactivity, Kosciuszko was now able to serve in the army of his own nation. In 1790 the Sejm recommended Kosciuszko's appointment to the army as a major general.

And here the truly epic tale of the quiet engineer of West Point and Saratoga has its real beginning. Events followed one another with lightning speed. Kosciuszko quickly became the nation's leader. In the war with Russia in 1792 he led a division under the command of Prince Joseph Poniatowski, nephew of the king. Superior Russian forces defeated the tiny Polish army at Dubienka in the Ukraine. Prussia, with whom Poland had signed a defense pact against Russia, not only failed to come to her aid, but betrayed her. Joining with Russia, Prussia carried out the second partition of Poland in 1793. The patriots and many generals, including Lieutenant General Kosciuszko, went into exile.

Kosciuszko's hope for foreign aid was crushed. It was left to the insurrection to succeed on its own strength. It burst forth prematurely and was quickly suppressed. On October 10, 1794, at Maciejowice, a superior Russian army delivered a mortal blow to Poland. Kosciuszko, severely wounded in the head and leg, was taken prisoner.

Kosciuszko traveled through Finland, Sweden, and England to the United States. On the way here he was showered with honors as if he were a king. Ovarions greeted him on every side. Orchestras serenaded beneath his windows, regiments paraded, elegant ladies of the highest social rank made pilgrimages to this Polish invalid who had lost a war and a

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# "THE DEBT TO MEN OF POLISH BLOOD" (ROOSEVELT)

by MIECISLAUS HAIMAN

THE history of Polish immigration in the United States, old as the country itself, is rich in episodes that surpass the most colorful fancy of a novelist's imagination. It is an epic of heroic struggle and silent sacrifice.

High ideals inspired the Poles who landed in Virginia in 1608—the first to settle in America. They were artisans, brought over by the Virginia Company to become pioneers of American industry.

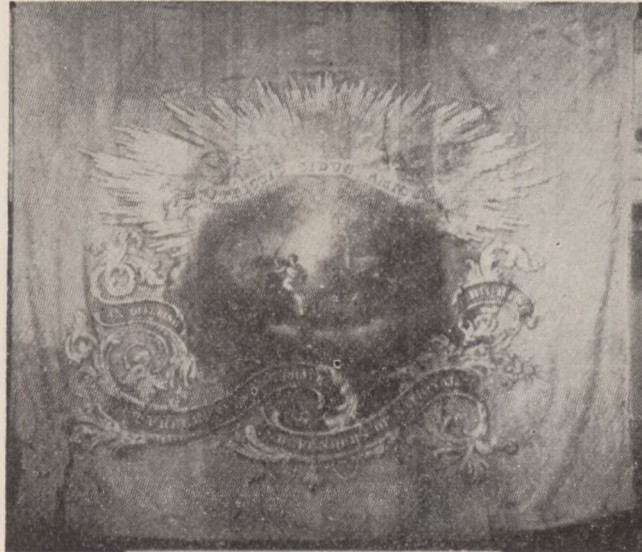
In 1659, a Pole, Dr. Charles A. Curtius established the first Latin school in New Amsterdam, bringing the light of higher learning to the future metropolis of the New World. A Polish noble, Albert Zaborowski (Zabriskie) of New Amsterdam, traded with the Indians in the second half of the 17th century, and the tradition of his friendly relations with the red man still lives. Another Polish trader, Anthony Sadowski (Sandusky) of Philadelphia, was one of the first white men to set foot in the Middle West. His sons live in Kentucky history as companions of Daniel Boone, first settlers of Harrodsburg and intrepid "long hunters" and pioneers. One of them, Jacob, was the first white man, from the English colonies, to descend the Mississippi River to New Orleans in a frail canoe.

Curtius was not the only man to bring Polish culture to these shores in Colonial times. Captain Charles Blaszkowicz, an English army engineer, surveyed the coast of New England in pre-Revolution days and made many beautiful maps. Casimir Theodore Goerck was City Surveyor of New York at the close of the 18th century. A Manhattan street still bears his name. Not without influence on the Declaration of Independence was a book "De Optimo Senatore," by Lawrence Goslicki, an eminent Polish statesman of the 16th century.

The American Revolution led many Polish soldiers to offer their services to the cause of liberty. Most famous among them were Generals Thaddeus Kosciuszko and Casimir Pulaski. The former was the "Father of American Artillery," the latter "Father of American Cavalry." Pulaski sacrificed his noble life on the altar of American freedom. "I came to hazard all for the freedom of America," were his last words to the Continental Congress. Kosciuszko considered his American service as a "sacred duty."

The American Revolution brought the United States into closer contact with Poland, then stifling in the iron embrace of her military neighbors. But even through her political death Poland contributed to the success of the Revolution, for she occupied the attention of Frederick the Great and Catherine II, who otherwise might have thrown the weight of their power on the side of England. American influence in Poland can easily be traced in the famous Constitution of the Third of May, 1791, and in the ensuing Kosciuszko Insurrection. Probably in no other country was Poland's ultimate dismemberment so sincerely and so unanimously deplored, as in the United States.

When the young American republic began its independent life, it was an Amsterdam banker of Polish origin, Peter Stadnicki, whose financial support helped the young country



Collection of Army Museum, Warsaw  
"An offering of freemen to the brave defenders of national rights." Symbolic flag presented by the City of Boston, Massachusetts, "to the heroic Poles" who fought in the great national insurrection of 1831.

published in Boston, in 1854, one of the earliest English-Chinese dictionaries. Marie E. Zakrzewska was a famous pioneer woman physician. Prof. Leopold J. Boeck founded the Polytechnic Institute in New York, said to be the first in this country. Col. Casimir S. Gzowski built the International Bridge over the Niagara River, then considered a miracle of engineering art. Dr. Felix Paul Wierzbicki published the first English book to be printed west of the Rocky Mountains. Lieut. Frederick Szwatka explored Alaska and Mexico. Many Poles fought for the freedom of Texas. They took part in every expedition organized in this country for the purpose of liberating other American republics. Col. Gustavus Schultz, a former Polish officer, even led an expedition from New York during the Canadian Rebellion of 1838; and, after fighting bravely at the Battle of the Windmill, met



Dr. Felix Paul Wierzbicki, hero of the 1846 Mexican War and author of the first history of medicine published in California. Part of a mural showing the history of medicine in California by Bernard Zakheim and Phyllis Wrightson, in Toland Hall, University of California Hospital, San Francisco, California.

to its feet. Polish political exiles who sought asylum in America at the end of the 18th and in the first half of the 19th century, repaid the hospitality they received by services in all fields of human endeavor. They contributed not a little to American culture. The names of Father Boniface Krukowski (Corvin), and especially Father Francis Dzierozynski, S. J., Superior of the Jesuits in America, are inscribed in the history of the Catholic Church. Adam Kurek, a Polish musician, introduced bands of travelling musicians in this country. Edward Soblewski composed "Mohega," the earliest opera based on the Revolutionary War, and woven around the life of Pulaski. Henry Dmochowski-Sanders was an able sculptor. Count Adam Gurowski wrote many important books. Stanislaus Hernisz, an interpreter for the American legation in China,

death on the scaffold without flinching. These are but a very few names from the long list of Polish exiles who have left their mark on American life.

Most of the exiles came here after the Polish Insurrection of 1831, that produced the second wave of pro-Polish sympathies in America. James Fenimore Cooper, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Samuel F. B. Morse, Albert Gallatin, Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe, and many other prominent Americans strove to help Poland during her struggle and, after her defeat gave hospitality to her exiles. Edgar Allan Poe tried to enlist with the Polish Army. In 1834 out of sympathy for the Polish cause, the Congress of the United States granted Polish exiles a whole township in Illinois for settlement; but for various reasons the gift served only as a friendly gesture.

The Poles were foremost in the ranks of those who tried to find a peaceful and just solution to the problem of slavery in America. Kosciuszko, by his celebrated last will and testament of 1795, in which he empowered Thomas Jefferson to employ his property in this country in purchasing, liberating, and educating slaves, was a pioneer of emancipation and of training slaves for worthy citizenship. And then a Polish exile in New Orleans used his savings regularly each year to purchase two Negroes whom he afterwards educated. J. Lewinski edited the abolitionist paper, "The American," first at Lexington, Ky., and later, in Cincinnati, Ohio, at the constant risk of his life.

When the fratricidal struggle broke out, the Poles remained loyal to the last, to their respective regions. About four thousand Poles fought for the Union; about one thousand, on the Confederate side. Five hundred Poles in blue, and more than a hundred in gray made the supreme sacrifice.

The most noted Poles in the Union armies were: Gen. Wladimir Krzyzanowski of New York, the hero of Cross Keys, Chancellorsville, and Gettysburg; Gen. Jozef Karge of New Jersey, one of the best Union Cavalry leaders; Gen. Albin F. Schoepf, victor of the battle of Rock Castle Hills; Capt. Alexander Bielaski who died a hero's death at Belmont, Mo.; Captains Joseph Gloskowski and Julius Krzywoszynski, pioneers of the United States Signal Corps; Capt. William Kossak, military engineer, and scores of others. Under the Stars and Bars fought such famous soldiers as Col. Valerian Sulakowski, Chief Engineer of the Trans-Mississippi and author of a plan to raise a Polish army of 30,000 for the Confederate cause; Lt. Col. Hipolitus Oladowski, Chief of Ordnance of Gen. Braxton Bragg; Capt. Leo Jastremski who was later Mayor of Baton



Students of the Polish-American St. Mary's College, Orchard Lake, Michigan, at work and play.

Rouge, La.; Col. Arthur Grabowski, a distinguished educator and many others.

American historians generally overlook the fact that the Polish Insurrection of 1863 saved the United States from armed intervention by England and France on behalf of the South. The Insurrection was the immediate cause of the visit of the Russian fleet to America, and diverted the attention of England and France from events on this continent.

Polish economic or peasant immigration began in the year 1853, when a few hundred peasants from Upper Silesia came to Texas and founded several agricultural settlements which exist to this day. The causes of this immigration were both economic and political. Prussia, Russia and Austria strove to impoverish the Polish sections of their empires, in order to diminish their political strength and importance. The Polish peasant possessed but little worldly goods, and even less education; but he brought with him the sterling moral qualities and virtues of a pioneer, all of which helped him slowly to win the highest recognition of the American people. In the beginning his lot was even harder than that of Polish political exiles, but he successfully overcame all handicaps, unaided, although a stranger

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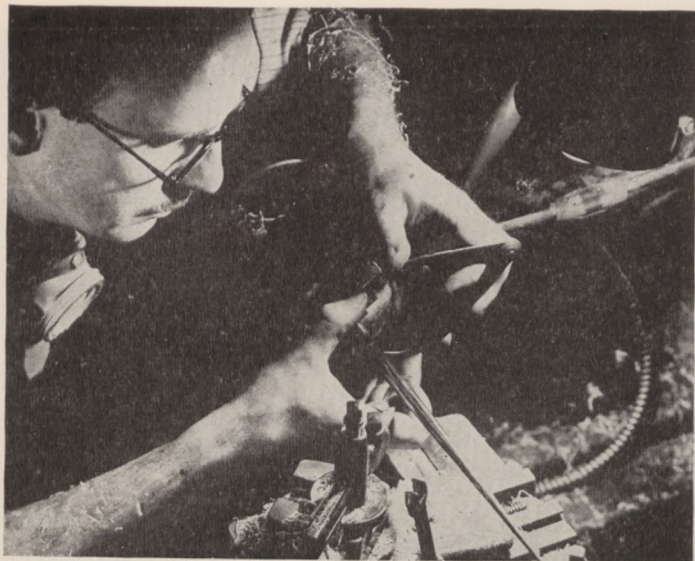


This standard bearing the coat of arms of the City of Lwow was presented in 1938 by the City of Lwow to the Association of Veterans of the Polish Army in America, Nest No. 7 "Lwow," in Detroit, Michigan, to demonstrate its gratitude for the part played by Polish-Americans in the Fight for Polish Independence, 1917-1920.



# THEODORE J. ROSZAK — POLISH-AMERICAN MODERNIST

by DR. IRENA PIOTROWSKA



Theodore J. Roszak working on one of his abstract constructions.

WHEN in 1933 a comprehensive Polish art exhibition was touring this country, one enthusiastic article commented that "the Polish exhibition is an evidence of the artistic genius of the Polish nation. This same artistic genius does doubtless exist, though still in an embryonic form, in the compositions of Americans of Polish descent. We may, therefore, expect the coming of great contributions to American art out of the midst of our Polish-American population."

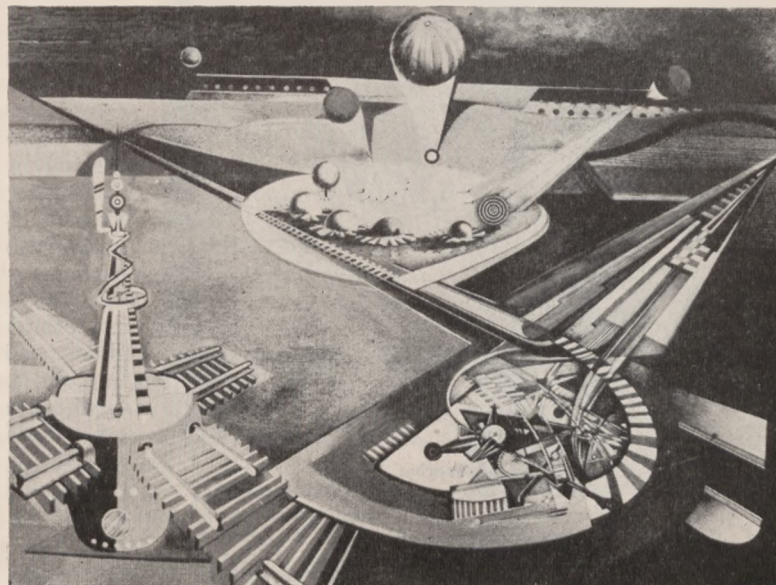
This opinion of an American art critic is especially significant in connection with the latest turn in America's attitude toward art. For the last ten or fifteen years interest in art has grown considerably throughout the United States. Before that time this interest seemed to be the exclusive privilege of sophisticated circles, but at present it is developing rapidly among people of all walks of life. Simultaneously, with the general increase in art appreciation, a trend toward genuinely native American art has manifested itself. While during the second half of the nineteenth century and the first decades of this one, paintings and sculptures were imported from Europe in great numbers, during the last few years a number of art organizations and art periodicals have fostered the development of native art. The Whitney Museum of American Art, founded in New York in 1932, is dedicated to American art exclusively. Other institutions have the same object. The splendid development of American architecture seems to have made the American people confident of their creative abilities in the field of art.

Thus lately America has begun to look for young native talent also in sculpture and painting. Owing to a number of exhibitions which have afforded ac-

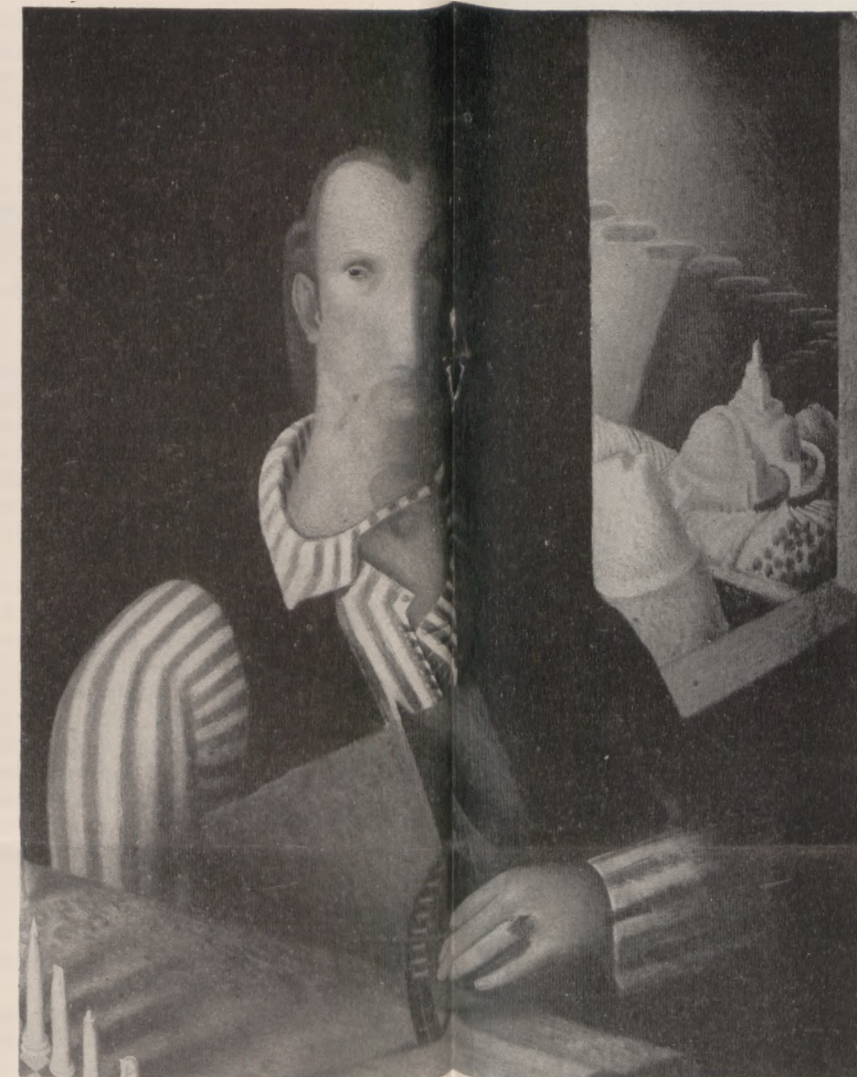
quaintance with the art of Poland, Americans have hopefully directed their attention to the young artists of Polish extraction, to men and women born in the United States, or educated here, but who at the same time possess the artistic genius of the mother country of their parents.

American lovers of art, eager to develop native talent, have encouraged a number of promising Polish-American artists, giving them prizes and scholarships, and purchasing their works. Before the war, they sent some of them to study in Europe.

Through the wealth and versatility of his talent, Theodore J. Roszak, painter, sculptor, and graphic artist, is pre-eminent in this group. He was born in Inowroclaw, Poland, in 1907, and came to the United States in early childhood. From 1922 to 1927 he studied at the Art Institute of Chicago, where he also taught lithography and composition the two following years. Roszak's first one-man show was at the Allerton Galleries in Chicago in 1928. Thereafter, he exhibited annually with the Illinois Society of Artists at the Art Institute of Chicago. The Art Institute awarded Roszak all the scholarships at its disposal—seven, the most important being the "American Travel Fellowship," in 1928, and



Railroad Signals, study in color by T. J. Roszak.



Self-portrait (1928) by T. J. Roszak.

the "Anna Louisa Raymond Fellowship," in 1929.

Roszak's works at that time were naturalistic in presentation of the subject, but remarkable in the power of expression. In the opinion of American art critics, these paintings revealed a typical Polish sentiment. Marguerite B. Williams, for instance, wrote in *The Chicago Daily News* (June 26, 1929): "Theodore Roszak, the first Art Institute student to win Mrs. Anna Louise Raymond's \$1,500 fellowship, set a new pace for artists turned out by the Art Institute . . . Though he left Poland at the age of two, subconsciously young Roszak has much of the exuberant Polish tempera-

ment. At the same time the beauty of rural Poland holds out much to him. Already one fancies that it is the tragedy and suffering of his native Poland that is cropping out."

The grants which Roszak received, enabled him to spend two years in Europe. He studied in Paris and traveled extensively in Germany, Italy, Czechoslovakia and Poland, where he was tremendously impressed with the beauty of Cracow.

Roszak did not work under any particular teacher in Europe. He studied by himself both ancient and contemporary artists. His own paintings of that period evidence the maturing of the artist. He was already in full command of his individual form of expression, showing earnest thought and profound artistic feeling. In those pictures one can see a wonderful blending of the influence of the old masters, particularly the Venetian masters of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, with the results of a study of the masterpieces of French Cubism. To the concise composition he learned from Picasso, Leger, and Braque, Roszak added the warmth of color



Collection of the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, N. Y.  
Fisherman's Bride by T. J. Roszak.

which acquired one of his large canvases, the *Fisherman's Bride*, for its permanent collection. In 1935, Roszak had a comprehensive one-man show at the Roerich Museum in New York, showing 132 oil paintings, lithographs, studies in color, and drawings. This exhibition was sponsored by the Polish Institute of Arts and Letters in New York, of which Mrs. Edith Cullis was director. The following year Roszak's one-man show was repeated at the Albany Institute of History and Arts, New York. In 1934 he won the Eisendrath award for his painting, *Madonna*.

Here are a few excerpts from the press comments on works produced by Roszak either while in Europe or shortly after his return to this country: In a review of a Holiday Show of prints, water colors and drawings shown in the Studio Gallery Increase Robinson in Chicago during the month of December in 1931, Tom Vickerman had this to say (*Chicago Evening Post*, December 22, 1931). ". . . But the best thing Increase Robinson has done for this show is to wheedle Theodore Roszak into sending a group of his lithographs from New York. He sent some, and some of them are pure knock-outs. His sailboats in (Please turn to page 15)



Girl with Violin, lithograph (1928) by T. J. Roszak.



## GENERAL SIKORSKI'S FAITH IN POLISH INDEPENDENCE NEVER FALTERED

(Continued from page 3)

Polish nation. Therefore the facts which are separating us must be removed as soon as possible. We expect the Soviet authorities to let the tens of thousands of Polish soldiers' families leave the U.S.S.R. as soon as possible, together with tens of thousands of Polish children and orphans. We also ask for the release of men fit to carry arms and, in conclusion, for the continuation of welfare and relief work for Polish citizens in Russia, deported after 1939, until they are able to return to their homes in Poland. After all, these are not problems which affect Allied unity. If they are solved, it will perhaps facilitate the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between Poland and Russia. But there are limits to concessions, which no one in the Polish nation will pass.

"The Polish nation, though bereft of the protective armor of its own statehood, has rallied to the Government composed of representatives of the peasants, workers and professional classes, and in so doing it displayed maturity and strength of spirit. When the time comes for the Polish nation to be judged by its actions, it will prove to be a solid nation of a high assay, strong, not only in moral but in true brotherly unity.

"We remain unalterably in the vanguard of the United Nations defending the common ideals which have been so emphatically expressed in the Atlantic Charter. Poles! In the name of these ideals I summon you to persevere, to continue the struggle, to resist. Though the road is hard and bloody, it is the only road leading to a free, democratic and happy Poland."

In these words there is the authority of a statesman and the frankness of a soldier.

General Sikorski was one man who saw clearly the goals for which the United Nations fought. As he stated on November 15, 1940: "The peace which will conclude this war must not be a peace of vengeance; it must be an act of justice which will exclude armed conflicts between nations for many generations . . ."

At a meeting of the Overseas Press Club of America in New York on December 16, 1942, during one of his three visits to this country, General Sikorski outlined a scheme for the future peace settlement in these words:

"As regards the future European settlement, I should like to say that the natural instinct of self-preservation makes nations tend towards the establishment of international unity among freedom-loving peoples who, living peacefully side by side, are exposed to the threat of attack from their powerful neighbors. This tendency towards federation is especially strong among the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The realization of this ideal of which I am a fervent advocate, will safeguard not only the security of nations situated between Germany and Russia, who will thus form a kind of international family, but it will likewise be a natural rampart of protection for Soviet Russia always so concerned about her western security. Such a peaceful family of nations would not only be a factor of security, but also one of permanent European stability and economic development, through the creation, over a vast area, of possibilities of large-scale exchange. As the Representative of Poland, I have the right to talk of Confederation, because five centuries ago Poland

had already established a successful Confederation of neighboring States.

"In this present war, Poland is not only fighting for her own freedom. True to her traditions, she is fighting for the realization of her oldest maxim: 'The union of the free with the free, on a basis of mutual equality.'"

Such a man was Wladyslaw Sikorski, outstanding soldier and statesman, but above all a patriotic son of the martyred country in whose service he gave his life. He was born in 1881 in the southeastern part of Poland, at a time when Poland was not even mentioned in European politics. Nevertheless the young Sikorski never accepted the facts of the partitions, and never ceased working for the day when his country would once again take her rightful place in the family of free nations.

After completing school, Sikorski enrolled in the Lwow Technical Institute. Later in life his studies in engineering that developed logical, precise reasoning were most useful in his career as a soldier and as a statesman.

Long before the first World War, Sikorski took up military studies. He was, in addition, one of the organizers of the underground forces in the Austrian-dominated part of Poland. In the Legions of Pilsudski, 33-year old Colonel Sikorski was chief of the military department.

Following the war, Sikorski had an important position in the organization of independent Poland. He fought for the liberation of Lwow and Przemysl in 1919 and in the Polish-Russian War of 1920. During the Russian offensive on Warsaw, he commanded the Northern Army, winning one of the decisive battles of the war. In the post-war period he was chief of the Army's General Staff. In 1922, Sikorski was briefly premier of Poland.

In Paris at the end of September, 1939, Sikorski was chosen to head the new Polish Government and to be Commander in Chief of the reformed Polish Army in France. He worked tirelessly, never sparing himself. When the collapse of France destroyed the new Polish Army that it had taken him so many months to build up, Sikorski began again in Britain, giving that country his full support in the black moment when it stood alone against the armed might of the Axis.

In May, 1943, on the eve of great events, General Sikorski decided to visit the Polish Forces in the Middle East which were preparing for a decisive part in the struggle against the Axis. He believed that he would lead those forces back into their liberated country. Almost at the close of his journey on July 4, 1943, he met death off Gibraltar.

What amounts to a political testament left by General Sikorski was contained in a short cable the General sent from Cairo on July 2, two days before his death, thanking the members of the Polish Government for the wishes they had sent on his namesday:

"I believe that by united effort and by relying on the heroic Polish forces, we shall fulfill the great and responsible tasks with which we are burdened. If we preserve national unity and if we remain aware that we are defending a great and just cause, we shall be able to overcome all difficulties and not only protect the most vital interests of Poland, but also ensure for her the conditions for peaceful development on true democratic principles."

**"From the first dark days of the Polish catastrophe and the brutal triumph of the German war machine until the moment of his death on July 4, 1943, General Wladyslaw Sikorski was the symbol and embodiment of that spirit which has borne the Polish nation through centuries of sorrow and is unquenchable by agony."**

**WINSTON CHURCHILL, Prime Minister of Great Britain.**



# A CANADIAN SPEAKS OF POLAND

by CAPTAIN PIERRE SEVIGNY, V. M.

SEVERAL months ago, the hospital ship *Laeitia* was entering the port of Halifax after another successful voyage. On board, seven hundred and fifty men were crowding the promenade decks and there was everywhere and in every heart an excitement and happiness as can only feel soldiers who, for many long years, have been away from home. These men had left their country at the start of the war. After their training in England, they had taken part in the invasion of Europe and fought in many countries side by side with the other free people of the world. Now wounded disabled, sometimes crippled for life, they were returning to Canada proud and happy, in spite of their ills, because they knew that over there they had created history together with their allies and they felt that they had saved the civilized world and their own country from the horrors of Nazi domination.

I was standing on deck with a few friends. One of them was a Polish airman who, in the battle of France, had lost an eye and his right arm. He was not speaking and we respected his silence because we knew what was in his heart. It was impossible for us to hide the ecstatic pleasure of seeing the shores of Canada once again but we sympathized at the same time with our friend who, in 1939, had seen his wonderful Poland invaded by the Hun. Bitter battles had been fought, but at the end, strength had prevailed and together with thousands of others, Jan, since that is his name, had fled to other countries from where he had continued to fight for the liberty of his native land with relentless determination.

Last summer I was attached to a Polish reconnaissance regiment for a period of four months. I now want to speak of these men with whom I shared so many happy hours, and also, I am sorry to say, moments of immense tragedy. I consider it a privilege to have met them all, to have shared with them a regimental life, to have fought with them, and the proudest day of my life was when, in recognition for my services, General Haller decorated me with the Order of the *Virtuti Militari*, Poland's highest military award.

In 1939, Poland's soldiers fought with magnificent bravery against the invading German Panzers. The Polish army was beaten and had to surrender. Many units refused to give in however and decided to carry on. To escape they had to separate and adopt a disguise. It was possible to flee at night only, since the roads were constantly patrolled by the Gestapo and SS men. Food was scarce and danger stood at every step, as Hitler had already organized in most cities and villages a highly efficient fifth column. But, in spite of tremendous difficulties, most of Poland's army of patriots managed to escape through the Balkans, by way of Italy and sometimes by the North Sea. After months of travelling some elements reached Egypt, others gathered in France, and it was there that the first Polish army of liberation was formed. Our gallant friends fought again bravely in the battle of France. Sadly enough, once again they had to taste the humiliation of surrender, but most of them were saved.

In England, Polish men organized another army. Through grim years of hard training, their ranks were constantly reinforced by men who managed to escape the hand of steel with which the Gestapo was now ruling Poland. These Poles related stories of fantastic sufferings, mass murders and indescribable massacres of innocent Polish citizens. The spirit of revenge grew each day in intensity and soon became the



Canadian Army Photo  
General Kazimierz Sosnkowski, former commander-in-chief of the Polish armed forces, congratulates Canadian Captain Pierre Sevigny, holder of the silver cross of *Virtuti Militari*. The order of the day announcing the award of the decoration to Capt. Sevigny, an artillery observer attached to the Polish Armored Division for several months, stated that during the fighting near Falaise he constantly exposed himself to danger and "was one of the main pillars in the defense of Hill 262."

only reason for living. These men had left their homes to carry on the fight for liberty and in their hearts a fire burned which galvanized all energies. They carried on their training with a fanatical determination which amazed and inspired all the Allied troops in the United Kingdom.

At last came the hour of revenge. On August the 9th, 1944 General Maczek's superb warriors were sent forward and took part in the smashing attack which resulted in the complete annihilation of the German Seventh Army. My unit, the 4th Medium Regiment (R.C.A.) was attached to the First Polish Armored Division for all purposes. Our main object was, of course, to support by the fire of our guns, the Polish forward elements. All ranks in the regiment considered that it was an honor to fight side by side with Poland's gallant sons and they all gave their best. For days the battle raged in the plains of Normandy with savage, bitter and relentless intensity. The Hun fought bravely and desperately. But no force on earth could have stopped the inspired and determined Polish troops. Slowly the enemy gave way and it soon became apparent that a final and decisive blow would crush his might.

It was decided to strike this blow at Falaise. A three prong attack was planned with the Americans on the right, the Canadians on the left and the Poles in the center. The objective was a small hill which stood between the cities of Trun and Chambois at a height of 262 feet above sea level. From this hill it was possible to command and interrupt the traffic of two main roads which were the only avenues of escape left open to the retreating German forces. At 09.00 hours on the morning of August the 20th, the 10th Polish Armored Brigade went into the attack. After some furious local actions which accounted for 50% of the brigade's strength, Hill 262 was reached. The remaining forces consolidated their positions: I was with this group, as a forward

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## GERMAN STAMPS REISSUED WITH THE RED STAR



THESE stamps were originally issued by the Germans for use in occupied Poland. They were to convince the Poles that the famous scientists and artists in Poland's history were not Polish but German. Now these same stamps are being used by the Lublin "Provisional Government." The original German inscription "Deutsches Reich, General Gouvernement" has been overprinted with the words "Rzad Tymczasowy" (Provisional Government). A five-pointed red star enclosing the Soviet Sickle and Hammer has been added. Nowhere is the Polish Eagle, national emblem of Poland, in evidence. In each case the black figure indicates the stamp's new denomination.

The 5-gr. (grosz) stamp shows Hans Durer, draughtsman, who settled first in Silesia and then in Poland. The 10-gr. stamp represents Wit Stwosz, famous medieval sculptor whose most famous work was the altar-piece in Cracow's Church of Our Lady. Jan Szuch, an outstanding architect who considered himself Polish and after whom a Warsaw Avenue is named, may be seen on the 25-gr. stamp. The 30-gr. stamp presents Joseph Elsner, Chopin's thoroughly polonized mentor and friend, who loved Poland so much that he took part in underground activities against Prussian and Russian domination of that country. Finally, Nicholas Copernicus, founder of modern astronomy and a Pole through and through, is "honored" on the 35-gr. stamp.

## TADEUSZ KOSCIUSZKO

(Continued from page 5)

fatherland. Stirred with emotion they wept at the sight of him, and gazed with awe upon him as if he were Mona Lisa. It was no doubt the greatest triumph a conquered man had ever enjoyed in modern times. The essence of this triumph was moral and it evokes nostalgia for a world so completely fascinated by greatness of soul and so deeply moved by one man's unhappiness. Kosciuszko had become the prima donna of suffering.

On August 8, 1797 an American freighter, the *Adriana*, brought the sick and defeated Kosciuszko to the very same Philadelphia pier at which eighteen years earlier the young, healthy and hopeful volunteer had disembarked to join the War for Independence. In Philadelphia the triumphal ovations of Europe were repeated. Philadelphia Quakers unharnessed the horses of Kosciuszko's carriage and themselves brought him to the house at which he was to stay. Not long afterward George Washington sent him a letter expressing full admiration and respect and inviting him to Mount Vernon. This invitation Kosciuszko politely declined; he re-

mained in Philadelphia, where he struck up a life-long friendship with Thomas Jefferson.

Why Kosciuszko suddenly left America, where he had intended to spend the remainder of his days farming, is a question which historians still ponder. It is possible he was discouraged by the antirepublican government of President Adams, which at the time passed the so-called "Alien and Sedition Bill" directed against foreigners. The more likely assumption, however, is that he left upon receiving news that a Polish legion was to be formed in the French army under the command of Jan Henryk Dabrowski.

His final years were spent at Soleur, Switzerland. On April 2, 1817, he liberated the peasants on his estate at Siechnowicze from statutory labor. On October 15th of the same year he died, adored by his neighbors, especially the poor toward whom his kindness was almost legendary. A year later his body was transferred to Austrian-occupied Cracow, where he was ceremoniously buried in the Polish National Sanctuary—in the royal catacombs beneath Wawel Cathedral.

## A CANADIAN SPEAKS OF POLAND

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artillery observer. Soon it became apparent that the attacking Canadians and Americans had been stopped. The Germans realized their advantage and massed two complete SS divisions whose purpose was the complete annihilation of the Polish force on Hill 262. Fortunately, Hill 262 was a perfect defensive position and the first attacks were pushed back with severe losses to the enemy. But the Germans were in strength and managed to completely encircle us. The Poles however held on stubbornly and with fierce determination. They knew that this was one of the decisive battles of the war and the Germans' desperation could be felt by the intensity of the attacks. At last Poland's sons were getting their revenge and this sensation stirred them on and each man felt that he could accomplish the impossible. Casualties were heavy, but this only served as a stimulant and the resistance never weakened. During three nights and two-days the fight went on. The Germans became discouraged and when Can-

adian relieving forces were sighted six hundred yards away, a furious bayonet charge pierced their lines and victory was ours. By their bravery, their courage and the magnificent conduct of each man, the Poles had won one of the major victories of the war.

They reorganized immediately and carried on their triumphant advance deep into France, Belgium and Holland. And in Germany they have fought many more glorious battles and their continued efforts have been an important factor in the defeat of the Huns.

Poland's gallant free army is now resting. Unfortunately destiny has willed it that Poland's future is one of the major issues being discussed. I firmly believe however that the Poles will receive a fair treatment. The three great Allied Powers are well aware of Poland's tremendous sacrifices and magnificent behavior in the face of impossible odds. The exploits of General Maczek's army have now become legendary in the Allied Forces.



# OSWIECIM WAS THE WORST



A life-long reminder of the horrors of German occupation. The 29,728th Polish slave worker branded at the Oswiecim concentration camp.

OF all the camps where the Germans vented their hatred upon the peoples of all nations by the practice of sadism and murder, none was so bad as that of Oswiecim in Southeastern Poland. Poles who have lived through the hell of both Oswiecim and one of the Western German camps are all agreed that Oswiecim was the worst of all, so much so that Buchenwald, Belsen, Dachau and Nordhausen cannot touch it for the incredible cruelties and the number of deaths perpetrated there by the Germans.

One former prisoner of Oswiecim, Auschwitz in German nomenclature, recently told Polish War Correspondent,

Florian Sokolow, that by comparison with Oswiecim, Buchenwald was a paradise.

This view is confirmed in the Parliamentary Deputation's Report on Buchenwald as quoted in *The London Times* on April 28, 1945:

"One of the statements made to us most frequently by prisoners was that conditions in other camps, particularly those in Eastern Europe, were far worse than at Buchenwald. The worst camp of all was said by many to be at Auschwitz; these men all insisted on showing us their Auschwitz camp numbers, tattooed in blue on their left forearms."

The women's concentration camp at Brzezinka (Birkenau, in German nomenclature) was close to the notorious camp at Oswiecim, in Southeastern Poland, and was in fact part of it. All stories reported here are from eye-witnesses, women and girls who were imprisoned in Brzezinka, and they have reached Polish official circles in London by devious routes. They relate to the second half of 1943 and the beginning of 1944.

The camp at Brzezinka was one of the three main concentration camps for Polish women. The others were that at Majdanek, near Lublin, and at Ravensbrueck.

The women's concentration camp at Oswiecim officially had no connection whatever with the men's camp. They were two separate worlds.

Founded a year or more after the men's camp had been started, the women's camp passed through the same process of successive horrors which the men's camp experienced. The results were still more terrible, for women have less powers of resistance and are more helpless than men.

The serial number of the women at the end of 1943 and the beginning of 1944 in the camp ran into the eighty thousands. Of this number, 65,000 women of various nationalities died during the two previous years. The majority of the deaths were Jewesses, but several other nations contributed large quotas. The total number of Polish women who passed through the camp is reckoned at fifteen to sixteen thousand. The numbers of released women were insignificant, and did not amount to one per cent of the total.

The women's camp was an abyss of misery, a horrible

slaughter house for thousands upon thousands of women. Their ages ranged from ten to seventy. The crimes for which they were incarcerated are equally varied: in addition to serious political cases, and women soldiers captured with arms in hand, there was a Poznan woman who refused to sell her favorite cat to a German woman. Her hard bed was shared by a twelve-year-old girl who, while collecting her father's geese, happened unknowingly to cross the frontier, so-called, near Czeszochowa. She had been there for two years as a serious political criminal. The nationalities were just as varied: Polish, Russian, Ukrainian, Yugoslav, German, French and Jewish. The Jewesses were the most numerous and most unfortunate of all.

There were very few low serial numbers left in Brzezinka. When one listened to the stories of those still left one was seized with indescribable horror.

Although a great improvement in conditions had been made since then, the mortality continued to be enormous. For instance, out of a number of prisoners transferred from the Pawiak prison in Warsaw on October 5, 1944, two-thirds died. In the winter the women were decimated by typhus, in the summer by malaria. All through the year bad hygienic conditions, starvation and a horrible, ruthless, humiliating regime prevailed.

Despite their stupidity the Germans realized that women determine the nature of the nation. To destroy the women was to destroy the morrow of their hated neighbors. So the few who did not die had to go back home mutilated. Feminine modesty is a powerful moral factor, it is equivalent to the conception of feminine virtue. So let modesty and honor perish. This was the purpose of the mass compulsion on the prisoners to strip themselves bare and to march naked past Germans. And so a line of beautiful naked girls, naked pregnant mothers, naked old and exhausted women walked past, scarlet with shame. An S.S. man called out jeeringly: "Forward the political ladies! Forward!" (*Loss die politische Damen! Loss!*) The tears poured down the faces of some of the girls and fell on their bare breasts. A gang of men from the men's camp was mending the road along which the procession marched. Their naked wives, sisters, mothers passed them by only a few paces away. And something fine and moving happened: without a word of command, all the men turned and stood with their backs to the road. Not one of them moved, or turned his head until the women passed. Like the old story of Lady Godiva. The procession reached the bath, called "Sanna," and the water of the showers washed away the tears. A group of S.S. men came up and watched the bathing women, looking for volunteers for "Puf," the brothel. Women could apply voluntarily. But if there were no volunteers, the S.S. men would select their victims. A crowd of naked girls from Lowicz district huddled in terror in one corner like an anxious, frightened herd. But a German woman, a former cabaret singer, broke away from the larger crowd, and proudly displayed her still not entirely ravaged body, while she sang pornographic German songs. Encouraged by her example another, a withered gypsy, started out and began to dance a fiery Cossack dance. She was lissome, her bare thighs swung around, she dropped to a squatting position to kick out her legs, the two dry pieces of skin which were once breasts smacked together. The S.S. men laughed aloud in their amusement and lashed at the dancer with their whips when she halted breathless. The Lowicz girls wept aloud.

Part of the system of dehumanizing the prisoners consisted of compelling them to perform even the most intimate physiological necessities in public. There was no chance of isolation in the camp, and a moment of solitude was an empty dream. The woman slave was always one of an animal herd,

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## OSWIECIM WAS THE WORST

*(Continued from page 13)*

always surrounded by a crowd, incessantly hunted, cuffed, heaped with the most horrible expressions. This slave, a living number, did not possess a change of underclothing, could not call the least thing her own, and had an unchallenged right to only one thing: to death. And the inhabitants of the camp availed themselves abundantly of that right.

In November of 1943 the annual typhus epidemic broke out in Brzezinka. It was especially violent in its course. In November, December and January the deaths amounted to nine thousand per month. Three hundred women died every day. The hospital blocks were overcrowded. Four sick women lay on each narrow pallet. Try to imagine the picture of four women in a high fever, pressed close together, unable to stir, with bodies covered all over with the itch and ulcers (avitaminosis), eaten alive with lice and fleas. There could be no thought of fighting the epidemic, for there were no medical supplies. They did not exist at all, not even the simplest and most primitive. Nothing. And of what avail was the devotion and good will of the doctors (most of them Polish women) when all they could do was to certify the disease, and had nothing with which to treat it. And so the sick died, died without religious consolation, without a friendly word of farewell. Young girls died for whom mothers were waiting yearningly at home, mothers died for whom little children were waiting at home. Some departed with resignation, others clung desperately to life. "I can't die, I promised mother I'd come back for certain," one dying girl complained. The block personnel carried out the bodies and flung them down in the yard outside the doors. By evening a large pile of bodies was gathered, lying in the mud or snow, naked, yellow and blue, fearfully emaciated, arms flung out, flung down carelessly, legs straddled, with staring eyes. For death in Oswiecim, the death which is the comrade of every prisoner, was entirely lacking in dignity, beauty and respect. It was as ugly as if Satan himself, the lord of the camp, were playing with humanity and its after-death hopes. The bodies lay in the yard all day, for the lorry carrying them to the crematorium came only in the evening. All this time the rats rummaged among them. But once it happened that the rats gnawed at the forearm of a dead woman and destroyed the number there tattooed, the only proof of her identity, and owing to the bureaucratic complications this caused, the camp authorities ordered that the lorry was to come twice a day, so as not to leave so much time for the rats.

The epidemic was at its height at Christmas time. A huge fir tree hung about with electric lamps shining brilliantly stood in the "Lagerstrasse." The light picked out the pile of dead bodies, but the merry sounds of music came from the "Sanna." The local band was giving a concert. The death-wires rang with the frost. As though that sound had a suggestive power, more than one desperate woman made her way towards it that night. The guards in various parts of the camp opened fire again and again. The "posts" sitting in their towers were firing, for they were not allowed to let

a suicide get near the wire. They had to shoot her first. A year before a post got a week's leave for shooting a prisoner. They were lucky. Every time they wanted to visit their girls, they watched for a woman prisoner getting too close to the wire, and their leave was assured.

Health and strength, honor and life—it was not sufficient to deprive the prisoners of these in order to consummate the work of dehumanizing them: the prisoners had to be robbed of their heart. Perhaps the greatest torment of a stay in the camp was the sight of the terrible tragedy of the Jews, which was open to all the camp to see. In Brzezinka there were six "chimneys," or crematoria. They were never idle. Not an evening passed without the prisoners seeing the flames leaping out of the broad chimneys, sometimes to a height of thirty feet. Not a day passed without heavy billows of smoke pouring from them. The cremating of the bodies of those who died in the camp was only a small part of the crematoria's functions. They were intended for the living rather than the dead. And every day trains drew into the camp along the sideline bringing Jews from Bulgaria, Greece, Rumania, Hungary, Italy, Germany, Holland, Belgium, France, Poland, and until recently, from Russia. The trains brought, men, women and children, and old people.

Most of the prisoners worked in the open. The weaker collected medical herbs, worked in the tailors' shop and twisted ropes. Most of them were older women. The doctor decided whether a prisoner was to be assigned lighter work. The food each day was: morning, only coffee; dinner, tinned soup, or with margarine; supper, coffee, two hundred grams of bread with jam or margarine, or something similar. Twice a week each prisoner got half a loaf of bread. Food parcels could be received even every day. They arrived unbroken. Bread and food constituted the currency with which one could buy anything, from warm clothing to the regards of the "block" or the hospital nurse. (It was a fundamental condition of survival that the prisoner had to have a large quantity of food sent to the camp.) The parcels could contain soap, tooth-powder, tooth-brushes, toilet paper, but no clothing. Prisoners could write once a month, and receive letters several times a month.

Seven hundred Polish women worked in the camp itself, in the kitchen, the laundry, the tailoring department, the packing department, the clothing warehouse, the office, etc. They were all privileged individuals, for they worked with a roof over their heads and in a moderate temperature. All the others, with the exception of five hundred "parked" in the hospital, went to work out of doors. This work was compulsory winter and summer. Frost, rain, snow, heat, nothing held up the march of the columns to work in the fields. Only when there was a dense mist were they kept in barracks, for fear that they should escape. This was the only rest they had, as Sunday was not observed. The work assigned to the women was very hard. In the winter the rivers Vistula and Sola were cleaned up, and the women digging out the channels stood up to their knees in water all day.

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## "THE DEBT TO MEN OF POLISH BLOOD" (ROOSEVELT)

*(Continued from page 7)*

in a strange land.

After the coming of the Upper Silesians to Texas, the influx of Polish immigrants grew steadily. In 1890 there were about one million Poles in the United States, organized in about 150 parishes with 125 parochial schools. At present there are about six million Americans of Polish extraction and about 800 Polish parishes with 530 parochial schools. The Poles live mostly in the northeastern part of the United States. Besides their parishes and elementary schools, they have hundreds of fraternal, cultural and other organizations. They publish about one hundred newspapers and periodicals.

They maintain three colleges, about 30 high schools, many orphanages, hospitals and other public institutions.

Polish immigration in the last fifty years was not exclusively a peasant influx. In recent years, many Polish names burned brightly in the firmament of American cultural life. The fine Shakespearian actress Helena Modjeska; musicians Henryk Wieniawski, Josef Hofmann, Leopold Stokowski, Artur Rodzinski; singers Marcella Sembrich, the DeReszke brothers, Jan Kiepura; film director and author Richard Boleslawski; bridge builder Ralph Modjeski; pioneer of Catholic schools Father Joseph Dabrowski; phil-

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## "THE DEBT TO MEN OF POLISH BLOOD" (ROOSEVELT)

(Continued from page 14)

osopher Father Jan S. Zyburá—these are only a few in a long list of Polish names that have left a permanent mark upon America. Poland and America can both share the honor of being the country of one of the greatest figures of our era—Ignacy Jan Paderewski.

In the first World War, American Poles won an enviable record for themselves. Among the first hundred thousand volunteers called to the colors by President Wilson, there were 40,000 Poles. Without letup the Poles formed the highest percentage of volunteers in the American Army. A total of 300,000 Poles served under the Star Spangled Ban-

ner, while 30,000 other volunteers recruited by Paderewski formed a Polish army to aid in freeing Poland. No other nationality group did more for the Red Cross campaigns and the Liberty Bond drives. In the words of Paderewski, during World War I the Poles "fulfilled their obligations more than three fold, they proved to be not only one hundred, but three hundred per cent Americans."

Equally laudable is Polish participation in the present war effort. According to unofficial statistics, Americans of Polish descent in the armed forces a year ago numbered at least 600,000 men and women. Figures for the same period show that Polish-Americans constituted at least 3.7% of the num-

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## THEODORE J. ROSZAK — POLISH-AMERICAN MODERNIST

(Continued from page 9)

color have all the style in the world, and the best thing is that he's beginning to loosen up and give us more variety . . . It looks as if he had suddenly decided to do some pioneering again. And he's probably another artist whom Chicago has let slip through her fingers, which is maybe a break for Roszak."

Edward Alden Jewell of *The New York Times*, one of America's leading art critics, points out in some of his analyses of modern American art to the decorative qualities of Roszak's paintings, and calls Roszak's *Fisherman's Bride* "a striking abstract decoration," and his *Self Portrait*, reproduced here, an "excellent decorative abstraction." On another occasion, however, Mr. Jewell points to the expressive values of Roszak's paintings. Thus when reviewing an exhibition of Chicago painters at the Brooklyn Museum, he writes: "It must be remarked, even with space so limited, that the man in Theodore J. Roszak's *Portrait Composition*, has about the saddest face, taking faces as they come and go, in the gamut of art through the ages."

Along with compositional and expressional values, richness of color harmonies has been stressed in Roszak's works. Thus we read in *The Art Institute of Chicago Weekly News Letter* (February 27, 1932), in an article describing a current exhibition at the Institute: "There are many other works in this exhibition showing constructive, creative thinking. Note the curious mechanical female figure by Theodore J. Roszak, which he calls *The Hostess*. It is arresting, intriguing, original and—what rich, luminous color!"

Summing up, it may be said that art connoisseurs commenting upon Roszak's works created under the influence of his European studies, stressed either their compositional, their expressional, or their coloristic values, the three aesthetic elements of his oil paintings and graphics that combined into a harmonious whole.

But during his stay in New York, with the passage of time, Roszak began to concentrate more and more exclusively on the composition of his works. Finally, four or five years before the outbreak of the war, Roszak entered into the third phase of his artistic evolution. He endeavored to represent the spirit of contemporary America through the means of geometrical forms devoid of any interpretation of the phenomena of nature. The "machine" became the symbol presiding over his artistic conceptions. Forms created by machinery are bound to change in time the aspect of "reality" we have been used to. Roszak was trying to individualize these forms as objects of his art and to set off their meaning, thereby creating a "new reality."

During this abstract phase in his development, Roszak expressed himself mainly in sculpture. He constructed his sculptures out of aluminum, steel, brass, copper, and wood. In 1940 he displayed his abstract works at two one-man

shows, at the Artist's Gallery and the Julien Levy Gallery in New York, and he showed them annually at the Whitney Museum. The Smith College Museum acquired one of his abstract constructions.

It is evident that Roszak's abstract art has evolved in conformity with the vogue of abstract sculpture and painting that has been in full swing in New York for the last ten years. However, Roszak is no adherent of any definite movement. He may not be included in any strictly defined school. He came to his artistic conclusions by himself, as a result of a logical development of his artistic talent and preoccupations. He forms an integral part of the recent intensified abstract movement in America, although not as follower but as a co-creator of this movement.

Already in 1937, in an article entitled "About Theodore Roszak—A Note on an Artist Whose Career and Reputation are in the Making," illustrated with a beautiful color reproduction, and published in *Coronet* magazine (November), a writer signed H. S. has made clear Roszak's attitude toward abstract art and his individual approach toward it. We read in that article: "Theodore Roszak is an artist who plays with forms to create abstract patterns. His pictures, most of them, indicate preoccupation with machinery and mechanics. Although he may be put down as a surrealist, he is decidedly not of the lunatic fringe . . . His pictures show preoccupation with the mechanical because he himself is mechanically inclined . . . He possesses, too, the mechanical virtues: He is clean, neat, meticulous, precise, deliberate." And he adds, "He is quiet and self-contained, a retiring person, living intently in his creative work. Above all, he is an artist without pose and blah."

Roszak's artistic evolution has been temporarily stopped by the outbreak of the war. He devoted four years to defense work as designer. A few months ago he returned to his artistic work, interrupted only by his educational activities at Sarah Lawrence College, where he teaches composition and design.

During the four years of interruption in his artistic work, Roszak thought much about his own creativeness and art in general, and he started anew as a still maturer man. A yearning to express his whole being, and not only his love of pure forms and of mechanics, has awakened in him. He wants to find a way to reveal not only what he knows, but also what he feels and what deeply stirs him. Perhaps in his new works he will be able to combine whatever he learned during his abstract period with all that had been dear to him before that time, that is, with luminous colors and intensity of feeling.

While attempting this, he may achieve a perfect blending of that which he has come to love during his artistic development and his young and mature years in America, with that which he inherited from his Polish parents and unconsciously absorbed during his early childhood in their mother country.



## "THE DEBT TO MEN OF POLISH BLOOD" (ROOSEVELT)

(Continued from page 15)

ber of American soldiers killed, although the total percentage of killed in proportion to the number of American troops was only 0.5%. The Polish-American home front has also enlisted in the war effort. War Bond and Red Cross drives, blood donations and civilian defense, and hard work in war plants—in each of these activities you will find plenty of Poles who give freely of their time, money and effort to bring the war to a successful conclusion.

In a radio address delivered on the occasion of the consigning of General Krzyzanowski's remains to Arlington National Cemetery on October 11, 1937, the late President Roosevelt paid this tribute to Polish-Americans:

"It is a high privilege to bear witness to the debt which

this country owes to men of Polish blood. Gratefully we acknowledge the services of those intrepid champions of human freedom—Pulaski and Kosciuszko—whose very names are watchwords of liberty, and whose deeds are part of the imperishable record of American independence . . . They and the millions of other men and women of Polish blood, who have united their destinies with those of America—whether in the days of Colonial settlement, in the War to attain independence, in the hard struggle out of which emerged our national unity, in the great journeyings across the Western Plains to the slopes of the Pacific, on farm or in town or city—through all of our history they have made their full contribution to the upbuilding of our institutions and to the fulfillment of our national life."



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