

The Outcome

al-Balagh, 18 January 1945

Warsaw was the first Allied capital Germany occupied, following her lightning war of September 1939. Marshal Stalin announced yesterday that it has now been liberated, and that the Germans have been driven out of it.

In the years between, Warsaw endured sufferings, horrors, and catastrophes beyond the mind's power to imagine, or the pen's power to depict. Warsaw rose up more than once, and each rising was violently crushed; her last rising was this past August, when the Allies triumphed in Western Europe, and France set about liberating herself with her allies' help. Through all that same period, the Russians were winning victories in Eastern Europe, and Poland resolved to follow her Western ally's own example, liberating herself with her Russian allies' help, exactly as France liberated herself with British and American help. Warsaw rose up to liberate herself, exactly as Paris rose up for that same purpose — but the situation differed enormously between France and Poland: France knew no division, no rift, no clash of conflicting loyalties and inclinations; France had but a single government, that of General de Gaulle.

Its own leader arrived from North Africa, witnessed the uprising, took part in it, and personally oversaw the work of liberation. Poland, by contrast, had a government resident in London, in touch with the Polish people, and a Committee of Liberation resident in Lublin, likewise in touch with the Polish people.

The difference between this government and this committee was plain, and far-reaching; the Polish people's own division mirrored this difference, and it was only natural that Poland's liberation should meet with difficulties and obstacles France's liberation never met.

Between France and her allies there was no disagreement over the facts of things, great or small; France moved toward her own goal, and her allies moved alongside her toward theirs. But between the Polish government resident in London and the Russian government, the disagreement was fierce and deep-rooted, arising even before the border question was raised, and only growing wider and deeper once that question was raised. Everyone knows that political relations between the

two states were severed even before the border question arose. And to the very same degree that disagreement divided the London-resident Polish government from the Moscow government, agreement united the Lublin Committee with the Russian government in Moscow.

It is no wonder, then, that the Polish uprising failed, nor any wonder that the magnificent efforts Warsaw's own people made to liberate their capital failed as well; all this disagreement was bound to squander effort, and widen the gap between the plans the Russians were drawing up for the war, and the plans the Poles were drawing up for liberation.

Whatever doubt there may be, Warsaw's failure this past summer was a catastrophe no less grave, no less terrible, than Warsaw's own occupation in 1939. Everyone knows the tremendous efforts Great Britain expended to reconcile the London-resident Polish government with the Russian government, and knows these efforts failed, even after coming close to succeeding. Meanwhile, the influence enjoyed by the Lublin Committee grew steadily greater, until it declared itself a provisional government, whereupon Russia recognized it; and then came this tremendous, lightning offensive Russia launched some days ago, sweeping through vast stretches of Polish soil, liberating the capital, and liberating the city of Kraków, along with countless other towns and villages.

There is no doubt that Russia did not launch this offensive except once she had secured full assurance from the Lublin government, and reached agreement with it, and established, between herself, this government, and the Polish people, the very cooperation indispensable to the success of such grave military operations.

What concerns us now is that this victory Russia won yesterday has restored to Poland her own glorious capital. It seems most likely this offensive will not halt before the whole of Poland has been liberated. The provisional government will therefore move from Lublin to Warsaw, and will take up its authority over the whole of Polish territory, in cooperation with Russia, until the war lays down its burdens. The Polish problem among the Allies will only grow more difficult and complex, given this victory and whatever results follow from it: it was the Russians who liberated Poland; it was the Lublin government that facilitated and assisted this liberation; the Russians recognize the Lublin government and reject the London-resident one; and the Lublin government is settled on the nation's own soil, and will now move to its capital, and take up its

full authority from there.

Such, then, is the politics of facts on the ground — the politics of facts backed by overwhelming, crushing force. But the government resident in London remains the one recognized by the British and American Allies, and by the other United Nations besides; it rests its claim on being the constitutional government, and has armies serving on the various fronts of the war. How, then, is reconciliation to be reached between these two Polish governments on the one hand, and between the London-resident government and the Moscow government on the other? This is the grave problem the meeting of three, or the meeting of four, soon to be convened, will have to confront. There is no doubt Marshal Stalin will attend this meeting, and will address this problem there with his hands already full of victory and triumph.

Politics has its own shifting fortunes and varied, divergent phases; but behind these shifting fortunes — indeed, above these shifting fortunes and their facts on the ground — lie other, moral truths, graver still and more enduring in their effect: that the Polish people have tasted every variety of suffering, and borne trials bearable and unbearable alike, yet endured, and went on enduring, until victory was granted them, and their freedom restored to them. God has ordained that the outcome always belongs to those who endure, who never fail, never falter, and never despair of God's mercy.

And if the Polish problem is exceedingly complex, the Greek problem remains unsolved, and its solution appears to be anything but near: a truce has been concluded between the insurgents and the English, but no truce has been concluded between these same insurgents and the new Greek government, and agreement between the two sides appears far from easy. The insurgents want, of freedom and social order, precisely what others may be inclined to resist, openly or secretly; the British, standing between the two sides, want to find some path toward reconciliation; and the British Parliament presses its own government to maintain, at the very least, absolute neutrality.

The clearest sign of this is the fierce debate that continued yesterday in the House of Commons, from which the Foreign Secretary escaped only by referring matters to today's debate, in which the Prime Minister himself is to speak; let us, too, wait for this debate. There is, besides, a third problem, every bit as complicated as the problems of Poland and Greece: the Yugoslav problem. King Peter, King of that

country, has refused to ratify the agreement between his own Prime Minister and Marshal Tito, and has refused to appoint a regency council — but his own ministers have opposed him, declaring that the communiqué he issued rejecting this agreement violates the constitution, since the King cannot ratify anything except jointly with his ministers and the responsible authorities.

The disagreement, then, is not merely between the King and Marshal Tito, but between the King and his own ministers; and his ministers have not resigned — they have, instead, backed their Prime Minister's agreement, and insisted on carrying it out. The British government has intervened between the King and his ministers, and it seems most likely it will persuade the King to accept whatever is put before him. Certain British MPs have been taking Mr. Churchill to task, in something of a sharp jest, for indulging kings too generously at their own peoples' expense; but it now appears Mr. Churchill will prove to his critics that he has not hesitated to back peoples over their own kings, whenever the interests of war, peace, and British interests themselves demand it — for he has already persuaded the King of Greece to accept the Patriarch's regency, and is now attempting to persuade the King of Yugoslavia to accept a regency system in turn.

What admits of no doubt is that political events occur, grow complicated, and pile one upon another, until observers of world affairs very nearly despair of ever seeing them solved. But a hidden hand is managing these solutions, revealing them little by little, until they impose themselves, inescapably, upon peoples and statesmen alike. And this hidden hand is the hand of right and justice, which insist that the outcome must belong to peoples, when they struggle, endure, and bear whatever horror is poured upon them, and then wish, afterward, to reap the fruit of their struggle — to reap it whole and sweet, unmarred by any bitterness, however many difficulties and obstacles stand in its way.