



# CONFRONTATION AND COOPERATION

## 1000 YEARS OF POLISH–GERMAN–RUSSIAN RELATIONS

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## *The Warsaw Uprising* as presented in chosen German newspapers

**Key words:** Warsaw Uprising, German press during WWII, Polish-German relations, Katyń, propaganda

### 1. Introduction

While dealing with the modern times history of Poland I have always presumed that writing about it we seem to neglect a relatively easily available source, i.e. daily press. Therefore, as much as I could, I was making attempts to fill in this gap in the description of some periods of our history with an addendum referring to various fields of studies using press as one of its main sources<sup>1</sup>.

That is why I came up with an idea to take advantage of the situation and during “the press query” concerning the issue of “Katyń”, which I was carrying out in March 2014 staying for a week in Staatsbibliothek in

Berlin, I would try to reach the newspapers from 1944 available there to take a look at what had been written about the Warsaw Uprising. I thought it could be of importance since this largest Polish tragedy of the end of WWII, influencing the further development of Poland and our perception of history, had never so far been fully described in historic terms from this particular “press” perspective. There are other significant texts concerning these issues, yet they do not fulfill the features, I have mentioned above<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> S.f.: *Problematyka polska w trzech gazetach niemieckich z lat 1933–1934*: „Voelkischer Beobachter, Frankfurter Zeitung, Kolener Stadt Anzeiger”, „Dzieje Najnowsze”, XXI–1989, 1, p. 41–67. *Prasa niemiecka o Katyniu. Jak niemiecka propaganda przedstawiała w 1943 roku sprawę mordu popełnionego na polskich oficerach*, „Zeszyty Katyńskie”, 1, p. 88–115. *Zbrodnie katyńska w kleszczach niemieckiej propagandy (Prasa niemiecka o Katyniu)*, „Zeszyty Katyńskie”, 23, p. 18–56, *Katyń w historiografii i propagandzie PRL*, „Łambinowski Rocznik Muzealny”, 15, p. 103. E.C. Król, P. Łysakowski, *Śmierć Bismarcka w opiniach prasy warszawskiej (lipiec–sierpień 1898 r.)*, „Dzieje Najnowsze”, XX–1989, 3–4, p. 4–20.

<sup>2</sup> E.C. Król, *Polska i Polacy w propagandzie narodowego socjalizmu w Niemczech 1919–1945*, Warszawa 2006, In one of the chapters of his interesting work („Od powstania Warszawskiego do klęski Trzeciej Rzeszy 1944–1945”, p. 494–506) the author concentrates on, „the propaganda kitchen of ProMi”, i.e. „The Ministry of Propaganda of the Reich” treating fragments of the paper as the exemplification of dispositions of Goebbels’ and other Nazi tycoons (e.g. Hansa Franka). S.f.: in *Niemiecka propaganda zagraniczna: starania o zawiązanie antybolszewickiego frontu?*, edited by S. Lewandowska and B. Martin a volume *Powstanie Warszawskie 1944*, Warszawa 1999; M.J. Kwiatkowski, *Powstanie Warszawskie w oczach Niemców*, „Kultura i Społeczeństwo”, 1990/2; numerous works by A.K. Kunert. It is very interesting that in his extremely important work from 1988 *Niemiecki Michel. Dzieje narodowego symbolu i stereotypu* Tomasz Szarota omitted the issues associated with the Uprising, ana-

The available titles which I mainly based the below text on are daily newspapers such as: “Voelkischer Beobachter”, “Berliner Boersen Zeitung”, “Der Angriff”, “Deutsche Zeitung im Ostland”, “Deutsch Ukrainische Zeintung”, and last but not least “Berliner Nord Ost Zeitung”. The period comprised by the query is between 1<sup>st</sup> August 1944 and 10<sup>th</sup> October 1944. This made it possible to recreate the image of the Uprising presented in the above mentioned newspapers.

Unfortunately, I didn't have enough time, or more importantly, an opportunity, to look through such ones as “Das Schwarze Korps”, “Der Stuermer”, “Signal”, “Kladderadatsch”, “Das Reich”. The lack of the above mentioned newspapers in no way, however, disturbs the image of this heroic Polish upsurge, which the German

lyzing the image of the Poles on the margin of his thoughts on the Germans. The Uprising and how it was perceived by the Germans hasn't been mentioned either in a significant, in my view, for the *Polish-German dialogue work Deutsche und Polen – 100 Schlüssellbegriffe* edited by Ewa Kobylińska, Andreas Lawaty and Ruediger Stephan, Muenchen, Zuerich 1992 – the same work was published in Polish by „Więź” in 1996. Janusz Sobczak didn't study this matter in detail either in his work published in Poznań in 1988 *Polska w Propagandzie i polityce III Rzeszy (1939–1945)*, limiting it to describing what the press of “territories incorporated” to the Reich had been writing about. See my review of this work in „Studia z dziejów Rosji i Europy Środkowo Wschodniej”, XXVIII, p. 180/183. Analyzing Polish historiography referring to the Uprising and the German propaganda towards it, I would pay attention to a work by Eugeniusz Guz *Goebbels o Polsce i sojusznicy ZSRR* published in Warsaw in 1999. Mentioning the publications of this Author I would also recommend an article in “Rzeczpospolita” (19<sup>th</sup> January 2010) *Jak agent wywiadu PRL uczył widzów TVP Info o Ali Agcy* written by Cezary Gmyz. It is also worth reading the work by Tomasz Głowiński published in 2000 under the title: *O nowy porządek europejski. Ewolucja hitlerowskiej propagandy politycznej wobec Polaków w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie 1939–1945*. Another significant text worth the attention is *Nationalsozialistische Pressepropaganda fuer Deutsche und Polen im Generalgouvernement 1939–1945* by Lars Jockheck published in Hamburg in 2004, as well as other works by this author concerning the issue of our interest. It is also worth mentioning here a significant, yet not the latest one, work by Jerzy Kirchmayer: *1939–1945 – Kilka zagadnień polskich* with a chapter „Powstanie warszawskie od strony niemieckiej”, p. 123–126, Warszawa 1957. The issue of Polish-German stereotype (from different perspective and referring to other time) is presented in a very interesting text by Maria Wardzyńska in *Założenia badań nad obrazem Polaków w Niemczech w latach 1945–1949* in “Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis”, no 1136, Historia LXXIX, Wrocław 1991, p. 131–141.

propaganda and press wanted to present to its readers<sup>3</sup>. Before I will start to analyze the texts concerning the Uprising, I would like to focus on how the Germans had perceived the possibility of the outbreak before it actually took place, as well as afterwards.

## 2. German official statements

If we are analyzing official German statements we might easily come into conclusion that the high rank officials of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Reich apparatus (both the ones in occupied Poland as well as in Berlin) had realised the oncoming outbreak. From the heights of their offices they didn't have to, however, comprehend the reasons for which the Poles wanted to fight, and for which the Uprising was inevitable<sup>4</sup>.

The General Governor Hans Frank mentioned himself in July 1944 the growing, “[...] uprising [...] psychosis[...]”<sup>5</sup>. It is of no significance that at that time he associated this situation with what had just happened in Lublin<sup>6</sup> when he was pronouncing these words. Objectively, no matter where actually the communist centre of authority had been established in Poland, this was one of the catalysts that led to the Uprising, which had de facto been prepared since the first days of the war and occupation of Poland started by two invaders<sup>7</sup>. Re-

<sup>3</sup> I would like to promise readers that it will be completed and extended in time to the months till the end of 1944 as soon as possible. There should also be analyzed press published by German propaganda for Polish people during the Second World War.

<sup>4</sup> „Witness no 15: [...] At the end of 1939 in two places 3000 km far from each other there appeared the thought on a new uprising. What would it look like? Nobody knew it; however, everybody was convinced, that it had to break out one day, to compensate these miserable times of darkness, which were cast on the world and Poland [...] Witness no 6. Poland was genuinely worshipped by us. We loved it more than our country; more like a mother, like a queen, like an innocent girl. This long century of partitions, when it was humiliated, tormented and blasphemed, was a painful period, which we have always perceived with mixed feelings of despair and shame” – quote from: *Varsovie 44* by J.F. Steiner, Flammarion 1975 (the copy published underground, in my possession), p. 7.

<sup>5</sup> *Das Diensttagebuch des deutschen Generalgouverners in Polen 1939–1945*, W. Praeg, W. Jacobmeyer (eds.), Stuttgart 1975, p. 890.

<sup>6</sup> Declared establishment of PKWN.

<sup>7</sup> The concept of the Uprising came into existence along with the underground in the days preceding the capitulation of Warsaw in 1939 and got its shape during the follow-

ardless of its aims the Uprising was welcomed by the Germans as a God sent. They thought that it was an opportunity to crush the disobedient and constantly rebellious city, the heart of Polish resistance<sup>8</sup>. On the other hand, it might have been a nuisance for them since they were planning a resistance stronghold in place of Warsaw, like Stalingrad, because of the approaching Soviet offensive. It can be seen in orders and documents of the German 9<sup>th</sup> Army. It should be reminded here that in the last days of July 1944 Germans effectively limited panic and disorder in bureaucracy apparatus resulting from the rapid progress of the Soviets towards the west, and taking over by them towns along the road in the Warsaw direction (Garwolin – 27<sup>th</sup> July 1944). Moreover, the formerly evacuated units of SS and police returned to the Polish capital.

On the 27<sup>th</sup> July the announcement was made through the loudspeakers ordering a hundred thousand Warsaw inhabitants between the ages of 17 and 65 to start building fortifications on the Vistula River on the following day. On Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> July on the foregrounds of Praga (Okuniew, Radzymin, Wołomin) appeared Soviet armoured spearheads. It all looked negatively from the German perspective although the panic had been under control, as I have mentioned before. The Germans, however, didn't foresee Stalin's attitude, so fortunate for them and so tragic for Poland and Warsaw. His political plans were perfectly presented in "Bolshevik" magazine.

In the article *Learning from the troublesome adventure*, published already after the collapse of the Uprising, an anonymous author signed as A.P. (probably Stalin's personal secretary Aleksandr Poskrebyszew or Poskriebyszew) characterized the attitude and vision of "the leader of the world's proletariat" towards the drama taking place in Warsaw, "[...] Polish renegades played their last card starting the Warsaw Uprising [...] Soviet highest command couldn't [...] be unaware of the prepa-

ing four years". In S. Kroboński *Polskie Państwo Podziemne*, Warszawa 1981, p. 87.

<sup>8</sup> In September 1944 Himmler was to say as follows, „I consider it a twist of fate that the Poles started it. We will leave this area in five to six weeks. Then, however, Warsaw will be swept of the surface – the capital, the centre of a sixteen-seventeen-million nation. The nation which for 700 has been blocking us out of the east, which has been on our way constantly since the first confrontation on Tannenberg. As a result Poland will cease to be [...] a big problem for our children and all who will come after us, and quite possible also for us [...]” – H. v. Kranhals, *Der Warschauer Aufstand*, Frankfurt am Main 1962, p. 309/310.

rations for the uprising [...] when our army was closest to Warsaw! [...] The immediate elimination of the uprising as well as breaking into the city were undesirable at that moment. On the contrary, there was common knowledge of the make-up of the uprising elements and their political attitudes. Therefore, comrade Stalin sent on 5<sup>th</sup> August 1944 a following message to the commander of the 1<sup>st</sup> Belarusian Front, Rokossowski – Hold the Warsaw offensive, wait for the further orders – this wise decision of our Leader was taken for important political reasons. It was the only and wise solution in the spirit of Lenin, which aimed at causing a conflict between the Germans and Polish political groups, and gain all possible political and military advantages [...]”<sup>9</sup>.

Therefore the events of August, September, and October 1944 described in German newspapers should be perceived from this perspective.

Now let's begin to analyze the content of the above mentioned German newspapers referring to the time and issues of our interest.

### 3. German newspapers

Since the Uprising started in the afternoon there couldn't be any references in German newspapers on 1<sup>st</sup> August.

We also wouldn't find in any of the newspapers traces of growing tension and pre-uprising heat in the capital of the occupied Poland<sup>10</sup>. A description of the atmosphere could be found in the already quoted work by J.F. Steiner *Varsovie 44*, when one of his interlocutors described the city just before the outbreak, “Witness no 6 [...] Sienna Street, where I have lived, was peaceful and quiet [...] however an unusual sight stroke me. In front of some houses where Germans lived there were piles of trunks and furniture around which groups of people were gathering in silence looking scornfully. German soldiers [...] seemed not to have noticed anything. [...] In Plac Żelaznej Bramy women were excited.

<sup>9</sup> „Bolszewik”, „Nauka z awanturniczej przygody”, 15 10 1944,

<sup>10</sup> And so „Der Angriff” a daily paper of German Labour Front informed on its front page about stopping the Soviet offensive on the central „Warsaw” part of the front, hard struggle in Normandy and their own counterattacks on various fronts of fight with the allies: „Eigene gegenangriffe im Gange – Schweres Vergeltungsfeuer fast ununterbrochen auf London”, it was also like this in other analyzed papers, from 1<sup>st</sup> August 1944.

Pointing at soldiers they were laughing and calling the soldiers names, which they seemed not to hear. [...] They looked absent, typically for defeated soldiers, who no longer trust either their strength or their commanders [...] German army which suddenly have turned into a bunch of marauders [...]”<sup>11</sup>. Stefan Korboński, on the other hand, emphasised great enthusiasm of Warsaw inhabitants in the first hours of “free Poland”<sup>12</sup>.

There was no information about the movements of the Soviets and Polish communists addressed to the Polish underground and aiming at the increase of the heat, when the decision of withholding the offensive had already been doubtless<sup>13</sup>.

At the same time Prime Minister Stanisław Mikołajczyk was intending to visit Moscow (he arrived there on 30<sup>th</sup> July 1944). He believed the uprising would be a powerful argument in talks with Stalin, who as we have already mentioned, had completely different plans concerning the future of our state. This visit, as I presume in connection with the Uprising that had just started, German newspapers referred to with attention already on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1944.

The information contained mainly the characteristics of the foreign press (Daily Telegraph) opinions following this visit concerning the pressure Soviets put on the changes within, “[...] polnischen Exilkomitees [...]” as the Polish Government and the legal structures of the Polish state functioning in Great Britain were referred to. It should be added that Stalin’s movements towards the sovereign nation were described accurately<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> J. F. Steiner, op. cit., p. 47.

<sup>12</sup> „The moment it got dark enthusiastic people entered the streets [...] Warsaw was covered in white-red flags and from German propaganda loudspeakers there spread the sound of patriotic songs [...]” – Stefan Korboński, op. cit., p. 95.

<sup>13</sup> “[...] People of Warsaw! Get the weapons! Let all the people stand as a wall around Krajowej Rady Narodowej (National Country Council), around the underground army of Warsaw. Attack the Germans. Foil their plans of demolishing public buildings. Support the Red Army in crossing the Vistula River [...]” – from manifesto of radiostation broadcast by radiostation „Kościuszko” on 29<sup>th</sup> July 1944 in: J. Garliński, *Polska w drugiej wojnie światowej*, Londyn 1982, p. 393.

<sup>14</sup> “[...] TASS bezieht sich auf auslaendische Pressestimmen, die der Meinung seien, dass Mikolajczyks Besuch nur einen sinn habe, wenn er eine gemeinsame Sprache mit der Sowjetregierung zu reden vermoege, vor allen Dingen mit dem von Moskau eingesetzten polnischen Sowjet (PKWN – PŁ)” from the text *Mikolajczyks frostiger Empfang in Moskau* published in „Berliner Boersen Zeitung” on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1944.

So were the opinions of German press concerning the long-range plans and actions of Stalin’s towards Poland expressed after the Katyn crime had been discovered in April 1943<sup>15</sup>.

It is obvious that Germans could well define and describe the reality around The problem was that they couldn’t take advantage of these diagnosis properly. It was commonly thought that Mikołajczyk went to Moscow not to discuss but to listen and subdue, if he wanted to have any significant role in politics. This thesis was formed in an extremely brutal way. However, as it turned out it was 100% right. No bitter words were spared for the British ally of Poland There were the lamentations also, referring to Portuguese press, that in 1939 Poland hadn’t joined Germany to invade Russia, which was a clear reference to the anti-Russian point of the Uprising, of which the Germans must have been aware<sup>16</sup>.

The issue of would have been Polish-German cooperation, mentioned by German press, would return at the end of the Uprising.

It had also two other dimensions. It emphasised the dependence of the Polish Government on the allies and showed the Germans the fate of the weak ones in case of the defeat by the allied, especially the Soviets.

Again, one must admit that the predictions were 100% right.

On 4<sup>th</sup> August 1944 one wouldn’t find in any German newspaper mentions about the dynamic development of Warsaw Uprising. On its front page “Der Angriff” wrote about the Soviet attacks fought off on the “bend of the Vistula River” and the great loss of the Red Army<sup>17</sup>. The same day in the same newspaper the

Almost the same version of this text appeared in „Berliner Nord Ost Zeitung” in the text *Mikolajczyk in Moskau, Merkwuerdiger Empfang der polnischen Abordnung durch die TASS – Agentur* it was also mentioned that it seemed that the fate of Poland had already been decided.

<sup>15</sup> See footnote no. 1 of this text,

<sup>16</sup> “[...] Fuer den Premier der Londoner Exilpolen gibt es in Moskau kein >verhandeln< mehr. Seine Aufgabe besteht nur noch darin, das Diktat der Sowjets enlegenzunehmen und die Modaliteten der Unterwerfung zunehmen. Ein Man, der einen englischen garantieschein in der tasche hat, wird dem bolschewistischen Todesurteil ueber Polen seine Unterschrift geben [...] Haetten die Polen sich aber schon 1939 tatsachen gerichtet, dann haetten sie sich mit Deutschland verstaendigt und in der Ruhe den Krieg zwischen Deutschland und Russland abgewartet [...]”, the text *Gefangen und gehangen* from „Berliner Boersen Zeitung” from 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1944.

<sup>17</sup> Schwere Kaempfe nordoestlich Warschau – Sowjets



topic of Mikołajczyk's visit in Moscow was continued, with the mention of the growing dependence of our state on the USSR, in which, apart from Great Britain also the USA were involved.

It was mentioned indistinctly about, "[...] polnischen buergerkrieg [...]" which was, in my opinion a clear and sure reference to "Burza" (the Storm) and the Uprising, although they were not called by their "proper names".

Again the role of a supplicant, with a very weak position, in which was Mikołajczyk in Moscow was emphasised. It was even mentioned that he made his journey on knees<sup>18</sup>. On 6<sup>th</sup> August German press focused on hard tank struggle in Normandy, still not noticing any problem in Warsaw<sup>19</sup>.

In the meantime, apart from fights, looting and slaughter performed by Oskar Dirlewanger's bandits on Warsaw inhabitants began. On 4<sup>th</sup> August around 200 civilians were murdered in Olesińska Street. Yet, it was merely the beginning to what was about to happen in Wola. These events, not even mentioned in German newspapers, will be described further on. German media didn't mention the promotion to the commanding positions the people who were to be responsible for suppressing the Uprising, or the fact that they arrived in the city<sup>20</sup>.

At the same time the first information on possible alterations of Polish eastern borders appeared.

There was even explicit information on possible attempts of establishing, "[...] polnische Sowjetrepublik [...]" Unlike most of text this one was signed with

a name and surname of its author<sup>21</sup>. It cannot be treated differently from another warning for their own citizens, fight and beware "Vae Victis", and the victors wouldn't have any mercy.

At that time, however, it was the Poles who were the victims of Soviet aggression, "[...] Moskau ist laengst durch die Besetzung Wilnas und Lembergs ueber die Curzon – Linie hinaus, es braucht nicht mehr Einsprueche gegen die Curzon – Linie anzuhoeren, es sieht tief im polnischen Lebensraum den Stalins Beauftragte fuer die kuenftige polnische Sowjetrepublik, fertigmachen. Im Besitz der Herrschaftsgewalt mag er Mikolajczyk leere Worten geben, sich fuer ein starkes, unabhaengige, freundnachbarliches Polen aussprechen – was praktisch aus Polen wird, das laest sich aus den Erfahrungen mit der Sowjetherrschaft in Ostkarelien, den baltischen Laendern, Ostpolen und Besarabien schliessen [...]"<sup>22</sup>.

Any reference on the Uprising still didn't appear. However, it was noticed that Polish troops fighting against the Germans in Italy were sent to the worst and hardest parts of the front<sup>23</sup>. The progressing faits accomplis were being signaled and the Soviets on the eastern areas of Poland It was to make the Poles, or even more the Germans, aware what their future would be like when the Soviets won<sup>24</sup>.

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verloren im Juli 4158 Panzer und 1329 Flugzeuge, from „Der Angriff" from 4<sup>th</sup> August 1944.

<sup>18</sup> Two similar texts on this issue in „Berliner Nord Ost Zeitung" from 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1944 and „Der Angriff" *Zum Kniefall nach Moskau – Taeglich neue ueberraschunegn fuer Mikolajczyk*, on 4<sup>th</sup> August 1944, a text with a similar message was also published in „Berliner Borsen Zeitung" – *Der Kniefall der Exilpolen vor Stalin*, the situation of Mikołajczyk was compared there to the situation of the Yugoslavian king Peter towards „[...] Bandenhauptling Tito [...]” the leader of bunches Tito, on 8<sup>th</sup> August 1944, this topic was repeated in „Berliner Nord Ost Zeitung" on 8<sup>th</sup> August 1944.

<sup>19</sup> Deutsche Zeitung in Ostland – *Deutsche Angriffe oestlich Warschau – Starke feindliche Panzerangriffe im Normandie*, on 6<sup>th</sup> August 1944.

<sup>20</sup> And so it would be pointless to seek in daily press the information on the arrival to Warsaw of (on 5<sup>th</sup> August 1944) SS and police general Erich von dem Bach Zelewski appointed by Himmler the main commander of German forces fighting against the Uprising.

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<sup>21</sup> Berliner Boersen Zeitung – *Und die Curzon Linie? Von Hans Schadewaldt*, on 8<sup>th</sup> August 1944. It is worth looking closer (as far as it is possible) at Schadewaldt. Born in 1894 (unfortunately it was impossible to track the date of his death, a journalist and lawyer dealing in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Reich with Polish issues known for his works on the „Polish corridor" and the German minority in Poland before the war *Der Deutschtumskampf In Westpolen*. The work can be found on the website <http://www.clarysmithcom/scriptorium/deustch/archiv/com>. Schadewaldt was among the ones who were fulfilling the directives of Propaganda Ministerium and Auswaertiges Amt of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Reich, to prove Polish crimes on German civilians in 1939 after the war. One of his "masterpieces" was the work: *Die polnischen Greuelthaten an den Volksdeutschen in Polen – im Auftrage des Auswaertigenamtes; auf Grund urkundlichen Beweismaterials zusammengestellt bearbeitet und herausgegeben*, Berlin 1940, Bearbeitet von Hans Schadewaldt. What is interesting „Google" sites with „Hans Schadewaldt" some pieces information has been removed; are they the ones concerning his Nazi activities?

<sup>22</sup> A piece from the mentioned above text published in „Berliner Boersen Zeitung".

<sup>23</sup> „Berliner Boersen Zeitung" – *Polnische Truppen werden geopfert*, on 8<sup>th</sup> August 1944.

<sup>24</sup> „Berliner Nord Ost Zeitung" – *Kommunistische Kommissare in Lemberg*, on 10<sup>th</sup> August 1944 the same news was published by „Deutsche Zeitung im Ostland" on the same day as the above quoted newspaper.

It is obvious that since there was no information about the Uprising, there couldn't be any on the mass murders committed on civilians by Germans and their allies on the first days of the struggle for freedom. Some time ago I had an opportunity for a conversation, and getting acquainted with a personal and quite outstanding account of one of the survivors from the execution on 5<sup>th</sup> August 1944 (it was so called "black Saturday") near the Orthodox church in Wola.

Having opportunity I will quote below the pieces of this dramatic story I heard, "[...] on Saturday morning our mother washed, dressed in clean underwear and fed with what was available the youngest of us, and so we were staying in silence and fear. Around 9 a.m., maybe 10 a.m. we got petrified since butts of German rifles started to break window panes. There appeared a barrel and yells could be heard >raus, raus<. Are there any possible words to describe how terrified we were? We started to climb upstairs, out of the church. I'm not able either to say or to describe what was happening with people walking in a row. How were their behaving? And the time was so short. Only a hundred steps from the exit of the church to a ditch. [...] I always see almost exactly what was happening next to me in those minutes, but I can hear nothing. I cannot even hear myself asking a German leading us, not to kill us. Bizarre, so bizarre that there are only images in my memory as seen today, one more clear than the other. And no voices or sounds. My father was walking as the first. I was walking with my mother carrying Sylwus (a little brother of the one relating), at the end of this procession of sixty one convicts. After the war I read that sixty people were shot to death at this place. Today I don't hear the voice of my mother who in despair kept repeating >they will kill us, will kill us. [...] How is it possible? They led us into a ditch and arranged in a row. Behind our backs was the embankment surrounding the graveyard Three rows of soldiers, standing on the three sides of the street cut off the way out. On the tram rails several meters from our chests there was a machine gun placed on a tripod. An officer over it. Everything prepared as if for a parade-flawless. Indeed, German order, commands in a hateful language. At the gun a band of shining bullets, which would be killing just in a while. It was a beautiful sunny August day, sunshine blinding me and other convicts. Seconds were passing. Suddenly I was turning back, face towards the embankment. I ran these several meters up. When I was there I fell down. I rolled limply to the barbed wire fence. Lying there, I don't know how long, I was invisible for the Germans doing their job.

The embankment was covering me completely. I came over. And deadly silence again. I didn't hear any voices. I got through the fence which was tearing my clothes, as if not letting me to escape. I was running across the graveyard Still nobody was looking for me, nor chasing. The Germans saw me falling shot, thought I was dead. They didn't rush to check.

As an adult I was pondering over this weird coincidence. I do realize that the one who was shooting at me was intending to kill me. But he was a poor shooter and only injured me. It's difficult to hit a short, thin boy. The shot in my side, a centimeter from my spine made me fall. Falling, as I have already mentioned, I became invisible for my aggressor. If I hadn't got injured and fallen down the chase would have started immediately there and then [...]. I was running further. I got weaker but still wasn't aware that I had been injured. By the alley I was running along I saw an open tomb. Iron wrought gate was ajar. I got inside., and down the stairs. I crouched and froze for a while. The view of four coffins as if adjusted to the walls, dusted and covered in cobweb, grey and this coldness of cellar terrified me. I left it and ran further to the end of the graveyard Somewhere in the middle a clearing with no graves. I kneeled under the bush, took off my sweater and shirt, and it was then that I noticed blood. My trousers got stiff in waist soaked with blood. What I had taken off I left under the bush. I went further. I no longer ran, I wasn't strong enough. Still I didn't feel any fear, I was calm"<sup>25</sup>.

<sup>25</sup> Quoted after the original copy of memories by Wiesław Kępiński published by the publishing house „Czytelnik” (which I had been given by him long before it was published). I will also add, that the account of Wiesław Kępiński from the execution site filmed by Leszek Rysak (an employee of BEP IPN in Warsaw) and me, was given by us to „Muzeum Powstania Warszawskiego” (The Museum of the Warsaw Uprising). Today the execution site looks exactly the same as reported by Wiesław Kępiński – from the entrance of the orthodox church to the place where he was standing before the execution, and today is the monument commemorating the drama described by him, there are exactly 100 steps. Apart from Wiesław Kępiński, another person, Maria Cyrańska survived the execution. Her account given to the judge, Halina Werenko describing the above mentioned events can be found in the files of Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich file AGKBZH, 842z, k. 29–30. To complete the “story” of Wiesław Kępiński I will also add a fragment of Mrs Cyrańska's account, „[...] everybody fell down, the shooting stopped, being wounded I also fell down, I was shot in my left arm, besides a shrapnel injured my temple and

Who exactly was shooting, murdering then we will probably never find out. These were no doubt the Germans, and not: Kalmuk, Cossacs, Ukrainian Legion of Self-defense, Azers regiment, the Własow units or "RONA", supporting them in suppressing the Uprising. As we have already noticed let this account stay beside the unemotional press texts. Coming back to German media at the end of the first decade of August still (when it comes to Polish issues) they focused on the Soviet activity concerning our state and Polish underground. There was information on disarming Polish underground units by the Russians, and their intentions concerning Poland, which could actually be summarized shortly", [...] the annihilation of the Polish nation and making Poland a Bolshevik state [...]"<sup>26</sup>.

It is worth reminding here that around this time (9<sup>th</sup> August 1944) Kremlin promised Mikołajczyk the air force support for Warsaw.

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cheek. I noticed [...], that a man unknown to me was moving, [...] German soldiers who came down to the hole, [...] to check who was alive-shot him to death. A German soldier stood on my back [...]. I had injuries on my skin from the nails which his boots were studded with. Having checked that all the shot ones were dead, the Germans left. [...] I went along the road to Jelonki, where I got to Wolski hospital, which had been evacuated [...]. Apart from me there was also a homeless boy, who as it turned out, survived the same execution as me. This boy's surname was Kempiński (Kępiński – P.Ł.) [...]"

<sup>26</sup> „Berliner Boersen Zeitung” – *Moskau entwauffnet die Ppolen*, the text from 10<sup>th</sup> August 1944, similar, however extended text appeared in „Der Angriff” – *Das ist das Ende Polens – Stalin liefert seine polnischen Hilfstruppe dem Henker aus*. In the text it was pointed out that, from Stalin's intention there came a clear conclusion that he aimed at, „[...] die vernichtung des polnischen Volkes und die Bolschewisierung des polnischen Staates [...]”, on 11<sup>th</sup> August 1944. The above mentioned text was completed by the one published on the 2<sup>nd</sup> page of the above quoted paper under the title: *Im Todesschaten des Kreml – Krise In Mikołajczyks Moskauer verhandlungen*. Also Mikołajczyk's visit to Moscow was commented in the tone that wasn't different from the previous reports: „Berliner Boersen Zeitung” – *Zwischenbilanz der Moskauerreise Mikołajczyks*, on 12<sup>th</sup> August 1944 emphasizing the British pressure on Poland and its government as well as the lack of British loyalty towards our country: „Deutsche Zeitung im Ostland”, *Englischer Druck auf Polen*, from 13<sup>th</sup> August 1944 and the following day in the same newspaper „Englands Verrat an den Polen”. In case of disobeying Russian orders and gaining the przewaga by „Exilpolen” Poland could be endangered with the civil war – see „Berliner Boersen Zeitung”, *Die Exilpolen unter dem Befehl Moskaus* from 16<sup>th</sup> August 1944.

Great attention was also paid to all the world news concerning the situation in Polish territories taken over by the USSR. It was the bigger the more significant subject was working on behalf of small nations for the right of their sovereignty<sup>27</sup>. On 15<sup>th</sup> August 1944 German newspapers informed about numerous events on fronts mentioning the threat of “Russian-Bolshevik” troops approaching Warsaw from the east. It was only thanks to the unbreakable morale of German soldiers that the enemy hadn't managed to gain bridgehead on the east bank of the Vistula, and the west one had also been in German hands<sup>28</sup>. A careful reader will discover here a piece of information (actually the first one) saying that there was happening something against the interest of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Reich in the city. Since what could be the explanation for mentioning “the west” bank of the river when the Red Army and Polish People's Army troops were attacking from the east and still had some distance to go before reaching the river bank.

Who was then threatening the access to the left bank of the Vistula still in German hands!? However the map of war operations showing the theatre between the Vistula and the Niemen rivers, which was published on 16<sup>th</sup> August 1944 in “Berliner Nord Ost Zeitung” didn't indicate that there could be anything wrong happening in Warsaw<sup>29</sup>.

Stress resulting from the weakening international position of the Polish Government in relation with the Soviets could have been relieved, according to the Germans, as it was a custom of the Poles with alcohol. This was what Anthony Eden decided to do when meeting Mikołajczyk<sup>30</sup>. The first explicit mention on the Upris-

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<sup>27</sup> „Deutsche Zeitung im Ostland”, *Polen in der Zange, Schoettische Bischoefe an Churchill*, on 11<sup>th</sup> August 1944.

<sup>28</sup> „Berliner Nord Ost Zeitung”, *Die Schlacht an der Weichsel – Kriegsbericht: Gerhard Starke*, „[...] Wieder bewahrt sich deutsche Soldat im alten Kampfgeist der ungerbrochenen Ostfront und fuegt dem wegner durch seine unerschuetterte Kampfmoral und durch das Geschick in der Handhabung der Panzerbekaempfungsmittel hohe blutige Verluste zu. Auch hier ist, ohne der Entwicklung vorgreifen zu wollen, die Bedrohung Warschaws durch die Gewinnung der westlichen Uferstrasse zunaechst beseitigt, da der feindliche Brueckenkopf staendig unter Kontrolle steht [...]”, on 15<sup>th</sup> August 1944. See also „Deutsche Zeitung im Ostland – Der Kampf an der Weichsel” on 15<sup>th</sup> August 1944, as well as the same newspaper on 16<sup>th</sup> August 1944.

<sup>29</sup> „Berliner Nord Ost Zeitung” from 16<sup>th</sup> August 1944.

<sup>30</sup> „Der Angriff – Alkohol soll den Polen helfen – Die Auslieferung an Moskau eine beschlossene Sache” from 16<sup>th</sup> August 1944 – apart from describing the political reality and the British helplessness towards the aggressive actions



ing appeared in the analyzed papers on 17<sup>th</sup> August. In a large article "Um Warschau-Panzerschlacht zwischen Sumpf und Busch" published in "Berliner Boersen Zeitung" major J. Schaefer wrote about hard struggle on the eastern part of the front and fierce Soviet attacks crushed by tank units of German army and "Waffen-SS".

During the four-day tank battle, according to the author, 189 tanks, 3 field guns and 45 cannons, were destroyed. The enemy's effort was strictly associated with, "[...] the uprising which started (on 1<sup>st</sup> August) in Warsaw [...]"<sup>31</sup>.

While the information in the above mentioned paper is "hidden" shamefully in the text, the following days brought more and more texts on the Uprising.

"At the beginning of August behind the back of the struggling German front the uprising broke out in Warsaw, which had clearly been inspired by Moscow. It has been stated with no doubt that the insurgents had completely irrational expectations concerning the support from the outside.

No chance for the success of the entire undertaking became clear as soon as Wehrmacht had stopped the attack of the Soviet armies some distance away from Warsaw [...]. After the support for the uprising had become illusory, Moscow immediately cleared itself from the responsibility for the uprising on the radio and press agencies, and blamed the emigrant government for it [...]. The Bolshevik game is easy to predict[...] for instance in >Izvestia< we can read that >the reactionary bunch of emigrants gave order to start the uprising from their warm offices< [...]. It is clearly shown that the head of Kremlin, with full awareness, sentenced the Poles of Warsaw who are not pro Bolshevik (in my opinion it means they are not communists – P.Ł.) for death"<sup>32</sup>.

These texts were published two and three days after Stalin had distanced (toward Churchill and Mikołajczyk it happened on 16<sup>th</sup> August 1944) from any relations with the Uprising, support for it or previous declarations of delivering it. TASS, quoted by German media, reported in this matter what follows, "Recently

there appeared in foreign press accounts from Polish Radio and press on the Uprising that started in Warsaw on 1<sup>st</sup> August [...]. The press and emigrant radio of the government in London state that the insurgents in Warsaw are in touch with the Soviet command who, however, doesn't provide any support. The TASS [...] Agency is entitled to make a statement that the reports of foreign press [...] are the result of misunderstanding or slander of the highest Soviet command TASS is in possession of information indicating that Polish circles in London responsible for the initiation of the uprising in Warsaw didn't make any attempts to coordinate this action with the highest Soviet command. Considering this, Polish emigration circles in London hold full responsibility for the events in Warsaw"<sup>33</sup>.

Let me remind at this point that general Bór-Komorowski received a message a couple of days before from general Kazimierz Sosnkowski, in which the latter one informed about the support for the struggling Capital of Poland that Stalin had promised to Mikołajczyk<sup>34</sup>.

There was also information about the crushing of the Uprising, and that the fact it broke out and collapsed could have been for Poland and inhabitants of the city, of whom German propaganda started suddenly to care, "an indirect Katyn"<sup>35</sup>. Who was to be and actually had become "Katyn executioner" in this dramatic moment of Polish history newspapers didn't mention, although generally when it comes to the substance of the case it would be difficult to argue with German propaganda people presenting these opinions following the Hungarians. It was clear that insurgents couldn't expect any direct military support from the British. However, there was another way of supplying this support. These were airdrops.

Following the Swedish newspaper "Aftonbladet", "Berliner Boersen Zeitung" writes about a bizarre "gift" dropped for "[...] bunches from Warsaw [...]" from the air

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by Stalin the text also refers clearly to a strong stereotype the Germans had of „a drunkard Pole” with whom you can make any deal while drinking alcohol.

<sup>31</sup> The article from 17<sup>th</sup> August 1944.

<sup>32</sup> „Der Angriff”, *Moskau treib ein frivoles Spiel – Das Drama in Warschau / Enthüllung der Hintergründe* eigener bericht, 19.08.1944, „Berliner Nord Ost Zeitung”, *Der Aufstand in Warschau – Aktion der polnischen Untergrundbewegung missunglueckt / Der Fangstoss des Kreml*, from 18<sup>th</sup> August 1944.

<sup>33</sup> Quoting after the book by Tadeusz Bór Komorowski *Armia Podziemna*, vol. 2, Warszawa 1986, p. 265.

<sup>34</sup> Tadeusz Bór Komorowski, op. cit., vol. 2: „Stalin promised Prime Minister Mikołajczyk that he would supply immediately any help needed for Warsaw, and especially airdropping weapons [...]", p. 256.

<sup>35</sup> „Berliner Boersen Zeitung”, *Aufstand in Warschau niedergeschlagen – Frivoles Spiel der Londoner Polen-Emigranten und Moskaus* and a short note from the same issue of the paper „Das Indirekte Katyn” as own correspondence from Budapest from 18<sup>th</sup> August 1944. See also the text from Berliner Nord Ost Zeitung: *Der Aufstand In Warschau. Aktion der polnischen Untergrundbewegung missunglueckt / Der Fangstoss des Kreml* from 18<sup>th</sup> August 1944.



to the territory of the struggling Polish Capital, “[...] England wasn’t able to help the insurgent Warsaw in any way [...] however, a British plane flew over Warsaw, where it dropped a wreath with an inscription >British soldiers for their fighting brothers in arms from the Polish army< [...]”<sup>36</sup>.

It is interesting that this story was emphasised in a leaflet dropped and distributed by the Germans among civilians and insurgents in Warsaw, in which they called to surrender and which included a pass guaranteeing safety in case of leaving the city. In the leaflet they pointed to a Swedish paper “Aftonbladet” already mentioned by “Berliner Boersen Zeitung”.

These are the fragments of the leaflet, “The wreath is already here. London prayers are with you. Yet, you have to manage on your own! [...] The insurgents of Warsaw what do you think of this symbolic wreath? Do you think it is a wreath of victory? [...] If London doesn’t help you in any other way than with >cheering you up< wreaths, it is clear that it was THE WREATH OF DEATH (capital letters in the leaflet – P.Ł.). It is implied from London that you are considered to be the ones to die [...] Moscow doesn’t intend to help you either. Stalin most probably gave his wreath [...] to Mr. Mikołajczyk when [...] he was sending him home. You can’t expect anything but death! [...]”<sup>37</sup>. Further it was written about the situation of Poland during the Uprising as follows, “[...] bloody events in Warsaw [...]”<sup>38</sup> and as the above mentioned facts they were to prove that the British had understood that the cooperation between

Poland and the USSR was necessary – this is how Poland was to be sold to Stalin.

At this time German air forces and artillery were attacking the Old Town. The struggle for Politechnika (the Technical Institute) were going on. Home Army units were making attempts to get through from Kampinos to Żoliborz. We won’t, however, find any information about this in the papers.

It is worth our attention as well that in the title of the mentioned article the insurgents were referred to as “bunches from Warsaw”. “Voelkischer Beobachter” was reporting in similar way that the outbreak in Warsaw was initiated by “Polish bandits”, who were mainly the youth. Their age was determined between 15 and 21. The Warsaw inhabitants were to have a negative attitude towards the uprising<sup>39</sup>.

Till then such phraseology had been avoided. This “dehumanisation” and equalizing insurgents with common criminals was most probably resulting from the set propaganda for the Poles, and the directives from the “Ministry of Propaganda” and “Auswaertiges Amt” in Berlin<sup>40</sup>. No doubt, these directives were based on the experience from the preparations for the aggression on Poland in 1939. Let’s remind here that both soldiers of Wehrmacht as well as special forces of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Reich had been prepared before entering Poland to treat civilians, and generally the Poles, as cunning people, who would often shoot at the German army from behind the corner<sup>41</sup>.

After some time more and more, more or less precise information on the outbreak of the Uprising and its first days appeared. The news was mainly cited after foreign mass media, and must have been censored.

<sup>36</sup> „Berliner Boersen Zeitung”, *Ein Britenkrantz fuer die Banden von Warschau* from 19.08.1944.

<sup>37</sup> A copy of the leaflet was placed on the site of Stowarzyszenie Pamięci Powstania Warszawskiego 1944 (the Society of Commemorating the Warsaw Uprising 1944) [http://www.sppw1944.org/powstanie/powstanie\\_zrzuty.html](http://www.sppw1944.org/powstanie/powstanie_zrzuty.html). The site was prepared by Maciej Janaszek – Seydlitz. Whether the dropping of the wreath had really happened, if the information about it was quoted after the Swedish press and not published as their own, I wasn’t able to find out. One can, however, presume, that such a wreath could have been among military supplies dropped between 15<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> August 1944 when also Royal Air Force planes were flying over Warsaw. It is also worth presenting a short statistics of “airdrop” action over Warsaw. During the two months of the Uprising there were 115 airdrops over the city and its vicinity, 74 of which were directly over the Capital. During these flights 235 containers with weapons and other supplies to support the Uprising movement were taken over by the insurgents in Warsaw. I haven’t included here the American airdrops made in September as a part of “Frantic – 7” operation.

<sup>38</sup> From the same article from the newspaper mentioned in footnote no 30.

<sup>39</sup> „Voelkischer Beobachter”, *Der Aufstand in Warschau. Herr, Waffen-SS und Ostsoldaten bekaempfen die Erhebung der „unterirdischen Polen”*, from 19<sup>th</sup> August 1944.

<sup>40</sup> E.C. Król, op. cit., p. 500, quoting after A.K. Kunert, *Rzeczpospolita Walcząca, Powstanie Warszawskie Kalendarium*, Warszawa 1994, the statement of the deputy head of the Press Department of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Reich Ministry of Foreign Affairs Gustav Barun von Stumm, who was to say, “We cannot call a soldier a man who has been pretending to be a quiet civilian for several years, and then reaches for a gun to shoot at German soldiers”.

<sup>41</sup> Information referring to this issue can be found in the catalogue to the exhibition made by IPN and Niemiecki Instytut Historyczny (German Historic Institute) in Warsaw *Z największą brutalnością* concerning crimes committed by Wehrmacht in Poland during the first 55 days of the war and German occupation – the title of the catalogue is *Groesste Haerte – Verbrechen der Wehrmacht in Polen – September/Oktobre 1939*, Warschau 2005.

Therefore, the presented image of fights can't have been real. For instance, a large part of the city taken over by Home Army was described as, "[...] part of the city and buildings [...]" which was to make impression of limited uprising moves. Information was often presented in a conditional, and a frequently used word "[...] they've managed" referring to the uprising success was to repudiate it immediately and by definition.

The reason for this was obvious, some "[...] bunch from Warsaw [...]" couldn't overcome heroic German soldiers, who were defending European civilization against Bolshevik invasion. German morale couldn't have been broken with such information at all<sup>42</sup>.

The advantage was also taken to humiliate and deprive of honor the leaders of the Uprising, as well as the Polish government members in the west, by quoting the pieces of British press (Daily Worker), inspired by Russian agents. It was also mentioned in these enunciations about "[...] semi-Fascist Polish government in London [...]" which for its own satisfaction and interest gave order for the outbreak of the Uprising<sup>43</sup>.

At that time the fierce struggle for the Old Time was taking place. The attack of the insurgents on Dworzec Gdański (the railway station) started (22<sup>nd</sup> August 1944) which was an attempt to get through to "Starówka" (the old town) from Żoliborz via the railway station.

The units of major Alfons Kotowski "Okon" were attacking. The action was a dramatic failure. Wounded insurgents lying on the grounds of what is today the "Polonia" team stadium were being massacred by German vehicles. The Church of Sacred Cross was taken over by the insurgents (23<sup>rd</sup> August 1944).

German papers underlined the growing tension concerning the matters of borders and "the cooperation" with the USSR within the Polish Government, the latter one being an entirely untrustworthy ally, which contributed, in an obvious way, to the outbreak of the Uprising and now was clearly satisfied by its elimination by the German garrison in the city<sup>44</sup>. It is worth paying

attention here that according to the German newspaper the Uprising was suppressed by "the garrison". Leaving aside the blatant lie, the Uprising was actually going on. Lowering the rank of their own "victory" the Germans were explicitly repudiating the entire Uprising. Somehow "by the way", the tragedy of the city and its inhabitants was noticed, quoting the Swedish press.

Of course there was no information that after receiving the information on the outbreak of the Uprising Hitler, staying at that time in Wolfsschanze (Wolf's Lair), got furious and ordered to level Warsaw down using air force, and then along with Himmler decided to suppress the movement by any means, "[...] No prisoners are to be taken, each inhabitant of Warsaw is to be killed, including women and children [...]"<sup>45</sup>. The tragedy of the Uprising didn't result from the murderous behaviour of the Germans in Warsaw but from, "[...] the Polish mistake which had fatal outcome [...]" as well as from "[...] suicidal attitude of the insurgents [...]". Thus, following the common stereotype, the Poles were irresponsible limitlessly. It was proven in further texts.

Quite rightly, also British opinions were quoted that, "[...] the Soviet command >slowed down< its entering Warsaw on purpose so that the Poles in Warsaw made themselves eliminated by their crazy uprising [...]"<sup>46</sup>. The opportunity was also used to present the submissive policy of Churchill's towards Moscow<sup>47</sup>.

The appeal of Polish women sent by radio to the pope from fighting Warsaw was welcomed with "schadenfreude". In the appeal the women cried for help for the abandoned Polish Capital and were asking why "[...] the world doesn't care for our country [...]"

In this context again it was emphasised several times, referring to the Portuguese press, that the Uprising was a completely pointless "[...] suicidal [...]" "[...] Polish mad-

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from 20<sup>th</sup> August 1944, and a day later in the same paper. [...] Deutlicher kann man nicht enthüllen, dass die Liquidierung der polnischen Aufständischen durch die deutsche Garnison in Warschau, zu deren Erhebung man im Kreml zunächst ermutigt hatte, durchaus von Moskau gewünscht worden war [...]", the further comment, from the same paper, to the above text should be another one from 30<sup>th</sup> August 1944 „Polens Zerfleischung durch Moskau”.

<sup>45</sup> Władysław Pobóg Malinowski, *Najnowsza Historia Polityczna Polski 1864–1945*, vol. 3, *Okres 1939–1945*, Londyn 1960, p. 677, as well as Tadeusz Bór Komorowski, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 242/243.

<sup>46</sup> „Der Angriff”, *Das Drama von Warschau* from 22<sup>nd</sup> August 1944.

<sup>47</sup> „Der Angriff”, *Churchill, der Knecht Moskaus* from 24<sup>th</sup> August 1944.

<sup>42</sup> „[...] ueber die Kaempfe In Warschau, wo es den Aufständischen zunächst gelungen sei, Teile der Stadt zu besetzen, [...] Die Aufständischen seien auf wenige Stadtteile und Gebaeude zurueckgedraengt, denn sie seien materialmaessig duetlich unterlegen gewesen. [...]” in „Berliner Boersen Zeitung”, *London bestaetigt Moskaus Schuld an Warschau* from 22<sup>nd</sup> August 1944, as well as in „Berliner Nord Ost Zeitung: *Moskaus Schuld am Warschauer Aufstand – Schwedisches Blatt bestaetigt deutsche Darstellung* from 22<sup>nd</sup> August 1944.

<sup>43</sup> From the text quoted in the above footnote.

<sup>44</sup> „Deutsche Zeitung im Ostland”, *Polnische Uneingkeit*

ness [...]". The attention was also drawn to the huge pressure put on Poland by the entering Soviet army to present "[...] attitude friendly towards communists [...]"<sup>48</sup>.

The Uprising still wasn't present on the front pages of German papers. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Reich propaganda for the above mentioned reasons, wasn't had no interest in showing its own public opinion what the strength of Polish resistance was. It is a kind of a whim of history that instead of writing about the Warsaw Uprising German press focused on an event of relatively less impact, i.e. "Paris Uprising", which broke out in August 1944 in the capital of France<sup>49</sup>. The comment of general Bór Komorowski sounds interestingly in this context, "[...] However, there was something that moved us [...] a message that said that Resistance started the struggle for Paris and the Allies had immediately rushed to the rescue [...] As it turned out Resistance had initiated the struggle [...] without the agreement with the command of the Allies. [...] The comparison was obvious. How much would the fate of Warsaw have differed then had American and British armies stood at its gates"<sup>50</sup>. The problem was that there was somebody completely different from western allies standing at the gates of Warsaw.

At the end of August again their betrayal of Poland and other smaller European countries was mentioned. Communism was to be introduced to them by Soviet agent, with the completely passive attitude of the USA and Great Britain<sup>51</sup>. This political treason was connected with another one, the one mentioned by the Archbishop of Edinburgh McDonald during the special mass for the intention of Poland, which was eagerly quoted by German newspapers. He was to blame the government of Great Britain for abandoning its ally in hard times of Uprising and the real threat of losing sovereignty by Poland. However, it wasn't mentioned (leaving aside the general attitude Churchill had towards the Uprising and the Polish issues) that the British Prime Minister, on 25<sup>th</sup> August 1944, demanded from Franklin

D. Roosevelt to send over Warsaw planes with military support and land at the territory of the USSR without its permission. The latter one refused this request two days later, underlining that the support for the Uprising could be delivered exclusively after the approval of the USSR.

This situation took place when a lot of information appeared on arresting Polish underground members by the Soviets. It was to be a memento for the uprising leadership. The information was taken from Swedish press as well as own reports. And in no way was it changed by the decision that had already been made by the governments of the USA and Great Britain (29<sup>th</sup> August 1944) in granting the Home Army soldiers the status of war veterans.

It is also interesting that exactly at that time German papers asked what was happening with general Bór-Komorowski, wondering whether or not he had been captured by "[...] Bolsheviks [...]"<sup>52</sup>.

Undoubtedly, this information must have been the echo of the above mentioned perfidious arresting and disarming of Home Army units done by the Soviets after entering the eastern territories of Poland and their initial (as it later turned out fake) cooperation with the Polish underground. However, German ignorance concerning the fate of general Bór-Komorowski seems surprising. Would it have been so deep, or was it a kind of camouflage that aimed at shadowing the genuine knowledge German had about the insurgents, and also, again, repudiate the greatness of the enterprise?

The fight is going on! Keep on fighting – and I know you will be fighting. There is no other way and every

<sup>48</sup> „Der Angriff”, *Polnische Anklage Gegen die Hetzer – Sie fühlen sich von den falschen Freunden im Stich gelassen* from 24<sup>th</sup> August 1944.

<sup>49</sup> „Der Angriff” from 27<sup>th</sup> August 1944 on its front page published information on hard struggle around Tulon and Marseilles, as well as in Paris, where 50 tanks had been destroyed, „Deutsche Zeitung im Ostland”, *Erbitterte Strassenkämpfe In Paris* from 28<sup>th</sup> August 1944.

<sup>50</sup> T. Bór Komorowski, op. cit., vol. 2., p. 285.

<sup>51</sup> „Der Angriff”, *USA: Verstaendnis fuer Moskau – Polens und Rumaeniens Schicksal ist ihnen gleichgueltig, Eigener Bericht* from 31<sup>st</sup> August 1944.

<sup>52</sup> „Der Angriff”, *Verrat an Polen – Erzbischof gersselt Englands Verhalten* and from the same issue *Moskau und die Polen – Hauptlinge der Untergrundbewegung verhaftet – Drahtmeldung* from 1<sup>st</sup> September 1944. The same information appeared on 1<sup>st</sup> September 1944 in „Voelkischer Beobachter”, *Moskau verhaftet Aufstandspolen*: „das polnisch – sowjetische drama ist um eine grimmige Nuance reicher: die Bolschewiken haben, wie [...] aus London meldet, die Fuehrer der sogenannten unterirdischen Bewegung die den Aufstand in Warschau entfesselten, soweit sie sich im Bereich der bolschewistischen Besatzungstruppen befanden. Ob dabei auch der General Bor in die Haende der Bolschewiken gefallen hat, ist nicht bekannt”. It seems that it wasn't without a reason, however without a clear reference, the same photo was published in „Voelkischer Beobachter” with a comment: „Panzertod <Goliath> presenting a German soldier working amongst the debris of some city and doing something at the <Goliath>”. If the photo was taken at this time it could be a photo from Warsaw, since at that time there was no need to use such a weapon anywhere else in a big city.

doubtful thought or breaking down means not victory, but death And you desire to and have every right to survive. Win and live...You've got the right to receive support...You haven't acquired the support that you've deserved despite the sacrifice of British, South-African and Polish pilots who were alone in providing you with assistance...At this moment taking the advantage of this situation I'm addressing Marshal Stalin, President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill in public [...] Warsaw is waiting, the whole Polish nation is waiting. The public opinion of the world is waiting [...]" Stanisław Mikołajczyk was calling to the great ones of the world politics. Whereas at the same time (1<sup>st</sup> September 1944) Kazimierz Sosnkowski accused the allies of passive behaviour towards the drama of insurgents and the city writing in order no 19 to soldiers of Home Army that no support for the fighting Capital of Poland was a riddle, which was incomprehensible for the Poles who apply moral rules in politics<sup>53</sup>.

However, as we know there was the third factor, Stalin, who was waiting for the Polish "[...] underground [...] to bleed out" which would let him avoid "[...] Katyń [...]"<sup>54</sup>.

Dramatic arguments within Polish government concerning not only the Uprising itself but also the relation of Poland with the Soviets associated with it reached German press via Switzerland, too. It is hard to imply here that German analyses were wrong when it comes to these issues. Unlucky for us they were almost 100% right.

The questions were asked about the guilty ones of the uprising failure, predicted by the German press, and between the lines there was the information on fierce struggle in the city<sup>55</sup>.

It was also mentioned that ally planes coming from support missions for Warsaw didn't have the permission to land on the Soviet airports. According to German press, the Soviets didn't stay passive in this dis-

cussion blaming for the drama "[...] Polish militarist clique with Sosnkowski as its leader [...]". Perceiving it in broader perspective it could be associated with the British demand addressed to Soviets on 4<sup>th</sup> September 1944 to support the Uprising.

According to what German press cited from the Soviet one the struggle going on in Warsaw wasn't the fight for the honor of the Polish nation, but merely fulfilling personal ambitions of particular members of "[...] polnischen Emigrantenregierung [...]", who didn't wait for the agreement and the final orders of the Red Army command<sup>56</sup>. Similar information was repeated a day later by "Der Angriff" writing that on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1944 according to the battle logs of Wehrmacht the Old Town, "[...] was cleaned [...]" by its units.

According to German reporters it actually meant the end of the Uprising. There were still some opinions concerning the intentions of Moscow towards the overtaken territories of smaller countries such as Poland and Romania.

However, it was forgotten somehow to introduce significant differentiation between these two countries, one of which was the 3<sup>rd</sup> Reich ally and the other one had been occupied by it for "quite" a few years occupied<sup>57</sup>.

<sup>56</sup> „Voelkischer Beobachter”, *Londoner >Spectator< stellt fest: >Warschauer Schicksal eroffnet dunkle Aussichten fuer die Zukunft<* „Die Anglo-Amerikaner ihrerseits erklaren im Laufe des letzten Monats 27 Flugzeuge bei Versuchen den Warschauer Aufstaendischen Hilfe zu bringen verloren zu haben, weil die Sowjets den Fliegern die Landung auf naheliegenden Flugplaetzen verweigert haette. Sosnkowski erklarte diese verluste fuer ubedeutend, wenn man die Opfer bedenke, die polnische Flieger im Kampf fuer England gebracht haetten. [...] Es hat also nur noch akademischen Wert, wenn das Thema: >wer ist schuld an dem Zusammenbruch des Warschauer Aufstandes?< [...] Auch Moskau ist in diesem Streit der meinung nicht still. Es lehnt wiederholt jede Verantwortung fuer den selbstmoerderischen Kampf der Warschauer Untergrundbewegung entschieden ab und stellt immer wieder fest wenn warschau heute zugrunde gehe, so sie das die Folge der vorzeitigen Befehle der militaerischen Polenclique, an deren Spitze Sosnkowski stehe. Das sie kein Kampf fuer die Ehre des polnischen Volkes [...] sondern fuer dem persoentlichen Ehrgeiz einiger Mitglieder der polnischen Emigrantenregierung. Sosnkowski habe nicht auf dem Befehl des Oberbefehlshabers der Sowjetarmee gewartet [...]" from 6<sup>th</sup> September 1944 and in the same issue an article *Moskau zieht sich aus der Affaere – Neue Schwierigkeiten in den polnisch – sowjetischen Verhandlungen* in correspondence from Stockholm.

<sup>57</sup> „Der Angriff”, *Das Ende des Warschauer Dramas* from 7<sup>th</sup> September 1944 and an article in the same paper

<sup>53</sup> Władysław Pobóg Malinowski, op. cit., vol. 3, p. 704.

<sup>54</sup> „Voelkischer Beobachter”, *Neuer Hilfescrei des polnischen Exilpremiers – Stalin, Churchill und Roosevelt sollen Warschau helfen* from 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1944, on the same page a large text was published *Das Chaos in Paris – Blutiger Kampf in allen Stadtteilen*. A similar text was published on the same day in „Der Angriff”, *Die Polentragedie: Neuer Hilferuf* as well as in „Deutsche Zeitung im Ostland”, *Neuer polnischer Notruf* from 4<sup>th</sup> September 1944.

<sup>55</sup> „Der Angriff” from 4<sup>th</sup> September 1944 in a short note about the war actions on different fronts there was information on „clearing” the Old Town in Warsaw from the Insurgents fighting there.



There appears a question how to understand in this context information passed by Roosevelt to Churchill on 5<sup>th</sup> September 1944 that according to the knowledge of American services all the insurgents had left Warsaw!? Another question is whether it is a good topic on the thesis about the work of Soviet agents beside the US president, or an example of a complete ignorance of the Americans when it came to European, and especially Polish, matters!?

Besides obvious failures of the uprising signaled by the newspaper mentioned here, also the army of USSR could in no way be proud of its progress in the front. The only strange thing being that this one experiencing one failure after another was, as described above, a significant threat for the freedom of Europe and its nations<sup>58</sup>.

And how were in all this people of the Capital City, exposed to unbelievable suffering caused by ongoing struggle, and at the same time abandoned by the western allies!?<sup>59</sup> Thousands of Warsaw inhabitants' "[...] the former Polish capital (underlined by me – P.Ł.) [...]", who, "[...] until now under German protection experienced calm and peaceful existence, now have been deprived of their homeland (in the meaning of the place on Earth – P.Ł.). Hopelessness and unspeakable fear, the effects of the event initiated by London and Moscow can be seen in their faces [...] Countless inhabitants of Warsaw who had nothing to do with a bunch of thoughtless political gamblers had to sacrifice their lives [...] and Warsaw was destroyed thanks to them [...]"<sup>60</sup>. The situation in the city as well as the issues connected

with international affairs around Poland caused the conflict within Polish emigration circles, of which main participants were prime minister Stanisław Mikołajczyk and general Kazimierz Sosnkowski. It was noticed with large and open satisfaction reminding that Poland had already had an opportunity to cooperate with Germany, which would probably spare our country a number of misfortunes and problems<sup>61</sup>. "[...] Warsaw the dead city [...]"<sup>62</sup> such information passed on 11<sup>th</sup> September 1944 by "Deutsche Zeitung im Ostland" was entirely in opposition to the one reported a day later by "Der Angriff" about exceptionally fierce fights in the northern part of the city. It was even stated in the text that, "[...] continuing strikes of German battle groups raised such hell that no city with a million inhabitants had experienced before. [...]". Insurgents ignored openly German attempts proposing agreement and honorable capitulation. It resulted from the fact that the sounds coming from the right bank of the fight between the Germans and the Red Army were making their will of resistance stronger and the rejection of the above mentioned German suggestions of capitulation made by the SS general Erich Von dem Bach Zelewski. On 9<sup>th</sup> September Von dem Bach gave order to withhold fire for a couple of hours so that civilians could live the City. Except for being "a good will gesture" it was to limit the possible source of manpower for the insurgents. The leaders of the Uprising were aware of that.

Probably, even against the will of its author, war correspondent Heinz Reske, the text actually presents the insurgents as heroic fighters with great will for struggle

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published the following day *Moskau – Erst die Besetzung – Waffenstillstandverhandlungen mit Rumänien verzögert*.

<sup>58</sup> „Deutsche Zeitung im Osten” *Sowjetkorps bei Warschau vernichtet* from 7<sup>th</sup> September 1944.

<sup>59</sup> On 9<sup>th</sup> September 1944 the government of Great Britain announced that the Germans guilty of the crimes committed in Warsaw were to be brought to justice, and the following day „Polish Uprising Radio” broadcast the surnames of 28 German military men who were responsible for destroying the city and committing crimes against its citizens and Insurgents. On the list, which was also broadcast by BBC, there were amongst the others the already mentioned Erich von dem Bach Zelewski and SS Gruppenführer Heinz Reinefarth.

<sup>60</sup> „Voelkischer Beobachter”, *das Drama von Warschau – Fruchtbare Leidensweg der Zivilbevölkerung der ehemaligen polnischen Hauptstadt* from 8<sup>th</sup> September 1944, Also other newspaper were concerned about the situation of Warsaw inhabitants „Der Angriff”, *Wo soll das enden? Heute Helsinki, Bukarest und Sofia / Das Elend in Warschau* from 9<sup>th</sup> September 1944.

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<sup>61</sup> Deutsche Zeitung im Ostland – *Chaos im Polen – Lager – Der Streit Mikołajczyk – Sosnkowski* from 9<sup>th</sup> September 1944. Between 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> September 1944 in „Voelkischer Beobachter” there was published a series of articles illustrated with numerous photos of Polish and British politicians under the title: „Der erzwungene Krieg – Zur Vorgeschichte des 3. September 1939”. They were written by Helmut Suenemann (amongst the other works he was the author of the widely known brochure published in Berlin in 1938 *Der Weg zum deutschen Journalismus*). The author was presenting in them the English disloyalty and the British actions with bad intentions, and the Polish lack of sense when Poland was accepting British guarantees. Also the role of Józef Piłsudski was emphasised in the text, implying that if the Marshall had been still alive at the end of the 1930s the whole conflict could have been ended in different way. It is interesting that the texts were published during the Uprising, were they the hidden suggestions for the leaders of the Home Army!?

<sup>62</sup> „Deutsche Zeitung im Ostland”, *Warschau eine tote Stadt* from 11<sup>th</sup> September 1944.

and life in the free city and the country<sup>63</sup>. The participation of various kinds of German units in suppressing the Uprising, described in the text, actually presented the extent of fights and Polish resistance, which is referred to by him as “[...] pointless [...]”. There even appeared the statement that the fights were carried out in, “[...] devious way [...]”<sup>64</sup>.

If we rejected the last statements of the writing one and would try to look at the case logically they must have completely repudiated the previous texts concerning the Uprising, which entirely neglected the uprising movement. This, however, wasn't about logic. The texts clearly present German irritation. It could have been caused by breaking (11<sup>th</sup> September 1944) the talks on capitulation by the insurgents and the increasing activity of the Soviets on the other side of the Vistula River, which could cause the impression that the final outcome of the fights was not decided yet.

In the papers under discussions there hardly ever appeared any photos of Warsaw or anyhow associated with the Uprising<sup>65</sup>.

<sup>63</sup> Wilm Hosenfeld, presents the facts of what was happening in Warsaw in his legacy *Staram się ratować każdego – Życie niemieckiego oficera w listach i dziennikach*, Warszawa 2008. It is also worth reading the review of this work published in Biuletyn IPN, 2004 08/09, on pages 131/137. It was written by W. Lipschera i P. Chojnacki. On 132<sup>nd</sup> page of the above mentioned work they are quoting the following text so different from the quoted press reports: „When the uprising broke out I was aware that our situation was serious [...]. Even tanks and heavy bombings don't seem to impress the Insurgents. The whole streets are set on fire, civilians are escaping [...]. The Insurgents occupy ruins and keep on shooting. Everything that moves is sot at [...]. Interrogations every day [...]”.

<sup>64</sup> „[...] Es waere in diesem Augenblick nur eine Frage einer Kluegeren Einsicht gewesen, die Sinnloesigkeit weiteren Widerstandes einzusehen und sie Kaempfe aufzugeben. Das deustche kapitulationsangebot indessen wurde ignoriert. In seiner Gnadenlosigkeit frisst sich das Chaos fort: In wenigen Minuten war dieser hinterhaeltiger Kampf gegen verbarrikadierte Scharfschuetzen und den Tod aus hundert Fensterhoelen, Dachluken und Kellerloechern zu einem Kampf um das Zentrum diesen Widerstandwillens [...]. Pausenlos trommelte noch einmal der Bombenhagel unserer Schlachtfieger – Geschwader in die brennenden Hausfronten hinein, heulten die deustchen Nebelwerfer hinueber, orgelten die Artillerie – und Werfersalven/Dazwischen schoben sich die wendigen Goliaths an die Barrikaden heran. [...] Aus flammende Selbstanklage bietet sich nach allem der endlose Zug der Fluechtlingskolonnen, denen Grauen noch in den verstoertten Gesichtern steht” in „Der Angriff” – So Fiel der Warschauer Nordkessel – Eine Hoelle, wie sie noch keine Millionenstadt erlebte” from 12<sup>th</sup> September 1944.

<sup>65</sup> „Voelkischer Beobachter” from 12<sup>th</sup> September 1944

Again, the attention was drawn, this time focusing on details, that the ally planes flying from Brindisi in Italy (1400/1500 km one way) and supplying support for the fighting Warsaw were not allowed to land on the areas taken over by the USSR.

Now we all know that it made the airdrops for poorly equipped and armed insurgents really difficult. The first large and relatively effective airdrop was possible only around the middle of September (almost 50 tons of war materials and food supplies were overtaken then – also mentioned in a footnote nr 36).

The Stalin's arguments were cited there, “[...] Firstly, the Polish uprising in Warsaw was initiated too soon, and it was useless in military terms, and even harmful for the Soviet army. Secondly, Polish insurgents in Warsaw were subordinate to the government which the Soviet Union doesn't treat as the legal representative of the Polish nation<sup>66</sup>. [...] Thirdly, this was the reason why the Soviet Union had refused the right to use air bases on its territory [...]”<sup>67</sup>.

In the announcement citing the arguments of “Generalissimus” there obviously was nothing about the cases when the Soviet Army was shooting at the plane flying with supplies for Warsaw, and that there were even fighter attacks. There is no use searching for the information on these incidents in German papers. They simply had no such information, otherwise they would surely use it for their propaganda purposes. There was also the information that, in opposition to what Moscow constantly claimed, it had been informed about the Uprising by Stanisław Mikołajczyk<sup>68</sup>.

published the photo with a following comment „Im Waldge-laende des Kampfgebiets Warschau – Auf den tiefen Sandwegen der Waelder des Weichselbogens bewegt sich nachschub zur kaempfende Front. Am strassenrand warten Gefengene und Fluechtlinge auf ihren Abtransport” – these might be the refugees from Warsaw. I will mention more photos from the struggling capital below, there weren't however many.

<sup>66</sup> I'd like to remind here that in April 1943 (the night 25<sup>th</sup>/26<sup>th</sup>) the USSR broke the relationship with the Polish government accusing it of the cooperation with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Reich concerning the „Katyń issues”. The request Polish government forwarded to the Red Cross about carrying out the investigation gave Russians the pretext for such an action. In fact, for Moscow it was clearing its way for the introduction of communist rule in Poland Therefore the Germans were right, when in the analyzed papers they were writing so much correctly decoding the intentions of „The Leader of the World Proletariat”.

<sup>67</sup> „Voelkischer Beobachter”, *Stalin verbot englische Hilfe fuer Warschau* from 13<sup>th</sup> September 1944.

<sup>68</sup> „Voelkischer Beobachter”, *Moskau wusste von War-*

In the meantime, the dark clouds started to gather over Poland. According to German press, the new Soviet republic was about to be established. It didn't matter that Poland had a legal government and parliament functioning in exile. The problem was to be solved in, "[...] Stalin's style [...]". Which meant using lie, brutality, and medial faking of reality writing about, "[...] so called soldiers of the underground army [...]" who didn't exist in reality<sup>69</sup>. In this context it is worth reminding of an interview given by the late professor Paweł Wiczorek in 'Rzeczpospolita' and which can be found on the website... It creates an interesting, in my view, image of the both occupants', especially Stalin's, attitude towards the Uprising. Of course, the basic question that should be considered here is whether the questions asked by the professor are justified!<sup>70</sup>

*schau? Neue schwere beschuldigungen gegen die Sowjets* from 15<sup>th</sup> September 1944.

<sup>69</sup> Voelkischer Beobachter – *Der Kreml weiss viele Wege zur Sowjetrepublik Polen – Moskau ernannt noch einen >Staatsrat< – Londoner Emigranten ohne Zukunft* from 17<sup>th</sup> September 1944, the same day in another text published in this newspaper „Nur grosser Laerm” *Neue Moskauer Ohrfeige fuer die Exilpolen* – it was written in it for example that, „Zu den kaempfen in der Warschauer Vorstadt Praga meldet die sowjetamtliche TASS” >>Es muss festgestellt werden dass trotz grossen Laerm, den General Bor mit seiner >unterirdischen Armee< im Raum Praga angestellt hat, in Wirklichkeit nicht ein einziger Soldat der sogenannten >unierischen Armee< in Praga zu entdecken war<< [...] Moskau will die Bolschewisierung Polens, und es denkt nicht daran, irgendwelche Polen erst darueber zu befragen [...]”. It should be reminded here that on 6<sup>th</sup> August 1944 Wanda Wasilewska was trying to convince Stanisław Mikołajczyk that Warsaw was peaceful – the above quoted opinions of the Soviet media are the aftermath of those propaganda activities.

<sup>70</sup> Here is the piece of the above mentioned interview, which was titled *Why has the Republic of Poland been waiting for two years before publishing?*:

„Question: *This was how the Germans reasoned in occupied Poland?*

Answer: Indeed. Besides, there were also reasonable people in Gestapo – which doesn't mean they weren't criminals – who knew that sooner or later when the Soviet roller would be getting closer to Europe, it would be necessary to make some deal with the Poles. Some unwritten agreements and settlements had already been made before. They basically meant that both organizations did their jobs, but did not hurt each other starting from a certain level.

Question: And what about the infiltration of the Home Army by the Soviets?

Answer: I'm afraid it was even worse. The Soviet agents within Polish authorities and Polish underground army had great influence. They took advantage from the fact that at some point Home Army started to turn leftwards. Eventu-

They should, however, be taken into consideration while analyzing the issue of the Uprising.

In the mass of threatening news there were even some making Stalin the president of Poland<sup>71</sup>. Somewhat by the way there appeared threats addressed to political opponents. German press mentioned even again about, “Katyń in another way”<sup>72</sup>.

Although Polish issues had a profound position in its services, the Uprising wasn't the main topic before 29<sup>th</sup> September 1944. Then it appeared on the front pages. “Der Angriff” informed then, “More and more insurgents capitulate in Warsaw and it was the most important news. It was one of few German successes at that time, and therefore it was placed in such an important spot. This particular information referred to the surrender of insurgents, who deserved the veteran rights like the ones granted to the soldiers of regular army in, [...] the old fort of Mokotów [...]”<sup>73</sup>.

In the background of the drama of Warsaw there was still present PKWN, which accused, “[...] the reactionist [...] Government of Poland of, [...] starting a civil war in Warsaw [...]”<sup>74</sup> by the wrong policy of Stanisław Mikołajczyk's cabinet, who was under particularly fierce attack.

In this context the “Polish” debates of the British parliament were described<sup>75</sup>. The first days of October

ally, Polish underground acted not according to the German interest, but to the Soviet one. It is enough to mention the unfortunate „Burza” (the Tempest) operation with the Warsaw Uprising. Only the one party benefited from the Uprising – the Soviets. The question should be asked, if Stalin could, and if the answer is positive, how he could influence upon the fact that it was on 1<sup>st</sup> August 1944 that Warsaw started to fight. The answer to the question could actually be shocking”.

<sup>71</sup> „Deutsche Zeitung im Ostland”, *Stalins Polen – Praesident* and another text from the same paper *Intrigen um Warschau* from 19<sup>th</sup> September 1944.

<sup>72</sup> „Voelkischer Beobachter”, *Katyn auf andere Art* from 20<sup>th</sup> September 1944.

<sup>73</sup> „Der Angriff”, *Weitere Aufstaendische in Warschau kapitulieren, Holland: Feindangriffe zerschlagen, Abwehrerfolg in Siebenbuergen* z from 29<sup>th</sup> September 1944, the same information was also published in „Voelkischer Beobachter” *Weiteres Aufstandsviertel in Warschau kapitulierte* in the same issue in a short note *Die Kapitulation der Aufstaendischen von Mokotow* it informed about the request to treat the Insurgents as POs.

<sup>74</sup> Deutsche Zeitung im Ostland – *Sowjetpolen diktieren* from 20<sup>th</sup> September 1944.

<sup>75</sup> „Voelkischer Beobachter – *Eiertanz im Britenparlament – Edens zarte Umschreibungen des Verrats an Polen* from 1<sup>st</sup> October 1944.

were the summary of the events that had had place in Warsaw for the previous three months. In the text, "Warschau – Symbol und Warnung" (Warsaw – the symbol and warning) in "Voelkischer Beobachter" all of the so far expressed opinions on the Uprising and the issues associated with it were summed up. The pointlessness of insurgency, which hadn't been consulted with the allies, and additionally as in opposition to the Soviet political interest doomed, was being emphasised.

The Uprising was also "lost" since it started in the wrong time and in the place where it couldn't have been successful.

The contemporaries were witnessing the agony of the idea of sovereign states in eastern Europe pushed, like Poland, by the British towards the war and now left to the Soviets mercy and deprived of German care, that was of such a significance. Warsaw insurgents were a classical example proving this theory, since they were the last ones to pay for the British betrayal of Europe<sup>76</sup>.

Obviously political texts of this type in no way could present what was going on throughout the Uprising in the fighting city.

The traces of information on how difficult it was for the Germans to fight in confrontations with insurgents can be found beside the above description in a short note, "Kampf in Kanalisationsschächten" (the struggle in the sewers). We learnt from it also about 25 thousand civilians freed by the Germans after overtaking Żoliborz, who, "[...] had been hiding in cellars and bunkers of this destroyed borough for weeks [...]", and their lives were saved thanks to the German proposal of capitulation, "[...] rejected before on 29<sup>th</sup> September [...]"<sup>77</sup>. The words about "civilians freed by the Ger-

mans" get a special meaning because shortly after Erich Von dem Bach had assured the Uprising parliamentarians that the insurgents were to be treated according to the rules and regulations of the Geneva Convention, in Dworkowa Street the Germans murdered almost 120 people, who had returned from Śródmieście to Mokotów through canals.

We need to remind here again that the German proposals of capitulation from 9<sup>th</sup> September 1944 articulated by the above mentioned SS general Von dem Bach, who then the order to cease fire for a couple of hours to let civilians leave the city, aimed also at limiting the possible source of manpower for the insurgents.

Two days later (6<sup>th</sup> October 1944) the NSDAP newspaper, "Voelkischer Beobachter" was informing, "[...] hard and persistent Polish resistance was broken, and the Warsaw dream was ended up with the help of the most modern German means for the city fight (street fights – P.Ł.) and brave units of Waffen-SS, infantry, police, supported constantly by Luftwaffe [...]" . Today, looking back from our perspective, we could ask, since Polish resistance was so irrelevant why use these means to suppress it.

However, before there appeared, unseen before, words on the bravery of Home Army soldiers, there had been the other ones, supporting stereotypes of Polish insensibility while writing about the marching out of Polish units from Warsaw after the capitulation, "[...] Company after company the silent lines are marching by [...]" . These are betrayed and deceived people. Their faces with the traces of poverty, many of them doubtful, tears running down on some of them [...] it is the tragedy of the nation, who doesn't lack courage, yet is short of better knowledge and political wisdom"<sup>78</sup>.

The Uprising was ended when general Tadeusz Bór-Komorowski along with his staff gave up. For the first time without mean comments the voices of western public opinion were being quoted, especially Winston Churchill's, saying about, "[...] the heroic people [...]", "[...] great respect [...]", and "[...] eternal memory [...]" for the Poles, whose love for freedom was known worldwide<sup>79</sup>.

<sup>76</sup> „[...] England hat Polen durch seine Garantie in den Krieg getrieben, dann sich selbst ueberlassen und schliesslich ohne Bedenken den Sowjets preisgegeben. Dieses Schicksal teilen in dieser oder jener Form auch anderen Ostvoelker, die Finnen und die Balkannationen, die auf gezinkte englische Karte setzen und damit alles verloren als sie ohne den deutschen Schutz den Bolschewisten allein gegenueberstanden. Die letzte Quittung erhielten die Warschauer Aufstaendischen – Symbol des britischen Verrats an Europa [...]" from „Voelkischer Beobachter”, *Warschau – Symbol und Warnung* from 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> October 1944.

<sup>77</sup> In the same issue of the paper as mentioned in the footnote above. The author of the quoted note must have made a mistake or it was intended manipulation. The capitulation talks with the Germans started on 26<sup>th</sup> September in Łucka Street and were continued the following day in other parts of the city, including Ożarów. After the talks there was a decision made within the command of the Home Army about carrying them on, and on 30<sup>th</sup> September, after

Żoliborz had been taken, the decision was made on armistice.

<sup>78</sup> *Die Kapitulation der Warschau – Polen – Kriegsber. Karl – Otto Zottmann* from „Voelkischer Beobachter” from 6<sup>th</sup> October 1944, on the same day in „Der Angriff”, *Der Fall Warschau – Katastrophe fuer die Alliierten*.

<sup>79</sup> *General Bor-Komorowski in deutscher Gefangenschaft* from the same issue of „Voelkischer Beobachter” as the



At the same time the pictures from the fights in Warsaw appeared, which showed types of German weapons used in Warsaw. Unfortunately, it is not possible to identify the places where the pictures were taken, and it is not even sure they were taken actually in the systematically destroyed city<sup>80</sup>.

above mentioned, a couple of days before (3<sup>rd</sup> October 1944) the same paper in the text: *Auch Bor passt den Sowjets nicht – Moskau – Polen wollen eigene Kandidaten* was informing about the far reaching aversion „[...] of the Poles dependent on Moscow [...]”, who referred to him as „[...] a criminal responsible for losing the Warsaw Uprising [...] and announced putting him on trial should he be caught by them [...]”. I’m mentioning it to present the technique of the German propaganda, which wasn’t attacking itself the defeated ones but referred to the opinions of the others, to express through them its disapproval towards its enemies. It was to present it as much more noble than it actually was in comparison with the Bolshevik lies and offences towards the Insurgents and their leaders. Alas, similar methods are presently being used in Poland by many media in political fights. A few days later (7<sup>th</sup> October 1944) about taking in captivity the command of the Uprising „Der Angriff” informed: *In deutscher Gefangenschaft – General Bor-Komorowski mit seinem Stab*. In another text on the same page the paper was quoting the Moscow „Izwiestia”, which were characterizing the Polish drama which had just ended in such a way: „[...] Raczkiewicz, the president of Poland and his reactionist clique, who are now shedding the dishonest tears are responsible for this tragedy. Warsaw had lost great number of its sons and daughters. This is the result of a criminal adventure of the Sosnkowski’s clique [...] and of others alike”.

<sup>80</sup> In „Voelkischer Beobachter” from 6<sup>th</sup> October 1944 we can see a photo of a German cannon Sturmgeschuetz III with a tactical number 322 on the rear moving along a destroyed street lined with tall burned inside buildings. On another photo next to the previous one, in a street with low buildings a unit of German soldiers is preparing „Leichter Ladungstraeger Sd Kfz 302” i.e. „Goliath” for the action. And here the doubts appear whether it is a photo taken in Warsaw, where „Goliaths” were used mainly in areas filled densely with buildings, in other words in the centre of the city, where one wouldn’t find the kind of architecture as presented in the photo. Obviously, I’m not deciding on the above I’m just asking if it’s a photo from Warsaw – (it is my professional duty to point out here that on the website „Kolejka Marecka – Forum Stowarzyszenia Obrońców Pozostałości Warszawy” devoted to the families of Temmler and Weigle there is the same photo I’m writing about placed „there” on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2010 by „roox miglanc” with a following comment: „[...]And talking about the house of the Weigle family – a famous photo with „Goliaths” was also taken there” – the mentioned house of Weigls was located in St. Piaskowa right next to Powązkowska – I don’t think it is „this” neighbourhood presented in the photo – but again it is the question to be discussed). The discussed photos are commented as follows: „Warsaw. By the means of armoured cannons and

Step by step, as the time was passing by it turned out that it wasn’t just a handful of madmen with hostile attitude towards their kinsmen and the inhabitants of Warsaw that had been fighting, but much bigger group.

We find out about this on 8<sup>th</sup> October while reading the information published by „Der Angriff” concerning the capitulation agreements<sup>81</sup>, according to which also

miniature tanks the last insurgent units are being made to capitulate”. The photos were taken by war correspondents Gutermann and Collmer. In „Der Angriff” from 8<sup>th</sup> October 1944 there was information *The Warsaw Uprising finally dismantled*. It was illustrated with photos presenting German soldiers sneaking through the ruins. The photo is commented in the following way „Our grenadiers have taken over one of the persistently defended by insurgents barricades and are attacking”. In the next photo we can see a soldier with a flame-thrower setting a building on fire. The comment with this image is as follows: „In the fights against the insurgents also flamethrowers were used, which had obviously contributed to breaking the last resistance”. Next to it two portraits of Waffen-SS soldiers decorated with „the iron cross with oak tree leaves”. Whether these are the soldiers fighting against the Insurgents we do not know. It seems that one of them Helmut Scholz SS-Obersturmfuehrer (awarded with „the Knight’s Cross of the Iron Cross with oak tree leaves as 591<sup>st</sup> out of 880) the commander of a battalion in the 23<sup>rd</sup> volunteer Regiment „De Ruyter”, at this particular time was fighting elsewhere and not in Warsaw, whereas the other one SS-Oberfuehrer Helmut Becker the last commander of armoured division SS-Totenkopf awarded with the same medal as 595<sup>th</sup> could have something to do with direct or indirect suppressing of the Uprising. The service was prepared by war correspondents Truol, Schremmer, Schmitz, and the photos come from the photographic post of the SS unit „Kurt Eggers”, which was established in January 1940 as „Kriegsberichter – Kompanie/the Company of war correspondents” consisting of four platoons of these correspondents. The platoons were meant for independent actions on the areas of fights beside the line units. Each of them was equipped with filming and photo gear. „Kurt Eggers” didn’t limit itself to only reporting the Uprising in media. It was also active in diversion and propaganda actions against it.

<sup>81</sup> It might be worth quoting the most significant points of the capitulation agreement from 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1944 signed on the German side by SS general Erich Von dem Bach, and on the Polish by colonel Kazimierz Iranek Osmecki, and lieutenant colonel Zygmunt Dobrowolski: The Insurgents were granted the rights resulting from Geneva Convention – it concerned also the ones who got to German captivity after 1<sup>st</sup> August. The Insurgents were not to be considered responsible neither for military nor political actions that had taken place before the outbreak of the Uprising. The units of the Home Army were to leave the city to give away their weapons on 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> October. The inhabitants evacuated from Warsaw were to be free from responsibility, as a group or individually, because of their activity in authorities and civilian administration.

capitulating or caught armed women and girls would be included in the agreements thanks to the magnanimity of Wehrmacht. Would it mean that they also became victims of the mass madness of the Poles, as a thorough reader must and should ask<sup>82</sup>.

This was the end of writing about the Uprising in the German press.

Summing up, in the period of time under discussion which we are interested in, in the above mentioned German newspapers a bit more than 100 (including photos), longer and shorter texts were published concerning Poland and the issues referring to our country. These were mainly the matters associated with the political future and the question of Polish borders. Among them over 40 concerned directly and indirectly the Warsaw Uprising.

## Conclusions

As it can be seen from the presented text, the first information on the Uprising appeared in the papers over two weeks after it had started, and probably only when the Germans became sure that it would fail<sup>83</sup>.

There was one more element, besides the generally negative situation of the Germans on all the meaningful fronts and the July attack on Hitler<sup>84</sup>, described broadly in the analyzed newspapers, which could have caused the delay in informing about the outbreak and the course of the Uprising. It has been mentioned before. There appeared an idea among the German high rank officers to take advantage of the Polish movement to

fight against the Bolshevism and to stop its march westwards<sup>85</sup>.

In my opinion, it was the reason why there was used the technique to present all the "uprising" information in the broader context of fighting for Poland taken over by the Soviet army, and later on Germany and Europe directly threatened by the export of the Soviet revolution. It was feared of what was to come along with victorious units of "krasna armija".

The treachery of allies, who left inhabitants of Warsaw alone to fight was emphasised, as well as the Soviets who would do anything to suppress the Uprising by Germans, refusing ally planes that were carrying the supplies for the fighting city to land at their airfields, pretending for quite a long time that they had had no knowledge of about the outbreak and the plans concerning it.

There appears a very interesting issue, which should be emphasised again. German journalists characterized the Uprising mainly as the act resulting from the lack of sense and the possibility of sober judgment of the situation by the Poles. Polish movement was generally belittled, or there were made attempts to belittle it.

This, on the other hand, made it impossible to appreciate the courage of the insurgents, and at the same time writing about the heroism of the Home Army soldiers. Polish "underpeople", so irresponsible, couldn't have been heroic. This feature was exclusively reserved for German soldiers.

The fact that, as I've pointed out, the mentions about the courage and persistence appeared only before the capitulation of the Uprising does not contradict or exclude the above thesis. It even emphasised them.

So if we take into consideration the above, these were the highest praise for the fighting ones that the German press could articulate.

What is interesting in the texts referring to the Uprising and the future of Poland anti-Semite elements were not emphasised as much as they had been when the bodies of the Katyń victims had been discovered<sup>86</sup>.

<sup>82</sup> „Der Angriff”, *Sie gelten als Kriegsgefangene – Auch die weiblich Mitkämpfer von Warschau* from 8<sup>th</sup> October 1944.

<sup>83</sup> Still in the initial phase of the Uprising (3<sup>rd</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> August 1944) Gauleiter Kraju Warty, Artur Greiser in his conversation with Goebbels, said that: „[...] that uprising [...] could in no way have been suppressed [...]” and later on the Minister of Propaganda of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Reich (around 10<sup>th</sup> August 1944) claimed that: „[...] our units have cornered them (the Insurgents – P.L.), in the main streets of the city so that they are not able to hold their defensive positions [...]” quotes after E.C. Król, op. cit., p. 497. German clerks (Josef Buehler) were estimating on 12<sup>th</sup> August 1944, that only six or seven days were needed to suppress the Uprising.

<sup>84</sup> „Der Angriff”, *Die Verbrecher vom 20 Juli gerichtet – Der gemeinste Verrat der deutschen Geschichte findet seine Sühne* from 10<sup>th</sup> August 1944, it needn't be added that there were many more of such articles and they held a lot of space in newspapers at that time – the title presented is to serve as an example of a particular atmosphere that was present then in German media concerning these issues.

<sup>85</sup> See E.C. Król, op. cit., p. 498, the author describes „the ideas” of Hans Frank and presents Josef Goebbels' opinions referring to these questions.

<sup>86</sup> See P. Łysakowski: *Prasa niemiecka o Katyniu. Jak niemiecka propaganda przedstawiała w 1943 roku sprawę mordu popełnionego na polskich oficerach*, „Zeszyty Katyńskie”, 1, p. 88–115; *Zbrodnie katyńska w kleszczach niemieckiej propagandy (Prasa niemiecka o Katyniu)*, „Zeszyty Katyńskie”, 23, p. 18–56.

It was done where the Soviet threat concerning small nations was described, which was also illustrated with numerous caricatures<sup>87</sup>.

This topic was being “avoided”, or not overexposed, while referring to the question of the Warsaw Uprising.

The solution of this mystery is to be included in yet another text.

Obviously, also the references to the complete brutality of the Germans and their allies, who not only were destroying the city but also slaughtered masses of its inhabitants during the first days of the Uprising, were neglected. It wasn't written in the analyzed texts, which can be understood, about the exact numbers of murdered Warsaw civilians or the losses of insurgents. There wasn't even a word on the casualties among German soldiers either<sup>88</sup>.

In press reports there are no traces of these events. On the contrary, German soldiers were presented there as immortal “heroes”, whom inhabitants of Warsaw owed a lot.

“De facto” they didn't owe them nothing but unspeakable suffering. Yet, according to the presented texts the leaders of the Uprising, especially general Bór and the emigration Polish authorities, “Exilpolen” were responsible for these. They were the ones to cause this “brawl” in agreement with Stalin, who eventually de-

ceived everybody, and the allies who in the end left the insurgents and the inhabitants of Warsaw on their own.

Generally, my impression is that if it had been possible not to mention the Warsaw Uprising at all, German propaganda would have done it gladly and with a great relief. The extent of the movement and tragedy resulting from it, as well as their political dimension were, however, too great to allow any manipulation.

Summing up the collapse of the Uprising, so inevitable in this particular political and military situation, Josef Goebbels said, “[...] The fate of Warsaw could almost be perceived as the act of the God. The city was destroyed completely the second time during this war, and it is here that this war had started”<sup>89</sup>.

In this words one can find the essence of the opinions the German press presented about the Warsaw Uprising.

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<sup>88</sup> Generally speaking it would be an interesting thing to analyze the obituaries from the time of the Uprising in German press. Finding, however (and I couldn't do it in detail), particular information referring to our issue might be difficult. My experience in this matter, although I'm not applying for the position of an authority, shows that generally (probably for the „counterintelligence” reasons as it is referred to nowadays) any details concerning the exact place of death of people were avoided in information (obviously I mean here German soldiers and policemen), who were commemorated in a particular obituary. In such cases an expression „fallen in the East” was used if person „X” was killed on Kursk or Stalingrad, in Poland or some fight against guerillas (sometimes it was added that „was killed by bandits” or „was killed fighting against bandits” not informing where it actually happened). Information from the „Polish campaign” of 1939 looked similar. There was information that such and such soldier or officer fell „in Poland”. Therefore, getting interested in this aspect of the issue, information from the period of the Uprising, could be a very interesting study as a result.

<sup>89</sup> Quoted after E.C. Król, op. cit., p. 513.



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