CHAPTER 11

AFTERMATH

By the end of September, the Polish patriots were still hoping for another supply flight by the American Air Force, although the Americans claimed only mediocre success with the "Frantic 7" mission. On 20 September, it was officially confirmed that approximately 130 containers had been recovered. Reports from isolated areas were still outstanding. On 21 September, the Polish General Staff in London reported to Colonel A.R. Maxwell, Director of Operations of the 8th USSTAF:

The information at present available can be summarised as follows: the Zoliborz area has been missed. All the containers landed in enemy hands in the area of Gory Szwedzkie, approximately 5 kilometres west of the target. The central area was fairly well covered with stores although the centre of the dropping was situated to the north-east of the area and the northern part received a larger number of containers. Some containers of this bulk were scattered as far as Praga, and some fell in the river.¹

He also claimed that the part of the load which was assigned to the Mokotow area was dropped slightly east of the target. Some however were dropped on the target area and there was still hope that part of the containers could be recovered because the Commanding Officer of this sector was organising a night party to look for the other containers.²

The Polish General Staff explained that it should be expected that some of the unrecorded containers could have fallen into the hands of partisans. But, since one third of the consignment of the containers carried food, the reception of a number of these would never be confirmed. The population needed food urgently and it should have been expected that many of the containers, although they fell into friendly hands, were immediately consumed. The initial estimates were that 640 containers had allegedly reached their destination. On 22 September, further confirmation was received that only 288 containers from the "Frantic 7" operation were accounted for. It was assumed that

¹ National Archives, Washington DC, Box 67, RG 334, S/OPS/8740, p.34.
² National Archives, Washington DC, Box 67, RG 334, S/OPS/8740, p.34.
another 100 containers were collected by the partisans. Thus, although the containers dropped on the Zoliborz should be considered as a total loss, the operation as a whole should be considered a very definite success. At that stage, approximately 37% of the containers dropped were officially accounted for.

On 25 September, information was received from the Polish Home Army in the southern sector of the Warsaw front, that they had been heavily bombed by the Germans and that they were subjected to massive artillery fire. It seemed as if the Germans were determined to stop the patriots from reoccupying the west bank of the Vistula. The main reason for this was to prevent the Poles from securing beachheads for the "advancing" Russians. Polish Authorities were also afraid that the Germans would murder Polish POW's at German internment camps at Oswiecim, Buchenwald and Birkenay.

By 26 September, the position in Warsaw had deteriorated even more. Bor-Komorowski reported that the availability of food for the army and the population in Warsaw had become catastrophic. Only 60,000 kilogram of barley was left. People were eating dogs to survive. Many deaths occurred because of starvation and an alarmingly high mortality rate among children prevailed. Outbreaks of scarlet fever had also been reported. Severe cases of exhaustion were reported throughout Warsaw because of the lack of proper clothing in severe winter conditions.

Without substantial relief efforts from the Allies, the partisans would not be able to hold out for more than ten days at the most. Although Soviet aircraft were now involved in occasional sorties to Warsaw to drop gruel and biscuits to the partisans, it was of little help, because only limited quantities were supplied. Many of the supplies were dropped without parachutes and disintegrated upon landing. Their revolt could collapse because of famine.

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3 National Archives, Washington DC, Box 67, RG 334, S/OPS/8740, p.34.
4 National Archives, Washington DC, Box 67, RG 334, JEUS U 69262, p.37.
5 National Archives, Washington DC, Box 67, RG 334, Polish Embassy, No.4, p.48.
6 National Archives, Washington DC, Box 67, RG 334, Polish Embassy, No.4, p.48.
7 National Archives, Washington DC, Box 67, RG 334, Message from Warsaw, No.2, p.49.
Poles faced either capitulation or an exodus to the Germans to escape death from starvation.

On 28 September, the Americans announced that they were planning operation "Frantic 8" to relieve the critical food situation. Approximately 72 bombers would be involved.

On 30 September, Mikolajczyk was officially informed that the Americans would proceed with sorties to drop supplies on Warsaw at the first possible opportunity. Emergency arrangements had been made and the Russians were informed they should expect American aircraft from this date until 5 October. "Frantic 8" was scheduled for Sunday, 1 October, and was approved by the Russians. Unfortunately, the operation had to be cancelled due to adverse weather.

Because of weather conditions which remained unfavourable, the mission was again postponed to the next day. It was hoped that "Frantic 8" could be conducted on Tuesday, 3 October. However, Allied representatives in the Soviet Union received a message on the same day from the Soviet High Command, disapproving of the proposed flight. The Russians stated that they were about to evacuate all the Polish partisans from Warsaw. The only result of such a supply mission would be to deliver supplies to the Germans. The Soviet authorities made it very clear to the Americans that they would not approve any similar future actions.

The Allies were confused by this sudden change in attitude. When permission for "Frantic 8" was requested on 30 September, the Russians had promptly approved. Their subsequent refusal for the mission came as a big surprise.

Soviet authorities now maintained that no more than 3,000 partisans were left in Warsaw, since the rest had been evacuated.

The Americans were very frustrated by the whole affair. They believed that they were in a favourable position to succeed in supplying the partisans with

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8 National Archives, Washington DC, Box 67, RG 334, Cable UX 68622, p.54.
9 National Archives, Washington DC, Box 67, RG 334, Cable UX 68622, p.54.
10 National Archives, Washington DC, Box 67, RG 334, Cable UX 68622, p.54.
the much needed supplies. They were also very keen to run the mission and could not believe the sudden change on the part of the Soviets.

Nevertheless, on 3 October, Mikolajczyk sent a telegram to General D.D. (Dwight) Eisenhower and the US Ambassador to Great Britain, informing them that the Germans had intensified their attacks on Polish resistance centres in Warsaw. German aircraft and artillery were also used during these attacks. In the meantime, the Soviet Army, having attempted to cross the Vistula, did not succeed and stopped all activity once again. This left the Poles in Warsaw defenceless. The Home Army was compelled to cease any further fighting under these circumstances. The people in the centre of the city, who represented the last bastion of resistance, had to stop their fight, since the last rounds of ammunition were used and the last supplies of food had been exhausted by the more than 260,000 civilians and soldiers of the Home Army. Large numbers of soldiers who were wounded the previous night were dying in cellars, without any medical assistance.

Although all Soviet military activities had ceased in Warsaw by 18:00 hours on 2 October 1944, and the Red Cross were evacuation the civilians,\(^\text{11}\) it did not affect the activities of the Home Army soldiers, who continued fighting the Germans in other areas of Poland. Mikolajczyk, therefore, requested the United States Army Air Force Command to commence sorties to supply the partisans who were still fighting in the district of Radom.\(^\text{12}\) He also requested supplies to be dropped on Wioscsow, 160 kilometres south of Warsaw, and Proszowice, near Krakow.\(^\text{13}\)

General Anderson replied to this request by telegram on 5 October. He indicated that, because of foul weather conditions, he could not advise any further flights to Poland. Nevertheless, the Americans still delayed the closing of their Russian bases until 5 October. They were secretly hoping to conduct one more shuttle operation.

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\(^\text{11}\) National Archives, Washington DC, Box 67, RG 334, KIV 44, p.71.

\(^\text{12}\) National Archives, Washington DC, Box 67, RG 334, KIV 44, p.71.

\(^\text{13}\) National Archives, Washington DC, Box 22, RG 334, Cable 68848, p.55.
As a last encouragement, Anderson informed the Polish premier that, although the supply drops had ceased, he was convinced that increasing pressure on Germany from all sides would soon allow Poland to be free again.\textsuperscript{14}

The US Tactical Air Force Command remained on standby until they were officially informed that all active resistance in Warsaw had ceased. After negotiations with the Germans, the partisans surrendered on 5 October 1944. The command of the \textit{Armia Krajowa} in Warsaw capitulated and, by agreement with the Germans, and with the help of the Red Cross, most of the partisans were evacuated by Russian planes.\textsuperscript{15} The city itself was virtually in ruins. When the Russian forces entered Warsaw later in October, they were met by grim scenes of devastation and the decomposing bodies of partisans who were never buried.

Looking back upon the ill-timed and doomed Warsaw uprising of 1944, it is impossible to overlook the tragedy of this whole episode. One is struck by the total and utter futility of the whole attempt to liberate the Polish capital from the inside with the hope and promise of outside assistance.

The consequences of this affair were grave. Relations between Britain and the Soviet Union were irreparably damaged. The difficult Polish question now became the conscience of the West. With the European war coming to its last phase, the shadow of Warsaw clouded the thought of those involved.\textsuperscript{16}

On 12 October 1944 Stanislaw Mikolajczyk, the Prime Minister of the Polish government-in-exile, again travelled to Moscow to attend the Tolstoy conference with Churchill and Anthony Eden, British Foreign Secretary, who had suggested that Mikolajczyk should try to renew attempts to reach some agreement with Stalin.\textsuperscript{17} The main issue at stake for the Poles in the Moscow talks was, once again, that of the Polish-Soviet border.\textsuperscript{18} Since the Great Powers had already come to an agreement on the eastern Polish border at the

\textsuperscript{14} National Archives, Washington DC, Box 67, RG 334, BC/HAV, p.71.
\textsuperscript{15} National Archives, Washington DC, Box 67, RG 334, Cable 20765, T 1251, p.72.
\textsuperscript{17} I.C.B. Dear, \textit{The Oxford Companion to the Second World War}, p.899.
Teheran conference,\(^{19}\) the Moscow discussions could only be on points of detail. The British put intense pressure on Mikolajczyk to concede and agree to the Curzon Line. But Stalin even rejected a compromise proposal that would have enabled Poland to, at least, retain Lvov and the Boryslaw oilfield. On his return to London, Mikolajczyk could not persuade his cabinet to accept the Soviet terms. On 24 November 1944, he resigned as prime minister.\(^{20}\)

Stalin then authorised the Lublin Committee to transform itself into the Provisional government of the Republic of Poland.\(^{21}\)

At the Yalta conference, between 4 and 11 February 1945, the following declaration was agreed upon:

> A new situation has been created in Poland as a result of her complete liberation by the Red Army. This calls for the establishment of a Polish Provisional Government which can be more broadly based than was possible before the recent liberation of (the) Western part of Poland. The Provisional Government which is now functioning in Poland should therefore be reorganised on a broader democratic basis with the inclusion of democratic leaders from Poland itself and from Poles abroad. This new Government should then be called the Polish Provisional Government of National Unity.\(^{22}\)

The Allies reaffirmed their common desire to establish a strong, free, independent and democratic Poland. This Polish Provisional Government of national Unity was committed to the holding of free and unfettered elections, as soon as possible, on the basis of universal suffrage and secret ballot. In these elections all democratic and anti-Nazi parties had the right to take part and to forward candidates. The Soviets promised that, once the new Government was properly formed in conformity with the rules laid down, the Soviet

\(^{19}\) The idea was to "move" Poland's border to the west. A very good map, indicating the Curzon Line and the Ribbentrop-Molotov Line, is given in the book of Yohanan Cohen, *Small Nations in Times of Crisis and Confrontation*, p.149.


Government would establish diplomatic relations with them and exchange ambassadors.\textsuperscript{23}

In June 1945, Mikolajczyk and a small number of colleagues returned to Warsaw and took up positions in the new Polish government of National Unity. Although most ministerial posts were taken by communists, Mikolajczyk became deputy premier and minister of agriculture. The new leader was the socialist, Edward Osobka-Morawski. On 5 July, the new government was formally recognised by the Britain and the United States of America, thus giving diplomatic recognition to the communist authorities in Warsaw.\textsuperscript{24}

The western borders of Poland had already been agreed upon by the Great Powers at the Potsdam Conference in July 1945. Poland’s borders were advanced at the expense of Germany. In places they recovered over 200 kilometres and received land which had belonged to Polish rulers in the Middle Ages. About 3.5 million Germans were removed from these new Polish territories. Stalin refused to re-establish the pre-war Polish-Soviet frontier and therefore large groups of Polish people were evacuated from the east as well. Hundreds of thousands of Poles were “repatriated”. Most of them were taken to the west to colonise the regions freshly acquired from the Germans.\textsuperscript{25} Many Poles were not willing to return to a communist dominated country and still viewed the communists with hatred and suspicion. Many of those from Eastern Poland had, in any case, no homes to return to.

The elections provided for at Yalta were not held until January 1947. Allegations of electoral malpractice were made throughout the elections, which resulted in a sweeping victory for the communists. The Western Powers could not intervene and therefore Poland became the victim once again. The new Polish state remained within the sphere of influence of the Soviet Union and became a member of the Warsaw Pact in 1955. The Cold War years, after the Second World War, divided Europe into two parts and Poland was isolated by the so-called Iron Curtain. Thus a government was established in Poland which was quite different from that agreed upon by the Western leaders. After almost six years of Nazi occupation, Poland found itself dominated once again by a foreign power.


\textsuperscript{24} I.C.B. Dear, \textit{The Oxford Companion to the Second World War}, p.899.