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POLAND.

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CONFIDENTIAL.

SECTION 1.

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Mr. O'Malley to Mr. Eden.—(Received April 2.)

(No. 34.)

Sir,

British Embassy to Poland, London, April 1, 1943.

NEVER since June 1941 have Polish-Soviet relations been worse than they are at present. At any moment the decorous official drapery which conceals the real state of things may be torn away. Neither the Polish Government as a whole nor General Sikorski personally desire or desires a rupture of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union if it can be avoided, but their freedom of action is limited both by their own feeling of duty towards their country and also by the feelings of the Poles at home and abroad, whose mandataries they are. In these circumstances it seems desirable to attempt an analysis of Polish public opinion on the question of Polish-Russian frontiers, in spite of the difficulty arising out of the geographical division of the Polish nation into the following four groups: first, Poles in Poland or in countries under German rule; secondly, Polish soldiers and civilian refugees in the Middle East, being in the main persons who have passed through Russian hands; thirdly, Poles now in this country, civilians and non-civilians, most of whom left Poland in the early months of the war; and, fourthly, Polish refugees in the United States. In each of the four groups are to be found adherents of the main political parties.

2. The Polish Socialist party (usually known as the "P.P.S.") together with the Jewish Socialist party (known as the "Bund") represents the great mass of the urban working class, together with a good deal of the middle class *intelligentsia*. The Polish Socialist party has always been conspicuously patriotic, and the latest news from Poland shows an intensification of the anti-Soviet and anti-Communist feelings which were always strong in its members, whether they belonged to the working class or to the *intelligentsia*. In their communications to members of the party in the United Kingdom the Socialists in Poland have for at least twelve months past been protesting steadily, and with increasing vehemence, against the activities of Russian Communist and other agents in the Eastern Marches, and also in the General Government. Evidence of this will be found in the enclosed translation of a communiqué recently issued by the Foreign Committee of the party here. The Polish Socialist party and, so far as it can still exist and work, its Jewish counterpart the "Bund," can now count on the support of many persons in Eastern Poland whose former leanings towards communism disappeared with their experience of life under the Soviet régime. One of the few prominent Communists of Polish race in pre-war Poland emerged from the prison to which the Soviet authorities had hastened to consign him with his Communist convictions unimpaired, but with the determination one day to lead an international Communist army to the annihilation of Moscow.

3. The Populist (or Peasant) party exercises everywhere a strong influence on the rural working class of Polish race, both peasant proprietors and agricultural labourers. It is best organised, and can make its weight most felt in the—for an agricultural country—densely populated districts of South-Western, South-Central and Western Poland. In the thirties it grew in influence at the expense of the more radical peasant groups, which have practically faded out as political organisations. Under the present repressive German régime a good many Polish peasants may not care to show themselves active members of the Populist party, but there can be no doubt that its leaders could, and would, mobilise for a struggle against Russia a very considerable part of the Polish peasant mass. In this connexion it should be remembered that the more radical Polish peasants, who did not twenty years ago feel particularly drawn to the Populist party with its "kulak" tendencies, have never, either then or later, shown any marked solidarity with the Ukrainian and White Russian peasants in Eastern Poland. So far as is known, there does not exist in Poland any organised peasant group which would come into the open with the doctrine that it is not worth while fighting Russia for the sake of the Eastern Marches.

[40—24]