

acting for the Polish Government. As Soviet-Polish relations deteriorated during 1942 great difficulties were created for these relief officers. At one time the offices of the relief agencies were raided and a number of arrests were made, the relief officers being accused of espionage. It is true that in the exercise of their duties these officers had found it necessary to collect a large amount of data concerning transport conditions. It is also probably true that like most Poles they had shown an inquisitive attitude towards what was taking place around them, while it is not improbable that some of these officers expressed sentiments that the Soviet authorities would regard as unfriendly. It is difficult, however, to believe that any of the Polish relief officers would do anything that was prejudicial to the Soviet war effort. It is claimed that when the Poles asked if these officers were being accused of espionage on behalf of Germany, the reply was given that they were undertaking espionage on behalf of the United States and of the United Kingdom.

15. The Polish Ambassador by his persistence and reasonableness was able to secure the release of most of the relief officers accused of espionage and the relief organisation continued to function reasonably well until January, 1943, when Soviet-Polish relations suddenly took a turn for the worse. The Soviet declaration that residents of areas occupied by the Soviet forces in 1939 were Soviet citizens led to many of the staff of the relief organisation being arrested on their refusal to take out new papers as Soviet citizens. Of the eight distributing depots, five are still functioning on a partial basis, but the movement of supplies from abroad has been brought to a standstill. A considerable quantity of relief supplies are immobilised at the ports of entry: Murmansk, Archangel and Ashkhabad, and no new supplies are coming forward. It is, no doubt, this situation which gave rise to the Department's telegram enquiring if the Soviet Government had prohibited the entry of relief goods for Polish citizens.

16. Recent Developments

Mr. de Romer, the Polish Ambassador, left for London in December, 1942. Prior to his departure he was informed by the Soviet Government that, although by the Soviet Decree of November 1939, all citizens of Soviet-occupied Poland who were in these territories at the time of their incorporation into the Union automatically acquired Soviet citizenship, the Soviet Government was prepared to recognise by way of exception as Polish citizens persons of Polish, as distinct from Ukrainian, White Russian or Lithuanian race who were in those territories at the time of the occupation. This reasonably satisfactory situation from the Polish point of view was abruptly terminated on January 16th, 1943, when the Soviet Government advised the Polish Embassy that owing to the negative attitude of the Polish Government who had made demands incompatible with the sovereignty of the Soviet Union, they could no longer recognise the exceptional position of such Poles.

17. I have not been able to ascertain the exact cause of this worsening of Soviet-Polish relations. It is difficult to sift through the mass of conflicting testimony given out by both sides and to maintain the proper degree of objectivity in the face of the considerable amount of emotion to which the human factors give rise. It is clear, however, that the fundamental element in the situation is the growing distrust by the Soviet authorities of the good intentions of the Poles towards the Soviet Union. The Soviet Government suspects that there are malign influences at work in Europe who are seeking to prolong the war until the Soviet Union is permanently weakened. They believe that elements close to the Polish government are imbued with this desire. Rightly or wrongly they attribute the policy of the Polish Government in restraining partisan activity in occupied Poland to this same malign influence. The same feeling, of