

some distant region at the will of an irresponsible Government. In their intercourse with the peasant inhabitants of the U.S.S.R., at any rate so far as Russians and other Slavs are concerned, the Polish exiles have found among persons of the older generation kindness and sympathy, and also respect for and attachment to the symbols of their religion, the crosses, medals, sacred pictures and the like, which they had managed to bring with them from their homes. It must be remembered that in the old days before 1918 the great mass of the Poles who were subjects of the Tsar did not *hate* the mass of the Russian race: they felt some contempt for their passivity, but the hate they undoubtedly felt for the instruments of the Russian Government did not extend to the mass of the population, who, they rightly felt, suffered under that Government as much as they themselves did. The behaviour of the Soviet soldiers and officers in Eastern Poland in the autumn of 1939, the way in which they bought out the whole stocks of shops in, for instance, Lwów and thereby acquired thousands of packets of needles, hundreds of alarm clocks, all this only confirmed the simpler Poles in their conviction that the Russians are on a lower level than themselves. What they have since seen in Russia has strengthened that conviction, and I doubt whether the valiant resistance of the Russian army has greatly shaken it. The Poles who remember the days before 1914 know quite well that the Russian peasants make very good soldiers, that they are courageous and enduring.

What I am trying to show is that there has been nothing in their experiences in the U.S.S.R., in what they have seen there, to convince the mass of the Poles that the Bolshevik régime is a very desirable one from any point of view. Very little of what they have seen can have impressed them in such a way as to modify their ingrained feeling of superiority to the Russians. This explains, I think, how it comes about that the vast mass of the Poles in the U.S.S.R. have passed so easily and so immediately to the order of the day over all their sufferings at the hands of the Soviet authorities. It must be remembered that the Poles in the U.S.S.R. are in the position of a huge emigration. They are in a country which they know and feel to be a foreign one: the front is still a long way to the east of the old Polish-Soviet frontier. It really seems as if practically all the Poles in the U.S.S.R. were inspired by the one desire to return to Poland and re-create the independent Polish State. It is not merely a longing for their homes which animates them. That exists no doubt, but it seems to be quite subordinate to their feeling of patriotism towards their country as an independent State. Their main enemy is the alien Power which occupies and oppresses that country. At present the Russians do not hold an inch of Polish soil and there is therefore no need just now the Poles in the U.S.S.R. feel, to think about their future relations to the Soviet Union. It might have been expected that, once released from prisons and labour camps, the Polish exiles in the U.S.S.R. would have been disposed to sit back and enjoy the absence of active persecution. Not so, apparently; even men who could hardly stand volunteered at once for service in the Polish army and were indignant when kindly officers and military doctors advised them to take up some relatively light office work. All the information which has come my way so far goes to show that the overwhelming mass of the Poles in the U.S.S.R. approve General Sikorski's action in signing an agreement with the Soviet Government, even if many important questions are left open in that instrument. The remarkable thing is that their approval is not prompted by self-interest. They do not say to the general: "By your action you have saved our lives," but "By your action you have enabled us to take part in the struggle to re-establish Polish independence." Polish romanticism, which has always been deliberately misrepresented abroad by the Germans, is a singularly virile thing. A friend of mine who was, I think, the first official Pole to visit Moscow after the signing of the agreement told me that he had been impressed by the absence of any Messianic passivism in the Poles who came to see him after their release from detention. None of them spoke of Poland as the "Christ among nations" or implied that their own sufferings were an offering for the redemption of mankind; their only desire was to fight the Germans and return to a free Poland.

It is extremely difficult to form a picture of Polish society or life in the General Government. To what extent do political parties still exist there? How far have the prestige of Pilsudski and the real achievements of the legionaries been overwhelmed by the discredit which attaches—undeservedly, I