

Zitierhinweis

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**Sovetskij sojuz i pol'skoe voenno-političeskoe podpol'e. April' 1943 g. – dekabr' 1945 g.**

V trech tomach. T. 2. Č. 1: Varšavskoe vosstanie. Ijul' – nojabr' 1944 g. Otv. red. A. N. Artizov. Moskva: Meždunarodnyj fond "Demokratija", 2016. 828 S. = Rossija XX vek. Dokumenty. ISBN: 978-5-89511-043-0.

The Russian/Soviet-Polish relationship is one of the most vexed issues in East European history. The reasons are many, but one of the most important in the modern period is that a small nation was overridden and terrorized by a much bigger neighboring nation. There are few signs that in the post-Soviet era the Polish-Russian relationship has improved much, if at all. Desperate to counter Polish claims to victimhood, in 2004 Moscow went so far as to celebrate a new national holiday, Russian Unity Day, honoring the liberation of Moscow in 1612 from Poland.

The Warsaw Uprising of 1944 is merely one of the countless contentious issues, which involves the West (Britain, Germany, and the United States) as well. In this case, too, Polish accounts tend to emphasize victimhood. The Home Army and other militant groups, supported by the residents of Warsaw, gallantly stood up to the Nazi occupiers, as the Soviet Red Army advanced from the east to the city's outskirts. In spite of pleas from Britain and the United States, Moscow refused to help the Polish fighters. As a result, the uprising failed in the end, and the numbers of the dead (up to 150,000) were greater than in Hiroshima (probably up to 140,000). In contrast, Russian/Soviet accounts emphasize the recklessness of the Poles, who did not have enough weapons and ammunition in the first place. Moreover, the Poles failed to coordinate, in advance, their actions with the Soviet forces. In fact they resorted to adventurism to forestall the liberation of Warsaw by the Red Army. It was therefore their own political decision that pre-determined their defeat and the resulting enormous casualties.

Unfortunately the present volume does not diverge much from the standard Russian/Soviet accounts. Many documents have already been published elsewhere (published Polish documents are translated into Russian here). These and new documents from archives do show the Russian/Soviet point of view well. Stalin was angry that the Poles were trying to liberate Warsaw before the Red Army advanced into the city, and he was resentful of the help provided by Britain and the United States, which appeared to know that the uprising would fail to dislodge German forces from the city. Stalin regarded the "London Poles" (the Polish government-in-exile in London, who did not trust Stalin) as merely using the occasion to gain political advantage over those Poles sympathetic to Stalin and the Soviet Union (the "Lublin" Poles, whom Stalin installed in the Polish Committee of National Liberation in Lublin in opposition to the government-in-exile). The London Poles not only refused to coordinate with the Red Army but failed entirely to inform Moscow of their military actions in Warsaw. In fact, according to the Russian

documents published here, the liberation of Warsaw was not even a military priority for them at that particular moment. And, according to the editors of the present volume, in spite of the outcry from Britain and the United States, in fact neither did much to help the Poles in the Warsaw uprising and what assistance they did render proved ineffective.

While there is some truth in this account, the editors of the present volume go out of their way to avoid inconvenient facts to justify Stalin's actions. First, it was Moscow, in coordination with Nazi Germany, which destroyed Poland in 1939. Second, when attacked by Hitler in 1941, Stalin needed the support of the Poles and promised, if implicitly, to restore the 1939 Polish territory in the event of victory, a promise Moscow completely ignored by 1944. Third, the present volume fails to state unequivocally Moscow's responsibility for the Katyn massacre. It was the discovery of Moscow's ghastly crime in 1943 that solidified the London Poles' distrust of Moscow. Disappointingly, the Russian editors have just let stand, without commentary, war-time Kremlin statements about the London Poles' "anti-Soviet slander" about Katyn (p. 287, for example).

This collection of documents is valuable for understanding Moscow's point of view. It demonstrates that Moscow was determined not to let the London Poles take Warsaw from the Germans. It also shows very well the skillfulness with which Moscow dealt not only with Poland but with its wartime allies, Britain and the United States. One suspects that there are many relevant documents still classified in Moscow archives that will shed more light on Moscow's hidden political agenda concerning the control of Poland after the war. More than other similar publications, this volume displays unabashed prejudices. This is a pity. (In spite of their conflicting views of their relationship, Poland and Ukraine have jointly published volumes on the "Polish Underground" in Soviet Ukraine that are far more valuable for scholarship.) One can only encourage the editors of this volume on the "Polish Underground" to present a more informed and scholarly account in any future volumes in the series.

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