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The Polish Home Army and the struggle for the Lublin Region - 1943-1945



Abstract

Between 1939 and 1944 the underground forces of the Polish Government-in-Exile created an underground army in the Lublin region, which, at its height, numbered 60,000 men. The underground Army was created in order to facilitate the reestablishment of an independent Poland. The Army that was created, the AK, was in effect, an alliance organisation comprising, to varying degrees, members of all pro-independence underground groups. It was, in Lublin, to always suffer from internal stresses and strains, which were exaggerated by the actions of the region's occupiers. These strains were highlighted and exploited by the 'liberating' Red Army. From the moment that they set foot in the province in July 1944, the forces of the Soviet Union aimed to put into place a Polish regime that was compliant and communist.

The most interesting fact about the operation mounted by the AK to liberate Lublin province from the Germans, lies in the regional command's reaction to both their orders and the demands made of them by the incoming Soviets. The regional commander's decision in July 1944 to order his forces to hand in their weapons and disperse meant that the human stock of the underground would remain, that it would survive the first wave of NKVD arrests. This meant that, despite the massive setback of the post liberation era, a core, armed, and well structured underground still existed. What destroyed this attempt to preserve the AK in Lublin was the halting of the eastern front for five months. This meant that 2.2 million Soviets were operating in and around Lublin whilst the AK central command was fighting to liberate Warsaw. The halting of the front, therefore, was to hasten the fate of those in the underground, both in the capital and to the east.

Ultimately it was the mass repression in the aftermath of the Warsaw Uprising that fatally weakened the Lublin underground as an organised, coherent entity. In many senses the crucial period for the AK in Lublin was the one from July until November 1944. The alliance of the underground in the area had been an often-difficult one but after months of silence from London, and the failure of the Warsaw Uprising and the Moscow talks, this alliance began to collapse.

Whilst the framework of the underground had been almost destroyed by the winter of 1944-1945, crucially a framework of resistance had survived the NKVD's concerted attempts to destroy it totally. The importance of this framework was clearly shown after the Red Army restarted its attack at the heart of the Third Reich in January 1945, removing the vast majority of troops from the region. The second underground was much more disjointed in its nature with weaker command structures. Yet because a framework was in place, because some respected officers and their men had survived the winter of 1944-45, the underground was to remain more organised in Lublin than in most other areas of Poland. Whilst the anti-communist underground was ultimately defeated, in Lublin it was to remain a sizeable threat to the communist regime until 1947.

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Polish military and civilian administrative units:

* As there is often no exact match between British and Polish administrative units, the following translations have been made with this in mind and should be taken as approximations. For example both *gmina* and *rejon* can be translated as district, however *obwód* seemed to better describe to an English-speaker the unit of a district.

Województwo – region, province

Powiat – County

Obwód – The literal translation in Polish is perimeter however in this thesis *obwód* has been translated to the English district

Gmina – The literal translation in Polish is community however in this thesis *gmina* has been translated to the English Parish

Rejon – This can be translated as area, district or beat. In this thesis, *rejon* is used to describe the smallest level of AK administration, and thus is translated as post or outpost.

Select glossary of terms used in this thesis

<u>Acronym</u>	<u>English name</u>	<u>Polish name</u>
AK	Home Army	<i>Armia Krajowa</i>
AL	People's Army	<i>Armia Ludowa</i>
BCh	Peasant Battalions	<i>Bataliony Chłopskie</i>
BiP	Bureau of Information and Propaganda	<i>Biuro Informacji i propaganda</i>
"Kedyw"	Special Operations Directorate	<i>Kierownictwo Dywersji</i>
MO	Citizen's Militia	<i>Milicja Obywatelska</i>
NOW	National Military Organisation	<i>Narodowa Organizacja Wojskowa</i>
NSZ	National Armed Forces	<i>Narodowe Siły Zbrojne</i>
PKWN	Polish Committee of National Liberation	<i>Polski Komitet Wyzwolenia Narodowego</i>
PPR	Polish Socialist Party	<i>Polska Partia Robotnicza</i>
RBP	Department of Public Security	<i>Resort Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego</i>
RJN	Council of National Unity	<i>Rada Jedności Narodowej</i>
SL	Peasant Party	<i>Stronictwo Ludowe</i>
SP	Labour Party	<i>Stronictwo Pracy</i>
SZP	The Polish Victory Service	<i>Służba Zwycięstwu Polski</i>
TRJN	Provisional Government of National unity	<i>Tymczasowy Rząd Jedności Narodowej</i>
UB	Security Office	<i>Urząd Bezpieczeństwa</i>
WP	Polish Army	<i>Wojsko Polskie</i>
WW	Internal Army	<i>Wojska Wewnętrzne</i>
ZWZ	Union of Armed Combat	<i>Związek Walki Zbrojnej</i>

The existing Historiography

The topic of this thesis, namely the study of the Polish Home Army (*Armia Krajowa* or AK) in the Lublin region (*Lubelszczyzna*) during the Second World War is one that has been long overdue. The English language histories of Poland are still relatively few in number even though the Second World War in Poland is one of the most heavily researched topics of modern central European history. Existing histories in the main focus on two elements of the wartime experience of Poland. In English there is quite rightly no dearth of material on the Holocaust. Whilst the other area of research into Poland's wartime experience has focused primarily on Warsaw and in particular in the efforts made by the AK during the ultimately fruitless Warsaw Uprising of 1944. These two events, the Holocaust and the Warsaw Uprising, were perhaps the two most emblematic and horrific events in Poland's war. They are symbols of the horrific nature of the rule of the General-Government, the occupying administration established by the Nazis, and the horrors of the Nazi occupation, yet they are not the full story. As with the story of the Second World War in general, until relatively recently and the fall of the Iron Curtain, the war was often represented as a war between the good of the west (the democratic Anglo-Saxon powers) and the evil of Nazism. Both the Holocaust and the Warsaw Uprising were symbols of the evil of Nazi power, and so both have been traditionally given far more coverage in the west than other aspects of Poland's war. To many casual observers and even to many students of history in the west, the story of Poland during the Second World War is one of concentration camps and the failure in Warsaw. This is partly due to the relative lack of interest in the experience of Poland, as compared to Russia or the Soviet Union, with the result that for much of the post-war period English language historiography has been led in both Britain and America by Polish émigrés.

There is no shortage of post war Soviet accounts of the war in Poland, or rather as their war passed through Poland. These all put forward a very similar, dialectically correct, version of the war. Marshalls Zhukov, *The*

Memoirs of Marshall Zhukov (London 1969), Konev, *The Fall of Berlin* (MacGibbon 1967), Chuikov and Rokossovskii, *A Soldiers Duty* (Moscow 1970), all recorded their accounts of the battle through Poland within thirty years of the war ending, and all were predictably dismissive or scathing about the Warsaw Uprising and the AK in general. The only mention they make to the force that helped them to clear *Lubelszczyzna* of the *Wehrmacht* in July 1944 is often along the lines of how unhelpful and aggressive the AK forces were towards them. In all of these Soviet accounts it is clear that the AK had to be seen as reactionary, and therefore fascist. Being 'the enemy' they could not have helped at any stage and they could not be given any credit for the liberation of Poland. What these accounts do help to provide, however, is an insight into the direction and speed of advance of the Red Army through Poland in the last years of the Second World War. This Soviet stance was mirrored by the historiography in Poland during the Stalinist period, in which the AK was dismissed as the reactionary force that was responsible for the deaths of so many of its countrymen in Warsaw.

For decades, research on the Polish Underground State was restricted both in Poland and abroad, largely because the communist People's Republic of Poland did not wish to acknowledge the role of non-communist resistance. Therefore, during the first post-war Stalinist years, efforts to explore this topic were regarded as both illegal and dangerous. At best, the communist state promoted the view that the non-communist resistance movement was marginal, while the communist movement (*Armia Ludowa* or AL) was of primary importance; in fact, the opposite was true. In the aftermath of the war, from their permanent exile in London, some of the survivors of the failed Warsaw Uprising attempted to battle this by publishing their accounts of what had happened. Tadeusz Bór-Komorowski's *Secret Army* (1951) provided an excellent account of the overall structure of the AK as well as providing an invaluable insight into the command's thinking in the days leading up to the Uprising. Equally, whilst *In Allied London; The memoirs of Count Raczynski* (1962) provides an overview of the thinking of the Polish Government-in-Exile in London, Stanislaw Mikołajczyk's work *The Rape of Poland; Pattern of Soviet aggression* (1948) put forward from the viewpoint of a senior member of the Government-in-Exile, the true

extent of Soviet intransigence during the Warsaw Uprising and afterwards. All of these books were published within twenty years of the war and represent an invaluable source for anyone attempting to understand the nature of the underground state which the AK succeeded in establishing. Komorowski's account was particularly important as it represented an attempt to right the record of the AK in the face of the pro-Soviet lobby that had characterized the Warsaw Uprising as merely an attempt by reactionary fools to pervert the people's will and install a reactionary regime in the capital. At the time of publishing, however, the power of these books was by and large lost amongst a barrage of Soviet and communist literature on the war. Undeterred, the émigré community in London and America continued to publish their accounts of the Polish war, in particular the invaluable *Documents on Polish-Soviet relations 1939-45 volumes I and II* (1967); this comprehensive collection is still an important starting point for any English speaker starting a study of the underground. The importance of émigré publishing is highlighted when one considers that the absence of research by Polish scholars, along with obstacles presented to foreign scholars seeking access to source material in communist Poland, contributed to a situation in which there was virtually no discussion of one of Europe's largest resistance movements for many years.

It was only during the 1980s that the Communist regime in Poland began to moderate its control over the historiography of the AK and allowed official publishing of some important books. This was to lead to a schizophrenic attitude within Poland towards the AK in which Polish historians such as Mańkowski in Lublin were more or less unable to discuss the AK in terms of official scientific discourse whilst simultaneously being able to debate privately on the importance of such things as the Zamość uprising in 1942. One such example of the limitations of this time is Eugeniusz Duraczyński's *Między Londynem a Warszawą* (1986). As the title suggests, the book focuses on the links between the Government-in-Exile and the role of the Delegate, as well as the Delegate's relations with the AK. The contention of this work is that from early 1943 onwards, Sikorski developed a program of consolidation and devoted time to the role of the Delegate. This work, therefore, touches clearly on themes developed in this thesis. It was able to explore the

problems between the Government-in-Exile and the AK as preparations for an uprising in the homeland began; preparations that were complicated by the death of Sikorski and the subsequent tension between Prime Minister Mikołajczyk and the Commander-in-Chief Sosnkowski. It is Duraczyński's contention that the start of Operation Tempest, "*Burza*", simply served to highlight these problems. Unfortunately, as with many books of this era, the publication date of this book had clearly marred the strength and scope of its discussion. While the story of disagreements in London about the role of the Delegate and the RJN are clearly told, the formation of the PKWN is discussed in terms acceptable to the climate in 1986 Poland. It is this fact that holds the book back, as much of the discussion of the period after the establishment of the PKWN reads very much like an official party line. Equally, in one of his earlier works, *Kontrowersje i konflikty* (1979), Duraczyński does briefly mention the Lublin region when giving the origins of the underground, and here there is some discussion of the controversy over who to appoint as Delegate. Here Duraczyński was able to show how this decision was partially the product of ongoing tension between two key figures in the Government-in-Exile, Sikorski and Sosnkowski.

Outside of Poland a series of studies on the establishment of communism were written during this period such as *Poland 1939-1947* (1986) by John Coutouvidis and John Reynolds, Krystyna Kersten's *The Establishment of Communist rule in Poland, 1943-48* (1991), or L. Swiąkowski's, *The Imported Communist revolution and the Civil War in Poland 1944-47* (1982). Each of these studies reflects the limitations put on historians by the communist administration, in terms of access to key archival material. They, therefore, focus either on the high level diplomacy of the period, or on the establishment of the Polish Committee of National Liberation (PKWN) by the communists and its attempts to gain popularity with the people. They provide a discussion of the installation of the PKWN and the resulting arrests of the AK in the area, but their focus is the experience of the whole of the country. Charting the establishment of communist Poland and challenging the notion of it being a truly 'popular' regime, they tend to look at the AK in *Lubelszczyzna* through the prism of arrests and do not provide a study of the organization that was fighting against the installation of communism. They move the narrative beyond the confines of bitter post

war recriminations, but because of the lack of access to key archival material, their conclusions on the activities of the AK were necessarily light. Naturally, their brief focus on Lublin during the year of 1944 does not truly expand our knowledge about the AK in the area. The more detailed English language studies from this period mostly focus on the Warsaw Uprising. Amongst the most important, Joanna Hansen's *The Civilian Population and the Warsaw Uprising of 1944* (1982), provided a sound study of the failed uprising and catalogued the experiences of the combatants and the civilians caught up in the battle.

Access to new archival materials has meant that for the first time, detailed studies of both the AK in Poland and the Government-in-Exile have been written. Both Eugeniusz Duraczyński's *Rząd Polski na Uchodźstwie, 1939-45* (1993) and Maria Pestowska's *Uchodźcze Paje* (1991) primarily explore the records of the Government-in-Exile to produce detailed studies of the tensions within that body. There is exhaustive coverage of the disagreement between Sikorski and his ministers, exploring issues such as the pre-war heritage of *Sanacja* and opposition parties and relations with the host country, mostly Britain. One of the central themes of these works is the concept that Sikorski's willingness to engage with the Soviet Union was central to the disputes within the Government-in-Exile. This was behind their first major crisis when the Government moved to London in the summer of 1940; a crisis which put Sikorski at loggerheads with the President, and ended in a compromise brokered by Sosnkowski.

Thereafter, almost any issue could revive the latent antagonisms, and these studies chronicle such incidents as the reorganization of troop deployment, the confinement of troublesome forces on the Isle of Bute, and Sikorski's pursuing of a personal foreign policy while on regular trips to Canada and the United States. The issue came to a head with the establishing of diplomatic relations between Poland and the Soviet Union in July 1941 and Sikorski's subsequent visit to Stalin in December. The ministerial crisis provoked, including Sosnkowski's resignation, and the changes in the National Council are explored at length. Thereafter, it is argued that such issues as the fate of the Anders Army and the discovery of the Katyn massacre was to mean that the issue of Polish-Soviet relations would never go away. Of the two, Pestkowska's *Uchodźcze Pasje* sees tension between

Sikorski and Sosnkowski as a constant theme. Yet, links with the homeland are only touched on in these studies, however. One work from the immediate post-communist period that addresses the issue of the homeland is Jerzy Paśnik's *Prawny Status Delegata Rządu na Kraj, 1940-45* (1991) which focuses specifically on the role of the Delegate. It sees the period 1941-2 as essentially preparatory, but does not avoid detailed consideration of the concerns of the political parties at home to the powers the Delegate claimed. The role of the Delegate during Operation Tempest, "Burza", other actions during spring and early summer 1944, as well as the Warsaw Uprising and the clash with the new communist authorities are analysed in detail.

Magdalena Hułas in her work, *Goście czy Intruzi? Rząd polski na uchodźstwie wrzesień 1939 – lipiec 1943* (1996), takes a rather different approach. Rather than being a chronological narrative, it explores themes. One theme – arguments on the composition of the government – involved many of the key discussions covered in both Duraczyński's *Kontrowersje* and Pestkowska's *Uchodźcze*. Whilst a great deal of detail is devoted to the crisis of the summer of 1941, for the author, the height of the crisis was early 1943 when the Soviet Union made clear in Stalin's statement of 1st March that the question of borders could no longer be avoided and that the Curzon Line was the Soviet Union's preferred option. Some of the other themes of the book do allow limited discussion of relations with the homeland. In the "structure and organisation" section, the work of the KSK is discussed, with some references to Sosnkowski's gradual ousting by the pro-Sikorski Kot. This section also discusses the work of the Delegate, but only briefly and rather schematically. The "Functioning" section also provides an opportunity to discuss contacts between the Government-in-Exile and its forces in Poland, the use of couriers, contact points, radio contacts and the role of *Radio Swiat*. Again this is rather summary in form, with discussion centring not on what was happening in Poland but meetings between Kot and the British Special Operations Executive (SOE).

In English there has been a similar evolution in the historiography of the Government-in-Exile and the AK. The Polish historian, Marek Ney-Krwawicz published his *The Polish Home Army* in 2001, which whilst

primarily being an analytical study of the working of the AK helped to provide a detailed look at the organisational structure of the AK as a whole. This reflected a trend in Poland in which several studies which limited themselves to attempting to chart the structure of the AK were published. Studies in Lublin such as Jerzy Józwiakowski's *Armia Krajowa na Zamojszczyźnie* (2007) and Caban's *Oddziały Partyzanckie i samoobrony obwodu AK Tomaszów Lubelski* (2000) have been good at establishing an empirical framework, but they are much weaker on interpretation. Such works are very well researched but they are primarily about presenting the documentary evidence in a more coherent manner. Ney-Krwawicz's English language work was written very much with the notion that it was to introduce or to update an English speaking audience to the advances being made amongst the Polish archives. In this he is not alone, and even Norman Davies in his well researched *Uprising 44: the battle for Warsaw* (2003), attempted this type of 'introductory history approach' to the AK.

One of the major British historians to have gone significantly beyond this has been Anita Prażmowska who has been able to link in the politics of the Government-in-Exile with its followers on the ground in Poland. In doing this she has provided a bridge between the post 1989 work of Polish historians and the historiography of the English speaking world. In *Britain and Poland 1939-1943; the betrayed ally* (1995) she was able to relate the expectations of the Polish Government-in-Exile to the realities of allied policy, thus building on the arguments and research of Polish historians such as Duraczyński. Of particular importance to the study of the AK is Prażmowska's *Civil War in Poland 1942-1948* (2004) which is the most up to date study of the AK in English. Prażmowska focuses on the split within the Polish populace during the period of the Civil War, and in doing so reveals much about the nature of the AK and its relations with both those groups allied to it such as the Peasant Battalions (BCh) formed by the Polish Peasant Party, or its Polish communist enemies. In such arguments there has been a clear move away from the discourse of the early 1990s which had often sought to stress the weakness of communist support as opposed to the weaknesses within the Government-in-Exile's support.

From the early 1960s, mirroring a slowly and cautiously developing trend across Poland, both of Lublin's Universities, the Catholic University and Marie Curie University (UMCS) became involved in serious research on the topic of the AK. In particular, Zygmunt Mańkowski and Ireneusz Caban were the first locally based historians to look into the activities of the independence underground in any great detail. Any serious study of the underground in *Lubelszczyzna* must still begin with Mańkowski and Caban's *ZWZ i AK Okręgu Lubelskim 1939-1944* (1971). Even though this book was researched during the communist period and is more than thirty years old, it was the first study to provide a template of underground activities. This work, using documentation that is now mostly in the Lublin City archive, is a general study that for the first time exposed the size and organisation of the AK in *Lubelszczyzna*. It was part of a growing trend in the historiography in Poland that started in the 1970s but grew in the 1980s. This trend tolerated 'independentist' historians interested in the wartime struggle for Poland's independence. Yet such historians had to be happy working on the fringes of the profession and mostly confined themselves to reconstructing the activities of the AK underground without fully commenting on its scale and importance. No access was available then to communist archives, so the work only covers the period up until Operation Tempest, "*Burza*", in July 1944. Yet the work is still a touchstone for all subsequent studies of the AK in *Lubelszczyzna*. In addition to this work, both historians have been prolific writers on the independence underground as a whole in *Lubelszczyzna*. In 1962 and 1964 Mańkowski along with Jerzy Markiewicz, and Jan Naumiuk, produced studies on the area's Peasant Party underground the BCh, most notably *Bataliony chłopskie na Lubelszczyźnie; 1940-1944*, (1962). This study again provided a sound and well-researched version of the activities of this force during the German occupation. However, all such works were essentially studies of the underground's role in the fight against the Nazis and therefore they were able to pass communist censorship. Such studies raised awareness of the extent of the AK's activities but because of the constraints of the period they were unable to construct a narrative on AK-communist relations.

Since the fall of the communist regime in 1989 work on the AK and their destruction by the Soviet Union and PKWN has literally exploded. The many blanks in Poland's war time experience captured the collective imagination of Poles in the first decade after communism's fall. Of the many delicate issues that had been largely ignored prior to 1989, the destruction of the AK was probably one of the most important and the early 1990s were witness to a glut of new works focusing on the contribution of the Polish non-communist underground. As already discussed, this phenomenon was apparent at the national level, but it was also a process that was to be replicated throughout Poland at a regional level. In this process Lublin was not exceptional. Caban's work of 1996, *Okręg Armii Krajowej Lublin*, was in effect an update of his work with Mańkowski from 1972 by utilising new-found access to communist sources. In this book Caban was able to take the AK story in the region into the period of the Soviet occupation. This work, whilst not being detailed on the Soviet period, was important in so far as it provides a sense of continuity from the German to Soviet periods. In addition, Caban's work of 1995, *Ludzie Lubelskiego Okręgu Armii Krajowej*, was a study of the backgrounds of many of the men and women who were involved in the upper levels of the conspiracy during the 1940s. These two books, in addition to Caban and Mańkowski's work of 1971 really provide the framework for any study of the region's underground. Building on this framework other historians have begun to expand our knowledge of the independence underground in the Lublin region. For example, a series of studies of AK inspectorates in *Lubelszczyzna* were undertaken in the 1990s. Amongst this number, of particular note is J. Kopiński's *Inspektorat Radzyń AK-WiN 1944-56* (1998). Anna Kister added to this increasing knowledge of the underground's activities in the region by publishing her work on the activities of the command in *Lubelszczyzna, Komenda Okręgu Lublin; Armii Krajowej w 1944 roku*, (2000). This study was amongst the first to focus exclusively on the central command structure in Lublin during its most crucial year 1944 and Kister was able to successfully show that the AK in Lublin was able to remain functioning as a coherent entity throughout the whole of 1944, and not just up until the August of that year. Aside from Caban's work of 1996, Kister's study is the only one to focus in depth on the AK through into the communist period and utilises both AK documents and those of

the communist secret police (UB) from archives in Lublin. Yet as a study of the AK command it has a very narrow focus. There is yet to be an in depth study that focuses on the AK military organisation throughout 1944.

As a part of the national rehabilitation of the AK many different primary accounts of the war have been published during the last fifteen years. Some accounts are sensational in tone and reflected a post 1989 trend in some sections of Polish society to claim ownership of their past via clinging to a romanticised notion of the AK's fight against the 'evils' of the Soviet led take over. Other accounts, which were not intended for publication, are important. One of the later is most definitely the Diary of Zygmunt Klukowski. Klukowski, had been a Polish socialist, and soldier during the inter-war period. By the time of the Nazi occupation he had become the local doctor and AK underground information officer in the town of Szczebrzeszyn near Zamość. During the 1940s he faithfully kept a diary of the events in his isolated corner of the Lublin region. The results provide any would be historian of the *Lubelszczyzna* AK with a fascinating people's history, a window, and often a critical window, on the underground in the area. His diaries have been published in both Polish and English, but the translation is uneven in quality and accuracy. Where quoted in this thesis, I have attempted to use the most accurately translated passages from the English versions or used the Polish version. The most recent publication of his diaries in Polish was in 2007, *Zamojszczyzna 1944-1959*.

Of course, one of the most important developments in the post 1989 study of the AK in Poland has been the creation of the Institute of National Remembrance, *Instytut Pamięci Narodowej* (IPN). IPN was established in late 1998 by a special bill and it began its activities in July 2000. This new body, with large government funding was given a mission to research and to preserve the memory of losses suffered by the Polish nation during the Second World War. In line with this IPN has conducted (and still conducts) several projects on Poland's wartime experience. It has followed a broad spectrum of research, of which the Polish Underground State has been one of the most significant. This has meant that access to the archives of the Polish communist security forces has never been better. Part of IPN's role is to increase public understanding of their past, to help the victims of

communism to find out the fates of friends or relatives. As a part of this IPN Lublin currently employs some of the most able researchers on the topic of the destruction of the independence underground in the region, among them Sławomir Poleszak and Rafał Wnuk. During the last ten years IPN Lublin has continued to publish from their archive, both in the form of printed documents and research papers. Wnuk was responsible for publishing *Inspektorat Zamojski AK* (1996) along with one of the most valuable works on the arrests of the independence underground in *Lubelszczyzna; Lubelski Okręg AK DSZ i WiN 1944-1947* (2000). I am personally indebted to the help of the researchers at IPN Lublin, and in particular to Rafał Wnuk.

However, after the victory of the Right and Justice Party in the 2005 parliamentary and presidential elections, IPN was visibly subordinated to that party's politics. The new president of the Institute, Janusz Kurtyka as well as the new head of the Public Education Office, Jan Żaryn made little attempt to conceal their political preferences and this influenced the profile of the Institute's historical studies. In particular, as was shown at their 2007 regional conference in Lublin, IPN's research became weighted towards either a narrative of mainly nationalist and right wing underground groups or on the suffering and losses of ethnic Poles during the war and afterwards. This focus was apparent not only in written research but also in television programmes in which IPN researchers were used. The local television current affairs programme, *Panorama Lubelska*, was witness to a spate of such programmes which emphasised the personal role of local 'heroes' such as Zapora and their suffering at the hands of the communist security forces. By contrast, more controversial figures in the independence underground were often glossed over. After the defeat of the Right and Justice Party in the elections of 2007, the new liberal Prime Minister, Donald Tusk did not attempt to exert such control over the focus of IPN's research. Such attempts to control the historical discourse on the AK has equally had an impact on the study of other underground forces. Piotr Gontarczyk's *Polska Partia Robotnicza; Droga do władzy 1941-44* (2006) is a classic example of how the discourse on subjects such as the role of the communist underground and their relations with the AK is still polarised twenty years after the fall of the Iron Curtain. The counterpoint

to such works are sympathetic portrayals such as that espoused by Ryszard Nazarewicz in *Armii Ludowej dylematy i dramaty*(1998).

In addition to the existing secondary sources, for this thesis I have used archival materials from three main sources. Firstly, I have been able to make use of materials at the Polish Underground Study trust, in Ealing, London. This archive is an often underused resource, especially by English language historians. The archive is home to deciphered reports sent from the AK to the UK during the period of my study. The strength of utilising such materials lies in the fact that whilst ciphers from central command in Warsaw have been often gone over, the reports from regional centres such as Lublin are much less used. In particular, such reports offer a rich vein of evidence on the tactics and organisational state of the AK in the region of Lublin up until the last months of 1944. They therefore cover the crucial first six month period of the Soviet Red Armies presence in the region.

I was lucky enough to live and work in Lublin for two years and during my time there I was able to access two archives, the first of which was the Lublin City Archive. In this archive I was able to study both the regional AK and BCh's internal reports and communiqués during the last months of the German occupation. In such reports contained much new evidence about the planning for the Soviet Army and its arrival in the province and by studying this information it enabled me to highlight the strength and organisation of the regional AK and BCh in the spring and summer of 1944. When attempting to build on our current understanding of how the underground alliance worked in practice, access to such materials were of the utmost importance.

The third archival source was the IPN archive in Lublin. As already mentioned, I am indebted to several of the researchers at this archive as they were constantly helpful and supportive in my attempts to finish my thesis. The strength of the IPN archives lies in the fact that it is the home to the secret police (UB) files on the underground and its activities in the Lublin region in the crucial first year after the Red Army's arrival in the province. The filing system at this archive reflects the county by county structure of the UB and the files on the 'illegal underground movement'

have been split down into 'characteristic' files that outline the activities and characteristics of the underground in given counties. There are limitations to the empirical usefulness of these files as many were reordered by local historians from UMCS during a period between the late 1970s and early 1980s. Some files are simply an overview of the 'characteristics' of county level AK groups that were written during this period of 'reorganisation' thirty years after the fact. However, many of these files contain the original orders and communiqués of the AK and its successor organisations during 1945 and 1946 and they are therefore an invaluable source of information for historians attempting to gain a greater understanding of the activities of the underground in the province. They have enabled this thesis to track the moves of the Lublin AK command beyond August 1944. As is shown from the evidence in the Lublin IPN archive, the AK in Lublin did not simply fold after August 1944 and neither did it simply collapse into a myriad of tiny guerrilla groupings. As this thesis shows, the collapse was long and painful, and the anti-communist underground was to remain significant for over a year after the arrival of the Red Army. Access to this archive has been crucial, therefore, as it has enabled this thesis to chart the often painful dilemmas that faced and ultimately defeated the underground alliance of the Government-in-Exile in Lublin.

Between these three archival sources I have been able to construct a thesis that is unique in so far as it is a regional study of the Polish underground in English. It uses the idea of a local case study to re-examine some of the strategic dilemmas faced by the AK and explore alternative tactics that could have been followed.

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Introduction

September 1939- March 1944

Creating an underground state

Poland Fights

The Government-in-Exile and its supporters in Poland managed to create an underground army as an integral part of a functioning and well structured underground state. Within five years, the entire fabric of a government was formed in Nazi occupied Poland, an underground military, underground press, underground courts, and underground political institutions. This process was to be framed by the nature of the occupiers of Poland and it was a process that was to be uneven. Given the size and range of the forces operating in Poland throughout the war, the forces loyal to the Government-in-Exile had to attempt to unify as much of Polish society behind its banner as politically possible.

At the end of the September War, the access routes to Hungary and Romania had remained open in the middle of September long enough for 70-80,000 Polish troops to escape into exile.⁸ In anticipation of future Polish resistance on 27th September 1939 The Polish Victory Service, *Służba Zwycięstwu Polski* (SZP), was formed in order to provide an organisational umbrella for the new underground fight. It began as the result of separate initiatives from, firstly, Marshal Edward Śmigły-Rydz, the Commander in Chief of the Polish armed forces at the start of the war, and Major-General Michał Tokarzewski-Karaszewicz. It was to be, from its very inception, an extension of the exiled government in occupied Poland. The SZP was not only to wage an armed struggle against the occupiers but it was also to provide civilian centres of administration; namely the new

underground force in Poland would be both a civilian and military force, it would provide defence for the Polish people and government. ²

In the *Lubelszczyzna* region, a new branch of the SZP was created. What was to become the Lubelszczyzna SZP and then eventually the AK grew out of the Lublin Defence Committee, *Komitet Obrona Lublin* (KOL). This organisation was formed during the September War and many of the members of this organisation were to form the core of the underground struggle during the German occupation. At the time of the September war Senator Stefan Lelek, a judge at the Lublin court of appeal, led the KOL. ³ When Lublin fell to the Germans the role of the KOL was to change to that of an underground force. On 21st September the commander of the "Lublin" Army, General Tadeusz Piskor began the process of establishing an underground conspiracy in the city. The other fledgling underground force in the area was the White Eagle Organisation, *Organizacji Orła Białego* (OOB), which was commanded by Major Kazimierz Kierzkowski. On 27th Senator Lelek met with Kierzkowski to begin talks on creating a unified elected position of chairman and on creating a unified, administrative structure for the underground in the *Lubelszczyzna* area. By the middle of October this regional unit had established links to General Michał Tokarzewski-Karaszewicz and the central SZP command. ⁴



Stefan Lelek

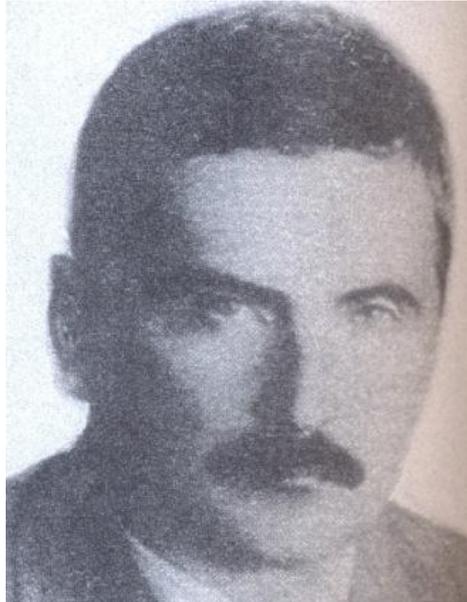
(I. Caban and Z. Mańkowski, Związek Walki Zbrojnej i Armia Krajowa w Okręgu Lubelskim 1939- 1944, Lublin 1971)



*The Commander of SZP from 26th September 1939 until 4th December 1939,
General Michał Tokarzewski, "Torwid".*

(J. Józwiakowski, Armia Krajowa na Zamojszczyźnie, Norbertinum Lublin 2007)

At the same time that the SZP was being formed in Poland, another resistance force was being forged abroad. On 13th November Polish military leaders in exile created the Union of Armed Combat, *Związek Walki Zbrojnej* (ZWZ), with the new force's leader being General Kazimierz Sosnkowski. The ZWZ remit was to stimulate national resistance through armed combat. Once liberation was achieved, it was to dissolve itself back into the regular armed forces. The ZWZ was to be a disciplined, hierarchical and uniformed military force. In fact, it was to be the only force in Poland with the right to wear Polish military uniform. Therefore, initially the Polish underground consisted of two forces one, the ZWZ, a military force, and the SZP a civilian-military organisation. In practice however even from the end of 1939 these two forces had a relatively close working partnership. On 4th December 1939 the Commander-in-Chief of all Polish armed forces, General Władysław Sikorski, sent the first organisational instructions for the underground to Colonel Stefan Rowecki, the Chief of Staff of the SZP High Command in Poland. From this point on the operating structures of the SZP and ZWZ became in effect one. ⁵



*The Commander of ZWZ-AK from 30th June 1940 until 30th June 1943,
General Stefan Rowecki, "Grot".*

(M. Ney-Krwawicz, The Polish Home Army 1939- 1945, PUMST 2001)

In *Lubelszczyzna* the process of unification and growth of the regional command mirrored the increased organisation of the force at a national and international level. From November 1939 commanders of SZP units were appointed and placed into their commands in the regions of *Lubelszczyzna*. However the first real increase in the size and organisation of the underground in *Lubelszczyzna* came during the spring of 1940. During this period the SZP extended its reach to the whole of the region and fine-tuned the organisation towards the 'military struggle' against the occupiers. From July 1940, Tadeusz Pełczyński headed the SZP in *Lubelszczyzna*. Subsequent leaders of the government's military forces in *Lubelszczyzna* under the German occupation were Ludwik Bittner, 1st August 1941 - January 1943, and Kazimierz Tumidajski, from January 1943 until his arrest by the Soviets in August 1944. ⁶

The message of these developments was clear: in exile, and in the face of defeat, the Polish freedom fight would carry on. In these events lay the seeds of the future Home Army. The underground state that was to emerge by 1944 was composed of three main strands. The ZWZ-AK was the official army of the underground state and the only force that was recognised by the Government-in-Exile as a part of the Polish army, *Wojsko Polskie*. In

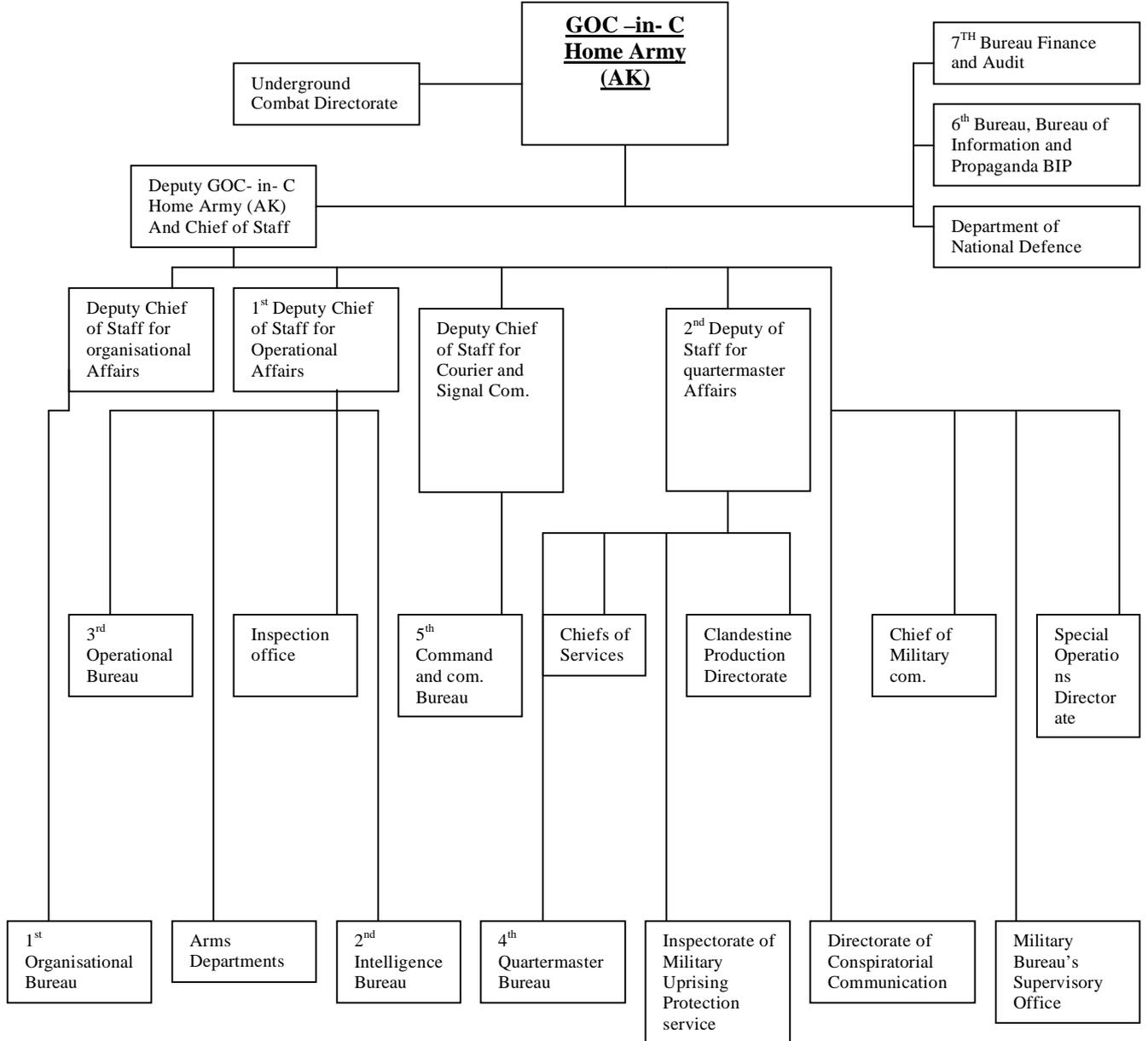
addition to this many of the most important Polish political parties were to be represented in the Council of National Unity, *Rada Jedności Narodowej* (RJN). Finally the third main strand of the underground state as it was to eventually emerge was the administration apparatus the Government Delegate's office at home, *Delegatura Rządu RP na Kraj*.

The *Armia Krajowa*

As a vital part of the establishing of an underground loyal to the exiled government, the newly formed government in exile very quickly began to establish their links to the underground in Poland, firstly via runners who went across the continent from Gibraltar to the motherland, and then via daily wireless reports. From 1940 to 1944 the underground and its links to London were strengthened and refined. During this time the underground went from being a cadre to an underground army. However it must be stressed, that as was to be expected in such extreme operating circumstances, the AK was to always suffer from hazily defined allegiances with those operating on its fringes.

The use of the actual term Home Army dates mainly from a telegram that General Sikorski sent to the ZWZ Commander-in-Chief and to the government Delegate of the Polish Republic at Home on 3rd September 1941. In the telegram he repeatedly referred to the 'Military Organisation at Home' ⁷. From this point onwards General Rowecki, one of the recipients of the telegram, began using the term Armed Forces at Home to refer to forces under his command. On 14th February 1942 Sikorski officially merged the ZWZ with the SZP to create a unified underground army. The result became known as the *Armia Krajowa* or Home Army.

**The organisation of the Home Army (AK) General Headquarters by the
summer of 1944**

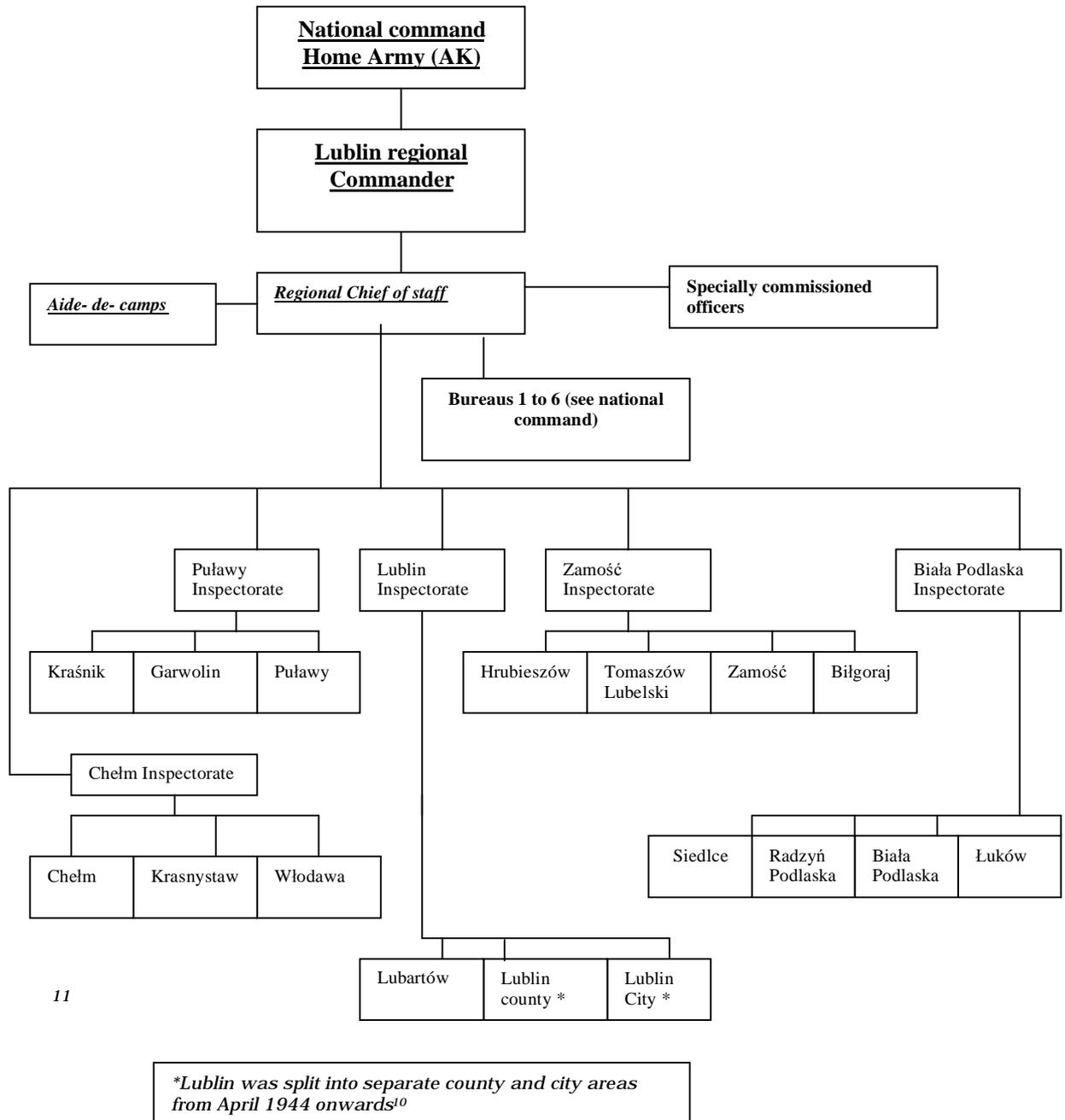


Key
Com.- Communications

The new combined force was run from this central command in Warsaw and by the time of its height in the spring of 1944 it was subdivided into sixteen regional branches, 89 inspectorates and 278 districts. Its sixteen regional branches were as follows: Pomerania, Poznan, Łódź, Silesia, Kielce, Krakow, Lublin, Lvov, Stanisław, Ternopol, Volhynia, Polesie, Białystok, Novogradok, Vilna and Warsaw. ⁸ By mid 1944 each district was in daily radio contact with the Polish high command in London and Warsaw. Each regional branch had a centrally appointed commander who along with his deputy, the regional Chief-of-Staff, would supervise and co ordinate the activities of the region. They received their orders directly from Warsaw and passed instructions down the chain to the inspectorates. Each region, such as Lublin had its own version of the central command set up that contained Bureaus I-VI. Below this level, the commanders of the inspectorates co-ordinated the activities of the Districts that formed the grass roots battalions and infantry units of the force. In turn, officers within the district command who received their orders from inspectorate command, were appointed to specialise in and supervise specific activities, such as sabotage, intelligence and diversions. The smallest administrative units were at village level where around three to four villages on average would make up a unit that was subordinate to the district commanders. ⁹

In the Lublin region the internal division of the command was, as in other areas, based on the pre-war administrative map of the area. By the spring of 1941, the regional command had been structured into three inspectorates: Inspectorate North, *Inspektorat Północ*; Inspectorate Centre, *Inspektorat Środek*; and Inspectorate South, *Inspektorat Południe*. As the organisation of the *Lubelszczyzna* underground grew and the number of recruits increased, so the command structure was enlarged accordingly. The original three-inspectorate structure was enlarged to four during the second half of 1941. The four Inspectorates were at this point: Puławy, Radzyń, Lublin and Zamość. In September 1942 this was then enlarged to five inspectorates. ¹⁰ From this point on, each one of the fourteen pre-war districts within the region matched one AK district. In addition to this, three to four districts made up an inspectorate and the commanders of these units as described above were directly sub-ordinate to the regional

commander. The outline of the regional command as it was to emerge in *Lubelszczyzna* follows:



It was clear that the ZWZ/AK was to be a highly organised and disciplined army, not merely a loose grouping of partisan bands. In fact within a relatively short time it had the numbers to back up this claim. By the time of the height of its membership and influence in mid 1944, the AK's ranks numbered at around 350,000. ¹² Within four years the Poles had created the largest and most organised underground network in Europe.



The above map shows the inspectorate boundaries of the ZWZ-AK-DSZ-WiN command in Lubelszczyzna (IPN Lublin)

Creating a unified AK in Lubelszczyzna

The government that had been created in Paris before the fall of France was an interesting mixture of the opposition parties of pre-war Poland. The original government of the Polish Second Republic had been interned in 1939 at the Romanian border town of Czernowiec and whilst this government had refused to consider broadening its political base before its internment, the government that was formed in Paris was a government of national unity. Yet tellingly, it was due to French pressure that the Polish Government-in-Exile had included all shades of Polish political opinion. Thus the government of national unity was to be composed of parties that had enjoyed popular support in the pre-war era but had remained out of power due to the *Sanacja* regime's undemocratic government bloc. The four main groupings in the new political alliance were the Peasant Party (PSL), the Socialist Party (PPS), the National Democrats (ND) and the Christian Democrat Labour Party (SP). The new government represented both in Poland and in the exiled community, a broad cross section of Polish society and Politics. Their united goal was the liberation of Poland, yet consensus was to rarely stretch beyond this broad aim. This was to be something that was to be a feature of the Government-in-Exile from its inception; Polish society and politics suffered from serious divisions, both the Government-in-Exile and the resistance which it helped to foster in Poland often reflected this fact. ¹³

Therefore, the forces of the underground in Poland, as an arm of the exiled government, were ultimately to reflect the nature of that government; it was a resistance coalition that represented a cross section of Polish politics and society. Throughout the period of the German occupation the original core of the underground attempted to create a coalition in the homeland that would reflect the government in London. This was a task that was to meet with varying levels of success. The AK after all was a military force that was manned by many of the pre war Polish Army and was therefore linked in the minds of many in the Peasant and Nationalist camps to the militarization of Poland during the late 1930s. This meant that for some Poles, the AK was initially a source of mistrust—both the National and Peasant parties had created their own functioning military undergrounds

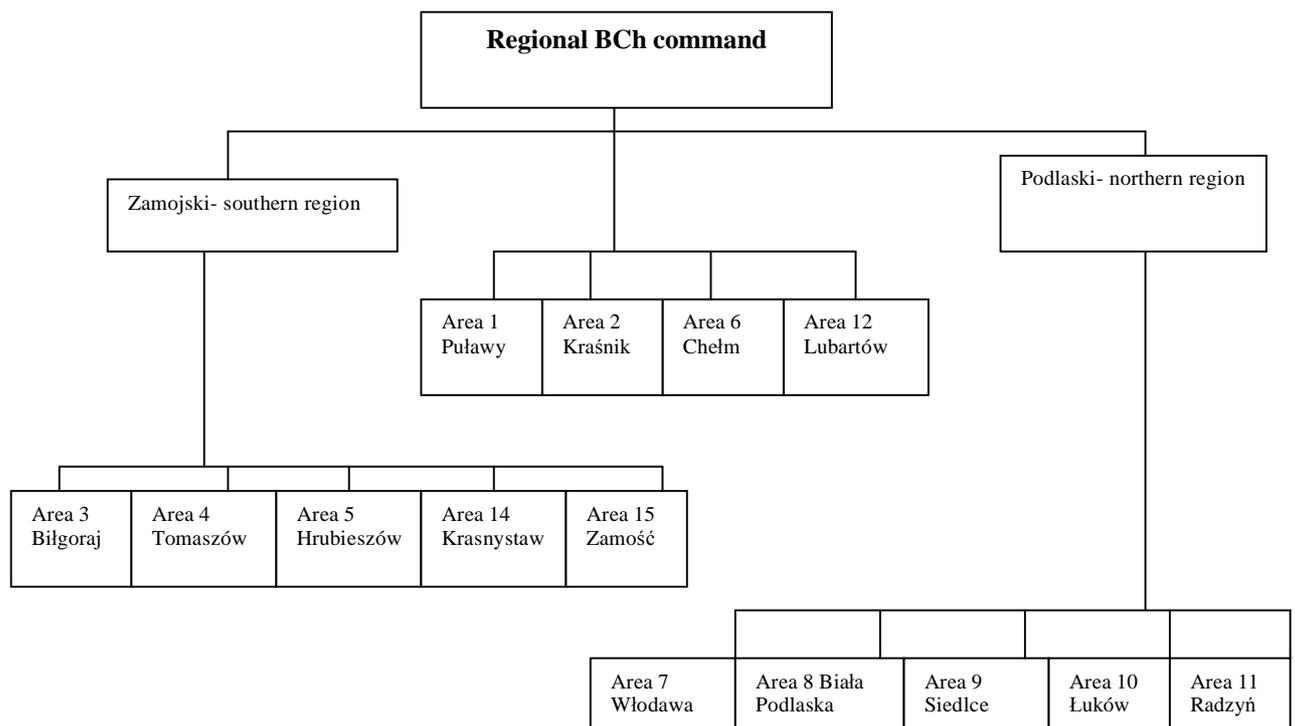
and they were not alone in this. The number of organisations which were originally operating independently of the SZP-ZWZ, what was to become the AK, in fact was huge: the total number of organisations operating in *Lubelszczyzna* is estimated by Rafał Wnuk as being over 100. In the attempt to construct a form of unified 'front' it was necessary for the forces of the SZP-ZWZ/AK in *Lubelszczyzna* to work with as many of these other groups as politically possible. This was eventually to mean that all sizeable non-communist groups that were fighting for an independent Poland were brought mostly within the AK.

In particular, the largest, most influential group outside of the AK, the Peasant Battalions, *Bataliony Chłopskie* (BCh) were amongst one of the most important groupings to be brought under the AK umbrella. In addition to this the *Lubelszczyzna* AK worked with and absorbed the following groupings: *Komende Obronców* (KOP), *Organizacje Wojskowa* (OW), *Organizacje Orla Białego* (OOB), *Związek Czymu Zbrojnego* (ZCZ), *Polska Organizacje Zbrojne* (POZ), *Konfederacje Zbrojna* (KZ), and the *Konsolidacje Longinusów Organizacje Niepodległościowych* (KPN). All of these forces were eventually brought under the AK banner by the local command to form larger more uniform units.¹⁴ However the number of underground networks initially operating in the region varied from area to area, for example in Lublin the KOP was the initial dominant force in the underground but it was only one of several underground groupings operating in the area before integration. However, in other districts such as Tomaszów Lubelski, there were only a small percentage of people who started the underground conspiracy in the ranks of an organisation other than the ZWZ.¹⁵

This process of integration was often pushed by a myriad of different factors. It should not be seen as a simple case of organisations being absorbed evenly into a government led force, some forces were never effectively merged into the *Lubelszczyzna* AK's ranks whilst others joined the AK only after German actions had weakened their ability to act independently. For example, during 1940-41 mass arrests of KOP members by the Germans meant that the structure of this force was massively undermined. As a result, the KOP effectively ceased to have a

coherent operating structure and effectively disappeared by 1943. A large part of the forces that had been a part of the KOP went into the ZWZ-AK, fold but other parts of the KOP moved into groupings such as the Nationalist underground, NOW, in Włodawa, POZ in Chełm or the military organisation “*Unia*” in Lublin. Units of the POZ were joined to the AK during the second half of 1942, whilst “*Unia*” units were integrated during the spring of 1943. All of the aforementioned forces were often localised to a few districts of *Lubelszczyzna*. For example when “*Unia*” was integrated the force provided an additional 1000 members to the ranks of the local AK. Yet this force had been operating since 1940 only in the central districts of the region. ¹⁶ In contrast to this the ZWZ-AK was able to integrate forces that were operating throughout the region such as ZCZ. ¹⁷

Nationally, perhaps the bulk of the AK's manpower came from its sometimes-uneasy alliance with the BCh, the military wing of the Peasant Party. Given the rural nature of much of Poland, the peasants made up the largest part of the population and their support was crucial for the AK. This was especially so in *Lubelszczyzna*, which was an overwhelmingly rural province, and which was to become home to one of the largest regional branches of the BCh. The history and organisation of this force was quite similar to that of the AK. From September 1940 onwards peasant military bands had started to form throughout occupied Poland and by 1941 they had created a nationwide underground force. By the end of 1942 the BCh had organised a command structure in all of the districts of *Lubelszczyzna*. This region was to become Region IV of the national organisation. Its structure was to become very similar to that of the AK with commands divided and sub-divided equally throughout the country. In *Lubelszczyzna* the BCh as it was to emerge took the following structure:



Within each of these areas BCh units were split down into tactical units, territorial units, special units and forest partisan units. Like the AK, BCh units played a large part in actions against the German authority's deportations of Poles from the south of the province during 1942-43. After this point, from 1943-44 BCh tactical units remained but territorial units were changed into units of the *Panstwowy Korpus Bezpieczeństwa* (PKB), and *Straż Samorządowa*, which were now directly subordinated to the *Delegatura* to act as police forces in the future. The remaining units were formed into the *Ludowa Straż Bezpieczeństwa*, which would act as a security force. ¹⁸

The AK estimated that at the beginning of 1944, BCh total strength nationally was around 50,000 men, ¹⁹ with the bulk of this number operating in the Lublin, Warsaw, Krakow and Radom regions. The BCh was officially incorporated into the AK by the beginning of 1944, however, some BCh bands were to remain outside the AK command structure, fighting their own private war against Ukrainian nationalists, Soviet partisans and Polish communists. It is important to remember that Poland, like many other eastern European societies experienced a large

cultural divide between its town and country folk. Rural Poland was very much a subculture of its own, and the traditional rural suspicion towards the ruling classes, the towns, and vice versa, had a large part to play. In this respect the experiences of the Lublin AK were not unique. So it must be emphasised that whilst the BCh contributed around 12,000 men to the ranks of the AK in the Lublin region, the integration of these two forces was to remain very much at a surface level in many areas. ²⁰

The process of integration was complicated therefore by several factors. Perhaps first above all in Lublin was the fact that the Piłsudski *coup d'etat* and subsequent militarization of Polish political life in the 1930s had meant that many of the main political parties and the people that they represented had been marginalized. Therefore, there existed even before the war an often-considerable antipathy to the 'officer class' that had been at the forefront of this process. In regions such as Lublin, where the AK had a considerable officer core, this antipathy was often directed against them - certain sections of the peasantry were determined that the military were not to deny them political power in the new Poland as they had in the old. This was especially true of members of the Peasant Party, *Stronnictwo Ludowe* (SL). The SL was consistently suspicious of the AK and its members were to withhold their arms and resources even after integration.

These suspicions in the main were exasperated by the AK's refusal to consistently share their weapons' stash with the BCh. This was to prove to be a running sore throughout the war. The perception that the AK had more weapons than they needed was a common one, and it was often interpreted that the AK were withholding weapons for Political reasons. Rumours went around the countryside that the AK had huge stashes of weapons hidden from 1939 and that these had now been added to by large allied air-drops. Many peasants therefore felt that the AK command was too representative of the old *Sanacja* hierarchy and believed that to retain a degree of autonomy for their units would guarantee a stronger peasant voice in the future of Poland. ²¹ Such ideas were typical of the peasant movement, if indeed it can be referred to as such at a local level. Many peasants had joined local bands in order to defend their villages and their homes from attack. The rationale for fighting was often, therefore, down to

parochial considerations; in such a situation it was to be expected that the AK's attempt to weld such men into a unified army produced uneven results to say the least.

Therefore, in some areas of the province the integration was successful and in other areas it was decidedly limited. One area in which the BCh integration was successful was in Lubartów, in the north of Lublin inspectorate. In this area during the first years of the occupation the National Party's underground had been the largest grouping, with a strong SL presence in the parishes of Michów, Tarło and Łuck. The BCh in the region had been established in 1940, whilst the AK didn't start to effectively organise itself until the second half of 1943. This meant that when the AK began its development it was being formed at the same time as the BCh and, as a result, the two had a close operating relationship from the beginning. The integration of the BCh began in the second half of 1943 and by June 1944 the staffs of the AK and BCh were fully integrated in Lubartów. The region's deputy commander, Aleksander Fil, "Foch", was from the BCh and in most of the posts of Lubartów the rank of assistant commander was ultimately to be filled by BCh officers - in post IV Jan Jarmoszuk, "Ryś" of the BCh was the assistant commander, as was Józef Białek, "Wiarus", of post III. ²²



This picture shows the meeting of the Zamość district AK and BCh on 25th May 1944. At this meeting Stanisław Książek, "Wyrwa", and Michał Polak, "Żelazny" signed the integration protocol.

(J. Józwiakowski, Armia Krajowa na Zamojszczyźnie, Norbertinum Lublin 2007)

However, this was not the case throughout the Lublin region. In *Lubelszczyzna* as in many parts of the country the SL, the socialist wing of the peasant movement, had a virtual monopoly on positions in the *Delegatura* and other non-military posts in the underground, and members of this group often adopted a negative stance to the AK. In addition to this, the BCh had more soldiers in certain areas of Lublin province by 1944 than the AK itself. This meant that when integration was attempted in *Lubelszczyzna*, the prevailing attitude amongst many in the BCh was that the AK was a competing organisation.

The argument over officer appointments, as I. Caban has pointed out, served to reinforce other problems. The key to this lay in the fact that the AK attempted, wherever possible to incorporate officers of other forces into the officer corps of the AK. However in a large portion of *Lubelszczyzna* the BCh lacked a strong officer corps of its own meaning that the local AK weren't willing to appoint many BCh men to positions of command. Despite BCh NCOs and other ranks willingness to fill officer posts, the AK was unwilling to appoint non-trained personnel to the rank of officers. Many of the BCh's small officer corps felt that they were entering into a union between equals and not entering into a commitment of subjugation. However if BCh officers met the grade then they were integrated into the AK's command structure; this was the case in Krasnystaw, Chełm and Zamość, in which BCh officers were functioning in positions of integrated command with the AK from as early as 22nd February 1944.

The reasoning behind the AK's officer policy lay in the fact that the AK represented the Polish Army in Poland, and forces such as the BCh were officially seen as militias that were allied to the army. Officers from the 'militias' were used wherever possible in the integrated command structure, but only when those officers had undergone the same military training as their AK equivalents. The problems of integration were often aggravated when large numbers of BCh soldiers were subjugated to smaller AK forces under such conditions, as was often the case in the far south-east. Viewed from a parochial perspective, resentment was not therefore surprising. Because of the friction between the AK command and BCh units in the area on this issue, AK soldiers began to swear the BCh's oath of allegiance

as a symbol of unity. But as I. Caban has pointed out, even after this, many in the BCh felt that it was a case of the AK joining the BCh and not of the BCh joining the AK. ²³

In districts such as Tomaszów Lubelski, in the far south of the region, the main driver for integration of the BCh and the AK was the Ukrainian-Polish conflict in this area. This was also true of the integration of these forces in Biłgoraj and a part of Zamość district. The operations of forces such as the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, *Ukrainska Povstanska Armia* (UPA) created unity in these areas, much more so than any unified political ideology; a sense of shared defence accelerated the integration. The result of this was that many underground posts in the south of Tomaszów Lubelski, such as Łukawica or Lipsko, were manned overwhelmingly by BCh men, who were still integrated into the command of the much smaller AK company “*Narol*”. Yet in areas such as the ones already mentioned, or in post IV of the Tomaszów Lubelski district, Krynice-Tarnawatka, this was to lead to bigger problems in the long run. It seemed to be the case that Polish unity was fine, as long as the numerically dominant force in the area was in charge. In post IV the vast majority of the underground was composed of BCh and as late as the 1st July 1944, the area commander, Tomasz Niedzialkowski, “*Tomasz*”, was reporting that: ‘*(There is) a difficult atmosphere during operations.*’ ²⁴ Indeed in some areas BCh units were not integrated into the local AK command until a matter of weeks before the Red Army arrived in the province.

The integration of NOW forces into the regional command in Lublin was no easier for the AK. The regional branch of the military arm of the National Party, *Narodowa Organizacja Wojskowa*, had been formed in 1939 and by 1942 this force was operating in all the districts of *Lubelszczyzna*. Yet this organisation was not strong throughout the region, for example in the Biłgoraj district NOW units never held influence outside of the Krzeszów parish. The districts in which NOW was operating in strength at the time of the integration were: Chełm, Włodawa, Lubartów, Lublin, Kraśnik and Hrubieszów. In addition to this NOW units were operating in the forests of the districts of Siedlce, Łuków and Biała Podlaska. ²⁵

In 1942, NOW forces signed a contract of integration within the local AK, which like the BCH's integration allowed NOW units to retain a degree of autonomy. However, the AK did not find it easy to reconcile the most nationalist elements within the NOW camp into its structure. Whilst the contract of integration that NOW units signed stipulated that NOW units were to remain whole and not be spilt up amongst AK units, this autonomy was insufficient for many. According to I. Caban, most of the NOW units in Chełm district did not integrate with the AK, and in addition to this a significant number of NOW forces in Janów Lubelski, Krasnystaw, Tomaszów Lubelski and Biłgoraj failed to merge.²⁶ This meant that when NOW units were incorporated into the *Lubelszczyzna* AK out of a membership of around 4,000 only 2,000 of that number joined the AK. Once integrated NOW commanders played a full role in the command structure of the AK in *Lubelszczyzna* with some becoming district commanders and deputy commanders.

NOW units that did not integrate into the AK joined a variety of factions but many of the remainder joined the National Armed Forces, *Narodowe Siły Zbrojne* (NSZ). Created in November 1942, the NSZ, was to become the extremist nationalist underground force in occupied Poland. This force was to act primarily as a destabilising influence in the region throughout this period and by 1944 was estimated to have around 4,700 members in *Lubelszczyzna*.²⁷ This force was at its strongest in *Lubelszczyzna* in the districts of Janów Lubelski, Łuków and Chełm. It was also operating in the districts of Lublin, Lubartów, Krasnystaw and Puławy, although not as strongly. Therefore, whilst small in relation to the rest of the underground, its force was sizable in local terms, and the AK command started negotiations with the NSZ to bring it within the overall umbrella of the regional command in June 1944. These negotiations were in part successful, but again only loosely brought what was in effect a far right organisation within the AK fold. This was to have significant implications later under the new Soviet administration, as it would add a certain fuel to the communist claim that the whole of the AK was fascist and reactionary.²⁸ However, in practice it was clear that the NSZ would not be acting as an integral part of the AK in *Lubelszczyzna*, resistance from many officers in the NSZ to subordinating themselves to the AK command saw to this. In

addition, due to the late timing of the negotiations it was not practical to achieve an actual merging of the two groups. This meant that the AK in *Lubelszczyzna* had the dubious honour of officially including a right-wing nationalist group in its organisational structure, and yet and at the same time have little direct control over it when the fight for liberation began.

Whilst officially still separate from the AK during the period from the end of 1943 to the beginning of 1944, the NSZ had launched punitive campaigns against communist and Ukrainian bands throughout the south-east of Poland. After the revelation of the massacre at Katyn, NSZ bands in effect involved themselves in a mini civil war with the Polish communist underground and this characterised the nature of events in *Lubelszczyzna* during spring 1944. In the south-west of the region, around Kraśnik and in the Janów Forest, the local NSZ were involved in a series of tit-for-tat killings with AL units, in particular with the infamous “*Cień*” unit. For example in the village of Monaki in response to an earlier communist attack, a NSZ unit killed the father of a local AL member “*Mewa*”. On 20th March 1944 soldiers under the command of captain “*Cich*” killed a radical local peasant who had been ‘co-operating’ with the PPR.²⁹ From the spring of 1944 onwards these anti-communist units were officially militias allied to the forces of the Government-in-Exile.

The development of the *Lubelszczyzna* AK

The AK in the Lublin region started partisan activities exceptionally early when compared to other AK regional commands. Yet, as the research of Zygmunt Mańkowski and I Caban shows in their study of the area’s underground, until 1943 the activities of the *Lubelszczyzna* AK were often half-hearted and many initiatives were to remain permanently in the developmental stage.³⁰ The main reason that the *Lubelszczyzna* AK was to become one of the AK’s largest command groups by 1944 was due to the nature of the brutality meted out by the province’s German occupiers. As part of the German administration’s implementation of *Generalplan Ost*, a large proportion of the region’s Polish population was displaced. Under this plan, the districts of Zamość, Tomaszów and Hrubieszów were to be made into bastions of ethnic German settlement in the east. The beautiful

Polish city of Zamość was renamed 'Himmlerstadt' in anticipation of the city's new, ethnically German future. Between November 1942 and August 1943 the German authorities displaced around 100,000 Poles from the Zamość area.³¹ The rapid and early growth of large partisan forces in the Lublin region can be directly linked to this action, and the response to it was virtually immediate, with new partisan groupings springing up from the grassroots level. This can be seen by the fact that already by the beginning of 1943 there were six partisan units operating in *Lubelszczyzna*. By the middle of the year, at the height of the deportations, this number had grown hugely to fourteen partisan units. By the year's end this number stood at seventeen units. Perhaps what is more telling is that the overwhelming number of these units were based in the Zamość inspectorate. In addition to this the geography of *Lubelszczyzna* helped to reinforce this precise concentration of partisans to the south and east of the region, as the area to the south of Zamość was very suited to this type of operation. To the south lay forests, rolling hills and moor-land, all perfect for hiding increasingly numerous underground units. There were other woods in the centre and north of the region such as the Parczew and Lubartów forests, but they were much smaller, and the areas surrounding them were not witness to mass deportations on the scale witnessed in Zamość, meaning that the development of the AK was much slower than in the south.



The Warsaw Company from the Zamość inspectorate presenting arms, summer 1943

(J. Józwiakowski, *Armia Krajowa na Zamojszczyźnie*, Norbertinum Lublin 2007)



Tactical units from Zamość district concentrating for operations, 15th August 1943

(J. Józwiakowski, Armia Krajowa na Zamojszczyźnie, Norbertinum Lublin 2007)

In *Lubelszczyzna* therefore, the growth of underground units was uneven. The table below provides a breakdown of the growth of partisan units and their Inspectorate of origin. It helps to show quite clearly how the exceptional circumstances in the Zamość inspectorate led to that area being home to the largest number of forces in the region. Indeed one of the worst effected areas of the ethnic conflict and deportations, the Tomaszów Lubelski district, had a huge 2,459 AK members in its ranks by as early as October 1943. Whereas most of the development of the Tomaszów AK took place during the turn of 1943-1944, it was still months earlier than the development of the AK in other areas, most of which had only organised 40-60% of their forces by the spring of 1944. ³² The table below excludes the 27th Division and other units whose origin was outside of the *Lubelszczyzna* region:

Table of the number of Partisan units in *Lubelszczyzna* and their
Inspectorate of origin

Inspectorate	1942	First half of 1943	Second half of 1943	1944	Total
Lublin	-	1	1	10	12
Chełm	-	2	1	7	10
Puławy	-	-	4	1	5
Radzyń	-	-	3	3	6
Zamość	2	13	8	14	37
Total	2	16	17	35	70

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As the above table shows, the German clearing of the south of *Lubelszczyzna* for settlement had a huge impact on the development of the AK in the area. It was also to mean that from the end of 1942 until the end of 1944, the bulk of the AK's support and manpower was heavily tilted towards the south of the province. It should also be remembered that it was in the east of the AK's Zamość inspectorate that the UPA started their operations during 1943. In the Chełm and Radzyń inspectorates, to the east and north of the city of Lublin, perhaps the development of the AK can be best described as showing more 'natural growth', i.e. steadily increasing support as the result of the German occupation and the approach of the front.

From September 1943 onwards, the AK operated what was in effect a three-tier force. The front tier included all soldiers in active units or units with distinctive functions i.e. sabotage, intelligence (BIP) communications. Part of such front tier forces were the "Kedyw" units. "Kedyw", an acronym for *Kierownictwo Dywersji* the Special Operations Directorate, were formed from existing organisations within the AK on 22nd January 1943. Initially these units were town-based, but as they grew in number they moved into the forests. Specifically "Kedyw" units, such as the "Zapora" unit in Puławy inspectorate, were responsible for active and passive sabotage and propaganda against the occupiers and collaborators. The second tier of the AK was the reserve force. Reserve forces were those

without specific orders or units that had been withdrawn from action. For example, once a unit had been discovered by the German authorities it would be “burned”, i.e. it would be dispersed or hidden to protect the remaining troops. Equally, reserves could be created if individuals or units were suffering from ill-health or fatigue. Finally, the third tier of the AK was for the suspended units, which, as the title suggests was composed of units that had been frozen by the regional command. For example, a unit could be suspended for not following orders, for failing to remain in contact with command, or for ill-discipline. This structure is important to remember when attempting to assess the AK’s manpower in *Lubelszczyzna*, as only a certain amount of its manpower was on the ‘front line’ at any one time. ³⁴

Protecting the population

Yet the plans on how to use and deploy these Homeland forces did not emerge from the thinking of a united Polish Government in London. As Maria Pestowska has pointed out, there were disagreements between Sikorski and his ministers from the beginnings of the Government-in-Exile, due to the pre-war heritage of *Sanacja*, opposition parties and relations with the host country, mostly Britain. Such disagreements were compounded by Sikorski’s willingness to engage with the Soviet Union and this was behind their first major crisis when the Government moved to London in the summer of 1940; a crisis which put Sikorski at loggerheads with the President, and ended in a compromise brokered by Sosnkowski. After these early and fundamental disagreements, any issue could revive the latent antagonisms, and the issue came to a head with the establishing of diplomatic relations between Poland and the Soviet Union in July 1941. This issue of how to deal with the Soviet Union was kept to the fore via the issues of the Anders Army and the discovery of the Katyn massacre. ³⁵ After the death of General Sikorski in 1943, the splits, already apparent in the Government-in-Exile, became worse as the key issue for the Poles, the question of where Poland’s eastern border would be set, remained an issue on which the Government-in-Exile and the Soviet Union fundamentally disagreed. ³⁶ With such issues creating a near constant rift between senior figures in the Government-in-Exile such as Sosnkowski and Mikołajczyk, the planning for the AK’s role in the liberation of the Homeland was

extremely contentious. As it became clearer that Poland would be liberated by the forces of the Soviet Union, the Government-in-exile became increasingly split on how this affected the role of its forces in Poland. Indeed, such divisions were not only unique to the Poles in London, the issue of relations with the Soviet Union was to compound tensions between the leadership in London and the leadership in Warsaw. ³⁷

The early disagreements between the Homeland forces and the Government-in-Exile were to become increasingly important as the Soviet Red Army moved into pre-war Polish territory in the middle of 1944. As the mixed results of the BCh and NOW integration had shown, the reality of the position of the AK was that it was the official army of a government that did not control its own territory and therefore could not mobilise its citizens. The AK was, therefore, in reality a *de facto* volunteer force. Likewise, the existence of the civilian branch of the underground, the *Delegatura*, enabled the Government-in-Exile to exercise at least a symbolic and moral authority over the population in Poland. By 1944, it was this body that was charged with the task of not only organising resistance, but of also making arrangements for the takeover of power after liberation. ³⁸ The rub lay in the fact that moral and symbolic authority could disappear after the expulsion of the Germans. Divisions at the top over the type of Poland that would emerge after liberation often mirrored divisions at grass roots level. Ultimately many people were only integrated into the Government-in-Exile led underground state because they shared one aim - the re-establishment of a free Poland. It is worth emphasising such problems, as during the Soviet occupation they were to become very important.

Whilst the policy of the Government-in-Exile was to an extent dictated by divisions within that body and by the pressures of allied politics, the AK and its tactics were shaped by both the orders of its divided leadership in London and by the methods of Poland's German occupiers; it had to defend its population whilst simultaneously preserving and expanding its manpower in the teeth of occupation. From 1943 onwards the German authorities were increasingly launching terror operations throughout the General-Government often in retaliation to the attacks of Polish

underground partisan groups. Unlike the communist AL, the AK often attempted to mask their acts of sabotage as accidents or mechanical failures. In addition partisan units and operations were kept to specific tasks, meaning that most of the time AK members were living in their home villages in readiness for given operations. The logic of this was clear; violent actions meant a huge and disproportionate response from the Germans on local Poles. As the government force, the AK could not be openly aggressive as it defeated its own purpose yet it had to act in order to protect its people and its legitimacy. In many senses the story of the AK in Lublin from 1943 until the Soviet entrance into the region is the story of how the AK struggled to follow its policy of limited action against forces over which it had little control.

In March 1944 Bór-Komorowski, the AK Commander-in-Chief issued, order No 116. It was an order that was to have an impact on both AK-Soviet relations in the Polish provinces and to sap the AK of vital manpower in the build up to liberation. This order, and the subsequent operations that followed it, highlight the unique position of the AK and the unique responsibilities that it was attempting to shoulder. Komorowski's order 116 stated that:

Robbery assaults, often accompanied by murders, are being perpetrated either by forest based Soviet partisan detachments or by ordinary gangs of robbers....I have instructed the regional and district commanders to resist the elements responsible for pillage, banditry or subversion, by force if need be. ³⁹

This order led to what became known as operation 'Swill', which was an aggressive action designed to protect the population from the excesses of banditry. The true intent of this order has long been a hot topic of debate amongst American historians. The Jewish American historian Joseph Tennenbaum amongst other post-war historians, saw order No 116 as an implicitly anti-Semitic order aimed primarily at the elimination of Jewish bandit brigades. The counter argument to this line of thought is, however, that the order was not aimed at any group in particular, that it was an attempt by the 'Polish authorities' to instil order in the countryside. The

order was issued as a response to increased criminal activities in the Polish countryside by numerous bandit gangs. In Bór's definition, 'bandits' were groups who were stealing from and crippling rural communities in order to survive. What with the heavy and exhaustive imposition of German food requisitions, the added imposition of such 'bandit' actions was creating extreme hardship for an already oppressed populace. Order No. 116 was a direct response to this.

In fact, the question of bandits and banditry is one of the most contentious issues in the study of the AK. According to the Dictionary a bandit is: 'A robber; especially, an outlaw who belongs to a gang.'⁴⁰ The problem with this definition is that it is open to wildly differing interpretations, this is especially so in the case of Poland during the period under study. Equally the usage of the term 'bandit' is often pejorative - it is used in a context in which those labelled as such are signalled out for violent reprisals in the name of the law. The problem with using this term during the period of study lies in the fact that there were many claimants to the title of law enforcer. Dependent on who was doing the labelling a 'bandit' could be an AK soldier, an AL soldier, a Soviet partisan or an UPA fighter. However, the use of the term by the AK is indicative of their role as the government military force. Irrespective of their political or ethnic composition as far as the AK was concerned 'bandit groups' had to be stopped, if the AK's claim to be a government agency was to be substantiated. Therefore, those groups and individuals that were acting in breach of the laws of this government were 'bandits' and were to be stopped. This was to lead to the AK taking on a great deal of responsibility in areas such as *Lubelszczyzna*.

It is instructive to look a little further at the composition of these 'bandit groups' targeted by the order. Aside from the Communist AL, there were many others who in order to survive had to steal from the very communities that they were claiming to defend. Some were Soviet soldiers who had escaped from their units or from German camps, alongside such men were Jewish escapees and Poles and Ukrainians who had been exiled from their communities. All such men needed food and shelter, something they could not afford and something which many Polish peasants were

loathed to give them. However some bands were merely thugs who as is often the case were taking advantage of their current situation to terrorise local communities. One such gang was led by “*Kielbasa*” (sausage). “*Kielbasa*” led a gang that terrorised a large area in the Lublin province throughout 1943 and 1944, stealing and burning homes and farms. Another group operating in the same region, as John Armstrong states, pretended to be part of the resistance even taking part in actions with Polish and Soviet partisans.⁴¹

This shows how complex the question of banditry was in Poland throughout the period of this study. Indeed, whilst the AK was able to supply themselves in terms of weapons and food without stealing from the local population, banditry was none the less a problem within some AK units during the German occupation. The AK, as a government agency that attempted to act as such, was able to deal with such incidents and to restrict their occurrences as much as possible. Operating within the underground was a functioning court structure that enforced the laws of the Polish Second Republic; equally AK soldiers were subject to the pre-war army code of discipline. This meant that discipline was maintained in the force, and when it was not, those in breach were punished. According to the research of Jarosław Kopiński, there were several cases of AK members engaging in what that force defined as banditry throughout the first years of the occupation in the Radzyń district of northern *Lubelszczyzna*. In *Lubelszczyzna*, the forest partisan units were ultimately responsible for eradicating banditry, yet they sometimes had to eliminate this problem from within their own units. For example, members of the post IV AK district Radzyń had been found operating in a Polish bandit group in the area. As a result they were court marshalled and shot. Another example was in the “*Zenon*” unit in which on two separate occasions, members of the unit were found stealing. The first time that these men were caught, they were flogged, the second time they were executed by firing squad in front of the rest of their unit. Similarly, in the “*Muller*” unit Stefan Lukaszewicz was executed in front of the other men of his unit for raping and murdering a Jewish woman. The effect of such hard responses to crime and criminality in the ranks of the AK meant that these forces were to keep banditry in their units to a minimum.⁴²

The question of Soviet partisan activity and order No. 116 raised issues which would impact on future Polish-Soviet relations. It is, a fine example of the fluctuating nature of the AK-Soviet relationship from the beginning of Soviet activity in Poland. John Armstrong in *The Polish Underground and the Jews: A reassessment*, quotes at some length AK reports of accounts of Soviet partisans fitting into the AK definition of 'bandits' as defined by Order No. 116:

On January 30 (1944) ...five Bolshevik saboteurs killed a farmer in the locality of Kozly.....

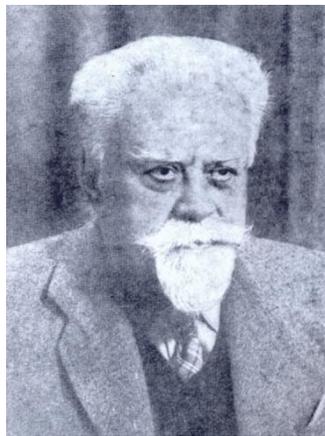
On the day of 2 February of this year, at 1.00 p.m., five Bolsheviks came riding on the two wagons into the locality of Korczowka and wanted to kill one farmer and his son, but they did not find them at home. So they completely burnt down their farm. ⁴³

Yet, there are also many reports of Soviet partisan bands fighting alongside AK detachments, such as that reported by Zygmunt Klukowski in the Józefów forest later in the year. What policy was the AK to take in the light of such actions by the ally of its allies? Order No. 116 was the response, therefore, to continued bandit type activity by Soviet partisan bands. Yet Bór-Komorowski, in his order of 20th November 1943 which specified the AK attitude towards Soviet forces as liberation approached, had clearly stated that:

In no case should Soviet partisan units be hampered in their fight against the Germans. Any fighting against Soviet units should be avoided. Units that have been involved in such incidents should be shifted to other places. Only acts of self defence are allowed. ⁴⁴

Thus the AK had clearly stated its official policy towards Soviet partisans and the Soviet forces in general almost six months prior to the issuing of Order No. 116. Yet, because of the nature of Soviet partisan activity, many of them could, potentially, become a target of Order No. 116. Clearly, the AK felt that it had the strength to enforce an order that committed them to effectively police the Polish countryside. They were taking steps to act as

the alternate administration that the government in London hoped they would become. From the start, this put the AK in a position of conflict with the often lawless behaviour of the Soviet partisans operating on Polish soil. Indeed, how else could the rightful government of Poland act in the face of such activity? Clearly Bór was mindful of giving the Soviets an excuse for a clamp down on the AK, and at this stage he was still committed to an attitude of openness towards them. However, if the AK were to maintain any pretence that it represented the government in waiting then they could not stand by and watch their population terrorised by the Soviets, Ukrainians and Germans.



Dr Zygmunt Klukowski

(Z. Klukowski, Diary from the Years of Occupation, 1939- 44, University of Illinois Press 1993)

Order No. 116 was symptomatic of a greater problem that the AK faced at this time, however. The attempt to control banditry in a war zone was a never-ending struggle. As soon as the AK had 'liquidated' one band, another would appear. As the front line got nearer, many Germans deserted into the woods swelling the problems for the AK. Perhaps the greatest effect of such orders, therefore, was to tie down a large percentage of the AK in anti-bandit activity - ultimately the AK in Lublin were to fight as much against the Ukrainian partisans and Polish communists as they were to fight the Germans. It is difficult to give numbers on this issue, but there are many reports and accounts of AK units in Polish rural areas which were, in effect, still fighting operations such as 'Swill' by the time the

Red Army arrived in July 1944. In fact, of the 350,000 ⁴⁵ members that the AK is reckoned to have had in July 1944, many were not active for a sustained period during the year. If inactive members are added to the ones still concerned with fighting 'Swill' type actions then the AK clearly faced a debilitating loss of potential manpower at a crucial moment.

This was a problem unique to the AK during the period 1943-45. As the one group that enjoyed enough cross level public support to legitimately claim to be the 'government' force, the AK had to care for its constituency. In the face of the harshest occupation in Polish history, the AK had to act against the various communist groups, and the UPA, which attacked and even wiped out entire Polish villages. Failure to act would mean a loss of legitimacy. However, over a sustained period this policing role could prove to be corrosive. The official policy of the AK was one of limited struggle, but this pragmatic approach was to be constantly challenged by events and groups beyond its control. This was the unenviable position in which the AK found itself in Lublin and across the east of Poland. The AK, whilst large, was still an underground force on the run from the Germans, with limited arms and limited supplies; and yet it had to launch military operations against other underground groups and against the occupying power often at the same time.

Preparing for the Red Army

Bór-Komorowski's order of 20th November 1943 not only addressed the question of Soviet partisans, it, perhaps more than any other set out to and in many senses helped to define the AK's official approach to the Soviets from November 1943 until September 1944 as the Red Army approached then entered Polish territory. As far as this study is concerned the part of the order worth closer attention is point 5.3:

We should play the role as hosts to the regular Soviet Army. The Polish commander who has taken part in the fight against the Germans and who therefore has the right to act as host, should meet the Soviet troops. Much more difficult conditions arise for the commanding officer and the Polish population where liberation from

the Germans is solely the result of Russian efforts. The local Polish commander jointly with the representative of the civil administration who will come out into the open should call on the commander of the Soviet troops and follow the wishes of the latter, keeping in mind that:

a) the severance of contacts with the Polish supreme authorities is only temporary and that the latter, not the Russians, remain the competent authorities...

b) All attempts to force Polish troops to join either the Soviet troops or Berling's units should be avoided ⁴⁶

This order represents the mixture of hope and suspicion that the AK High Command had towards the Soviet Union at this time. In October 1943 the Government-in-Exile had issued new instructions to the underground stating that it should be prepared for an insurrection against German forces. However, this insurrection should be attempted only at the point of German collapse. In these instructions it was rather confusingly stipulated that the insurrection was only to continue until the arrival of the Soviet Army. In the likely event that diplomatic relations had not been restored between the Government-in-Exile and the Soviet Union, the underground units were advised to return to their former role of being a force in hiding. Bór-Komorowski and the command in Warsaw felt that such an order was a recipe for disaster. His command, therefore, as the above quote shows, intended to address the problem of how to act towards the incoming Soviets. Bór-Komorowski felt that to go back underground would hand the political initiative, and a huge propaganda victory, over to the Soviets. In the event, Bór-Komorowski ignored his superiors in London and issued the above order. The decision to disclose AK units to Soviet forces, however, was not recognised by the Government in London until February 1944. From this point on the policy of disclosure became a key element in the AK's approach to the Soviets. ⁴⁷



General Tadeusz Komorowski, "Bór", Commander of the AK from 17th July 1943 until 2nd October 1944.

(M. Ney-Krwawicz, The Polish Home Army 1939-1945, PUMST 2001)

In November 1943, the calls to 'act as host' and to 'come out into the open' did not seem to be hopelessly naïve. They represented a clear attempt by the AK to work with, and not against the Soviets; they would welcome them and fight alongside them. The AK would not give the Soviet Union any excuse for repression. Perhaps this is the key point here: the AK/*Delegatura* would set up its administration and let the incoming Soviet forces pass through their territory. Equally the need to stipulate points a) and b) betray a suspicion of the Soviets. Even at this stage, the AK command felt it necessary to make clear that its forces remain under 'free Polish' command. The Command would not allow its forces to be absorbed into the Soviet dominated Berling Army. Perhaps the final observation to make is that this order committed the civilian branch of the underground to announce themselves to the Soviet Army. Clearly, the AK did not want any confusion as to who was the new governing force in Poland. They were the representatives of the Government-in-Exile they were the only true legitimate Polish Government.

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 - ²⁹ P. Gontarczyk, Polska Partia Robotnicza; Droga do władzy 1941- 1944, (Warsaw 2003) p. 336.
 - ³⁰ Mańkowski and Caban, Związek Walki, pp. 34- 35.
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 - ³⁴ Wnuk, Lubelski Okręg, pp. 17- 22.
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 - ³⁶ P. Żaron, Kierunek wschodni w strategii wojskowo-politycznej general Władysława Sikorskiego, (Warsaw 1988), p.233
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⁴¹ Armstrong, 'The Polish Underground', p. 264.

⁴² J. Kopiński, 'Problem bandytyzmu wśród żołnierzy AK-WiN Inspektoratu Rejonowego Radzyń Podlaski', Instytut Studiów Politycznych Polskiej Akademii Nauk- Problemy bandytyzmu w okupowanej Polsce w latach 1939- 1947, (Warsaw 2003), p. 141.

⁴³ Armstrong, 'The Polish Underground', p. 265.

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⁴⁵ J. Haestrop, European Resistance Movements 1939-1945; a Complete History, (Meckler 1981) p. 273.

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*Preparing for the Soviets: The last months
of the German occupation of
Lubelszczyzna, March 1944- July 1944*

The first months of 1944 were a period of organisational consolidation for the AK in Lublin. By the end of spring 1944, the Lublin AK was increasingly organized, well supplied and well trained. The greater strength that this process gave to the AK, both nationally and locally, meant that during this period the force was able to launch successful offensive actions, yet ultimately, the phase of operational consolidation was put into effect to prepare the regional AK for the liberation of the province. In the course of its preparation, the AK inevitably drew on the experience of the eastern territories where the AK had been used, marginalized and victimised by the Soviet Army. When it entered the region, the AK regional commanders who were to meet Soviet representatives had no idealistic illusions about the international brotherhood of communism. Communists had murdered their fellow Polish Army officers at Katyn and now they were arresting AK members to the east. In addition, antagonism towards the communists was reinforced by the Lublin AK's own confrontation with the communist AL. As a constant backdrop to this, from the spring onwards, preparations for liberation were still further complicated by the continued activities of the Ukrainians, which became a serious distraction. And none of this planning and development was happening in a vacuum, it was all being undertaken against the backdrop of the Nazi General-Government. Shortly before the Red Army arrived in the Lublin area, the Germans launched a series of anti-partisan operations. These operations were to bring out some of the tensions within the AK, especially regarding the arming of Peasant Battalions; this weakened its preparations for liberation.

This combination of events meant that the mood of the regional command was distinctly nervous. This would lead to the local AK command modifying the instructions of central command. A sense of the threat of communism creeping up on the province was clearly evident. The Red Army was operating on the soil of the old Polish Second Republic and the AL was operating in Lublin with increasing support from Soviet partisans, NKVD and Soviet regulars. This sense of unease was manifested by the fact that the regional commander, "*Marcin*", ordered that a shadow command should be created in case disclosure backfired. The events in Lublin were to be dictated both by orders from central command and by the experiences of the east.

Operational Consolidation

The increase in AK activity from spring 1944 onwards was in accordance with plans devised during the time of General Sikorski. The AK had laid out a clear and pragmatic process of escalation in their war with the Germans. This was to follow three stages: "*Mucha*", "*Burza*", and "*Powstanie*". The first stage, "*Mucha*" or "Fly", was to be a period of organisation, of intelligence gathering and sporadic sabotage. This was then to be followed by "*Burza*" or "Tempest", the operation at the moment of liberation. Originally, the third stage of the AK's war was to be known as "*Powstanie*" or "Rebellion". This was to be a nation wide rebellion that would engulf the German regime at the moment of its collapse. This final stage of planning was ultimately abandoned as the likelihood of a Soviet liberation of Poland changed the situation radically. In this operational escalation, the first six months of 1944 were of key importance since they helped to shape the force in *Lubelszczyzna* and its ability to fight. As part of this first stage of operations, the Lublin AK was to undergo a period of organisational consolidation during early spring 1944. Once this had been achieved, the region's AK was to start to fulfil both its role as a government force, attempting to protect its people, and to attempt to prepare for stage two of its operational escalation, Operation "Tempest".

Since the beginning of the occupation, "Fly" had been gathering pace, with the British dropping wirelasses and supplies to the ZWZ-AK from 1941

onwards. On the ground in Poland the Warsaw authorities had been tidying up the AK's structure, creating a strong central authority with the ability to command offensives in any part of the country. The process of organising and standardising its forces was mostly carried out in *Lubelszczyzna* during the period of spring 1944 and in fact, in *Lubelszczyzna* the AK officer corps was to become relatively well developed. According to Mańkowski and Caban, at its height the AK in the Lublin region had around 1,000 officers and reserves in its ranks. This meant that officers were to make up around 2% of the regional AK, with a ratio of officers to men of 60 soldiers to one officer. This ratio of officers to men was pretty consistent throughout the region, with no large variation between areas. For example, in Lublin officers made up 1.2% and cadet officers 15% of the force, whereas in Tomaszów Lubelski officers made up 1% and cadet officers 14% of the force. The area with the largest percentage of officers was Zamość where officers made up around 3.5% of the force in the 9th Infantry. This meant that in the vast majority of cases, AK units were led by trained officers, which gave their formations a level of discipline and orderliness that other underground units often lacked. ¹ These officers had come to positions of command in the underground army via many different routes. By the time of "Tempest" around thirty of its officers in the Biała Podlaska inspectorate were ex- Polish Army officers. ² Whereas in the Lubartów district a large percentage of the AK's officers had been schoolteachers before the war, amongst this number was "Lekarz" who had taught in Polesie. ³ Some, such as the regional commander "Marcin", had entered the region during the occupation from another part of the General-Government, whilst others, such as "Adam", had been based in and around *Lubelszczyzna* all of their lives. One of the most famous and successful underground officers in the *Lubelszczyzna* AK, "Zapora", had been parachuted into the region. Major Hieronim Dekutowski, "Zapora" had been in the field since 1939 having fought with the Polish forces in the September War and with the Free Polish forces in the west. "Zapora" was a trained commando who was to lead one of the most successful and long lasting AK units in the area. ⁴

“Fly”, therefore, was the phase during which the AK went from being a loose grouping of resistance fighters to truly becoming an underground army, the developed officer corps and command structure provided the framework for the expansion of the rank and file during spring 1944. Equally, communications and links were strengthened between Lublin, Warsaw and the UK by the establishment of radio communications. Already by the end of 1943 the AK had used Fly to develop a sophisticated radio and intelligence gathering network that led all the way back to London. Indeed, Polish intelligence gathering was vital at times for the war effort and was based around wireless operators who once a day to twice a week, would send reports to Barnes Lodge on everything happening in their area. As it was impossible to organise and maintain a radio communications centre in Warsaw, Barnes Lodge acted as the focal point for communications with messages from Lublin to Warsaw being sent via Britain. This also meant that reports and orders would be sent from command to the regions, but not between the regions. In addition, signals were often sent via listening stations in Sweden. ⁵

The two leaders of the Lubelszczyzna AK during 1944

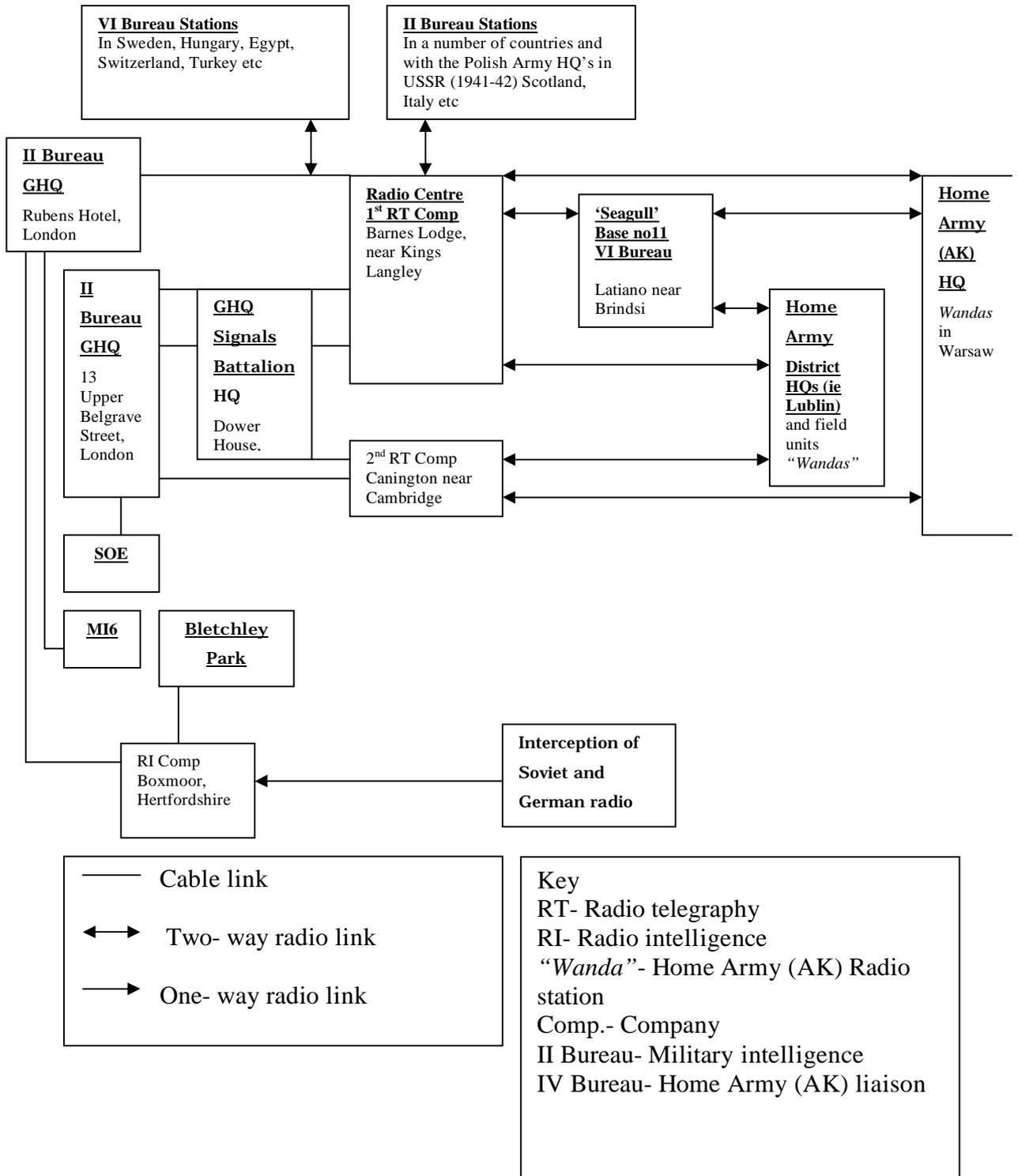


Kazimierz Tumidajski “*Marcin*”

Franciszek Żak “*Wir*”,
“*Żak*”, “*Ignacy*”

(Z. Mańkowski and I. Caban, Związek Walki Zbrojnej i Armia Krajowa w Okręgu Lubelskim 1939- 44, Lublin 1971)

Polish GHQ and the AK radio network by the summer of 1944



In order to remain concealed, special mobile radio units were created in Lublin, and each radio station, or “Wanda”, was given a special cryptonym and number. For instance in the Puławy inspectorate, the “Pająka” mobile

radio unit was directly subordinated to the regional command and operated in the north of the inspectorate. ⁷ The Lublin command radio unit was “Wanda 28” whereas the “Pajka” unit was known as “Wanda 30” and the Zamość unit was “Wanda 77”. In addition, every branch of the Lublin AK was given a cryptonym that was used when communicating with other branches or national or district commands. Below are the radio cryptonyms of the Lublin AK during 1944:

Regional command: 997

Regional chief of staff: 998

Unit 1: 999

Unit 2: 1000

Unit 3: 1001

Unit 4: 1002

Unit 5: 1003

Constant cells: 1004

BiP (propaganda and information unit) 1005

8

As a part of this organisational consolidation, the AK also undertook changes to their basic cells: the platoons. The spring of 1944 was to be witness to a massive expansion to these front line forces in Lublin. Initially, from the beginning of the occupation, groups of men often as small as three or five in number had started to join with other small groups, and these were to eventually form platoon units. Originally the AK had operated both full platoons, numbering around fifty people, and skeletal platoons, which numbered around twenty to thirty. However, from June 1944 onwards the regional command began the liquidation of skeletal platoons; it was intended to merge the smaller groups to create larger, more uniform platoon units that, beneath the commander and his assistant, were split into three teams that numbered around 54 people in total. In addition to this, platoons were supposed in future to consist of the platoon commander, his assistant, two orderlies, two sappers, two runners, two messengers and two observers. A team consisted of a commander plus thirteen riflemen. In addition to this there were independent teams that

were placed in towns or remote areas. The independent teams could number anything above ten riflemen.⁹ However, given the circumstances in which these units were operating, the size and experience of units in the Lublin AK varied as a result of the locale in which they were based. It should always be remembered that partisan units were constantly changing in size and staff; at times units were amalgamated in line with the above standardisations, whilst some units gained new recruits, and others were destroyed or incurred serious losses as a result of enemy actions.

Of course, each of these platoons would need to be armed and, nationally speaking this was often a problem for the AK.¹⁰ Yet in this respect, the *Lubelszczyzna* AK was more fortunate than other AK regional commands. Because the Polish Government had briefly been located in Lublin during the September War, huge battles such as that at Kock had been fought in the region. Literally hundreds of weapons had been taken from these battlefields in the days following the defeat of the Polish Second Republic. In the main, these seem to have been taken into the woods and buried until the moment that they could be used in the fight to free the region. A report of the ZWZ central command from 1st September 1940 shows how many weapons the *Lubelszczyzna* AK had at this early stage, the vast majority of which were taken from the battlefields of the previous year. The report states that the Lublin region AK had 834 pistols, 10,943 grenades and over 1 million pieces of ammunition.¹¹ According to I. Caban such weapons formed the bulk of the arms used by the underground in *Lubelszczyzna*, and it was from the spring of 1944 onwards that these weapons stashes were starting to be dug up and used. In addition to this, Allied air-drops had helped to top up these weapons stores. For example, in Tomaszów Lubelski district between 11th-31st May 1944, the local AK received 22 Smith and Westerns, 2 Colts, 50 kg of plastics, 200 sapper detonators and around 40 boxes of ammunition.¹² In total, there were an estimated 483 airdrops to the Polish underground during the period of the Nazi occupation, of this the Lublin region received around 23-25; Lublin and Puławy inspectorates received 8-10 drops, Zamość 8, Radzyń 3, and Chełm 3. The lion's share of these drops took place during spring 1944. In addition to these sources of weapons, the local AK was also operating a

weapons 'factory' in Lublin city. According to a report of the AK central command, this factory was able to produce 36,000 grenades during the period of the Nazi occupation. ¹³



Captain Czesław Tchórz, "Kowal", (centre) of the well-equipped 2nd Platoon, 1st company, part of the "Podkowa" partisan unit.

(J. Józwiakowski, Armia Krajowa na Zamojszczyźnie, Lublin 2007)

Between these three main weapons sources, forces such as the one in Tomaszów Lubelski were reasonably well armed. In an action against Ukrainian forces mounted on 2nd June 1944, the district was able to arm around 1,000-1,200 troops for the operation. ¹⁴ In the main, however, the AK was armed with the tools for sabotage work and with light weapons; in Tomaszów Lubelski the AK had only twenty machine guns at its disposal by July 1944. Elsewhere in the Lublin region it was a similar story, for instance by July 1944 the Lubartów district had around 1,500 arms, only fifty of which were automatic. Three groups had the lion's share of the weapons: "Lekarz", "Uskok" and "Brzechwa". These groups had around 200 weapons per unit, with the rest of the district's weapons being spread

around the other members of the six regional posts. ¹⁵ In Lublin city it is not really known how many guns the AK had by July 1944. However, when the *"Kmicic"* unit was disarmed by the Red Army near Majdan Forest on 24th July, it handed in 36 semi-automatic LKMs, 6 grenades and a lot of ammunition. ¹⁶ To the south, reports from April and June 1944 show that the Kraśnik AK had 46 Sten guns, 4 LKM, 10 Colt pistols, 7 Nagan pistols, 115 grenades, 12,333 pieces of ammunition for the Stens, 4,989 pieces of ammunition for the LKMs and 252 pieces of ammunition for the Nagans. ¹⁷

In addition, the AK operated a strict policy regarding the issuing of weapons. In the main, weapons were only given out to units for the Tempest operation, for the actions in Zamość during the deportations of 1942-43 and for defensive operations such as the one mentioned in Tomaszów Lubelski when weapons were handed out at the discretion of *"Marcin"*- the regional AK commander. ¹⁸

Once platoon structures had been standardised and trained officers put in place to lead them, the local command began to organise its platoons into larger military units in readiness for the "Tempest" stage of operations. The first force to emerge in the spring of 1944 was the 9th Infantry, which was based in Zamość inspectorate. According to Jan Turowski it was between 22nd-23rd April that the 9th Infantry Regiment, which was later to become part of the 3rd Infantry Division AK was concentrated in the woods to the south of Zamość. After concentrating, the unit carried out an inspection and training. Units such as this had been terminated during the winter of 1943-44 and were reformed, again at this point in the forest. This force was composed of several dozen partisan units in addition to the following units: the joint *"Norbert"* and *"Dolina"* unit, *"Podkowa"*, *"Grom"*, *"War"*, *"Ciąg"*, the staff platoon *"Osa"*, the mounted reconnaissance unit *"Sęp"* (or *"Dniestr"*) and the communications platoon *"Leszcz"*. ¹⁹



The photograph shows an inspection of the 9th Infantry after its concentration. The picture was taken on 23^d April 1944 somewhere in the Puszcza Solska

(I.Caban and Z. Mańkowski, Związek Walki Zbrojnej i Armia Krajowa w Okręgu Lubelskim 1939- 1944, Lublin 1971)

What was in effect happening in the villages and forests of Lublin during the spring was the completion of the AK's military framework – with this in place each of the above units experienced a huge growth in their numbers. The experience of the Lublin county district was typical of the Lublin region at this point. For most of the occupation its troops had been mainly composed of large groups in the villages, yet by June 1944, these village groups had joined partisan bands in readiness for “Tempest” and gone into the 8th Infantry. ²⁰ A good example of the massive growth experienced by the Lublin region AK during the late spring of 1944 can be seen in the size of its units in the Puławy inspectorate:

Partisan unit	Number in June 1944	Number at the start of Operation Tempest
<i>"Zagonczyka"</i>	30	170
<i>"Przepiórka"</i>	30	170
<i>"Orlik"</i>	20	200
<i>"Hektor"</i>	30	100
<i>"Argil"</i>	15	100

(In addition in the Puławy Inspectorate, the "Zapora" unit also operated in the north and so did the special communications unit "Pająka" which was subordinated directly to the regional command.)²¹

Therefore, from spring 1944 the AK had formed military units from their original partisan platoons that were of a considerable organisational size. The warmer weather, foliage on the trees, and the nearing of the front meant that local partisan units were rapidly increasing in size making the creation of these larger formations possible. In fact in *Lubelszczyzna* the size of the AK's partisan units was almost to double between May and July 1944.²²

As a reflection of this increased capacity and confidence of the organisation, the AK launched Operation *"Jula"* in April 1944. *"Jula"* was a co-ordinated attack by the AK on German lines of communication within the area of the General-Government. The AK attacked isolated German patrols and outposts, blew up railway lines and cut communication wires. Ordered by the increasingly confident Special Operations Directorate, *"Jula"* was carried out throughout occupied Poland from 6th to 9th April. So successful were some attacks that it took a full week before the German authorities could start using certain routes once more. In Lublin province, the most effective *"Jula"* attack was on the railway-bridge in the small town of Trynca, in the north of the province.²³ This attack effectively disabled the main line for German reinforcements to the eastern front. The operation, therefore, marked a significant step-up in AK activities in the region and was a signpost for things to come.

Operation “Tempest” and the approaching Red Army

“Fly” had resulted in the creation of an advanced network that stretched throughout the General Government and the occupied eastern territories. Stage two was to be “*Burza*”, or more famously known in English as Operation “Tempest”. The parameters of the operation had been set out by Komorowski's order of November 1943, and the specifics of the plan in *Lubelszczyzna* were to be established in the first few months of 1944. “Tempest” was to be characterised by a major sabotage campaign that would be mounted in connection with Allied offensives. The “Tempest” plan was in fact to be a series of consecutive uprisings at the moment of German collapse. It was, therefore, to be initiated by the AK at a local level when the German administration in that area was at the point of withdrawing. By 1944 it was no longer intended to be a synchronised operation that began across the country all at the same time - as the Red Army entered the operating area of a particular AK region, then operation “Tempest” would be put into effect. By July 1944 “Tempest” had already been initiated in roughly a quarter of Poland, whilst in *Lubelszczyzna* the command was still waiting to enact their plan. The Volhynia AK enacted “Tempest” in January, the Tarnopol AK in March, the Brześć- Polesie in June and July, and Lvov in July; ultimately it was to be enacted in *Lubelszczyzna* at the end of July 1944. ²⁴

In many respects there was no other feasible method of the AK launching their plan. Had “Tempest” been intended to be a synchronised operation, many AK units would have risen up in areas of often huge troop and artillery concentrations. It would have meant that several thousand partisans armed with often nothing more than a hand-gun would have risen up against the full might of the *Wehrmacht*. Given the very nature of the war that the AK was attempting to fight, therefore, “Tempest” had to be mounted according to a local timetable and local circumstances. This pragmatism was perhaps also the key flaw in the plan. It meant that if the Soviet Union continued its aggressive stance, local AK units, usually isolated and lacking even in

small arms, would reveal themselves and be picked off one by one. The intention was that once these operations were complete the AK, along with civilian members of the *Delegatura*, would attempt to restore Polish administration throughout liberated areas.

Yet the “Tempest” plan should not be seen as being monolithic; as Soviet policies became clearer the instructions and manner of “Tempest” were to change. Throughout 1943, the idea of launching a general uprising at the moment of liberation had led to heated discussions between the civilian and military branches of the Government-in-Exile in London as well as in occupied Poland itself. ²⁵ The key issue was the question of the Soviets and how the homeland forces should react to them both during and immediately after the period of liberation. Such questions, as preparations for an uprising in the homeland began, only complicated further the existing tensions between the new Prime Minister Mikołajczyk and the Commander-in-Chief Sosnkowski. Ultimately, the start of “Tempest” simply served to highlight these problems, as it exposed differences in approach both within the Government-in-Exile and between London and the AK in Warsaw and Lublin. ²⁶

Therefore, Soviet actions during the early months of 1944 and the enaction of “Tempest” in areas to the east of Lublin were to have a large impact on the manner in which the operation was attempted to the west of the Bug River. On the night of 3rd-4th January 1944 the Red Army had crossed Poland’s pre-1939 frontier for the first time since the launching of Operation Barbarossa in 1941. On 26th March 1944 the commander of the AK in Volhynia, after revealing himself and his unit to Soviet forces, entered into discussions with General Sergeev and Colonel Kharitonov, the commanders of the Soviet army that was heading in the direction of Kovel. The Volhynian and Vilna Divisions represented the two largest AK units in the disputed eastern provinces and would be of considerable help to the Soviets in their advance through difficult wooded and marshy terrain. In fact at this time, in the areas of Poland which lay to the east of the Curzon Line, the three main

AK units were the Volhynian Division with 6,000 soldiers, the Vilna brigade with 12,000 men under the command of Colonel “*Wolf*” and the 5th Infantry under Colonel “*Yanka*” with 11,000 men. ²⁷ The resultant agreement between the 27th Volhynian Division and General Sergeev of the Red Army was sent back to London and the details presented by Count Raczynski, the Polish Foreign Minister, to the British Foreign office on 7th April 1944. The report stated that the Soviet-Polish talks had come to the following agreements on continuing the fight together:

- 1) Total subordination in the operative sense of the Polish forces to the Soviet command locally and also beyond the River Bug.
- 2) The recognition of the Polish forces as a Polish division under the Polish authorities in Warsaw and London
- 3) Absolute liberty for the Division to maintain contact with these authorities.
- 4) The creation out of existing Polish partisan detachments of a regular Polish Division.
- 5) Prohibition of partisan activity of any kind in the rear of the Soviet forces.
- 6) Full field equipment and armament for the Polish Division to be supplied by the Soviet authorities. ²⁸

At a cursory glance this agreement looked like a series of wonderful concessions by the Red Army to the AK. It promised to recognise their command structure, to equip them and to guarantee them communication access to the underground authorities. It seemed as if a workable agreement had been signed. Perhaps the Soviets did not have any designs on Poland. However, the point of crucial importance was point five. It was made clear that there was to be no partisan activity behind Soviet lines. But how were 'partisans' to be defined, and who would define them? The AK were quickly to find out that, as soon as the front had passed their region, they ceased to be allies and became bandits. Equally, an appreciation of the Soviet-Polish border dispute was key to understanding the overtones of this agreement – these AK forces were operating on soil that as far as the Soviet Union

was concerned was Soviet. To the AK this territory was part of the Polish Republic and it had been stolen from them by the Soviets in 1939. Clearly, therefore, it was always implicit that AK forces in these areas, forces that supported the re-establishment of Polish government east of the Bug, would be ultimately classed as bandits and destroyed.

The pattern that would emerge over the course of the next two years was radically different to the one that the AK had envisaged. If the AK unit were large enough, the Soviets would use it for a while, if not, the unit was liquidated immediately. The NKVD would separate the AK officers from their men. The officers were shot, tortured or imprisoned. Their men were disarmed or forced into Berling's Army. As one AK officer put it: 'Katyn was being perpetrated on various scales all over again.'²⁹ This was of course happening a matter of miles away on the eastern bank of the Bug, and the presence of the Red Army here meant that the number of regular and irregular Soviet units in Lublin was rapidly on the increase. From 1943 onwards the Soviet Union had been parachuting partisan detachments into Poland in order to undertake diversionary activities, which were primarily designed to tie down as much of the German administration as possible. Although starting slowly Soviet troops steadily grew in number and the size of their activities increased accordingly. By the last years of the war the Soviet Partisan Command had thousands of troops operating in Poland behind the lines, blowing up German supply depots, railway lines and command posts. Their contribution to the defeat of the Third Reich is one of the great and often over looked elements of the Second World War. In the *Lubelszczyzna* region the Soviet partisan forces were, like the rest of the armed resistance to the Nazis, primarily operating in the forests and marshes of the region.

These partisan groups were linked to Red Army command and were often well trained and equipped to discharge the sabotage activities assigned to them. From 1943 all large-scale Red Army operations had been co-ordinated with the Partisan Command and partisan commanders were given the rank of Generals in order to tie them

personally to the leadership. Despite the considerable hurdles placed in the way of partisan camps, in the form of repeated liquidations, they were still able to play a significant role in the Soviet war effort. From 1941 onwards the Central and Republic Partisan Schools alone trained 22,000 troops, 75% of which were demolition experts. ³⁰ A.A. Maslov estimates that during the war Moscow partisans blew up 12,000 bridges, destroyed 65,000 motor vehicles and destroyed 1100 airplanes. Perhaps most importantly however, Maslov estimates that as much as 10% of the *Wehrmacht's* regular forces were forced to fight against the partisans. ³¹

Indeed, the partisan bands that were dispatched to Poland formed quite a considerable contingent. Their remit was to conduct diversionary, reconnaissance and sabotage activities. These units, such as P.P. Vershigora's 1st Ukrainian Partisan Division, which served in the Puszca Solska, also had the mission of establishing contact with communist underground forces and helping to strengthen the nuclei of a future pro-Soviet government. By May 1944 in many of the woods of the region, the local communist force, the *Armia Ludowa*, People's Army (AL), were operating with large Soviet partisan groupings. ³²

It was not until February-March 1944 that Soviet partisan units began to operate in Lublin in strength. Initially Soviet units had crossed the Bug and operated on its western bank in an uneven capacity, crossing back and forth as events allowed. For example the Aleksander Nevski partisan unit reached the Bug in March and crossed the river on the night of 4th-5th April, coming into contact with an AK unit commanded by Stanisław Witamborski in the process. Whilst building a temporary bridge across the river, the unit was attacked by members of the *SS Galizien*, scattering the Soviets and forcing one battalion to remain on the eastern bank.³³ Once inside the Lublin region, Soviet forces began busying themselves fulfilling their *raison d'etre* by launching diversionary attacks that would tie up as much of the German military as possible. In this both the AK and Soviets had a common enemy and initially relations between the two forces seem to have been positive.

According to Zbigniew Czernicki, *"Kaktus"*, from February onwards Soviet partisan units led by General Kovpak were operating in Biłgoraj and the local AK commanders, *"Podkowa"*, *"Wadaw"* and *"Sławian"* took part in talks with Piotr Verszyhora the local commander of these Soviet partisans. As a result, local AK units and Soviet partisan units launched a series of joint raids on German positions in the area. In particular, a joint Polish–Soviet attack on a local railway viaduct was undertaken in which it was successfully blown. ³⁴

Another example of AK-Soviet co-operation was reported by Alfred Thor, *"Zych"*, in the Hrubieszów area. According to his recollections, large Soviet partisan forces passed through his area in February 1944. Contact was made, and it was established that they were on their way to the forests in Biłgoraj. Much later on 25th April an AK post on a track near the Huczwa River was visited by an exhausted and starving Soviet horse patrol. The tired group had amongst their number Soviet officers and a few Poles. Talks were conducted between *"Zych"* and the commander of the patrol, Lieutenant Rudanowski, in which the latter asked for food and lodgings for his exhausted men. The Soviets were, according to *"Zych"*, given food and together with AK members began to march west, but such was the level of fatigue amongst the Soviet unit that many of them collapsed soon after the start of the march. After meeting up with his wireless detachment in the forest near Tyszowiec, *"Zych"* radioed command and was told to retain contacts with the Soviet unit. After resting in the wood, talks were renewed during the course of which it was discovered that Rudanowski was the descendent of a Polish rebel who had been exiled to Siberia after 1863. He said that his orders were to meet up with other Soviet partisan forces in Biłgoraj. ³⁵

It is quite clear that Soviet partisans operating in the south of the Lublin region had been given orders to concentrate in the large woods of the Puszcza Solska and Janów Forest. As a part of this process in April 1944 the following Soviet partisan units crossed the Bug River and entered the Janów forest via Zamość and Hrubieszów: the Nadielin, Sankov, Vasilenko, Fiedorov units and an AL unit commanded by

Edward Gronczewski. Individually each of the units numbered only a few companies but together their size was significant. As these new partisan forces were subjected to the command of the existing Soviet forces in the area they also took part in joint operations with the local AK. In particular the 3rd Battalion of the 9th Infantry AK was to take part in many such actions with Soviet forces during April and May. Such was the success of these actions that during this period the General Government lost control of a large area of the districts of Biłgoraj, Tomaszów, Zamość and the northern part of Hrubieszów. Reports and recollections show how complex the situation was. Clearly groups were operating together in the province in order to face a common threat, the Germans, but as the front came closer the relationship between the AK and the communists became more problematic. In most of the reports mutual antagonisms stemming from anti-Polish and anti-Russian feelings were greatly antagonised as Soviet partisans attempted to assert their hegemony over local AK units via weapons and intelligence reports. As April wore into May, Soviet commanders were increasingly unlikely to share intelligence reports and equipment with the AK. The fact that AL units were often attached to Soviet partisan units did not help relations, and it was often clear that AK and AL would not work together. ³⁶

A major example of how this initially cordial phase of AK-Soviet relations was changing took place in the province bordering Lublin. By May, the AK's 27th Volhynian Division which had been fighting alongside the Soviets since the March agreement found itself trapped by the German army on its portion of the front. Surrounded since late April, with the German Army tightening its noose around the Szack forest in which it was based, the 27th decided to break out through to the Soviet-German lines to the north-east, where they would be given new equipment as previously agreed with the Soviet authorities. The Division was split into three groups for the breakout, Major "*Kowel's*" column, Captain "*Garda's*" column and Major "*Zegota's*" column. The breakout was attempted on 21st-22nd May. The "*Garda*" column suffered heavy casualties from both German and Soviet troops during

the breakout, and in effect found itself under fire from all sides. "*Garda*" himself 'disappeared' during the breakout and it was later found out that he had run into a NKVD unit; "*Garda*" was arrested by the Soviets and then later on was deported to the east. The troops of the "*Garda*" and "*Zegota*" columns that did break through were faced with the ultimatum of join Berling or be arrested. The Column of Major "*Kowal*" managed to escape into Lublin province. The column crossed the Bug River and set up a new base of operations in the Parczew Forest. The survivors from the breakout initially numbered only 2600, although stragglers quickly swelled this number to 3200. ³⁷ Of course, it could be said that this change in Soviet attitude took place in the areas to the east of the Bug because they were claimed by the Soviet Union, but this would have cut very little ice with Poles living on either bank at the time - to them the lands to the east of the river were as Polish as Łódź or Kielce.

Therefore Soviet policy towards the AK even from this early stage can be said to be duplicitous at best. On the one hand they were actively prepared to fight alongside AK units, but ultimately the AK was being used only if their help aided the Soviet advance through the region. In adopting this policy the Soviets were not recognising the AK as the rightful heirs to the Polish Government; they were merely using Poles to speed their own advance. It can be clearly said that this was no alliance, rather from the Soviet point of view they would enter into a marriage of convenience with the AK if and when it suited them.

Yet to the AK command, Soviet actions in spring 1944 seemed uneven and contradictory. The Soviets had signed an agreement with the AK to the east yet reports were reaching Bór-Komorowski that other units were being disbanded. What was Soviet Policy? Surely the Soviets could not annex Polish territory or indeed Poland itself against the wishes of Poland's Anglo-Saxon sponsors? Faith in the Government-in-Exile and the British and the Americans remained strong, and it was a major factor in how the AK interpreted these early Soviet actions. However, the undermining of the AK by the Soviets was increasingly

happening; slowly but surely the territories under Soviet control were being reigned in. This is clearly shown that within one month of the March agreement, the NKVD had been installed in all Soviet controlled district level towns east of the Bug.

“Marcin” and the command’s planning for the front in
Lubelszczyzna

The sense that the AK in the region was feeling increasingly uneasy at the prospect of liberation by the Red Army is shown in their planning for the moment of liberation. As the level of organisation grew, along with the number of recruits, the specifics of the liberation of *Lubelszczyzna* became clearer. In response to this the regional command in Lublin began readying their troops for the moment that the front would arrive and a German withdrawal seemed inevitable. The precise plan that the *Lubelszczyzna* command would follow for “Tempest” was drawn up by Bureau III of the regional command, and in particular by the regional Commander-in-Chief, “Marcin”, by his Second-in-Command, Franciszek Żak, “Wir”, and the chief of Bureau III, Jan Kucharczak, “Kazimierz”. Inspectors, and partisan group commanders were familiarised with the details of the plan from February until June 1944. In addition to briefings each commander was sent envelopes containing the precise details and plans of attack that their units were to follow. At the moment that the central command issued the ‘go’ order then these plans were to be put into practice across the province. ³⁸

The key to this planning for the arrival of the Soviets is that “Marcin” ordered his deputy Żak, to prepare a reserve command during June and July that would be able to function if and when he was arrested by the Soviets. Lublin was not the only AK region to order the establishment of a reserve command but it was one of only a handful that did. This order is fascinating as it clearly shows that at least in the minds of “Marcin” and the AK command in *Lubelszczyzna* the possibility of Bór-

Komorowski's exposure order backfiring was a real one. The command could well have been the result of a secret order, sent from central command but it is more likely that the establishment of a reserve command reflected the regional AK commander's increasing fear of impending Soviet liberation. With the existing splits within the Government-in-Exile being worsened over the issue of how to approach the Soviets, it is not inconceivable that some lower down the chain of command were starting to make their own contingency plans. In particular, this response in Lublin is not surprising given the fact that many amongst the AK upper command in the area had prior experience of Russian/Soviet invasion and or occupation. Once again the geographical position of the area is an important factor in explaining this foresight. The fact that Lublin province was to the east of the nation meant that in the great struggles for independence after World War One, just twenty years before, Lublin had been very much in the front line. Equally significant is the fact that the region had been invaded by both German and Soviet troops in 1939. This meant that many in the regional command had personal experience of the Soviets.

For example Żak, who was to become the regional commander under the plan if "Marcin" was arrested, had served in the 4th Infantry Legion alongside Zygmunt Berling at the end of the First World War and had then fought in the Soviet-Polish war in 1920.³⁹ Equally, Ludwik Bittner, "Halka", who was to become commander of the 9th Infantry Division in *Lubelszczyzna*, had fought the Soviet-Polish War as commander of the 34th Infantry Regiment. "Marcin" himself, one of the main architects of the "Tempest" plan in the region, had been born in 1897, had served in the Polish Legions in 1915 and in the September War in 1939. Initially he had been based in Krakow but during the German occupation he moved to Lublin to head the regional command. Equally Stanisław Prus, "Adam", a commander in the 9th, had also served in the KOP. Even Stefan Drewnowski, "Roman", had been arrested by the Tsarist authorities in Minsk during 1917 for agitating against the occupying power.⁴⁰ This level of familiarity with the realities of the Soviet system must have been an important factor in the stance that the command

took when the Red Army entered the region in July. Yet this perhaps provided only the background for suspicions of the Soviet Union.

“*Marcin*” had already identified that opposing the activities of the PPR was amongst the most important roles that his force was involved in, equally he must have been aware that the NKVD was arresting Poles in the eastern provinces.⁴¹ Another factor, the power of which cannot be underestimated, was the impact of the Katyn massacre. This meant that whilst the regional command were to obey Bór-Komorowski’s order on openness towards the Red Army, they were clearly worried enough about it to put a contingency plan in place.

German anti-partisan operations and their impact

The build up to “Tempest” in the region was interrupted by the moves of the German authorities. In the days and weeks before the end of the German occupation of *Lubelszczyzna*, the occupying authorities were to launch several punitive campaigns throughout the length and breadth of the region. These operations were to have a significant impact on both the population at large and the various partisan groups operating in the area, which at this point in time constituted the territory to the immediate rear of the *Wehrmacht* on their eastern front. The German authorities launched a series of operations designed to requisition extra food for the front, and to clear partisan forces from the areas to the immediate rear of their forces. The operations launched in the Janów Forest and the Puszcza Solska were known as *Sturmwind I* and *Sturmwind II*. Operation *Sauhatz* was launched in the Kozłowiecki Forest, and operation *Cyklon* was launched in the area of the Parczew Forest. A matter of weeks before the arrival of the front, the AK was, therefore, involved in several critical actions.⁴²

By the end of May 1944 the number of partisan groups operating in the woods to the south of Zamość was huge. In fact Zygmunt Klukowski recorded in his diary that by this time local village women had started to build up a lucrative trade with many of the partisans in the woods of

the area. Many of them had taken to walking into the woods with baskets laden with cigarettes, matches, beer, lemonade and sandwiches – all of which were sold at inflated prices. Over the previous few weeks many different units had entered the woods, amongst them deserters from the German Army in the area. According to “*Marcin’s*” report to central command in Warsaw dated 13th July 1944, in the area to the north-east of Janów Lubelski there were now around 3-4,000 Soviet partisans operating with a NKVD diversionary unit as a part of this number.⁴³ Add to this the fact that many young men from the area were now moving into the woods to join the partisans, and the picture in the woods at this time becomes very confusing. What is more, from the middle of May the *Volksdeutsch* that had been so recently settled in the area started to move out, leaving once rich Polish villages such as Brody Duże deserted.

In particular the woods of the south-west were targeted by the German authorities since in effect, they had lost control of these areas at the end of April. Punitive actions against the population at large involved food requisitions for the front, population round ups, burning settlements and launching anti-partisan raids. No corner of *Lubelszczyzna* was spared in the last weeks of the German occupation. For example in the Kranystaw district the Germans started actions on 9th June against the villages in that area, requisitioning livestock from the inhabitants who were probably lucky to flee with their lives. But it was in the south of the province, in the Zamość inspectorate, that the Germans launched a major campaign to displace the local population. From 9th to 29th June the German authorities launched operations “*Wicher I*” and “*Wicher II*” in the area in and around the Puszcza Solska; this included the concentration of eight villages, amongst which were the populations of Józefów, Aleksandrów, Pardysowka, Bondyryz, Teresopol and Bukownica. Dr Klukowski visited the village of Zwierzyniec on 23rd June, where some of the captives were being held behind barbed wire. He estimated that in total there were around 200 children and 700 adults, mostly women that were being held there. These people were subsequently moved to Lublin’s Krochmalna Street *Arbeitsamt* on 25th June.

According to research by Zygmunt Mańkowski, Jerzy Markiewicz and Jan Naumiuk, during these operations in total 509 civilians were killed, whilst from the Biłgoraj and Tarnopol regions in total the Germans moved around 12,000 people into such temporary holding camps. ⁴⁴

The German anti-partisan initiative had at least one consequence that the Germans would have welcomed: the AK's internal alliances were put under strain. The local AK command held a meeting at the village of Bondryz on 19th June, which was then moved to the area of Krzywe to avoid a large German detachment that was entering the area. Within days, from 21st June, a large number of the AK's local force, the 9th Infantry Regiment, were involved in a major battle in the woods to the south of Józefów, around 15 miles to the south of Klukowski's hospital. ⁴⁵ This meant that many of the towns felt they were without adequate protection when the German authorities started the deportations. During operation "*Wicher II*" alone, 5,000 civilians were captured, with an additional 3,000 being captured in another part of the Biłgoraj district. ⁴⁶ Klukowski records the immediate reaction in the area to these facts:

June 25th

...There have been no new transports, but the memories of the last few days are still very strong. Villagers are disappointed that their leaders deserted them, moving into secure places. In particular people from the peasant battalions are disturbed. They are extremely upset about the warehouse full of uniforms, shoes, and arms in Bondryz and Trzpieciny that were taken by the Germans. As far as I know the AK refused to distribute these goods to the peasant battalions. ⁴⁷

Dr Klukowski goes on to describe how on Friday 23rd June, near the village of Krzywe, members of peasant units killed Wal, "*Msciwy*", and shot at Stefan Pozdzik, "*Wrzos*" both of whom were AK members. Klukowski finished his diary entry for 25th June 1944 with this: "The

upset peasants swear to kill the leaders of the Home Army'.⁴⁸ Such tensions were apparent, both at the grass roots level and at the level of the regional command. In fact the BCh command in *Lubelszczyzna* had already sent a letter to the central commands of both the AK and BCh on 6th June explaining that due to problems existing between the two forces further integration between them was now impossible.⁴⁹ This is something that was clearly an issue in *Lubelszczyzna* at this point. Integration meant that the regional AK commander was ultimately responsible for the distribution of arms, and AK policy on the distribution of these weapons was highly contentious. During June, in addition to the aforementioned letter the head of the BCh in *Lubelszczyzna* had a series of correspondences with "Marcin". In these it is clear that the issue of AK weapon stashes was a highly contentious one and it was an issue that was driving a wedge between the two biggest underground forces in the area. "Marcin" sent his opposite number in the BCh the following letter on 14th June 1944 in response to allegations of weapons being withheld:

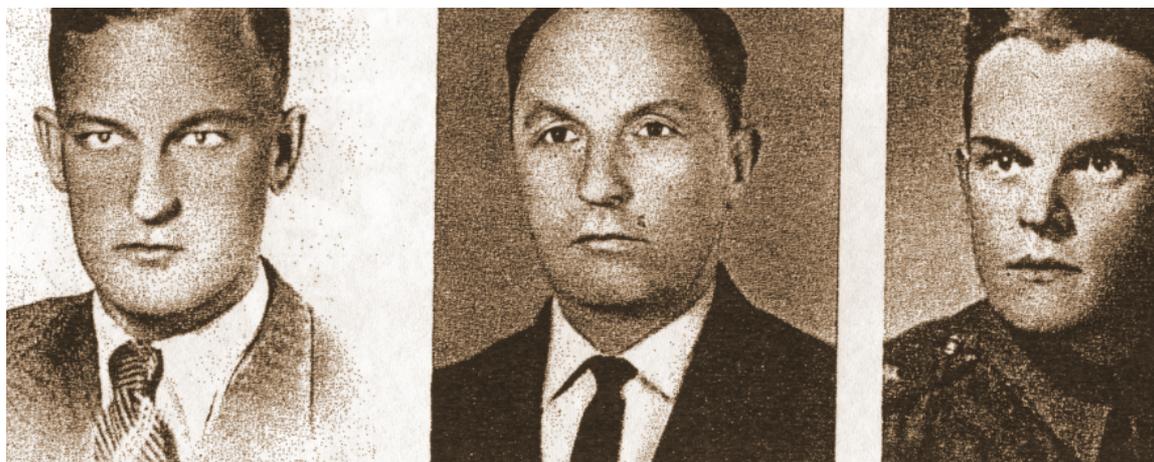
Whilst not entering into the merit of specific demands of operations of integrated soldiers – as this is incompatible with the spirit of the military. Allowance of arms is necessary for commanders responsible for operations – There is no difference (in the treatment) between soldiers and units...They are (claims of weapons being withheld) imaginary pretensions. One military commander is responsible for the whole of operations, and political factors are an entirely different problem.... Weapons and magazines are to be given only to (partisan units) on operations. At the present time weapons are only given to units on special tasks or relative to training.⁵⁰

If after liberation the Government-in-Exile had been able to return to Poland such problems could be dismissed as the type of internal conflict that any organisation would be witness to given the extreme nature of the occupation. Yet this was not to happen, and stress between the AK and BCh was to remain in *Lubelszczyzna* until the turn of the year.

This was perhaps the unique problem that the AK faced as the valid claimant for the title of the official Polish armed forces – they would have to fight the occupiers of their country and at the same time provide an adequate defence of their population. As the events in the Zwierzyniec area show this was a difficult balancing act that the AK weren't always able to manage.

To the south, in the forests of the Puszcza Solska the AK's 9th Infantry took part in a large partisan battle against German forces in the second half of June. On 18th June, as a part of their anti-partisan operation "Sturmwind II" 30,000 soldiers from 154th, 174th and a part of the 213th Wehrmacht Divisions, along with an SS battalion and other forces were cast in a net encircling the Puszcza Solska. The German forces were cast along the line of Zwierzyniec-Biłgoraj-Tarnograd-Lubliniec-Ruda Różaniecka-Susiec-Krasnobród-Zwierzyniec. What followed, the Battle of Osuchy, was to be one of the largest partisan battles in occupied Poland. On 21st June an AK unit commanded by "Woyna", "Kalina" and his deputy "Miecz", were surrounded in the Józefów Forest by German forces. By 27th June reinforcements had been sent to help the AK forces in the woods, with the units commanded by "Podkowa" and "Dolina" going to help. In addition to this, AK units from as far away as Hrubieszów took part in the fighting. According to the research of Jan Turowski, the following units were trapped within the German circle: the "Corda" unit numbering around 120 men, the "Grom" unit under the command of Jan Kryk "Topol" numbering around 100 men, a staff company of the Zamość Inspectorate numbering around 100 men under the command of "Weyna", part of the "Podkowa" unit under the command of "Korczak" numbering around 20 people, a unit of around 100 under the command of Konrad Bartoszewski "Wir", a woodland Hospital unit from Biłgoraj under the command of Lucjan Kopic "Radwan" numbering around 16, a unit under the command of Stanisław Kowalski "Huk", and finally a section of the Zamość Inspectorate BiP under the command of "Kalif". In total, Turowski calculated, this force numbered around 560 men. In addition to this, caught in the German ring were a sizeable Soviet partisan force, AL

units and BCh units. Overall the Polish independence forces in the forests were under the command of the BCh Zamość Inspector, Major Edward Markiewicz *"Kalina"*. The BCh units caught in the ring were under the commands of Antoni Warchał *"Szczerb"*, Jan Kędra *"Blyskawic"* and Antoni Wróbla *"Burza"*.⁵¹



Jan Turowski- *"Norbert"* Tadeusz Kuncewicz- *"Podkowa"* Adam Piotrowski- *"Dolina"*
(I.Caban and Z. Mańkowski, Związek Walki Zbrojnej i Armia Krajowa w Okręgu Lubelskim 1939- 1944, Lublin 1971)

Reports of the fighting that filtered back to Szczepieszyn were sketchy yet telling. By the 29th, according to AK troops emerging from the woods, the command was experiencing problems leading a force as large as the 9th Infantry. This was perhaps an inevitable result of the rapid expansion of the force over the previous weeks and months, and of the nature of the terrain in which it was fighting. What was clear, however, was that during the course of the fighting *"Cezary"*, *"Adam's"* Second-in-Command had lost contact with his commander and that the 9th Infantry's chain of command had temporarily broken down and disorganisation reigned. Members of the command who turned up at the hospital in Szczepieszyn asking for medics to be sent into the woods were testimony to the fact that casualties in the fighting at Osuchy were high. According to Dr Klukowski, the officers involved seemed reluctant to talk about casualties but it was clear that the battle at Osuchy ended in defeat but not destruction for the AK's 9th Infantry and the other forces that took part. According to the local AK, around

1,000 members of the AK and BCh, 3,000 'Russians', and 1,000 PPR took part in the defeat. ⁵² In fact the AL units involved were mainly from the forces that had been under the command of "Wick" that had moved to the area in May. This force had subjugated themselves to Soviet command and made their attempt to break the German net near the village of Tereszpol. The 500-600 soldiers were heavily outnumbered and were destroyed during the fight. This meant that the largest AL forces in the south of Lublin province had been removed in a battle that lasted only a few hours. ⁵³ "Marcin's" report to the AK central command in Warsaw dated 13th July backs this up. He estimated that the AL units that had been operating in the south of the region had been 'wrecked' by these German anti-partisan initiatives. As a result, the report claims the remaining AL forces in the south were forced to move into the districts of Puławy and Lublin. ⁵⁴

In other areas of Lublin, the German authorities were also attempting to reassert their control of remote areas. In the centre-north of the province, on 12th July, the Germans launched one of their last major attempts to crush the partisans in Lublin province, and in particular those hiding out in the Parczew forest. As with other remote regions of *Lubelszczyzna*, the Parczew was now home to a wide mix of partisan units. Along with the newly arrived 27th Volhynian Division, operating in the forest were both sizeable Soviet and AL Divisions. According to the AK command's estimation, operating in the Włodawa district and the Parczew Forest were around 2,000 Soviet partisans and the "Mietka" grouping from the regular Red Army along with a few other smaller units. ⁵⁵ The aggressive German anti-partisan actions brought these groupings together, however temporarily. In the forest the 27th came to an agreement with the local Soviet commander, General Baranovsky, that for the period of the fighting they would subordinate themselves to his command and fight alongside his troops. In the event, the AL partisan commander Lieutenant-Colonel Grzegorz Korczyński refused to give the extra arms that the 27th Volhynian Division needed to take part effectively in the fight against the Germans. ⁵⁶ This was repeating a pattern that had become apparent in Zamość during the previous

month. Therefore the 27th Volhynian Division took the decision to break out again to a more defensible position, away from the Parczew Forest and the Germans anti-partisan measures.⁵⁷ Most of the 27th Volhynian Division was therefore based around 15 miles due north of Lublin city in the Lubartów Forest during the final weeks of its existence.

In these operations of June and July, both regionally and nationally the AK had lost many soldiers in operations against the Germans, before the start of “Tempest” and the Warsaw Uprising. Even at this stage, there were clear strains on the internal fabric of the Government-in-Exile and the AK. What the German anti-partisan campaigns during the last weeks of the occupation did was to effectively rob the *Lubelszczyzna* AK of its maximum strength in the days immediately preceding “Tempest”. In total at this time it is estimated that the AK nationally lost around 62,000 men before they had even enacted what was to be their key operation, the one at the moment of liberation. This number represented about 18% of the total national force, and in *Lubelszczyzna* the attrition rate was higher than the national average. Mańkowski and Caban estimate that from the above statistics and given the higher loss rate in the province due to actions such as the ones mentioned above, the AK in *Lubelszczyzna* had probably lost around 11,000 men before the start of “Tempest”.⁵⁸

AK: Tactics and strength in July 1944

Yet it was the events in the east that caused AK command in Warsaw to adapt once again its disclosure orders on dealings with Soviet forces. This was to be a constant feature of AK-Soviet policy throughout 1944 and 1945. As the Soviets pushed further into Poland’s pre-war territory, and the AK’s worst fears began to be realised so official approaches to the Soviets were to be changed. This new directive was of particular importance to the AK in *Lubelszczyzna* as it was to form the blueprint for their enactment of “Tempest”. The order issued to the district commands on 12th July 1944 read:

On the one hand, the Soviets are our mighty comrades in arms in the fight against the Germans, and on the other hand, dangerous conquerors threatening our cardinal principle, independence... We must co-operate with the Soviets only in the fight against the Germans. We must offer political resistance to the Soviets, consisting of constant and stubborn demonstrations of the autonomy of all forms of Polish organised life... Commanders of Home Army units must carry out military operations against the Germans absolutely independently, without rashly seeking to establish contact with Soviet troops. They establish this contact on their own initiative, only in the event of imperious tactical need which may arise in the battlefield... Should the Soviets try to enrol the Polish units in the Soviet army or Berling units, it is appropriate: a) to protest, b) to try to withdraw and to avoid disarmament by force, or enrolment, c) in the last extremity to put all arms in a safe place and disband the unit. ⁵⁹

This order is markedly more aggressive in tone towards the Soviets, and reflects how reports from regional commands sent to Warsaw had made a strong impression on Bór-Komorowski. The experience of the AK to the east had meant that "*Marcin*" now put resistance to the communists in his region as the first priority and had ordered the creation of a reserve command; clearly redefining his forces stance to the Soviets based on experiences on the ground. In Warsaw a similar change was also clearly taking place.

According to Zygmunt Mańkowski and Ireneusz Caban in total AK forces in *Lubelszczyzna* totalled around 60,000 in the days leading up to the enactment of "Tempest" in the province, at the end of July and the beginning of August 1944. Of this number, around 80% of the force were to be used in the front line, the remaining 20% were to be used, in accordance with the strategy outlined by the regional command for "Tempest", as police units that would enable the AK and the civilian *Delegatura* to maintain law and order from the very moment that the province had been cleared of the

Germans. ⁶⁰ Yet, out of this force of 60,000, only the estimated 12,000 soldiers in partisan units were actually to enact “Tempest” in *Lubelszczyzna*. By July 1944 these partisan units were armed, formed and ready for the go signal.

In total partisan forces in *Lubelszczyzna* had launched around 2,150 actions during the period from the region’s occupation until the end of July 1944. These actions had been of varying size and success but the range of the actions undertaken show clearly how the AK as the military wing of the Polish Government-in-Exile had attempted to act as protector of its people, as a police force, and perhaps most importantly as a unifying umbrella for the fight of most of the underground forces. Just as importantly the type of operation undertaken was in effect dictated by the conditions that were peculiar to the different areas of the command. For example, certain inspectorates or districts were home to large Ukrainian populations, other to *Volksdeutsch* - such facts were to have a large effect on the type of actions undertaken in these areas. The following table helps to show the scope of partisan raids undertaken in the Lublin area prior to Operation “Tempest”:

A table of partisan operations carried out before Operation
“Tempest” in the province of Lubelszczyzna

*Specific lettered actions are given as a percentage of the overall number of actions undertaken

Key to the table:

Column A - Attacks on trains, transport and train stations

Column B- Attacks against members of the occupying military forces

Column C- Liquidation of collaborators and informers

Column D- Attacks on communications facilities

Column E- On prisons and release of those arrested

Column F- On members of the occupying civilian administration

Column G- Requisitions and economic actions

Column H- Accidental engagements with the enemy, fighting during German pacification and anti- partisan campaigns

Column I- Actions against banditry and robberies

Column J- Actions against Volksdeutsch Villages and their colonists

Column K- Fighting against the UPA, Ukrainian Selbstschutz units, Ukrainian Police and operations against nationalist groupings

Area	Number of actions (approx)	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
Whole Region	2150	8,2	22,4	14,6	1,4	2,7	5,8	20,8	7,2	3,1	4,6	5,8
Insp of Lublin	320	7,5	25,9	6,6	1,5	2,1	6,2	38,2	5,6	2,6	-	-
Insp of Chełm	280	5,7	32,8	15,1	2,5	2,1	7,1	22,9	4,6	1	-	4,6
Insp of Puławy	440	13,1	24	12,8	1,4	2,7	5	24,2	3,4	7,4	-	-
Insp of Biała P.	260	15	24,6	11,3	2,3	3,8	6,1	20	6,9	2,3	-	1,5
Insp of Zamość	850	4,7	16,2	18,9	0,9	2,8	5,6	11,8	10,4	2	11,7	12,9

The table shows that the AK in *Lubelszczyzna* by the time of Operation Tempest had become adept at launching a myriad of different types of operation against the occupiers of their land. Even if all of the above operations had been a failure they would have pointed to the fact that the AK had the ability to launch operations across the region, and further, that the underground army now possessed at least a core of men who were well practiced in military operations. At the point of launching Operation “Tempest”, therefore, the *Lubelszczyzna* AK was by no means a ‘green’ force that had spent the German occupation merely avoiding capture. It had been increasingly attempting to fulfil its role as a government force, launching anti-banditry operations, operations against the UPA and attacks on the German occupiers. What is interesting about this table is that it clearly shows that a relatively low percentage of operations undertaken were directly against the military forces of the occupier. Indeed in Zamość inspectorate, the area of the greatest activity, only 16 percent of the operations undertaken were against German military units, whilst only around 25 percent of operations were against any part of the German occupying apparatus. This meant that three quarters of the AK’s operational time in this area was occupied by fighting Ukrainian groups, bandits, and on things such as food requisitions. This clearly shows how the AK, as a government force had taken on a huge raft of responsibilities in addition to the fight against the occupier.

Equally, the AK, the only force recognised by the Government-In-Exile, had only brought together the many groups in the Lublin region under the one banner in the months immediately preceding July 1944. It was only during the last months of the occupation that the conditions existed in which the AK had started to form larger more uniform units. In this process NOW, BCh, and the NSZ had been brought into the fold but to limited effect, and many amongst those groups were to remain operating outside of the Lublin AK even by the time of Operation "Tempest". These groups were primarily united by the fact that they were all fighting for an independent Polish state, and ultimately they were brought together at the moment of what they hoped would be its realisation – in this lies the importance of the outcome of Operation "Tempest" both for the future of Lublin and Poland in general. When the Polish communist underground or Soviet partisans fought alongside AK forces this can be seen to have been, in the light of subsequent events, forced out of necessity. This was perhaps the key, the AL, the AK, the NSZ and the BCh in June and July had a common enemy, the Germans. Once this common enemy left, what was it to be replaced by? Clearly those within the AK fold believed that this meant the return of the Government-in-Exile, but ultimately what form would this new Poland take?

Finally it should be pointed out that when the Red Army entered the Lublin region in July 1944, it was not the only force that was entering the region. The 27th Volhynian Division, other AK and underground units and the UPA, were being pushed onto the soil of Lublin. However, the advance of the front should not be seen as one huge tidal wave of humanity heading towards the region. The Red Army, operating across a huge front, fought in areas of concentration and other areas of relative weakness. Therefore, when this force entered the region its effects were to be varied at first. The arrival of the front should not be thought of as one clean continuous wave in which the whole of Volhynia was secured before Lublin was entered. Rather, the Red Army were continuously punching holes in the *Wehrmacht's* lines, not allowing them to regroup, and attempting to keep the front in a perpetual state of motion. This meant that even as the Red

Army was approaching the city of Lublin, the fighting in Lvov had still not finished. In fact the fighting in Lublin city was to finish on 26th July, whereas in Lvov, 120 miles to the south-east, the fighting was not to finish until the 27th.

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- ¹⁰ For example this problem was acute in the Lvov region where despite the fact that the AK had 11,000 soldiers it only had 200 officers and very few weapons. As a result of this only around a third of its forces were able to take part in Tempest.
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- ¹⁶ IPNL 0136 124 116/136 Lublin city
- ¹⁷ IPNL 0136 112 116/124 Kraśnik
- ¹⁸ Kazimierz Tumidajski is relatively unique in the upper ranks of the Lublin AK as he kept the same pseudonym, "Marcin", throughout the period of his command. It has become standard in the regional literature to consistently refer to him as "Marcin" and therefore this study does likewise.
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Chapter 2

July 1944-August 1944

Operation “Tempest”

Recollections of the liberation of the Lublin region from the Nazis differ violently. For a significant period, both during the war and the post-war communist period, the story of liberation centred around the idea that it was achieved by the communists alone. It was a victory of Polish and Soviet communism over the forces of fascism. The AK, for its part, was either parachuted into the region by Churchill or simply did not fight and certainly did not fight alongside the Soviet forces entering the region. However, more recently this view has slowly crumbled under the weight of overwhelming evidence. The AK in Lublin did take part in the fight for the province, they had been planning for this moment for years, and they often fought alongside Soviet units and shared military information with them. What becomes clear from the moment of liberation in Lublin is that relations between individual AK and Red Army units or commanders were often initially cordial. The Red Army stance was often to seem contradictory to the AK in Lublin, but the stance of the NKVD was not. During the first two days of the liberation period the NKVD was given orders to arrest or disarm local underground units and to create holding camps to deal with those arrested.

Once the Germans had been removed, the *Delegatura* put their plans into effect in the region's towns, villages and parishes to reassert the control of their government. This process was initially successful, with city councils being created in Lublin, Zamość and countless other smaller urban areas. Yet within days of crossing the Bug, a new communist puppet government the Polish Committee of National Liberation (PKWN), had been put in place in the eastern town of Chełm. The Lublin region thus had two governments, the *Delegatura* based in Lublin and the PKWN only sixty

miles to the east in Chełm. With the PKWN's Soviet supporters behind them, the *Delegatura's* government was destroyed in Lublin and the PKWN moved in once the regional capital was secured. This pattern was repeated throughout the region. In effect three governments functioned in Lublin during July 1944: the Nazi General-Government, the *Delegatura* and the PKWN.

One of the most important aspects of Operation "Tempest" in Lublin lay in the decision of "Marcin" to hand in his force's weapons and to disperse his troops. This decision which was a result of both his own personal experiences and an order from central command meant that much of the AK in Lublin was to avoid the initial wave of NKVD arrests. Behind his decision lay a clear strategy; by dispersing his forces the core of the AK in Lublin could be preserved, it could weather the initial storm. In July 1944 it seemed perfectly feasible that the Red Army would continue its advance through Poland and that the current situation would not last for long. In the great 'Krakow' tradition of resistance, the AK would preserve its manpower and simply wait, boycotting the Berling Army forcing the new administration into crisis.

By most standards Operation "Tempest" in Lublin was a fiasco. Thousands of AK soldiers and *Delegatura* men would offer themselves into the clutches of the NKVD whilst assisting the advance of the Red Army. But, by the end of Operation "Tempest" in Lublin when the NKVD had arrested thousands of AK men, the core of the force, led by officers and NCOs who had avoided capture were able to return to their homes. In fact, only a fraction of the weapons that the AK had taken from the Germans were handed to the Soviets. After Operation "Tempest" the regional reserve command still commanded an organised and equipped force.

At the beginning of July there was still perhaps some doubt as to the true intentions of the Soviet Union. Up until this point, the Soviet Union had been arresting AK men on territory that the Soviet Union had annexed in 1939, in Lublin they had no such claim; this was the importance of Operation "Tempest" in *Lubelszczyzna*. The events in Lublin during the period between July and September 1944, helped to confirm to Bór-

Komorowski and the AK command that something must be attempted now if free Poland was to be saved. By the beginning of August, Lublin was in the grip of a new Soviet-directed administration and the AK was being systematically destroyed. In the face of what was increasingly looking like a *fait accompli* from the Soviets, the central command in Warsaw took what was in effect a last desperate throw of the dice.

Chuikov's troops enter the Lublin region

In mid July General Vassili Chuikov's 2nd Guards Tank Army had reached the Western Bug River. At 12.00pm on 20th July the 2nd Corps had crossed the river and by the next day the entire army had crossed. Driving forward, units from the 2nd Guards Tank Army and the 28th Rifle Corps surrounded the city of Lublin from the north and east by the end of the 22nd. The War correspondent, Vassili Grossman was with General Ryzhov as he entered the city on the night of Sunday-Monday 23rd-24th July. He recounted how he sped up Lubartowska Street to witness Ryzhov's men fight their way into the city finally disabling the German machine gunners that had been positioned in the main *Rynek* of the city's old town. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of his account is in his recording of the attitudes of the liberated Poles:

The most amazing thing about the fighting in the streets of Lublin was the hundreds of people - men, women and children - who came out into the street from basements and archways, careless of danger, contemptuous of shells and grenades...We saw many a touching scene that morning, heard many a word of heartfelt gratitude to our men from the people of Lublin. ¹

This seems to be an accurate account of the reactions of most Poles in the area at the moment of liberation. After five long years of repression, hatred and fear, the moment of liberation, by whoever it was, was bound to engender such a response. However whilst Grossman is strong on Polish gratitude, as are other Soviet accounts, their silence on AK activity throughout the period and region is almost deafening. In fact the reality was that the AK troops who had been patrolling the captured city were

ultimately to be disarmed or interned whilst the city was handed over to the PKWN whose leaders were being flown in from Moscow. The commander of the 1st Byelorussian Front, a Pole, Konstantine Rokossovskii, hardly mentions the AK at this time, Chuikov does, albeit in a customarily brusque manner. According to Chuikov's account, his army first came into contact with the AK in the forests to the south and west of the town of Lubartów. He estimates that in this region the AK had a strength of around 20,000. His comments on his first encountering the AK are telling:

They simply did not fight the Germans at all, and the later in turn did not touch them. The British Prime Minister, Churchill, had taken care to have them formed, equipped and dropped into Poland not to revenge their country and fight those who occupied it, but just for the sake of appearance. ²

In fact, the AK was to be far from inactive when the liberating Red Army reached Lublin, for the regional command had been planning for this moment of co-ordinated resistance since the beginning of the German occupation. According to the AK's logic, now was the time to fight.

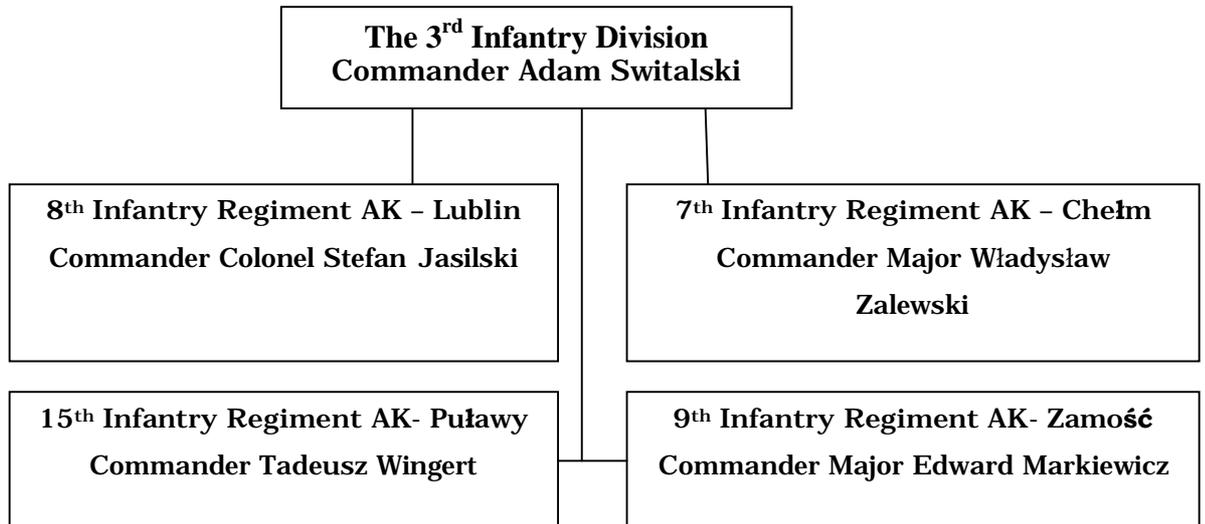
"Tempest" comes to Lublin

By summer 1944, the AK's Lublin district had become one of its strongest. ³ Mańkowski and Caban estimate that the total strength of the *Lubelszczyzna* AK at the beginning of "Tempest" was around the 60,000 mark, however of this number only around 12,000 were in partisan units. ⁴ At some point between 16th-20th July the central command in Lublin began appointing commanders to each of its newly formed regional units. "Marcin" therefore had the following forces at his command: The 3rd Infantry Division, the 9th Infantry Division and the 27th Volhynian Division. In addition to this the two main infantry divisions were divided within these Inspectorates. Within the 3rd Infantry Division fell the following Regiments: 7th, 8th, 9th and 15th. In the Lublin inspectorate, Colonel Stefan Jasilski commanded the 8th Infantry Regiment. In the Zamość inspectorate the 9th

Infantry Regiment, was commanded by Major Edward Markiewicz. In the east in the Chełm inspectorate, the 7th Infantry Regiment was commanded by Major Władysław Zalewski. To the west, Major Stanisław Kowalski commanded the 15th Infantry Regiment in the Puławy inspectorate, along with units under the command of Captain Tadeusz Wingert. ⁵ The 9th Infantry Division was composed of the following: the 34th and 35th. Colonel Stefan Drewnowski commanded the force in the Radzyń district, along with units under the command of Konstanty Muller. This force, the 35th Infantry Regiment was based in both the Radzyń Podlaska and Biała Podlaska districts. The 34th Infantry Regiment was based in the Biała Podlaska area. Finally the 27th Volhynian Infantry Division was under the command of Colonel Jan Kotowicz. ⁶ The 27th Volhynian Division were based in the woods between Lubartów and Włodawa in the upper centre of the province. Close by, at the beginning of operations the 9th Infantry Division were operating in the area just further to the north in the Biała Podlaska area. To the south of Zamość, the lumpy hills and isolated villages amongst the woods of the Puszcza Solska provided the base of operations for much of the 3rd Infantry Division. ⁷ This meant that as the Red Army entered the province, moving from east to west through it, the first AK forces in the province to encounter the Red Army were those of the 3rd Infantry Division.

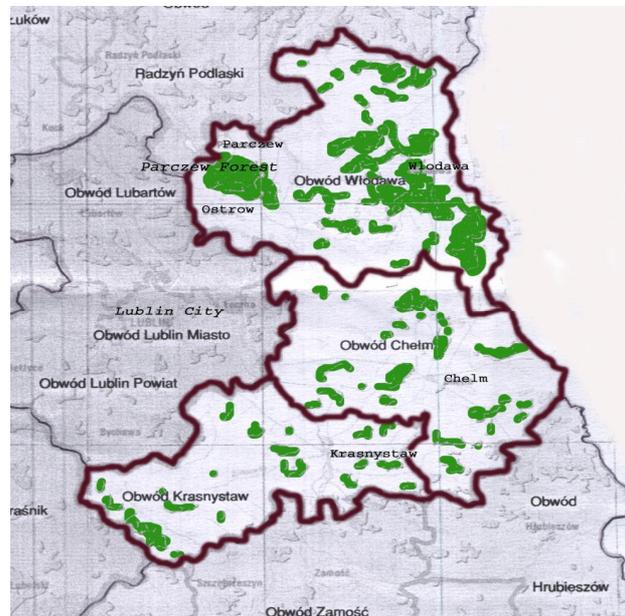
The 3rd Infantry Division during “Tempest”

The 3rd Infantry Division that was based in the centre and south of the province was composed of the 7th, 8th, 9th, and 15th Infantry Regiments at the beginning of Operation “Tempest”. It is worth here showing the breakdown of this force’s command structure, as it was the biggest force in the region:



When Operation “Tempest” was initiated throughout the whole of the province, the heaviest fighting involving AK units took place between 20th-26th, but for the operations of the 3rd Infantry Division, the fighting to clear the area of Germans was mainly to last until the 24th. The Red Army’s thrust through the centre of the province was along the line of Chełm-Lublin-Puławy.

The 7th Infantry Regiment - Chełm



(Courtesy of IPN Lublin)

The 7th Infantry Regiment was the weakest force amongst the ranks of the 3rd Infantry Division in *Lubelszczyzna* at the start of Operation “Tempest”.

This was mainly due to the strength of the NSZ and BCh in the area, but perhaps more importantly as part of the anti-partisan initiatives launched by the German authorities, from the 17th-21st July a large part of the Chełm inspectorate was witness to a large pacification campaign. In addition to this, in Włodawa district, there is very little surviving archival evidence about the AK's movements. These factors combined mean that following the AK's actions in this inspectorate is very difficult. What is known is that according to a report by the regional command dated 29th July, the AK units in Chełm concentrated their forces in the area of Surchów and Żółkiewka. After this in the Chełm region AK units took part in skirmishes around the crossing point on the river Bug at Dorohusk where the bridge was blown up. AK units then helped the Soviet Army to liberate the city of Chełm on the 22nd.⁸

This story of AK resistance is in stark contrast to the official Soviet line of events, as summed up by Marshall Rokossovskii. In his memoirs he states:

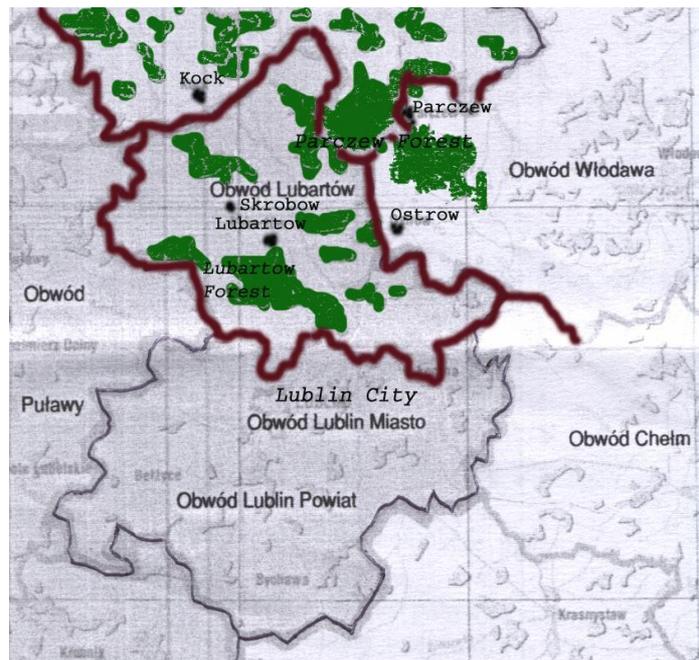
Only the AK- the Armia Krajowa- kept aloof. Our first meeting with representatives of this organisation left an unpleasant impression. On receiving information that a Polish formation calling itself the 7th AK division had occupied the forests north of Lublin, we decided to send out several staff liaison officers to contact them. At the meeting the AK officers, wearing Polish uniform, held aloof and rejected our proposals for combined operations against the Nazis...⁹

As Rokossovskii had set up his forward command base on the western bank of the Bug River in the town of Włodawa, the force to which he was referring was the Chełm inspectorate AK. According to this account, the Soviets, from the very moment that they crossed the Bug River found that the AK in Lublin refused to fight in joint operations, yet it also depends on Rokossovskii's definition of joint operations. It is perfectly likely that to the Soviets 'combined operations against the Nazis' meant Soviet-Berling Army¹⁰ combined operations.

Whilst the lack of information on the actions of the 7th Infantry Regiment in Chełm means that refuting Rokossovskii's claim is difficult, if true, it

would have been an anomaly within the region as a whole. Thus the actions of other forces operating in the forests to the north of Lublin provide a sharp contrast to this account. According to research undertaken by Roman Jezior and Czesław Gregorowicz on the AK in Lubartów at this time, the commander of the AK in Lubartów, “Okon”, had established contact with the Soviet forces entering the area at the start of Operation “Tempest”. After establishing contact, “Okon” acquainted the Soviets with the situation in the area and returned to them nine Red Army soldiers who had escaped from captivity a month earlier and had been given shelter. According to a report by the former commander of post II, Jan Majerski, “Anastaza”, the attitude of the forces entering the Lubartów area, amongst them AL units under the command of Grzegorz Korczyński, only changed after the clearance of the Germans. ¹¹

The 8th Infantry Regiment and 27th Volhynian Division in Lublin



(Courtesy of IPN Lublin)

The 27th Volhynian Division had been operating in a large area in and around the Parczew, Włodawa and Lubartów forests for about a month prior to the enactment of Operation “Tempest”. At this time, the division was composed of around 3,500 men. As discussed in the previous chapter, operating in the same area were other partisan groups, independent

communists and communist groupings directly subordinate to the army and security forces of the Soviet Union. Amongst them were several thousand partisans of the 2nd and 3rd Brigade Soviet group, under the command of General Baranowski and Captain Bielowa. In total, this force numbered about 4,000 men. In addition to this the military group of Leon Kasman commanded a unit of around sixty NKVD functionaries. ¹² The 27th Volhynian Division, in conjunction with these other, often stronger, units had been operating in this area of the province during July helping to disorganise the German lines of defence in the face of the approaching Red Army. The German response was to launch operation “*Wirbelsturm*”, but this operation was not a great success as it only really succeeded in scattering the local AL force, whilst the 27th Volhynian Division was able to break through the German ring on 21st July to the south and the Lubartów forest.

During Operation “*Tempest*”, the attack plan of the 27th Volhynian Division was to strike in three directions towards the towns of Kock, Lubartów and the village of Firlej on the road to Lublin. This attack was duly launched on 21st July. The first units into the town of Lubartów were from the 27th Volhynian Division, it marched into the town along Ulica Ulotka to the cheers of local women who threw flowers at the troops. The 50th Infantry Regiment, 27th Volhynian Division, under the command of Major Szatowski, “*Kowala*” took the barracks, disarmed the German guards, secured the weapons left behind by the enemy and managed to take the station, which was on the line to Lublin. There they seized a German supply train and took around 100 weapons and a lot of ammunition. ¹³ Once the town had been taken on the sunny evening of Saturday 22nd July 1944, the central staff headquarters of the district commander, Roman Jezior “*Okon*”, was established in Lubartów middle school with a platoon guarding the building. Throughout that evening and the next morning elements of the 8th Infantry Regiment kept arriving in the town, whilst the *Delegatura* began setting up its administration in the centre. ¹⁴ Lubartów is and was a small place, with the middle school on the north western corner of the central cross roads and the new *Delegatura* headquarters being opposite on the south eastern corner on the road to Lublin. Elements of the 27th Volhynian Division then moved out of Lubartów to

take the ancestral home of the Zamojski family, the manor house at Kozłówka less than eight miles outside of Lubartów.

As part of the same three-pronged attack, a battalion from the 27th Volhynian Division, which was commanded by Captain Filipowicz, was operating in the area around the mouth of the Wieprz River. This area, around the Wieprz River mouth and the River Tyśmienice, was an area of swampland and marsh. This terrain provided good cover for the unit's attack on the town of Kock, which they took successfully along with weapons, vehicles and enemy prisoners.¹⁵ Finally, in the third part of this operation, a battalion commanded by Major Pukacki "*Gzymsa*" seized the village of Firlej to the south. By the end of 22nd July the 27th Volhynian Division had successfully taken three areas of key local significance. On the same day, the command sent a message back to central command informing them that the above towns had been taken and that they were awaiting further orders.¹⁶ By capturing the village of Firlej, the 27th Volhynian Division helped to cut off the main road to the north out of Lublin. The capturing of the town of Lubartów, meant that the Germans lost control of one of the largest towns in the area and a key section of railway line. Finally the capture of Kock meant that the AK had taken the key crossroads town in the north of the area.¹⁷ However in the overall scope of the liberation of the Lublin region, the actions of the 27th Volhynian Division were strictly limited in scope, and took place in a largely wooded and thinly populated area of the province.

In the final days of its existence as a fighting force, the 27th Volhynian Division was based in and around the town of Lubartów. It was to be in this area, near the village of Skrobów, that the force entered into talks with the nearest commander of the Red Army, D. Bakanova of the 74th Soviet Guards Infantry Division, and it was the 27th Volhynian Division that was amongst the first AK units in *Lubelszczyzna* to be faced with the ultimatum of disarm, enlist in Berling or be arrested.¹⁸ The Red Army started entering Lubartów at around 9am on 23rd July. It was followed by Korczyński's 1st Lubelski AL Brigade at around midday. During that afternoon, in the centre of this small provincial town, three rounds of talks were held between the Soviets, the AK and the AL. The first and second

rounds descended into a slanging match between the AK and AL commanders. Despite the fact that there are reports of many joint AK/AL/Red Army actions against the Germans in the Lubartów district during 22nd and 23rd July, the tone of these meetings can be summed up by the AL commander, G. Korczyński's declaration: 'Gentleman officers- you are bandits! You tried to break my soldiers. You denounced my men to the Gestapo.' On the evening of July 23rd, the governmental activity of the *Delegatura* in Lubartów was stopped by the AL and Red Army. ¹⁹ On 25th July, the 27th Volhynian Division cabled back to London to inform the command of what was happening. The 27th Volhynian Division had only just escaped Soviet disarmament in its home province a matter of weeks before, but the key fact about this report is that the Soviets were now disarming AK units in territory that they recognised as Polish and not Soviet. The ramifications of this short report were massive therefore: 'The Soviets are disarming us- I repeat- The Soviets are disarming us – 27th I.D.'

20

Elsewhere in the Lublin inspectorate Operation "Tempest" continued. ²¹ A matter of forty minutes drive to the south of Lubartów, on 21st July the AK Lublin city district concentrated its forces for Operation "Tempest". Here in the city of Lublin itself Operation "Tempest" began for the 8th Infantry on the evening of Saturday 22nd July. In the city the AK forces had been divided into five regions, numbering around 1,200 people. The fourth platoon 8th Infantry Regiment concentrated in the area of Czechowa, Marysina and Wola Sławińska near to the Dąbrowa Forest. ²² The AK in the city was able to take command of several streets in the provincial capital and successfully break off communications between the Germans defending the city centre and their forces outside the city. Post I started its attack in the Śródmieście area of Lublin. This area, as its name suggests was very close to the city centre and to the nerve centre of the German occupation on the city's main street, Krakowskie Przedmieście. Platoons of post I attacked and took the German administrative buildings on that street. Post III was able to seize the Religious Seminary, which had been used by the Germans as a hospital. Troops from posts IV and V successfully took the SD building and the waterworks. However, by far the

greatest success was achieved by platoons of post II. Moving out from the city's southern suburbs of Piaski and Diesiąta, these units were able to attack and take the sugar factory, the gas plant, the electricity plant and the main railway station.²³ Most of these attacks took place at the same time that the Red Army began its attack on the city on Sunday 23rd and Monday 24th.²⁴ The Soviet attack of that night began with an armoured bombardment. On the morning of the 23rd, the Red Army attacked the German forces defending the city from the south, from Ulica Piłsudski this attack was held up by the Germans on Ulica Narutowicza. Another attack, this time from the north of the city, along Ulica Lubartowska, met with more success. The Red Army was able to clear the old town and the rest of the city centre of its German occupiers. It was at this point that Vassily Grossman found himself riding up the city's main streets. From his account he was within yards of the platoons of post II yet no mention was made of their existence. In fact, it was in the city on the 23rd that the first local AK force, the "Kmicic" unit, was disarmed by the Soviets.



*The Red Army Parades down Krakowskie Przedmieście after entering Lublin,
July 1944*

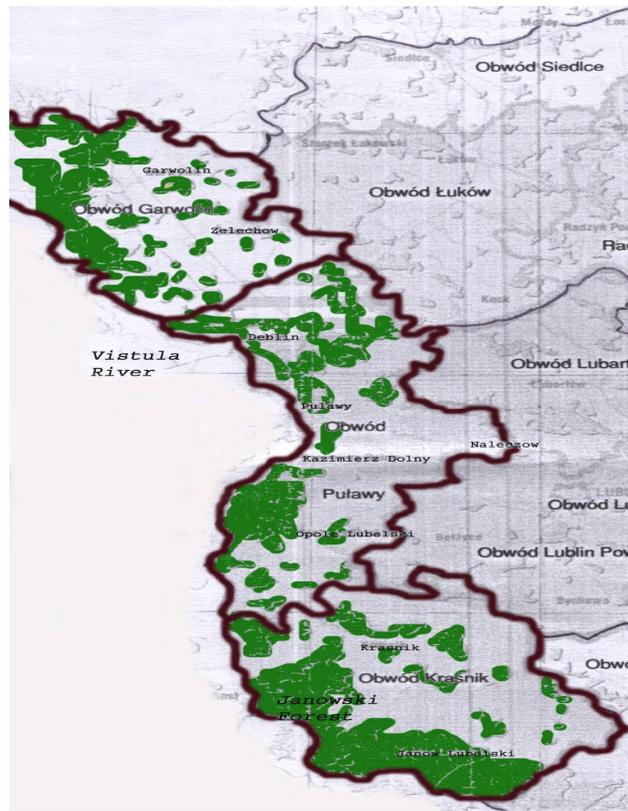
(A.G. Kister, Studium Zniewalania; Walka aparatu bezpieczeństwa z polskim zbrojnym podziemiem niepodległościowym na Lubelszczyźnie 1944-1947, Krakow 2005)



The above photograph shows the commanders of the AK 8th Infantry Regiment meeting with officers of the Soviet Army, somewhere in the Lublin inspectorate. July 1944

(Z. Mańkowski and I. Caban, Związek Walki Zbrojnej i Armia Krajowa w Okręgu Lubelskim 1939- 44, Lublin 1971)

The 15th Infantry Regiment - Puławy

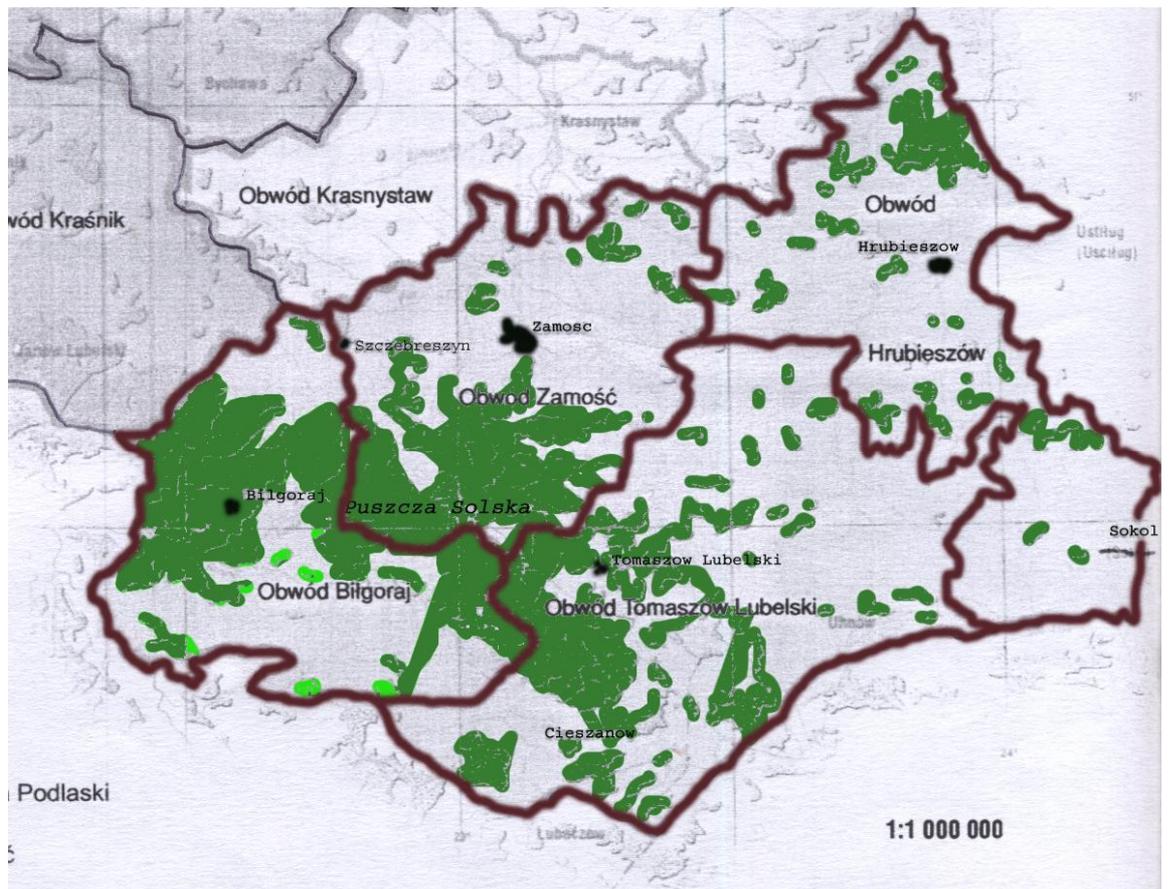


(Courtesy of IPN Lublin)

The operations in the Puławy inspectorate undertaken by the 15th Infantry Regiment were typified by their large geographical range and by the co-operation between the AK and other forces. Firstly due to the breakdown of inspectorates in *Lubelszczyzna*, the Puławy inspectorate's forces had to operate over the largest distances - this meant that co-ordinated operations in the inspectorate were more difficult than in other areas. The Inspectorate's boundaries meant that it roughly formed a long boomerang that ran two thirds of the length of *Lubelszczyzna* along the Vistula. In addition to the 15th Infantry Regiment, the inspectorate was also the base for the 8th Infantry Regiment's 3rd Battalion which was operating in the area of Janów Lubelski to the very south. In Puławy district the AK concentrated for Tempest in the village of Wronów in the parish of Końskowola. ²⁵ In the Kraśnik district, Commander Tadesz Wingert "*Warta*" concentrated around 200 men near the Vistula River for the start of operations. ²⁶ Operations began in the Puławy district on 21st July when sections from the "*Debicz*" platoon fired on a German column in Kazimierz Dolny. On the next day, the 3rd Battalion of the 15th Infantry Regiment, under the command of "*Turnus*", along with soldiers of the BCh and AL ambushed a SS staff car on the road between Puławy and Wąwolnica. Next they ambushed and captured a German unit in the same area. Later on in the same day, two German armoured cars near the village of Kurów attacked the group. As a result of the skirmish, the group captured one of the armoured cars. It was at this point that the commander of the force made contact with members of a Red Army tank column. Elsewhere, on the 24th a platoon from the 3rd Battalion under the command of "*Melchior*" ambushed the German troops guarding the bridge at Bobrownika and then went on to ambush another German group in the area. On 23rd July, a twenty-strong unit led by the commander of the Nałęczów area, "*Weneda*", had entered the spa town in order to secure the weapons left behind by the enemy and to take the town's railway station a couple of miles to the north. On the same day a seven-man patrol under the command of "*Mazowiecki*" stopped and seized three cars, capturing two police officers. On 25th July a unit from post I of the Dęblin sub-district fought with a German unit near the Vistula River killing three Germans. On the same day, in reaction to

SS units attempting to burn the village of Zastaw, a unit under the command of "Debicza" together with BCh soldiers fought against the Germans for an hour and a half, forcing them to withdraw from the village. Again on the 25th, the units "Przepiórka" - "Zagończyk" along with local units of the AL and BCh fought against a 150 strong German unit which was in the process of setting fire to the village of Końskowola on the road to Puławy. During this fighting, units of the Red Army entered the village and cleared the area. Finally from 26th-30th July, units from the Puławy district helped to reconnoitre and take the town of Puławy along with units of the Soviet Army. In addition they also helped to take the towns of Wąwolnica and Poniatowa during this period.²⁷

9th Infantry Regiment - Zamość



(Courtesy of IPN Lublin)

The second main thrust of the Red Army into the Lublin region was along the line of Hrubieszów-Zamość-Kraśnik. The line of attack that the 9th Infantry Regiment followed however was in the direction of Zamość-Hrubieszów-Szczebrzeszyn. ²⁸ On 21st July in Zamość inspectorate, the town of Bełżec was taken and held until the arrival of the Soviets. In the eastern town of Hrubieszów, after taking the town the units commanded by Marian Gołębiowski, "Korab", were disarmed by the Soviets. This appears to be the first case of disarming in this region and was almost certainly carried out by units of the NKVD. ²⁹ Elsewhere, the AK and Red Army were fighting shoulder to shoulder. Moving into the south-centre of the province, the Red Army began a bombardment of the city of Zamość on 23rd July. Most of the bombs were dropped in the vicinity of the city's zoo, meaning that the beautiful city was able to avoid significant damage to its old town. By the 24th, Red Army and AK units had cut off the roads out of the Szczebrzeszyn area forcing the last of the German units in the area to attempt to escape via the road to Frampol. On 25th July the village of Zwierzyniec was taken by Soviet units. After the taking of Zwierzyniec and Szczebrzeszyn, "Adam" received news from "Sas" that units in the Hrubieszów district had been disarmed by the Soviets. On the 25th Wacław Wnukowski, "Kabel", and his men arrived in the old town of Zamość at 14.00 - around two hours before Soviet forces entered the city. After the liberation of the city, the head of the *Delegatura* in the City Antoni Wiącek, "Sandomierski", announced the re-establishment of independent Polish government in Zamość. ³⁰

Zygmunt Klukowski, the local AK information service officer in Szczebrzeszyn, recorded a typical scene during the liberation of his town on 26th July:

Around 7:30 am, from the direction of the bridge, a small group of Soviet soldiers came walking towards the town.

At 8 am a Russian Officer arrived at the hospital. While talking with him I heard the cry, "our boys are coming!" I left everything and ran to see for myself. From the direction of Blonie a group of approximately twenty young men approached; all were armed, in (AK) uniform, with red scarves around their necks and red and white

arm-bands on their sleeves. The people went wild. They were crying, shouting, and throwing flowers...

"Podkowa" (the local AK commander) received information that the Russian colonel to whom (he) was to report had arrived. When we went outside we found the Colonel standing by his car. After a short introduction he began a speech. He talked about the Germans, brothers and the independence of Poland. He assured us that the Russians are our friends and the Russian military will give the Poles complete freedom to organise our own administration, but it must be democratic. He was a very good speaker. ³¹

In fact, the AK soldiers that Klukowski describes were actually from units of the 9th Infantry Regiment along with a company of the 24th Infantry Regiment from the 27th Volhynian Division. The key part of the Soviet officer's speech, as recorded by Klukowski is in his mention that the new Polish government 'must be democratic'. This is key, as the use of the word 'democratic' was to have a huge significance for the future of Poland. Unknown to Klukowski and his countrymen at the time 'democratic' would ultimately mean communist. To the audience, 'democratic' doubtlessly meant a return of the exiled government, but as it was to emerge, the communists were to constantly link that body to the undemocratic Constitution of 1935. Ultimately therefore the Government-in-Exile was not, to the incoming Soviets, democratic and would not be allowed to return as a whole. However this would not have been discernable to the people at the time, the speech of this Soviet officer must have had a very comforting effect on the ears of its audience.



Entrance of the "Kabel" unit into Zamość old town square
(J. Józwiakowski, Armia Krajowa na Zamojszczyźnie, Norbertinum Lublin
2007)



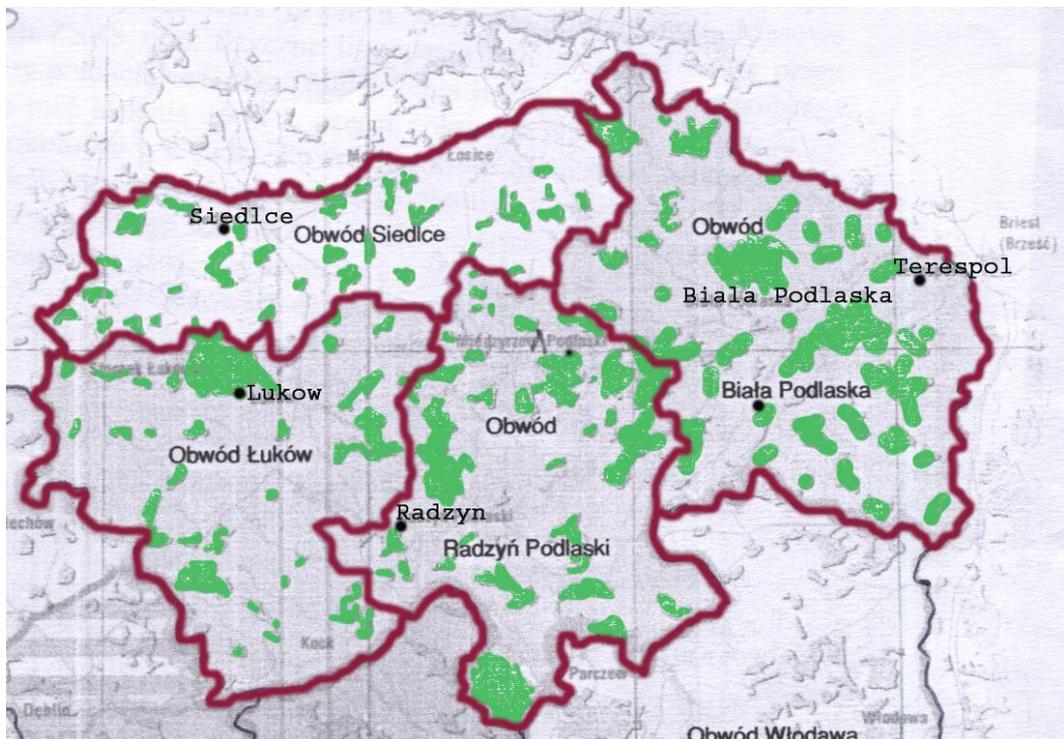
*AK troops receive flowers after the liberation of Zamość. This picture was
taken in front of the City hall on 25th July 1944*
(J. Józwiakowski, Armia Krajowa na Zamojszczyźnie, Norbertinum Lublin
2007)



The head of the Delegatura in Zamość, Antoni Wiącek, “Sandomierski”, in the city a few days after taking control, 29th July 1944

(J. Józwiakowski, Armia Krajowa na Zamojszczyźnie, Norbertinum Lublin 2007)

Operations of the 9th Infantry Division



(Courtesy of IPN Lublin)

The 9th Infantry Division which was based to the north of the province in the Radzyń inspectorate, was composed of the 34th and 35th Infantry Regiments, along with the 9th Artillery Regiment. In July 1944 the area had around 8000 soldiers at its disposal but only 1600 of this number were in the 9th Infantry Division. On the morning of 21st July Ludwik Bittner, “*Halka*”, the inspectorate commander and one of the most experienced commanders in the region, ordered the concentration of his forces. In Biała Podlaska district the 34th Infantry Regiment was concentrated near the village of Leszczanka, in the districts of Łuków and Radzyń Podlaski, the 35th Infantry Regiment was concentrated in the region of the Kakolewnica Forest. ³² The attack route of the Division was along the line of Łuków-Międzyrzec-Biała Podlaska, which meant that its operational route skirted the northernmost area of the region. Their operations began on the night of the 21st and 22nd July when the “*Zenon*” unit attacked a German column on the road from Biała Podlaska-Łomaszy. ³³ Next, on the 23rd, the 34th Infantry Regiment led by “*Zenon*” surprised a German unit on the Biała Podlaska-Parczew road, scattering the enemy and destroying an armoured car. ³⁴ The 9th Infantry Division provides perhaps the best example of regular Red Army-AK co-operation during the period of Operation “*Tempest*”. The Division’s attack along the north of the region was made in conjunction with Soviet armoured cavalry and infantry units. On 23rd July, units of the Division were able to take the town of Łuków in conjunction with Soviet forces. On the same day, a unit of the 35th Infantry Regiment, numbering around 170 men, attacked and took the railway station along with its rolling stock at Bedlno. On the 24th the “*Zenon*” unit attacked a retreating German column near the village of Leszczanka to the south of Biała Podlaska. ³⁵ The next two biggest objectives in the Division’s attack route, the towns of Biała Podlaska and Międzyrzec, were both taken on 26th July, and were once again taken along with Red Army units. ³⁶ Biała Podlaska itself was taken by the 34th Infantry Regiment under the command of “*Zenon*”, which took the town along with the Red Army’s 278th Infantry under the command of Colonel Pawlowski. Skeletal platoons from the Division, commanded by Piotr Makarczuk “*Gruda*”, Jan Giewartowski “*Janka*”, along with a platoon under Zygmunt Lukaszuka “*Wrzos*” and a mounted reconnaissance patrol under Zygmunt Raczynski “*Nalęcz*”, attacked the town from the south, protecting the town’s power station.

After three days the 34th Infantry Regiment removed itself back to the nearby village of Leszczanka, where the command was able to send messages back to command in London from their R-31 radio transmitter. From 29th July until 3-4th August the commander of the 9th Infantry Division, Ludwik Bittner "*Halka*", engaged in talks with the Soviet command that was now based in Biała Podlaska. ³⁷ During the initial stages the 9th Infantry Division was re-armed by the Red Army and an agreement was reached with the local commander that would have allowed the Division to march to Warsaw fully armed. Joint struggle meant that in this region relations were cordial, at least for a few days.

Yet ultimately Red Army AK relations were not to be the key. The Red Army was followed into the province by the NKVD -and it is worth quoting an NKVD order given during this time as regards NKVD policy towards the AK:

- (1) Permit representatives of the Berling Army to enter the collecting centres for AK prisoners with a view to recruiting suitable NCOs and privates.
- (2) NCOs and privates who earlier expressed a willingness to serve in the Berling Army should be drafted... for use in auxiliary units of the Soviet Army.
- (3) AK staff officers with operational significance should be transferred to the relevant organs either of the NKVD- NKGB or of *Smersh* counter-intelligence.
- (4) Remaining AK officers should be sent to NKVD camps since otherwise they would occupy themselves by forming Polish underground operations. ³⁸

This order was given on 20th July to NKVD units in Lublin province, on the very day that the local AK began to enact Operation "Tempest". There is nothing ambiguous about these orders, once the Germans in a local area had been destroyed this blueprint for the destruction of the AK was to be put into effect, irrespective of what help they had given. Indeed such a mind set enabled the Soviets to set aside the aid that the 27th Volhynian Division had given them when on 25th July they forcibly disarmed the unit.

Equally, the 35th Battalion, a unit that formed part of the 8th Infantry Regiment was forced to freeze its operations during Operation “Tempest” the day after the disarming of the Volhynian Division. On 26th July the Lublin regional command sent a cipher to London informing central command that the 35th Battalion under threat of force from the Soviets had been forced to sign a declaration and join the Berling Army ³⁹

Conflict over the new civilian administration of Lublin

A day after the Germans had been cleared from the city of Lublin, Waldemar Lotnik, who had recently escaped from Majdanek, started the walk into the city after spending the night in a barn near the death camp. He recalled:

Two days later I approached Lublin along the Warsaw Road, which had once been a magnificent avenue lined on either side with plane trees and parkland, dotted with imposing public buildings and the houses of the wealthy... On the way I passed three charred Soviet tanks with their turrets blown away. The stench of rotting flesh in the July heat was intense. They were from the Ukrainian front under Rokossovsky and had been knocked out by artillery from the Byelorussian front under Koniev... Some houses had been peppered with bullets and here and there I could see evidence of mortar shells... the city was still in turmoil and the survivors had no desire to celebrate their liberation, however great their relief that the Germans had gone. ⁴⁰

On the same day that the Soviets were disarming the 27th Volhynian Division some 15 miles away, in the city of Lublin the AK/ *Delegatura* were busy attempting to re-establish the independent apparatus of government. On 25th July Władysław Cholewa, “*Paśnik*”, the Delegate of the Government-in-Exile, read out a proclamation in the city centre announcing that the legal Polish authorities were now in power in Lublin. The new headquarters of the local government, the *Miejaska Rada Jedności Narodowej* (MRJN), was on the city’s main street, at number 51 Krakowskie Przedmieście. It was a central and symbolic choice of location, at the heart

of the city, within a stone's throw of the old town. It was a clear declaration to the people of Lublin and to the Soviet forces in the city that the exiled government was exiled no longer. It also signified how the modified plans for Operation "Tempest" were being enacted successfully in the province – as ordered, the AK-*Delegatura* were making a resounding declaration to their Soviet liberators that this was Polish territory and that they were the Polish government. Along with the declaration, the news was posted on walls, doors and notice boards throughout the city. In addition to this announcement, the serious work of attempting to create government was begun. Units of the State Security Corps, *Panstwowo Korpus Bezpieczeństwa* (PKB), became the city's new police force, patrolling the city and being identified by the PKB initials on the Polish flag on their arm sleeves. One of the new government's key roles were to station PKB men outside key public buildings and ensure that basic services could continue running. As a part of this the new police force was placed outside the gas, electricity and railway stations, along with the city's abandoned shops to prevent looting. On the same day the commander of the PKB in Lublin, "Adam" announced the formation of his police force, along with the order that PKB units were to take immediate control of policing in 60% of the region, and perhaps provocatively, that the new police force would disarm any Poles that were not part of a force subordinated to the AK or PKB. ⁴¹

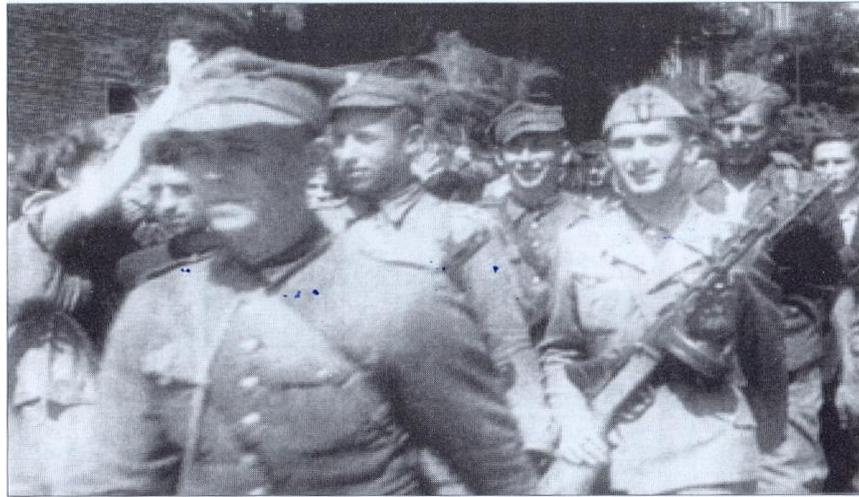
Equally the AK forces in the city, which had been led by "Konrad" during the fighting in the absence of Stefan Dębicki "Kmicic", formally revealed themselves. "Kmicic" set up a new headquarters for the city command at 4 Ulica Górna, which was about a five-minute walk from the new MRJN base. Throughout the 26th and the 27th the process of installing an administration continued with the appointment of an official town president and the appointment of local ministers for public institutions and industry. As a part of this process the pre appointed president of the *Delegatura*, Roman Słaski, who was not in the city at this point, saw a temporary replacement, Marian Chojnowski, appointed as provisional vice-president until his arrival - Słaski was to arrive in the city later. As the *Delegatura* was now attempting to fulfil its long held aim to return as the government, so the local AK was beginning to return to the role of a conventional armed force. At least this process can be seen to have begun

in the announcement by the new administration of the re-establishment of the army and its calls for a regional mobilisation. This was the first stage of the so-called Reconstitution of the Armed Forces plan that had been drawn up during the German occupation. According to the AK its plan, met with a strong initial response, for it was perhaps no surprise that many local men were very keen to respond to this call to arms in 'their' army. Yet by doing this, by calling up the men of the province into their Police force and their military, the AK/*Delegatura* were effectively presenting a challenge to Soviet plans for recruitment into the Berling Army - the Soviets had also set up a recruitment centre in the centre of the city for the Berling Army. ⁴²

The next day, 27th July, can be seen to be one of the most crucial days in modern Polish history. At the beginning of the day the central command in Lublin, both civilian and military were still operating freely, openly expanding their activities, and recruiting new men to their cause. By nightfall, however, the picture would look very different. The key to this change was the swing in the weight of numbers between communist and non-communist forces in the city which took place during the day. Equally, the open activity of the preceding two days had meant that virtually all of the key players in the Polish underground had revealed themselves and their whereabouts to the Soviets.

On the morning of the 27th, the AL started to concentrate its units around Lublin and entered the city in a conspicuous show of force. On the same day units of the Berling Army started to enter the city. The arrival of these large Polish communist forces inspired local communist groups within the city. Having previously remained quiet, they now started to set up People's national Unions. After this Lublin was a very different place. The regional delegate of the PKB, Józef Dolina "*Zych*", was invited to Berling's headquarters for a meeting. In this meeting it was demanded that the PKB forces in the city submit to the local AL commander. Dolina replied that he could only follow the orders of the legal authorities, and Berling said that that being the case he would meet with Cholewa himself at 13.00. This promise was never kept. Instead, on the night of the 27th-28th July the

Delegatura's new government building on Krakowskie Przedmieście was stormed and captured by Berling's forces. ⁴³



27th July, the first AL partisan units, led by Grzegorz Korczyński, enter Lublin.

(A.G. Kister, Studium Zniewalania; Walka aparatu bezpieczeństwa z polskim zbrojnym podziemiem niepodległościowym na Lubelszczyźnie 1944-1947, Krakow 2005)

In Zamość “Dąbrowa” and “Adam” had engaged in talks with Berling Army representatives the day before. After these talks “Dąbrowa”, on the morning of the 27th, left to go to Lublin for discussions with “Marcin”. ⁴⁴ On the same day “Marcin” had been invited to a conference with the commander of the Soviet 69th Army, General Kolpaczka, in which he was faced with the option of joining his forces to the Berling army or be disarmed. “Marcin” chose the later of the two options and decided to disperse his troops. However, both he and his officers were placed under Soviet arrest and then kept under guard until 29th July. In taking this option, “Marcin” was following the orders given to him on 12th July by central command. In these orders, he had been told to resist recruitment into the Berling Army and that only ‘in the last extremity’ was he to disband units and stash arms. It is not known precisely what was said at his meeting with the Soviets but it must have given “Marcin” the feeling that his forces were facing the last extremity. In a cipher sent back by him on 30th July, “Marcin” stated that during the meeting, General Kolpaczka asked him when he was given the order to fight the Germans. ⁴⁵ Co-operating, “Marcin” responded that the order, Order Number 43, had been

received by him during 1943. Further, Kolpaczka asked him when he was given the order to attack Soviet units – the first such attempt perhaps to link the AK to the fascist forces in Lublin province. Naturally, as no such order had been given, “*Marcin*” denied this claim. ⁴⁶ Such a line of questioning must have confirmed for the regional commander that he was in an incredibly difficult position – disarming and dispersal would at least save the bulk of his forces from being targeted by the NKVD.

So the order to disarm was given, and around 1000 soldiers of the Lublin AK handed in their weapons to the Soviets on the 28th July. Equally at this time “*Marcin*”, whilst presumably still being kept guard by Soviet troops issued a briefing to the members of the AK regional command then present in the city, in which he ordered them to demobilise and disarm their forces. On the next day, 29th July at 12 noon the AK troops in the city were officially dismissed. ⁴⁷ The units in the rest of the province would follow, but some not until August. “*Marcin’s*” report back to London on 31st July is very telling as to why he took the second option presented by the Soviets.

Alarm – *Marcin*.

Although the Soviet attitude towards the AK is bad I feel that it is crucial to reveal our units in other areas. It proves that our posture is correct. It will open Soviet eyes to the fact that we are the true rulers of the area. There is no result of recruitment to the Berling Army. This is a brilliant social attitude. The KRN (The PPR sponsored National Homeland Council) can be seen to be a complete fiasco. ⁴⁸

“*Marcin*” seems to have believed, therefore, that in the face of the Soviet stance his forces would adopt a position of passive resistance, refuse to mobilise into a Soviet controlled army and ignore communist sponsored political initiatives. Clearly, trust in the intervention of the exiled government and, above all, their Anglo-Saxon allies is the most important factor here. “*Marcin*” was continuing to commit both himself and his entire command to Bór-Komorowski’s disclosure policy because not even the Soviets would attempt to impose communist rule in an area, which was governed by an allied force. This sense of waiting for the immediate

repression to pass and for the Anglo-Saxons to assert themselves, is equally clear in another message that the Lublin command sent to the Government-in-Exile on the evening of 29th July. In this cipher the command talks about being squeezed by the two million Soviet troops that were coming into the province and how the Soviet aim was to 'freeze out' the Anglo-Saxons in a policy of AK destruction that was about 'interference in the name of power.'⁴⁹ To "Marcin", the AK had to remain open and the Soviets would eventually change their stance. Disbandment meant that most of his forces would stand a chance of surviving what was probably hoped to be a short-lived period.

However whilst "Marcin" had been under Soviet guard, the *Delegatura's* governmental apparatus was being dismantled. On 28th July the local PKB delegate was summoned to the Soviets and in front of two witnesses the demand that he submit to the AL was repeated. It is interesting that on the 27th the communist line had been to invite the civilian branch to meet with the 'Polish' Berling Army, whilst the AK leadership had been invited to meet directly with the Soviet military commander in the area. Clearly the decision had already been made that civilian matters in Poland were now in the hands of Polish communists acting at Moscow's behest whilst military matters were to be in the direct hands of the Soviets. Yet on the 28th this had been changed, now both the AK and *Delegatura* were being dealt with directly by the Soviets. Perhaps the Soviets were discovering that the Polish communists commanded very little respect or influence on their countrymen. The Soviets would have to do everything themselves.

At the meeting with the Soviets on the 28th "Zych" too decided to disarm and disband the PKB; from now on the *Delegatura* had no effective police force, no way of enforcing its law on the city it was attempting to govern. The Soviets now had both the numbers and the will to enforce their own law on the city of Lublin irrespective of whether the local population supported them or not. Whilst the storming of the *Delegatura's* headquarters the night before had not signalled the end of their administration, the disarming of the PKB marked the symbolic end. In response to the closure of their offices on Krakowskie Przedmieście, the

Delegatura had moved to number 7 Ulica Chopina, but by the evening of the 28th this building had been captured as well. ⁵⁰

The Lublin Committee

The taking of Lublin was extremely important for the future of post war Poland, as it was the first sizeable Polish City taken in territory recognised by the Soviet Union as being 'Polish'. The opportunity to exploit this fact was duly taken by the Soviets. On 22nd July 1944 the Stalinist puppet of the Polish Committee of National Liberation, *Polski Komitet Wyzwolenia Narodowego*, (PKWN) or Lublin Committee was established. For the first few days of its existence, however, the 'Lublin' Committee sat in the city of Chełm in the east of *Lubelszczyzna* around 60 miles to the east of Lublin. In a typical piece of Soviet factual manipulation the establishment of the committee in Chełm had been announced on Moscow radio on 21st July, whereas in reality Chełm itself was not seized by the Red Army until the 22nd and members of the PKWN did not reach the city until the 27th. Therefore, whilst the *AK-Delegatura* was being hounded and dismantled in Lublin city the Soviets were setting up their puppet government to the east in readiness for the moment when the provincial capital could be 'secured'. The establishment of the PKWN marked a major turning point in Polish-Soviet relations. Prior to this point there had seemed no viable alternative to restoring the Polish Government-in-Exile. Through the PKWN the Soviets had created a bridgehead for future communist rule. It would administer over the newly liberated Polish territories in conjunction with its Soviet masters until the state of political flux had passed, and would then become the centre-piece of a new communist Polish administration. The Government-in-Exile, with Churchill's backing could not be ignored completely, but with the PKWN in place Stalin had taken a huge step towards creating a 'friendly' Polish post war state. Now there was a communist alternative that Stalin could pay lip service to, a 'government' that was in Poland, a government that was 'fighting' for a free Poland with the people of Poland.

Whilst this was very much the image that Stalin wished to portray to the world and thus undermine the prestige and support of the AK, this was in

reality far from being the truth. The committee was an entirely Soviet construct from its very inception. It was created in Moscow and its manifesto stamped out by Soviet not Polish communists. Moscow's new puppet was composed of the Moscow based Union of Polish Patriots (ZPP) and Central Bureau of Polish Communists (CBKP) and the Polish-based PPR. Whilst the *Polska Partia Robotnica*, the party that formed the backbone of the new committee, had been created on 28th December 1941 their party membership had always remained small and isolated. The PPR had attempted guerrilla campaigns against the occupying German authorities from 1941 to 1944 and most if not all had ended in failure. Its military wing, the AL, had been relatively powerful in the Lublin region but had been largely undermined by the German actions of less than a month before. Therefore, Stalin chose the PKWN's new leaders, as they were reliable men with a history of strict adherence to Moscow. Men such as the Committee's new chairman, Edward Osóbka-Morawski, or the Security Minister Stanisław Radkiewicz. These Soviet backed men were placed in key positions in the new Committee to prevent it from becoming too independently minded.

On 30th July Cholewa, the Head of the *Delegatura* in Lublin was invited to the Soviet commander in Lublin, where he was told that he must work with the Polish communists. Cholewa refused this and on the next day he was taken to Chełm to meet with General Zukow and Osóbka-Morawski and Andrzej Witos of the PKWN. At the meeting he repeated that he was the representative of the legal Polish authorities and that he would not work with the PKWN. He then met the head of security, Radkiewicz, who advised him to stop all governmental activity with immediate effect.⁵¹ He returned to Lublin, from where he sent his report to the U.K. On 1st August the AK-*Delegatura* held a large meeting to discuss their response to the Soviet and PKWN demands. Yet, they were not given time to act on their deliberations. On 3rd August Cholewa was arrested and "*Marcin's*" arrest followed on the same day. The PKWN would now be the only government in *Lubelszczyzna*.

From the very inception of Operation "Tempest" the NKVD, if not the Red Army had a clear policy of neutralising the AK via the systematic arrests of its officers and the impressment of its men. Bór-Komorowski's attempt to

work with the Soviets, via his policy of non-concealment of forces was back-firing. Throughout July the AK had effectively offered themselves into the clutches of the NKVD. Yet, clearly the AK had helped in the liberation of the province, making a mockery of assertions such as those of Chuikov that the AK had simply watched. In fact if anything, it is highly probable that by fighting, by aiding the Soviet advance and by setting up their own administrations, the AK/*Delegatura* had probably reinforced the NKVD's determination to disarm and neutralise them.

The net result of implementing Operation "Tempest" in Lublin was that the AK had assisted the Soviets in their attempts to advance in towns and villages throughout the province. In total underground partisan forces had launched around 150 raids during Operation "Tempest". This had yielded, in military terms, 1,000 German dead, 1,200 German soldiers captured, seven enemy tanks destroyed, 31 enemy armoured cars captured or destroyed, and 24 guns and mortars captured or destroyed. The scope and range of the raids had varied considerably from inspectorate to inspectorate and was clearly impressive, yet ultimately the net results were questionable. Firstly the Soviets had managed to arrest virtually all of the underground's top military leaders by mid August. After the arrest of "Marcin", the commander of the 3rd Infantry Division Adam Switalski, was arrested on 13th August, and the commander of the 9th Infantry Division Ludwik Bittner, was arrested on 14th August. In addition to this many soldiers had been disarmed and forced to enlist into the Berling Army. Yet, as I. Caban points out in his study of the underground in this region, the majority of those NCOs and other ranks who had served in Operation "Tempest" had been able to return to their homes or quarters at the end of the operation, in the main still armed. The Soviets were clearly targeting the head but the body still remained very much alive at this point in time.⁵² This was in a large part due to "Marcin's" decision to disperse his forces before his arrest. In addition to this, as shown in chapter two, "Marcin" and the regional command had to an extent anticipated that the Soviets would take such an approach and had put a shadow command structure in place before the arrival of their 'liberators'. This meant that the AK in *Lubelszczyzna* was able to remain very much an operational force after this point. Although the shadow command limited the impact of the arrests,

many experienced members of the underground in the region had been lost; "Marcin" had been in a position of command in Lublin for two years. To some the policy of disclosure in effect had meant that Operation "Tempest" was nothing less than a catastrophe.

After Operation "Tempest", whilst the new, at first unofficial, regional commander Colonel Fraciszek Żak managed to preserve the core of the AK in the region, the AK and the *Delegatura* as an open force in the towns of Lublin province was to be effectively destroyed by September 1944. However, the underground and resistance as an idea had not been destroyed, the Poles were once again beginning to do what they had done under the German occupation. In August 1944 Żak was still the head of a sizeable, organised force. Until his suspension of activity in November of that year, Żak controlled the following inspectorates: Lublin, commanded by Edward Jasinski until his arrest on October 16th who was then succeeded by Stanisław Piotrowski; the Puławy inspectorate, commanded by Stanisław Kowalski; Radzyń, commanded by Stefan Drewnowski until his arrest and then Wilhelm Szczepaniewicz; the Chełm inspectorate commanded by Władysław Zalewski; and finally Zamość inspectorate, which was commanded by Stanisław Prusem. From September Żak was hiding in a flat in Lublin - within two months the AK in Lublin had become an underground conspiracy once again. ⁵³

The communists had managed to send the AK back underground and they appeared to be leaving nothing to chance. Indeed, Władysław Gomułka claims in his autobiography that nothing was left to chance when it came to the matter of who would ultimately be able to step into the power vacuum in Poland. He talks about how special operational groups formed from the PPR followed the advance of the Red Army into the newly liberated territories of Poland. He described their role thus: ' (To) build and extend the party organisational network, prepare the land reform and propagate the programme of the provisional Government'. ⁵⁴ Therefore, behind every Red Army unit there was the NKVD to arrest and impress members of the AK, allied to this the PPR was following behind in turn to plug the gap in administration. In effect the Soviets can be seen to have been removing two layers of government in the towns of Lublin in the summer of 1944.

The Red Army in conjunction with the AK had removed the Nazi administration from Lublin and now, within weeks often days, the AK/*Delegatura* administration was being removed in favour of the incoming PPR. However in the official post-war Soviet histories on this period, the very existence of the first phase was simply wiped from the record books. A section of Marshall Zhukov's memoirs in which he talks about the local authorities is very revealing in this respect: 'We had established normal relations with local authorities and public organisations, and had their co-operation where-ever it was possible.'⁵⁵ Technically Zhukov is correct in making this statement, as the local authorities of which he speaks are almost certainly the communist PKWN authorities. The Period in which the *Delegatura* had attempted to run the towns and work with the incoming Soviets had simply never, happened.

The key factor that the AK still had on its side as August 1944 began lay in the fact that the Government-in-Exile was still perceived to be the legitimate government of Poland by the vast majority of Poles and was recognised as such in London and Washington. In Lublin, the arrests and round ups had removed the AK's original top command in the towns of the region, and to some extent damaged its standing in society, but it could still enjoy the support of a population which still saw them as 'our boys'. This meant that in the rural areas of the province, where the PKWN and the NKVD had a small and infrequent presence local *Delegatura* men were still settling matters of government. Communist authority in much of the province, despite the huge numbers of Soviet troops in the area, was very much only skin deep. The PKWN had declared that it was the government yet in real terms it was an isolated committee with a few thousand followers in the PPR and its military wing, the AL. The PKWN had authority in an area directly occupied by Soviet troops; the danger was that when the troops left so would the PKWN's authority in Poland.

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- ¹⁰ The Berling Army, or the Polish First Army (*Pierwsza Armia Wojska Polskiego* 1 AWP) was formed in the Soviet Union in 1944, from the previously existing Polish I Corps as part of the *Ludowe Wojsko Polskie*, (Peoples Army of Poland, WP) and for the first part of its existence was a Polish force with a Soviet-dominated officer corps. It operated under the auspices of the Red Army, and it was often known by the title the Berling Army, due to the fact that Zygmunt Berling was the commander of this force up until the period of the Warsaw Uprising. Throughout 1944 and during the first months of 1945, the Lublin AK in their internal reports constantly refer to the military forces of the PKWN and its successor organisations as the Berling Army. This force however, was only headed by General Berling in combat for a relatively short period, with it entering combat in the summer of 1944 as part of the 1st Belorussian Front on the right wing of the Lwow-Sandomierz Operation. During this operation, the 1 AWP was involved in fighting in and around Lublin province, during the Soviet crossing of the river Vistula around the towns of Dęblin and Puławy. It was during this period that Lublin became a recruiting ground for the Polish communist forces. In September 1944 the Berling Army was involved in fighting around Warsaw in an attempt to support the Warsaw Uprising. However, those efforts received minimal Soviet support ending in failure and resulting in the subsequent replacement of General Berling as its commander. In the winter of 1945 the army fought in Pomerania, breaking through the *Pommernstellung* fortified line and captured Kolberg. In the Spring of 1945 the army, now numbering 78,556 soldiers, was shifted to the front on the river Oder in preparation for the final Soviet offensive of the war in Europe. The Polish Second Army also entered the line of battle at this time, and together the two armies contributed about 10% of the total forces involved in the operation. During the offensive it crossed the river on April 16 and joined the Battle of Berlin. In it, among other actions, the Polish units of the 1st army crossed the Hohenzollern Canal and advanced on Kremmen, Flatow, Paaren and Nauen. They ended their campaign by participating in the capture of the Brandenburg Gate. The army was disbanded after the war, on 22 August 1945. Its constituent units went on to serve in the armed forces of the newly created Polish People's Republic.
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Chapter 3

August 1944-October 1944

*Lubelszczyzna during the Warsaw
Uprising*

At the beginning of August the new communist PKWN was weak and its supporters were divided as to the way forward. They had been put into place in Lublin only days after the removal of the *Delegatura* and the arrest of the AK's regional commander. The AK's policy of disclosure had clearly not worked, neither in Lublin nor in the east. It had meant that the intelligence which the Soviets had gained on the AK from the AL and their own partisans was massively expanded - disclosure had revealed to the NKVD thousands of AK partisans in the region. Yet in the first few days of August, communist administration had only been established in the cities of Lublin and Chełm. At first members of the *Delegatura* and AK were running administrations in many rural areas and in some cases this was to be the case for the first couple of weeks. Whilst disclosure had failed, "*Marcin's*" decision to hand in weapons and disperse his forces meant that a significant number of his troops were able to avoid the first wave of arrests. Equally the decision to create a shadow command meant that the impact of "*Marcin's*" arrest was minimised. Thus the arrival of the Soviets did not herald the end of an organised underground in the province. Rather, in the first few days after Operation "Tempest", the NKVD was occupied with the soldiers that had been captured, in clearing the rear of the front and reconnoitring the region.

It was against this backdrop that the uprising in Warsaw was launched. This event was to have a significantly disruptive impact on the Lublin

region. The effects were immediate with the removal of the remaining AK *Delegatura* figures from the towns of the province. Equally, the uprising in Warsaw made huge demands on the men that had avoided the first wave of arrests. Across the region, area commands and individual units held discussions on whether to help their comrades in the capital. In the event many of them did go and merely walked into Soviet forces. The Uprising in the capital was to have a huge impact on the AK in *Lubelszczyzna* – for it was to provoke new waves of arrests by the NKVD. This, allied with the fact that the Warsaw Uprising meant that the eastern front was to unexpectedly halt to the west of the province for nearly six months, produced a situation in which “*Marcin’s*” idea of weathering the storm was severely tested. This process of weakening the ties of the underground was compounded by the Government-in-Exile’s decision not to send clear and consistent orders to the province.

Even so, the underground that remained, much weakened though it was, was able to retain its structure and to redirect some of its activities. Due to the early weakness and division of the PKWN, AK forces were able to penetrate many of the new structures of the fledgling administration, including even the security services. The PKWN’s early attempts to reach out to elements of the underground did not have the immediate effects that they hoped for. Rather, as the Uprising in Warsaw continued without serious Soviet help the people of the province became increasingly polarised. Equally, it took the NKVD in the province time to establish their base, to extend their intelligence networks and to familiarise themselves with the whole of the region. As a result, during the first few months of the Soviet presence in the region the NKVD were not able to cut off AK radio communications, nor destroy its command networks in Lublin. By the end of the period of the Warsaw Uprising, the AK in Lublin was still operating. Ultimately the period of the Warsaw Uprising was to be a crucial one in the history of the AK, not just for the fighters in Warsaw, but for their compatriots in Lublin - with out guidance from London the regional AK had to attempt to survive NKVD arrests in a weakened state whilst also go to Warsaw’s aid.

The Warsaw Uprising

In the city of Lublin the heads of the AK and *Delegatura* had been arrested, but a large number of men linked to both groups remained at liberty and continued to implement their government's plans for the re-establishment of an independent Poland. The Soviet Union had created the PKWN, their own puppet administration, and had now moved it to Lublin, but it had few supporters and little or no reach outside of its new headquarters.

Within the Communist movement there were clear divisions of opinion on how to overcome the hostility of the majority of the population. The main differences were between the Polish based communists in the PPR, and the Soviet-based ZPP communists who preferred to fall back on Red Army repression to assure a communist future for Poland. Differences between the two groups was not a new phenomenon, throughout a significant period of the war the PPR had developed without radio contact with Moscow. It had developed organically, and in many respects independently of Moscow. It had spent most of the war attempting to fight the Nazis and the NSZ, seeking to increase its support away from its traditional heartlands such as Łódź yet it still had only around 20,000 members by mid-1944. The PPR felt that they knew the temper of the Polish people; after all they had been trying and largely failing to gain popular support for some time. Their ZPP counterparts, who had been flown in from the Soviet Union, had had very little in put about the direction of the communist movement either through influence in Moscow or through influence of the PPR's military wing, the AL. At this stage there was no unified Polish communist strategy.¹

Aside from the communist factions within the PKWN, the PPS, was ultimately to be the committee's the most numerous and influential member. Drawing the majority of their support from their traditional strongholds in the industrial cities of Lublin, Zamość and Krosno, the socialists were the only other faction within the new Committee aside from the communists, who were to control its upper echelons, and therefore have a degree of influence in its policy making.² Many members of the PPR believed that this small base had to be broadened if the committee was

to become the post war government of Poland. Yet it was made quite clear in the committee's manifesto of 25th July that the AK and the Government-in-Exile were now the enemy and would not be tolerated:

The National Council of the Homeland, called forth by the fighting nation, is the sole legal source of authority in Poland. The émigré Government in London and its agency in Poland is an illegal and self-styled authority, based on the illegal Fascist constitution of April 1935. ³

This statement is typical of the approach that the PKWN took in order to undermine support for the Government-in-Exile. The reference to 'the fighting nation' was a constant line that the communists, both Polish and Soviet, took towards London. These 'fascists' were safely tucked away in Western Europe, whilst the real war was being waged in Poland by true Poles, by the Poles of the Communist Party. Equally, the reference to the 'Fascist constitution' was another line that the PKWN consistently took towards London. The constitution referred to was the 1935 *Sanacja* regime which was unpopular, distinctly authoritarian and undemocratic in nature. Even though the members of the Government-in-Exile had had nothing to do with this constitution, they had been members of the politically repressed opposition, the PKWN constantly attempted to link them with it. It was a desperate attempt to link London with the failures of the inter-war government, with the abject defeat of 1939 that had led to the terrible Nazi occupation.

Yet it is important to point out that in the initial stages of the Soviet occupation, the propaganda of the PKWN was markedly 'softer' in its tone than it would become. This can be seen to be part of the attempt to draw in more of the region's left leaning people, persuading them to support or at least to accept, the PKWN. As Rafał Wnuk points out in his study on the province's underground, PKWN documents from the period of the Warsaw Uprising are full of adjectives such as 'patriotic', 'democratic', 'people's' and 'national'. These were used and emphasised instead of the type of rhetoric more readily associated with Stalinist propaganda such as 'communist', or

'Marxist'. By using this type of language the PKWN were clearly attempting to appeal to the people's sense of Polishness and not their class loyalties. ⁴

With the PKWN apparently hesitating and the liberation of Warsaw seemingly imminent, it must have seemed as if everything was still to play for. The perception both amongst the AK, the Polish people and many in the PKWN was that the future hung on the fate of the uprising in Warsaw and the support of the western allies. Nothing seemed to have been decided in the international sphere; success in Warsaw and pressure from the western allies would surely persuade the Soviets to back-down. Such broad political reflections were reinforced by the results of Operation "Tempest" in the east. These had a great influence on the thinking of the AK command in the capital. Disclosure clearly was not working; throughout July the AK had in effect lost some of its largest units in the east of the country. It had tried co-operating, it had tried disclosure, what then was the AK to do next? To Bór-Komorowski and the high command it looked more likely every day that the Soviet Union was intent on presenting the AK with a *fait accompli*. ⁵

For this reason Bór-Komorowski at the suggestion of his subordinate, Leopold Okulicki, had ordered a modification of Operation "Tempest". From now on the AK was to focus its attention on enacting Operation "Tempest" only in the major towns. In urban centres, in front of witnesses, the AK would concentrate its forces, set up an administration and 'welcome' its Soviet guests. The capital was to be the centre of this operation.⁶ Bór-Komorowski had to act now, Soviet guns were heard beyond the Warsaw suburb of Praga; the same force that was destroying the AK in the east seemed now to be on the doorstep of the capital, at the centre of the resistance. In a message to the *Delegatura* on 26th June the Government-in-Exile had effectively handed over control of the uprising start date to the AK in Poland. This meant that even though key people in London, such as the Commander-in-Chief Sosnkowski,⁷ were against action at this time, the decision was in the hands of Warsaw. To the people on the ground, the situation must have seemed increasingly desperate. In addition to the reports from regional commands, on 27th July Radio Moscow had announced that the previous day a ten-point agreement had

been made between the Soviet Union and the PKWN. The most important points were these:

Point Two: The PKWN is to establish a Polish administration in accordance with the Polish constitution, create the machinery for recruiting men for the Polish armed forces and ensure active co operation with the Soviet Commander-in-Chief

Point Six: As soon as an area of liberated Poland ceases to be a zone of direct military operations, the PKWN will assume full responsibility in matters of civil government. ⁸

Therefore, only days after the setting up of the PKWN in Lublin, Moscow was announcing to the world that the Polish future would be in effect a communist one. This 'agreement' appeared to set in stone Moscow's policy on Poland. The clear inference of point six was that the PKWN was to be the government after liberation, not the *Delegatura* authorities. For the AK command this meant that if their men on the spot continued to welcome the Soviets, continued the policy of disclosure, they would continue to be relieved of their posts. The AK would not be allowed to set up an alternative administration. If the announcement of the establishment of the PKWN had sent shock waves through the AK, the Ten Point agreement confirmed their worst fears.

The uprising that began in Warsaw at 5p.m. on 1st August 1944 was, therefore, in many senses a supreme act of defiance, perhaps an act of desperation by an organisation that was running out of options. Okulicki had persuaded Bor-Komorowski that if the AK could hold Warsaw until the Soviets arrived, the international community could not allow the NKVD to crush the Poles there as they had in the provinces. The Warsaw Uprising was indeed an act of desperation, as it relied on too many variables to guarantee its own success. In order for the uprising to succeed, the AK needed the *Wehrmacht* to continue its withdrawal from the city leaving the German garrison exposed. This did not happen. The uprising needed British, American and, most vitally, Soviet support to succeed. For the British and Americans the operating distances to Warsaw were very great and would require a series of dangerous flights over Germany itself

meaning that significant help was never very likely. Even if Stalin had allowed US planes to refuel in the Soviet Union, the distances and dangers involved were always going to be prohibitive, despite an attempt by the RAF to overcome these problems in September. Given their recent record during Operation "Tempest", the Soviets were never likely to offer significant support. Anita Prazmowska in her recent work *Civil War in Poland, 1942- 1948*, estimates that the AK had a total force of 50,000 in Warsaw at the beginning of the uprising, but only around 22,000 men actually participated in the fighting; even this force only had enough ammunition to cover 10-12 percent of its needs. ⁹ The uprising would not be successful without outside help: it was one of the great ironies of the situation in mid 1944 that the Poles were dependent for their freedom on the very people who would ultimately deny them it. On 29th July, Major General Radzievsky's Second Tank Army had got to within twenty kilometres of Warsaw, the same day the AK reported hearing the Soviet shelling of the northern suburb of Praga. However, Radzievsky ran into a wave of panzer counter-attacks from German Army Group Centre. The strength of these attacks had exposed the temporary insecurity of the army's left flank and the charge to Warsaw had been stalled, but for how long? Certainly very few people within the Polish capital believed that it would take more than a couple of days. Marshall Zhukov in his memoirs claims that in a meeting with Stalin, the decision not to go for Warsaw was made first and foremost on tactical grounds:

From the operational viewpoint we do not particularly need the area north-west of Warsaw. The City must be taken by skirting it on the south-west and simultaneously dealing a powerful blow in the direction of Łódź-Poznan. ¹⁰

After this meeting in late September 1944, Zhukov claims that Stalin decided to adopt a defensive posture along the 1st Byelorussian Front. The official line was that the Soviets had attempted a breakthrough in August and had been knocked back, now they were to attack elsewhere. Yet it is highly possible that the difficulties of entering Warsaw whilst it was in the hands of the AK were more to the forefront of Stalin's mind in his decision to adopt a defensive posture. Stalin's mind was on the Balkans in August

and September and the Soviet push southwards into that peninsula - the Soviets could afford to wait outside Warsaw and watch events unfold. Yet this halt was to have a massive impact on the AK forces both in front of and behind the Red Army. The pause for six months outside Warsaw enabled the Soviet security forces to the rear crucial time and extra troops with which to smother their enemies.

Zhukov's tactical argument has a ring of truth about it. The 1st Byelorussian Army was commanded by the heroes of Stalingrad, who knew well the horrors of street fighting against a seemingly invisible enemy and in the first half of 1944 it was becoming increasingly clear that the German Army was planning to make a stand in Warsaw. Zhukov also states that the initial attack on the Praga suburb of Warsaw was merely a faint, part of a greater deception to persuade the German Army Group Centre to mass their forces around the Polish capital, enabling the combined Byelorussian and Ukrainian Fronts to outflank them. However, as Norman Davies argues in *Rising 44: The Battle for Warsaw*, this excuse was only valid until the middle of August; after this with every day that passed the pointed nature of the Soviet halt became more apparent. ¹¹

The view from Lublin

In Lublin, on 1st August, on the very day that the Warsaw Uprising was launched, the experience of the *Delegatura* and AK was decidedly mixed. In the central strip of the province, where the direction of the Red Army's thrust had deposited the greatest number of Red Army and NKVD men, it was beginning to look as if a new occupation was being established. Yet in contrast to this, the far south-east of the province had been left virtually untouched by the incoming communist forces, and the AK was fighting the UPA whilst setting up its own administrations in 'Polish' areas. In the cities and large towns of the province the experience was equally mixed. In the city of Zamość, in the south of the province, representatives of the Government-in-Exile were openly holding a meeting to discuss the problems of how to restore law and order to the area. The *Delegatura* representative presiding over the meeting was Antoni Wiącek, a local Zamość banker. On the walls of the city council chambers, where the

meeting was being held were hung a Polish eagle that was surrounded by the flags of Poland and the USSR on one side and Britain and the United States on the other. ¹²

At the local level, the agents of the Government-in-Exile were attempting to establish their administration, yet against this lay the background of reports of arrests elsewhere. Locally most of the AK involved in Operation "Tempest" had been disarmed at the end of July but in the Zamość area, the quantity of weapons handed into the Soviets represented but a small portion of the weapons that the AK had managed to seize from the retreating Germans. Although in many of the towns of the province the AK was still in the open, by the beginning of August the atmosphere was distinctly nervous. The feeling at this time must have been one of uncertainty. The Germans had gone, the Soviets were arresting people to the north and east, and as yet there was no direction from the Government-in-Exile. During the first few days of August, in many of the towns of the province, much of the AK had been temporarily disbanded in accordance with "Marcin's" order, while the *Delegatura* attempted to govern. This state of affairs was watched over by an increasingly numerous NKVD. ¹³ According to the work of Jacek Wołoszyn, during the first days of the occupation the NKVD were primarily occupied with two aims: to disarm the independence underground, and to force AK other ranks into the Berling Army. Operation "Tempest" had enabled the NKVD to seemingly achieve these aims very quickly; within days of the Germans leaving, the top commanders of the region had been arrested and after "Marcin's" dispersal order, the other AK units in the region had returned to their hiding places. In many senses it was primarily due to "Marcin's" order to disperse that the AK was able to continue in organised strength at all after Operation "Tempest".

The reasoning behind the NKVD's policies in the region was that the force under the command of Ivan Serov was there to clear the areas to the rear of the Soviet advance. The fact that Serov was sent to Lublin after leading the arrests in Soviet-claimed Vilna is indicative of the continuity of the NKVD's policy towards the AK. ¹⁴ There was no tangible difference in the treatment received by the AK in Vilna or Lublin, they were behind Soviet lines and

therefore had to be neutralised, it did not matter that they were part of a force that was allied to the ally of the Soviet Union. The military imperative to defeat Nazi Germany overrode all other considerations. The disclosure policy had dramatic consequences: before Operation “Tempest” the only information that the NKVD had on the AK in *Lubelszczyzna* had been limited and gathered by AL and Soviet partisan units operating behind the front during the last two months of the German occupation. After the fighting to clear the Germans from the province, many AK units and the cryptonyms of their leaders became known to the NKVD. Thus in the first few days of the communist administration the Soviet security forces were able to compile lists of AK officers, information that would ultimately prove to be vital. ¹⁵

In the initial stage of operations, the NKVD in *Lubelszczyzna* was primarily interested in removing the biggest potential obstacles from the rear of the Red Army. At this stage it lacked the local know-how to truly bring the whole of the region under control. Therefore, it concerned itself in the first few days and weeks with dealing with those AK soldiers who, by fighting alongside the Soviets in Operation “Tempest”, had given away their positions. In the main, AK forces, such as the 9th Infantry Division in the north, had withdrawn after Operation “Tempest” to small villages in their operating areas. This meant that, aside from Lublin, for the first two weeks of the communist administration, the majority of the NKVD forces in the area were dealing with the AK units that had been surrounded in mostly remote areas. During this time General Ivan Serov based NKVD operations in the city of Lublin and began to organise his forces into the following groupings: agents, investigators, reconnaissance investigators, and army-operations. These groups were to work with NKVD regiments in the region in order to clear the rear of the front. Although the NKVD was adept at such operations, things such as the reconnaissance of a war-torn region would take time. ¹⁶ Therefore it is important to state that during this period, and until the failure of the Warsaw Uprising, the first few months of ‘People’s’ authority brought about a relatively wide margin of freedom for the majority of the population.

Weathering the NKVD storm

The arrests of “*Marcin*” and “*Paśnik*” had been destabilising but it was the sheer number of Soviet and NKVD forces moving in and through *Lubelszczyzna* at this time that made coherent large-scale AK activity virtually impossible. As Rafał Wnuk points out, given the fact that the NKVD were still relatively ignorant about the terrain in which they were working and that the Polish communist security forces existed in only name, it was the fact that the front had halted in the Lublin region that was the major factor in hampering the AK’s activities in these crucial first weeks. ¹⁷ “*Marcin’s*” order to disperse should not be seen as an example of someone grossly misreading the situation that his forces were in. Rather, it must have seemed perfectly conceivable given the speed of advance by the Red Army in the four months prior to August 1944 that this force could have been in Berlin by Christmas. This would have meant that the crushing weight of the front would have moved beyond Lublin, and therefore the period of communist military saturation would have been brief. Despite his arrest and the arrests of many of his colleagues, “*Marcin*” had arranged that a reserve command be put in place and many of the rank and file had returned home after Operation “*Tempest*”. The Warsaw Uprising and the halting of the front for five months was to destroy the idea of weathering the storm. In many senses the contrast between what could be described as the “*Marcin*” line and the decision to launch the uprising in Warsaw was indicative of a greater schism in approaches to ‘fighting’ occupation in Poland. Since the nineteenth century Polish resistance had been divided into two broad camps. In many senses the Warsaw Uprising, was the last great manifestation of the ‘heroic’ approach to resistance. Equally “*Marcin’s*” attempts to preserve the body of his force whilst the NKVD rolled over the province is resonant of the so-called ‘*Kraków*’ school of resistance. In 1944 one was to ensure the failure of the other.

The stalling of the front for such a prolonged period had two huge benefits for the communists in Poland. Firstly the key fight in Warsaw was watched but not helped, and secondly it gave the Soviet security forces time and men to make sufficient progress in undermining the AK/*Delegatura* to its rear. If the front had continued forward in August 1944, it is highly

unlikely that the Soviet Union would have been able to make any form of communist administration work in the land that they had set aside for the new Polish state. The local AK in Lublin was therefore smothered under the weight of Soviet not Polish communist numbers. Given this weight of numbers, the level of 'filtering' of non-communist groupings was achievable on a huge scale, and was always likely to have destroyed any attempts by the local population to determine their own fate.

As touched on in the previous chapter, the NKVD had been given specific orders to effectively destroy AK forces in *Lubelszczyzna* from the very moment that they had stepped into the region. The day after this order, on 21st July NKVD units operating in the Lublin area had received another order that assigned sections of this force to creating and controlling holding centres, or prison camps, for local AK units. Virtually all of those AK forces that had held talks with the NKVD or Red Army in July were to be 'filtered' through camps in this manner. For example, the 27th Volhynian Division and elements of the 8th Infantry Regiment had met with Soviet forces in the village of Skrobów outside of Lubartów after Operation "Tempest". Once the ultimatum to disarm or join the Berling Army was given to this AK force, the NKVD had to create a holding centre for thousands of soldiers. According to AK sources, in the first weeks of August around 6,000 men were held at this temporary camp near Lubartów. The camp commander, Major Alexander Kavaznikov, was in control of men most of whom were now classified as being a part of the Polish People's Army. Until the entrance of the Soviets they had been members of AK, NOW and BCh units, which were mostly from the Lubartów area. These people had 'decided to join' the Berling Army, after the NKVD ultimatum, yet they were to still find themselves in what was essentially a prison camp for weeks after their decision. Once camps such as Skrobów were liquidated, the former inmates were either deported to the USSR or sent to Lublin with NKVD minders to begin their service in the forces of People's Poland.¹⁸ Initially the NKVD was operating out of their new base on Ulica Chopina in the city of Lublin. Once the cells at this location proved to be insufficient due to the sheer volume of arrests, a further two locations in Lublin city centre, at number 10 Ulica Świętoduski, and number 10 Ulica Skłodowski were created. In addition to this the former German prisons/ camps at

Majdanek and Lublin Castle were reopened to deal with the increased numbers. The speed of the NKVD's work in the province can be seen by the fact that within two weeks of arriving in the region, on August 11th, they sent out their first bunch of deportees from Świdnik to Kiev. Amongst the first people deported from Lubelszczyzna were around 40 members of the local AK/*Delegatura* and 8 officers of the AL. ¹⁹ It is unknown when the NKVD began using the recently vacated German concentration camp at Majdanek to house captured AK soldiers but it is certain that the camp began its new use at some point during the first two weeks of August. Janina Kielboń estimates that it was probably on August 8th that the camp received its first batch of AK inmates – ten officers from the 3rd Infantry Division. From this time onwards, new prisoners were to arrive virtually every day into the camp. Very quickly another two branch camps were set up at Poniatowa and Krzesimów to deal with these numbers. This first phase of repression lasted until mid-August and saw the leaders of the AK/*Delegatura* in Lublin, Tumidajski and Cholewa arrested and ultimately be sent to Gulag camps in the interior of the USSR - a fate that most of the inmates of Majdanek in the summer of 1944 would share. ²⁰



The attempted destruction of the AK in progress, Majdanek, summer 1944. In the foreground are officers of the Berling Army conscripting AK other ranks into their force. In the background are the blocks of Pole III, field III, of the former Nazi death camp. These were now being used as barracks and holding blocks for AK men. Whilst the men were conscripted their officers were being interrogated and deported.

(A.G. Kister, Studium Zniewalania; Walka aparatu bezpieczeństwa z polskim zbrojnym podziemiem niepodległościowym na Lubelszczyźnie 1944-1947, Krakow 2005)

Over 200 AK officers alone were sent to the camp at Majdanek during the first weeks of August, where they were held in field III, *Pole III*, this number would eventually be much higher. The interned AK men were next to the German POW's in *Pole IV* that they had perhaps helped to capture less than a month before. The efficiency at which large numbers of people were arrested and deported was truly impressive, indeed on 23rd August around 250 officers and cadet-officers of the AK were taken from *Pole III* of Majdanek and under armed guard were forced onto 40 freight wagons. Some of these men were able to throw letters that were addressed to their families out of the train, some amongst them must have guessed their fate – they were being deported into the heart of the Soviet Union. This was the largest single deportation out of *Lubelszczyzna* in the first two months of the Soviet occupation.²¹ At a stroke the NKVD had removed many of the AK's most experienced and respected officers from *Lubelszczyzna*. In total 8 transports deported around 400 AK/ *Delegatura* officers from Majdanek during August and September 1944 into the Soviet Union.²²



A view of Lublin castle from the city's old town. This former Tsarist prison was used from August 1944 onwards as a NKVD prison and interrogation centre.

(Author's own collection)

These initial detentions were not focused on the whole of Polish society nor were they focused against the AK as a whole, the NKVD was mechanically removing the non-communist armed groups, whose presence they were aware of, from the rear of the Red Army.

The outbreak of the Warsaw Uprising sent shock waves through the ranks of the PKWN in Lublin and prompted the NKVD to intensify its activity. If the uprising were to succeed then Stalin, the Red Army and the PKWN would themselves be presented with a *fait accompli* - an AK and anti-communist coalition in Warsaw would destroy any communist attempt to take power in Poland before it had even begun. The response to this was to begin arresting more members of the underground. In Zamość on 4th August the *Delegatura* leader in the city, “Wiącek” was forced to leave his post in favour of a member of the Polish Worker’s Party, Dubiel.²³ The destabilising effects of the removal of the heads of the local *Delegatura* representatives was felt immediately:

Because of “*Sandomierski’s*” (Wiącek’s) removal, the general situation in our region is very unsafe. This morning a proclamation signed by General Żymirski, a communist, was posted throughout the town. General Żymirski is calling on all “former” members of the Home Army, or other underground units to join the Berling Army.²⁴

Whilst the NKVD was beginning its arrests of the local leadership, a decree, was posted throughout the Soviet held towns of the province on 12th August. Stating that all former military personnel were to register for the Berling Army by 18th August at the latest. The local AK command reported back to London in a message dated 14th August that a commission headed by General Bogdanov was investigating anti-communist activities in the Lublin area. The commission was treating both the AK and NSZ as agencies that were engaged in such activities. As a consequence, all AK men who had revealed themselves were being interned.²⁵ Thus a two-pronged attack was made on the AK. The leadership was being arrested and removed whilst the grass roots support for the Government-in-Exile was to be forced into the communist Berling Army under direct Soviet control.

Yet it must be stressed that the NKVD’s ability to install PKWN men at this stage was still very much limited to the larger towns and cities of the south-east. Elsewhere, as “*Marcin*” had suggested it seemed possible to

weather the storm. On the day that the Lublin city *Delegatura* was being destroyed, in other, remoter areas of the province, the administration was to remain in the hands of 'Mikołajczyk supporters'. The command noted on 4th August that the NKVD were already beginning 'their work' in the region's cities and yet the same report states that at this time the 'Soviets' were operating in only some of the region's outlying areas. It took the NKVD in some cases until October to penetrate the region's largest forests. This is something that is often repeated in the messages sent back to London during the first half of August 1944. In the first weeks of the Soviet occupation the NKVD, a foreign force with little knowledge of the area, had entered the region primarily along the main transport routes into Lublin. Without a sizeable Polish security force to liase with, the NKVD was in effect running blind in much of *Lubelszczyzna* at first. As the NKVD began to move out from their original base in the city of Lublin, and reconnoitre the outlying terrain, their ability to restrict and stop the governmental working and military activities of the AK/*Delegatura* massively increased.

For example, on 4th August the commander of the AK and the head of the *Delegatura* had already been arrested, the AK had been disarmed and the NKVD were operating in the city of Lublin at number 18 Ulica Chopina, yet to the north of the province things were very different. In the Biała Podlaska area, elements of the 30th Infantry Regiment would still be in a position to attempt a march to Warsaw fully armed on 12th August. Equally, whilst the Red Army and NKVD were in the town of Biała Podlaska itself, "Marcin's" order to disperse had not yet been enacted. According to the commander of the 34th Infantry Regiment "Roman", "Marcin's" order was to be enacted on the morning of 12th August. As a part of it, the 34th and 35th Infantry Regiment were to return to their original place of concentration, stash their arms and appoint officers to liase with the local Soviet command. To fulfil this, the 34th Infantry Regiment marched to Biała Podlaska and the 35th Infantry Regiment marched to Łuków. Due to the fact that at this point the AK in this region still had a large degree of operational independence *vis-à-vis* the incoming Soviets, they were able to successfully stash most of their arms. ²⁶ This discrepancy between the experiences of the region's AK forces was not to last. The reach of the

NKVD was spreading across the terrain of *Lubelszczyzna* during the first half of August 1944 as reports to London show:

Sent to London on 4th August:

In the towns the work of the NKVD is starting, and in some villages the Soviets are operating ²⁷

Sent to London on 13th August:

In Łuck and Włodzimierz mobilization of Poles to Berling, Ukrainians to Soviet Army ²⁸

Sent to London on 17th August:

On 12th August the Government delegate in Tomaszów Lubelski was arrested along with 235 personnel ²⁹

Sent to London on 19th August:

Registration of officers and cadet officers in the counties of Zamość, Krasnystaw, Tomaszów, Biłgoraj ³⁰

Sent to London on 19th August by the AK regional commander Żak: Mass arrests are taking place throughout the whole region by the NKVD ³¹

In most of these reports it was stated that as communist 'government' was expanding its area of operation, it did so at the point of a NKVD rifle. If on 4th August the NKVD was beginning its work, by the 19th the regional commander could report that 'its work' was being repeated throughout the area of his command. In practice this meant that towns throughout the region were receiving the same treatment as Lublin, for example in Zamość the NKVD had now set up a prison in the city, arrested Poles were put in a cold house, next to the butchers on Ulica Radziecki. ³² But as these reports show, the local AK constantly described how mobilisation and arrests were being carried out by the Soviet NKVD and not by the PKWN. The new communist government was completely impotent at this early stage, which helps to explain why most AK men felt that the repressions and arrests could not go on. It just did not seem feasible that the communists could stay in power once the front moved forward. Zygmunt Klukowski records in his diary how the communist administration was slowly spreading out from its base in Lublin to the rest of the province's main towns:

20th August, 1944 - Sunday

The Soviets are slowly widening their influence. A Russian colonel travelling with the chief of the county National Liberation Committee, Dubiel, inspected the communes. He stopped in Szczebrzeszyn. We have here now a Soviet city commandant who is not only in charge of all military activities but also heads the city administration.

An NKVD officer took over three rooms of the Zamoyski Estate and also seems very much interested in the cellars, probably as a future prison. The inhabitants of Zwierzyniec are obviously extremely disturbed about this. ³³

On 23rd August the Soviet High Command had sent Soviet war commanders to be appointed over every village, town and large town in Lublin. Their orders were precise and clear; they were only to work with the PKWN, their representatives and officials, and no other group. It was against this backdrop that the AK's shadow command in Lublin started re-orientating its activities in order to combat the moves of the communists. From the beginning of August, Bureau II of the AK command in the region reoriented its work towards the activities of the Red Army, PKWN, Berling Army and NKVD. By the autumn, the framework of a counter-intelligence operation had been established by Bureau II. Captain Antoni Wieczorek, "Scibor", later known as "Kaktus", headed the counter intelligence unit during August. This unit was able to penetrate the workings of the fledgling communist administration. During the period of the Warsaw Uprising, Bureau II was able to receive information from workers in the Department of Public Security, *Resort Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego* (RBP), a part of the PKWN. These contacts, along with men working around the area of the RBP building, also enabled Bureau II to gain information on the activities of the NKVD, which were undertaken at 18 Ulica Chopina, and afterwards at Lublin castle. In addition to this appointments to the RBP and the Communist Armed Forces were monitored along with the movements of troops through the area and the attitude of the population towards these events. ³⁴

On 10th August an AK officer meeting took place in a flat in the city of Lublin, after which “*Nurt*”, the Lublin inspectorate commander ordered all members in his area to remain in organised underground units and to resist the call up to the communist controlled Polish Army, *Wojsko Polskie* (WP).³⁵ Starting from 2nd August, Żak also sent a series of commands to his subordinates that talked about the need to maintain operations. In each of these orders, constant reference was made to the ‘legal government in London’, and to the support of the Anglo-Saxon allies. For example on 21st August, in a command that was sent to all Lublin region AK and BCh commanders he ordered that the PKWN should be boycotted and that it was the AK’s duty to resist call up to the WP. In most of these orders he finished with the words: ‘Soldiers! We must follow the commands of the rightful government. Long live Poland!’³⁶ From these reports it is clear that the regional command increasingly believed that conflict between east and west, between the Soviet Union and the Anglo-Saxon allies, was becoming inevitable and that the Lublin AK should prepare for this. From September onwards Bureau II and the BiP in Lublin were ordered to begin to infiltrate and to launch counter propaganda aimed at the communist forces in the region. Below the regional level, the Lublin city BiP created a special section whose remit it was to infiltrate the workings of the PKWN. This unit was led by Zbigniew Flisowski, “*Mochort*” until October 1944 and was able to successfully infiltrate the PKWN and the WP in the region. The city AK also created diversionary groups that were ordered to disrupt the installation of the communist administration. By the end of September 1944, in Lublin city there were three platoons of 24 people in such units.³⁷

The longer the Warsaw Uprising went without Soviet aid, the stronger in tone Żak’s orders become, and the more the AK in Lublin re-orientated its activities towards the communists.

The fact that the underground was able to successfully penetrate the fledgling communist administration eloquently highlights the problems faced by any occupying power which wishes to enforce a satellite government on a foreign people. In the first few months of the Soviet occupation, the PKWN had to invent a government virtually from scratch. Although through the PPR and AL, the Soviet-led communists were to have

a source of vital local intelligence and manpower, such was the small size of these organisations, that they were not large enough to form a viable basis of government in the short term. In the first few months of the PKWN's existence therefore, given the size and organisation of the non-communist underground, any attempts to enlarge either the PKWN's civilian or military governmental apparatus in *Lubelszczyzna* meant the potential employment of AK men into their new communist forces. The potential for infiltrating communist forces, such as the Citizen's Militia, *Milicja Obywatelska* (MO) – the new communist police force, was huge therefore for the AK. Despite the steady expansion of the NKVD, there were signs that the AK was weathering the storm.

Several issues highlight the uncertain foundations of the new People's Poland. It is important to point out that from August 1944 onwards; in effect three distinct legal systems were operating in *Lubelszczyzna*. Firstly the law courts of the AK/*Delegatura* were still functioning in a reduced underground capacity and enforcing the laws of the inter war republic on its members. Then there were two distinct Communist legal systems, the Soviet and the Polish. In practice it was Soviet law that was to rule in the province throughout 1944, with the *Delegatura* being sidelined in August and the Polish communist system often deferring to their Soviet masters. Nothing reflects the puppet-master relationship of the PKWN and the USSR more clearly than the fact that Soviet law held precedence over Polish territory in all matters, and in particular to those relating to the destruction of 'opposition'. Whilst the Soviets had transferred the lands to the west of the Bug River over to the PKWN, in practice Soviet law was applied in both Soviet and Polish territory, to wherever the Soviet terror apparatus and judiciary happened to operate. From this point onwards those unfortunate enough to fall into the category of 'political offenders' were to be charged under the infamous Article 58 of the Soviet Penal Code. This meant in practice that, under Article 58, an AK soldier who was an ethnic Pole, who was born in pre-war Poland, and had been a life long Polish citizen could be sentenced as a "traitor to the Soviet Motherland", or a "counter-revolutionary" or more simply as a "fascist". However whilst always deferring to Soviet law the new PKWN administration introduced its own

legal regulations by amending the existing pre-war laws with a barrage of new decrees. ³⁸

From the inception of the PKWN, the RBP had been formed as an integral part of the new government. Within this new department, a section was devoted to the fight against the 'public enemy'; it was this branch that was to be trained and expanded by NKVD minders, and it was this force whose work was aimed against the forces of the underground in *Lubelszczyzna* from 1st August 1944. The new security apparatus comprised the RBP as well as provincial and district security offices. In practice this meant that during the first months of PKWN rule the MO provided the backbone to the administration. These forces were sometimes supplemented by units of the WP which played an auxiliary role in operations against 'enemies' of the new administration. The new regional MO during the first half of August was based on Ulica Ewangelicki in Lublin city, a street that runs parallel to the city's main street. The new police force's core was composed of members of the local AL - this was to prove to be a vital factor in the ultimate paralysing of anti-communist partisan activity in the area. In particular, the first command posts of the regional MO were dominated by members of the 1st Lubelski AL Brigade. The commander of the 1st, Grzegorz Korczyński, therefore became the first commander of the region's MO. Korczyński was subsequently transferred to command of the Otwock area with another ex-AL man, Ignacy Borkowski, "Wicek", becoming Lublin region MO commander. In the city of Lublin itself, the city's new police force was formed from members of the local AL unit that was led by Paweł Niewinn "Bartosz", whereas in Zamość, the MO was created from the AL unit under the command of Józef Małysz "Marek". According to Anna Kister, during the first months of the MO's existence around 50% of the force was composed of ex-AL partisans. ³⁹ Many of the men who were now in the core of the MO had therefore been fighting in the same areas of the province as AK units during the German occupation. Some had even fought in actions alongside AK units during the liberation of the area. These men often knew woods such as the Parczew very well, and could often identify members of AK units. In addition, the Polish Independent Special Battalion, *Polski Samodzielny Batalion Specjalny*, was formed at this time. It was a unit numbering 200 people that was formed from ex-AL

units along with Soviet officers and soldiers who could speak Polish. This force was ultimately to form the core of the PKWN's Internal Army, the *Wojska Wewnętrzne* (WW).

Yet during the first weeks of the PKWN's existence, its security forces were not in a position to challenge the underground on their own - such was their weakness in terms of numbers. By the end of August there were only 1,053 men in the Special Battalion and by November this had only grown to 2,195. According to Coutouvidis and Reynolds, this force was so weak that its numbers had to be bulked up by ill-trained and ill-equipped Ukrainian and White Russian peasants. ⁴⁰ Until well into 1945, the suppression of the AK and other underground groups was in the hands of the NKVD, therefore. ⁴¹ This Polish communist weakness is shown by the fact that, as early as 15th September the PKWN approved measures to strengthen communist party cells within the MO, such was the level of infiltration of the new police force by members of the independence underground. This was quickly followed by a decision to sack over 50% of the MO's personnel due to their unreliability. ⁴²

The precarious nature of the PKWN's hold on power, despite the actions of the Soviet NKVD, was all too clear to people such as Władysław Gomułka. On his return from Moscow late in August, Gomułka helped to dampen the wave of repression through his personal influence and the stressing of a broad national line. This national line approach was ultimately unsuccessful but it did have an effect. Gomułka's early attempts to create this broader political front of support for communist government was aimed at splitting the AK from within, and it had some success. The key was that the PKWN targeted the peasantry in Lublin; this was the group that needed to be won over. In territory governed by the PKWN, even once full industrial production was achieved again by the end of the year, only 85,000 people were in the industrial workforce out of an estimated population of 5.5 million. The PKWN could not come to power on the backs of the urban proletariat alone. ⁴³ Gomułka, though a communist, was also a patriot. He understood the precarious nature of the PKWN's position in Poland in 1944. Unless the PKWN attempted to court favour with a broad

cross section of the Polish people, it was doomed to failure, and perpetual reliance on the presence of the Red Army.

Whilst the majority of the peasantry would remain loyal to the Government-in-Exile some, in particular amongst BCh units, had answered the call to join the PKWN's new forces. For example in the Kraśnik district after Operation "Tempest" the "Warta" group had been given the disarm or disperse ultimatum and handed in its weapons. Part of this group went into the WP, including a unit under the command of Stanisław Łokuciewski "Mały". The AK-NSZ partisan groups that stayed active were those of Wacław Piotrowski "Cichy", Leon Cybulski "Znicz" and Hieronim Dekutowski "Zapora", the rest of the underground went home.⁴⁴ Yet the precedent of working with the communist authorities had been set and in the first months of PKWN rule in Kraśnik and Biłgoraj, an estimated 80% of the lower level council posts were taken up by local peasants. Yet this pragmatic approach on the behalf of the PKWN worked both ways - low level functionaries were continuing their government functions, as many had during the Nazi occupation, but in practice this meant that the government structure was ideologically woodworm; On 1st September 1944 Communist party membership in the whole of 'People's Poland' was only still 4,633.⁴⁵ The main difficulty for Gomułka lay in the fact that the PKWN was obviously a usurper government, put in place by a foreign power which was arresting people's cousins, brothers, teachers, or wives. Therefore the PKWN's intention of in effect absorbing former AK officers and men into the newly expanding Polish state forces flew in the face of the NKVD policy of arresting all unreliable elements. Ultimately in any conflict of interpretation, the view of the NKVD was always likely to prevail.

It is clear from the archival evidence that the AK's contacts between regional-inspectorate and district command were able to continue despite the best efforts of the NKVD. In addition, many of the region's radio transmitters were still operational during the period of the Warsaw Uprising, meaning that a game of cat and mouse between the NKVD and the regional AK's wireless groups was taking place across the province. On the night of 30th July the NKVD had managed to capture one of the city's transmitters and arrest its two operators, Antoni Kudela "Mis", and Piotr

Potasinski “*Cygan*”. On 20th August Leon Rembarz “*Dolega*”, a member of the local AK’s Bureau V established a radio communications unit that was composed of the best men available in the city of Lublin. Initially the unit broadcast from the home of Konstanty Machniuk “*Rysia*”, at number 25 Ulica Bychawski, near to the city’s main train station. However in order to evade the NKVD, the unit had to quickly relocate to the village of Wilczopole a few miles to the south east of the city. The unit managed to keep contact with London from this location for four days. From his position in the village, Konstanty Machniuk, helped by Marian Gutka “*Urej*”, sent back regular reports and the two men were able to hide the transmitter and evade capture when the NKVD arrived after four days. On returning to Lublin, the NKVD again located the position of the unit, but once again the two operators evaded capture and saved the transmitter. Other transmitter units were not so lucky. In the village of Babin a transmitter unit was able to function for three weeks before the Soviets discovered their presence, yet in the Chełm inspectorate that region’s transmitter operator “*Marzec*” was discovered, arrested and eventually deported to the USSR. Equally in the Puławy inspectorate, Waclaw Herman “*Fadina*” was discovered by the Soviets and shared the same fate as “*Marzec*”.⁴⁶

As a result of these set backs, it was decided by the regional command that it would be safer for the Lublin regional AK to move its central broadcasting unit to the Zamość inspectorate. This switch took place half way through September and was part of several moves within Bureau V of the Lublin regional AK. At the same time, Leon Rembarz, the unit’s deputy commander moved from 43 Ulica 1 Maja to his sister-in-law’s at 19 Ulica Bernardynska. Rembarz took with him the files of Bureau V and hid them underneath a stack of coal. From this point onwards the commander of Bureau V, Major Mieczysław Komarski “*Wojtek*”, reoriented the command’s contacts with London to just two transmitters: transmitter 31, which operated out of the Radzyń inspectorate, and transmitter 77 which operated out of the Zamość inspectorate.⁴⁷ These events clearly point to the fact that from the beginning of the Soviet occupation the NKVD was attempting to cut off the AK’s links to the outside world. This policy was intensified during the Warsaw Uprising, when a systematic attempt was

made to destroy all possible links to the central command and to the Allies in London and Washington.

However, the NKVD were not able to silence the broadcasts out of the region, and the surviving AK ciphers are today one of the most valuable sources for historians of this period. For example, the local command reported back to London several times between 14th-18th August, commenting on the fact that a new Soviet commission had been set up in the city of Lublin. Relying on information that had been gained by an unnamed member of the underground who had recently been released by the commission, the AK in the city reported that this new Soviet commission was officially maintaining that its actions were to regulate Polish war relations. However, according to the increasingly frantic sounding reports arriving in London, the commission was led by Soviet General Bogdanov and General Zukov, who was now acting as the liaison officer between the new commission and the PKWN in the city. The commission was openly investigating the activities of 'anti-Soviet forces' in the region. Overall this committee seemed to be directing the activities of the Soviet forces in the area, using the Berling Army as a pretext to impress men. The reports also mentioned that those impressed, most probably officers, were taken in isolation and subjected to prolonged discussions 'of a political nature'.⁴⁸

Incomprehensively, during the second half of August when the Government-in-Exile was being sent regular reports that must have been increasingly alarming to them, it is clear from the messages sent that during this crucial period in the history of the AK in the Lublin province, guidance from London was lacking. As the population were refusing on mass to cooperate with the attempts of the Soviets to install their puppet administration, the terror of the Soviet forces seemed to be increasing. Yet London was clearly not issuing instructions to the Lublin command. It meant in practice that Żak was repeatedly feeding central command information about the arrests of his men, about the expansion of the Berling Army call up age, and about the weakening morale of the population and yet he was receiving no adequate response. The following

examples show the dilemma and were sent to the UK during the second half of August 1944:

Sent on August 19th at 00.57 from Zamość Insp:

We request an immediate response to this radio station, what are we to do? ⁴⁹

Sent on August 19th from Żak:

Silence from London is worrying for us. We haven't received any directives for three weeks. The community demands guidance from London ⁵⁰

Sent on August 21st at 14.50:

Resistance is weak, they are waiting on the results of talks involving Mikołajczyk – how to proceed... again send us guidance ⁵¹

Sent on August 21st at 17.20 from Żak:

Arrests of AK soldiers are still going on. Resistance is weak. Please give us guidance. ⁵²

Received on August 31st at 15.00 from Żak:

Please General send us orders and directives ⁵³

During the German occupation the regional command had received constant instruction from their superiors in London. This had helped to maintain contact and to retain the relevance of the exiled government for those people on the ground. However, in a sense clear orders were made possible by the fact that the Germans were the enemy of the Poles, the Soviet Union and the Anglo-Saxon powers. Once the Germans had gone from *Lubelszczyzna*, defining the enemy of the Allies was much more complicated. Whilst those people leading the AK in Lublin were fast coming to the conclusion that the Soviets were the enemy, in the corridors of power in London it must have seemed far more complicated. What Żak and his fellow commanders needed to know was whether they were still bound by the order not to attack the Soviets.

According to the work of Rafał Wnuk on this period, this lack of response can be explained by the fact that the Government-in-Exile were waiting for the results of the upcoming talks in Moscow with Stalin. This meant that during a crucial stage in the creation of the communist state in Poland, the

central command in London was not issuing sufficient guidance to the AK in the provinces, rather it hesitated until October waiting on the outcome of the Moscow talks and the uprising in the capital. This virtual radio silence from London was doubly damaging to the AK in *Lubelszczyzna* and the other areas that were already behind the Soviet advance. The net effect of this was to be the fact that during the Warsaw Uprising, the Lublin AK was in effect operating in a *de facto* independent state. This relative independence of the AK command was compounded by a growing sense of disillusionment with the central authorities in London. For example the commander of the Hrubieszów area, Marian Gołębiowski, “Ster”, described the silence from London as being the most hurtful factor in Lublin during the first months of the communist administration. According to Rafał Wnuk the silence from London had a large and depressing impact amongst many of the commanders in the Lublin region.⁵⁴ This was an abrogation of responsibility that London could ill afford in an area where the PKWN were actively courting the largest component parts of the AK.

Coming to Warsaw's aid?

The one order that the AK in Lublin did receive from central command was the order to aid the uprising in the capital. This was controversial. Most of the region's partisan units had been dispersed after the end of Operation “Tempest” in accordance with “Marcin's” order. As a consequence, many of the area's partisan units had been able to avoid the attentions of the Soviet authorities up until this point in time. Whilst AK soldiers had been arrested after the withdraw of the Germans and some taken from their homes by the NKVD, the initial arrests had not destroyed the AK's internal structure and many from the partisan units remained undiscovered after dispersing, and had successfully stashed their weapons. This meant that during the months of the uprising in the capital there were many units in *Lubelszczyzna* that did attempt to go to Warsaw's aid despite the distance to the capital. For units in the north of the Lublin region, in the Biała Podlaska and Łuków areas the march to Warsaw would mean a march of less than three days, whilst units in the Hrubieszów or Tomaszów Lubelski areas would have to be on the road for almost twice as long.

Once the Warsaw Uprising had begun, Bór-Komorowski issued the following order to the provincial commands:

The battle for Warsaw becomes more intense. We are fighting against vastly superior forces. The situation calls for immediate reinforcements from outside. I therefore order all available units to march on the capital as speedily as possible, attack the enemy on the outskirts and break through into the city

Bor

C in C Home Army ⁵⁵

If the provinces were to respond to this order and come to the aid of Warsaw, they would need a good slice of luck, for they would need the Soviets to allow them to march to the capital. This was not something the Soviets would allow to happen. The problem in essence was this: during August 1944 the Red Army had around two million men in the *Lubelszczyzna* region. After “Marcin’s” meeting with the Soviets and the arrests of the local command, only an Adjutant Antoni Wieczorek had returned. The NKVD had released him requesting that he return with the region’s deputy commander, Franciszek Żak. Wieczorek informed the command about the meeting but stated he was not sure what had happened to “Marcin”. There followed a period of inaction by the local command that was probably due to their attempt to reach an understanding of what was happening in *Lubelszczyzna* and how best to combat this. At least part of the shadow command was composed of new officers and was based in Tartak, near Lubartów, around twenty miles north of Lublin city. Those officers that remained from before changed their pseudonyms. However, the command did hold a series of discussions on the possibility of responding to Bór-Komorowski’s order to help the capital. The decision was made to send the PKB commandant Jan Flisiak on a scouting mission to see if helping Warsaw was feasible. Flisiak returned with the news that every road to Warsaw out of the area was blocked by Soviet troops, indeed the Soviet advance had swung north from Lublin along the banks of the Vistula towards Warsaw. This meant that

the bulk of this massive Soviet force was situated directly between Lublin and the capital city. Clearly helping Warsaw was not an option for the central command in Lublin. ⁵⁶

Yet, due to the nature of the fight in Warsaw and its significance for the future of the AK and Poland, many units did attempt to go to Warsaw's aid. Given the size of Soviet forces in the area, the effects on such units of attempting to force a way through to Warsaw were often devastating. According to I. Caban, many units in the Lublin region started to re-group from the middle of August onwards. On 20th August the "*Wilkow*" unit attempted to march to Warsaw but was stopped by the NKVD. On the next day the famous "*Zapora*" group from the city of Lublin re-grouped in order to assist the capital but couldn't cross the Vistula and terminated their attempt. In the second half of the month soldiers from the units "*Uskok*" and "*Lekarz*", along with other local AK units concentrated and began the march to Warsaw but they too were unable to cross the river. ⁵⁷ Outside of Lublin an AK force of around 700 men heading towards Warsaw was intercepted by the NKVD and arrested. Likewise units of the Home Army marching from Krakow along with elements of the 9th Infantry Division were intercepted to the east of Lublin province and forcibly disbanded before they could come to Warsaw's aid. ⁵⁸

The largest unit from the Lublin inspectorate to attempt the march to Warsaw was the unit of Tadeusz Pospiech "*Brzechwa*", which numbered around 120 soldiers. This unit was based in the area around Firlej to the north of Lubartów. The force reached the Vistula, but was unable to cross and was disarmed by Soviet forces. A second grouping from Lublin inspectorate along with other smaller detachments made it to the Vistula near the town of Dęblin. They found that Soviet detachments were based along this stretch of the river, and once they had encountered them they were disarmed. Other units however didn't even make it this far. For example, the BCh regional commander of Lubelski, Jan Pasiak "*Jawor*", along with the commander of sub-region IV B in Zamość, Edward Michonski "*Lis*", engaged in talks with the Soviets in their area with a view to marching to Warsaw. The result of these talks was that their request was refused and that they and their men were ordered to join the WP. ⁵⁹ To

the north, after an agreement with the Soviets, units of the 34th Infantry Regiment were supposed to march to Biała Podlaska before their march to Warsaw. On 9th August, as a part of this agreement only the 3rd Battalion under the command of Józef Strzeciwiłk “*Dunina*”, actually went to Biała Podlaska where his men were forcibly integrated into the Berling Army and the officers interned. The other units of the 34th Infantry Regiment, suspicious of Soviet intentions never started the march.⁶⁰

An excellent example of the fate that met the units attempting to help Warsaw can be found in Hrubieszów district. On 16th August a group of around 1,600 people, including AK soldiers and a few dozen nurses and women from the Women’s Military Service, *Wojskowa Służba Kobiet* (WSK), set off to aid their countrymen fighting in the capital. However, the force came into contact with the Red Army near the village of Ornatowic around twenty miles north of Hrubieszów. At negotiations between the two groups, the Red Army commanders refused to believe the AK commander’s story that the unit was heading north to aid Warsaw, and their further progress was halted. In reaction to this, the unit decided to march from Ornatowic to Hrubieszów. Around six miles outside of Hrubieszów as the column was crossing a cornfield, a plane was spotted circling above. This was then followed shortly afterwards by the appearance of two WP officers in a jeep, who ordered the column to march to Bohorodyca. In response to this, the commanding officers declared that they needed a briefing with the Hrubieszów magistrate before they could determine their next move. As the force remained outside of the town, a woman who had successfully broken through the Soviet cordon around Hrubieszów was able to update the AK unit as to the latest situation there. They were informed that the Red Army had formed a cordon surrounding the town and that a military post had been created to process and disarm any persons or units leaving or entering. In reaction to this, most of the unit withdrew to the cover of the local woods, whilst the “*Wygi*” company chose to hide in the ruined buildings in the area. Their attempt to aid Warsaw was effectively at an end.⁶¹



On the march to aid their countrymen in the capital, the NKVD disarmed this force shortly after this picture was taken. Hrubieszów district, August 1944.

(I. Caban, *Oddziały Partyzanckie i Samoobrony Obwodu AK Tomaszów Lubelski*, Warsaw 2000)

The experience of the unit from Hrubieszów is telling of the AK's greater problem in August and September 1944. Whilst "Marcin's" dispersal strategy meant there were still many units that had not been arrested or disarmed by the Soviets, their ability to act had now been seriously curtailed. As this story illustrates, the countryside was crawling with Soviet troops. Within a short space of time, they had encountered regular Red Army, Red Air Force and WP, there was never any chance that such forces could help Warsaw. At some stage, usually an early one, they would come across Soviet forces that would prevent their progress. "Marcin", like the cause of which he was a part, had been a victim of events out of his control, but his response had been the most pragmatic one available to him, to preserve most of the manpower of the underground. The march to Warsaw, allied with the halting of the front was to seriously undermine even this response. It did not destroy the underground but it added considerably to the cumulative effects of the summer of 1944.

The second wave of large-scale arrests, and the undermining of the AK's operational strength in the *Lubelszczyzna* region came primarily as a result of the attempts to go to Warsaw's aid. Clearly it was at this point that "Marcin's" strategy was, in effect, destroyed. Many battle-hardened units

with experienced officers left the homes or hiding places where they had been since “*Marcin’s*” dispersal order, reformed and marched straight into Soviet forces. The importance of the loss of such officers on the march to Warsaw is impossible to estimate but there are one or two clues to look at in the experiences of the Lubartów district. Of the district’s three main partisan units, comparing the fate of two is instructive. “*Uskok*” was not disarmed and arrested on the march to Warsaw; in fact, the “*Uskok*” unit was so adept at avoiding the communist administration that it was able to remain in operation for several years. Once the front moved away from the province in January 1945, the logic of “*Marcin’s*” weather the storm approach was proved when forces such as “*Uskok*”, which had laid low during the autumn and winter expanded to over 500 men and was able to aid in paralysing the communist administration in its area. By contrast, the “*Brzechwa*” unit, a unit with a similar level of experience in partisan warfare, of a similar size, and with a similar number and type of weaponry to “*Uskok*” went to aid Warsaw, and was effectively wiped off the scene. ⁶²

The internal fabric of the regional underground was significantly weakened by the events of August, and this is shown clearly in two reports from Żak at the end of the month. In the first report Żak mentions how anger was building amongst his troops towards the Soviets in the province. Crucially, he stated that if his men broke orders not to attack Soviet forces then he would not be able to prevent this. He reiterated this threat in another report sent on August 26th:

Society is disorientated by the silence of London and the unpunished conduct of the NKVD which threatens us with destruction. Its resistance weakens, but among AK soldiers it grows stronger. A spontaneous armed uprising against the Soviets, which I cannot stop, threatens to occur and would have terrible consequences. In the case of spontaneous action I will be forced to lead it. I request instructions. Spontaneous acts will cause unpredictable acts of retaliation from the soviets. ⁶³

If Żak’s report is accurate then many AK in the region were sticking to an order from London that was hugely unpopular whilst the NKVD was

arresting their comrades, Warsaw was burning and the *Lubelszczyzna* command was receiving no guidance from the centre. This was certainly a recipe for weakening the bonds between the exiled government and Lublin.

And yet, despite the impact of actions aimed at helping Warsaw, the AK Command survived. From this time on, most of the command that had managed to evade the first wave of AK arrests in August was forced to change their pseudonyms and go into hiding. Żak, the new area commander of the *Lubelszczyzna* region, spent the rest of 1944 hiding in many different safe houses throughout the city. Żak used the flat of his adjutant commander, Witold Engelking, throughout September and October. Just as the AK command had done during the German occupation, it used a large network of safe houses to rotate and hide their commanders, helping it to survive the first wave of NKVD repression. One such place of safety was a church situated in the same district of Lublin as Engelking's flat, the 10th District.⁶⁴ The church was probably a centre of underground activity at this time, although the records, seen by Anna Kister are, not definite on this. What was clear, however, was that Żak was hiding in this church, and that in November at the same time that the regional command was suspended, he was able to leave the church disguised as a priest. Kister's research shows how a strange misunderstanding on the part of the NKVD actually allowed Żak to reside in the church and ultimately escape. During interrogations of captured AK officers and men, the NKVD was repeatedly told that Żak was hiding in the church. However, the interrogating officers misunderstood this information, taking it to mean that Żak was a very religious man who spent most of his time in church.⁶⁵

Aside from the aforementioned safe houses, Żak or using the pseudonym that he adopted from August onwards "*Ignacy*", used the following to meet with other members of the regional AK command in the period between August and November 1944: apartment 1,2, and 4 Ulica Kapucyński, an apartment on the corner of Nowy Świat and Bychawski, apartment 1, 22 Ulica Lubartowska, apartment 5, 58 Krakowskie Przedmieście, apartment 22, 25 Ulica Karmelicka, apartment 1, 9 Ulica Przemysłowej and several

rooms at the Catholic University. The fact that the AK command in Lublin used so many safe houses in the summer and early autumn of 1944 points to two things: Clearly the new communist administration was as far reaching as the German occupation that it had so recently replaced, and that the AK had no shortage of locals who were willing to risk themselves providing safe houses for the underground. Indeed the flat at 58 Krakowskie Przedmieście was virtually opposite the new headquarters of Poland's communist government, the PKWN. On top of this whilst members of the command were in and around the city of Lublin, and remained at large, not all the work of their organisation had been stalled by the entry of the Soviets. For example, in August Kazimierz Stepniak, "*Witek*" / "*Witold*" commanded an underground cell that was based at 5 Ulica Dominikanski. Along with Mieczysław Zurawski "*Włoczeza*" and Bohdan Kossowski "*Zaorski*", Stepniak was working intensively forging fake identity papers and documents for underground members. In particular, this unit was responsible for issuing false papers to those members of the 27th Volhynian Division that had evaded capture by the Soviets at the end of July. ⁶⁶

Equally, outside of the city of Lublin, many AK units still remained in operation, and many were involved in military actions that were increasingly directed against the communist administration, killing MO members, or freeing their colleagues from Soviet gaols. Soviet arrests, the failing uprising in Warsaw, and the stalling of the front meant that 'People's Poland' was to be borne amidst the gathering clouds of civil war. In the district of Hrubieszów, the district commander, Captain M. Gołębiwski "*Ster*" led over 100 men into the town on the night of 19th August. In this raid, "*Ster's*" unit was able to take control of the town prison, free twelve members of the AK, and in the process re-take the arms that the Red Army had confiscated from them. Another good example of local AK units attempting limited operations during August 1944 was in Zamość district. At the end of the month, Józef Smiech "*Ciąg*" led a unit that attacked the prison in the city of Zamość. The attack resulted in the freeing of eighteen political prisoners. ⁶⁷ Such attacks show that the AK in *Lubelszczyzna* had now returned to launching the type of partisan raid that they had become so adept at during the last years of the German occupation. The new 'occupation' meant a return to old operations. Yet there was now a crucial

difference, the AK had been ordered not to pursue aggressive actions against the Soviets and in the absence of new instructions from London, that order still held good. Yet the fact that such operations were now happening is indicative of the heightened tensions caused by Soviet actions. These tensions were also articulated by the increasingly strong language now being used about the Soviets in the underground's newspaper the Information Bulletin. In fact the term 'second occupation' was now being used in the press agencies of the underground. This term first appeared in the Lublin region on 20th August and was to be used regularly from this point onwards.⁶⁸ By the end of September the storm that "Marcin" had originally envisaged weathering was obviously going to last a lot longer than seemed likely during late July. If this were the case, then would the AK alliance be able to hold?

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⁴ R. Wnuk, Lubelski Okreg AK DSZ i WiN 1944- 1947, (Warsaw 2000), pp.70-123.

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⁶ A. Prażmowska, Civil War in Poland, 1942-1948, (Macmillan 2004), p. 101.

⁷ Who was in Italy with his forces after their successful taking of the Monastery at Monte Cassino.

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³⁶ IPNL 0136 1 116/1 Lubartów county

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⁵⁹ P. Gawryszczak, 'Powstanie i upadek konspiracji antyniemieckiej i antysowieckiej w Inspectorate Lublin', Podziemie zbrojne na Lubelszczyźnie wobec dwóch totalitaryzmów 1939- 1956, (Warsaw 2002), pp. 53-54.

⁶⁰ Caban, Okręg, p. 63.

⁶¹ Wnuk, Lubelski Okręg, pp. 268-269.

⁶² IPNL 0136 1 116/1 Lubartów county

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- ⁶³ PUMST, Depesza Szyfr 134, Lublin region AK file, sent 26.8.44, received 30.8.44
- ⁶⁴ Kister, Komenda, p. 120.
- ⁶⁵ Ibid p. 121.
- ⁶⁶ Ibid p. 121.
- ⁶⁷ Wnuk, Lubelski Okreg, p. 269.
- ⁶⁸ Ibid pp. 60-123.

Chapter 4

October 1944-December 1944

Where do we go from here? The complex aftermath of the Warsaw Uprising

On October 2nd after 63 days of fighting in the capital, Bór-Komorowski announced the capitulation of the Warsaw Uprising. The AK command had received guarantees from the German victors that AK troops were to be treated as prisoners of war and that the civilian population would not be the victim of reprisals on the condition that they evacuated the city. The 63 day long siege had cost the lives of 100,000 Polish soldiers and civilians.

¹ The AK had 5 top generals, including Bór-Komorowski, and 17,443 soldiers taken into captivity. ²

After the failure of the Warsaw Uprising, what remained of the AK's command core was left in tatters. From the ashes of this defeat was to come a change of direction for the organisation. With Bor-Komorowski a German prisoner, his deputy Okulicki took the decision many in Lublin had been waiting for impatiently and identified the Soviet Union as the main threat to the Polish nation. Yet there were problems with this change, for much of the old command network, developed to deal with the problems of the German occupation, were kept for the very different realities of a 'second occupation'. Further down the command structure, in the Lublin region, the AK's uncertainty continued as in Moscow talks unfolded between Stalin and Mikołajczyk against a backdrop of increased mass repression by the agencies of the Soviet Union and PKWN. This mixture of repression and confusion meant that this period was to witness the growth of fractures within the underground. Some underground members, after Warsaw, and after the failure of the Moscow talks, were starting to question the logic of continued activity after five long years of

war. The PKWN was, after all, not like the General-Government that it had replaced. For all the talk of 'second occupation', the PKWN was not going to destroy the Polish nation, rather it was using patriotism and the promise of land to appeal to the people. The reopening of the Catholic University in Lublin, children being encouraged to wave Red and White flags, and the enforced transfer of the Ukrainian population from the south-east of the region all were starting to have an effect.

Yet despite these first stirrings of support, the PKWN was still struggling to create an effective administration that could survive once the Red Army resumed its advance to the west. The expansion of the armed forces and the police had meant that hundreds of politically unreliable people had been absorbed into the PKWN's structure, something that was evident in the mass desertions from the Polish Army during this period. After Warsaw, the communist authorities' response to this weakness was mass repression. The growing strength of the UB was supplemented by nearly 9,000 NKVD troops in Lublin. In *Lubelszczyzna* the period in which large areas of the province had remained beyond the reach of the NKVD was ending – by October they had reconnoitred the province and were beginning to use the information given to them by their growing spy network. Whilst the increase in support for the PKWN was slow, it had recruited enough men (often via blackmail or threats) to enable its security forces to massively undermine the underground. The underground was not destroyed, nor did the PKWN overcome its basic problem of legitimacy; what the communists were able to do in the autumn of 1944 was to destroy the internal fabric of resistance to them. Between October and November 1944, Lublin was witness to a massive sweeping campaign of terror that brought the underground to its knees without destroying it completely. Without a functioning central command and increasingly cut adrift from the outside world, individual and district commands continued their operations.

The most significant impact of the failure of the Warsaw Uprising was however that it destroyed the *raison d'être* of the AK. The AK had been created in order to facilitate the restoration of the Government-in-Exile and to continue the fight against the Germans. The uprising, in many senses,

had been the last serious throw of the dice to achieve these aims and had it failed. In effect, caught in a catch twenty-two situation that was not of its own making, the AK had risked everything on Warsaw. In Lublin the uprising, in effect, had meant that "*Marcin's*" attempt to preserve the bulk of his forces by dispersing them had been wrecked. Many of the units dispersed after Operation "Tempest" had re-grouped and been arrested as a direct result of the fighting in the capital. Once the Warsaw Uprising failed, the Soviet Union was never going to allow the forces and supporters of the Government-in-Exile to return in any meaningful sense. With the Soviets in military control of much of Poland's pre-war territory and with it soon to be in control of the rest, the future of the AK and the Government-in-Exile looked bleak indeed.

By launching an uprising in the capital, central command had, in effect destroyed the "*Marcin*" strategy that the Red Army should be allowed to roll over Poland, whilst the underground remained dispersed and ready for the moment when it could again play a role in creating an independent Poland. Launching the uprising meant that the PKWN and NKVD could clamp down on the AK, whilst other AK units were captured during their futile attempts to get to the capital. This story of Polish resistance being spilt between the political realism of people such as "*Marcin*" and the romantic notions attached to the Warsaw Uprising were long standing ones. The disaster in Warsaw was not just to seriously undermine the cause of the AK, but it was to ultimately mean that the romantic tendency in the Polish armed resistance was to be destroyed for a generation. This was not to be felt immediately but it did add to the sense of war weariness, itself a major threat to the AK's attempts to resist the continued imposition of communist rule in Poland.

Okulicki's New line

On 12th October 1944 General Leopold Okulicki issued a dispatch to the general staff of the AK. The dispatch was to fly in the face of the existing policy of the Government-in-Exile and so it was in essence a request for a major change in policy. Clearly the experience of Operation "Tempest" on the ground had taught the leadership in the homeland that a new approach must be tried, and tried soon. The simple idea that the Germans

were the only enemy had become blurred after Warsaw and the new orders reflected this. In his dispatch Okulicki asserted that Operation "Tempest" should be abandoned in favour of a new approach, namely that, in the case of the Germans, the AK should only act in defensive actions and maintain sabotage actions against them. As to Soviet forces, crucially Okulicki claimed that the AK should stop the practice of revealing itself, rather it should remain undercover, and that those persons most in danger from Soviet forces should be evacuated to the west. ³ Further to this dispatch, on 17th October Okulicki issued instructions for the period from October until November 1944, while his instructions for the winter operations of 1944-45 are telling in this respect as they show little sign of defeatism. The following orders were sent to the AK's general staff on 26th October:

- (1) To reinforce the organisation and discipline in the underground forces which had become slack as a result of the open fighting.
- (2) To adapt work to a worst-case scenario, and survive a long-term period of Soviet occupation.
- (3) To limit fighting with the Germans to sabotage and defending Polish civilians from their repressive measures and confiscation of property. To have readily available, swift, small but well armed detachments.
- (4) Partisan forces should be limited to such numbers as would allow them to survive the winter without threat of being destroyed, taking into account the territory and available provisioning. The remaining forces should be distributed by platoons throughout villages, and kept in reserve.
- (5) If the Red Army approaches, small detachments should attack the remaining Germans in order to get weapons, drawing as much attention to such action as possible, and then return underground and hide their weapons.
- (6) To train commanders from company to divisional level and their staffs - since the lack of trained people in open battle was painfully felt. To concentrate on the development of and training in the field of communications, especially radio. ⁴

The logic of these new orders is clear, the Soviet Union was now the main threat along with the PKWN who were seen as nothing more than Soviet stooges. Okulicki's orders clearly outlined that no compromise was to be contemplated, even though at this time Mikołajczyk was still attempting to come to a compromise with Stalin.

Throughout September the Government-in-Exile had been prepared to restart the negotiations with Stalin that had been broken off in August. By October it was still arguing about the approach that it should take towards the Soviets in light of the events of the previous two months, and at the beginning of the month it launched what were in effect last ditch negotiations with Stalin in Moscow. As far as the British and Polish delegations in Moscow were concerned, the eastern border of Poland was an issue that was still to be resolved. The conference would also provide a platform for the Government-in-Exile to present their evidence of Soviet interference in the affairs of their state. ⁵ Yet in Moscow the supporters of the London government achieved nothing. At the Tehran Conference a year earlier Churchill had discussed the Curzon Line, but he had not believed that any firm commitment had been made to the Soviets on this. However, at the meeting between the Soviets and Premier Mikołajczyk, the latter was humiliated and told in no uncertain terms that the border issue had been decided long ago. In response to Mikołajczyk's question on the border issue, Molotov stated: 'We all agreed at Tehran that the Curzon Line must divide Poland... President Roosevelt agreed to this solution and strongly endorsed the line.' ⁶ As Norman Davies points out, however, the American President had endorsed the Soviet border proposal a year earlier without informing his British and Polish allies. ⁷

The failure of the Moscow talks only confirmed Okulicki in his tactics. At home in Poland it was clear that Okulicki's conception of the AK's future role was as a primarily defensive force, but one that would remain armed and organised. The emphasis in his orders was very much on survival in the longer-term. Clearly the AK did not see itself as a spent force, implicit in these orders is the acceptance of a reduced operating capacity post-Warsaw, but equally it shows that as the autumn passed the AK was, in effect, preparing to re-group for action in the spring. It is therefore worth

quoting a small section of the order of 26th October, to emphasise the overall thinking of the central AK command in the days and weeks immediately after Warsaw. Okulicki stressed: '(The AK should) adapt work to a worst case scenario, and survive a long-term period of Soviet occupation.'⁸ This was a clear indicator that the AK was beginning to readjust its planning back to the level of an underground conspiracy. Yet, in October 1944 it still seemed as if there was a lot to fight for, and still a lot that could be changed. From Okulicki's viewpoint, a long term period of Soviet occupation may become a reality but it still seemed to be far from a given. Therefore, it was still seen as a 'worst case scenario' and not a fact. But this was clearly not the only reaction to the actions of the communists. Whilst the mass of the population still backed the AK the different stresses and strains of this new period meant that people were starting to adopt many different nuanced opinions about the PKWN.

Lubelszczyzna and the Moscow Talks

The failure of the talks in Moscow, that had begun on 13th October seems to have had a large and depressive impact on the population in Poland. It is difficult to stress the importance of the outcome of these talks for the AK in *Lubelszczyzna* and for the whole of the east of the country, a fact that had been compounded by the silence from London. It must have appeared to the members of the AK in *Lubelszczyzna* that everything had been placed on the success of Warsaw and the Moscow talks. Both were failures and the fall out from both was large.

From the reports sent back to London during September and October 1944, it is clear that the regional command in *Lubelszczyzna* were placing a lot of faith in the outcome of the Moscow talks. From the moment Operation "Tempest" had started in July, in the actions of, and more directly through the messages sent back to command, there was a sense that the repressions of this period would pass. The Government-in-Exile and the western Allies, once fully informed about the events in the east of Poland, would be able to force the Soviets into some form of climb down. Before the talks in Moscow in October, it was perfectly reasonable for the local AK command to assume that once Premier Mikołajczyk went to Stalin,

backed by the British and Americans, things would change. In the first few months of the Soviet 'occupation' this did not seem to be unreasonable, after all the PKWN was still struggling ineffectively to form a government, and the vast majority of the population backed a return of the Government-in-Exile. Added to this, whilst the Soviets had arrested thousands of non-communists, the Soviets had only been in the province for eight weeks and the NKVD had only been effectively operating in the outlying areas of the province for just over a month.

The importance of these talks for the AK in *Lubelszczyzna* is shown most clearly in a report addressed directly to Premier Mikołajczyk. It was sent on 2nd October, on the same day that Bór-Komorowski announced the end of the Warsaw Uprising, ten days before Okulicki's order and only eleven days before the start of the talks in Moscow:

From Lublin regional command on the day of 2nd October 1944
...The 3rd, 9th, and 27th Divisions after fighting the Germans in Operation "Tempest" were disarmed in a deceitful manner, and the soldiers pressured into incorporation into the WP. However from the AK command in this region over 200 officers, 2000 soldiers and the chiefs of the national administration...were deported to the east due only to the reason that they revealed their stated authority to the Soviets, that they were subordinate to the government in London, and that they could execute their own will...Until now around 21,000 Poles have been arrested and the PKWN has announced further increases in arrests...Please Mr Premier (we rely on) the intervention of the governments of the USA and Great Britain, to return to the nation imprisoned AK soldiers...(for) employees of the state to be released from prison...(for) the cessation of further arrests and to enable us to continue the fight with the Germans under the command authority of officers and the supervision of the central command of the AK...We assure you, Mr Premier, that the whole of Polish society in the region of Lublin stand firmly and faithfully by you.....⁹

This report was by far the longest that was sent back from *Lubelszczyzna* in the period between July–October. Yet this one went to the pains to provide in detail the size and scope of Soviet arrests. Clearly the upcoming talks were of vital importance for the command, and the report of 2nd October can be seen to be nothing less than a desperate plea for help from people who must have been acutely aware that their own fate was out of their hands.

Nothing more eloquently sums up the fruitlessness of the Government-in-Exile's talks on 13th October than a coded message sent back to London by the *Lubelszczyzna* command at the end of August, almost two months before the Polish Premier got on a plane to discuss the Curzon Line. It read:

Along the line of the Bug and Dubno...the towns are fortified...the Soviets have taken guard along the Curzon Line. Passage through the state across the Bug is impeded by the Soviets...Deportations from Lwow to Russia...There is strong propaganda against the London government. ¹⁰

Two months earlier, therefore, the Soviets were beginning to man 'their border' with Poland, they were deporting and arresting Poles who were unlucky enough to have found themselves on the wrong side of the Soviet's line. At the same time, their forces were undermining the Government-in-Exile in what they had decided was Poland. This report along with others reporting the events along the Bug, were sent to the UK, thus the Government-in-Exile knew of the realities of the border question before the Moscow talks, a fact that makes their silence to *Lubelszczyzna* in the build-up to the talks all the more remarkable. Yet, what is also clear from the command's reports back to the UK from the end of August and September 1944 is that the AK organisation and almost certainly most of the population in *Lubelszczyzna* were waiting on Mikołajczyk's talks with Stalin hoping that they would end the repressions. Yet Mikołajczyk's talks were an abject failure; Poland enduring its 'second occupation' would have to live with this fact. This must have had a huge and demoralising impact on the AK forces in Lublin, many of who were keenly listening to the events in

Moscow via the BBC. Zygmunt Klukowski recorded in his diary the local reaction to the talks:

15th October:

During the last few days we have been following the conference in Moscow. The participants include Eden, Mikołajczyk, and Stalin. Yesterday we hoped for the prospect of at least some positive results, but today the news is so terrible that Mikołajczyk will probably return to London without accomplishing anything. ¹¹

Indeed the results of the conference were to have terrible consequences for those interested in a non-communist future for Poland. The Lublin command's reports at this time paint a nightmarish picture of life in the region. From the end of the Warsaw Uprising onwards, the AK were being directly targeted by the communist security forces, and during the Moscow talks, the PKWN and Soviet forces in the region had increased the propaganda campaign against the whole of the AK. According to Żak, during the talks in Moscow the Lublin AK had been subjected to a 'massive campaign of terror and propaganda'. ¹² Equally, he reports how the PKWN had been organising rallies throughout the region to denounce the AK and the Government-in-Exile. In town squares the length and breadth of *Lubelszczyzna* communist meetings were using slogans such as 'Put the enemies of the nation on trial' and 'Enough of fratricidal struggle'. The hysterical tone of this propaganda reflected deep uncertainty within the PKWN about its grip on power. The issue of desertion further accentuated this. Indeed the events of August and September 1944, in which AK support remained high and in which the PKWN started to witness desertions from their newly formed army, had highlighted how dependant they were on Soviet military muscle. In fact the manner in which the PKWN began its call up virtually guaranteed that large-scale desertions would happen at some point. By mid-August AK reports show that men had been forced into the Polish communist army by threats and coercion. Dr Klukowski records the reasoning of youths in his area at this time:

More and more of our boys are enlisting into the Berling Army because they do not see any other way to survive. Recently,

“Ślavian” and a few others enlisted. In a letter to “Orsza”, “Ślavian” wrote that he had done so to gain more experience and to fight Communism from the inside. ¹³

In a sense it was never likely that a communist army could have been established in any other manner in the short term, given the hostility of the mass of the population towards what was clearly a foreign controlled body. The emphasis on creating a large army served many important roles in bolstering the new regime, and one of the most important was the fact that many local men of fighting age, who may well have occupied themselves in the underground, were sucked into a communist-led force. For instance, one of Lubartów’s partisan leaders, “Wicher”, was taken into the WP in August and was not demobbed until 10th November 1945, a long time after the key period of struggle between the underground and the communists had passed. ¹⁴ Within four months a 172,000 man army had been created. Whilst this number appears significant, given the population of the call-up area it was a poor response from a people whose murderous hatred of the Germans and thirst for revenge should have produced a greater result. In effect, an estimated 40% of the population that was liable to conscription did not respond to the call of the communist dominated committee. ¹⁵ At the point of crossing the Bug River, at the end of July, the WP had numbered around 100,000, this was to be originally, and unrealistically, expanded to 430,000. ¹⁶ It is in this light that the number of 172,000 should be assessed. It should also be remembered that by the middle of August the PKWN had decreed that failure to register for the army meant trial by court-martial under the charge of desertion.

Perhaps the fact that the original core of the new communist army was formed from former AL units did not help. For the previous four years local people had consistently chosen to support the AK and the Government-in-Exile ahead of the AL and nothing had changed in this respect. Indeed of those who did join the new Polish Army, or Air Force, many deserted after an incredibly short time. Waldemar Lotnik had joined the Air Force after being imprisoned by the Nazis in Majdanek concentration camp in July 1944. He was trained by a mixture of Russian and Polish officers and talks in his memoirs of how Russian officers referred to him at times as a 'filthy

laki'.¹⁷ He and many others talk about large-scale desertions from communist training camps during this period. Indeed, the attempt to indoctrinate Poles, and the atmosphere of intimidation, led others to question their own participation in the new forces. Lotnik himself eventually from deserted from the Air Force to join the AK.¹⁸ His story is quite typical in the Lublin region. Lotnik's experiences in the Polish communist air force, which from the beginning of September had its first training base outside of Zamość, are fascinating and show the mixed feelings of the Poles in such forces:

Navigators, radio operators, ground staff and mechanics were all needed, not just pilots, and all received their training from Russian experts in Zamość. At the beginning as many as half the officer cadets were Russian, generally of Polish extraction, although very few spoke Polish with any ease or fluency. Like the Russians with Polish names who filled leading positions throughout the liberated part of Poland, we called them infiltrators, but for the moment we had a common enemy and relations were not hostile...Tensions between Poles and Russians smouldered beneath the surface and periodically threatened to burst into flame. Leaflets from the Home Army detailing the Soviet betrayal of Poland appeared on the doors of latrines in Lublin, where the locals also risked tuning in to the BBC or Polish broadcasts from abroad. The official Soviet view was that the Polish aristocracy had exploited the bravery of Polish youth in an attempt to re-establish the pre-war feudal system, but none of us believed that.¹⁹

Although disappointment at the Government-in-Exile's inability to shape Poland's future was widespread this did not mean that support for the new communist authorities was significantly on the increase. However, there were clear signs that divisions were emerging among AK forces. Rafał Wnuk points out that the absence of AK sources from this period mean that historians primarily rely on communist sources for these months. Independent verification is currently unavailable, but the evidence that exists provides a good example of the confusion and demoralisation caused by London's abrogation of responsibility. According to the documentation

available, during one of the regional command briefings at the beginning of October, the Inspector of Puławy inspectorate, Major Stanisław Kowalski “Konrad”, proposed sending a delegation to the PKWN to negotiate for arrested AK members and to explore the possibility of leaving the underground. According to these sources, Żak rejected this idea. Also during the same meeting, the inspectorate commanders informed the regional commander that differences between the AK and the BCh were growing as a result of Mikołajczyk’s visit to Moscow. ²⁰

These reports could just show the divergence of opinion that would be expected in an organisation placed in the position that the underground was at this time. In addition it is true that the Government-in-Exile had been placed in an incredibly difficult position by the Soviets and by their allies in the west, yet their decision to issue no clear commands to Soviet controlled regions for nearly two months meant that men such as “Konrad”, felt sufficiently disillusioned to contemplate talks with the communists. Such reports also point to the fact that between Okulicki’s line and the NKVD line, within Poland there were many different, nuanced positions being taken by different sections of the population. For the AK, perhaps, the most potentially dangerous result of the failure of the Government-in-Exile at this time was in the fact that the BCh was drifting further away from the AK. Indeed, the failure of the talks in Moscow was to lead to the resignation of Mikołajczyk, the leader of the Peasant Party, from his post as Prime Minister. Even before this, the majority of peasants had no automatic loyalty to either side, being suspicious of both the communists and the ‘officer class’ leaders of the AK at the same time. Mikołajczyk’s leadership of the Peasant Party and of the Government-in-Exile had been a crucial factor in the continued loyalty of many peasants to his government. According to Anita Prażmowska, many in the Peasant Party wanted to play a role in the rebuilding of Poland and to prevent the peasants being sidelined, as they felt they had been during the establishment of the Second Republic. While Mikołajczyk continued his role in the exiled government, the majority of the peasant movement continued to support London and the AK, however his resignation led to even more people on the ground questioning their continued loyalty. ²¹ This meant, potentially, that if any BCh commanders were to eventually

leave the underground for the new communist administration, their knowledge of the AK in the area, its staff and its operating structures, would truly mean that the underground could be destroyed.

This sense of different positions being adopted towards the Government-in-Exile and the PKWN is shown in the creeping split between elements of the BCh and the AK. On 14th October 1944, in a meeting in Lublin of activists from the Peasant's organisation "*Roch*", this sense of disenchantment with the Government-in-Exile's alliance was clearly shown. The minutes of this meeting as quoted by I. Caban sum up how many commanders in the *Lubelszczyzna* BCh were now feeling:

Initially the relationship was agreeable. The AK was disloyal to us in this relationship, integration was on unfavourable conditions for us. After integration differences...certainly still intensified. ²²

This process should not be exaggerated the vast majority of BCh units still remained loyal to the Government-in-Exile, but clearly some people were starting to question loyalty to London. In short, old grievances that had existed during the German occupation and that had been down played during liberation were now resurfacing after the failure of the Warsaw Uprising and the Moscow talks.

Defence of the State

Those BCh and AK units contemplating a negotiated settlement with the PKWN received a cruel blow when the PKWN issued 'The Defence of the State' decree of late October 1944, officially ushering in a new period of draconian repression of the AK. As with many communist policies within *Lubelszczyzna*, in practice they had been following them for some time before the official declaration. Whilst Żak's reports show that from the end of the Warsaw Uprising mass repression was being used, the Defence of the State decree was the trumpet call. People's tribunals for political offences, the standard Stalinist medium through which sham justice was administered, were used from October onwards, and helped to feed the region's prison camps with 'Fascist sympathisers'. One of the most

important aspects of these decrees lies in the fact that they backdated legislation dealing with the underground to 15th August meaning that those members of the AK who had been arrested over the previous two months were now being held, indeed they had always been held, legally. It was at this time that the notorious poster declaring 'The AK- the spit stained dwarf of the reaction' began appearing throughout the region.²³ This poster was perhaps the most famous example of the beginnings of a concerted propaganda campaign aimed at smearing the AK by decrying it as reactionary and by blaming the organisation for the debacle of Warsaw. The underlying meaning of this change of direction in October was that terror was now to be used on a national scale, and against all opponents actual or perceived. Clearly the idea was to convince the population that the imposition and ultimate victory of communism in Poland was irreversible and inevitable.



The above poster is one of the most famous examples of the Communist propaganda campaign against the AK during the autumn of 1944. It reads

'The giant and the expectorated dwarf of the reaction'.

(Author's own collection)

The change of policy from the PKWN was brought about due to events earlier in October. Stalin had given Gomułka and Witos a dressing down in Moscow because of their lack of progress in Poland; the *Generalissimo* urged them to crack down on the AK without remorse and without delay, and to get to grips with desertion. In addition, the halt of Soviet forces outside of Warsaw during the uprising had helped to bring anti-communist feelings to a head in many areas of Poland. ²⁴ On the strength of an order from Soviet high command issued on 13th October 1944, the NKVD sent a Division numbering 8,850 persons to the Lublin region. ²⁵ This new Division was specially raised and sent to the Lublin area by the USSR State Committee of Defence in order to reinforce the NKVD units in the area. It was to operate exclusively in the Lublin area until the middle of 1945, when its operations were expanded to the whole territory of communist Poland. The new unit was the 64th NKVD Internal Army Division and was headed initially by Major-General Boris Sieribiako, and then by Major-General Pavel Brovkin. The fact that the command for these reinforcements into the region came from the very top, spoke volumes about the degree of opposition that the NKVD was encountering in *Lubelszczyzna*. It also pointed to the weakness of the Polish communists, that the Defence of the State repressions were to be implemented by a specially created Soviet force. Clearly, the Soviet Union felt that the existing NKVD forces, even though they had already arrested and deported thousands of people, were not sufficient to bring the area under effective control. ²⁶ In addition to these moves, Ivan Serov, the commander of all NKVD forces in Poland, personally oversaw the build up of the Polish security forces with the expansion of the Ministry of Public Security, *Ministerstwo Bezpieczeństwa Narodowego* (MBP), along with the local Security Offices, *Urzędy Bezpieczeństwa* (UB). ²⁷ At his suggestion, earlier attempts to include ex-AK members in the MO and WP were now abandoned; these people were now enemies and were to be arrested. In the creation of People's Poland the Security offices were to overshadow the communist party itself.

The tone of the PKWN was, therefore, becoming increasingly menacing from the point of view of the AK from October onwards. On 18th October

Gomułka gave the following speech, that was published in *Trybuna Wolności*, Tribune of Freedom:

There will be no civil war. If however, the provocateurs force it upon us, if it provokes democratic Poland through murder and violence, the democratic camp will undertake the struggle with reaction and will destroy, ruthlessly destroy, reactionary defenders of the landlord rule. ²⁸

The Defence of the State decree, in effect declared war on the non-communist elements in Lublin province. Unreliable elements, namely those people whose communist credentials were in doubt, were dismissed from the judiciary and bureaucracy of the PKWN itself. In addition to this, the decree stated that any action directed against the authorities now carried a mandatory death penalty. Amongst such actions directed against the state was the possession of radio transmitters; it was now in effect illegal for the AK to contact its superiors in Warsaw and the UK. The ban on radio transmitters had already been in effect since the entry of the NKVD into the region. Since the end of July the NKVD had been arresting AK radio units across the province, yet at this stage no 'policy' had as such been officially announced. It was only after the failure of the Warsaw Uprising that the PKWN felt confident enough to publicly proclaim a policy that the communist authorities had been following for the past two months in *Lubelszczyzna*. In addition to the above decrees, Poles could now even be given the death penalty for not being vigilant enough about informing on 'reactionary activity'.

From October and November 1944 the UB was organised into several different bases operating out of the city of Lublin. The regional UB was based at 53 Krakowskie Przedmieście, the county UB at number 41 and the city UB at 12 Ulica Chopina. The UB was not large enough during 1944 to make an effective difference on its own. During the last months of the year it was only able to launch single actions and invariably even these were supported by NKVD or MO forces. Yet the important fact is the collective size of these forces. For example by the end of the year the MO alone had 13,206 members. ²⁹ When added to the Soviet presence, this was quite a

persuasive force, against which the men of the AK began to look exactly what they increasingly were, weak and isolated. ³⁰

It was against this background, with more Soviet regular and NKVD troops coming into the region, that the security forces were able to inflict heavy losses on the *Lubelszczyzna* AK. Once the Soviet Union decided to directly target the whole of the AK in *Lubelszczyzna*, its destruction as an organised underground was not long in coming. The security services had gathered enough information on local networks and the terrain in which they were operating to be able to mount large-scale anti-partisan initiatives that were to successfully paralyse underground operations in *Lubelszczyzna* until early 1945. The NKVD had, of course, been able to inflict huge losses on the AK prior to October, but they had not been able to destroy the local underground and ultimately to 'secure' the rear areas of the Red Army, hence the massive reinforcements ordered to the region at this point. They had spread their 'reach' to the whole region by September, but the communist security forces were not able to operate in effective numbers in outlying areas until after the October reinforcements. For example in Tomaszów Lubelski, the NKVD and UB only started to launch pacification campaigns in the area from 2nd October onwards. ³¹ Equally, in effect until October 1944, the Communist security forces in the Lublin region had concentrated on arresting, interrogating and deporting the AK's commanders, after this point they focused on anyone suspected as being a part of the underground.

However, even with this growing knowledge of local conditions the NKVD and UB still stuck to a relatively small range of operational methods in *Lubelszczyzna*. This was to be the case until the early spring of 1945. For example, once an area of anti-communist partisan operations had been identified, the area in question was combed on a mass scale. Up to 1,000 NKVD personnel, would be concentrated in one district and several villages combed simultaneously. Certain towns or villages were surrounded and cut off, often on no more evidence than a hunch. The encircling units then moved into the area in question and began arrests. If and when independence underground units were found, they were either arrested or instantly liquidated. For example, one of the first successful operations of

this type in the autumn was carried out in the Włodawa AK district, where an AK unit commanded by Bolesław Flisiuk “*Jarem*” was engaged and destroyed by a NKVD anti-partisan group.³² Rafał Wnuk estimates that during 1944 and the first half of 1945 the NKVD carried out around 80 percent of such operations.³³

The NKVD units taking part in these anti-partisan operations were split into groups of between 25-170 people. Such units were the spear-head for a determined struggle against partisan units in *Lubelszczyzna*. From the beginning of October virtually the entire province was witness to sweeping anti-partisan campaigns. For example, in the eastern part of Tomaszów Lubelski, from 2nd-4th October the NKVD and UB carried out an operation that resulted in 150 people being imprisoned.³⁴ Equally, another operation was carried out in the forests of Tarnogóra, Piasków Szlachecki, and Rudnik on 23rd-25th October. During the operation, the 25-man strong AK unit of the area commander, “*Niwa*”, was destroyed; on the 25th in Rudnik, another 15-man AK unit, which included eleven deserters from the WP, was attacked and scattered. Later on the same day, NKVD units engaged another underground unit near Rudnik killing two and capturing a further three men.³⁵ Such operations, allied with mass arrests, and the surveillance of the region’s towns and cities, were to mean that continued partisan activity was to peter out during the autumn. Jacek Wołoszyn estimates that the anti-partisan operations carried out by the 64th NKVD Division in *Lubelszczyzna* between October and November were responsible for the arrests of 2,039 AK members.³⁶

The weather also helped the anti-partisan operation. The large-scale growth of partisan units in *Lubelszczyzna* in 1944 had really only begun in earnest from the spring onwards. This was, of course, in no small part due to the fact that the front was getting ever closer to the region, but it was only from spring onwards, that it was feasible for large numbers of men to operate in the woods of the region. Before April the cold temperatures of the eastern European winter and the leafless trees made partisan activity incredibly difficult. From April until October 1944, the warmer weather and the foliage on the trees meant that large groups could operate in the forests and remain out of reach. By October 1944 it was not just the

international situation and Soviet repression that was worsening; it was also the weather. Soon it would be too cold to remain in the open coverless woods.

Dismantling the Lublin underground

That the NKVD and UB were so successful in taking apart much of the organised underground during autumn 1944 is in part due to the fact that the AK, both nationally and locally, did not face up to the new realities of the Soviet occupation until it was too late. In terms of their organisational structure, certain operations, such as counter-intelligence were changed, but the AK still attempted to maintain a large-scale underground network. In this lay one of the major reasons for the unravelling of the network. The underground alliance had come into being in *Lubelszczyzna* during the peculiar circumstances of the German occupation in which all of Polish society had a common enemy and cause - the removal of the Nazis from the province. In this atmosphere an incredibly intricate underground army and state had been created in Lublin of 60,000 people. These circumstances had now passed into history, the communist party and the Soviets provided a different threat, and they could recruit and did recruit informers and spies, which once inside a network could destroy it. By not de-centralising its forces and by maintaining links between centre, inspectorate and district, the AK exposed itself to much greater risk. Thanks to a network of safe house meetings and communications developed under the German occupation, the AK in *Lubelszczyzna* created a situation whereby a domino effect of arrests could and did happen.

The following events in the district of Biłgoraj highlight this danger and also provide an excellent indicator of the increasing polarisation of the population. In November 1944 the former commander of Zamość BCh Edward Michonski "*Lis*" defected to the PKWN. "*Lis*" was able to persuade Captain Jan Wojtala "*Jez*" and the former BCh commander of the Biłgoraj district Stanisław Makiella "*Brzask*" to join with him. These three were to involve themselves in intensive pro-PKWN propaganda, which involved organizing meetings with other local members of the BCh urging them to hand in weapons and join the PKWN's army. "*Brzask*" ordered the members of the Peasant Party and BCh in Biłgoraj to submit to the PKWN.

According to Rafał Wnuk, this order was followed by “Brzask’s” subordinates and most of the BCh units in the area handed in their weapons to the NKVD and UB.⁴² To the AK in the region “Brzask” and “Orsza”, a fellow BCh officer, were as a result of their actions to be treated as traitors and liquidated if found. The Biłgoraj BCh’s reaction to this resulted in the AK being destroyed in the area. As some BCh commanders had been operating as commanders in AK units their knowledge of local networks was large. One such commander, goaded by the AK branding his fellow BCh men as traitors, decided to tell the security forces all he knew about the AK in Biłgoraj. In fact the relationship between the communist authorities and the BCh in the area was to become so good that the chief of the Biłgoraj UB nominated Józef Makuch, a former commander of the 4th BCh region, as a chief of intelligence. These events meant that within weeks the AK underground in Biłgoraj effectively ceased to exist.⁴³

That this happened in Biłgoraj is very telling about the overall state of the organisation in *Lubelszczyzna* by the end of the year. Biłgoraj was in the Zamość inspectorate; it had been one of the areas worst affected by the German population exchanges and anti-partisan initiatives during the Nazi occupation. It had, therefore, been one of the strongest districts for the *Lubelszczyzna* AK in terms of manpower. Also Biłgoraj had been one of the areas in which BCh officers had been operating in positions of integrated command with the AK for the longest. Yet even though this was the case, clearly loyalties had remained divided and this split had increased as the PKWN appealed to peasants and workers. Even though members of the BCh had given information to the PKWN, in the minds of many BCh officers, loyalty to fellow BCh officers was greater than the allegiance to London. The AK was the official army of a Polish Government without territory, it was run and ordered by its pre-war codes but it was ultimately a volunteer force. AK officers declaring that BCh men were traitors was symptomatic of their outlook, betraying them meant betraying the Polish Army. Equally ‘the militias’ that were allied to the Polish Army had often joined the AK to fight for liberation from the Nazis - once this had been achieved, once the Warsaw Uprising had failed and once the leader of the Peasant Party had resigned from the Government-in-Exile, continued involvement was being questioned. This again points to the fact that the

alliance forged during the last few months of the German occupation, was an alliance forged by the peculiar circumstances of that period. The AK/*Delegatura* had not been allowed to restore the old Polish Republic and now the alliance that they had formed for that purpose was starting to significantly unravel.

The tough new approach by the communist authorities after the failure of the Warsaw Uprising, added to their increased knowledge of local circumstances and networks meant that in the period from October to November much of the fabric of the AK in *Lubelszczyzna* was destroyed. Anna Kister's research on the AK regional command in *Lubelszczyzna* reveals some fascinating insights into the nature of Soviet terror, and how it led to a snow-ball effect that virtually destroyed the underground in *Lubelszczyzna* as a coherent centralised force. According to Kister, it was the capture of a few members of the underground at the end of the summer that led to a domino effect of arrests. As a result of the interrogations of these individuals, who were connected to the regional command, the NKVD and UB were able to seize 'more than 440 persons'.⁴⁴

At the end of September, the regional printing house on Ulica Narutowicza in Lublin city was discovered by the NKVD and closed down with its workers being incarcerated. After this, during the first half of October the UB was able to capture the AK regional head of intelligence Lieutenant-Colonel Aleksander Bieniecki "*Łodzia*". After a fruitless interrogation "*Łodzia*" was executed. The NKVD and UB launched two key operations during autumn 1944 that were to have a paralysing effect on the central command of the AK in *Lubelszczyzna*. The first of these operations was put into effect between 16th-21st October. This operation was aimed primarily at the regional command and therefore took place in the Lublin inspectorate. The security forces set traps around the AK's exposed contact points, such as Anna Gross's flat, which had been used as a meeting point for many members of the inspectorate's command. During this operation the NKVD and UB managed to capture the following leading men of the underground in Lublin Inspectorate: inspector of the Lublin inspectorate Edward Jasiński, "*Nurt*", the aide-de-camp of the regional commander Antoni Wieczorek "*Ścibor*", inspector of the regional command

Mieczysław Szczepański, "*Mieczysław*".⁴⁶ These arrests had a predictably debilitating effect on the regional underground. However, perhaps the greatest impact of this first wave of arrests was to increase nervousness throughout the AK underground. This meant that communications were reduced in some areas in an attempt to lessen the chances of arrest. For instance the commander of the Tomaszów Lubelski district Władysław Surowiec "*Sosna*", ordered on 5th November that units within his command should loosen contacts and re-orientate their operations to defence in order to ensure that all cells remain organised.⁴⁷

The impact of the arrests at the end of October was huge therefore for the regional command. Even before the subsequent arrests on 6th November, the regional command feared for the future of its organisation. Franciszek Żak sent a report back to the Chief of General Staff General Stanisław Kopański at this time:

Lately many officers and soldiers of the Home Army have been arrested. They are being transported to unknown destinations from the castle in Lublin. We will not be able to keep it up in the long run. There are constant Citizen's Militia raids aimed at getting rid of Home Army soldiers in the Lublin region. 38 Home Army soldiers were executed without trial by firing squads. PKWN propaganda calls us bandits, murderers, fascists, Hitler's servants etc. Home Army officers and soldiers are interned in Brest Litovsk and transported to Kazan or Ryazan. The NKVD terror is equal to that of the Gestapo. ⁴⁸

However it was not the October operation that effectively ended the activity of the central command, but the operation undertaken on 6th November 1944. Whilst contacts had been weakened, the attempts to maintain the centralised apparatus of the underground linked to Warsaw and London meant that command meetings were still being called. Due to the very nature of these meetings, most high-ranking and experienced officers from the region would be in one place at one time. Such meetings had taken place during the German occupation in order to maintain links throughout the region, yet the risk of these meetings being exposed was significantly

smaller during the German occupation. In November, not only for those present at the meeting but for those people across the region whose names and addresses might be given away during the subsequent interrogations. According to Rafał Wnuk, communist agents had gained information informing them that a Lublin regional briefing was to take place between 5th-9th November. It was on 6th November that the UB and NKVD burst in on the meeting; virtually every member of the upper echelons of regional AK was present. Żak was able to avoid arrest, but the following AK leaders were not so lucky: the chief of the 1st Bureau "Orlik", the chief of the BiP Captain Marian Tułacz, "Step", the Chief of the 2nd Bureau Major Mieczysław Komarski "Wojtek" and his deputy Second-Lieutenant Leon Rambarz, "Dołęga", the chief of the 3rd Bureau Major Jan Nawrat "Lucjan", the head of the regional office Eugenia Wachowska "Emilia", aide-de-camp of the regional commander Colonel Witold Engelking "Prot", inspector of the Zamość inspectorate Major Stanisław Prus "Adam", the inspector of Puławy inspectorate Major Stanisław Kowalski "Konrad", and approximately seventy other high ranking members of the regional AK. Although the regional commander Żak managed to avoid capture, the devastating impact of these arrests was reflected by the fact that shortly after this Żak sent a command to the inspectorates advising them to consider all existing contacts as burnt until further notice. Clearly from this point onwards, the AK command, as a centralised and functioning entity that was capable of maintaining regular contacts with its component parts, ceased to exist.⁴⁹ Perhaps the most damaging aspect of the arrests lay in the fact that the NKVD now had most of the leaders of the *Lubelszczyzna* underground in cells under Ulica Chopina. This meant that, sooner or later, some if not all of them would be beaten into denouncing both themselves and the work of their organisation now and during the German occupation. Others, like Witold Engelking "Prot", would be beaten to death during interrogation. Those captured were ultimately forced to divulge the names and addresses of a further 280 officers of the AK in *Lubelszczyzna*.⁵⁰

The result of being involved in the non-communist underground was to face arrest, exclusion, torture and ultimately deportation or death; this fact radicalised those people remaining loyal to the AK. Of the men and women captured in October and November 1944, many were given death

sentences. The use of the death penalty was as much about instilling fear into the wider population as it was about removing certain individuals. According to the research of Janusz Wrona, the court of the Lubelski Military Garrison meted out its first death verdict to AK members on 14th November. Up until December 1944, thirty three more death verdicts were passed by this court based in Lublin castle. ⁵¹ Such was the number of arrests that all types of prison and detention centres were filled to capacity throughout the region. This meant that new temporary holding camps were created across the region, most of which were liquidated by the beginning of 1945. For example, one of the largest such camps in the region was established in November in the city of Lublin on Ulica Nowy Świat. This particular camp was used as a concentration area for prisoners from places such as Biłgoraj and Tomaszów Lubelski. From 18th November onwards prisoners were deported from here to several different destinations, to sister camps within People's Poland, or to camps in the Soviet Union. ⁵²

Continuing Activity

Even though the central command structure was suspended from this point onwards and many of the AK partisan units had been arrested or frozen, some units and regions continued to function and were still able to launch limited operations against the communist authorities. For example, from a high point of 3,263 members in July 1944, the Tomaszów Lubelski AK still contained 474 cadet officers and 2,422 other ranks at the end of October 1944, still a considerable force and not untypical within the context of *Lubelszczyzna*.⁵³ In the Puławy inspectorate in July 1944 there had been five radio stations operating in the area, by the end of November the inspectorate was down to three. One station was confiscated by the UB on 26th November 1944 from Mieczysław Józefacki "Zych" in Rybitwa parish in the Puławy district. The second station was also then seized by the UB, although the exact date of this is not known, from Tadeusz Marc "Pogromca" in the village of Dąbrowa in the parish of Godów. Yet despite this, the remaining radio station continued to broadcast "*Wiadomości Radiowe*", radio news, to the districts of the inspectorate throughout the autumn and winter of 1944-45. In this inspectorate the intelligence officer was "Inżynier", who was an expert in radio (how long he worked for the AK

or what his real name was is not known).⁵⁴ Yet clearly his work was being directed by the inspectorate command.

In Puławy, as in other AK inspectorates members of the WSK were charged with finding safe houses and meeting points. In this area the following female intelligence officers made sure that at least some internal channels of communication remained open: in the town of Puławy itself, Helena Łukasik "*Halina*", in Kraśnik district, Janina Chełmicka; and in the Puławy district, "*Freda*" from the "*Orlik*" group and "*Joanna*" from the "*Orlik*" group. Therefore, even during this incredibly difficult period "*Inżynier*" and his fellow intelligence officer "*Władysław*" were still able to meet with "*Konrad*" the Puławy Inspector until his arrest and then with his successor at the following locations: at Halina Szalkiewicz's house on 99 Ulica Lubelski in Puławy (this was not closed by the UB until March 1946); in the village of Witowice Puławy county, in the home of Ignacy Gębali "*Chudy*", which was also the point of contact between the Puławy district and the sub-districts (liquidated on 12th October 1946 by the UB). In the town of Puławy itself, in the shop of Henryk Pacek on 31 Ulica Lubelski there was a meeting point for district intelligence and Inspectorate to regional organisations until 26th September 1945.⁵⁵

From October onwards attacks by the AK and other non-communist groups on those Poles now working with the new communist government were becoming increasingly common across the whole of the region. Most of these attacks took place in the more isolated areas of *Lubelszczyzna*. As the NKVD moved into the remoter areas of Lublin, they increasingly pushed the AK back into their strongholds, and so clashes became more common. When they did take place in the region's towns and more populated areas, they often took the form of lightning attacks, with AK raiding parties entering the area in which the target resided, carrying out their operation and then retreating back into the woods before the communist authorities could intercept them. For example, in the village of Zezulin near Lubartów on 16th October, an AK unit liquidated two collaborators of the new government known only as Stanisław P. and Mieczysław M. In November, in Puławy inspectorate in the villages of Koszarów and Wandalin, the local AK carried out death sentences that had been issued by the county

Delegatura on two local communists and AL members, Stanislaw Roli in Koszarów and Wincenty Samon in Wandalin. Equally in Puławy county, on 25th November in the village of Końskowola, on the road between Lublin and Puławy a member of the PPR, Wojciech Popik, was liquidated by a raiding party. On 17th November, on the other side of the region in Kranystaw, forty miles to the south of Lublin city, a local AK raiding party executed the County Commissioner of the PPR in Kranystaw, Konstanty Krasowski.⁵⁶ Equally, during November, in the north of *Lubelszczyzna*, in Biała Podlaska, Captain Robert Domanski led a nine-man patrol into the town and between the hours of six and seven in the morning his force managed to take the prison and free several prisoners. The operation was completed without a shot being fired, primarily because of the lightning nature of the raid and because the unit was very familiar with the town and its prison. Near Pokowice in the Kraśnik district on 19th December, partisans from the “Zapora”, “Jur”, “Glaz”, “Maks” and “Cygan” units were involved in a fight with MO units in a barn. During this clash two MO members were killed and the AK partisans were able to escape. On 8th December, in Jaraczew in the Tomaszów Lubelski district, AK soldiers killed a local member of the UB, whilst on the 3rd, in Słodków in the Kraśnik district, AK soldiers attacked and fatally wounded the PPR secretary Bolesław Winiarczyk.⁵⁷ These actions were of course being carried out against a background of mass arrests throughout these areas by the communist forces.

In these actions, the AK was in many senses mirroring the increasingly aggressive stance of the communists. Okulicki's order for the autumn of 1944 had talked about a Soviet occupation, and in effect identified the Soviets as the new enemy. Whilst the AK was only to launch defensive actions against the communist forces, defensive could be interpreted in many different ways. Okulicki's order had been also made clear that the PKWN were usurpers, they were a part of the Soviet occupation and were an illegitimate body. In this spirit, attacks on MO outposts or prison breaks could be seen as being defensive, but actions that would nevertheless ultimately help the communist authorities to justify further clamp-downs. These processes fed off of one another. For example, in Tomaszów county members of the underground attempted to assassinate a

local communist security officer on 14th October. The attempt failed, but it was met by a large and devastating response from the security forces in the region. Operating with lists from informants identifying underground members, the NKVD and UB conducted a pacification action through the villages of Komarów, Tyszowce, Bełżec and Susiec. According to the district BiP chief within days of the failed assassination attempt, continued underground activity in the area was almost completely impossible.⁵⁸

Equally, the NKVD's success in arresting the leadership of the AK in Lublin Province had a predictably debilitating effect on much of the underground's provisioning. As a direct result of the destruction of the leadership in and around the towns, banditry was becoming an increasingly alarming problem in certain areas during the last months of 1944. Some former underground units, which until recently had themselves been involved in anti-banditry actions, now, through disenchantment and often a lack of coherent leadership, took part in murders, robberies and beatings.

Zygmunt Klukowski noted the following scene in his diary:

30th November, 1944 – Thursday:

I am extremely disturbed about the growth and continuation of banditry, particularly when it involves former soldiers. As a pretext for robbing people, they are using collaboration with the enemy; once it was Germans, now it is the Soviets. More often than not, no guilt has been established. Yesterday the Pikula family, owners of a small market, were robbed.

Former officers of the Home Army have sometimes taken part in the robberies together with known bandits. So far I know of “*Gruda*”, “*Mongol*”, and “*Błyskawica*” (local AK men). They are working with Niedzielski and “*Piorun*”.⁵⁹

Such men were still in the minority, but their number was increasing. Their dilemma represents the dilemma of their organisation as a whole. With the top level of command either arrested or being harassed by the communist security forces, and with their position increasingly under threat, some amongst the underground adopted increasingly lawless behaviour. One point of note here is Klukowski's mention of the tag ‘Soviet

collaborators'. Increasing numbers of local people were, in one sense or another, beginning to collaborate with the new communist authorities. In the vast majority of cases in the province's towns this meant a passive acceptance of the new authorities. Yet young men were joining the new communist military forces, increasingly anti-AK initiatives in Zamość were joint NKVD-UB/MO/WP operations. In reaction to these local events, many members of the underground saw the choice facing them by November 1944 as an essentially simple one. It was a case of fighting for a free Poland or a communist Poland. Many in the local population were classified in such simple terms; increasingly 'pro-Soviet' forces were finding themselves the victims of AK attacks. ⁶⁰ This was certainly the case in the Kraśnik district where from August 1944 until March 1945 AK operations were typified by such small group actions. In the north of Kraśnik district there was the large "Zapora" AK group operating, whilst in the south it was mainly NSZ groups. Throughout the winter of 1944-45, AK and NSZ groups were launching attacks in this area on MO and PPR members. One such attack took place in the village of Boiska in Dzierzkowice parish on 4th December 1944, when AK members killed a local PPR member, Stanisław Kapica. ⁶¹

By mid-November, despite the fact that he still remained at large, the AK regional commander had still not contacted the remaining members of central command. In the weeks after the November arrests Żak had escaped to Warsaw where he was living in the ruined city on the right-bank of the Vistula. In all probability he had escaped the *Lubelszczyzna* area in order to contact central command in Warsaw and receive some sort of directive from them. Amongst the chaos of the frozen ruins of the capital, he was probably as safe as anywhere in Poland during its 'second occupation'. In addition to Żak's disappearance from the region even the regional second in command Władysław Zalewski "*Leśnik*" had still not contacted the other commanders. This was probably due to the fact that the arrests in November had made the leaders of the Lublin AK understandably very cautious. Yet for the rest of the command in the city, it seemed prudent to re-establish contact and set up a skeletal command that would attempt to direct the remaining AK forces in the region. As a result of this thinking a meeting was held at the beginning of December

1944 and a new skeletal command created with Major “Kord” being appointed as the new regional commander. Present at the meeting were the following AK officers: “Kazimierz”, “Kord”, Henryk Bukowski “Henryk”, Andrzej Łoziński “Andrzej”, Captain Mieczysław Szczepański “Mieczysław”, Second-Lieutenant Zdzisław Glogier “Prot”, Colonel Zygmunt Wróbel “Iskra”. However, this command was never able to expand its activities during its short life span.⁶² The fact was that from November 1944 until January 1945 the members of the independence underground in *Lubelszczyzna* were operating without a command structure that went higher than the level of local inspectorate.

A mixture of communist and nationalist rhetoric, the failures of the Government-in-Exile, splits within the independence underground, acute war weariness, and mass terror had cumulatively meant that the secret police of the new communist state, the UB, had been able to establish an effective web of informers and spies in *Lubelszczyzna*.⁶³ By December 1944 the Polish communist administration had at its disposal about 2,500 security officers, twelve to thirteen thousand policemen and 4,000 soldiers from the WW.⁶⁴ Amongst these forces were a large number of former AL men, which meant that violence between them and the underground had history, and as a result the increasingly frequent campaigns of these security forces were often brutal. For example, Grzegorz Korczyński, the former AL commander who had refused the 27th Volhynian Division weapons during the German occupation and who had led the 1st Lubelski AL Brigade into Lublin in July, now led a pacification action in Krasnystaw county during October that was particularly brutal. On 14th December in the village of Choina, AK member Stanisław Smyk “Bunczuk” was arrested and then tortured in a nearby barn. In the village itself Korczyński’s force killed fourteen locals amongst them the local school-masters and their children.⁶⁵

According to the research of Janusz Wrona the agents that the UB in *Lubelszczyzna* had assembled by the end of 1944 comprised three different groups. The first group of informers were those with a convinced communist ideology; for them informing on reactionaries amongst their own society was ultimately for the good of that society. The second group

recruited were those who were blackmailed into being an informant; it was this group that was to make up the majority of the UB's informers during the first years of the communist regime in Poland, often the communist authorities had some type of compromising material or documents about these people that usually related to the period of the German occupation. The third group that was involved in the spy network of the UB were those who wished to profit from their work. This could take the form of benefits, or assurances of profits from informing. Equally, the UB was able to recruit members of society that were involved in semi-legal or illegal work, in occupations such as speculation, smuggling or prostitution. Working for the security forces meant that such people's work could continue without interference from the MO. Between the three groups, the UB had been able to build up an effective web, and indeed given the nature of the 'recruitment' of many of these people as informers, it was often in their best interests to maintain a high number of reports to the authorities. Essentially this was to mean that many people could be watched and identified by a few. ⁶⁶ This is shown in a report listing the arrests undertaken by the UB in the Lublin region by the end of 1944:

Compilation of arrests carried out:

	<i>Authority</i>	<i>Number of arrests</i>
1	<i>Provincial authority</i>	<i>1487</i>
2	<i>Lublin City</i>	<i>200</i>
3	<i>Lublin county</i>	<i>243</i>
4	<i>Siedlce county</i>	<i>120</i>
5	<i>Tomaszów Lubelski county</i>	<i>427</i>
6	<i>Puławy county</i>	<i>436</i>
7	<i>Lubartów county</i>	<i>460</i>
8	<i>Łuków county</i>	<i>208</i>
9	<i>Kraśnik county</i>	<i>970</i>
10	<i>Biała Podlaska county</i>	<i>130</i>
11	<i>Włodawa county</i>	<i>264</i>
12	<i>Hrubieszów county</i>	<i>142</i>
13	<i>Krasnystaw county</i>	<i>171</i>
14	<i>Zamość county</i>	<i>206</i>
15	<i>Chełm county</i>	<i>253</i>
16	<i>Radzyń (Podlaski) county</i>	<i>220</i>
17	<i>Biłgoraj county</i>	<i>378</i>
<i>Total</i>		<i>6393</i>

In another document relating to the same arrests, the breakdown of those arrested and targeted in the region is quite revealing and helps to show how those targeted were not just members of the AK; in many areas only around half of all arrests were categorised as AK members. For example, in Tomaszów Lubelski, the UB had arrested 427 persons up until the end of December 1944. Of this number 253 were classified as being members of the AK and 15 as members of the BCh. In Biała Podlaska of 130 arrests 37 were of AK members and 35 of *Volksdeutsch*. Whereas in Lubartów out of a huge 460 persons arrested only 116 were of AK members and 20 were deserters.⁶⁸ Those AK members now being arrested were often key members, for both Soviet and Polish security services were, acting on information given via informants. According to a report by the local NKVD commander Ivan Serov, from November onwards, his forces had 114 agents operating within the structures of the AK underground. With UB men acting as agents as well, the communist security forces had informants operating in the inner circle of Żak's command. One such informer, whose pseudonym was "Konrad", was able to operate in the AK Radzyń district from August 1944 until March 1945. Equally, in Lublin the liquidation of the "Sek" AK unit was made possible by the use of an informer within that organisation with the pseudonym "Stefan".⁶⁹ Such high level insiders were vital in the new wave of arrests after October 1944.

In the destruction of the Biłgoraj AK district, the information given by BCh members to the security forces meant that the arrests were precise and clinical. It had also led to a snowball effect in which arrest had led to arrest. This was still being felt over a month after the initial break up of much of that areas' underground. For example, on 8th December the NKVD had managed to arrest all of the remaining AK leadership in the district, with the local AK security officer "Szyszka", and his deputy "Mur" being taken along with the district's typewriter and radio station.⁷⁰ This continuing wave of arrests meant that even after the initial arrests, underground members who most probably would have been in a position to re-organise the underground were now being removed. According to the work of Jacek Wołoszyn, during the Christmas 1944 period communist security force operations against the AK in *Lubelszczyzna* yielded around

1,000 arrests. In total in the period up until the end of 1944, such forces had managed to arrest 2,604 members of the Lubelszczyzna AK. ⁷¹

Anna Kister has shown how the Security forces often used bandits or thieves who had been sentenced by underground courts during the German occupation. ⁷² This phenomenon is perhaps highlighted by the following events in the village of Majdan. In this village the "Podkowa" AK unit had been using Józef Łapiński's farm in the village as a hiding place for weapons and the unit's radio. On 3rd December two soldiers from the unit stashed explosives under the treadmill in the farm. This was noticed by the wife of a local farmer who subsequently tipped off the UB anonymously about the existence of a 'weapons stash'. Immediately MO and UB members arrived on the scene and proceeded to search the farm. In the course of the search one of the security force members accidentally kicked one of the explosives in the stash killing twelve of the men. Amongst the dead was the Deputy Commander of the UB in Zamość, Józef Kowalski.⁷³

These arrests were to have a variety of impacts on the remaining underground forces. Once the communist security forces had 'top-sliced' the region's commanders in November, large numbers of AK men were left without an umbrella organisation to guide them. These effects were to vary from region to region, with some areas retaining contact between district and inspectorate level. Yet for those AK members who did lose contact with a higher command, it must have been incredibly dispiriting, having fought for years for Polish independence to be declared a bandit by a 'Polish government' and left in isolation. In some areas the November arrests meant that, for a matter of weeks, nobody knew what was happening. Against this confusion came constant NKVD surveillance for those living in towns, more arrests and population and land transfers. For example, in the Zamość inspectorate, the November arrests meant that for a whole month the AK internal communications apparatus ceased to function in some areas. In practical terms this meant that, as all contacts between Lublin and the inspectorates had been burnt no AK organisational news was reaching towns such as Szczebrzeszyn, no runners, no Information Gazettes.⁷⁴ Ever dwindling members of the underground could only huddle

around ever dwindling numbers of radio sets and listen to the BBC, other than this many areas were now cut off. In addition to this, the lack of communication with the AK in other areas meant that whilst commanders such as “Adam” had been arrested at the beginning of November, what had happened to him was still not known in his local command by December! This meant that the population was without a coherent organising force, the following effects in the Zamość inspectorate were observed by Klukowski:

Lack of leadership can be seen everywhere. People like “Adam” were once capable of keeping soldiers disciplined. Now we do not have anyone as a real leader. “Wacław”, who now handles the affairs of Inspector, is too soft, not quick enough in dealing with problems, and even more important, he hides so well that contact with him is virtually impossible. Now more and more soldiers are joining the Berling Army. Many others have been arrested, and the remainder do not know what to do. Only a small group is still organized.⁷⁵

The most interesting aspect of this account is in the fact that Klukowski attributes the collapse of most of the command to the removal of “Adam”. In Jarosław Kopiński’s research into banditry in AK ranks in *Lubelszczyzna* he points out that there is a direct link between banditry and the removal of regional commanders by the NKVD and UB. Kopiński argues that inspectorate and district commanders, most of whom had been in positions of command locally throughout the war, played a key role in maintaining the AK as a coherent force that was orderly and well-disciplined. Such men had built up a large amount of trust and respect amongst both the populations in which they moved and amongst their men in the regional AK. As Klukowski’s diary entry says, once men such as “Adam” were removed, men of comparable standing commanding the same degree of respect were hard to find. After the November arrests some inspectorates, such as Zamość found it difficult to prevent banditry and to maintain order to the same degree. Kopiński’s research, however, is quick to stress that until the second half of 1945 such situations were very much in the minority in *Lubelszczyzna*. In most areas men who commanded such respect were able to maintain order in their own force. Amongst such men

who had a cohesive role in their areas were the commander of the Biała Podlaska district Stefan Wyrzykowski “Zenon”, and the Łuków district commander Waclaw Reymak “Ostoja”. In most of *Lubelszczyzna* such men were able to retain a hold on their men.⁷⁶

Winning hearts and minds

The AK in the south-west of *Lubelszczyzna*, and in particular in the Bilgoraj area, had been effectively destroyed by the events of October and November. Of course this question of carrying on an organised underground in *Lubelszczyzna* after the autumn arrests, was to have similar effects in other parts of the province.

To the east, the Krasnystaw district lost contact with the Chełm inspectorate command after the wave of arrests that hit the central command in November. This led the area commander Captain Jan Wojtal “Jez”, to attempt a rapprochement with the PKWN. He managed to persuade the inspectorate’s deputy commander Franciszek Jarocki “Jadzwing” along with several members of his staff, to agree to meet with the communists in an attempt to come to an understanding. On 12th December representatives of the local AK, and BCh met with representatives of the WP and the MO. The outcome of these talks was to cause a fatal split in the independence underground in Krasnystaw and ultimately lead to its destruction. At the meeting a declaration was drawn up whereby in exchange for safe passage into the WP at an equivalent rank, the underground forces in the area would hand in their weapons and submit to the authority of the PKWN. All underground activity would be ceased in the area. This declaration split the Krasnystaw underground down the line of militia allegiance. As a direct result the inspector of the Chełm inspectorate nominated a new commander in Krasnystaw Waclaw Makara “Lisc”, who kept the underground going in name. However, in reality the area’s underground collapsed after 12th December. In the main the area’s BCh soldiers submitted to the declaration, handed in their weapons and ceased underground activities, whilst underground members in the area from ZWZ and NOW refused to follow this order. Not all of them remained within the AK fold however. In fact many of those from NOW

units were so disillusioned with the events since July that they joined an expanding NSZ in Krasnystaw rather than continue within the AK under new command. ⁷⁷ There were not many defections such as this, but Makara's decision did reflect a change in public mood. The communist authorities had launched a determined effort to win hearts and minds.

Following Stalinist doctrine, land redistribution was believed to be the key to winning over the silent majority of the population. It was believed that the Polish peasantry would look on the Communists with fresh eyes after being handed tracts of land at the expense of their former aristocratic landlords. However the attempt at land redistribution from mid-October to 15th December 1944 did not produce the huge upsurge in support for the communist party that the PKWN had assumed. In the first place, only 212,084 acres of land were redistributed, meaning that 80% of the Polish peasantry did not benefit at all from the communist's new land policy. The party membership figures are telling in this respect,; in October 1944, the PPR had 9,000 members, by late December 1944 after the attempt at land redistribution, the membership was still only 21,649. The mission of the PKWN to convert the countryside to communism was greatly hampered by the actions of the Red Army.⁷⁸ Lucja Urszula Swiakowski claims that the food requisitions for the Red Army, from the end of 1944 until April 1945 were three times worse than under the German occupation. ⁷⁹ In fact, one of the most prevalent forms of food requisitioning was for Red Army soldiers to round up Polish urban workers by force and march them out to the surrounding countryside to collect food.⁸⁰ Such incidents were in sharp contrast to the assertion made by Marshall Zhukov that 'the troops... shared everything they had with the population. In this way...we laid the foundation of fraternal friendship between the Soviet and Polish peoples'. ⁸¹

If land redistribution did not have a great impact on communist support - patriotism seemed to. In Zamość and Lublin, Book Days were organised by the new local communist authorities in which children were encouraged to wave Polish flags, in addition, that cornerstone of Polish identity, the Catholic Church, was left largely unmolested. Members of the PKWN authorities addressed rallies in the town squares of many towns talking of the future of an independent, free and democratic Poland. In some

respects at least life seemed to be returning to normal. In Lublin schools and universities were reopened, priests called mass, and in Biłgoraj and Szczebrzeszyn the marketplaces were once again filled with local farm produce for sale.⁸² Yet at the same time, the security situation meant that most of the province found itself under a curfew. By the end of October 1944, whilst the Government-in-Exile was still seen by many as being the legitimate government, the direction and ultimate purpose of continued resistance was beginning to be questioned. Whilst only relatively few people were actively prepared to assist the communist regime, few were still prepared to openly resist it. The communists were after all attempting to create a new Polish state they were not attempting to destroy the Poles as a nation. Communist propaganda promised the largest groups in society, the workers and the peasants, social and economic advancement. The ideology of communism could appeal to all, and by joining the party one could advance oneself in the new future of People's Poland. That not many people were joining the party, in spite of the obvious perks that membership brought, speaks volumes yet equally no such opportunities had existed under the German occupation. Despite the fact that many members of the PKWN's governmental apparatus were still merely Russians with Polish names, the new communist authorities were promoting the advancement of Poles, and they were slowly but surely expanding their Polish membership.⁸³

Added to this is the fact that the Polish population wanted a return to some degree of normality after the worst occupation in their history, and the power of the appeal for normalcy after years of strife cannot be underestimated. After five years in which their lives, their land and even their nation was under the threat of annihilation, passive acceptance of the PKWN could seem the only thing to do, why keep on fighting if the government is 'Polish', if the government provides fruit and vegetables in the markets of Zwierzyniec, Nałęczów, and Łuków? Equally the new administration by reopening centres of learning such as the Catholic University in Lublin was providing an outlet for aspiring young Poles who wanted to return to education. The moment of liberation had brought with it great hope, but three months on the Government-in-Exile had failed in Moscow and the AK had failed in Warsaw. Why keep on fighting after five

years when the new administration was providing the basics of life once again and waving a Polish flag furiously whilst doing so? All of this seemed to clash with Okulicki and the Information Bulletin's talk of a 'Soviet occupation'. Dr Klukowski noted in his diary how many in his area, including himself, were beginning to have such thoughts:

8th November:

The mood of the population, particularly among the peasants, is changing. They are not as willing to help in the fight against the common enemy as they were during the German occupation.⁸⁴

3rd December:

In spite of the repression against the Home Army, I clearly feel how different today's situation is from what we had under the German occupation. Under the Germans it was impossible to organize any type of Polish Cultural enterprise.⁸⁵

For almost five months nearly one person in every three in *Lubelszczyzna* was in a Red Army uniform.⁸⁶ The presence of the Red Army and thousands of communist security service operatives meant that by January 1945 there were only a handful of the AK's forest partisan units left operating in *Lubelszczyzna*. From a high of forty partisan units in July the AK were now down to a few units. Of the units left some were led by the officers who were the most well-equipped to continue operations. Amongst these were the "Uskok" and "Zapora" partisan units. One of the main reasons why the "Zapora" unit had survived until this point was doubtlessly the fact that its commander, Major Hieronim Dekutowski "Zapora", was a trained commando who had been parachuted into the region by the British during 1943. Whilst other units commanded by officers who had had only experience of commanding military forces in 'normal' circumstances had been liquidated, units led by men such as "Zapora", with their specialist training, were the ones still operating by January 1945.⁸⁷

In many senses the period from the end of the Warsaw Uprising until Christmas 1944 was the key one in the history of the AK in *Lubelszczyzna*. After the Warsaw Uprising less than three months of total repression had

removed the regional command, arrested many of the rank and file and seriously undermined the system of internal communications that had been so carefully constructed during the German occupation of the region. The stalling of the front meant that the storm, which the Lublin AK had to weather, was not survivable. At the central level, the skeletal command that had been established after the November arrests had not managed to organise its activities effectively by the end of 1944, and at the end of December even this command was rocked by a new wave of arrests that saw the regional chief-of-communication Zygmunt Wrobel "Iskra" amongst those detained. However, these December arrests coincided with the return of Żak from Warsaw. It was with Żak's return that a new command was established in the region from 1st January 1945 onwards. This command, unlike the one that had operated since November 1944, was able to resume at least some underground activities and regain contact with the inspectorates of the command.⁸⁸ In a sense by the end of 1944 the Soviet Union and its Polish satellite administration had destroyed the framework of the underground formed to fight for independence from the Germans in *Lubelszczyzna*. Once the Red Army launched its new offensive in January 1945, the communists would have to defeat an underground formed primarily to fight for independence from them.

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Chapter 5

January 1945-May 1945

The Spring Offensive

On 31st December the PKWN rebranded itself the Provisional Government. However, when Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill met at Yalta in February 1945, that government was not recognised by the Anglo-Saxon powers. In the middle of January the Red Army's offensive towards Berlin was resumed, reducing the Red Army's oppressive presence and allowing the underground to begin to re-group. If it could organise a sufficient challenge to the communist regime before the 'big three' next met after German capitulation, the cause of Polish independence might not be dead. It had taken four and a half months - considerably longer than the AK command in the region had expected, but when the Red Army advance began again, the underground was, as "*Marcin*" had conceived back in July, able to paralyse much of the communist administration in the province.

As the spring wore on, the promises of free elections given by the 'Big Three' at Yalta and the removal of the bulk of the Red Army presence facilitated a flight of thousands of people to the woods of the province. By spring 1945 more partisan units were operating in Lublin than at any point since Operation "Tempest", and a central command had been re-established. Refugees from the eastern bank of the Bug, deserters, and those fleeing persecution joined a resurgent underground. Once again people hoped that communist repression was only a phase and would pass after the elections, or once the Soviet Union fought the Anglo-Saxons in a

coming Third World War. Such hopes had fuelled the movement to the woods, and the return of Mikołajczyk and the attempts to legalise opposition parties seemed to confirm this.

By April 1945, the Polish communist authorities had in effect lost control of large areas of the province. By day MO, UB and NKVD patrols swept through areas making arrests only for the area to return to the underground after dark. With the administration paralysed in Lublin, the Soviets once again fell back on repression. As the Second World War came to an end in May the leaders of the AK in Lublin were again arrested, and thousands of Soviet reinforcements were on their way to the province.

The Impact of the Red Army's offensive

In the first few weeks of 1945 a series of new offices were created or enlarged in order to provide a more effective security framework for the communist TRJN. Amongst these new departments that were operating from 2nd January onwards were the Security Officer's School, *Szkoła Oficerów Bezpieczeństwa*, the Department of Government Security, *Wydział Ochrony Rządu*, and the Intelligence Department. Of particular importance to the independence underground still operating in the region was Department 1 of the Department of Government Security. This department was sub-divided into eight sections that were responsible for the fight against enemies of the state. The most important sections and the target of their work were:

Section 1; Germans (Hitlerites)

Section 2; Underground (Polish underground)

Section 3; Fight with political bandits (fight with enemy infiltrators in the government apparatus)

Section 5; Provide security for the legal authorities by penetrating the underground

Section 7; Observation. ¹

Although at first each of these sections was small, they did help to formalise the policies being followed by the PKWN since the end of the

Warsaw Uprising. Equally, by January 1945, it was increasingly likely that the final advance of the Red Army from the Vistula into the Third Reich would take place any day. Once the bulk of the Soviet and Polish Armies left the province, the Polish communist state's infrastructure would have to shoulder a much higher burden. As part of the preparations for this, on 10th January the Political Office of the TRJN also took the decision to raise the size of the Polish Internal Army, *Wojsk Wewnętrznych*, to 15,000 men. However, the fact that this announcement was made in January show how previous attempts to enlarge this force had largely failed. ²

Before the impact of these organisational changes could be assessed, Marshals Koniev and Zhukov began their advance towards Berlin on 12th January 1945. Known as the Vistula-Oder campaign, it would take the Red Army through the last of Polish territory up to the borders of the German Reich itself. Pushing on from bridgeheads near Sandomierz and Radom, Koniev's 1st Ukrainian Front made lightning progress against the over stretched and outnumbered German Army Group Centre. In freezing snow laden weather, with visibility virtually nil, the Red Army's overwhelming numbers, wide tracks and winter suitability of their T-34 tanks meant that the defending Germans were forced back. It was the beginning of one of the most successful military campaigns in modern military history. The German commander facing the onslaught on the morning of the 12th later summed up the Soviet advance:

It was clear that their supreme High Command had fully mastered the technique of organising an offensive by vast mechanised armies. It is impossible to describe what happened between the Vistula and the Oder in the early months of 1945. Europe had known nothing like it since the fall of the Roman Empire.³

As Koniev's front moved forward, the next day General Chernyakhovsky's 3rd Belorussian Front began its attack on East Prussia. On the 14th, Rokossovsky's forces attacked East Prussia from the Narew River bridgeheads, whilst Zhukov's 1st Byelorussian Army pushed off from the Vistula to attack towards Radom and then onwards through Łódź on the long road to Berlin. Koniev's 1st Ukrainian Army was to push through to

Kielce, which they took on 15th January, to Kraków and on to the capital of German Silesia, Breslau. ⁴

Speed and perpetual movement would be the key to preventing the Germans from regrouping. This meant that, as the front swept forward, German forces, often of considerable size were left in the rear of Soviet forces, often to be swept up by NKVD units. Thus the next phase of eliminating 'banditry' in the Soviet rear began. In connection to this, on the night of the 15th an interesting conversation was taking place thousands of miles away from Poland, but it was one that was very revealing as to what the fate of the country would be. On that night, Stalin was entertaining the American Air-Chief-Marshal Tedder, General Eisenhower's Chief-of-Staff. The American report of the meeting noted:

Stalin emphasised that one of the difficulties (of the Vistula offensive) was the large number of trained German agents among the Poles, Latvians, Lithuanians, Ukrainians and German-speaking Russians. He said that they were all equipped with radios and, as a result, the element of surprise was practically eliminated. However the Russians have succeeded in eliminating this menace to a large measure. He said that he considers the clearance of the rear areas to be just as important as bringing up supplies. ⁵

Soviet forces had indeed been busy eliminating 'bandits' in rear areas such as *Lubelszczyzna*, and clearly the AK had been included in this analysis of 'trained German agents'. Indeed, the AK was regrouping as Stalin feared. Ironically, however, the prerequisite for regrouping was disbandment. The AK had been formed in order to end the German occupation of Poland. With the speed of the Soviet advance through Poland in January, this objective had been achieved. On 19th January therefore, the same day that the Red Army took Kraków, the ancient Polish capital, Okulicki, the AK Commander-in-Chief formally ordered the disbandment of his force:

Soldiers of the Home Army. This is my last order to you. From now on it will fall upon you to exert yourselves for the restoration of an independent Poland and for the defence of the Polish people from

extermination.....Each of you must obey self - imposed orders. I am convinced that you will carry out this call and that you will keep your allegiance to Poland forever. In order to facilitate your task I discharge you from the oath and disband the units of the Home Army, on the strength of the authorisation of the President of the Republic. ⁶

Although Norman Davies has suggested that Okulicki's decision to disband deprived the AK in the provinces of a badly needed umbrella organisation, in *Lubelszczyzna*, in effect the AK had been on its own from August onwards; in addition, after the mass arrests in the last quarter of 1944, central command in the province had been undermined to such an extent that inspectorates, or districts or even individual partisan units were in effect operating on their own from November. ⁷ The key part of the dissolution order was the phrase 'from now it will fall upon you to exert yourselves for the restoration of an independent Poland and for the defence of the Polish people from extermination.' This phrase in itself meant that, whilst the AK was to be disbanded, some form of underground activity against the communist authorities would continue. The '*Nie*' organisation was planned to be the realisation of this continued underground activity, but it was in effect a still borne organisation; in the Lublin region there is no known evidence that '*Nie*' as an organisation took root at all. In fact in the Lublin region, as already shown in previous chapters, by January 1945 most of the regional command had been destroyed and so '*Nie*', as an organisation that was specifically based around the idea of an elite tight-knit force, had no real chance of being realised in the region. However, in *Lubelszczyzna* the AK remained relatively large at the level of the rank and file, and so the call to 'exert yourselves for the restoration of an independent Poland' was taken to mean that the regional forces were to continue resistance.

The irony is that the dissolution of the AK was ordered at a time when its supporters and members in *Lubelszczyzna* were starting to increase operations again. Soviet forces, both regular Red Army, *Smersh* and NKVD units, did not entirely leave with the advance of the front - sizeable forces remained to bulk up the Polish communist forces but the sheer crushing

weight of literally millions of men had now left the province. According to Anna Kister, the forces left behind in *Lubelszczyzna* were largely spare units composed of soldiers from the region's army schools. In addition, the communists' attempt to raise the size of the WW to 15,000 men had still not materialised. The force had been divided into companies and deployed in individual provinces but as of 10th March it still had only 7,346 men in its ranks. ⁸

The AK in *Lubelszczyzna* continued, re-establishing command links and recruiting men until into spring. Żak, the regional commander, clearly reflects this sense of continuity within the Lublin AK in the edited form of Okulicki's order that he gave to his subordinates later in the month. In this order Żak informed his men that their sacrifices, both in the past and in the future would be the foundation for the establishment of a truly independent Poland; equally he talked of greater recruitment into the ranks of the force. The order specifically stated that all officers who had co-operated with the 'illegal Lublin government' were to be dismissed. Furthermore the order emphasised the fact that the work of the regional AK's office of information and propaganda should be improved, and lists compiled of those who had collaborated with the Polish communist authorities. In the future, all underground members in the Lublin area were still to follow the rules of the AK. ⁹

The AK command in Lublin believed that as the Second World War neared its end, a conflict between east and west was coming. Convinced of this truth, the AK in Lublin was to remain active, organised and should prepare for its future role in this conflict. In *Lubelszczyzna*, therefore, the dissolution of the AK seemed to mean that the force did not end, rather it was explicitly identifying a new struggle and a new enemy. ¹⁰ What did happen at the official end of the AK was that individual district and inspectorate commands in the Lublin province decorated their soldiers, and continued the adjustment towards surviving the 'second occupation' of the new enemy. In Lublin county the 'dissolution' of the AK meant that the district command reduced the command staff's size on 13th February, whilst also promoting 68 members within the rank and file; in addition, 41 soldiers were decorated for their services to the Polish nation thus far.

These moves were replicated in many districts within the Lublin region and were reflective of the fact that the force was far from dissolved. Commands were shrunk in order to decrease the likelihood of detection, and men were being tied to the movement via the rewards of increased responsibility and medals. ¹¹

As the Lublin AK began to regroup, the 'Big Three' met at the Yalta Conference between 4th-11th February 1945. The Yalta declaration on Poland included the promise that elections were to take place in Poland and that the communist government would be expanded to include London politicians. While the Government-in-Exile issued a feeble protest, ¹² its representatives within Poland were more conciliatory. On 24th January the Council of National Unity and the Home Council of Ministers met in a small town south-west of Warsaw to discuss their response to Yalta, and in the face of reported reluctance from Okulicki, the decision to accept the Yalta declaration was made. This decision clearly broke with London's stance and pointed to the ever-weakening relationship between London and its dwindling forces in the homeland. ¹³ But what Yalta did for many of the people still involved in the underground was to present them with a chink of light.

The prospect of free elections, which Stalin had publicly agreed to, meant potentially that those supporters of the 'illegal' sections of parties, such as the PPS or SL, increasingly felt that ending armed operations and attempting legalisation of their movements offered their best chance. There was an increasing feeling that the current situation in Poland was only temporary – elections would change the current state of affairs. In the case of the SL, Yalta compounded existing differences within the party, which were highlighted by Mikołajczyk's decision to leave the Government-in-Exile and the exiled Poles. The SL had been spilt into two parties since the decision of a minority group to work with the PKWN during the late summer, and many members felt now was the time to legalise themselves – in any election they would be the favourites to win a majority. On 14th February this feeling was given the official stamp by the leader of the party Mikołajczyk when he sent a dispatch to the leadership of the peasant movement in Poland telling them that he supported the Yalta declarations

whilst imploring them to 'work loyally toward facilitating Polish-Soviet relations'.¹⁴ This policy was formally adopted on 15th March at a plenary meeting of the leadership of the peasant movement, when it decided to come out into the open and begin political action. This declaration of policy by the peasants was then followed by the PPS, when on 18th March in Kraków its supreme council decided that it too would now undertake legal activity.¹⁵

The underground campaign begins

Feeding into the idea that the current plight of the region was only temporary, many displaced Poles armed themselves and entered the woods, to await what many of them felt was the coming and inevitable war or confrontation between east and west. Such people were joined in this process by the remnants of the AK and the deserters from the WP and MO.¹⁶ By January 1945 the partisan units of the AK in the area were down to a few well adapted units led by men such as "Zapora". By spring 1945 this had massively changed. By the spring there was a partisan group operating in virtually every district of the Lublin region. The statistics on this movement are quite impressive. According to Janusz Wrona an estimated 40,000 people were in the AK in its various guises during the period 1945-47.¹⁷ In addition to this, Sławomir Poleszak and Rafał Wnuk estimate that during 1945, mainly in the south and east of People's Poland, there were up to 17,200 people in independence partisan units, with a peak of 2,400 of this number operating in forest partisan units in the woods of *Lubelszczyzna*.¹⁸

From the beginning of February onwards, therefore, it was rare for a day to pass in *Lubelszczyzna* without this resurgent underground clashing with the apparatus of the communist administration. The departure of the Red Army meant that the resurgent underground was now able regularly to attack and undermine communist forces, such as the MO, that were still struggling to recruit. Below is a list of clashes that took place in *Lubelszczyzna* during the week of 10th-17th February 1945. It is important to state that this does not include all of the clashes recorded in this week, but it shows quite clearly how the underground was now attacking and

paralysing communist administration in rural areas throughout the province. Equally, this is a list of events from February 1945, but it could be from March or April of the same year:

10th February Lubartów county:

The “*Brzoza*” unit attacks a government transport and takes 144kg of butter.

11th Lubartów county:

Partisans from the “*Jordan*” unit disarmed the local MO post.

12th Tomaszów Lubelski county:

Agents of the UB and NKVD surrounded a group of partisans from the V Obwód Tomaszów Lubelski in the Palace of Narol. During the fight a few AK soldiers were killed or captured. Although the total losses are not known it is known that after the fight the Soviet troops involved ransacked and burnt the palace.

14th Lubartów county:

Members of the “*Uskok*” partisan unit shot and killed nine people in the village of Uciekajek.

15th Lublin county:

Ten members of an unknown underground unit stole 900 litres of spirits.

Lubartów county:

“*Uskok*” unit attacked and vandalised the local MO post and gmina building in the village of Ludwinów.

17th Lublin City:

Eleven soldiers of the AK manage to escape from the prison in Lublin Castle. Amongst this number are “*Kmicic*”, “*Muller*” and “*Konrad II*”.

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During this phase of reconstructing the underground, the Lublin region was relatively unusual in that it was able to re-establish its internal framework. According to statistics gathered by Rafał Wnuk and Sławomir Poleszak on behalf of the Lublin IPN, between July-December 1944 twenty-eight partisan units had operated in the territory of Poland. Of this number AK partisan units constituted more than 93 percent with the rest being from NSZ units. Equally of interest is the fact that, of those partisan

units, the vast majority were units that had come to the Rzeszów province from the cleared eastern territories of what had previously been the Polish Second Republic. The ethnic cleansing of Poles from regions such as the Volhynia and Lvov had meant a concentration of partisan forces just within the new south-eastern border of People's Poland. Nationally partisan units had a total strength of 2,500-2,800, meaning that the average unit size was around 60-100 partisans. Yet, during 1945, the number of partisan units nationally was to expand massively to 341 units with a total operating strength of somewhere between 13,000 to 17,200 partisans. Around 6,600-8,700 of these partisans were a part of units that were subordinated to the dissolved AK command. However these numbers were not evenly distributed throughout the territory of People's Poland during 1945. In the west and north of the country, the underground was much smaller than in south and eastern areas such as *Lubelszczyzna*. This is probably in a large part due to the fact that in these areas underground units had been able to function in Soviet occupied territory for much longer and had been able to adjust their operating structures to suit the demands of the communist system. The largest numbers of partisans were found, as was the case in 1944, in the Rzeszów province. Here in 1945 were operating around 3,600-3,900 partisans. Second only to Rzeszów in terms of numbers, was *Lubelszczyzna* where around 1,900-2,400 people were operating in partisan groups. What is equally important to mention in the results of this statistical analysis is that in Lublin, Rzeszów and Białystok the vast majority of these partisan units were subordinated to AK command structures. The Lublin region was home to the largest percentage of units that were subordinated to this command with around 72-76% of partisans in *Lubelszczyzna* being a part of this structure.²⁰ With the exception of the three largest areas of activity much of the partisan movement was either not fighting as part of a greater organisation, or they were a part of NSZ or part of a purely localised force such as the Resistance Movement of the Home Army, *Ruch Oporu Armii Krajowej* (ROAK).

The core units of the AK that had avoided capture and arrest in *Lubelszczyzna* had often stashed their arms in dumps that had served them so well before Operation "Tempest" and were waiting for the next phase of their struggle. Forest based units had been ordered to appear to

disband in order that the NKVD would be put off of their scent. Equally, in an atmosphere of population exchanges and repression by the new communist authorities, this position was to remain relatively secure in the short term. It was very clear that the Lubelszczyzna AK was continuing to grow during the last weeks of the winter of 1944-45. As Klukowski noted:

17th February 1945 – Saturday:

Because the German armies are no longer in Polish territory, the Home Army is dissolved, but the soldiers must be ready for any call to fight again for a free and independent Poland. So now we witness the end of one historical period. The Home Army has gone into history, but we are now beginning a new period of struggle even more difficult than the last one and surely a longer one.

A couple of days ago a briefing of all officers from the Inspectorate took place in Krasnobrod. Major “Wacław”, the current inspector, presided. I do not know any details yet, but the dissolution of the Home Army was the main topic. The Polish underground army is still active but will take a new name. Which name I do not know. ²¹

It took time for new underground units to form, and for old units to re-form, then they had to attempt to re-establish contact within a greater command framework but by March 1945 several large partisan units had re-formed, along with several smaller ones. In particular, by March the “Zapora”, “Podkowa”, “Orlik”, and “Zenon” units were operating once again.

²² Within weeks of the Soviet advance, Żak and the central command began re-establishing the links to the inspectorates that had been ‘burnt’ since November. By February and early March 1945, a centralised ‘AK’ command was once again functioning - several weeks after the official dissolution of the force. ²³

However the existence of this re-established central command under Żak was to be very short lived. On 21st March 1945, the entire leadership of the AK in Lublin was arrested after a meeting in Praga, Warsaw. Under torture they revealed that, whilst Okulicki had officially ordered the dissolution of the AK, he had also intended that the regional branches should not fully disband; in effect the non-communist underground's remit was that they

should be prepared for a future struggle against the Communist authorities. ²⁴ Present at the meeting were Żak, the regional chief-of-staff Jan Kucharczak “Kazimierz”, the chief of unit 1 Major Jerzy Iszkowski “Kord”, quartermaster Władysław Pawlicki “Zych”, Zamość inspectorate commander Antoni Pstrocki “Wacław”, Chełm inspectorate commander Władysław Zalewski “Leśnik” and Puławy inspectorate commander Captain Zygmunt Żebracki-Żyłka “Żeliwa”. ²⁵

According to Rafał Wnuk after these arrests at the end of March no effective command functioned at Lublin or inspectorate level, but lower down, at district or outpost level the underground in Lublin retained its structure in many areas. ²⁶ The breakdown of inspectorate level links was, in fact, brief. As had happened several times in the province by this time, the immediate subordinates of those arrested simply took their place. In Zamość Marian Gołębiowski “Ster”, became inspectorate commander, in Puławy Piotr Ignacak “Just”, and in Chełm Franciszek Jarocki “Jadźwing”. However at regional level the command situation was to take over two months to resolve. This was due to the fact that only two members of Żak’s staff had avoided arrest in March. One of them Aleksander Iwanicki “Achilles”, became *de facto* regional commander until May. ²⁷

During the spring, these former AK soldiers along with the new recruits moving into the woods, formed new organisations throughout the region. By far the largest successor organisation to the AK in *Lubelszczyzna* was ROAK. This force was centred in the Zamość, Chełm and Lublin inspectorates and represented the bulk of the underground forces at this point. Equally, in Puławy inspectorate former AK bands now named themselves the Armed Resistance Movement, *Zbrojny Ruch Oporu* (ZRO). In Biała Podlaska inspectorate the forces now named themselves the Army of Military Self-Defence, *Wojskowy Związek Samobrony* (WZS). Equally these forces sometimes operated under the names: the Poland Underground Army, *Podziemna Armia Polska* (PAP), the Resistance Movement, *Ruch Oporu* (RO), and the Citizen’s Resistance Movement, *Obywatelski Ruch Oporu* (ORO). These forces were in essence AK, yet as this force no longer existed, the names were to change but the men behind them were to stay largely the same. ²⁸

Both for reasons of ease of continuity, and for obviously symbolic reasons, the successor forces to the AK in Lublin province all followed the rules of the officially defunct AK. After 17th January the AK in Lublin county joined ROAK, but this force's operating procedures remained the same. ²⁹ The defining order of RO, order number 1 sent out on 14th April 1945 was AK in its tone, and its outline of the purpose behind the force. Its members were to oppose recruitment to the WP, equally former AK partisan groups were ordered to help with materials and the strengthening of other groups, they were to organise groups into powerful platoons, organise a bank and treasury, report to the region the moves of all PPR members, and, it made clear it was to have a similar structure to that of the AK. ³⁰ What is even more telling is that in most of the communiqués from these forces, the appeals, or the orders were most often made to the 'soldiers of the AK', and not to the soldiers of RO or ROAK. Even in an order of 5th May 1945 from the regional command, there were still constant references to men and officers as being AK members. ³¹

In order to reinforce this sense of continuity, and set against the propaganda blows dealt to the AK's cause during the previous six months, the underground continued the propaganda work of BiP. The major difference in this campaign post-January 1945 was that, with the bulk of the Red Army gone and with the improvement in weather conditions, this campaign was on a far greater scale. Throughout the province the BiP began publishing propaganda sheets once again in significant numbers. In Puławy inspectorate the local BiP published "*Głos Wolny*" and circulated around 250 copies of this newssheet. This paper had sixty different editions the first was produced in July 1945. In addition, Puławy BiP printed both "*Pobudka*" and "*Nowy Czas*", although their circulation is not known. Also circulated in Puławy were "*Na straży*" from Zamość inspectorate, and "*Wiadomości bieżące*" and "*Zagiew*", which were published by the Lublin regional BiP. ³² In the districts of Lubartów and Biała Podlaska, the local BiP had been printing "*Reduta*" from as early as October 1944 onwards. In addition, most of the Lublin region received the Zamość inspectorate's "*Nowy Zew*" and the "*List do marszałka Roli-Żymierskiego*". ³³ These publications were often distributed in the

washrooms of the region's WP barracks, on air force training bases, or were circulated amongst AK members to disseminate this information amongst their communities. In addition to these publications, those areas that still had radio communications, such as Puławy, which retained two radio sets during 1945, would broadcast "*Wiadomości Radiowe*" news reports to their locales. ³⁴

The other aspect to the tactics of this restored underground in Lublin province was the growth in the number of attacks on members of the communist administration. Without the same degree of shielding by the Red Army, and with the rapid growth in the size of the underground, members of the communist administration were increasingly isolated. What made things so incredibly problematic for the security forces of the communist administration was the basic fact that at no point had they been able to disarm the countryside. "*Marcin's*" decision to stash his force's weapons at the end of July 1944, coupled with the inevitable availability of weapons in an area that had been until recently a war zone, meant that even though the security services had managed to seriously weaken the human resources of the underground in Lublin by the beginning of 1945, they had not taken its weapons. A good example of how the security forces could fail in this can be seen in Lubartów district, where it is estimated that from August 1944 til 1947 the SB and MO confiscated in total 799 weapons in the area; yet during the same period the underground in Lubartów possessed around 1,830 weapons. In addition to the original weapons that dated from the area of the German occupation, the underground was able to replenish its weapons stocks from a variety of sources. For instance, MO members who were forced to leave their posts would have their weapons taken from them; equally there are reports of Red Army and Polish Army soldiers selling small arms to the underground. In Lubartów, as in much of the Lublin province, the security forces were only able to confiscate around half of the AK's weapons. ³⁵ Once the underground started to grow again in the spring, this failure on the part of the communists became crucial.

Armed, increasingly re-organised and confident the underground once again started to significantly challenge the communist administration – it

was unfortunate this only happened six months and 20,000 arrests after “*Marcin*” had assumed it would back in July 1944. In Puławy inspectorate, “*Just*”, the inspectorate commander, set aside special diversionary units to disrupt the functioning of the communist administration in the area. In particular, the “*Orlik*” group performed this role during spring 1945. In Puławy, as in the rest of Lublin, there was a special focus on security and intelligence, with “*Just*” focusing on the work of the BiP in Puławy, yet the diversionary groups played an important role in the force’s strategy. In the commands given to the various AK successor groups in the region during spring 1945, these diversionary groups were to kill or intimidate PPR or MO members, weakening the communist administration, whilst simultaneously helping to keep their own forces undetected. By the end of the spring such groups were often sizeable, for example in Puławy, the “*Orlik*” group at its height numbered around 500 people when it assembled for action in the Stockim Forest on 23rd May 1945. It was the largest band in the area. The other units in Puławy Inspectorate were mainly in the Kraśnik district where one AK unit of 50 soldiers operated alongside several NSZ units of a similar size. ³⁶

Thus despite the grandiose statements of intent from the communist administration regarding the destruction of the underground, large areas of rural *Lubelszczyzna* were under the control of independence forces at night. In many areas the underground was operating quite openly. In these areas, MO stations were often isolated and vulnerable to social pressure and violence. This meant that, in most instances, the underground did not have to resort to issuing death penalties against MO members, other methods would often suffice. For example, some MO officers provided the local underground with information, or turned a blind eye to their activities. In cases where MO members were causing problems for the underground, such men were brought into line through corporal punishment, oral or written warnings, or kidnapping. Sometimes, MO members were humiliated in front of the communities that they policed by being stripped to their underwear and tied up in the centre of a given village. Another way of weakening MO men who followed their orders was to kidnap them and take them to an isolated local church. When in the church they were forced at gun-point, and before God, to renounce their

support for the PPR. The fact that this often worked spoke volumes about the nature of the communist system being created in Poland – even the police force did not hold ideologically sound atheist beliefs! Such actions meant that the attempts by the communist authorities to enlarge the MO, or to increase its influence in these areas, were being constantly undermined. The MO commander in Kraśnik reported at this time that, of the area's seventeen MO posts only four were actually functional. His report states that the other posts had either been destroyed or disarmed by local 'bandits' who were openly operating in strength. ³⁷

In spring 1945, opposition to the communist administration was increasingly effective, and increasingly violent. One of the most famous incidents took place in Hrubieszów. On 3rd March 1945 local underground units carried out a death sentence on a security force member. In response, locally based security troops along with political instructors from the local regiment, arrested eight people from their homes or off the streets. According to the underground, these people were first tortured and then murdered and their corpses then thrown into the Huczwa River. This awful incident was followed up by the underground attempting to assassinate the man responsible for issuing the order for the attack, Wincenty Grodek. A ten-year-old boy was sent to his home with a basket containing food, flowers, and an explosive device. When unpacked, the bomb detonated. ³⁸ Such incidents were happening throughout the province, as the underground began to retake control of the countryside at night. In response, several large anti-partisan operations took place during the eight months from January-August 1945 in Puławy inspectorate against the AK and this was quite typical of Lublin in general. In Chełm district, between the 6th-9th of March a fire-fight outside of the town of Włodawa resulted in 51 underground partisans being killed. On 20th April, in the village of Labunek, a further nine underground partisans, along with their commander Edward Lachów "*Konrad*", were engaged and liquidated. On the 30th a further 67 partisans were killed. Such fights were taking place throughout the province during the spring of 1945. ³⁹ The largest fight in Puławy took place near Nałęczów when on 12th May 1945 the NKVD engaged the "*Szatan*" group numbering 65 people with 54 partisans being killed. Another clash took place in the Stockim forest on 23rd May 1945,

when the “*Orlik*” group was involved in a two-day fight with a joint communist force, which resulted in twenty of the eighty partisans being killed. ⁴⁰

Clearly the underground was still operating, and in places it was paralysing the administration. On 25th March, the NKVD arrested a group of the AK underground that had been operating in Łódź, central Poland. Amongst their number was Colonel Rudkowski who had only recently been appointed Commander-in-Chief of the AK's new air force section. As a result of the arrests of even more prominent AK leaders, the NKVD was able to find out that even as late as December 1944 the AK in the Łódź region had received parachute drops from London; according to Prażmowska in that month the AK had been dropped 7,200 dollars in gold, 66,000 dollars in notes, 80,000 Polish Złoty and 400,000 Deutsch Marks. ⁴¹ It was against this background of information on the leaders of the underground that the communist authorities prepared to act. The NKVD had been pursuing an active policy of arresting members of the underground for the past eight months. This new information, however, gave them the pretext on which to wipe out the entire organisation, for the new information seemed to confirm that the AK was not only still a fact to be reckoned with but, with help from London was preparing to overthrow the communist authorities.

The reality of the situation was somewhat different. The AK was ready to talk. It was at this time that AK commander, Okulicki took the decision to meet with NKVD representatives in order to reach an agreement with the Soviets. It is not known who made the first move to suggest the meeting, yet what is clear is that both parties had a motive to meet. Okulicki must have felt he was arguing from a position of strength; in exchange for a cessation of diversionary activities, he believed that a dialogue could be opened with the NKVD. It seems remarkable that men who had grown to be rather familiar with the workings of the Soviet system would think in this naïve way. However the underground still had a strong faith in the Anglo-Saxon powers which were after all arguing for the Government-in-Exile to come to an agreement with the communists in Poland. Therefore, on 27th-28th March virtually the entire leadership of the underground

delivered itself to a villa in Pruszków near Warsaw and was arrested. In one swoop the NKVD had captured the heads of the AK, the *Delegatura*, and the RJN. The Soviets acted completely in character, but perhaps the biggest betrayal was that by the Anglo-Saxon powers; aside from one or two protests and requests to know the whereabouts of the arrested underground leaders, Britain and America did nothing. It is perfectly conceivable that the lack of reaction to the arrests of the Lublin leadership, a matter of days before, had assured the NKVD that nothing would be done by the west.

Poland's two main political parties had decided to attempt legalisation, Mikołajczyk supported this process and Okulicki had probably started talks with the NKVD with this in mind. The result was arrest, torture and ultimately a public show trial in the Soviet Union. The impact of Okulicki's arrest was not as serious as it might once have been. Ironically, the now mostly fractured nature of the underground at a national level made the job of crushing resistance even harder for the NKVD. Until the beginning of 1945, if NKVD operatives were successful in infiltrating and destroying an AK command post, it would be likely that the information found through torture would enable the NKVD to effectively round up most of the AK in that region. However, from May onwards, when the NKVD captured underground activists, it would often mean the exposure of just the local command. The chances were that this meant exposing only a relatively small network, just one shard of the underground in the region.

Before attending the meeting with the Soviets in March, General Okulicki had appointed Colonel Jan Rzepecki as his deputy. In April 1945 Rzepecki reorganised the networks subordinated to him. The "*Nie*" organisation was officially liquidated in favour of the Armed Force's Delegate's Office at Home, *Delegatura Sił Zbrojnych na Kraj*, (DSZ). This force was to operate only on the soil of post-war Poland, it accepted the supervision of the Government-in-Exile but, crucially, it assumed that in the case of the establishment of a Western-recognised political executive power centre, the force would subjugate themselves to it. Clearly the new force was to be far more independent in nature than its predecessor the AK, far more attuned to the existing problems in Poland; it would not just follow a government in

London that must have seemed increasingly out of touch and irrelevant to the people in Poland. ⁴² The question of the DSZ command in the Lublin region was resolved during a meeting in Warsaw between “Achilles” and central DSZ command. At the meeting it was decided, at the recommendation of “Achilles”, that the commander of the Biała Podlaska Inspectorate become the new DSZ Lublin commander. Wilhelm Szczepankiewicz “Drugak”, was duly appointed and was to hold this post for a further ten months. According to Rafał Wnuk, this command was able to keep links with the Inspectorates and below. ⁴³

What follows below is a list of the partisan units operating in the terrain of *Lubelszczyzna* in early spring 1945:

AK-DSZ Lubelszczyzna

Lublin inspectorate:

“Zapora” with a strength of around 150 persons, “Uskok” with around 50 persons, “Jordan” 30-40 persons.

Chełm inspectorate:

“Zagloba” around 100 persons, “Wolyniak” 20-30 persons, “Sokół” 20 persons, “Jastrzebia” around 30 persons, and “Huragan”-“Fali” with 20-30 persons.

Puławy inspectorate:

“Orlik” with around 200 persons.

Biała Podlaska inspectorate:

“Zenon” around 150 persons, “Tom” 30-40 persons, “Lot” 20-30 persons, and “Kruk” numbering around 20-30 persons.

Zamość inspectorate:

“Podkowa” 50-60 persons, “Konrad” 20 persons, “Wir” 40-50 persons, “Kostka” around 50 persons, “Mat” 20- 30 persons, “Ciąg” around 50 persons, and “Wiktor” around 40-50 persons.

A NSW Unit under the command of “Ojca Jan” numbering around 100 persons was also operating in *Lubelszczyzna* and in the area of Rzeszów.

A NSZ unit under the command of Mieczysław Pazderski “Szary” numbering around 100 persons was also active in *Lubelszczyzna*. ⁴⁴

To address the ongoing threat from the underground, and to reinforce the point that no concession would be made, on 19th April the communist authorities started to reorganise the WW into the Internal Security Corps, *Korpus Bezpieczeństwa Wewnętrznego* (KBW). This force was in effect the direct Polish equivalent of the Soviet NKVD. By May it numbered around 23,000 and it was given a remit to pacify the countryside. The new KBW was staffed mainly by officers who had recently graduated from training schools in the USSR, and it now took over the lead role in the Polish authorities' fight against the underground. ⁴⁵

According to an underground report the communist security forces launched a huge pacification campaign in the areas of Garwolin, Łuków, Lubartów and in the city of Zamość no sooner than the KBW had been formed. The report estimates of the numbers arrested were rough, between 10,000-20,000 arrested, but they clearly point to a huge campaign of repression. In another report it was stated that around 8,000 prisoners were being held in Lublin castle in the month of April. ⁴⁶ Equally it is known that the NKVD was still operating the large internment camp at Skrobów, near Lubartów. ⁴⁷ This camp, from April onwards was operating primarily as a holding centre for *Volksdeutsch*, although many from the Polish underground were to also end up there.

However, internal reports on *Lubelszczyzna* from this period almost constantly report the fact that across the region, the population was either hostile or disloyal to their government. ⁴⁸ Without popular legitimacy, the Communist authorities found that when one partisan band was destroyed, another would spring up in the same area only weeks later. For example the NKVD had deported or arrested 10,000 AK members in *Lubelszczyzna*, and the special military courts of the Polish communist government had passed 150 death sentences on AK members between July 1944-April 1945 ⁴⁹ and yet the regime was no more secure in the remote regions of Lublin than it had been back in August 1944, with the newly reformed independence underground growing in number once again. ⁵⁰ A pattern had developed whereby NKVD and UB units would sweep through an area to bring it under control, only for it to return to the underground when they left. Of course MO units stationed in outlying areas were the most

vulnerable but all branches of the security forces were vulnerable, in differing ways, to such pressure. Dr Klukowski talks about these events in the forests of the south:

6th April 1945 – Friday:

One officer and two cadets who had come for quota deliveries to Szczebrzeszyn were disarmed today. As it happened to them for a second time they do not want to go back to their formation and are going to stay here “privately”. Yesterday in Brody the “boys” also disarmed a soldier who was walking by himself near the railway station. Such disarmament of Polish soldiers and officers has become the daily routine for now. The same with desertions. Many deserters are hiding in the villages. This causes big trouble for the villagers because of retaliations, but they still help. One has to admit that there are some villages that have not changed their stance on this matter. Let’s take Kawenczyn. There are still many “forest people” as there were under the German occupation. Everyone knows who keeps who, and they constantly remain on alert because a raid may begin at any moment, as has happened so many times before. ⁵¹

However the military and security forces ranged against this renewed underground movement were still considerable, despite the advance of the Red Army in January. It is also noteworthy how, even at this relatively late stage in the imposition of communist rule in Poland, and despite the creation of forces such as the KBW, the destruction of the anti-communist underground was still primarily in the hands of the Soviet security forces. Although the repressive apparatus of a Polish communist state had been created very quickly in 1944, even by mid-1945 the basic fact that the communist administration was reliant on the presence of huge NKVD numbers was clear. In many rural areas the Polish communist authorities were still forced to create *ad hoc* groups to fight the underground. These were often composed of WW/KBW, Polish Army, UB, MO and members of the PPR. For example operations against partisans in Lublin county during 1945 were led by the following security forces- Lublin province UB 6

operations led, Lublin county UB 28, MO 3, WP and KBW 11, MO and Red Army 1, UB and Red Army 4, UB and WP 3, MO and WP 1, UB and MO 2, UB, WP and Red Army 3, Lublin province UB 1 and Lublin county UB 1. ⁵² Even the arrest lists of these operations show how the security forces were struggling to identify and remove members of the underground. In Lublin county in 1945 these operations killed only 125 underground members, injured 16, and arrested 34, yet a huge 388 were arrested for only being suspected of AK membership. ⁵³ Even with these combined groups the Polish communists were still being assisted by large NKVD units across the region. ⁵⁴

In Włodawa district Polish security forces trapped the “*Zagloba*” partisan unit in a marsh and reported the entire force had drowned. However, according to the research of Anna Kister, this unit continued to fight until the amnesty in August 1945. ⁵⁵ Were the security forces mistaken, or did they exaggerate their success? The existing documentary material available makes it difficult to assess the success of Polish security forces in dealing with the underground threat in the province. The need to exaggerate successes speaks volumes for the fragility of their position.

This meant that, as the Second World War neared its end, the Soviet military commitment to Poland had to be stepped up yet again. By mid-1945 the NKVD had fifteen internal army regiments operating in the territory of Lublin Poland, representing 43 percent of all the NKVD forces in Eastern Europe at this time; even after the final defeat of Germany and the establishment of a Soviet held zone in that country, there were only ten NKVD internal army regiments stationed there. In total, the NKVD had stationed in Lublin Poland, in a country that was part of the anti-Nazi alliance, around 35,000 men. This force was responsible for sealing the borders, fighting the anti-communist underground and even for the personal security of the communist leadership. ⁵⁶ A NKVD report on the situation in Poland given during May 1945 is most telling in this respect. It shows how the communist administration in the regions of Lublin, Rzeszów, Warsaw and Kraków were paralysed by attacks by the non-communist underground. ⁵⁷ The report also appealed for a further five NKVD regiments to be sent in order to deal with the problem. The fact that

partisan units were operating in every inspectorate of the region meant that communist government across the region was being seriously challenged. The AK's success in infiltrating the police and army prompted the deployment in *Lubelszczyzna* of seven Soviet regiments and a motorised battalion, to reinforce the presence of the 64th NKVD Internal Regiment. The 98th NKVD Internal Regiment was also based in the town of Hrubieszów to the east of the province. ⁵⁸ Poland was now a vital bridge between the Soviet Union and the remnants of Nazi Germany. Once Germany surrendered, the importance of Poland strategically was to continue. As Gomułka told the May PPR plenum, Polish communists would have been unable to 'fight reaction' without Soviet support. ⁵⁹

The decision to commit such huge numbers of Soviet security forces to Poland clearly showed Stalin's determination to make Poland a compliant satellite state. The Polish-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact that was signed by Osóbka-Morawski and Stalin on 21st April 1945 reinforced the point and dismayed those struggling for a non-communist Poland. Whilst not internationally recognised in the West, this pact highlighted the Soviet Union's determination to have a veto over the reconstruction of post-war Poland. The announcement of the pact was timed in order to pre-empt the coming discussions on Poland at the first conference of the United Nations in San Francisco. ⁶⁰ The pact was to last for twenty years meaning in practice that Poland was to be a Soviet dominated satellite state for years to come. As the Yugoslav communist Milovan Djilas recalled of a conversation with Stalin in 1944, it is that:

This war is not as in the past; whoever occupies a territory also imposes on it his social system. Everyone imposes his own system as far as his army can reach. It cannot be otherwise. ⁶¹

Saying this was one thing, implementing it another. To the NKVD operating in Poland in 1945, the underground must have seemed like a hydra. They could cut off as many of its 'heads' as they liked but until the basic problem of legitimacy was solved, the underground would always recruit anew. Yet this was the problem how could a system, such as the Soviet one, that was based on violence achieve 'legitimacy'. It would do so

by continuing its tried and tested method of arrests, shootings, and deportations, until the people themselves were tired of resisting. But by summer 1945 there was little sign that this was being achieved.

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Chapter 6

June 1945-December 1947

Afterword and Conclusions

When the Second World War in Europe finally came to an end with the fall of Berlin in May 1945 the groups operating against the communist government of People's Poland were still growing. A grass roots movement of those avoiding the UB and NKVD, refugees, the politically motivated, and deserters from the People's Army had helped to swell the number of people in the woods of the Lublin province. The promise held out by the formation of the provincial Government of National Unity did not last long. In August Mikołajczyk left the government and the underground made its third and final attempt to offer centrally organised resistance. Freedom and independence, *Wolność i Niezawisłość* (WiN), was created to support Mikołajczyk's opposition in its attempt to prepare for the elections promised at the meetings of the 'Big Three'. However, despite the fact that the organisation was able to survive until those elections, it was not able to ensure the success of the democratic parties. Once the rigged elections had taken place Stalin no longer needed to pay any lip service to the west on Poland. Within a year of their outcome, Mikołajczyk had been exiled and the underground snuffed out.

Amnesty

The discussions in Moscow that had proceeded the agreement establishing the Provisional Government of National Unity had been attended by Mikołajczyk at Churchill's prompting. They had been timed to take place at the same time as the trial of Okulicki and the sixteen captured underground leaders. ¹ When the new government's composition was announced on 28th June 1945, seventeen Ministerial posts were taken by communists or by people subordinated to the PPR; Mikołajczyk became Deputy Prime Minister and members of his Peasant Party took a further three, albeit minor, positions in the new government. ² The work of this new government was given international approval at the Potsdam Conference that took place just outside the German capital from 17th July-2nd August, an assembly that also recognised Poland's eastern border and gave provisional recognition to its western border. With the defeat of Nazism, and the formation of a Polish government that included Mikołajczyk and other democratic members, the 'Polish question' was effectively settled for the Anglo-Saxon powers. ³ Members of the underground in Lublin were once again listening to such declarations, but by this late stage their faith in the Anglo-Saxons and politicians from the Government-in-Exile was much weaker than it had once been. ⁴



Warsaw July 1945, Mikołajczyk back in Poland
(A.G. Kister, Studium Zniewalania; Walka aparatu bezpieczeństwa z polskim zbrojnym podziemiem niepodległościowym na Lubelszczyźnie 1944-1947, Krakow 2005)

Once this new government was recognised by the USA and Great Britain in July, it no longer made sense for the leaders of the underground in Poland to maintain its current stance which linked them to a Government-in-Exile that no longer had international recognition. An appraisal of the new situation was

made by members of the DSZ command in July, and its decision reflected the new realities that the force faced:

A way out of the current impasse concerning the Home Army is possible only by means of a) severing ties with the London leadership and admitting its bankruptcy; b) confirming by way of an order that armed conflict within the country in the present situation is useless and weakens the nation; c) confirming also that units remaining in the forests are units which have been demoralised by the war (bandits) or units having their own social or political aims having nothing to do with the Home Army; d) a summons to work on various fronts in the name of the ideals of freedom and independence. ⁵

Rzepecki and his officers, at this point, feared that the end result of continued military activities would be the increasing polarisation of the underground and its uncoupling from the people. The liquidation of DSZ was meant to empty the forests and to change illegal activity into legal activity, thus supporting Mikołajczyk and the non-communists in the new government. On 6th July therefore the Council of National Unity was dissolved and on 6th August the *Delegatura* ceased to exist. Inevitably the military wing of the resistance would also have to be reoriented towards the new conditions. ⁶ Yet despite the hopes of central command, the dissolution of DSZ did not empty the forests, and it did not end the fighting or indeed the will and need to fight. What the dissolution did do was to bring to an end the notion of an underground linked to the western alliance and to the government in London.

One of the key early decisions of the Provisional Government of National Unity was to introduce an amnesty for those members of

the underground who left the forests. The amnesty was enacted by a Decree of the Council of Ministers on 2nd August and came into force for a month from 21st August. It was an attempt by the government to draw the teeth of the underground by using both political means and repression; for it took place against a backdrop of sweeping anti-partisan operations throughout the Lublin region. ⁷ The amnesty was presented as being an integral part of the process of free elections agreed to at the Yalta Conference, as part of a process to involve non-communist parties in the government of an independent Poland. Before liquidating itself, the DSZ regional command in Lublin had ordered its troops to take part in this process, that at the agreed time, its forces should hand in its weapons to the Red Army or Militia at agreed places. The order stated that the Red Army would guarantee their immunity. ⁸

The response to the amnesty was mixed. Whilst some followed the order, other members of the underground, after being hunted for over a year, would never trust any Soviet or communist guarantee. One area that did follow the order to adhere to the terms of the amnesty was the Lublin county district. On 13th July 1945 the Lublin county district Inspector “*Jung*” ordered the reduction of his staff to just essential operations. From this point onwards, the staff in the Lublin county district was reduced to the following: Commander “*Halicz*”, Communications officer “*Figus*”, Training officer “*Leszek*”, Intelligence officer “*Wilhelm*”. ⁹ “*Halicz*” then ordered all members of his force to cease activities on 15th October and to hand in their weapons to the MO and UB in the area. As a result of this, 290 ‘AK’ members in this region handed themselves into the authorities. ¹⁰ Yet this decision to hand in weapons and return to ‘legal life’ was in contrast to the decision of the Lublin city commander. Up until the amnesty, the Lublin city DSZ had continued to operate according to the rules of the AK, thereafter it

changed its operating procedures. As late as 24th October 1945 the Lublin city district commander Franciszek Abraszewski "*Borut*" formally decided against the amnesty commanding his troops that: 'The fight does not end... In place intensify our work through observing members of the occupying security forces and liquidating the most dangerous enemy agents.'¹¹ Using the word 'fight' to describe the work of a force which, at a national level was trying to re-orientate its efforts towards the support of peaceful elections, speaks volumes about how many among the underground's rank and file actually felt. As a result of this stance, the officers of DSZ in Lublin city did not reveal themselves at the amnesty. The Lublin City force simply downsized using a smaller staff and a controlled shut down of most existing safe houses and flats in the city.¹² However, despite the fact that the district commander ordered against it, still around an estimated third of the Lublin city AK abandoned the underground and accepted the amnesty.¹³

This scenario was repeated across the region, with a core of the underground preparing to continue the fight, or at least to continue to remain undercover until the situation became clearer. For example, whilst in Puławy inspectorate less than fifty 'AK' members responded to the amnesty, the lion's share of the underground was to continue the struggle.¹⁴ Years of fighting and arrests had left their mark on the underground; it had massively weakened its structure and trapped its surviving members into a vicious circle of violence. Dr Klukowski met up with members of the forest based units in his area during the summer of 1945, after which he reflected:

I noticed that the years of conspiracy, the underground life, and specific conditions of their work have left a peculiar stamp on these men. They live mostly in a relatively limited

world, they see only underground fighting, they are removed from normal social life, most of them are conceited, self-confident, some suffer from megalomania. They regard themselves as idealistic messengers, ready to despise and push around anyone who is not part of their conspiracy. They are ready to act, fanatics of a kind, ready to fight out situations to problems, people of dulled sensitivity toward the acts of violence and illegality they command, for instance, various expropriations, decisions regarding the liquidation of dangerous people, etc. At the same time they are people willing to sacrifice, risking their lives, being pursued, persecuted, and searched, without a home of their own for years, leading a wandering existence, often dirty and lice-infested, without shelter. They have one aim in view, the final victory, in which they believe fanatically. There are many things about them that shock and irritate me, but in spite of that I feel better than anywhere else among these crazy partisans. ¹⁵

Five years of German occupation and one year of the Soviet 'second occupation' had turned "*Marcin's*" well-ordered and well-equipped underground army into a loose grouping of bands, most of whom knew nothing more than perpetual warfare. By the middle of 1945 such men often could not and would not come out of conspiracy, despite the intentions of their leaders.

Whilst in *Lubelszczyzna* the majority of partisan units operating during this civil war were part of WiN, ¹⁶ the NSZ was the second largest force operating during the civil war in *Lubelszczyzna*. Yet the NSZ had still been operating primarily in the Holy Cross Mountains area in the far south of People's Poland, and were in effect a spent force by the end of 1945. Unlike the AK command

the NSZ had never been prepared to work with the Soviets. The increasingly desperate and high profile nature of NSZ campaigns helped to further justify the Soviet repression of AK bands who were tarred with the same 'fascist' brush. Whilst AK-NSZ relations during this period were to remain in most instances cordial, they were to operate as separate forces throughout the civil war. The NSZ was in effect a disparate number of small bands, but its forces operating in *Lubelszczyzna* were still relatively large, in particular in areas such as Włodawa. They were a significant nuisance to the local communist authorities, with the key stage of the struggle between the NSZ and the communist authorities taking place during June 1945. On 10th June an assault group of the NKVD were able to surround one of the area's largest NSZ groups under the command of Major Mieczysław Pazderski, "Szary". The NKVD surrounded the group in the village of Huca and the subsequent fire-fight resulted in the village being set alight and many of the villagers being killed. The "Szary" unit was destroyed in this action, and the NKVD unit involved went on to track, liquidate and attempt to clear the province of the NSZ. They were not able to eradicate this force completely, but by 20th June they had killed 200 partisans. In the course of this action the units under the command of "Szary", Bolesław Skulimowski "Sokół", and Zbigniew Góra "Jack", were destroyed in these actions with many in these units simply being shot on the spot. ¹⁷

Freedom and Independence

One reason why underground groups were uncertain whether or not to accept the amnesty was Mikołajczyk's decision to leave the Provisional Government of National Unity, thus seriously weakening its claim to represent the whole nation. After a stormy visit to Moscow in mid-August, at which he felt Stalin had duped him, Mikołajczyk resigned as Deputy Premier. On 2nd September

1945 Freedom and Independence, *Wolność i Niezawisłość* (WiN), was created as the last attempt to organise centrally the underground resistance to a total communist takeover. WiN's founders assumed that it was to be a temporary organisation. Ultimately WiN was to exist in order to support the non-communist parties at the free elections for the new government. After this, it was originally intended to be dissolved. As a part of this process it ordered that the military nomenclature used up until then was to be changed i.e. commanders now became presidents. However, in *Lubelszczyzna* as in other areas the existence of large partisan units meant that this was not followed and the WiN underground was to remain consistently militaristic in its nature. However, these military actions were not seen by the organisation as being essentially aggressive in nature. WiN units in the region argued that they were taking part in defensive actions, the struggle was to preserve rather than to defeat. Members of these forces even considered actions that seemed aggressive such as attacks on MO stations or breaking colleagues out of jail, as acts of defence.¹⁸

Individual commands made their own decisions regarding their policy towards the Soviets, and the formation of WiN in effect reflected this reality.

The size of WiN was considerable. Janusz Wrona gives the statistic that between 1945-1947 an estimated 25-40,000 people were members of WiN in *Lubelszczyzna*.¹⁹ The civil war that it engaged in with the security services was not a war of pitched battles, rather it was essentially a period of tit for tat killings - a MO post would be destroyed by groups claiming to be a part of WiN and the security forces would retaliate with a sweep of the area. Whilst the interrogations in Lublin had been harsh ever since the Soviets arrival in the province, during the period of the

civil war, reprisals and interrogations reached a new level of barbarity. According to an underground newspaper in the province dated July 1945, on average twenty prisoners per week were dying as a result of injuries inflicted during interrogation in Lublin Castle. ²⁰ One such infamous interrogation took place in Lublin during September 1945. Barbara Nagajewicz-Woś “*Krystyna*” was a member of Major Heronim Dekutowski’s “*Zapora*”, WiN unit. She was captured, tortured for three weeks and then sentenced to ten years in gaol. What follows is an account of her interrogation in Lublin:

This was a terrible night. She was beaten. She screamed.... Investigating officer Maksymiuk beat her with a wire-tipped pole. He threw “*Krysia*” over a chair, pulled up her skirt, and whipped her. Then she was prostrated on the floor and the torturers poured cold water into her nose. She lost consciousness several times. ‘Will you talk?’ they asked her when she opened her eyes. She kept silent. ‘Whip her some more!’ Maksimiuk yelled. She was thrown back into her cell at 7:00am. She was completely covered in blood.... The beating and torture did not help. “*Krysia*” kept completely silent. ²¹

Anti-partisan operations continued. In Kraśnik district, the NKVD and UB launched a sweeping action in February 1946 during which many people were arrested, detained and tortured on trumped up charges. Between 1944 and 1947 in Lublin county district there were 161 large operations mounted by the security forces. In these operations 699 suspects were held, although the groups involved numbered from 3-300 people. ²² In total 472 ‘AK’ members from Lublin county district were arrested during this period, of whom around 290 AK members were taken after the 1945 amnesty; 53 had been arrested before the amnesty. Records show that 70 were interned in the USSR, 11 were killed in

'accidental clashes', and that 48 of those arrested were interrogated but not sentenced. ²³

The standard method of interrogation was for water to be pored into a victim's nose. Another was for a victim to be held down on a table: one officer would sit on the victim's head, the other on his back; a third officer would whip the soles of the victim's feet until walking was impossible. ²⁴ WiN had been formed to support the democratic parties until the promised elections, fighting in the woods to protect those whose electoral success would surely bring an end to Poland's trials. ²⁵ But when the elections were held in January 1947 they were rigged. ²⁶

A new amnesty was then declared on 22nd February 1947 which was to last until 25th April the same year. ²⁷ This succeeded in neutralising many of the remaining groups in the forests; in Lubartów all of the district's 85 WiN members handed themselves in. ²⁸ Hand in hand with this, the force was hit by several arrests of its leadership at national level and whilst the Lublin leadership was to avoid arrest until 1947, by the beginning of that year the underground had been crushed by the NKVD and Polish security forces. ²⁹ By the end of the year, even the most successful partisan leaders had been captured. In Lublin the last partisan was not shot until the 1960's, but the symbolic end of the struggle came when the UB finally captured Major Hieronim Dekutowski "Zapora" in autumn 1947. He had been fighting since 1939 and had been awarded Poland's most coveted *Virtuti Militari* Cross. "Zapora" was horrifically tortured, he had had his teeth knocked out, his nose, hands and ribs broken and his fingernails pulled out. He was finally executed on 7th March 1949. By the end of 1947 meaningful resistance was at an end both in government and in the forests. The fact that Mikołajczyk was forced into exile at the end of October 1947 was symptomatic of how successful

the communists had been in strangling the 'democracy' that had been effectively promised in the Yalta declarations.³⁰

The experience of Lublin

The Soviet and German occupations of south-east Poland in 1939 had presented Poles with the grindingly familiar dilemma of occupation. The questions that had arisen after 1794 once again resurfaced, but this time the harsh nature of the Nazi occupation threatened the very future existence of the Polish people. The extremity of Nazi repression therefore created a unique unity amongst the nation. Nationalist, communist, right wing or moderate had seen the necessity of fighting the German occupier. In Lublin, an ethnic war and the mass deportations from the south had helped to create the AK Lublin underground.

Yet even with this 'unity', there were many signs of division in the Polish 'front'. During the spring of 1944 NSZ, AL and AK forces had all been involved, to varying degrees in fratricidal fighting. The forces of the underground in Poland, as an arm of the exiled government, were ultimately to reflect the nature of that government; it was a resistance coalition that represented a cross section of Polish politics and society and it was one which suffered from significant divisions. Throughout the period of the German occupation the original core of the underground had attempted to create a coalition in the homeland that would reflect the government in London. This was a task that had varying levels of success. The AK after all was a military force that was manned by many of the pre war Polish Army and was therefore linked in the minds of many in the Peasant and Nationalist camps to the militarization of Poland during the late 1930s. This meant that the initial mistrust of the 'officer class' of the AK was to never really go away. It was often placed in the background until the

enemy, the Germans, had been defeated. Therefore, groups that were allied to the main AK, such as NOW or BCh, were not always absorbed and even when they were questions of weapons and command positions were to cause tension. Yet the key issue in the build up to liberation was the question of the Soviets and how the homeland forces should react to them both during and immediately after the period of liberation. Such questions, as preparations for an uprising in the homeland began, only complicated further the existing tensions between the new Prime Minister Mikołajczyk and the Commander-in-Chief Sosnkowski. Such tensions and divisions impacted down the chain of command, to the extent that both Bór-Komorowski and regional commanders such as *"Marcin"* were to modify Operation "Tempest". *"Marcin's"* decision to create a shadow command showed both his distrust of the Soviets and his concerns about the policy of his Government. Therefore, the start of "Tempest" during the summer of 1944 simply served to highlight these problems, as it exposed differences in approach both within the Government-in-Exile and between London and the AK in Warsaw and Lublin.

At the moment of liberation, the AK did fight and did play the role that their government requested of them. They launched diversionary attacks across the province meaning that AK soldiers were the first to take the city centre of Lublin, and played their part in the liberation of countless other towns and villages across the province. In the process of this some units fought alongside Soviet forces, and shared intelligence information with them. One of the most important aspects of Operation "Tempest" in Lublin lay in the decision of *"Marcin"* to hand in his force's weapons and to disperse his troops. This decision was a result of both his own personal experiences and an order from central command. The order meant that much of the AK in Lublin was to avoid the initial

wave of NKVD arrests. Behind his decision lay a clear strategy; by dispersing his forces the core of the AK in Lublin could be preserved, it could weather the initial storm. In July 1944 it seemed perfectly feasible that the Red Army would continue its advance through Poland and that the current situation would not last for long. In the great 'Krakow' tradition of resistance, the AK would preserve its manpower and simply wait, boycotting the Berling Army forcing the new administration into crisis.

Yet the disclosure policy was disastrous for those interested in the return of the Government-in-Exile to Poland. Within hours, or at best days, the *Delegatura* officers were removed from their governmental roles and the bulk of the region's best partisan units were delivered over to the Soviets. Thousands of AK soldiers and *Delegatura* men would offer themselves into the clutches of the NKVD whilst assisting the advance of the Red Army. But, by the end of Operation "Tempest" in Lublin after the arrests of thousands of AK men, the core of the force, led by officers and NCOs who had avoided capture were able to return to their homes. In fact, only a fraction of the weapons that the AK had taken from the Germans were handed to the Soviets. This meant that, despite the massive setback of the post Operation "Tempest" era, a core, armed, and well structured underground still existed. What destroyed this attempt to preserve the AK in Lublin was the halting of the eastern front for five months. This meant that 2.2 million Soviets were operating in the areas of Poland in which the AK had been at its strongest. Lublin, Vilna, Radom, Volhynia and Białystock were amongst the AK's strongest regional commands and they were all behind the front line by September 1944.

Whether the Warsaw Uprising prompted this halt is a question for another thesis but the launching of the uprising certainly did not help the attempts of the Lublin AK to weather the storm. Given the desperate situation that the Poles were faced with in 1944 it would

have been a negation of their national character not to have risen up. Yet the need to prove oneself by taking up arms against an enemy was not just a Polish trait, the bravery of Spanish fighters in their civil war amazed foreign commentators as did the bravery of British Tommys at the Somme. The need for the individual to fight and die for one's country, in an often hopeless situation, is still a trait of western culture and it is somewhat myopic, therefore, to criticize the AK command in Warsaw for its romantic Polish decision. Had they not risen up then communist charges that the AK were refusing to fight, that they had been dropped in by the Imperialists just for the sake of appearances would have seemed far more valid. What the decision to stage an uprising did do, however, was to hasten the fate of those in the underground, both in the capital and to the east. Equally, the uprising in Warsaw made huge demands on the men that had avoided the first wave of arrests in Lublin. Across the region, area commands and individual units held discussions on whether to help their comrades in the capital. In the event many of them did go and merely walked into Soviet forces. The Uprising in the capital was to have a huge impact on the AK in *Lubelszczyzna* – for it was to provoke new waves of arrests by the NKVD. This, allied with the fact that the Warsaw Uprising meant an unexpected halt of the eastern front for nearly six months, produced a situation in which “*Marcin's*” idea of weathering the storm was severely tested. This process of weakening the ties of the underground was compounded by the Government-in-Exile's decision not to send clear and consistent orders to the province.

Even so, the underground that remained, much weakened though it was, was able to retain its structure and to redirect some of its activities. Due to the early weakness and division of the PKWN, AK forces were able to penetrate many of the new structures of the fledgling administration, including even the security services. The PKWN's early attempts to reach out to elements of the

underground did not have the immediate effects that they hoped for. Rather, as the Uprising in Warsaw continued without serious Soviet help the people of the province became increasingly polarised. Equally, it took the NKVD in the province time to establish their base, to extend their intelligence networks and to familiarise themselves with the whole of the region. As a result, during the first few months of the Soviet presence in the region the NKVD were not able to cut off AK radio communications, nor destroy its command networks in Lublin. By the end of the period of the Warsaw Uprising, the AK in Lublin was still operating. Ultimately the period of the Warsaw Uprising was to be a crucial one in the history of the AK, not just for the fighters in Warsaw, but for their compatriots in Lublin. The period of the Warsaw Uprising in Lublin meant units regrouping and marching into Soviet blockades, sporadic clampdowns during the course of the uprising and mass repression after its failure.

Ultimately it was the mass repression in the aftermath of the Warsaw Uprising that fatally weakened the Lublin underground as an organised, coherent entity. In many senses the crucial period for the AK in Lublin was the one from July until November 1944. In this five-month period, the people who had faithfully fulfilled the orders of the Government-in-Exile were to have that faith majorly shaken. The alliance of the underground in the area had been an often difficult one but after months of silence from London, the failure of the Warsaw Uprising and the Moscow talks, this alliance began to collapse. Once this began, against the backdrop of mass arrests and the increasing numbers of Soviet and Polish security troops, the process developed an unstoppable momentum.

Therefore, by the October of 1944, what remained of the AK's command core was left in tatters. From the ashes of this defeat

was to come a change of direction for the organisation. With Bór-Komorowski a German prisoner, his deputy Okulicki took the decision many in Lublin had been waiting for impatiently and identified the Soviet Union as the main threat to the Polish nation. Further down the command structure, in the Lublin region, the AK's uncertainty continued as in Moscow talks unfolded between Stalin and Mikołajczyk against a backdrop of increased mass repression by the agencies of the Soviet Union and PKWN. This mixture of repression and confusion meant that this period was to witness the growth of fractures within the underground. Some underground members, after Warsaw, and after the failure of the Moscow talks, were starting to question the logic of continued activity after five long years of war. The PKWN was, after all, not like the General-Government that it had replaced. For all the talk of a 'second occupation', the PKWN was not attempting to destroy the Polish nation, rather it was using patriotism and the promise of land to appeal to the people. The reopening of the Catholic University in Lublin, children being encouraged to wave Red and White flags, and the enforced transfer of the Ukrainian population from the south-east of the region all were starting to have an effect.

Yet despite these first stirrings of support, the PKWN still struggled throughout 1944 to create an effective administration that could survive once the Red Army resumed its advance to the west. The expansion of the armed forces and the police had meant that hundreds of politically unreliable people were absorbed into the PKWN's structure during these first months, something that was evident in the mass desertions from the Polish Army during this period. After Warsaw, the communist authorities' response to this weakness was mass repression. The growing strength of the UB was supplemented by nearly 9,000 NKVD troops in Lublin. In *Lubelszczyzna* the period in which large areas of the province had remained beyond the reach of the NKVD

was ending – by October they had reconnoitred the province and were beginning to use the information given to them by their growing spy network. Whilst the increase in support for the PKWN was slow, it had recruited enough men (often via blackmail or threats) to enable its security forces to massively undermine the underground. The underground was not destroyed in 1944, nor did the PKWN overcome its basic problem of legitimacy; what the communists were able to do in the autumn of 1944 was to destroy the internal fabric of resistance to them. Between October and November 1944, Lublin was witness to a massive sweeping campaign of terror that brought the underground to its knees without destroying it completely. Without a functioning central command and increasingly cut adrift from the outside world, individual and district AK commands continued their operations on into 1945.

The imposition of a communist regime also posed different questions for a force whose structure had been formed to meet the demands of the German occupation. An alliance that had been weak in areas would become untenable under a ‘second occupation’ in which the future of the nation itself was not under threat. Żak’s August orders to create groups to hamper the work of the PKWN contrasted violently with the Biłgoraj BCh’s decision to work with the new PKWN just a couple of months later – the fragile alliance was clearly starting to crumble by the end of 1944. Therefore, between Okulicki’s new post-Warsaw line and the PKWN’s Defence of the State decree, lay many different reactions to the policies of the Soviets in Lublin. Over-ridingly, the majority swung towards the non-communist forces but this support was often varied. After years of horrific occupation, in which the Poles faced annihilation, continued repression now came hand in hand with patriotic book days and the creation of new universities in the region. The Soviets did not want to wipe the Poles off the face

of the earth, they only wanted to force a communist administration on them. The many shades of response to this fact meant that the sort of intricate, alliance-based structure created during the German occupation was increasingly in danger. The failures of the diplomacy of the London Government and the uprising in the capital greatly exasperated this problem. Set against a determined and ruthless adversary these weaknesses were exploited and much of the underground destroyed in the winter of 1944-1945.

Yet, as a result of the command's actions during August 1944, the Lublin AK was able to hamper the attempts of the communists to build a people's state. Continuing organised resistance meant that deserters from the People's Army or MO had an alternative force to turn to, providing a focus and a much-needed source of hope for many people in the province. This meant that the infiltration of the MO and WP could be directed, at least in the summer of 1944 and early autumn of that year. Also it must be considered that the presence of an organised AK force, with popular support, existing as it did in the cockpit of Communist Poland affected the policies of that body. "Marcin" and his successors ordered their men to not join the WP, to not help the PKWN in any way. This was undoubtedly a factor in the prolonged inability of this body to form an effective government that was not reliant on Soviet military might. The success of this AK policy gives a clear idea of how effective the strategy of weathering the storm could have been under different circumstances. It can be said that the presence and policies of the Lublin AK post August 1944 had a strong influence on the development of a body that was to ultimately expand and take over Poland for forty years.

Whilst the framework of the underground had been almost destroyed by the winter of 1944-1945, crucially a framework of

resistance had survived the NKVD's concerted attempts to destroy it totally. The importance of this framework was clearly shown after the Red Army restarted its attack at the heart of the Third Reich in January 1945, removing the vast majority of troops from the region. This second assembling of the underground was much more spontaneous than the first, with many of the region's most experienced leaders already having been removed. It had taken four and a half months - considerably longer than the AK command in the region had expected, but when the Red Army advance began again, the underground was, as "*Marcin*" had conceived back in July, able to paralyse much of the communist administration in the province.

Fuelled by the promises of free elections at Yalta and the removal of the bulk of the Red Army presence, Lublin witnessed a flight of thousands of people to the woods of the province during spring 1945. By April more partisan units were operating in Lublin than at any point since Operation "Tempest", and a central command had been re-established. Refugees from the eastern bank of the Bug, deserters, and those fleeing persecution joined a resurgent underground. Once again people hoped that communist repression was only a phase and would pass after the elections, or once the Soviet Union fought the Anglo-Saxons in a coming Third World War. Such hopes had fuelled the movement to the woods, and the return of Mikołajczyk and the attempts to legalise opposition parties seemed to confirm this.

The resurgence of the underground in Lublin meant that by spring 1945, the communist authorities had lost control of large areas of the province. By day MO, UB and NKVD patrols swept through areas making arrests only for the area to return to the underground after dark. With the administration paralysed in Lublin, the Soviets once again fell back on repression. Yet, even

with Soviet reinforcements it was to take nearly two more years before the partisan threat to the Lublin province of People's Poland was effectively ended.

In sum the actions of the Lublin AK command represent a lost glimpse at what the AK could have done - at policies the Government-in-Exile could have followed. The attempt to avoid the NKVD, to preserve the body of trained manpower (the majority of which was against the imposition of communism), could have been a route to greater influence in post-war Poland. In July 1944, given the incredible advance of the Red Army thus far, it was not inconceivable that the war could have been over by Christmas 1944. Had this been the case then, the Lublin command's attempts to weather the storm would have been perfectly valid and incredibly pragmatic. In turn, a far greater proportion of experienced officers, and other ranks would have survived until the winter. Within a matter of weeks the front would have moved westwards once more and the underground that emerged again in spring 1945 would have been much better led, and a more effective opponent. Of course such speculations are of limited use, but they are interesting nonetheless. What is important is the fact that the AK in Lublin did not only fight in July 1944 but continued to do so for much longer. For too long the impact of the AK outside Warsaw has been overlooked and this thesis has gone some way in attempting to redress this imbalance.

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 - ⁹ IPNL 0136 21 116/33 Lublin county
 - ¹⁰ IPNL 0136 21 116/33 Lublin county
 - ¹¹ IPNL 0136 16 116/28 Lublin city
 - ¹² IPNL 0136 16 116/28 Lublin city
 - ¹³ IPNL 0136 16 116/28 Lublin city
 - ¹⁴ IPNL 0136 43 116/55 Puławy inspectorate
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Annex

Appendix 1: Demographics

Population density Per square Km, 1921 -1939

	1921	1931	1939
Poland	70	83	90
Lublin province	66.9	79.1	87

Population in City and village 1939

Year		Poland	Lublin region
1939	City	10,455,000	520,000
	Village	24,394,000	2,230,000

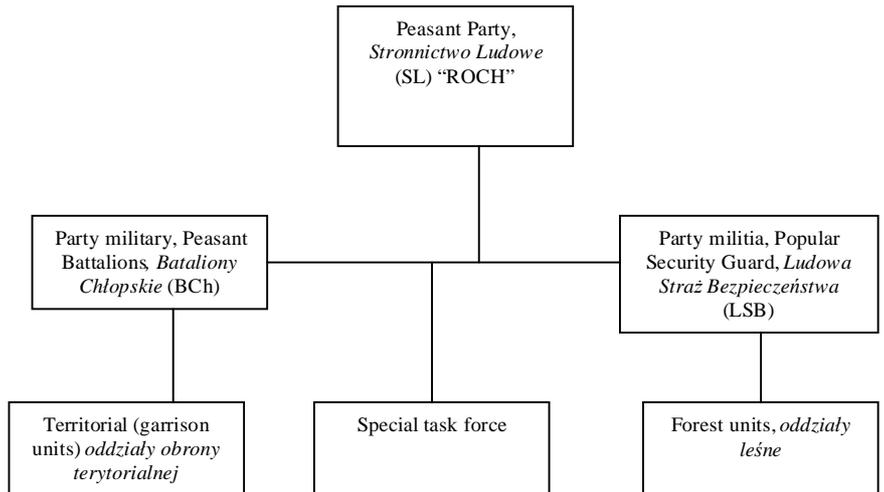
Population by nationality (1921) and by language (1931) (as a percentage of total)

Nationalities		1921	1931	1939
Poles	Poland	69.2	64.7	65.0
	Lublin province	85.4	86	87
Jews	Poland	7.8	8.8	10
	Lublin province	10.9	11	10
Ukrainians	Poland	14.3	16.0	15.0
	Lublin province	3.0	2.5	2.5
Belorussians	Poland	3.9	6.1	6.0
	Lublin province	0.1	0.1	0.1
Germans	Poland	3.9	2.4	2.0
	Lublin province	0.5	0.3	0.1
Others	Poland	0.9	2.8	2.0
	Lublin province	0.1	0.1	0.1

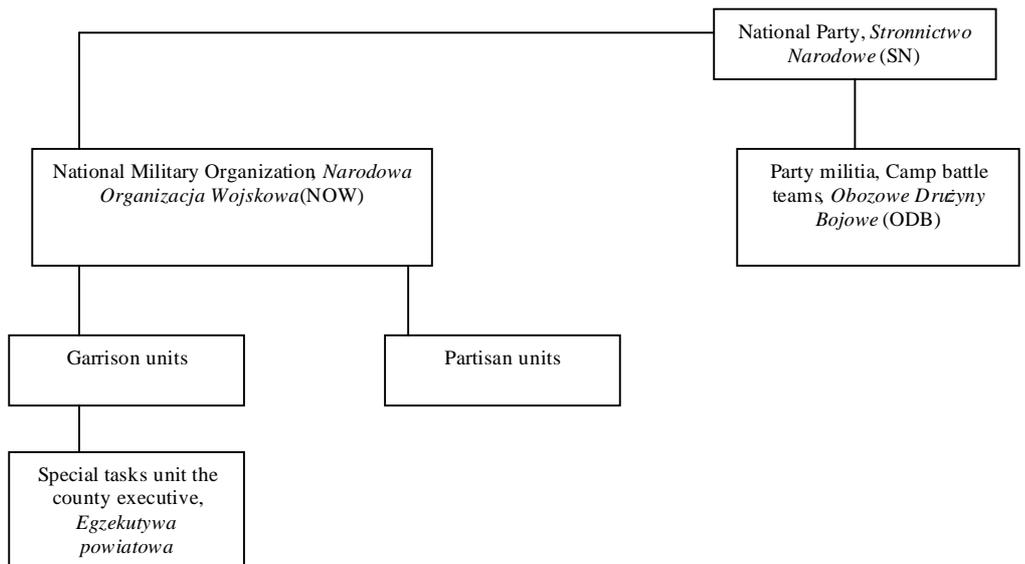
Taken from M.J. Chodakiewicz, Between Nazis and Soviets: occupation Politics in Poland, 1939-1947 (Lexington 2004), pp. 348- 349.

Appendix 2: Major underground organizations and their auxiliaries
(1939- 1944)

Populists



Nationalists



Taken from M.J. Chodakiewicz, Between Nazis and Soviets: occupation Politics in Poland, 1939-1947 (Lexington 2004), pp. 411-412.

Appendix 3: Tactics

An article from the *Biuletyn Informacyjny*, the Information Bulletin, of 1st April 1943 entitled: ‘Armed Action? Yes- but limited!’ Quoted from M. Ney-Krwawicz, The Polish Home Army 1939- 1945 (PUMST 2000) pp. 164-165. (*emboldening added by the author of this thesis*)

‘There are those who do not fully appreciate the phase of struggle with the enemy the country is in at present. These people do not quite understand why, on the one hand, the leadership at home is opposed to the current insurgent mood and to taking to the forests, and is stamping out all manifestations of panic- struck “heroic” excesses, and on the other hand, it commands and organises such actions itself, as witness the battle at Krasnobrod, the hounding by fire and bullet of all fresh settlers in the Zamość region, the liberation with arms in hand of political prisoners, and all manner of sabotage initiatives etc. This apparently dual approach may be explained by reference to the two ostensibly contradictory watchwords under which the *Biuletyn Informacyjny* (Information Bulletin) has been published over recent months. These watchwords are: “Blessed are those who do not lose their spiritual equilibrium in times of thunder” and “Holy God, Holy and Strong, Holy and Eternal- bless the brave and courageous”. We wish to clarify the issue:

We have never equated “spiritual equilibrium” with inaction of the Home Forces. Appropriate military units and those connected with the military, have been accomplishing their set and defined combat tasks. Only, for a variety of reasons, we saw no need to make these actions public knowledge and to give them undue publicity. It is only a few months ago that we recognised it as being desirable to communicate this or that fact from time to time.

Conducting this limited form of struggle, **striking not wildly but where and when necessary**, we simultaneously categorically oppose premature insurgent action and any knee- jerk responses stemming from despair. We do so because we fully appreciate that a National uprising cannot be declared every three months. **Only one uprising can be staged- and only one. And such an uprising must be unquestionably successful. An unsuccessful uprising, ill prepared, declared at the wrong moment- would be tantamount to drowning the country in blood; it would be a pointlessly lost opportunity and would destroy our most precious human resources.**

The principles and policies of the Soviet agents in Poland are completely different. One hundred percent different. The present armed action of Polish communist detachments is virtually non- existent, but the communist propaganda’s boasting sounds like the roar of a lion! This propaganda is deafening with its tales of skirmishes and victories-

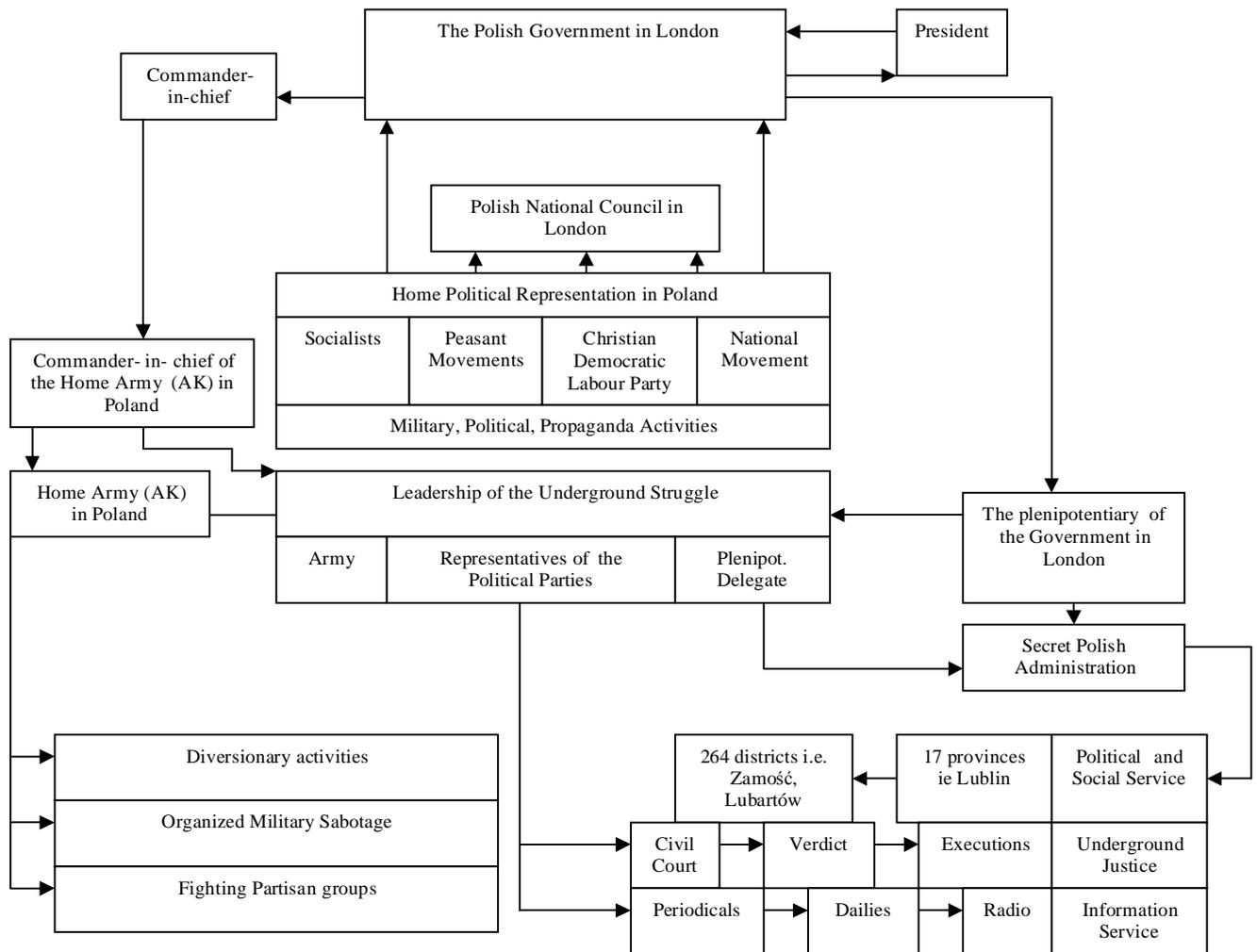
fictitious or “misappropriated” from others- and every day it calls upon our workers and peasants, women, youth, priests and city dwellers, to undertake wholesale sabotage and diversionary action, to escape to the forests *en masse*, and to form mass partisan detachments...

We assert: the current phase of armed struggle at Home is one of limited not mass action- conducted by special detachments. It is not amorphous but planned, with everything occurring at the right time and place. Independent of any attitudes that may obtain, but among others, in connection with the conduct of the Germans: the intensified bestiality of the enemy will meet with intensified reciprocity from us.

Practice has shown that the policy of limited struggle is paying dividends. **Mean while the opinions reaching us from London reassure us that this is the only reasonable policy to pursue not only from the point of view of Polish interests, but also from that of the United Nations as a whole.**

Confirmations of the fact **that in Europe the time is not yet ripe for mass action** can be seen, for one, in the appeal of King Peter of Yugoslavia of 28th March of this year, in which he called upon his people not to start action on a wider scale before the appropriate moment arrives and also, on the same day, English radio's repeated broadcast, for the fifth time or so, to the French population saying that: “until the appropriate time arrives, you should act in a controlled manner and **save your national strength for the final reckoning.**”

Appendix 4: The structure of the Polish Underground State by the summer of 1944



The Home Army oath of Allegiance

Before Almighty God and the Holy Virgin Mary, Queen of Poland, I take in my hands this Holy Cross, the sign of Suffering and Salvation, and swear loyalty to my country, the Polish Republic, to unyieldingly guard her honour and to fight for her liberation from slavery with all my strength- and unto death. I shall remain unwaveringly obedient to the President of the Polish Republic, to the Commander- in- Chief and his appointed Commander of the Home Army, and I shall keep the secrets entrusted to me irrespective of whatever may befall

Appendix 5: Before the Soviets; a breakdown of some of the AK districts in Lubelszczyzna. The platoon numbers given are from the month of July 1944

AK forces in the district of Tomaszów Lubelski November 1943- July 1944

District commander Wilhelm Szczepankiewicz “Drugak”
Assistant commander Władysław Surowiec “Sosna”

Post 1 Battalion 1

From the parishes of Łaszczów, Telatyn, Poturzyn, Dębobyczków, Oszczów, and Tamoszyn.

Commander Jerzy Sobieszczański “*Jastrząb*”

Company 1 – 200 soldiers
Commander Władysław Wiśniewski “*Lemiesz*” 1941- July 1944

Company II – 220 soldiers
Commander Jan Sierleczo “*Szarfa*” 1941- July 1944

Company III- 80 soldiers
Commander Tomasz Wielosz “*Ostoją*” 1941- March 1943
Jan Opiełko “*Arab*” March 1943- July 1944

“*Żelazna*” company- 120 soldiers
Commander Andrzej Dzygało “*Korczak*” April 1944- June 1944
Eugeniusz Sioma “*Lech*” June 1944- July 1944

Post II Battalion II

From the parishes of Majdan, Górny, Jarczów, Tarnoszyn and Uhnów

Commander Ryszard Suprynowicz “*Zawisza*” October 1943- 5th April 1944
Błażej Czop “*Czapliński*” April 1944- 30th July 1944

Company I “*Malika*” – numbering around 150 soldiers
Commander Stanisław Pisarczyk “*Malik*” 1942- 5th April 1944

Company II “*Czapliński*” – numbering around 150 soldiers
Commander Błażej Czop “*Czapliński*” 1942- July 1944

Company III from Tarnoszyn – around 120 soldiers
Commander Józef Nowak “*Topola*” March 1943- July 1944

Post III Battalion III

From the parishes of Tyszowce and Komarów

Commander Hieronim Biłowolski “*Grot*” January 1943- 30th July 1944

Company I “*Glaza*”

Commander Paweł Dziurbas “*Glaz*” January 1943- 2nd June 1944

Bronisław Bochenek “*Granit*” 2nd June 1944- 30th July 1944

Company II “*Beli*”

Commander Jan Kulik “*Bela*” September 1943- July 1944

Company III

Commander Marian Pilarski “*Grom*” September 1943- 10th July 1944

Post IV Battalion IV

From the parishes of Krynice, Tarnawatka and Rachanie

Commander Tadeusz Niedziałkowski “*Tomasz*” April 1941- July 1944

Company I AK Krynice –100 soldiers

Commander Szary “*Sep*” from March 1943

Company II AK parish of Krynice- 120 soldiers

Commander Władysław Kowalczyk

Company III AK Tarnawatka- 200 soldiers

Commander Łysak “*Szarak*” 1941- 20th July 1944

Post V Battalion V

From the parishes of Narol- Susiec-Bęczec- Cieszanów- Majdan Sopocki

Commander Marian Warda “*Polakowski*” February 1942- July 1944

Company I “*Narol*” – 350 soldiers

Commander Karol Kostecki “*Kostek*” from 1943 to 30th July 1944

Company II “*Ruda Różaniecka*”- 250 soldiers

Commander Sikora “*Sosna*” May- July 1944

Company III “*Susiec*” – 225 soldiers

Commander Witold Kopcewicz “*Ligota*” 1942- 30th July 1944

Company IV “*Majdan Sopocki*”- 220 soldiers

Commander Antoni Kusiak “*Bystry*”

Company V “*Dzików*”- 260 soldiers
Commander Stefan Pluta “*Jodła*” from 1943

Company VI “*Cieszanów*”- 105 soldiers
Commander Wilhelm Kolodziejczyk until July 1944

Company VII “*Kadlubiska*”- 107 soldiers
Commander Jozef Mazurkiewicz “*Hora*”

Post VI Battalion VI

From the town of Tomaszow Lubelski
Commander Mieczysław Szejn “*Skala*” 1942- June 1944

District of Hrubieszów November 1943- 30th **July 1944**

Commander Marian Gołębiewski “Irka”, “Korab”
Deputy commander Ignacy Krakiewicz “Wilk”

Post I City of Hrubieszów

Post II Battalion II

From the parishes of Dubienka, Biłopole, Horodło, and Moniatyce.

Commander Czesław Głębski “*Jawor*” November 1943- July 1944

Company I – 60 soldiers
Commander Stanisław Witamborski “*Mały*” May 1943- July 1944

Company II- 120 soldiers
Commander Wadaw Bojarski “*Hucul*” November 1943- July 1944

Company III- 150 soldiers
Commander Wincenty Smalej “*Orzeł*” November 1943- July 1944

Company IV- The “*Kedywu*” group
Commander Goldasiński

Post III Battalion III

From the parishes of Grabowiec, Uchanie and Młodiatycze

Commander Stanisław Panas “*Grzyb*”, “*Orwid*” May 1944- July 1944

Company I- 200 soldiers
Commander Stanisław Lombardo "*Poleszuk*"

Company II Białowody- 120 soldiers
Commander Zbigniew Choman "*Foka*" April 1944- July 1944

Company III- 120 soldiers
Commander Franciszek Kasz "*Szczęśny*" January 1943- November 1943

Company IV Grabowiec 80 soldiers
Commander Paweł Runkiewicz "*Czarny*" from 1942 to 1944

Post IV Battalion IV

From the parishes of Werbkowice, Świdniki, Zawalów, and Gdeszyn

Commander Stanisław Baran- Barski "*Bis*" 1943- 12th June 1944

Company I "*Huragana*"- 140 soldiers
Commander Karol Drzewiński "*Kociuba*", "*Pirat*"

Company II from Zawalów- 100 soldiers
Commander Tadeusz Błaszczuk "*Grom*" 1943- July 1944

Company III from Świdniki- 140 soldiers
Commander Leon Milowicz "*Adam*" October 1943- July 1944

Post V Battalion V

From the parishes of Ddohobyczów, Sahryń, Mircze, Kryłów, Waręż and Krystynopol.

Commander Stefan Kwśniewski "*Lux*", "*Wiktor*" February 1943- July 1944

Battalion V –500 soldiers
Commanders Karol Bojarski "*Wyga*" April 1943- July 1944

Company I "*Czarusia*"- 200 soldiers
Commander Sergiusz Konopa "*Czarus*" April 1943- July 1944

Company II "*Wyrwiczka*"- 100 soldiers
Commander Aleksander Piotrowski "*Wyrwicz*" January 1944- 30th July 1944

Company III "*Wygi*"- 200 soldiers
Commander Karol Bojarski "*Wyga*" April 1943- July 1944

Company IV –60 soldiers
Commander "*Nieśmiały*", "*Sep*"

Company V- 50 soldiers
Commander Marian Plewako "*Pogoń*"

Battalion BCh post of Hrubieszów

One battalion of 500 soldiers split down into 10 platoons.

District of Zamość November 1943-July 1944

District commander Waclaw Stasiewicz, March-August 1943

Stanisław Książek, "Wyrwa" August 1943-May 1944

Michał Polak, "Żelazny" from the BCh, May-July 1944

Post I

Skierbieszów

Commander Stanisław Kleszczyński, "Gniadosz", commander Post V 1943- July 1944

Post II

Stary Zamość

Commander Jan Denkiewicz, "Pobór", 1943- May 1944

Eugeniusz Jareczek, "Żubr", May 1944- July 1944

Commander of platoons in Stary Zamość Roman Szczur, "Urszula"

Commander of the platoon in Wirkowice Józef Repé, "Wilga"

Post III

Zamość

Commander Stanisław Sobieraj, "As", November 1943- May 1944

Jan Denkiewicz, "Pobór", May- July 1944

Zamość platoon in the 9th Infantry

Post IV

Radecznica

Commander Piotr Bohun, "Gromski", to January 1944

Józef Godzisz, "Kraśnik", January- July 1944

Post V

Szczebrzeszyn

Commander Franciszek Mucha, "Komar", September 1943- July 1944

Commander of the Kawęczyn company Leonard Kowalczyk, "Kawka", July 1943- August 1944

Commander of the Szczebrzeszyn platoon Marian Książek, "Nieuchwytny", July 1943- July 1944

Commander of the Zwierzyniec platoon Jan Paczesny, "Pocisk", May- July 1944

Doctor of the Szczebrzeszyn post and the Zamość district Doctor Stefan Józwiakowski

Post VI

Krasnobród

Commander Stefan Banicki, "Ulan", "Skala", October 1943- June 1944

Aleksander Markowski "Alma", July 1944

Deputy Commander from the BCh Stanisław Struzik, "Rolnik", June- July 1944

District of Biłgoraj November 1943-July 1944

Post I

Biłgoraj

Commander Józef Stegliński, "*Cord*", 1942- June 1944

Post II

Tarnogród

Commander Marian Melas, "*Lot*", 1941- July 1944

BCh Tarnogród platoon commander Jan Sępniewski

Platoon II commander Czesław Wasilewski, "*Grot*"

Post III

Krzyszów

Commander Józef Wójcik, "*Mały*", "*Błysk*", to December 1942

Edward Pawowicz, "*Baca*", to July 1944

Commander of the Krzyszów platoon "*Sulica*"

Post IV

Frampol

Commander Władaw Gniewkowski, "*Wasal*", September 1943- May 1944

Marian Miazga, "*Kwiatek*", "*Michał*" June- July 1944

Deputy Commander Marian Miazga, "*Kwiatek*", "*Michał*", to June 1944

Diversionsary platoon commander Aleksander Kómiński, "*Czerwień*", May 1943-
January 1944

Post V

Józefów

Commander Konrad Bartoszewski, "*Wir*", 1942- July 1944

Platoon commanders Władysław Homa, "*Kula*"

Czesław Mużacz, "*Selim*"

All of the above information relating to the 9th Infantry and the districts is taken from Jerzy Jźwiakowski's *Armia Krajowa na Zamojszczyźnie*, (Lublin 2007), pp. 518-698

District of Lubartów

Figures correct as of July 1944

District commander Roman Jezior, "*Okon*"
Deputy commander Aleksander Fil, "*Foch*", of the BCh

As of July 1944 "*Uskok*" had at his command around 4000 soldiers in Lubartów

Post I

Parishes of Spiczyn, Ludwin, Łęczna, Niemce

Post II

Lubartów, Łuck, and a part of Tało

Post III

Michów, Rudno, Wielkie

Post IV

Firlej, Luszawa

Post V

Kamionka, Samokłęski

Post VI

Czernierniki, and a part of Tało

Charakterystyka File No.2 'AK-WiN w powiat Lubartów' (IPN Lublin archive.)

District of Lublin County

Figures correct as of July 1944

District commander: Stanisław Piotrowski, "*Korszun*", "*Jar*"

As of July 1944 "*Jar*" had at his command 5868 AK/BCh (of which 1425 were BCh) soldiers in Lublin County

Post I

Commander Józef Filipowski "*Dąb*"

Post 1 commander "*Pilnik*" in the Parish of Jastków
Post 2 Jan Sadowski "*Mir*" in the Parish of Wojciechów
Post 3 "*Grot*" Parish of Konopnica
Post 4 Józef Albinski "*Nowy*" Parish of Bełżyce
Post 13 Andrzej Gorajek "*Wilk*" Parish of Chodel

Post II

Commander Józef Król "*Leszek*"

Post 5 "*Ryś*" Parish of Brzeziny
Post 6 Waław Borowiec "*Boryna*" Parish of Jaszczów

Post III

Commander Edward Grabinski "*Grabina*", "*Proch*", "*Młotek*"

Post 7 "*Przemiana*" Parish of Piaski
Post 8 Piotr Kosmala "*Kret*" Parish of Mielgiew
Post 9 "*Ludwik*" Parish of Wólka

Post IV

Commander Władysław Hoffman "*Chmura*", "*Ordynat*"

Post 10 commander unknown Parish of Krzczonów
Post 11 Bolesław Bolibok Parish of Zemborzyce
Post 12 commander unknown Parish of Piotrków

Post V

Commander Józef Kukuła "*Derwisz*"

Post 14 "*Bór*" Parish of Niedrzwica
Post 15 Władysław Rydz Parish of Piotrowice
Post 16 "*Deres*", "*Kłós*" Parish of Bychawa

Post VI

Commander “*Gozdawa*”

Post 17 “*Skrzydło*” Parish of Dorohuczka

Post 18 “*Pifel*” Chelm County

Charakterystyka File No.6., ‘Nielegalnej organizacji AK- WiN obwodu Lublin- powiat działającej w okresie od lipca 1944 do Kwietnia 1947’, Lublin dnia 17 lipca 1979r.’, (IPN archive, Lublin)

District of Radzyń

Post I

Miłków
Commander “*Puchacz*”

Post II

Gąś
Commander “*Rola*”

Post III

Radzyń

Post IV

Polskowola
Commander “*Bogdan*”

Post V

Tłuściec
Commander “*Ryok*”

Post V a

Misolzyzec
Commander “*Szczesny*”

Post VI

Biała
Commander “*Gryf*”

Post VII

Suchowola
Commander “*Wilk*”

Post VIII

Przegaliny
Commander "*Marny- Kropka*"

Post IX

Ruomo
Commander "*Zegota*"

File No. BULU-55110-59/07, (IPN archive Lublin)

Appendix 6: The leadership structure of the Lublin regional AK-DSZ-
WiN 1944-45

August 1944 – May 1945

Regional command August –December 1944

Commander;

Franciszek Żak codenames "*Zuzia*", "*Wir*", *Ignacy*"

Deputy Commander;

Władysław Zalewski "*Leśnik*"

Adjutant;

Antoni Wieczorek "*Ścibor*" (arrested November 1944)

Chief of staff;

Jan Kurcharczak "*Kazimierz*", "*Andrzej*", "*Stefan*" (arrested
21st April 1945)

Skeletal command December 1944 – January 1945

Regional commander;

Jerzy Iszkowski "*Kord*", "*Orczyk*" (arrested 9th January 1945)

Deputy commander;

Henryk Bukowski "*Henryk*"

Chief of staff;

Jan Kucharczak "*Kazimierz*", "*Andrzej*", "*Stefan*"

Regional command January- March 1945

Commander;

Franciszek Żak “*Wir*”, “*Ignacy*”, “*Zuzia*”, “*Róg*” (arrested 21st March 1945)

Deputy commander;

Władysław Zalewski “*Leśnik*”, “*Dąb*”, “*Janusz*”, “*Nowina*” (arrested 21st March 1945)

Adjutant;

Zdzisław Glogier “*Prot*”, “*Ney*” (arrested March 1945)

Chief of staff;

Jan Kucharczek “*Andrzej*”, “*Kazimierz*”, “*Stefan*” (arrested 21st March 1945)

Skeletal command April- May 1945

Aleksander Iwanicki “*Achilles*”, operated as unofficial commander of the province at this point

DSZ/WiN Regional command June 1945- January 1946

Commander;

Wilhelm Szczepankiewicz “*Drugak*”

Deputy commander and chief of staff;

Marian Gołębiewski (arrested 24th January 1946)

Bureaus of the regional command

Bureau 1- organisation

Unit commander Robert Bijasiewicz “*Orlik*”, “*Jadzia*” (arrested 6th November 1944)

Jerzy Iszkowski “*Kord*”, “*Orczyk*” (arrested January 1945)

Bureau II- intelligence

Unit commander Aleksander Bieniecki “*Łodzia*” (arrested October 1944)

Leon Żurek “*Lech*”, “*Leon*” (arrested 2nd November 1944)

Bureau III- operations

Unit commander Jan Nawrat “*Jan*”, “*Lucjan*” (arrested 3rd November 1944)

Bureau IV- quartermaster

Unit commander Władysław Krzanowski “*Bronek*”, “*Bronisław*”, “*Justyn*” (arrested 7th December 1944)
Władysław Pawlicki “*Zych*” (from December 1944)

Bureau V- command and communication

Unit commander Mieczysław Komarski “*Wojtek*” (arrested 6th November 1944)

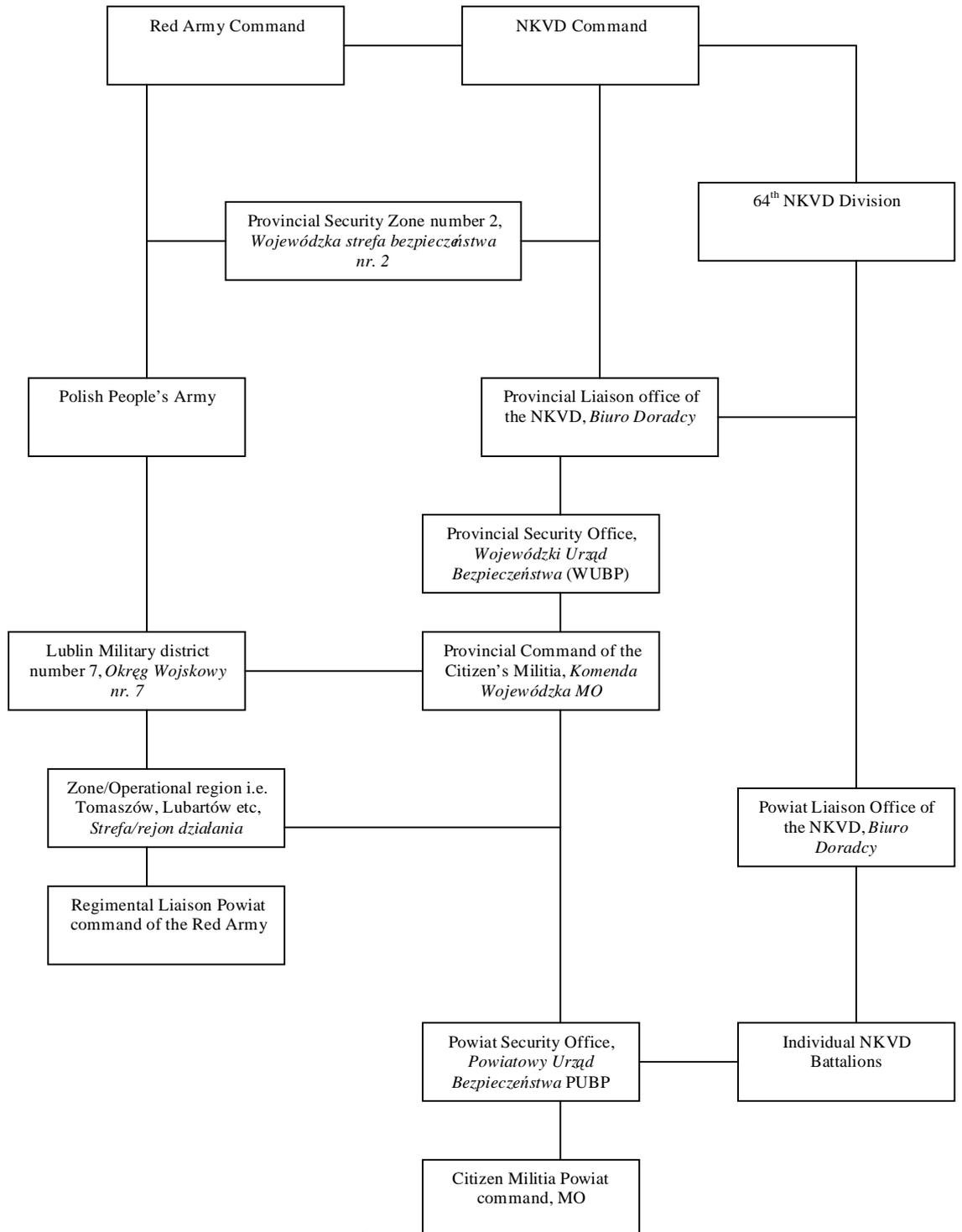
Bureau VI –Office of information and propaganda

Unit commander Marian Tułacz “*Step*”, “*Wierch*” (arrested 6th November 1944)
“*Tarkowski*” -actual name not known
Jan Zadrag “*Ostoja*” – commander June 1945- January 1946

*All of the above information is taken from Rafał Wnuk’s Lubelski Okręg AK DSZ i WiN 1944-1947 (Warsaw 2000) pp. 248-267.

Appendix 7: Security structures of the communists in the province of Lublin, 1945-1947

Taken from M.J. Chodakiewicz, *Between Nazis and Soviets: occupation Politics in Poland, 1939-1947* (Lexington 2004), p.438.



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Institute of National Remembrance Lublin Branch Archive, Lubelski, Poland; AK Characteristics collection and original AK command orders post July 1944

Lublin State Archive, Lubelski, Poland; original AK internal reports 1942-1944, original AK commands 1942- 1944