POLAND

BY WALTER DURANTY

I

THE Poles have reason to know the glory and horror of war. In their long and stormy history they have experienced defeat and triumph, conquest and servitude. To-day they stand on the brink of a struggle as harsh and terrible as any in their past. They say they will meet it boldly — 'they' say, but who are 'they'? The speeches of Polish leaders are full of courage and defiance, but what do the people feel, the men and women of Poland whose lives and homes are menaced? Do they know what lies before them? With what spirit do they face it?

I have visited Poland constantly for more than fifteen years. To find now what its people are thinking I did not go to the statesmen or generals, the rulers and guides, but rather to those who follow, the ones who will bear the brunt. They were willing enough to talk, to tell a foreigner what they thought and hoped and feared, but the 'man in the street,' as we call him, does not always think for himself, and finds it hard to express his thoughts in a clear and logical way. He is prone to repeat what he has read or heard, without thinking — perhaps because he believes that it sounds well, or simply because it is easier for him. Thus I collected a mass of opinions and statements, for the most part so similar that there seemed little difference between them. Then I saw that they were like the photographs in a film. Any two of them together look almost exactly the same, but gradually, as the film is unreeled, the picture takes shape and a story is told.

My task was to set together from hundreds of sayings and facts the picture that told a story, the story of Poland now, as it stands on the brink of war. But my picture is made with words, with ideas as well as scenes. It must be shown with footnotes, because always it deals with the Why as well as the What and How. Not only what people think, what they say, and what they do, but why they say it and think it and do it.

I thought that I was acquainted with Poland and its people, but there were two things I did not know or expect to find: the degree to which its past is mixed with and part of its present, and the absence of signs to show the greatness and nearness of danger. The use of words like 'storm' and 'abyss' and 'tension' had created in my mind the thought of clouds and darkness, the visible tokens of coming disturbance, and their physical effect upon man and beast. Instead, the land was smiling in the brightness of northern summer. The plants of the earth were growing, and everywhere men and women went on with the business of life, in the field and town or city. Here and there, of course, there were soldiers marching, or guns on trucks in a siding, or a bayonet on a war-loan poster. But those were the only signs, and all my pictures were taken in clear, warm, peaceful light, with no sounds of thunder or tempest to warn of the wrath to come.

II

'The Poles are Slavs with brains, but the Russians are only Slavs,' said the man at the County Fair. The air was heavy with heat and the odors of animals, and a moment before he was reckoning the weight of a steer which he wished to buy, but suddenly, so strange is the magic of words, I was back in a café in Paris, long ago before the war, with my friend, Ignace Pilinski, the first Pole I ever knew.

'The Poles are Slavs with hearts, but the Russians are only Slavs,' I quoted mechanically, for that was one of Pilinski's favorite sayings.

The dealer looked at me in surprise and twitched at his rainbow tie. 'With brains *and* hearts, you are right, but . . .'

'And what about Germans?' I asked.

He spat on the dusty grass. 'We will smash them,' he said, 'like flies. With the Germans we have a long score, and now comes the time to pay. The Germans' — his voice rang scorn — 'we smashed them before at Tannenberg, and now we shall smash them again.'

I stared at him. 'Tannenberg? But Hindenburg won that battle, from the Russians in '14.'

'At Tannenberg, in fourteen *hundred*, the Polish Army defeated the Teutonic Knights, and . . .'

'Oh yes, of course,' I gasped, 'but wasn't that long ago?'

He replied in a firm voice, 'We beat the Germans then, and now we shall beat them again.'

At the Fair there were scores of prizes, for livestock and butter and eggs and honey and jams and vegetables and fruit, and then there was one chief prize for the best exhibit of all. It was won by a great black bull, and the owner's little daughter, a plump child of ten with fuzzy hair, stepped out to receive a blue ribbon with a gold star which the leading local magnate, who looked like Don Quixote, pinned on to her yellow frock.

'What's the bull's name?' I asked her.

She said, 'It is Jan Sobieski,' then added something which I did not catch, and everyone applauded. A Boy Scout touched my arm. 'The girl say her Mister Bull,' he told me in labored English, 'he have name of Jan Sobieski who save Vienna from Turks as we save Europe from Germans.'

'The child said that?' I asked. 'As you save Europe from Germans?'

'Yes, that is why people shout. They glad for Jan Sobieski and that we save Europe from Germans.'

The idea of Poland's mission seems general and deep-rooted. For instance, the boy from the Air Academy just home in Warsaw on leave, the first time since the end of March. He was young and handsome and gay, with life like a cup in his hand, and the world at his feet to play with, but I knew that his chance to be alive at Christmas was one in a hundred, if war came. When I said, rather desperately, 'There must be some way out — some compromise, I mean. If the Germans would agree . . .' he cut me quickly short: 'You cannot *trust* the Germans. Look how Prussia betrayed us in 1790 to Catherine of Russia. And Hitler's just the same. I mean at the end of April, when in ten words he tore up a treaty of peace which he'd promised to keep for ten years. And what he did to Prague, after giving his word at Munich. But we are Poles, not Czechs, and we know that the Germans must be stopped, now, before they go any further. Their aim is to dominate Europe, and if others don't know it, we do, and are ready to fight their battle.'

'No, I don't agree with Remarque,' said my friend the Polish reporter, and drummed his knuckles on the café table. 'I'm sorry they've burned his books, but I don't really think he was right.'

I'd been speaking of the passage in *All Quiet on the Western Front* when the French and German soldier in the shell

hole agreed that men of the people were everywhere much the same and would all be friends if once they could win themselves free from the slogans their masters had taught them.

'Remarque may have thought that was true, but it is not true about Poland. The Germans are not our friends. No Germans are our friends. Perhaps once, but not any longer — we know our friends and foes. Our enemy is Germany, which wants to steal Danzig from us and the Corridor, although both have really belonged to Poland since . . .'

'Oh yes,' I nodded wearily. 'They were yours five hundred years ago and so you must fight for them now.'

'That is just what I mean. In 1526 the frontiers of Poland were . . .'

'Why always bring in history? Americans never think . . .'

'Of course, you can't understand. But did you ever reflect that United States history began when Poland's history ended? Almost year for year, when you began we ended, and Poland had no history. There was no Poland at all while your history was being written. Don't you see what that means to us? Shall I say that Poland was dead — and came to life again? Can't you see that its life must resume from the point where it had stopped? Can't you see what Danzig means and why we must either fight or let Poland sink back to the grave?'

I pondered that conversation and thought that it told me much, that perhaps my friend was saying what the others all tried to say. And although the sky was clear, there was this sign of coming storm, that everyone talked of the war and all used much the same terms, as if — which was doubtless true — their minds were all keyed to the same pitch by a single tension. For instance, the cadet's phrase, 'We are Poles, not Czechs.' I heard that on every side, and always it was spoken with finality, as a decisive fact which made further argument needless.

III

We were sitting after dinner on the terrace before the house. The night was very still, and we watched the moon rise through the trees across the lake.

'So peaceful,' said my host, 'but . . . yes, I have it here.' He took from his wallet a faded snapshot of the building behind us gutted by fire, with black smoke marks on the columns and a dead horse with stiff legs in the air at the very place where we sat. 'The Russians did that,' he said, 'in the retreat from Lemberg. Everything was destroyed, all the furniture and books and the family portraits and relics. Just like my mother's home — she was American, you know — I mean her old home in the South. This house had been burnt before in the war with Sweden, the year Charles XII was beaten at Poltava. But that is Poland's fate and now — is it coming again? No, not fate,' he added reflectively, 'but geography. Poland's place on the map between Russia and Germany, without any natural barriers. That is why we're a fighting race; we had to fight to survive.'

I scarcely heard what he said because my mind was ablaze with excitement. 'That is it,' I cried. 'Like the South! The parallel is exact — I mean the romantic . . .'

'Except that we Poles were more fortunate — for once. The war was a new beginning and we have rebuilt our house.'

The parallel is not exact, but there is much of the South about Poland. Its reverence for old memories, for chivalry and tradition, so stressed that tradition seems to have taken the place of reality. You feel that the conditions of which the Southerner speaks can never have really existed. The South he tells of is a dream country and he is living in that dream, which is the product of his compensation for defeat. There is much of this about Poland. There has been, not for two

generations but for six, a romance Poland, a Poland of tradition, where men were brave and courteous and women were fair and kind. And the peasants knew their place and sang and danced on the old plantations, and 'God's in his heaven: all's right with the world.'

It is partly the universal dream of 'the good old days' before the War, the Revolution, or the Depression, a childhood dream or throwback fantasy, — whatever you care to call it, — escape mechanism or release from present care. And sometimes nations dream it, like Poland or the South. Because in it there was truth, and its glory and sweetness were real, at least in part, and their memory shines more brightly by contrast with the defeat and sorrow in which their country perished. Of course the Poles are romantic, incredibly so. More romantic than *Gone with the Wind*, or is that not real too, as D'Artagnan was real and Robin Hood and Don Quixote?

The old priest shook his head. 'Yes, the Boy Scout movement is good, but I'm not so sure of the teaching. It is not the same as in the old days.' I thought he was deploring the lack of religious education, and said something of the sort.

'Oh no,' he replied, 'I don't mean that at all. But teaching of Poland's history — why, I'm sure that most of these youngsters hardly study it at all. In the old days it was different.'

And then he went on to speak of this educational work, in which the Church took the lead. It began, he said, in the middle of the last century, during the 'Dark Years' which followed the abortive revolts, when Poland's oppressors were trying to stamp out the national spirit and language. What he said was the key to the riddle which had puzzled me before, why the man in the street and the peasant on the farm think and speak in historical terms as readily as statesmen. The priest now made it clear, as he told how leagues were formed for the 'underground' teaching of Polish language and history. 'All over the country, mind you, every schoolteacher and the young men and women who had received a good education — all of them joined the movement. There were scores and hundreds arrested, but that only made them more eager. And the children learned so quickly. It shows that a child will learn anything if it holds his interest. It wasn't like work any more, but a game full of secrecy and excitement. And always,' he added proudly, 'the Church played a very large part. Because we were close to the people and shared their inmost thoughts. Our enemies tried hard in different parts of Poland to change our people's religion, or to use it for their ends — the Lutherans in the West, and the upper clergy of the Orthodox Church in Russian Poland. But, although I shouldn't say it, our priests were first Poles and then priests.'

It was cool under the green arbor of the little restaurant by the river near the big open-air public baths. An old man played an accordion and a few couples danced without enthusiasm on the bare earth floor. They drank beer and brought their own food, coarse hunks of black bread with cheese or onion, not meat. The proprietor looked discouraged. 'As you see,' he answered glumly when I asked how business was. 'They want the new music nowadays — a phonograph or nickelodeon, as they used to call it in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, when I worked in the coal mine. Or like that over there' — he pointed to a more flashy establishment across the road where a loud-speaker blared out jazz music.

The accordion player laid down his instrument, drained his glass, and nodded his head. 'Yes,' he said, 'they don't care for the old tunes nowadays, but when I was young I remember . . . Ah, yes, I made a good living in those days, all over the country.'

'At fairs?' I asked.

'Not only at fairs, but everywhere in the villages. At harvest time it was best, but Christmas and Easter were good too.'

I offered him more beer and he told a rambling story of the lonely Polish villages where the people had no amusements, not even a place to meet, except in church on Sundays and the little village inn, and the square before it in summer. They played no games in those days and had no village hall or cinema, nor any money to speak of. They danced, he said, for hours, and at intervals someone sang, and all of them sang in chorus. There were storytellers too, but that was a different thing.

So this was the pattern, woven clear by two old men, which led to the source of Poland's universal patriotism. In the old days Poland's weakness was the gap between rulers and people. There was really no middle class, and until the nineteenth century the gentry could say, as they did, that they were really Poland. Between 1840 and 1900 an enormous change was accomplished, and the people, even the poorest and most illiterate, were brought to share the glories of the past and to feel that they who owned no worldly goods yet had part of a priceless possession.

It was not the priests alone, but the youth of the upper classes who led the patriotic campaign. The element of danger, and the feeling of a subject race that it was outwitting its masters, sent young men and women by thousands to what would now be called propaganda work. In the towns it was organized through student bodies, musical associations, and the so-called welfare societies. In the village the church and the schoolhouse were centres of the movement. In village and town alike, popular fondness for singing and dancing was used as a powerful lever. The old man with his accordion and his predecessors, the flute players and pipers, the fiddlers and tellers of tales, had done more, perhaps, to kindle and feed the flame of Polish patriotism than the great revival of national literature in the middle of last century, which, great as were its effects, reached only a small part of the people.

Another factor which tended to spread patriotism in the villages was the 'decay,' in a material sense, of noble families, who slid gradually down the scale of property until all over Poland to-day there are bearers of ancient names who own farms so small that there is no standard of comparison in America except the 'poor white trash' in the South. These Poles, however, did not think of themselves and were not thought of by their neighbors as 'trash.' They cling jealously to their titles and coats of arms and still refuse to intermarry with more prosperous but low-born farmers. Despite their poverty, they were and are the leaders in the villages, and thus have transmitted direct the tradition of glory and patriotism — of 'our,' the gentry's, Poland — to the peasant masses whom their ancestors had regarded as little more than cattle.

IV

'I'm less afraid here than in Paris,' said the woman. 'Here they don't talk of air raids so much, but I suppose there is just as much danger.' She was manageress of a store that sold peasant pottery and carving and handwoven linen, a branch of one of the big coöperatives which encouraged handicraft in the villages.

'But I thought you'd just come from Paris,' I said. 'Weren't you telling me about the big order you'd received and that you were afraid the war would begin before you could deliver it? The air-raid scares in Paris were last year, at the time of the Crisis.'

'They keep talking about it all the time, and downstairs in every house, outside the lodge of the concierge, there are plans of the cellar and how to reach it in

case of alarm, and the addresses of shelters and first-aid stations. So everyone there is nervous, but here . . .' She smiled. 'I suppose they take some precautions, but the Pole says, "Who cares? If it comes, I can't avoid it."'

'Slavic fatalism,' I murmured, 'the Russian *nichevo*.'

'Oh, it's more than *nichevo*. There's no language in the world which has so many ways as Polish of saying, "Who cares?" or "What of it?" or "A man can only die once." Perhaps the French and the English have more to lose than we have. Or their lives are more secure. But the Poles think only of to-day and have no care for the future.'

I could not let that pass. 'They think of yesterday, too. I've never heard so much history as in the last four weeks.'

Her face changed. 'That's different,' she said seriously. 'That's Poland's past, not our own. We don't think lightly of Poland.'

She was certainly right about air raids. It is a burning topic in Paris and London, and the newspapers are full of it. But in Warsaw and Polish towns the subject was hardly mentioned, and then what you generally heard was what *we* will do to Breslau or Königsberg or Danzig — and to Berlin as well, which, as everyone said, is much nearer the Polish frontier than Warsaw is to Germany. For good or ill — call it insouciance or boasting, as you please — I found no trace of defeatism anywhere in Poland. To hear the people talk, one might think that Poland, not Germany, was the great industrial colossus. And men said, as if they meant it, 'Don't forget, one Pole is worth three Germans' — a phrase I had not heard since the days of 1914, when the English still believed that one of their volunteer soldiers was worth three German conscripts.

I said as much one day to a Polish professor, who shook his head rather sadly. 'It is good that my people are brave, but they are also reckless. The trouble with us has been that we don't say such things without meaning them. We really believe they're true. How often has Poland paid dear for attacking a stronger enemy, or fighting against great odds!'

All the same, it was refreshing after the panic-mongering of London and Paris and their seeming willingness to leave all initiative to the Axis Powers.

'Of course, the feeling exists, but it's very much less than it was. We've the Germans to thank for that.' The speaker was a rabbi in a small Jewish community near Warsaw. 'The Poles,' he continued, 'have become very anti-German; there's a boycott of German goods and German films and even the German language. Now nothing to-day is more German than anti-Semitism. So even those circles in Poland which were most against the Jews have dropped it like hot iron. What is more, there's a double reaction. Perhaps it's the first time in history that my race shares Polish sentiment wholly — the common hatred of Germany. I could tell you dozens of cases. Not only the Loan, of course, although more Jewish money has gone to the recent war loans than was ever subscribed before. But individual cases. I know of an old Jew whose son was mobilized not long ago. It had been a grief to the father when his son was called for military service, but this time the old man went with him to the depot and handed a gold cigarette case to the officer in command. "I give you my only treasure for Poland," he said, "as well as my son."

'And thousands of our girls have volunteered for the "Woman's Auxiliary Service" which is being organized to replace men called to the colors or drafted for special work in the factories and mines. Some of them even have military training — not, I think, to fight, but for sentry and police duty guarding bridges and warehouses in the areas behind the front. I never expected,' he added thoughtfully, 'to see Jewish girls volunteer for an organization controlled by the Polish

Army. When young men were called as recruits, they always tried to avoid it, but now you could almost say they have joined the colors as eagerly as the Poles.'

'Are the Poles really eager?' I asked. 'Don't they know what this war will be like?'

'My brother is employed at one of the central depots, and he said that of seventeen thousand men called up there only thirty-three were missing, and of these two had died, and in five of the other cases relatives came instead and said their brothers couldn't be reached and offered to take their place.'

I heard similar figures elsewhere, surprising as it sounds. On the other hand, the Polish Army has good food, clothing, and quarters, which means much in a country as poor as Poland, where probably a third of the population gets less than it wants to eat. Then, too, soldiers are well treated to-day in Poland, — there seems no doubt about that, — infinitely better than in Russian and German armies of the old days. Before the World War, the day on which recruits were called up was a day of mourning throughout Poland. It now is a celebration, with music and flags and song.

V

In the inner yard of a post office not far from the centre of Warsaw they are building an air-raid shelter to hold several hundred people. So one of the workers told me as we stood talking while a patch of concrete was drying. He was savagely patriotic and yet sharply opposed to the government. 'I'm a Socialist,' he said, 'and have been for fifteen years — joined the party when I finished my army service. This country is governed all wrong; it's a dictatorship without a dictator — or with two of them, if you like, because the Marshal and the President run it all between them.'

I had heard the same thing before. As one of the editors of a Warsaw newspaper put it, 'Marshal Smigly-Rydz and President Moscicki are like the two Consuls in Rome in the days of the Republic, with the important difference that there are no Roman Senate and no Tribunes to act as a check on them.' The worker, however, thought that Marshal Smigly-Rydz carried more weight than the President. 'What about Colonel Beck?' I asked.

He shrugged his shoulders disdainfully. 'I suppose he's all right now, and of course his last speech was fine — a good strong soldierly speech, and just what the country wanted. But before we were not so sure; he'd played too close with the Germans.'

'But that was Pilsudski's policy,' I said, 'since the pact of 1934.'

The man's face grew bright. 'The old Marshal — he was different. If only we had him now! He made that deal for Poland's sake and for Peace. And besides,' — he lowered his voice, — 'if the French had been willing to fight before, there'd be no German danger to-day.'

It is widely believed in well-informed circles in Europe, and the report has never been successfully refuted, that after Hitler came to power, early in 1933, Marshal Pilsudski proposed to France to clip his claws by force, or at least by an armed demonstration, but the offer was refused.

'But Pilsudski made himself dictator,' I objected. 'Is he not the real founder of the present régime?'

'That was different too, Parliament had broken down into dozens of little groups, and all of them squabbled and argued all the time and left the country's business undone. It simply had to end — the old Marshal understood that. But he was a true democrat, he was, as well as the greatest soldier and patriot that ever lived. And a true Socialist at heart — you know, he founded our party. The country would stand anything from him, but these others . . .'

He checked himself, and added more slowly: 'Did you know that none of the Opposition parties would vote in the last elections? The Parliament we have now doesn't represent the people, but only the bosses, the landowners and bankers and big boys, who've feathered their nests when the rest of the country is so poor. Just look at the municipal elections last December where the voting was free: the Opposition won twice as many seats as the Government, and it would be the same in Parliament if they changed the electoral law.' Again he paused, then continued, 'I mean, if there wasn't going to be war — that is, if there was no German threat and everything was peaceful. Of course now we're all for the Government and there can't be a thought of a change. It's the same with the Peasant Party. They are Opposition too, but Witos, their leader who recently came back from exile, makes nothing but patriotic speeches.'

'You think there is sure to be war?'

'Not a doubt, unless Hitler pipes down, and there isn't much chance of that. We'll never surrender Danzig. They say it's a German town, and there was a time when I thought an arrangement might be made, — before March, that was, — but now . . . well, now we all of us know the way Hitler acts and what his word's worth. It isn't Danzig really, it's the whole Pomorze [Corridor] they want, and that was always Polish; there was always a Polish majority — even Germans can't deny that. So we'll fight to keep hold of Danzig if it takes the last man in the country. I'm mobilized myself, for that matter — have my uniform ready at home and wait orders at any minute. There are lots of us like that, of the older classes. We were ordered to join, and did, at the end of March, you know. Then later the men with jobs were released and some of the farmers too.'

In Warsaw I met an elderly man who once had been attached to a geological mission in Khiva, the oldest city on earth, in the Central Asian desert. He had worked out a theory that the Aral Sea and the Caspian and the Black Sea were originally one ocean until it broke through the Dardanelles into the Mediterranean and left the Caspian and the Sea of Aral high and dry, or anyway drying, in the desert. And if somewhere they dug a canal . . .

I found it rather confusing, but the geologist had a plan for a canal somewhere out in the desert, to make it green and fertile and blooming like a rose. And he said, 'When the war is over, perhaps I can go back to Russia and put my plan before them. I have heard that they want a canal, and I have all the figures prepared. Perhaps Stalin himself would be interested — after the war.'

'Do you like the Russians?' I asked.

'Oh no — you see, I am Polish. But I hear that they want to reclaim the desert, and of course they will need help, so I . . .'

'Doesn't Poland need Russian help — if war comes?'

'You mean, against the Germans? But that is a different thing. We will fight this war for the Russians, really, because Germany wants Russian oil and wheat and iron. Of course the Russians *should* help us, with whatever they —'

'Send an army, you mean, to Poland?'

'Oh no, not Russian troops. Why, I've seen . . . in 1920 . . . and before that in Rumania. But supplies and munitions and things . . . perhaps airplanes. Yes, they could fly over; I have heard they can make long flights.'

That is another point about which all Poland agrees. They don't want Russian troops on Polish soil. Here old memories join with new, and priest and soldier, worker and peasant, have each of them their reasons.

'Atheists and enemies of God,' says the priest.

'We have not forgotten 1920,' says the soldier.

The workers tell you that their Socialist party, under the leadership of Pilsudski, professed Marxian revolutionary doctrines, but its action was direct and militant on national lines — the fomenting of strikes, sabotage, and revolt against foreign, especially Russian, domination. Some add that in recent times Stalin has gone further from Marxism than Pilsudski ever did.

The peasants are still religious for the most part. In addition, the basis of Polish land tenure is family ownership, whereas Russian villages under the Czar owned the land in common and allotted it to successive holders at frequent and regular intervals.

As one man the Poles believe that the presence of Russian troops would not be a temporary measure, but an end to Polish independence, for which they are ready to fight.

I talked with dozens of soldiers, from General Sikorski, former Premier and War Minister, to privates in the ranks. From them all I select three examples to complete the picture of Poland on the brink of war.

One soldier said, 'The army *is* Poland. In the old days of "gentry" rule, they all were trained to arms, and fought as well as governed. That is true of our leaders to-day. Pilsudski was a soldier and his successors are soldiers. Now, on the eve of war, it is not timid elderly civilians who are facing Hitler and Göring with umbrellas, but men with swords, like Smigly-Rydz and Beck, who shared their dead Leader's revolutionary "underground" activities and are familiar with crowd psychology, conducted guerrilla warfare and pitched battles, have known adversity and success, and cannot be bluffed or bullied. Poland's fate is already in the hands of the army, which must bear the responsibility for decisions now and bear the brunt of the fighting later.'

Another soldier said, 'The trouble with the Poles is that they talk too much and always passionately believe what they are saying while they say it. Their self-confidence verges upon boasting, their courage tends toward recklessness, and their chivalrous refusal to brook an insult or leave a challenge unmet makes them quarrelsome. Amongst the masses even wedding parties rarely end without broken heads. But the basic principles of military training are discipline, coolness, and restraint. The army teaches the hot-headed Poles to control themselves and to understand that action is more important than talk.'

The third soldier said, 'You say you are always hearing the phrase, "The Poles aren't Czechs." You ask how the army interprets it. We mean that the Czechs didn't fight, and look what happened to them. Perhaps they wanted to fight, but they didn't fight. Maybe England never promised them support and France was lukewarm and Russia was an unknown quantity — whereas we are in a different position. England and France are pledged to help us, and perhaps there will be a pact to bring in Russia, too. But what I tell you is this, that if England walks out and France lies down and the Russians stay home in their mud, then *we* will fight by ourselves. Our leaders are soldiers, not politicians or professors. They won't be sold down the river or frightened by their enemies or fooled by their so-called friends.

'You say that what strikes you most in Poland is how its past is mixed up with its present, and how its history has become an integral part of its life. That is right. And history has taught us hard lessons, much harder than those of any other nation. The last ones we learned quite lately, from Munich and then from Prague. So now you know what we mean when we say, "We are Poles, not Czechs."'