

Sikorski, Wladyslaw Eugeniusz

(1881--1943), Polish general and statesman. After the Germans invaded Poland in September 1939 and World War II broke out, Sikorski fled the country as head of the Polish government-in-exile. He was also named commander in chief of the Polish armed forces in November 1939.

From 1940--1943 Sikorski served as Polish prime minister and Chief of General Staff. He devised Poland's war objectives, planned the deployment of Polish troops outside of Poland, and organized a resistance movement inside occupied Poland. In statements made in 1939 and 1942, Sikorski described his plans for the future of Poland: he hoped that changes would be made after the war, making Poland more like the democratic countries in the West. In July 1941 Sikorski signed a diplomatic agreement with the Soviet Union. However, the Soviets broke ties with Poland in 1943 after Sikorski demanded that the International Red Cross be allowed to look into the murder of thousands of Polish officers on Soviet soil (see also Red Cross, International).

Sikorski did not always have a positive attitude towards European Jewry. However, on several occasions, he condemned the annihilation of the Jews and unsuccessfully begged Western leaders to take a stand against the murder.

Sikorski was killed in a plane crash in July 1943.