

= Jan Mazurkiewicz =

Jan Mazurkiewicz (27 August 1896 , Lwów ? 4 May 1988 , Warsaw) , nom de guerre Radosław , was a Polish soldier , veteran of World War I , and a colonel in the Polish anti -@-@ Nazi resistance Armia Krajowa (AK) during World War II . He was one of the main commanders of the Warsaw Uprising , where he led the Radosław Group (Polish : Zgrupowanie Radosław) , part of Kedyw , which was one of the best armed and trained insurrectionist units in the Uprising .

After the war Mazurkiewicz was persecuted by the Soviet @-@ led communist authorities of the People 's Republic of Poland , kept for two years in pre @-@ trial jail , tortured and sentenced to life , despite the fact that he tried to cooperate with the new regime . He was rehabilitated after the end of the Stalinist period in 1956 and became active in the official veterans ' organization Society of Fighters for Freedom and Democracy (ZBoWiD) . He was eventually promoted to the rank of general of the Armed Forces of the People 's Republic of Poland (LWP) . He died shortly before the fall of communism in Eastern Europe .

= = Early life and World War I = =

Mazurkiewicz was born in a craftsman 's family in Lwów . His father died in a fire in 1905 . He spent his childhood in Złoczów and attended a gymnasium in Lwów . He was a member of Strzelec and then of the Polish Legions in World War I. He was a private in Józef Piłsudski 's First Brigade and fought in the Battle of Łowczówek on 25 July 1914 , where he was wounded and taken into Russian captivity . He soon escaped and rejoined his unit . In 1918 , he took part in the Battle of Kaniów as a unit commander , while serving under General Józef Haller .

= = Second Polish Republic = =

During the interwar period of the Second Polish Republic , he was promoted to the rank of captain , but left active service between 1922 and 1927 . Right before the outbreak of World War II (1938 ? 1939) , he served as an instructor at the Centrum Wyszukolenia Piechoty w Rembertowie (Center for Infantry Education in Rembertów) , where he taught military tactics to future company commanders .

= = World War II = =

In August 1939 , Mazurkiewicz was assigned to the Diversionary Operations (Grupa Operacyjnej Dywersji) of the Polish General Staff , which was involved in counter @-@ intelligence against Nazi Germany particularly in the Free City of Danzig . After the German Invasion of Poland and the imminent collapse of Polish defenses in mid @-@ September , following plans made before the outbreak of the war , he organized Tajna Organizacja Wojskowa (Secret Military Organization , TOW) , an underground group dedicated to sabotaging and resisting the German occupation . He journeyed to Paris , where he met with General Władysław Sikorski , the Polish prime minister in exile , who officially sanctioned the formation of TOW . In Hungary , Mazurkiewicz subsequently organized a cell whose purpose was to serve as a transit point for soldiers and couriers traveling between occupied Poland and France . He returned to Poland in June 1940 .

In March 1943 , TOW was officially merged with Kierownictwo Dywersji (Directorate for Diversion) , or Kedyw , which was the group within the general anti @-@ Nazi organization Armia Krajowa (The Home Army , AK) , charged with carrying out sabotage , propaganda , intelligence gathering and direct action against the Germans . Mazurkiewicz was the second in command of Kedyw (its head was General Emil August Fieldorf) until August 1944 and the outbreak of the Warsaw Uprising .

= = = Warsaw Uprising = = =

Shortly before the outbreak of the Warsaw Uprising in 1944 , Mazurkiewicz was made commander of the Radosław Group . This force was one of the largest , best trained and equipped Polish units in the uprising . After the initiation of the uprising , the unit seized major portions of the Wola suburbs , and subsequently defended it against German attacks carried out by troops under the command of SS Gruppenführer Heinz Reinefarth and Standartenführer Oskar Dirlewanger . One of the battalions of the group , Battalion Zośka , liberated the Gęsiówka concentration camp located within Warsaw , and freed 384 prisoners (mainly Jews) , most of whom then joined the unit . The Radosław Group fought its way to Stare Miasto (Warsaw Old Town) borough , when further defense in Wola became impossible . In the areas of Wola that Reinefarth 's and Dirlewanger 's troops recaptured from the insurgents , at least 40 000 civilians and prisoners of war (POWs) were murdered in the Wola massacre .

Despite being severely wounded in the head and leg during his escape from Wola , after a short stay in a hospital , Mazurkiewicz was put back in charge of the Radosław Group . He led an unsuccessful attempt in early September to evacuate to Śródmieście (City center , Warsaw) after Stare Miasto was overrun by German troops . After this failed , his group managed to make its way to the Czerniaków suburb where it tried to contact the First Polish Army under Soviet command , stationed on the right bank of Vistula . Since no help was forthcoming from the Soviet -controlled Poles , Mazurkiewicz and his unit made their way through Warsaw 's sewers to Mokotów , the last center of resistance in Warsaw , in late September . There , the remains of the decimated group , including the Parasol and Czata 49 battalions , fought until the surrender of the Polish forces on 2 October . Shortly before the order was signed , Mazurkiewicz was officially promoted to the rank of colonel , by General Tadeusz Bór Komorowski , the commander of the uprising .

According to the capitulation agreement , the Polish Home Army soldiers were to be treated as regular POWs and the civilians of Warsaw evacuated . Mazurkiewicz disbanded his unit and together with his wife Anna , who was a member of the Radosław Group , escaped the city by posing as a civilian .

= = In communist Poland = =

In 1945 , he was arrested by Urząd Bezpieczeństwa , the Polish communist secret police . He decided to cooperate with communist authorities in order to protect former members of resistance and he called for ex -AK soldiers who had joined the anti -communist underground to lay down their arms in accordance with the amnesties of 1945 and 1947 .

In 1949 , Mazurkiewicz wrote a letter to Stanisław Radkiewicz , head of the Ministry of Public Security , complaining of the continued persecution of former Home Army soldiers and he was arrested again . During a two -year pre -trial confinement , Mazurkiewicz was interrogated and tortured ? he was beaten and his teeth and hair were forcibly pulled out . He was eventually sentenced to life imprisonment in a show trial , in which the prosecutor submitted a false confession allegedly made by Mazurkiewicz and no defense witnesses were allowed to appear . He remained imprisoned until the amnesty of 1956 . Eventually rehabilitated , he was active in organizations which sought to protect former veterans of anti -Nazi resistance and served as vice -president of the Society of Fighters for Freedom and Democracy , the Polish veterans association . In 1980 , during a brief liberalization associated with the first Solidarity period he was promoted to the rank of General .

He died in May 1988 , about a year and a half before the first postwar non -communist government was elected in Poland , and was buried at Powązki Military Cemetery .

= = Honors and awards = =

Gold Cross of the Order of Virtuti Militari , previously awarded the Silver Cross
Cross of Independence with Swords
Cross of Valour ? eleven times
Warsaw Uprising Cross (1981)

