

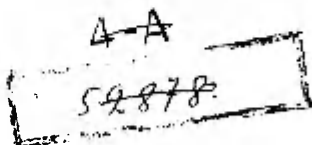
BRITAIN AND THE BALTIC

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BY

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"THE MEDITERRANEAN AND ITS PROBLEMS," ETC.



WITH FIVE MAPS



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To

MY AUNT

MARY ANNE POLSON

WHO, IN SEPTEMBER, 1914, CROSSED THE ENEMY
MINEFIELDS OF THE BALTIC AND THE NORTH
SEA ON HER RETURN FROM THE BALTIC
PROVINCES OF RUSSIA TO HER NATIVE LAND

INTRODUCTION

THE following pages are based on observations made on two journeys in the Baltic area, the first in Finland and the Baltic States during the summer of 1927, and the second in Germany, Poland, and Danzig during the winter of 1928-9. As this particular area contains several dangerous situations which will in the future play an important part in the destinies of Europe, I have tried to explain them in some detail and to show their significance in the maze of European politics.

In this book I make a plea for less talk, less pens, ink and paper, and more reality in dealing with international questions; and I do so because I believe that the Great War has left many of us in a realm of fanciful dreams, building castles in the air and feasting our eyes on idealistic conceptions which are unlikely ever to take permanent concrete form. After the greatest war in history it is in the nature of things that this should be so, but we must re-orient our minds and let true facts be our only guide. Our generation bears a great responsibility towards those who come after us, and it is our duty to mankind to make every effort to dispel the confused mirages that dazzle our outlook upon post-war Europe, and to look into the future with a penetrating objectivity based on the grim tragedies of the past and hard realities of the present.

The future will demand that many of our ideals of the last ten years be jettisoned and that many of our most cherished hopes be shattered. Many of us are doomed to bitter disappointment and disillusionment. But perhaps this may prove to be our salvation. The future peace of Europe depends, not on the theories of philosophizing professors, nor on the countless resolutions of pacifist societies, but on the constant and determined endeavour of our

statesmen, diplomatists, and men of affairs to see things as they really are, to see human nature as it really is, and to mould their policies in accordance with hard facts, stern probabilities, and the principle that modern war is fatal to every moral and material interest of the nations that take part in it.

It is a profound mistake to imagine that what is termed 'the new diplomacy' is any different from that of former times. Diplomacy may change its outward appearance by adopting a new outer casing for its machinery, but the fundamental principles remain the same—every nation for itself, policies based on national interests, and concessions only regarded as objects of legitimate exchange. If we delude ourselves into thinking that the nations of Europe can be influenced to settle their differences against their respective material interests, we are building up a rotten foundation of peace which will bring about the collapse of all that is built thereon. Peace cannot be assured until it is based on purely practical policies, until it is in the material interests of the respective nations to maintain it, and until the interests of Europe as a whole become the chief concern of the nations that form its component parts. Peace on these lines will take a long time to establish, but it will be worth while to concentrate our efforts on building with sound material.

For detailed information with regard to Treaties and fundamental questions of fact, I have drawn upon these excellent works, *The History of the Peace Conference of Paris* and the *Survey of International Affairs*, issued by the Royal Institute of International Affairs, by whose courtesy I am able to reproduce a map of the Baltic area. I am also indebted to *The Times* for permission to use certain of their maps.

In the spelling of place-names, where there are usually two and sometimes three different spellings, it is difficult to be consistent throughout. The spellings now adopted in the countries concerned usually differ from those found on most maps, and are little known to the world in general; yet it is only right that these new spellings should be recog-

nized as soon as possible. I have, therefore, adopted the following compromise : while in general questions of international and historic interest I have adopted the spellings most widely known, in the chapters dealing with certain countries in particular I have used those favoured by the Government concerned, and I have added foot-notes where there is likely to be confusion.

My thanks are due to a large number of diplomatists and others, in London and in the various countries which I have visited, who have assisted me in the collection of material and have been kind enough to grant me the necessary facilities for accomplishing my task. I am also deeply grateful to my wife for her most valuable help during all stages of the work in England and abroad.

E. W. POLSON NEWMAN

WARSAW, 1929

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(Reproduced from the Survey of International Affairs, 1920-3, by courtesy of the Royal Institute of International Affairs.)

¹ *These three maps are reproduced by courtesy of "The Times."*

BRITAIN AND THE BALTIC

CHAPTER I

THE BALTIC: YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY

THE Baltic is usually associated with the Midnight Sun, with eternal daylight, with sharp, invigorating air, and with the healthy smell of pine forests. To those who inhabit more southern lands it is regarded as an ideal place for summer rest and recreation. The Norwegian fiords, the forty thousand lakes of Finland, the old Hanseatic cities, and the more modern capitals attract travellers from all parts of the world, who return home laden with reindeer horns, hunting-knives, and block amber. To them there is a strange romance about the Baltic. Visions of the hardy Vikings who roamed the seas before William the Conqueror set foot in England, of the Danes who figure so prominently in the early pages of English history, and of the victorious armies of Gustavus Adolphus, make it impossible to forget that throughout history the Baltic countries have played a prominent part in the destinies of Europe, and of these islands in which we live. Petrograd stands as a monument to the efforts of Peter the Great to introduce into Russia the civilization of Western Europe; Helsinki,¹ guarded by the ancient fortress of Sveaborg, recalls the bitter struggles of centuries between Sweden and Russia; Tallin² and Riga stand for the power and prestige of the German Order of Teutonic Knights; and Stockholm is one of the most beautiful cities in the world. Scarcely less imposing is Copenhagen, while

¹ Helsingfors in Swedish.

² Formerly known as Reval.

Königsberg and Danzig carry the mind back to the days of mediæval commerce, when the Hanseatic League carried their trade into foreign lands under the banner of the Cross and the Sword. British trade with the Baltic ports has been of importance since the earliest times, and a visit to the docks of Newcastle or Hull is sufficient to show that it is still of importance to-day. As time passes, the Baltic countries are all, with the exception of Russia, looking more and more towards Great Britain; for they believe that in this direction lie their chief interests. Politically, economically and strategically, they believe that the British nation is the surest and safest friend in case of need. British policy, dictated by common sense, appeals to these northern peoples much more than it does to the more logical nations of the south; London is regarded as a financial rock little affected by the world's economic upheavals; and the power and efficiency of the British Navy is an object of the highest respect by these seafaring peoples. Each year our ships of war make a cruise through the waters of the Baltic, and there are few sights that give more satisfaction in the northern capitals than that of the white ensign fluttering in the breeze. The sight of a British battleship or cruiser gives the people a certain feeling of security. They find it difficult to imagine that Great Britain will not stand by them in case of need, and they hope that in time some assurance will be forthcoming. They know that British interests in the Baltic are considerable, but fear that the English people are too wrapped up in their own imperial affairs to show much concern in what happens north of the Kiel Canal. Yet they keep on hoping that one day Great Britain will awaken to her northern responsibilities, and that she will then respond to the silent appeal of those smaller states which have no sheet-anchor other than the League of Nations.

Apart from the contrast between the Slavonic and non-Slavonic races, there is no great racial clash on the shores of the Baltic. The Swedes and the Danes belong to the same Teutonic race as the Anglo-Saxons. On the other hand, the Finns, to whom the Estonians are closely allied, belong to

the Finno-Ugrian race which came originally from the banks of the Volga ; the Latvians are of Aryan descent and Indo-European origin ; and the Lithuanians have from the earliest times inhabited the shores of the Baltic between the Dvina and the Vistula. But if there is no great clash of races, there is a muddle of languages which more than makes up for it. The Baltic is a perfect babel of strange tongues, few of which are intelligible to the ordinary European. While Sweden, Norway and Denmark have undergone little change since pre-war days, the countries on the east of the Baltic have passed through a period of linguistic revolution, and Finland in the north and Poland in the south have been faced with new problems calling for a re-orientation of their linguistic conditions. In countries where formerly German and Russian were the languages of commerce newly revived languages are strongly encouraged at the expense of the more practical means of conversation, with the result that the stranger is completely bewildered by the confusion of tongues with which he is surrounded. And what is more, these peoples are very susceptible. No Finn will talk Russian if he can help it, and there are exceedingly few Finns who have a knowledge of the Russian language ; few Estonians care to speak German ; and very few of either race can speak French. But there is now a great liking for English, specially in Finland and Estonia, and the tendency is to substitute English for German in the state schools. Poland, the new arrival as a state on the Baltic shores, is a babel of tongues unto herself. Polish, Russian, German, French, Ruthenian, Lithuanian, Czech, and Yiddish are all spoken in the new Poland, restored from the territory of the former German, Russian, and Austro-Hungarian Empires ; and, although nominally French is recognized as the second language of the country, the fact remains that Polish is the only tongue that is readily understood in the course of ordinary travel. But if these lands of strange tongues have complicated the progress of the traveller, they have contributed more than their share to education and learning. The universities maintain a high

standard, higher than exists in most other countries, and a doctor's degree obtained at Upsala, Tartu,¹ Helsinki, or Riga represents more than an equivalent degree in most of the better known seats of learning farther south.

In the matter of religion the honours are divided between the Lutheran, Greek Orthodox and Roman Churches. While Poland and Lithuania are Roman strongholds, the Lutheran cult practically has the monopoly in Sweden, Finland and Denmark, and has a strong following in Estonia and a part of Latvia. The Greek Orthodox faith, which was the national church of Imperial Russia, is nowhere predominant, but exists as a minority in many of the Baltic countries, where the gilded domes of its church buildings are still conspicuous to the obvious annoyance of the local inhabitants. In modern times Rome has made little headway in the North, and in the countries where she has the smallest foothold there is a little prospect of her being able to advance her position. In material progress the Scandinavian countries and Finland have come to the fore in many departments of human activity; and it is only natural that the new states bordering on Russia should be unable to show the same progress as their neighbours. But the Baltic has undergone a great transformation since the Great War, and it is reasonable to suppose that the next ten years will see changes no less remarkable than those of the last decade.

In looking at the Baltic to-day it would be a great mistake to forget the Baltic of yesterday, and to fail to realize that Sweden has undergone no material change for centuries and is the country of the greatest stability in the whole Baltic region. With her ancient traditions, her advanced culture, and her dignified prestige, Sweden stands to-day for all that is best in human civilization. Her past history shows her valuable contribution to the evolution of modern Europe, and her stable policy of peace makes her a bulwark of strength in an atmosphere of political uncertainty. As it is difficult to understand the situations that have developed in the Baltic without some knowledge of a country

¹ Formerly Dorpat.

which has played so significant a *rôle* in peace and in war, I propose to give some account of Swedish achievements during the time of her greatest activity.

The sixteenth century was the age of Sweden's re-birth, and the line of the Vasas, which then ascended the throne, was one of the most celebrated and gifted families known to history. The name of Gustavus Vasa stands out prominently amongst the great rulers of the world, and his services to Sweden marked a turning-point in the evolution of the nation. He rallied a half-annihilated people; he freed Sweden from her political dependence on Denmark, her economic dependence on the Hanseatic cities, and her ecclesiastical dependence on the Papal powers. The traces of nearly a century of warfare were obliterated by a newly awakened and peaceful industry; and this Scandinavian people became for the first time in history a distinguished member of the state system of Europe. Thanks to his personality, Gustavus Vasa won the undisguised reverence and love of his people. In spite of a certain vehemence of temperament and an excessive patriarchal omnipotence, 'Good old King Gosta' was regarded as an ideal monarch both by his contemporaries and by posterity; and, although his name is less familiar to foreigners than those of his successors Gustavus Adolphus and Charles XII, it has by no means been overshadowed by them in the memory of the Swedish nation.

In 1544 Gustavus succeeded in making the kingdom of Sweden hereditary in his family, and a hereditary kingdom at that time conferred the right to a share in that kingdom upon the younger sons of the royal house. This gave rise to internal feuds among the descendants of Gustavus Vasa, and it took the wisdom of Charles IX, another ruler of the first rank, to restore stability. For several years before his accession to the throne Charles was the virtual ruler of Sweden, and it was he who brought about the definite victory of the Reformation over Roman Catholicism; while under his son, Gustavus Adolphus, the division of the kingdom among the royal princes was discontinued, and a new principle, laying down the individuality of the state,

removed one of the strongest possible barriers to any form of national union.

Immediately after the middle of the sixteenth century, Sweden embarked upon the acquisition of territory on the other side of the Baltic. As a consequence of the Reformation the states east of the Baltic, which had been established on a Catholic foundation, fell to pieces; and from the year 1561 the adjoining countries began to contend with one another for the prize. Sweden could not permit this territory to fall into the hands of Russia, nor of Poland, which was under the sway of Roman Catholicism, nor of Denmark, whose aspirations lay in the restoration of the Scandinavian Union from which Sweden had but recently broken away. Hence, chiefly out of consideration for her own safety, the Swedes were compelled to seize as large a share as possible, which led to the great conflict for the mastery of the Baltic, and carried Sweden both to the summit of her greatness and to the brink of destruction. The mastery of the Baltic was considered to be a necessity for Sweden at a time when trade routes led more often over sea than land, and when it was much easier to travel from Stockholm to Riga than from the Swedish capital to the provinces of Småland or Västergötland. But the more immediate consequences of all these new complications did not develop till the next epoch of Swedish history—the period that begins with the accession of Gustavus Adolphus to the throne and ends with the death of Charles XII. Compared with the stirring period of the Union, the sixteenth century did not bring to light many great personages outside the reigning house, and advance on the cultural side was not so considerable as on the political and economic sides. It was not until the following century that the great work of the period in the spiritual world, the reformation of the Church, was realized in its true significance.

In order not to break the thread of Swedish history, it is usual to regard the beginning of the period of Sweden's political greatness from the accession of Gustavus Adolphus in 1611, although it ought more correctly to be dated from his appearance on the theatre of the great European war

in 1630. During the seventeenth century, which played so important a part in the whole history of Europe, the rulers of Sweden were Charles IX; Gustavus II Adolphus; Axel Oxenstierna, the head of the regency during the minority of Queen Christina; Christina as a ruling sovereign; Charles X Gustavus; the regency during the minority of Charles XI; Charles XI as a ruling sovereign; and Charles XII. The history of the world cannot often show such a series of great personalities as successive leaders of the destinies of a single nation. It is only the second regency that gives an impression of insignificance, and the period of its rule marks a noticeable weakness in an otherwise brilliant picture. The personality and fate of Gustavus Adolphus and the story of Sweden during his reign belong to world history, and they are more generally and better known than are the events of any other period of Swedish history. His appearance on the scene of the Thirty Years War was as much a measure of self-defence on the part of the Swedish nation against the far-reaching plans of Wallenstein and the Roman Catholic princes who were trying to obtain the mastery of the Baltic and its shores, as it was a magnanimous assistance rendered to the German co-religionists of the Swedish people. The victory of Breitenfeld at once raised Sweden to the position of a Great Power. Although her newly won position was subsequently threatened by the death of the king on the field of Lützen, it was saved by the political genius of Axel Oxenstierna and the military exploits of the Swedish generals which, even during the latter phases of the war, assured for Sweden a more important position than is acknowledged in some quarters. At the close of hostilities Sweden was master of the mouths of all the German rivers and of the greater part of the shores of the Baltic; and, almost at the same time as these events, she succeeded in acquiring the provinces of Sweden proper,¹ which had hitherto belonged to Denmark or Norway. The acquisition of these provinces, which increased the Swedish population by about one-third and gave the country its present natural

¹ Skåne, Halland, Blekinge, Gottland, Bohuslän, Härjedalen, and Jämtland.

boundaries, was a gain of the greatest political importance. Moreover, of all the lands won in her period of political greatness these are the only provinces that Sweden still has in her possession.

In 1658 the Swedish power had reached its culminating point. Even after some territory had been given up a few years later, Swedish dominion embraced the whole of Sweden and Finland, as well as Estonia, Livonia, a part of Ingria, Hither Pomerania, Wismar, Bremen, and Verden, making a total of about half a million square miles. Yet the Swedish Empire was rather a geographical expression than a state with natural and national boundaries. Modern Sweden is bounded by the Baltic ; but during the seventeenth century the Baltic was merely the bond between her various widely dispersed dominions. Stockholm, the capital, lay in the very centre of the empire, while the second city, Riga, was situated on the other side of the sea, and this vast empire contained but half the population of modern Sweden. These extensive wars and the newly acquired position of a Great Power had a considerable reaction upon the internal conditions of the country. Increased relationships with foreign peoples exerted a strong influence on Swedish intellectual culture, which was promoted to a high degree and fostered by the enlightened monarch Gustavus Adolphus, by Axel Oxenstierna, and by Charles XI. But Sweden's prestige as a military Power was purchased at the price of heavy economic sacrifices, and it was with the greatest difficulty that the common people could bear the heavy burden of taxation and the continual demands of the military levies. The nobles enriched themselves by means of the war, and increased their power as well as their material wealth. Imposing castles, filled with foreign loot, sprang up in all parts of the country, and the fiefs which the nobles received as payment for their services in the war made them masters of an ever-increasing share of the land. Indeed, things came to such a pass that Charles XI introduced a measure whereby the estates of the nobles obtained in this way reverted to the Crown ; and this economic revolution

completely broke the power of the nobility and practically transformed its members into a nobility of state officials. At this time sweeping changes were also made in the form of government. Gustavus Adolphus prepared, and Axel Oxenstierna carried out, the reform of the administration which ensured national unity. The monarchy was supported by a powerful council, composed of the chief representatives of the highest noble families, thereby creating a well-organized ruling body based on a corporate system. The balance of power within the state was for some time disturbed owing to the great wealth of the nobles and the increased influence acquired by the council during the long regencies ; but royal power had everywhere emerged from the Thirty Years War with increased strength, and it was impossible that Sweden should remain untouched by this movement in favour of royal absolutism. The great depression which followed the wars undertaken by the feeble regency during the youth of Charles XI aroused much ill-will against the Council and the nobility ; and the forcible measures found necessary for the salvation of the country could not be carried out without a royal autocracy, which in these circumstances almost assumed the character of a Roman dictatorship. Indeed, about 1680, absolutism was embodied in the constitution under Charles XI, but it did not involve the abolition of the Riksdag, although that body was never once summoned even by the succeeding monarch.

The position in the political system of Europe attained by Sweden was of the greatest importance in the history of her cultural development ; but, as this position was out of all proportion to the size and material resources of the nation, it was only natural that it should be of brief duration. The downfall occurred during the reign of Charles XII, as a result of what is usually known as the Great Northern War (1700-21). The great military efforts of this monarch, which in the end were directed against the whole of Northern and Eastern Europe, gained for himself and for Sweden the general admiration of the civilized world ; and the devotion of the Swedish people to their leader was remarkable in

adversity as well as in success, in spite of the almost super-human demands made upon them. The struggles and sufferings of Sweden and Finland during this period are, indeed, among the most stirring incidents in history, although there was never much doubt as to the final issue of a conflict with such superior forces. By the peace treaties that followed Sweden lost her possessions in the eastern and southern Baltic, with the exception of the most northerly part of Hither Pomerania and the town of Wismar ; and the south-east part of Finland also had to be given up. Sweden had then ruled in Estonia for about a century and a half, in Livonia about a century, and about sixty-five years in Southern Pomerania. Although these periods are short in the history of nations, Swedish rule left its traces and was remembered with gratitude by the lower classes of the population, which at that time suffered so much from oppression at the hands of others. The well-ordered Swedish administration was taken as a model by Prussia and Russia, who succeeded as the possessors of these Baltic countries ; and the nobility of Livonia was chiefly indebted to the political education they received from the Swedes for the influential position which they afterwards attained in the history of Russia throughout the whole of the eighteenth century.

The death of Charles XII in 1718 was the occasion of a fundamental change in the form of the Swedish Government. The unrest caused by the misuse of royal autocracy during the period of the Great Northern War was so general and deep-rooted that Sweden lost no time in rushing to the other extreme, and became subject to a Riksdag possessing power not only over the legislative but also over a great part of the executive. The Riksdag still consisted, as it had done for many hundred years previously, of four Estates—the Nobility, Clergy, Burghers, and Peasantry. Of these the Nobility, especially the numerous class of the lesser nobility, now acquired the greatest influence ; and gradually the greater part of the power of the Riksdag came into the hands of a Committee, on which only the first three Estates were represented. Indeed, the royal power became a mere

shadow, and for half a century Sweden was virtually a republic ruled by an oligarchy. This was a peculiar phenomenon at a time when royal absolutism held sway in all the states of continental Europe. There is no doubt that the Government of Sweden, during this so-called 'period of liberty', suffered from serious defects, of which the most sinister was the general corruption that prevailed towards the close of this period, recalling the state of affairs which had existed a little earlier in England under the government of Walpole; and this was specially dangerous in Sweden, as it was to a large extent due to the activities of foreign Powers for the promotion of their own interests. Yet it was here that Sweden had the opportunity of learning her earliest lessons in constitutional government, and in this she preceded all other European nations with the exception of Great Britain. Indeed, if the Swedish form of government has now attained a high degree of constitutional maturity, this is due in no small degree to the experience gained during these early days of danger and difficulty.

If this period of the predominance of the Riksdag was significant for the important progress made in political development, it was equally remarkable for a revival in economic and scientific directions; and Sweden, deprived of her former influence on the military and political destinies of Europe, flung herself with youthful enthusiasm into the progressive pursuits of peace. The name of Linnæus, the botanist, outshines all others, but Sweden at that time also produced chemists, such as Scheele and Bergman; physicists, such as Celsius; and general scientists, such as Swedenborg, who in most departments of knowledge was far ahead of his time. While Alströmer was busy laying the foundations of Swedish industrialism, Dalin was engaged in introducing modern Swedish as a literary language. But further political changes were forthcoming; for in 1772 Gustavus III abolished by a *coup d'état* the form of government already described, and introduced a constitution, in which the royal power was considerably extended without going to the length of absolute autocracy. The country was tired of party strife and attached itself with confidence

to the king, who had imbibed the doctrines of the age respecting enlightened despotism, and governed well for some time in accordance with the spirit of those doctrines. But he soon involved the country in difficulties, owing to his lack of ability in financial matters, and he knew no other means of meeting growing opposition than a war with Russia, which certainly strengthened Sweden's position *vis-à-vis* this powerful neighbour. But, in order to break down the opposition of the irritated nobility Gustavus had to resort to another *coup d'état* in 1789, when he nearly re-established the autocratic form of government, a legacy which was inherited by his son Gustavus IV Adolphus, one of the most ill-fated sovereigns who ever had the guidance of Swedish destinies in his hands. His fanatical hatred of Napoleon, whom he believed himself called upon to overthrow, caused the great French leader to incite Russia against Sweden; and the war of 1808-9 brought about the loss of Finland, a country which had so long faithfully shared the fortunes of Sweden and had thereby gained a share of the culture of Western Europe. As result of this disastrous campaign, it became necessary to depose the king by means of a military revolution, in order to save the kingdom from ruin; and the new constitution then drawn up by the Riksdag has remained in force to this day.

The Constitution of 1809 has given Sweden over a hundred years of internal and external peace, with great material and intellectual development under the protection of a constitutional form of government. With the first years came notable events in the sphere of foreign politics. Sweden participated in the war of liberation against Napoleon (1813) and, thanks to the personal qualities of Charles John, the heir-apparent, played a very important part. Then in the following year came the union with Norway. While helping in the struggle against Napoleon, Sweden had obtained the promise of a union with Norway in compensation for the loss of Finland; and Charles John had obtained the consent of Denmark by force of arms. Norway, however, took another view of the matter, and ignoring this arrangement adopted a very democratic constitution

of her own, with Christian Frederick, the Danish *Stadholder* and heir-apparent, as her king. But Charles John was too strong for Christian, whose abdication led to the recognition of the union by the Norwegian Storting, and Charles XIII was chosen to be king of the united monarchy. On the conclusion of peace with Denmark, Sweden handed over to that country, in compensation for Norway, her last remaining possessions on the other side of the Baltic—the northern part of Hither Pomerania; and since that time these two nations inhabiting the Scandinavian Peninsula, sheltered from sudden invasion, have pursued a strictly defensive and peaceful policy.

For several decades 'the Scandinavian Movement' gathered strength and expressed itself in an endeavour to unite more closely the three Scandinavian peoples, Swedes, Norwegians, and Danes, first in a political sense and afterwards in cultural and economic respects. While the chief benefits are to be found in the sphere of jurisprudence, the legislations being in many cases identical, the new movement also had an important influence on literature, science, and art. In 1865 important changes took place in the composition of the Riksdag. The Four Estates were abolished and replaced by two Chambers in accordance with modern parliamentary methods, this change being completed in 1909, exactly one hundred years after the first establishment of a constitutional form of government. The union between Sweden and Norway never fulfilled the expectations of its promoters, although the defects of the Treaty of Union might have been remedied by good will on both sides. Unfortunately there was a good deal of mistrust, which showed itself in many directions, including the question of a combined scheme for Scandinavian defence and that of foreign representation. The conflict came to a climax on the question of parity in the conduct of foreign affairs. The Norwegians demanded their own minister of foreign affairs, their own envoys, and their own consuls in foreign countries, and their obstinacy in the face of all Swedish proposals pointed to the fact that they were really aiming at the dissolution of the union. On the 7th June,

1905, the crash came, and King Oscar's Norwegian Ministry renounced in revolutionary fashion their allegiance to their sovereign. The deed was done, but it was necessary that bloodshed should be avoided and that Norway should clothe her dissolution in a more respectable form. Negotiations were accordingly opened at Karlstad, where the legal instrument was drawn up, and the dissolution of the union of Norway and Sweden became *de jure* as well as *de facto* on its confirmation by the Swedish Riksdag in accordance with certain conditions laid down by the Swedes. Among these stipulations was an arbitration treaty and the establishment of a neutral boundary zone, in which the recently erected Norwegian fortifications were to be dismantled. The methods adopted by the Norwegians to bring about the dissolution of the union led to a powerful national movement in Sweden, and the years that have elapsed since the separation of the two countries have shown an increasing activity in the spheres where Swedish spiritual and material life differed most from that of her western neighbour. In recent years Sweden has enjoyed an increasing prosperity, she has been spared the ordeal of the Great War, and she has not failed to profit thereby. She has encouraged the rise of many new branches of industry; she has done much to improve her means of communication; she has given a great stimulus to popular education; and she has given to the world scientists and explorers of considerable distinction. Sweden, like the two other Scandinavian nations, has during the last few generations entered into far more intimate connection with foreign countries than was possible with the imperfect means of communication of former times. Moreover, new ideas and movements reach the shores of Sweden as quickly as those of any other nation; and it often happens, indeed, that it is from the North that new ideas emanate. But, if Sweden has prospered through a long period of peace, she has also developed certain tendencies scarcely conducive to the maintenance of national strength. The Swedes are fond of luxury, and their policy of 'progress in an atmosphere of peaceful prosperity' leads them to try and avoid any

action that might threaten to disturb their comfortable ease.

In the past Swedes have always been distinguished for soldier-like qualities, and the history of Sweden's wars is one of the most brilliant chapters in the history of the world. In spite of a century of peace, there is reason to believe that these qualities still exist ; for scarcely a war is waged in any part of the world without a considerable number of Swedes volunteering for service, and reflecting credit on the country to which they belong. Humanity is a prominent feature of the Swedish character, as is shown by the treatment meted out by the Swedes to other nations. Wherever Swedish rule has been exercised, as in the Baltic Provinces, in Pomerania, and elsewhere, it has left behind it pleasant memories of a rule of justice and humanity, which has never attempted to despoil or to oppress, but has endeavoured, as far as possible, to develop and raise its subject peoples. Another aspect of Swedish humanity is the decided aversion shown by most Swedes to all kinds of litigiousness. In no country is so little sympathy shown to insistence on mere legal rights, as opposed to what is equitable and fair. The Swedes have also a considerable gift for organization, due to the stability which the structure of Swedish society has exhibited for generations ; and joined to this is a rare capacity for obedience without sacrificing personal dignity, and an equally rare capacity for command without the arrogance so often associated with this quality. There are many young Swedish engineers abroad who have hundreds or thousands of workers under them, and who, by quiet tact and a judicious blending of firmness with moderation, obtain from their subordinates that willing obedience which smooths the relations between employer and employed and produces work of the best quality. Swedes are known for their courtesy, their readiness to do anything to oblige, and their hospitality. On great occasions they love magnificence and pomp, and are rather inclined to lapse into rhetoric. Indeed, their social etiquette is one of the most complicated in Europe to-day. But the most deeply seated feature of the Swedish character

is a passionate love of nature. It is this quality that has given birth to Sweden's great scientists, her inventors, and her explorers; but it has also diverted attention from psychological questions, and therefore cuts both ways. This strong attachment to nature, which in certain cases leads to licence and coarseness, is nevertheless the vital source of the health and vigour of the race, which has even defied the wanton recklessness that in Sweden often plays havoc with the energies of body and soul. Light-hearted recklessness is, indeed, one of the greatest weaknesses of the Swedish character, but it cannot be denied that peoples so constituted often display a greater vitality than nations of the cautious, thrifty type.

Sweden is the most ancient kingdom in the world, and has never, as far as history records, been subjected to foreign domination; indeed, owing to her remote position, she has kept herself tolerably free from foreign influences. She has known neither feudalism nor serfdom; her legislation has been but slightly affected by Roman Law; she has been less deeply influenced than most other nations by the Roman Catholic Church; and she has had but a brief experience of absolute monarchy. As the Swedes have preserved their Aryan descent purer than any other race, one might naturally expect a very original culture, though possibly accompanied by that stagnation to which isolated nations are peculiarly liable. The originality certainly exists, but not quite to the extent that one might expect, while the stagnation does not exist at all, except in the form of a type of conservatism also characteristic of the British people. The explanation of this is to be found in a certain trait inherent in the Swedish character—a keen interest in all things foreign. This interest, which has caused the Swedes rather to over-estimate things from abroad and to under-estimate their own productions, has often tended to check the full growth of national individuality; but, on the other hand, this keen interest in all things human has saved the Swedes from sticking fast in ruts, and has to a great extent warded off the dangers associated with a position of isolation.

THE BALTIC : YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY 17

The history of Sweden from a social point of view presents features of great interest, inasmuch as it is the record of an evolution on an exclusively Teutonic basis unaffected by the influence of Roman culture or the theories of Roman Law, which made so marked an impression on the continent of Europe as a whole. The oldest Swedish community knew of no other legal distinction among its members than that of thralls and freemen ; yet even at that time there were wealthy and powerful families from which a nobility could easily develop. After the introduction of Christianity, another form of aristocracy arose in the shape of the Catholic priesthood, with its claims to a legally recognized status ; and during the thirteenth century social conditions became crystallized. The ancient state of thralldom ceased to exist, although it was not until the beginning of the following century that it was entirely abolished. The new Estates, on the other hand, were now recognized by law, while the personnel of the Catholic Church formed a privileged class of the community. About forty years later, a legally acknowledged temporary aristocracy came into being, and every man who agreed to serve as a mounted soldier was exempted from all ordinary taxation. In this way an aristocracy of service rather than of birth was constituted ; but, as birth, wealth, and service under the Crown were generally enjoyed by the same individuals, this may be regarded as the beginning of an hereditary nobility. By this time the larger towns had also begun to detach themselves as distinct communities with their own constitutions, and the burgesses became a class by themselves. The Fourth Estate was formed of peasant proprietors, who constituted the bulk of the remainder of the population.

In the fourteenth century, the aristocracy took advantage of the great unrest and general lawlessness to seize all the power they could in the body social, and tried to introduce into Sweden the contemporary principles of feudalism. The peasantry, however, succeeded in averting this danger by rising in arms, and the vigorous national movement that followed raised them to a position of political importance unparalleled in the history of that time. Although a check

to the independence of the peasantry was given by Gustavus Vasa, their legal and social status was definitely secured, and as the Swedish Diet (Riksdag) became more firmly established it was impossible to exclude the peasant class from representation. The reform of the Church and the confiscation of its lands overthrew the ecclesiastical aristocracy; while new Protestant clergy became one of the Four Estates of the Riksdag, in which they always supported the lower classes against the nobility.

The Estate of the Nobles, which was materially weakened as long as Gustavus Vasa was on the throne, became all the more influential during the wars which followed. Nobility became a mark of royal favour, and the Estate became a close, hereditary caste, with great legal and actual privileges, although the nobles were at the same time required to take a real share in the government of the country and in the great tasks resulting from Sweden's entry into the arena of European politics. It was during this period of Sweden's greatness that the nobility reached its zenith, when everything that was brilliant and remarkable was the property of the First Estate. Indeed, it may be said that there are few countries whose nobility possessed such an excellent record as that of Sweden at this period, when valuable services were rendered, and there were few encroachments at the expense of the other classes of the community. Yet it must not be imagined that the position attained by the nobility in the seventeenth century was not burdensome to the other Estates. The immunity of the nobles from most ordinary taxation was a heavy burden on the rest of the population, which fell heaviest on the peasants, who were brought to the verge of social and economic ruin. The peasants, however, were rescued by the king and by the Riksdag, in which they had the support of the clergy and the burghers against the nobles. A series of struggles followed, lasting for more than thirty years (1650-82), after which Charles XI succeeded in introducing a measure for the forfeiture to the Crown of the vast areas of land which had been given away or leased to the nobility under previous monarchs. The greater part of the forfeited

estates passed later into the hands of peasant proprietors, whereby this class gained so firm an economic position that the effects of this land reform policy are distinctly noticeable in Swedish political life of the present day. The nobility, on the other hand, became divided into the higher and lower aristocracy and, although they formed a very numerous but comparatively impoverished class, they were willing for the most part to obtain a livelihood by filling posts in the public service. But Charles's land policy did not put an end to the quarrels between the Estates in Sweden. They burst out again in the eighteenth century over the privileges enjoyed by the nobility, especially their exclusive right to higher government appointments and to the possession of privileged land. Gustavus III brought about a further social reform in 1789, when a large number of privileges were abolished in exchange for the acquiescence of the other Estates to the introduction of a short-lived absolutism, and such privileges as still remained were voluntarily given up by the nobles after the revolution of 1809.

The Estates had lost their legal and social importance, although they survived as political units until 1865, when this time-honoured division of the Riksdag was supplanted by two chambers with proportional representation. In Sweden a titled nobility still exists, but as a corporate body it is only concerned with the administration of joint funds, and additions to its ranks are of rare occurrence. The last relic of ancient social conditions, exemption from taxes, was withdrawn in 1892, and from that time forward it may be said that the struggle between the 'Estates' was replaced by a struggle between 'Classes'. Since 1866, when the method of representation was altered, the class of peasant proprietors has had a very large share of political power, and it is significant that the Swedish peasants have exercised this power themselves, and not through representatives chosen from other classes of the community. Strained relations between the different social classes have always been modified by that human quality which is characteristic of the Swedes; hence, all the dissensions that have occurred have been less violent than in most other countries. It is

perhaps nowhere so easy to rise in the social scale as it is in Sweden, which is chiefly due to the fact that higher education is almost free and open to all. About 25 per cent of the pupils at secondary schools are the sons of peasant farmers or artisans, and about half the total number belong to the lower classes of the population. As many of the finest men in Sweden can trace their origin back to the lower classes of the community, either directly or with the intervention of one or two generations, the 'upper' and 'lower' classes are strongly united by the very closest of all ties, that of blood. But this has not prevented class distinctions from being artificially accentuated by the so-called 'labour movement'. The quite natural endeavour of manual labourers to improve their condition from a political, economic, and social point of view, has by means of socialistic theories and trades unionism led to a widening of the gulf between them and other classes of the community. Class warfare, and its immediate expression, general strikes, have consequently been adopted in Sweden as elsewhere in the hope of fulfilling aspirations that are visionary and utterly devoid of sense. But as far as communism is concerned, I do not think the Soviet will quickly forget the sound 'telling off' which King Gustav gave the Russian Envoy on the occasion of their last attempt at propaganda on the Swedish coast.

If I have devoted a good deal of space to the subject of Sweden and her past history, it is because Sweden must play a most important *rôle* in the future destinies of the Baltic, and this fact is insufficiently realized in this country. Our knowledge of the Swedes and their capabilities is very restricted, and it is seldom that the eyes of the British public are turned northwards. At the time of writing there are indications that something may occur to flood this part of Scandinavia with British limelight; and if this does occur, the near future will see the popular press of these islands overflowing with information and trivialities about Sweden and the Swedish people. Should the British public be led to take a strong human interest in King Gustav V and his royal house, and should they be thereby encouraged to learn

something of the subjects of this descendant of Bernadotte, Marshal of France, it will be a great source of satisfaction throughout the entire Baltic and will be a substantial benefit to those countries, which have hoped in vain for British interest since the end of the Great War.

Prior to 1914 the Baltic Sea had been dominated by two Great Powers, Germany and Russia, although occasional visits of the British fleet reminded the world that the Sound and the Cattegat were not closed to ships of war. The whole continental coast, however, had been under Russian and German sovereignty, while the Scandinavian states on the opposite side had safeguarded their independence for a century by a policy of abstention from international complications. The general status of the Baltic basin had been regulated by two international instruments: a Treaty signed in 1907 between Great Britain, France, Germany, Norway, and Russia, which aimed at securing the integrity of Norway, which might have been threatened, after the separation of that country from Sweden in 1905, by Russian ambitions to possess an ice-free port on the open sea; and a Declaration signed in 1908 by Denmark, Germany, Russia, and Sweden, with a view to maintaining the territorial *status quo* in the Baltic.

By the beginning of 1920, the war and the Russian Revolution had brought about a complete change in the political status of the countries bordering on the eastern and south-eastern shores of the Baltic, which affected the whole international situation in that area, including the position of the Scandinavian states of Sweden, Norway, and Denmark. The German Navy had almost ceased to exist, while the Baltic coast of the former Russian Empire had passed into the possession of five new states—Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland—the actual coastline of Russia being now confined to the eastern end of the Gulf of Finland, with the ports of Kronstadt and Petrograd. At the same time, the new arrangements for Danzig and Memel had interested Great Britain and France in these waters, while the Kaiser Wilhelm Canal at Kiel had been opened to the commerce and warships of all nations. The

Scandinavian states, which had succeeded in preserving their neutrality during the war, had emerged from it without any serious change. Norway increased her territory by the acquisition of the island of Spitzbergen in 1920, and in the same year Denmark benefited by the acquisition of North Slesvig. It was hoped that the result of the Slesvig plebiscite would be to remove what had been a constant cause of international friction since 1866, and the Danish Government showed great discretion and moderation throughout the affair. They made every endeavour to treat in a most conciliatory manner the comparatively small number of Germans who were incorporated in Denmark as a result of the plebiscite ; but, unfortunately, certain nationalist elements in Germany showed a disposition to keep the wound open. Since then, however, there has been a great improvement on the German side, and this increase of territory has in no way involved Denmark in the general current of affairs in continental Europe. Sweden, on the other hand, became involved in a controversy with Finland over the question of the Åland Islands, while all three Scandinavian countries would have become implicated in the problem of the Russian border, if they had established any form of *entente* with the new states on the east coast of the Baltic, either through the formation of a Scandinavian *bloc* including Finland or through the entry of the Scandinavian countries themselves into a general Baltic Union. Both these combinations were suggested at the time, but the Scandinavian countries preferred to retain their previous character of minor states of Western Europe without continental commitments, and to look for support from the League of Nations rather than in any local system of alliances.

A tendency towards a political association of the Scandinavian states had appeared during the war, when they had been brought into closer contact with one another by their common neutrality ; but attempts to maintain this association in any formal way after the war were unsuccessful. All three nations preferred to pursue their independent policies, although there did remain a tendency to co-operate

in certain matters. In Norway there was a continuance of the strong nationalist spirit that had led in 1905 to the disruption of the union with Sweden, and it was even suggested that the old Norwegian possessions of the Farøe Islands and Iceland should be returned to Norwegian sovereignty. This is a good illustration of how the doctrine of self-determination might be used to upset past settlements of territorial questions, but fortunately this claim was defeated by circumstances. Iceland, which had long enjoyed extensive home rule under the Danish Crown, had attained the formal status of an independent sovereign state under the Danish-Icelandish Treaty of the 30th November, 1918, although the conduct of her foreign affairs remained in the hands of Denmark. On occasions when the flags of all nations are displayed there is usually one that defeats most people : it is that of Iceland, which is the Norwegian flag with the colours interchanged.

The many and great changes that have taken place in the map of Northern Europe as result of the Great War and the Russian Revolution have given rise to a Baltic situation, comprising a series of international questions of the first magnitude, which is engaging the serious attention of the Scandinavian and Baltic countries, even if it is receiving little consideration from the British public. But the fact that the British public is not particularly interested in what is taking place, or is likely to take place, in the Baltic region by no means implies that this comprehensive question does not concern Great Britain. It is not only of the greatest importance to our maritime interests in the Baltic, but it seriously affects our Continental policy and directly concerns the prospects of European peace. The advent of the Soviet *régime* in Russia, the independence of Finland, the establishment of the new Baltic States, and Poland's access to the sea, have given birth to such complicated questions as those of Vilna and the Polish Corridor, both of which threaten the peace of Europe ; while most of the new states bordering on Russia are submitted to a varying degree of pressure, internal as well as external.

The background is, as before, to be found in Russia, where

there is in force a political system which bewilders those who try to analyse its true significance. Revolutionary in its methods and Russian in its inconsistency, this strange *régime* has for eleven years dominated 130 million people spread over an area of 7 million square miles. From Archangel to Baku and from Petrograd to Vladivostok this revolutionary philosophy, giving rise to the most grotesque and unbalanced policies, has ruled supreme ; and there is as yet no sign that holds out any reasonable prospect of change. To gain anything approaching an accurate insight into the present conditions of Russia is almost impossible, and it is as dangerous to generalize on the subject of this vast area as it is to study the reports emanating from the Tass Agency in Moscow and from the news factories of Tallinn and Riga. The conditions existing in the Ukraine may be separated from those prevailing in Northern Russia by a gulf no less great than that which separates the south of Spain from the north of Scotland ; and it is a known fact that the communications in the interior of Russia are so bad that while in some parts corn has to be used for fuel through want of wood, in others the people are reduced to eating the bark of trees through the failure of the local harvest. Russian news is a commercial commodity as well as a political instrument. The Russian Foreign Office co-operates when it is in its interests to co-operate, with the Third International to give the world such news as is considered beneficial to Russia and the progress of communism ; while the foreign news merchants in the Latvian and Estonian capitals vie with one another to produce the most saleable material for press consumption.

Yet, in the matter of general Russian policy, I am inclined to believe that Russia has not changed fundamentally, but that the present *régime* is merely another name of wielding power in a country where some form of autocracy is a fixed political precept. As far as foreign policy is concerned, I think that the same principle holds good and that we should regard that policy as Russian rather than Bolshevik. The Russians are simply making use of the fact that Bolshevism is a political power in their country in order to pursue their

ordinary and time-honoured lines of foreign policy, and there is little doubt that Russia must always play the same *rôle* in international affairs, irrespective of the form of government prevailing in Petrograd or Moscow, as long as her geographical integrity remains unimpaired. It is, indeed, a fallacy to imagine that the re-establishment of an imperial *régime* would to any great extent modify the position of Russia *vis-à-vis* the nations of Europe and Asia. While Russian foreign policy has its well-defined objectives in Southern Europe, in the Persian Gulf, in India, and in the Far East, it is only necessary to consider that policy in so far as it concerns the Baltic. Russia has been deprived of the important Baltic ports of Tallinn, Riga, and Libau, on which, under pre-war conditions, she largely relied for her export trade in the west ; and a glance at the map is sufficient to indicate the political position of the new countries in which these ports are situated. Although at present Russia is economically diseased and has little need of Baltic ports, there is no reason to believe that this will always be the case. It may be that the Russians have learnt nothing from their past fatal mistakes, and that they would, at some opportune moment, try to reconquer their lost territory south of the Gulf of Finland. It is difficult to see a real necessity for this, although it may seem logical on paper ; for, even without overrunning Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, they can use the ports of these countries with great advantage, as these new states have been far-seeing enough to grant Russia all imaginable facilities to use their ports and railways for commercial purposes. It is a mistake to conclude that the Russians necessarily contemplate a course of military aggression. They have other weapons at their disposal. By invoking the aid of the Third International they can try to oppose the endeavours of these new countries to settle down to peace conditions, and can pursue a policy tending to bring them into conflict with one another.

Russia was really a state composed of several nationalities rather than a national state ; and the crystallization of the various constituent elements, which had been going on

prior to 1914, received a great stimulus with the progress of the war. In the matter of national consciousness, the border peoples were at very different stages of development, and the course of the war intensified the national and separatist feeling of those who suffered severely from the fighting in that area; so that the establishment of the Soviet Government and the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk became mere signals for the disintegration of that part of the Russian Empire, which was facilitated by the victory of the Allies on the Western Front.

We will now turn to the position of the northern countries against which Russia may have aggressive designs in some form or another.

CHAPTER II

THE NEW FINLAND

OF all the northern countries that became independent as result of the Great War and the Russian Revolution, Finland is the most remarkable and the most progressive, which is chiefly due to the fact that, as an autonomous Grand Duchy, with her own institutions, her own language and her own culture, she was in a very favourable position to start life as an independent sovereign state. Finland was never a Russian province and, in the Russian sense, she was never a part of the Russian Empire. The feudal system never existed within her frontiers, and agriculture has throughout the ages been almost entirely in the hands of independent peasant proprietors. Indeed, about ten years ago the large estates did not exceed 8 per cent of the total area under cultivation. Hence, national independence, so severely encroached upon in practice, if not in law, during the Russian *régime*, has become almost a religion among the people ; and Finland, having thrown off any Russian influence that existed under the Grand Duchy, is now progressing fast in the most auspicious circumstances. While the former Russian provinces on the eastern shores of the Baltic had to contend with an antiquated land system based on the feudalism of the Middle Ages, and were at first quite unprepared to deal with the immense problems arising out of their independence, Finland was at that time almost fully equipped for the independent development of a system free of the encumbrances of the past. Separated from Scandinavia by the Gulf of Bothnia, and by the Gulf of Finland from the European mainland, Finland now occupies an independent position in the Baltic. First under Sweden and then under

Russia, the Finns have trod a thorny path ever since the Middle Ages, while the geographical position of their country made it for centuries a buffer state and the cockpit of Northern Europe. Hence Finland has produced a virile race with staunch qualities and well-defined characteristics, which are the direct result of the difficult conditions imposed upon the people from the fifteenth to the twentieth centuries.

From the fourth to the ninth centuries the Finnish nation was in the process of formation out of the original Finns who had immigrated from the area of the Volga, and during the period commonly known as the 'Viking Age' there was an extensive migration of Swedes to the country; so that the Finnish people really emerged from a blending of the original inhabitants of the Finnish peninsula, Finns who had worked their way northwards from the Volga region, and Swedes who had come as colonists from across the Gulf of Bothnia and settled on the coast. The next element to influence the Finns was that of religion, which took the form of three Swedish 'Crusades' beginning in the twelfth century, which were intended to put a stop to the piratical expeditions of the Finns, and at the same time to spread the Christian faith amongst the followers of a pantheistic religion. This religion, which included worship of the dead and the spirits of nature, forms part of the theme running through the great national epic, the 'Kalevala'. The first Swedish military expedition in 1154 was undertaken by Eric IX, accompanied by the Bishop of Upsala, whose successor seems to have planned the establishment of some kind of ecclesiastical state directly under Papal jurisdiction; the second crusade in 1249 brought all the west of Finland under the power of Sweden; while the third expedition of 1293 extended Swedish rule to Carelia in the east, and established the fortress of Viipuri¹ on the north-east coast of the Gulf of Finland. These military expeditions gave rise to a prolonged struggle between the Swedes and the Russians of Novgorod for the possession of Carelia, but the war ended with the Peace of Nöteborg, by which the frontiers of Finnish territory were for the first time determined, and

¹ In Swedish Viborg.

Russia ceded to Sweden the three western districts of Carelia. Hence the provinces now forming the territory of Finland, and the races from which the Finnish people are descended, were united under one rule. The Reformation, which led to the setting up of the Lutheran Church in Finland, took place in the reign of Gustavus Vasa, after the Diet of Vesteras in 1527, which also reorganized the administration, and started a scheme for settling and



FINLAND'S OUTLET TO THE ARCTIC.

cultivating the interior of the country. A few years later the elective monarchy was abolished, and Sweden and Finland were formed into an hereditary kingdom.

In the almost continuous wars which followed between Sweden and Russia the Finns were invaluable in the services they rendered to the Swedish armies, and this was recognized in 1581 by John III of Sweden, who raised Finland to the position of a Grand Duchy, so that by the sixteenth century the Finns had achieved some degree of national independ-

ence. But the country continued to form the battleground of the contending forces of Sweden and Russia, when the Finns greatly contributed to the success of their suzerain Power, and if the Finns owe a considerable measure of their culture to Sweden that debt has been fully paid in Finnish blood. The Thirty Years War, in which many Finns fought with distinction, brought the country to the notice of Central Europe for the first time, but the honours of war were accompanied by much trouble in other directions. Early in the seventeenth century, Gustavus Adolphus forced Russia to acknowledge as the territory of the Grand Duchy of Finland an area closely corresponding to the frontiers of to-day, and further concessions were subsequently made to the Swedes. It is also significant that the Finnish Diet, consisting of the four orders of Nobility, Clergy, Burghers, and Peasants, was set up at this time, and that the Swedish language supplanted Finnish among the upper and official classes. It was not until early in the nineteenth century that an attempt was made to revive the Finnish language, which has now been fully established as the language of the country. Swedish rule, which lasted until the war of 1808-9, brought important benefits to Finland. A gradual organization of the country took place; systems of justice and administration were set up on Swedish lines; and the inhabitants were given full civil rights, similar to those enjoyed by the Swedes, so that the Finns learned to manage the affairs of their own country. A common government and a common Western civilization welded together the former scattered tribes into one Finnish people, which was united in the struggle against the ever-present danger in the east. As a result of the defeat of Sweden in the war of 1808-9, Finland passed from the suzerainty of Sweden to that of Russia as an essential fruit of victory, and Finnish nationalism was inclined to regard the change as likely to lead to greater independence.

Finland did not join Russia as a conquered province, but she maintained her free constitution and fundamental laws, and became an autonomous Grand Duchy under Tsar Alexander I as Grand Duke, who was accepted by a free

diet of the Estates at Porvoo.¹ The Grand Duke then recognized the Finnish constitution and undertook to preserve the religion, laws and liberties of the country. Under his successor, Alexander II, a policy of liberty and progress was pursued, but, after twenty-six years of prosperity, the murder of the Tsar and the accession of Alexander III led to a policy of gradual Russification, which was continued throughout the reign of Nicholas II in spite of repeated pledges to the contrary. During this period continued attempts were made to curtail, if not to abolish, the powers of the Finnish Diet. General Bobrikov, who was afterwards assassinated by a Finnish student, was appointed Governor-General with almost dictatorial powers. Where possible Finnish officials were replaced by Russians, and the Russian language was introduced. The Finnish army was disbanded. Newspapers were suppressed. The Finnish Post Office was brought under the control of the Russian Ministry of the Interior. A Russian political gendarmerie was created with its system of spies and domiciliary visits. To all this the Finns presented an attitude of passive resistance, although many Finnish officials were arrested and imprisoned at St. Petersburg. Such was the position at the outbreak of the Great War.

The war, however, brought no relaxation of the Russian rule. On the contrary, the Government took more active measures, and declared their intention of suspending the Diet for the duration of hostilities. The Finns naturally hoped for the overthrow of Russia, and it can easily be understood that their sympathies during this period were generally inclined towards the Central Powers, particularly as they were convinced that the top-heavy structure of Imperial Russia could not successfully resist the onslaught of superior and more up-to-date armies, or survive the economic strain of war on a great scale without an internal revolution. At the outbreak of the first Russian revolution, when the Kerensky Government was set up, Finland recovered her right of autonomy and the Finnish Diet was again convoked. But it was not long before the Diet came

¹ In Swedish Borgå.

into conflict with the Petrograd Government which led to its dissolution ; and by the time the new Diet met in December, 1917, affairs in Russia had gone from bad to worse and the Bolshevist *régime*, which was rapidly developing, found no sympathy in the Finnish Chamber. Finland chose this moment ¹ to declare her independence, which was then recognized by the Governments of Russia, Germany, Sweden, and France. It was, however, not until the following year, after a sanguinary struggle with Bolshevism, in which the Red forces were utterly routed, that Finland could really be regarded as a free and independent state. No sooner had Finnish independence been proclaimed than certain radical elements of the population, in close collaboration with the most evil elements in Russia, made a supreme attempt to suck Finland into the whirlpool in which Russia was being engulfed. Red Guards, with a good stiffening of Russian troops, with Russian instructors, and supplied with Russian arms, ammunition and material, were formed in all the chief centres ; and Finland was rapidly converted into a state of anarchy closely resembling that prevailing across her eastern frontier. By January, 1918, the situation was such that the Government had to resort to desperate measures. The already existing White Guards were officially legalized, and organized resistance was offered to the forces of revolution which were menacing the civilization and very existence of the country. The Reds occupied the south and south-west, including Helsinki, Turku, Tampere, and Viipuri ² (by far the most prosperous part of the country), while the White Guards held Central and North Finland. In their despair the White Finns, who were very short of arms, turned for help to Germany who readily came to their assistance. The Finnish Jäger Battalion, which had been trained in Germany since the beginning of 1915 and consisted of some 2,000 young men of the best Finnish elements, was sent to Finland and was followed later by a German 'Baltic Division' under General von der Goltz, comprising some 12,000 men including marines.

¹ 6th December, 1917.

² In Swedish Helsingfors, Åbo, Tammerfors and Viborg.

There followed a most desperate struggle in which the Red forces were driven across the Russian frontier with heavy casualties in killed and wounded, besides the loss of a large number of guns and great quantities of ammunition and stores. From the very first days of the Great War the belief was fairly widespread in Finland that Russia was likely to suffer defeat and that, as result of an unavoidable revolution, would probably fall to pieces. As events have proved, the Finns were right. They worked systematically for their freedom, which they only achieved after heavy fighting and great losses. Although this successful conflict with the Reds was chiefly important to Finland, it is scarcely realized in other countries that the Finns also performed a very significant service to Europe by definitely closing one important door against the forces of red revolution, which threatened to burst westward and carry everything before it.

As Finland believed that the war would end in a negotiated peace and that Germany would remain the strongest Power in Eastern Europe, their fear of Russia led many Finns to favour the election of a German prince to the Finnish throne as a means of strengthening the position of their country. When, however, Germany was ultimately defeated, this policy lost its *raison d'être*, the election of Prince Friedrich Karl of Hesse, a close relative of the British royal house, was cancelled, and Finland became a republic. But after hostilities with the Bolshevists had been brought to a successful conclusion, and pending a decision as to the future government of the country, the Diet, which met in June, 1918, entrusted the supreme authority to a Regent, and M. Svinhufvud, the President of the Senate, was appointed. There was, however, a popular demand in favour of a republican government, which led to the resignation of the pro-German Regent and to the election of General Baron Mannerheim, the distinguished soldier who had done so much to save Finland from Bolshevism, but it was not long before the Diet resolved to establish a republican form of government, and the new constitution came into force on the 17th July, 1919. The differences of opinion

regarding the form of government of the country have now entirely disappeared. The Finnish constitution is one of the most democratic in the world, but the President of the Republic enjoys considerable powers. According to the Constitutional Law of 1906, which has only been modified as regards questions of parliamentary procedure, the Diet consists of one chamber of 200 members chosen by direct and proportional election, in which all who are entitled to vote have an equal vote. There is universal suffrage for all Finns who have attained the age of twenty-four years. The President is entrusted with the highest executive power in the country, and his authority extends to the sphere of legislation. As the holder of the highest executive power, the President decides the most important questions in the Government of Finland, and the term 'Government' is sometimes used to represent the President, sometimes the Council of State (or Cabinet), and sometimes both in conjunction. In the Government it is the President alone who has the power of legislation in conjunction with Parliament, and of issuing ordinances, a power only granted to the Council of State by special authorization in particular circumstances. Lack of space prevents me from dealing more fully with one of the most interesting constitutions of modern times, which is a development of the old Finnish constitution, free to function without interference from the Russian capital. Those who are interested in Constitutional Law would do well to study the system of this model democracy, which enjoys the respect and admiration even of those who are doubtful of the value of democratic forms of government. When the time came in 1917 for Finland to declare her independence, she not only already possessed a constitution of her own, but only had to create a Ministry of Foreign Affairs and a Ministry of Defence to complete her equipment as an independent sovereign state. Hence, the Finns are now merely developing by themselves a system of government which never stood a chance of success under the suzerainty of Imperial Russia, but was a system well suited to their needs.

The war seriously affected the economic life of Finland

as a dependent Grand Duchy, and the country could not but suffer from having to accept the Russian paper currency at its face value, and from the general requisition of food supplies and other material needed for the supply and equipment of the Russian armies. But, although these hardships were far from being appreciated at the time, especially as they had to be endured for the benefit of a dominating race which was heartily disliked by every patriotic Finn, they have proved to be for the ultimate benefit of the country. Industry received some stimulus, and necessity became the encouragement to enterprise in directions hitherto unexploited. Hence, the hardships of the war years gave rise to a realization of the benefits to be derived from the industrial experience gained during this period, and from the general increase of productive power. Finland only needed to secure her independence as a sovereign state in order to put these efforts to the best advantage for her own people instead of for the benefit of Imperial Russia.

These last twelve years have been eventful ones for this new sovereign state, whose remarkable progress constitutes one of the most outstanding features of the last decade. The Finns have introduced a form of government based on the most modern democratic foundations ; they are developing their natural resources on the best economic and scientific lines ; and they are organizing their industries so as to ensure the greatest output with the least possible expenditure of labour. The Finns are studious, slow, and deliberate. They are industrious, eager to acquire the latest information and methods, and very nationally minded. Little devoted to the pleasures of life, they are thrifty and very democratic in their ideas. Their sense of humour is somewhat heavy, and what pleasures they take they seem to take rather seriously. The Finnish national character is somewhat influenced by the attitude of the people to Russia and everything Russian ; and there was a note of tragedy, mingled with pride and hope, in the words of President Relander to me as we sat discussing the Finnish nation in what was once the palace of the Tsars in Helsinki. 'The

Finnish character,' he said, 'as you see it to-day, is the outcome of centuries of adversity.' There are many ways in which the British and Finnish mentalities are similar. British ways and methods, which in many countries are liable to be misunderstood, find favour in Finland, and the calm, dispassionate outlook of the average Finn is closely allied to that of the thinking Englishman. Besides being scrupulously honest, the Finns are very sincere and outspoken. Generally speaking, the Finns are reliable in a marked degree, although their conception of time is scarcely in keeping with this quality. They have an unusual capacity for collaboration, and prefer to put their heads together to arrive at decisions rather than to confer and leave the decision to a representative superior. In the government of the country they have a great liking for committees, and the administrative officials co-operate in a remarkable way. The co-operative movement, which is probably more successful and more advanced in Finland than anywhere else in the world, is an example of the capacity of the Finns to achieve the best results by united effort. The co-operative society has the whole-hearted support of the Finnish farmer, who obtains better prices for his produce than he would do otherwise, and is encouraged to increase his financial return by payments based on quality as well as quantity. The people are naturally suited to such a system, by which they produce better results than they would by independent endeavour. The Finnish conception of liberty differs widely from that prevailing in England, the Finn viewing it in a national sense, while the Englishman regards it from the individual standpoint. For this reason the Finnish nation has achieved a considerable degree of consolidation, and this has been facilitated by the almost complete absence of class distinctions.

The peasants, who form the great majority of the population, are renowned for their high intellectual capacity. They study political questions in a most objective way, and they spend the long winter evenings in enlarging their knowledge not only of what concerns their own country but also of world affairs in general. While their know-

ledge of Finland is profound, their interest in foreign countries is considerable. On visiting the homestead of a small farmer near Porvoo, I was more than surprised to find that he possessed a library of over 300 volumes, most of which dealt with serious subjects and many of which were translations of foreign works. The Finnish peasant is conservative in one way and yet not in another. Although he prefers the more or less primitive life on the farms in Finland, he admires the more modern system and the accumulation of wealth which he finds on emigration to America. On return to Finland, however, he resumes his old life, and has no respect for wealth in his native country—a tendency possibly due to the influence of the lakes and surroundings generally which cannot but have a strong effect on the people who dwell in their midst. Yet, in spite of the conservative atmosphere in which he lives, he seems to adapt himself easily to modern agricultural improvements and to any new invention which is likely to contribute to his success and efficiency. Finland is practically governed by the peasants for the peasants, and the fact that the Finns are essentially a highly educated peasant nation seems to have prevented any class distinctions in the ordinary sense of the word. This, combined with the fact that there is no great wealth and comparatively no poverty, has greatly contributed to that quality of solidarity to which I have already referred.

Although the consumption of alcohol in Finland was the lowest in Europe before the war, the fact that drink incites Finns to perpetrate the more serious crimes, has led to the introduction of a prohibition policy. While some claim that crime has decreased since prohibition was introduced, others assert that the evil results of 'boot-legging' have produced the opposite result. It is difficult to say whether the crime statistics have been influenced to any appreciable extent by the prohibition laws, but there is little doubt that the peasants drink less than they did owing to the difficulty of obtaining liquor. I should say that the less the Finns drink the better, but the present system, which is not carried out effectively,

leads to contempt of the law. It seems that some form of liquor control would be more successful, but the position is such that no political party can oppose the prohibition movement without losing its power in the country, and the women's vote is the determining factor.

Of all the serious problems which face the Finns in working out their own destiny, perhaps the most difficult are the language question and that of under-population. While it is impossible in a few words to describe the history of the Finnish and Swedish-speaking elements and their relationship to one another, suffice it to say that the Swedish element is chiefly confined to the towns and to parts of the south, south-west and west, and only represents about 10 per cent of the population, while the Finnish element predominates in most of the country districts and Finnish has become the national language of Finland. Although the Swedish-speaking Finns form a small minority with privileges probably greater than any other minority in the world, they consider that they have a grievance and do not hesitate to make the most of it. It is a perfectly natural situation in which the Swedes, who previously held most of the important positions in the country and are now on the decline, resent the growing and vastly predominant influence of the Finns, and where the former, rightly or wrongly, find grievances in the attitude and actions of the latter. I would not go so far as to say that all these grievances are unfounded, but it seems that the Swedish minority are largely responsible for their own misfortunes and are making a profound mistake in not accepting a situation which they cannot alter. The generous policy of the Finnish-speaking people in this question is almost without parallel, but the Swedish minority have not yet realized that their true interests lie in co-operation with the majority, and prefer to rely on propaganda in their attempt to resist a movement which is the outcome of national evolution. Although there is this difference of language, there is complete unity of culture and nationality, so that, without a knowledge of either language, it is quite impossible to distinguish the one from the other. It is a question to be settled by time alone, and one in which

legislative measures are at present likely to do more harm than good, but there is little doubt that Finnish is destined to remain the language of Finland. Finnish-speaking students have long had direct relations with the leading European centres of learning, and it is a profound mistake to imagine that they have had to resort to Swedish as a medium for cultural relations with other countries.

The other problems of under-population is one which cannot escape the notice of the most casual observer who penetrates any distance into the interior of the country. While two-thirds of the total population of Finland are concentrated in the south and south-western provinces of Uusimaa, Turku, Vaasa and Viipuri,¹ the remaining third is scattered over an area nearly three times as great. Whereas the population per square mile in the province of Uusimaa is 105·8, it is only 6·0 in the northern province of Oulu² which is almost as large as all the other provinces combined. In the northern districts it is possible to motor for long distances without seeing any sign of human habitation, and even in Central Finland it is not unusual to travel for many miles without meeting a human being. But the fact that clearly stands out in all statistics is that the total population of Finland is only 26·4 to the square mile. This is a serious consideration for the Finns, who possess large tracts of undeveloped territory in the north, and need more man-power for the defence of a country which is nearly three times the size of England. The population question is one which the Finnish Government will have to face sooner or later, in order to strengthen the northern province of Oulu and to ensure that the utmost benefit is derived from the natural resources of the country.

Few capitals express the character and mentality of a nation so well as Helsinki. While the ancient capital of Finland was situated at Turku, the Government was moved eastward to Helsinki owing to the destruction of the former city by fire. If Turku represents the Finland of the Middle Ages, Helsinki certainly represents the

¹ In Swedish—Nyland, Åbo, Vasa, and Viborg.

² In Swedish—Uleåborg.

nation of modern times. The first object to attract the attention of the traveller approaching the Finnish coast is the massive stone edifice of the Lutheran Church of St. Nicholas, with its somewhat heavy architecture silhouetted on the sky-line. The entrance to the harbour, through myriads of small islands, leads one to expect an ancient city closely resembling the Hanseatic fortresses which adorn the eastern shores of the Baltic ; but time and circumstance have decreed it otherwise. Helsinki is one of the most modern cities of the world, and its chief characteristic is to be found in the heavy solidity of its buildings. The red Russian church with its gilded dome is a gentle reminder of the days of Russian rule, and the Government buildings have a certain likeness to those found in Central Europe ; but the great mass of new buildings which the Finns have erected in recent years have an architecture distinctly Finnish in style and construction. The railway station, the National Theatre, the banks, and the new commercial houses are built of hewn blocks of solid granite, and look rather as if they had been constructed to resist the attacks of man or nature. Even the ornamentation of the buildings is stolid in appearance, but owing to its sense of proportion it is not unbeautiful. Modern Helsinki is quite a new departure in architectural art, and if it does not yet please the eye of those accustomed to the more ancient architectural styles, it has the great merit of individuality and complete absence of vulgarity. Although the city is new and up to date, it has considerable dignity, and is fortunate to have a setting of great natural beauty. Built on a promontory, some of the newer residential quarters have their foundations resting on the solid rock, and the city has been enlarged by building on what were at one time regarded as impossible sites. The streets are paved with heavy cobble-stones in order to resist the severe winter, and the traffic rattles heavily over this uneven surface. Although the noise is considerable, this paving undoubtedly contributes to the remarkable cleanliness of the city streets, which very seldom need to be repaired. There are no slums, and the workmen's dwellings are modern, airy, clean, and comfortable. The chief shop-

ping centre is the broad boulevard of the *Esplanaadikatu*, on both sides of which are displayed goods of excellent quality, although there is a singular lack of luxuries, 'fallals and fripperies'. In the central gardens are cafés where Finns drink coffee at all hours of the day, and restaurants where a cheap and substantial meal can be enjoyed to the accompaniment of a Finnish military band. The harbour and its surroundings form the heart of the city, while the cobbled market-place is the starting-place of the small steamers which run to and from the numerous little islands, and is the site of the President's Palace. Helsinki is growing rapidly, and elaborate building schemes are being carried out in almost every street, while new quarters are springing up on the various outskirts of the capital, and a new Parliament House is in course of construction. What few traces of Russian domination ever existed have been almost obliterated, but the statue of the Tsar Alexander II still stands in the Senate Square, in remembrance of that ruler's sympathy for Finnish interests, and the imperial crown may still be seen over the door of one of the official reception halls.

As a country Finland is unique owing to her enormous system of lakes and rivers, and these geographical features have their advantages as well as their drawbacks. The roads and railways have had to suffer from the peculiar configuration of the country. In the lake districts the roads, which are narrow and constructed of gravel, skirt the edges of the lakes, crossing here by a narrow neck of land barely wide enough to allow two cars to pass, and there by an artificial embankment built up across a shallow stretch of water. It often takes hours in a motor to reach a point a few miles distant, usually owing to the fact that a bridge or ferry has to be crossed at some place a long way off the direct route. The railways suffer from the same disadvantage, and train journeys are long and tedious affairs. Yet a great deal is being done to improve communications generally, special attention being paid to the roads, which are little adapted to the ever-increasing volume of motor traffic. The most important road just completed is that from Ivalo along the Paatsjoki River and across the moun-

tains to Petsamo on a small estuary of the Arctic Ocean, and it is now possible to travel by motor from Rovaniemi, the most northerly point on the railway, to the Arctic coast by a road over 300 miles in length. Not only does this bring the ice-free port of Trifona within easy reach of the Finnish railhead at Rovaniemi, but it improves the political position of Finland by providing a northern sea communication with the outside world. The Finns will thus be enabled to open up virgin forests in their northern territories, to exploit the fisheries of the Arctic coast, and to shorten by twenty-four hours their communications with America.

This new road, which constitutes a most important artery in Northern Europe, was commenced in 1916 in the neighbourhood of Ivalo, but work had to be suspended during the Finnish War of Independence, and it was not until 1921, after Finland took over possession of the Petsamo district, that operations were again resumed. Although the Finns only obtained possession of this new territory in 1921, in accordance with the Treaty of Tartu of the previous year, the Finnish claim had long been recognized by the Russian Imperial Government. In 1809, when Finland was united to Russia, there was a certain stretch of Arctic coast, bordering on Finland, Russia, and Norway, in which all three countries had long enjoyed common pasturage, hunting and fishing rights. But, by a Treaty with Norway in 1826, Russia arbitrarily fixed the frontier so that Finland was entirely excluded from the Arctic Ocean, and the Finnish population was subsequently forbidden to fish off the Russian coast. In 1863 the Finnish Senate raised the question of an outlet to the Arctic, and in the following year the Tsar promised to transfer to Finland a section of Arctic coastline in compensation for the district of Rajajoki (near Petrograd), which was illegally annexed to Russia on account of the Russian rifle factories established there. Up to 1920 this compensation had never been made, but the promise was still regarded as valid by the Russians; for even in the Peace Treaty of 1918 between the Soviet Government and the Finnish Reds provision was made to cede Petsamo to Finland.

I have recently made this journey, using a motor-boat to cover the distance where the road was then incomplete, and it is one of the most interesting and unusual journeys I have ever made. This new road is a broad, straight highway, stretching in places as far as the eye can see and lined with modern telegraph poles and neatly painted milestones. As the car swings along over the smooth surface and through the invigorating air of the vast pine forests, the fiery sunset blazes through the trees and only changes its colouring to form the first streaks of the rosy dawn. In summer there is no darkness and the days are all rolled into one, so that it is almost impossible to distinguish the days of the week. The homely inns of the Finnish Tourist Association, built of huge logs and fitted with electric light and telephones, are open day and night, and there is a constant coming and going of travellers who arrive and depart at the oddest hours. Breakfast at four in the afternoon and dinner (consisting of porridge, salmon-trout and reindeer meat) at two in the morning is nothing out of the ordinary. One may travel great distances without meeting a single human being, while the only visible signs of habitation are the little wooden post-boxes, without locks or even lids, which speak well for the honesty of the few Finnish inhabitants. An occasional reindeer dashes across in front of the car, but 50 miles an hour can be maintained with perfect safety. Between Pitkäjärvi and Salmijärvi the road was until recently under construction, so the first car was abandoned and the journey continued in a motor-boat down the Paatsjoki River, which carries huge masses of floating pine-logs on their way to the sea. This river forms the frontier between Finland and Norway, and contains such a bewildering number of small islands that many have been labelled according to the country to which they belong. From Salmijärvi a second car took the traveller still farther north through a bleak country, where mists hang low over the rugged landscape, and an occasional bear may be seen blundering through the undergrowth, until the golden domes of the Russian monastery of Alaluostari suddenly glitter in the morning sun. Although this little Finnish village is hundreds of

miles from anywhere and on the verge of the Polar regions, it has all the necessary conveniences of modern civilization. Besides the usual comfortable inn, there is an up-to-date branch of one of the Finnish banks and telephone communication with the more populous districts of the south, while electric light is supplied from an efficient power station built and run by an old monk, who is the general provider of the district.

Finland's chief source of wealth is her timber, and almost one-fifth of the total population of the country is mainly dependent on the timber industry, which is of special importance in Finland's foreign trade. Although the Finns have lost their principal market, Russia, they have more than made up for that loss by extending their commercial relations in Europe, in the American continent and in the Far East. Moreover, the volume of Finland's foreign trade is showing a steady tendency to increase, and Great Britain is one of her chief customers. About 40 per cent of Finland's total exports find their way to British ports, the greater proportion of which consists of timber and wood products ; but, while England is Finland's best customer, our export trade to Finland falls very short of what one might have reason to expect, although this unfortunate state of affairs is not entirely the fault of the Finns. Relatively, Finland is the most densely forested land in Europe, while absolutely she is surpassed only by Russia. The forests, which cover two-thirds of the surface of the country, provide an abundance of raw material, and by the development of communications fresh tracts of timber land are now being brought within the reach of the wood-working industries. Spruce, pine, and a certain quantity of birch logs are cut up in the saw-mills ; spruce and pine also find their way to the pulp and cellulose mills, and thence to the paper factories ; while birch is used chiefly for the manufacture of plywood and bobbins, and aspenwood for match factories. The enormous quantity of timber, which is annually converted into not less than 40 million saw-logs, is obtained partly from the forests of the timber companies and saw-mill owners, partly from the state forests, and partly from

private forests whose proprietors are anxious to realize some portion of their timber. The trees are felled during the winter, and as soon as sleighing becomes possible on the roads the logs are hauled to the nearest waterways. The spring floods are used to float the timber down the streams and shallow rivers to the nearest lakes, where the logs collect to be lashed together in rafts of varying sizes and, in the course of the summer, towed across the great lakes to the rivers which carry them down to the sea. Here the rafts are divided up, and the current carries the logs down to the river mouths, where they are again collected and sorted, and afterwards distributed to the different saw-mills according to their different marks. On some of the large waterways, the transport of millions of saw-logs calls for a very extensive organization, and the rafting is carried out jointly by rafting associations ; but arrangements are different on the Saimaa waterways, where the logs are sawn up on the lakes and conveyed in lighters through the Saimaa Canal to the ports of shipment in the Gulf of Viipuri. A great many of the logs from the Saimaa waters are carried across the narrow necks of land to the waters connecting with the Kymi River ; while sawn wood from the Ladoga district has to be carried a long way in barges down the Neva, although the railway is also used to a fairly large extent for conveying it to harbours on the Gulf of Finland.

The treatment which the timber undergoes in the saw-mills is of a purely mechanical nature, and consists of cutting up logs of varying shapes and sizes into straight planks of exact dimensions as to breadth and thickness. When the wood has been sorted according to dimensions, it is piled up near the saw-mill to dry and await shipment. But the saw-milling industry cannot be worked so that sales immediately follow production. Shipments cannot as a rule be effected during the winter when the harbours are ice-bound, for even if steamers could force their way out the ice prevents the carrying of goods by lighter from the wood-yards to the vessels in the harbour, and consequently a considerable proportion of the yearly output accumulates in the wood-yards. In spring, summer, and autumn

shipments are carried on at a brisk rate, so that under favourable conditions the stocks of timber should be practically exhausted by the time winter sets in. This, however, is seldom the case. The saw-mills number between four and five hundred, and are to be found all over the country, wherever rivers connect with large or small lakes, along the railways, chiefly in districts where new lines have opened up fresh tracts of forest land, and at the mouths of large rivers flowing into the Gulf of Finland and the Gulf of Bothnia. Viipuri, Kotka, the neighbourhood of Pori, and Kemi are the chief centres of the saw-milling industry, and account for a considerable proportion of the total output. The traveller in Finland finds wood in some form wherever he goes. He is either motoring through forests which seem interminable, or he is watching the incessant transport of logs in some form or another. It is a wonderful and inspiring sight to see the logs dashing down through the rapids and swirling round and round in the great pools below, where they often become cigar-shaped with the constant dashing against the rocks. Through the lakes there is an incessant traffic of lighters followed by log rafts of great length, and the larger and slower-flowing rivers are divided by logs lashed together into two channels, one for logs and the other for river traffic. The mills for the manufacture of pulp, mechanical and chemical, and the subsequent transforming of the same into paper, are often erected so near to one another that it is difficult to distinguish where one begins and the other ends. This intertwining of industrial activity and the dependence of the paper mills on the pulp mills for their supplies of raw material has naturally reacted on industrial organization, and all three branches of industry are often operated under uniform management. In fact, this system of combination has been extended to include saw-mills which use the same raw material and produce the waste products used in the cellulose mills, so that the Finnish wood industry really consists of a number of large organizations working with wide views towards a rational use of Finland's chief assets, which are to be found in her forests.

Water power ranks second as a natural asset, and the river rapids are a unique and valuable possession. There are over 40,000 lakes in the country, and most of these are connected by watercourses, so that waterways form an important means of communication between the inland forests and the timber ports of the Baltic. Where necessary, canals have been constructed, and by this means the water system of Saimaa has direct communication with the sea at Viipuri. Considering the conditions of the country the Saimaa Canal is a remarkable piece of engineering, although only small ships can pass through it. On its course from Viipuri to Lake Saimaa the canal passes through several small lakes where the water-level has been raised by damming, while in other localities its course is through cuttings and embankments. The Finns are experts in putting water to the best use, and the exploitation of their natural resources is nowhere more prominent than in the new electric schemes, by which power is obtained from the swiftly flowing rapids that are outstanding features of most of the Finnish rivers. The new power station at Imatra, where the rapids have been harnessed, supplies electricity to all Southern Finland. Of the two factors which multiplied together give the power available—the height of the fall and the volume of water—the latter is great and the former small in the case of the Finnish rivers. Waterfalls exceeding 15 feet in height are rare in Finland, and the falls at Imatra, which are about 60 feet high, are distributed over a distance of about 1,500 yards. The harnessing of these rapids is, therefore, costly, and a large amount of capital is required for the conservation of their water-power. Although it is difficult to estimate the exact value of these vast resources, the fact remains that, in spite of the difficulties and expense involved, industry is greatly attracted towards a source of power which will never fail. The water power actually available for industrial purposes has been estimated at 2,300,000 horse-power (including that of the rivers flowing into the Arctic Ocean), and of this only about 14 per cent has yet been utilized. Possibilities of future development are practically unlimited, and by the building of the power station at

Imatra, which is now completed, the amount of available and consumed water-power has been greatly augmented.

While about 60 per cent of the area of Finland consists of forest land, about 10 per cent is cultivated, the remainder being occupied by lakes and swamps. Yet agriculture plays a very important part in Finnish life, and together with forestry is closely supervised by the Government so that Finland's natural resources are protected by legislation. Although it cannot be said that the country is at present self-supporting, there is little doubt that it could be made so in case of necessity. The Finnish farmer is progressive to a marked degree, due to the high value put upon land which has been made cultivable by immense labour. Indeed, there are few countries where scientific methods of farming have made greater progress in recent years, thanks to the enthusiasm with which the farmers and landowners have made use of the benefits of the co-operative system. Co-operative societies provide almost all the farmer's needs, and assist him greatly in the disposal of his produce. Oats is the most important crop in Finland, while rye and wheat are grown as autumn crops, the former on a far greater scale than the latter. Rye bread is to be found almost everywhere, and it is with difficulty that ordinary white bread can be obtained outside the principal cities. It is, however, in the development of dairy-farming that the Finnish farmers have found their most profitable occupation, and it looks as if there is a great future in store for this form of produce. The export of butter and cheese is carried out on the most scientific basis, and my visits to dairies in the interior, as well as to the testing station at the port of Hanko, were a revelation of what the Finns have achieved by co-operation. The whole system of making, handling, testing, and exporting these dairy products has been raised to the highest pitch of perfection attainable under modern conditions. Although farming is carried on in most of the southern half of Finland, the northern half of which is almost entirely composed of forests, the chief areas of cultivation are situated in the south, the south-west, and west of the country, where the population is greatest. The

average area per holding in the south does not exceed 100 hectares, while the farther north one goes the larger the holdings become, owing to the smaller percentage of cultivable land. But the chief feature of agriculture in Finland is that the Finnish peasant is far above the ordinary peasant of continental Europe. He is a small farmer, but he is well educated, enterprising, and progressive, and he is getting the best out of the country in spite of disadvantages of climate and natural conditions.

Although Finland is essentially an agricultural country, industry is an equally important consideration in this new republic. Industrial enterprise first appeared as a factor of importance in Finnish business life about 1870, so that it was not until long after England and the West European countries had witnessed the great industrial revolution, and the consequent radical changes in their national economy, that industrial concerns of any importance came into being in Finland. With such means of communication as then existed, Finland was very remote from the centre of commerce. A struggling iron industry had survived from earlier days, and the present up-to-date textile industry was then in its infancy, but it was not until the forests, the country's great natural asset, became the object of industrial enterprise that industry on a large scale obtained a firm footing. Steam then gained ground as the motive power in the saw-mills, and enterprising merchants ventured for the first time to let the great rivers carry logs from the interior down to the seaports; the manufacture of wood-pulp was begun, and a newly awakened energy became apparent in all directions. The first railways were built in 1868, and the Saimaa Canal was opened for traffic. During this period the first joint-stock banks were established, and the conditions necessary for industrial development were brought into existence for the first time. Finnish exports, which in 1850 did not exceed about 20 million Finnish marks, had by 1870 risen to practically 50 millions and were steadily growing. Ever since this critical time Finnish industry has made steady progress. New ideas have been rapidly adopted, output has risen both in quantity and quality, and

industry must now be regarded as a most important factor in the economic life of Finland. About 130,000 workers are engaged in industrial occupations, the value of industrial products may be estimated at about £70,000,000, and the industries using the staple raw material of the country produce more than four-fifths of the whole value of Finnish exports.

Up to the present very few deposits of important minerals have been found in Finland, but it is possible that the future will reveal some hidden treasures of that kind ; but industry has made use of the primary rock itself, and certain kinds of granite are quarried for building and various other purposes. Flax is cultivated in increasing quantities and provides a large part of the raw material for the only linen mill in the country, which has a very considerable annual output ; and in recent years sugar beet has been grown for refinement in Finnish sugar factories. The above are the principal natural assets utilized by those Finnish industries which, by working up native raw material, produce goods for international commerce. But in addition to this first group of industries there exist a second class, the so-called import industries, which produce Finnish articles from raw or semi-manufactured materials brought from abroad, although about 60 per cent of the country's need of raw material is supplied from her natural resources.

A further factor of vital importance to the growth of industry is sufficient capital. Finland has always suffered from lack of capital, which continues to the present day, and has undoubtedly handicapped industrial development. A shortage of money has also had an influence on the mode of financing large undertakings. It has not been possible to obtain large sums of money from private individuals, and usually the capital has had to be found by appealing to a number of small investors. In this way the joint-stock company has become typical of industrial activity in Finland, and private individuals are seldom found as the owners of important undertakings. Certain large industrial establishments are state-owned, and the municipalities own various undertakings, but the joint-stock company predominates in Finnish industry. Bank credits still play a prominent *rôle*

in procuring the necessary funds, and it is significant that the greater part of the credit advanced is of Finnish origin ; but foreign capital has lately to a considerable extent contributed to the rise and expenses of industry, almost exclusively by long-term credit loans. As far as the currency is concerned, the position is now satisfactory. The Great War, of course, caused a period of serious monetary disturbance, and the depreciation of the Finnish mark was, at first, largely due to the strain which Russian war finance put on the Finnish banking system. Then, at the end of 1917, Finland had to cover the increased expenditure incurred by her position as an independent state, and had to meet the expenses of the War of Independence in the spring of 1918. As there was difficulty in the collection of taxes owing to the disturbed state of the country, the Government resorted to increased borrowing, and part of the demand for credit was met by new note issues made by the Bank of Finland. During the period 1919-21 the exchange seriously declined, but towards the end of 1922 the State Bank stabilized the exchange in relation to the dollar, and since then fluctuations have been slight. Finally, at the end of 1925, the Finnish currency was put on a gold basis, the exchange being approximately 193.23 Finnish marks to the pound sterling.

The third essential of industrial activity is an adequate supply of human labour, which has never been lacking in Finland, though never superabundant. This factor has therefore not favoured the rise of industry, but has of late years occasionally presented a difficulty, as the necessary supply of labour has not always been with certainty available. As far as the technical side of the question is concerned, it may be said that, thanks to present-day communications, new ideas will rapidly find their way to Finland, and will be put into practice wherever feasible. It is now possible to obtain a thorough technical education and the establishment of the Central Laboratory of Industry in Helsinki, with the object of carrying out research work with regard to the more effective use of Finnish raw materials, illustrates the effort made to put scientific theories into

practice; while a visit to the industrial centre of Tampere is convincing of the energy and resource of Finnish industry. In few countries do the workers live under such favourable conditions. There has been no unemployment for many years, there is little illiteracy, and the cities have no slums. By means of education, technical instruction, and the co-operative movement, the status of the workers has been raised to a very high standard, while woman and child welfare is receiving scientific attention on the most up-to-date lines. The position of women is a striking feature of the Finnish social system, and the women's contribution to the welfare and progress of the country is almost equal to that of the men.

Owing to Finland's position as a next-door neighbour to Soviet Russia, the question of defence is one which not only occupies the serious attention of the Government, but is also of special interest to every Finn from one end of the country to the other. The army, recruited on the principle of universal service, is a military force in the making, which, thanks to a very efficient and up-to-date General Staff, is already showing signs of substantial efficiency founded on the best methods of the great European armies. The material from which the men are drawn is first-class, the Finnish non-commissioned officer and private soldier being very fine examples of manhood. They are mentally and physically healthy, and their national disposition is such that military service is not an irksome duty. The officers may be divided into three grades: the officers of the old Finnish army which was dissolved under the Russian *régime*; those who have received a thorough military training with the Jäger Battalion that went to Germany under the auspices of the Finnish national movement in 1915-17, and now form the nucleus of the new military organization; and those who have become officers since that time and are receiving their experience in the new Finnish units. While the two former may be regarded as a highly trained and experienced corps of officers, the latter are being trained on a thorough and carefully thought-out system which should in time ensure a high standard of military knowledge. But national feeling

in the matter of defence finds expression chiefly in the Defence Corps, or volunteer Civic Guards, which are recruited only from the most reliable citizens and occupy a very important position in Finnish national life. The training of these volunteer officers and soldiers is conducted on lines no less advanced than those of the army; and the methods of instruction, especially the system of indoor training devised for the long winter months, are striking in their novelty and attraction. The *Lotta Svard*, an organization attached to the Defence Corps, which deals with clothing and equipment of the troops, besides attending to their feeding during manœuvres, is entirely in the hands of women. Throughout Finland the Defence Corps is exceedingly popular, and so enthusiastic are the people to support its interests that those who cannot serve in its ranks contribute to its funds in a most generous way. During my recent visit to Finland I was much impressed by the spirit of self-sacrificing patriotism which permeates the whole Finnish nation. Finnish patriotism is not one of the fine-weather variety, but the kind that puts love of country before love of self and is one of the qualities that makes nations great.

Perhaps the most valuable feature of the lake system in Finland is its defensive strength, which adds considerably to the security of the country against possible aggression. Military operations in such a country would be exceedingly difficult to carry out except by an army knowing well the peculiarities of the *terrain*, and for this reason an invading force would be at a great disadvantage. The Finns are fully aware of this factor in their favour, and are sparing themselves no effort to make the best use of the geographical features in order to make them a still more formidable obstacle. But, if the inland waterways are an obstacle to military movement in summer, they are the very opposite in winter; for snow and ice convert the whole country into one great slippery crust over which men on skis can move with great rapidity. The Finns are expert ski-ers, and the pace at which they cover great distances in winter is almost unbelievable. Hence the whole Finnish army,

including guns, transport and aeroplanes, takes to skis as soon as weather conditions permit, and swift offensive action becomes an even more important factor in military training than it is under conditions where natural obstacles are the dominating feature.

Having given a rough outline of Finland's internal position, her place in the international sphere must now be considered from the view that independence, political and commercial, is the chief axiom of her policy, which is framed to give expression to this precept. From one end of the country to the other there is strong opposition to any form of external alliances or to commercial relations which are likely to lead to foreign influences. The Finnish attitude towards Soviet Russia is friendly but cautious. The Finns are not afraid of Russia, but they are anxious to safeguard themselves against any attempts to force or attract Finland within the Russian orbit. Their strategical position, guarding the northern side of the entrance to the Neva and separating Russia from Scandinavia, enables the Finnish Government to keep a sharp eye on the eastern horizon, and there is probably no Government in the world which has more accurate knowledge of Russian affairs than that of Helsinki. The Russian frontier is at a railway bridge near the station of Rajajoki. This frontier bridge, which is painted red on the Russian and white on the Finnish side, joins the banks of a strange river, so dark brown in colour that it almost has the appearance of blood ; and so great is the curiosity to gaze at the Bolshevists on their own soil that large numbers of people motor to the frontier every Sunday from the Finnish city of Viipuri. In fact, the Bolshevik soldiers have become so shy of the vast number of cameras that have been pointed at them that the taking of photographs is now forbidden by the Finnish authorities at the special request of Moscow. The contrast between the two sides of the river is most remarkable. While on the one side flies the fresh-looking flag of Finland (a blue cross on a white ground), on the other a red Russian ensign adorns a stunted and rather crooked flagstaff. But the greatest difference is to be found in the buildings. On the Finnish

side clean, tidy-looking cottages are clustered round the well-kept frontier station, and there are flowers in every window, yet a few yards farther east, across the bridge, there is nothing but a collection of broken-down wooden shacks surrounded by squalid little cabbage patches.

Before the war this particular part of the country was a fashionable seaside resort for the wealthy Russians of St. Petersburg, which is so near to the present frontier that the fortress of Kronstadt is clearly visible ; but to-day the luxurious villas in which they lived are falling to pieces one by one, and chickens have made their home in some of the richly decorated rooms. Once this famous little bridge bore the burden of the heavy traffic between St. Petersburg and Helsingfors, and the Tsar crossed it as Grand Duke of Finland. Now that Finland is a progressive, independent state, it merely serves to separate European civilization from the barbarism into which the Bolsheviks have dragged their gigantic country.

Perfectly friendly relations with the U.S.S.R. are always maintained, and any measures inclined to be provocative are carefully avoided ; but, at the same time, the Finns will not submit to dictation from anyone, and any attempt in this direction is likely to produce an attitude of the most stubborn resistance. With Sweden the Finns have long been on the most friendly terms, and, the question of the Åland islands finally settled, relations between the two countries tend to become closer than ever. With Sweden Finland has a great deal in common politically, commercially, and strategically. Their interests in maintaining a peaceful Baltic and in remaining detached from such entanglements as might lead to trouble are very similar ; they are both countries largely concerned with the timber trade and with the commercial policy which that involves ; and they have a common strategical significance with regard to potential enemies and disturbers of the *status quo* established after the Great War. Naturally Finland's position *vis-à-vis* Russia is more difficult than that of Sweden, and that country's moral support and friendly, though neutral, attitude would be of considerable value to Finland in case of

emergency. For this reason Finland is inclined to adopt a Scandinavian orientation. But aggression is utterly alien and contrary to all political and moral ideas in Finland, and in military matters all Finnish efforts are strictly defensive.

In her relations with the Baltic States the Finns show a marked degree of sympathy, and there is much similarity between Swedish-Finnish relations on the one hand and Finnish-Baltic relations on the other. If Sweden is ahead of Finland in culture and progress, Finland is equally more advanced than any of the new Baltic countries. It is with Estonia and Latvia that Finland is most concerned, and it is of the utmost importance to her that these republics should maintain their independence. Although the Finns have not concluded any defensive alliance with any of the states bordering on Russia, this in no way diminishes their close sympathy and consideration for those who share with them a common interest. I was specially struck when in Finland with the almost brotherly affection which the Finns have for the Estonians, whom they regard as their kinsmen across the sea. A great interest is taken in all Estonian affairs, and there is much coming and going between Helsinki and Tallinn. Marriages between Finns and Estonians are common, there is a similarity of language and race, and a keen interest on the part of the one in the welfare and prosperity of the other. In the case of Latvia, distance and a difference of race and language makes a common political interest the predominant feature of mutual relationships, but the Finns are deeply interested in what happens in Riga and heartily welcome the successes and achievements of the Latvian people. Naturally, these two Baltic countries are anxious that Finland should join them in a defensive alliance against Russia, and they never cease pressing their desires in this respect. In this they make a profound mistake, for by so doing they are much more likely to produce stubborn resistance than any modification of the Finnish view. With Lithuania the Finns have comparatively few dealings, but the relations between the two countries are very cordial, and the Finns have great sympathy with the Lithuanian people. Finland and Poland are geographically

far apart, but in Finland there has always been a very sincere admiration for the Poles in their immense difficulties of the past, and the Finns follow with the keenest interest the progress of Poland in her political and economic reconstruction and consolidation. Lately the commerce between these two countries has grown considerably, and this factor also tends to strengthen the old friendship between Finns and Poles. But the Finns very wisely prefer a policy of detachment leaving them free to act according to circumstances when and if the need for a decision arises.

Among the Great Powers Great Britain and the United States are the most sought after, and Finland hopes that their friendship and support will be valuable aids to her progress, besides being political and financial sources of strength to resort to in case of need. For both the British and American systems of national life the Finns have a profound admiration, and they carefully study all new developments in London and Washington with a view to finding ideas suitable for adaptation to the Finnish national structure. For Germany the Finns have a considerable admiration, partly owing to the German help given in their hour of need and partly to the sound characteristics of the German people. But the forward commercial policy of Germany finds little favour in Finland for reasons which I have already given. But Russia is the country on which Finnish eyes are always set. Fortunately, the geographical position of the country and the large number of forests, lakes and rivers of which the interior is largely composed render Finnish territory particularly suitable for defensive purposes, while the national characteristics of the Finns form an equally strong protection against the inroads of revolutionary propaganda. Further, although the Finnish ports are connected by rail with Petrograd, they by no means fall under the same category of importance to Russia as the Estonian port of Tallinn and the Latvian ports of Riga and Libau; and the fact that Russia is no longer Finland's principal market removes all question of economic pressure. It may, therefore, be assumed that the Finns are comparatively secure from any immediate danger of Russian aggression.

CHAPTER III

ESTONIA AS A SOVEREIGN STATE

WHEN, however, one investigates the conditions prevailing in the Baltic States, a sufficiently marked contrast at once becomes apparent. But before judging these conditions in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania it must always be remembered that, unlike Finland, these territories formed provinces of the Russian Empire, were completely under Russian domination, and had few autonomous institutions of any kind. The people were not even permitted to use their own language for official purposes, their culture was suppressed, and they were submitted to a considerable degree of oppression. Those who did not suffer at the hands of the 'Baltic barons' were under the heel of the Russian officials, so that, when at last they found themselves free, they had little experience for the creation of the entirely new machinery of independent states. The difficulties, financial and otherwise, with which they had to contend were sufficient to tax the strength of the most resolute people.

In the space at my disposal it is impossible to enter into details of Estonian history or to give even a general survey of the events bringing about the terrible oppression that afflicted the Estonians throughout the centuries, but the following rough sketch of events will supply some background for what has taken place since the termination of the Great War. The Estonians, the most progressive and enterprising of the western branch of the Finno-Ugrian family, settled in what is now Estonia during the early part of the Christian era. For eight to nine centuries they lived in their communities under chiefs or elders, who in time of war often commanded the united forces of the entire

country. When in A.D. 1208 a Crusade of German Knights of the Sword was formed against them, the ancient warlike traditions of the people were still very much alive, and it was only in A.D. 1227 that the whole country was subjugated by the German Order with the help of Waldemar II of Denmark, who built the castle of Tallinn where the State Assembly of Estonia now conducts its deliberations. After an Estonian revolt which they were unable to suppress, the Danes sold their Estonian possessions in 1346 to the German Order, who thus obtained control of the whole territory until 1561, when Ivan the Terrible destroyed the Livonian State and the whole country was overrun by the Muscovites. As the German Order was not strong enough to resist this powerful enemy single-handed, a part of its southern possessions was pledged in 1558 to Poland in return for military support and finally, when the military impotence of the Order became more than evident, the city of Tallinn, which already maintained a thriving trade between the East and West, joined with the nobility of Northern Estonia in an oath of allegiance to Erik XIV of Sweden.

During the Livonian war (1558-83) Tallinn was twice besieged by the armies of the Tsar, and it was not until 1583 that the country was finally freed from the invaders after the victories of the Swedish field-marshal Pontus de la Gardie, whose magnificent tomb still adorns the Dome Church in the Estonian capital. At this juncture Poland retained the southern part of the Baltic countries while Sweden occupied the north, but on the accession of Sigismund III of Sweden and Poland both parts were united under one rule. But it was not long before the king's uncle, Duke Charles of Sodermanland, seized the Swedish throne from Sigismund, landed in Estonia and began hostilities against his nephew; and this was continued by his son, Gustavus Adolphus, who secured the eastern frontier by annexing Ingermanland in 1617 (or what is now the province of Petrograd), and finally conquered the southern territory. As in the previous century, Estonia had to submit to another Russian invasion; for, when Charles X was engaged in a new war with Poland, the Tsar Alexis seized the

opportunity to break into the country. Tartu was besieged and taken, but the invaders made no further headway and were compelled to relinquish the occupied territory in 1661.

During the period preceding Polish and Swedish dominion the position of the peasantry had become extremely difficult. Serfdom was almost general. The barons considered the peasants as their personal property, over which they had even the right of criminal jurisdiction, and these conditions were only alleviated in the seventeenth century by the intervention of the Swedish kings. In 1630 Gustavus Adolphus established the Royal Court of Justice at Tartu, granting to the peasants for the first time the right to raise complaints against the nobility, and two years later the rights of the landowners with regard to criminal jurisdiction were definitely abolished. The king further demonstrated his generous intentions by stating that he wanted peasants to be admitted to Tartu University, and he signed the statutes of the University shortly before the end of his promising reign, which was followed by a further period of hope. In 1680 the Stockholm Diet pronounced itself in favour of a reduction of estates held by the nobility as fiefs, with the result that 85 per cent of the estates owned by the nobility of Livonia (a province including the south of modern Estonia), 40 per cent of the estates of Estonia, and 25 per cent of the estates of the island of Saaremaa, were taken from their owners. The work of the peasants on these estates was fixed and alleviated, schools were opened, and teachers, often chosen from the peasants themselves, were provided. One may imagine the conditions under which the peasants had been living, when even these moderate innovations caused this period to be spoken of as 'the good old Swedish times'.

These social reforms embittered the nobility, who strove to undermine the confidence of the king (Charles XI) in his governor-general, and sent a special delegation to Stockholm under Johan Reinhold Patkul. The delegates were accused of high treason, and Patkul escaped to the Saxon court where, acting in the interests of the nobility, he was instrumental in bringing about an alliance of Russia, Poland

(then under August II of Saxony) and Denmark against Sweden. Patkul was indeed responsible for the first ill-fated campaign of the Saxons against Riga in 1700, shortly after which Tsar Peter appeared with a Russian army before Narva. Both armies were defeated within a short space of time owing to the military genius of Charles XII, but Estonia still remained open to Russian invasions. Tartu and Narva fell in 1704, being destroyed a few years later when part of their populations were deported to the interior of Russia, and it was during this time that Peter I conceived the idea of conquering the Baltic provinces, relinquished by August II of Saxony who was formerly to have received them as former Polish possessions. At the conclusion of this conquest the Tsar showed a remarkable leniency towards the Baltic nobility, and the Swedish reduction of the estates was abolished. Once more the landowner had absolute jurisdiction over the peasant, and the nobility were confirmed in the right to form a Local Government which endured right up till 1917. The Treaty of Uusikaupunki,¹ concluded in 1721, finally gave the Baltic provinces to Russia.

The eighteenth century was the 'dark age' of Estonian history, and this was specially true of the first half of the century when the peasants were considered to be the property of the landowners in terms of Roman law. The peasants sought consolation in religion, and the sect of Moravian brothers gained a large number of adherents in spite of official persecution. This movement exercised a strong influence on the spiritual life of the people for over a century. The attempts made by Catherine the Great of Russia to improve the conditions of peasant life failed owing to the resistance of the ruling class, and it was only in 1804, during the first liberal period of the reign of Alexander I, that the Livonian Peasant Law was passed, in some degree restoring the rights possessed by the peasantry during the period of Swedish rule. According to this law a peasant could no more be separated from his farm, only landless labourers and servants could be sold, and the peasants were given the right of private property and inheritance.

¹ Nystad in Swedish.

Also, the work of the peasants was determined so as to preclude arbitrary measures on the part of their masters. As was to be expected, this measure incurred the hostility of the conservative section of the nobility, who preferred individual liberation of the peasants to the partial surrender of their rights over peasant property, with the result that the peasants were liberated in Estonia in 1816 and in Livonia in 1819 without receiving any land, and the law of 1804, according to which the peasants could no more be separated from their farms, was practically annulled.

The liberal *régime* which followed in Russia the unsuccessful Crimean War was the occasion of introducing several important reforms. The forcible annexation of peasant lands to the estates was stopped, and peasants were granted long-term leases and the right of purchasing land, but in order to provide land for the servants and labourers of the estates one-sixth of the peasant lands was still expropriated and added to the property of the big landowners. In 1868 the *corvée* (or forced labour) was finally abolished, and some years previously the nobles lost the right of inflicting corporal punishment on the peasants without a trial. Peasants were no longer compelled to ask the permission of their landowners before marrying, and they could freely choose their profession and move from one place to another without hindrance. These were the last reforms to be introduced by the Russians, and right up to the revolution of 1917 peasant rights were entirely subordinate to those of the landowning classes. In many cases peasants were not entitled to have on their own land any mills, factories, shops, or other commercial enterprises, but they had to repair the roads, maintain postal communications, and provide money for schools and for the local government, which remained entirely in the hands of the nobility.

During the second half of the nineteenth century the land question and education were the foremost claims of the Estonian popular leaders, and the first political newspaper was started soon after the peasant revolts in 1855. The liberal reforms of the 'sixties were hailed as the dawn of a new era, and the theory of co-operation with Russian

liberalism was proclaimed. This was, however, in vain, for with the accession of the reactionary Alexander III Russian liberalism lost its former influence. In the 'eighties a policy of ruthless Russification was adopted, and Russian superseded German as the language of all the schools, of the university, and of the courts of justice, with an increase in illiteracy as the result. Estonian officials were transferred to the interior of Russia to be replaced by Russians ignorant of the Estonian language and local needs. As these measures affected the nobility as well as the peasants, it was thought that a compromise might be effected for a common resistance, but in the early 'nineties the landowners forestalled this hope by themselves coming to an arrangement with the Russian administration. In return for assurances that they would be left in control of the local government they agreed to accept the policy of Russification, which lasted until the Russian Revolution in 1917. It therefore became increasingly clear that other methods must be adopted if popular aspirations were to prevail, and economic independence was regarded as essential to political freedom. Vigorous co-operative and educational movements sprang up, and national consciousness was further developed by the press, the new national literature, and by the national song festivals for which Estonia is famous. In 1904 the Estonians succeeded in wresting the municipal administration of Tallinn from the 'Balts',¹ who had previously held it on the grounds of a conservative electoral law; and although the revolution of 1905 failed to fulfil expectations, the nationalist movement gained considerably in strength owing to the severity with which it was suppressed and the fact that the greater part of the nobility co-operated with the Russians in even the harshest of their measures.

While political activities were restricted to the declarations of the Estonian members of the Duma, who claimed education in the mother tongue, settlement of the land question, and the reorganization of the Local Government, the economic and cultural progress of the people continued unabated. Farmers' societies performed the functions

¹ Descendants of the Teutonic Knights.

neglected by the Local Government, while private schools, co-operative banks, and sales organizations were established in ever-increasing numbers. Although the Russian governors resorted to every possible device for curbing the Estonian National movement, they were unable to arrest its natural development. The national and democratic ideas of Western Europe permeated the whole mass of the people, who were merely waiting for an opportunity to create conditions of social and political justice. This opportunity was provided by the Great War, which came as a blessing to these sorely tried people. Having contributed their full share of men and material to the Russian army and navy, the Estonians never lost hope that the liberation of the hitherto oppressed peoples would be one of the results of the European upheaval. Their hopes were finally realized when the events following 1917 severed the bonds connecting Estonia with the Russian Empire, and when, immediately after the overthrow of the Russian Provisional Government, the Estonian Diet declared its supreme power and on the 24th February, 1918, proclaimed the independence of Estonia.

A German occupation followed, which left the country depleted of leaders, arms and supplies, and was the fore-runner of another Russian invasion that led to yet a further struggle before independence was substantially assured. During these operations Estonia received many signs of encouragement from the Western Powers, especially Great Britain and the United States, and active assistance in the dispatch of a British naval squadron and detachments of Finnish volunteers.¹ Yet, Estonia with all her troubles was able to help her neighbour, Latvia, which had to face a still more desperate situation,² until the excellent fighting qualities of the two nations finally crushed the Bolsheviks and Germans, and an armistice was proclaimed leading to the Peace Treaty of Tartu in February, 1920.

It was only after the conclusion of this Peace Treaty with Russia that the Estonian people had a chance for the first

¹ There were also a few hundred Swedish and Danish volunteers

² *Vide* Chapter IV.

time of organizing the economic life of their country and setting their internal affairs in order. A constitution, closely resembling that of the German Republic, was passed by the Constituent Assembly in June, 1920, and under this law citizens of both sexes from the age of twenty have the right to vote or stand for election to the Diet. But the initiative for legislation does not lie solely with the Diet, for 25,000 electors may claim a plebiscite or propose a new law.

There is no possible doubt that the condition of Estonia before the Great War and on the conclusion of peace was, to say the least of it, deplorable, and that, taking this into consideration, the Estonians have achieved a very considerable measure of progress since they obtained their independence. It is, indeed, surprising that they have made so much headway, but there is still room for a great deal of improvement. That they have succeeded in setting up 'a state based on justice, law, and liberty, for the defence of internal and external peace', cannot be disputed, and a comparison between the state of the country in 1918 and what one sees in Estonia to-day shows a very great advance in all directions. A stable democratic Government has been established where turmoil and insecurity ruled supreme; free education in the mother tongue exists where national culture was forcibly suppressed; and conditions of social justice have replaced the disabilities under which the great majority of the people had suffered for centuries. Before the Great War and until 1919 over half of the country was in the hands of large landowners, whereas now most of the land is nationalized and split up into small holdings. By 1927, 40,000 new farms had been created, which has gone far to eliminate the social unrest among the agricultural masses. As Estonia is essentially an agricultural country, and as discontent has mostly been connected with the land question, this reform has marked a very important advance in the right direction, and has been accompanied by a considerable increase in agricultural production and in dairy farming.

If the radical policy of land reform in Estonia was the cause of undue hardship to the landowning classes, or Baltic

barons, it was absolutely necessary for the organization of a free and independent state. The Balts had had their innings, which had lasted for centuries, and the time had now come when the peasants were to have their full share in the rights of citizenship. But the newly formed Estonian Government, to whom the very word 'landowner' was anathema, were perhaps unduly harsh in their treatment of those who had to give up their homes and estates under the scheme of land reform. In Estonia more than in Latvia the hatred for the Baltic barons had become almost an obsession, so that when the estates were divided up the authorities saw to it that their former lords and masters were reduced to impotence. So much so, indeed, was this principle carried out that there are in Estonia to-day a large number of noble families living in circumstances of poverty and distress. In most cases former landowners have been allowed to remain on their estates, but they have to be content with a small farm or cottage, while the ancestral castle either falls to pieces or is used for some state purpose. Yet in judging the Estonians for their treatment of the former landowning class it must always be remembered that in this particular part of the Baltic Provinces of Russia the peasants came in much closer touch with the German landlords than they did with the Russian officials, and it was therefore against the former that they directed their strongest hatred. Although Russian rule was indirectly responsible for the extremely backward condition of the country and favoured the feudal system, to the Estonian peasants it was the Baltic barons who were directly responsible for their misfortunes.

According to the Land Reform Law of 1919 the large estates belonging to the Baltic barons were seized, and, apart from those of the small peasant proprietors, the only lands allowed to remain were those belonging to cities, charitable and scientific institutions, local governments, and lands occupied by cemeteries, churches, and cloisters. All other property was nationalized, and a compensation law was passed providing for payment according to the real value of the land at the time of nationalization. When it

is realized that over 96 per cent of the total area of the large estates was handed over to the Estonian Government, it can be seen that this land reform was of a most revolutionary nature. Once in the hands of the Government these lands were distributed as follows : (1) as farms on hereditary lease ; (2) as lands on long-term lease, chiefly to municipalities, educational institutions, commercial and industrial enterprises or societies for co-operative farming ; and (3) as lands on short-term lease to private persons who wished to cultivate them as a means of livelihood or to supplement their incomes partly derived from other sources. Land suitable for cultivation, such as tillage and pasturage, was the first to be divided into small holdings, the price being based on actual value which could not exceed a fixed amount of 40 grammes of gold per hectare for field and meadow lands and 4 grammes of gold per hectare for pasturage and forest land. The annual rent has been fixed at 4 per cent of the value with an addition of a small amount to cover administrative expenses, and this is paid in instalments twice a year. In the case of purchase payment is arranged according to the desire of the purchaser, and it may either be made in one lump sum or by instalments extending over a period not exceeding sixty years. In the latter case 4 per cent interest is charged, with 0.25 per cent for expenses and a redemption interest according to the terms of amortization. All income from the sale or lease of state lands, after deducting administrative expenses, goes to form a state colonization fund for use as the Government may decide. Provision has also been made for subsidies in the form of long-term loans for the construction of buildings, purchase of stock, and improvement of land ; while extensive improvements in the way of drainage, etc., are carried out at the expense of the state or local government in question. Nationalized forests remain at the disposal of the Government, while waste land and marshes form a land reserve, which in course of time will be reclaimed and rendered suitable for distribution in small holdings.

The reorganization of agriculture, the drainage, stocking, equipment, and general capitalization of the new small

holdings, together with the training of the new peasant farmers and the establishment of agricultural co-operative societies, has been a formidable task for a Government with little previous experience. But while it is too much to say that success has already been achieved, a good beginning has undoubtedly been made and, considering the obstacles in the way of progress, the Estonian nation have done, and are doing, what would have been thought quite impossible ten years ago. The Estonians, with their faults and disabilities, have 'put their shoulders to the wheel' and deserve every possible encouragement from those who can give them a helping hand. Before the Great War Estonia was one of the principal sources of St. Petersburg's food supply, and the port of Tallinn was one of Russia's main northern outlets to the sea, but since then an agricultural revolution has taken place and agriculture has lost its normal market. Yet, with the assistance of the co-operative societies, Estonian agriculture is now developing on entirely new lines. The people are specializing in cattle-breeding, dairy farming, and flax production, while the export of butter is controlled by the state with a view to maintaining a definite standard of quality, and new markets have been found in Germany, England, and elsewhere. The fact that the land under forage crops amounts to about 60 per cent of the total cultivated area points to the importance of stock-raising in Estonia, which, from a pecuniary point of view, is the chief branch of farming. Although handicapped by a failure of crops in 1923, there has been a general increase in this branch since the war, and statistics show that there are now 28 per cent more horses, 18 per cent more cattle, 43 more cows, 23 per cent more sheep, and 15 per cent more pigs in the country than there were in the days of Russian rule. In this, as in all branches of agriculture, the Estonians have set themselves to study the very best methods suited to their needs, and are directing their agricultural policy, educational and otherwise, so as to build up a sound foundation for future development. During all the years since Estonia obtained her independence there has been a favourable balance in her agricultural foreign trade, even in the

bad year of 1923, and the part played by agriculture in the foreign trade of the country has been consistently increasing. It may, therefore, be concluded that the Land Reform of 1919, although primarily intended as a measure of social justice, has also proved to be an economic success.

Next to agriculture came the reconstruction of Estonian industries, which are chiefly centred at the port of Tallinn and at the frontier town of Narva ; and the restoration of equipment removed during the war and finding new markets are problems which still confront Estonian manufacturers. Before the Great War there had grown up at Tallinn, within easy reach of foreign coal, a considerable industry—ship-building, metallurgical shops, textile mills, etc.—designed to supply the Russian market and largely to meet the requirements of the Russian army and navy. At Narva the Kraenholm Cotton Mills, with 500,000 spindles and 4,000 looms, was, and still is, one of the largest mills in the world. In the first few years of Estonian independence the difficulties with which industry had to contend were of the first magnitude. It had lost its capital, its skilled workers were dispersed, its machinery partly evacuated and destroyed, there was no raw material, and there was neither fuel nor connections with the outside world. Yet high hopes were placed on the future of the larger industrial undertakings, and considerable sums were advanced by the State Bank, with the result that by 1923-4 the credit and banking situation of the country became highly critical and a considerable proportion of the gold reserve obtained from Russia under the Treaty of Tartu was lost. But, although industrial production has not yet reached the pre-war level, chiefly owing to the difficulty of replacing machinery and equipment destroyed or removed by the Russians and Germans, a substantial advance has taken place. The large establishments of the metal industry had suffered most, the greater part of their machinery having been forcibly removed to the interior of Russia, and consequently they employ less than a quarter of the workers of pre-war times ; but the textile industry has partly succeeded in recovering its former position, and has been

adapted to foreign markets. As the largest pulp mill in Estonia, with an annual production of 60,000 tons of sulphate cellulose, was completely destroyed by the Russian army, the production of the paper industry is less than before the Great War, but it is significant that all the remaining mills have succeeded in increasing their output. The general tendency is on the upward grade, and, although it is too soon to speak of anything approaching industrial prosperity, the energy of the people, assisted by sound technical education, is making itself felt in all departments of industry.

Estonia also possesses certain raw materials, which may possibly constitute the basis of a new industrial development in the future. Of these the most important are wood and oil shale, the latter of which is unusually rich in oil and is already used in its crude state in factories and on the railways in place of coal, while the former constitutes an additional source of fuel, besides supplying the raw material of the saw mills, ply-wood factories, and paper industries. During the last few years the amount of timber employed in these three industries has steadily increased.

The economic progress which the country has achieved may be judged from the growth of the total exports from over 2 milliard Estonian marks in 1921 to 9½ milliard in 1925, although this increase is to some extent due to the depreciation of the Estonian mark and the rise of prices. Direct fiduciary inflation ceased in 1921, and the exchange improved slightly during the next two years. With the bank inflation of 1923-4 the exchange depreciated from about 340 to 460 to the U.S. dollar, but by the end of 1924 the State Bank had succeeded in bringing down the rate to about 373 to the dollar, or 100 Estonian marks to the Swedish crown. From January, 1925, onwards the exchange remained stable, and in 1928 a new currency basis—the 'Kroon', equivalent to 100 Estonian marks, was introduced. The measure of success which have attended Estonia's economic reconstruction, in spite of great initial difficulties, highly critical periods and inevitable errors in policy, has been largely due to the fact that since 1921 she has managed to balance her budget. Indeed, not only has

the budget been balanced, but the capital outlay necessary for her economic reconstruction has been largely met out of current revenues. Economically, Estonia has come through very heavy weather, but with the help of a British financial adviser she has gone far towards reaching a sound financial basis, while it is noteworthy that the final stabilization of the currency has been effected without any dislocation.

Important though the foregoing considerations may be to the Estonians themselves, it is the seaports which form the most outstanding feature of the country from an international point of view. Tallinn was known for centuries as the most important harbour of Estonia and one of the best commercial ports in the Baltic, having entered the Hanseatic League in the thirteenth century and long enjoying the privilege of local government with a view to developing its commercial importance. In 1870 Tallinn was connected by rail with St. Petersburg and became one of the principal ports for the Russian import trade ; but during the last decades of Russian rule the commercial development of the city was hampered by the deliberate policy of the Russian Government, which recognized in Tallinn a naval base for the Baltic fleet, and endeavoured to prevent the expansion of trade by tariff rates on the state railways connecting that port with the interior of Russia. When, however, Estonia was liberated, these obstacles were removed and a new development began. In recent years the harbour has been greatly improved by the construction of new quays, storehouses, railways, and by the development of other transport facilities, as result of which the working and storage capacity of the harbour has been doubled. In most years it is possible to keep the port open by means of ice-breakers, while sometimes navigation is not hampered by ice at all.

Tallinn is a peculiar city, and it takes some time to orient one's impressions of the Estonian capital. There, on the shores of the Gulf of Finland, stands this ancient Hanseatic city with its noble buildings as witness of its former greatness and prosperity. The massive walls, the heavy bastions, the

roughly cobbled streets and the northern dignity of the churches recall the days when the Teutonic Knights fought in the name of the Church to develop commerce and accumulate worldly wealth. The gilt-domed Russian church on the heights overlooking the main part of the city reminds the visitor of centuries of Russian domination. There is a distinct German feeling in the air, and yet there is something else that takes time to diagnose. In spite of the up-to-date tramcars, motor vehicles, and electric light, there is an atmosphere of obstinate stagnation. Tallinn is a gloomy city, probably owing to the fact that the stone of the older buildings is very dark in colour, and the newly erected edifices of the new Estonian State stand out in marked contrast to the ancient background. Yet these modern buildings in no way clash with the old Hanseatic houses, all huddled together in the mediæval quarter, or with the old Danish castle on the hill that now flies the Estonian flag and houses the State Assembly and a number of the Government offices.

The important fact to bear in mind in connection with Tallinn, as indeed with most of the ports of the Baltic States, is the fact that the transit trade with Russia is one of the foundations on which its prosperity must to some extent depend. The Estonians realize that their future much depends upon their ability to make Russia feel that she is not cut off from the Baltic ports, and their policy in this situation has been broad-minded. They are doing everything possible to facilitate Russian transit, without going too far, and the improvements of the port of Tallinn have been with this end in view. Yet this dependence on Russian trade makes the position rather difficult for a country with Estonia's situation on the map, although the port of Tallinn figures less prominently in Russian calculations than the port of Riga farther south. East of her frontier at Narva lies that enormous area of European and Asiatic Russia stretching to the shores of the Pacific Ocean, and Estonia, lying on the western fringe of these countless acres, cannot ignore the ebb and flow of Russian affairs. Even if she were to open up entirely

new markets for her goods, the situation could never be entirely changed.

Although decreasing, the Russian influence still exists in no small degree in Estonia, and it is difficult to see how the present generation can completely throw it off; in fact, it looks as if Estonia will remain more or less under that influence until a new generation comes which never knew the conditions of Russian domination. The people show unmistakable signs of the conditions to which they had to submit for centuries, and it is too much to expect a complete transformation in the short space of ten years. Yet the standard of education among the Estonians has for some time been of a high order, and so much attention is given to this department that there is even a fear lest the number of university graduates should become out of proportion to the population of the country. In the University of Tartu, which was reopened in 1919 as a national institution, there are over 4,000 students, when the total population of Estonia only just exceeds 1 million. Hitherto German has been the language of commerce, and Russian is chiefly used for communication with the nationals of other Baltic countries, but recently it has practically been decided to adopt English in the schools as a second language in place of German. Estonia, however, is a poor country, and the people can ill afford either to buy English books in quantity or to pay sufficient salaries to English teachers. Moreover, the cost of living in England is so much higher than in Estonia, so that Estonians find it very difficult to come to study in this country. It is sincerely to be hoped that Lord Cecil's recent appeal¹ for English books will induce British universities, libraries, and private individuals to send as donations some of their surplus literature. By so doing they would not only be helping a gallant little state that is struggling to progress with the help of the English language, but they would also be making a notable contribution to British interests in the Baltic. The Estonians have in the past received valuable support from Great Britain, financial and otherwise, and their eyes are now turning towards these

¹ *The Times*, 25th June, 1929.

shores for cultural influence as well as moral and material support. The foundations of prosperity undoubtedly exist, the country is one that lends itself to development, and the will of the people is on the side of progressive endeavour ; but the lack of funds and the necessary expert advice in technical matters stand in the way of a strong forward policy. Estonian enterprise exists in a somewhat conspicuous degree, but it needs the support and encouragement of others to set it running on sound and profitable lines. Railway improvements, roads, town planning, urban and rural development, and building are among the departments calling for urgent attention ; and there is ample scope for those seeking new openings, provided that the Estonians themselves see the necessity of encouraging external help.

The Estonians are a young nation and are, therefore, inclined to be unduly optimistic. After gaining their independence they found themselves practically penniless owing to the crash of the Russian rouble. They had to organize their country from top to bottom, and, however critical one may be, it must be admitted that their achievements during the last decade have exceeded even the most optimistic expectations. Not only have the Estonians shown great enterprise, but they have been remarkably firm in their handling of internal affairs. As neighbours of Soviet Russia, they have naturally been an object of communist propaganda directed from Moscow, but they have met all attempts to disturbances and difficulties with a strong hand, so that the Bolshevik virus does not find a fertile field in Estonia. But Russia's eyes are never off the port of Tallinn, although she has no immediate need of it for export purposes. The Estonian people have many good qualities. They are honest, straightforward, patriotic, and hard-working people, who have since the war been struggling to overcome the most formidable difficulties ; but they have been working under natural disadvantages, relying entirely on their own strength and resources. The great and increasing weakness of Russia at the present time is perhaps

the most important consideration in Estonia's favour, and her opportunity lies in consolidating her position before Russia begins to regain her strength. Her best course is to attract the political and economic support of others to enable her to achieve this while that opportunity lasts.

CHAPTER IV

LATVIA : THE KEY OF THE BAL TIC STATES

IN the case of Latvia and Estonia, two countries inhabited by peoples of very different race but with a history that had much in common, the struggle for freedom and for national independence was even more remarkable than it was in the case of Finland. The severest phases came after the exhaustion of the Great War, when both states were fighting against both Germany and Russia and had little previous experience of constructive statesmanship. Although it is not yet possible fully to appreciate the true significance of this desperate struggle for national existence, there is little doubt that the achievements of Latvian and Estonian patriots will receive the unqualified admiration of future generations.

As the past history of these former provinces of Imperial Russia are similar in so many respects, I have confined myself to pre-war history in the case of Estonia and to more recent events in dealing with Latvia ; and my reason for adopting this course is because the land question before the Great War was more acute in the northern province than it was in the more industrial area of the south, and because Latvia suffered more in the Great War than her more northern neighbour, who was farther removed from the centre of general hostilities.

It would be a mistake to suppose that the political situation in these two Baltic provinces about the time of the Allied Armistice with Germany was the direct result either of the war, or of the fact that a Communist Government had been set up in Russia, or of the declaration of the Allies that they were fighting for the interests of small

nations, or even of the idealism wrapped up in the theoretical expression 'self-determination'. It was rather a case of these circumstances providing the conditions in which national consciousness, which had distinctly come into existence in these provinces during the 'sixties of the previous century, rapidly developed into maturity and expressed itself in significant action. This deepening desire for freedom of economic and cultural development had already shown itself in the rising of 1905, and proved itself to be a very substantial reality in the defence of Latvian and Estonian territory against the Germans, and later against the pro-German Bermondists and Bolsheviks alike.

From the spring of 1915 right up to the spring of 1920, Latvia was almost continuously a theatre of military operations, and practically the same conditions prevailed in Estonia. In their retreat the Russians spared no effort to convert this once flourishing country into an area of desolation. Owing to the removal of machinery and raw materials to the interior of Russia, and the deliberate destruction of all that remained, together with a wholesale evacuation of the industrial population, the large industries of Latvia, and particularly of Riga, were entirely destroyed; so that in this respect Latvia suffered more than any other region of the former Russian Empire. Attempts were made to remove rolling-stock and all means of transport by sea or river, and whatever was left behind, either in this direction or in the form of grain, cattle or supplies, was seized by the German occupational authorities and either used by them or transferred to Germany, together with large quantities of timber. Although troops that were recruited from these regions fought magnificently in defence of what was their native land, no real defence of Courland or Livonia was attempted by the Russians. But the fight put up by two battalions of Latvian reservists before Jelgavā¹ inspired the idea of raising purely Latvian detachments in the Russian regular army. Permission was obtained from the Russian commander-in-chief, and, in July, 1915, the Latvian delegates of the Duma issued a recruiting appeal which led to

¹ Formerly known as Mitau.

the formation of eight regiments from the Latvian refugees and from nationals transferred from other Russian regiments. The gallantry shown by these troops on various occasions during the years 1915-17, and especially before Riga, was such that Hindenburg referred to them as the 'eight stars on the Riga front', which would have to be extinguished before that city fell into his hands. Yet the Russians continued to retreat, and the circumstances of the evacuation of Riga, in September, 1917, produced a profound impression, and deepened the conviction that there had been a systematic betrayal of these regions by the Russian Supreme Command. Two-thirds of the inhabitants of Courland were now refugees all over Russia, but many returned to fight for Latvia, and the Latvian organization charged with the care of these refugees, operating from Petrograd as long as this was possible, not only kept alive their national feeling, but proved a good training ground for those who were later called upon to create and mould the new Latvian State.

After the Russian Revolution of March, 1917, and especially after the Bolshevist *coup d'état*, it became clear to the Latvian patriots that they could expect nothing from Russia, and that they must take the destinies of their country into their own hands. And this was more evident still when the commander of the German forces of occupation, after the fall of Riga, called into existence various *Landtags* and *Landesrats*, arbitrarily composed of representatives of the German baronial class, who began to plan for some form of annexation to, or incorporation in, the German Empire. Accordingly, the Latvian National Council, composed of representatives of the different democratic political parties, outstanding national organizations, and individuals, constituted itself at Valk¹ on the 16th November, 1917, and proceeded to take steps for proclaiming and establishing the independence of Latvia. At the All-Russian Constituent Assembly, which met in Moscow on the 5th January, 1918, the Latvian Deputy, Goldman, announced that Latvia now regarded herself as an autonomous unit, whose position, international relations, and internal organization were

¹ Now a town on the Latvian-Estonian frontier.

matters for the decision of her own Constituent Assembly ; and the Latvian National Council held a second session in Petrograd on the 17th and 18th January, 1918, at which Latvia (formerly Courland, South Livonia, and Latgalia) was declared to be separated from Russia. Protests were also made on behalf of the Latvian people against any attempt to divide up the country, as also against any attempt, at a conclusion of peace, to limit the rights of peoples to self-determination. In the same way, representatives of the Estonian people had met at Tallinn in November, 1917, and in the name of the right of self-determination had proclaimed Estonia a sovereign state, and carried the resolution into effect by the establishment of a Government at Tallin on the 24th February, 1918.

Meanwhile, during the interruption of the peace negotiations at Brest-Litovsk, the Germans occupied Estland and Livonia, so that, with the exception of a part of Latgalia, the whole of Latvia and Estonia was in German hands. In accordance with the terms of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, Courland, together with the district and city of Riga, was placed under a German protectorate ; the remainder of the country (as also Estland) was to remain under German occupation until peace and order were restored, while the destiny of Latgalia was to be decided later. The agitation for union with Germany was carried on energetically by the various *Rumps* of the *Landesrathen*, that of Courland imploring the Kaiser to accept the grand-ducal crown of Courland, and expressing the hope that Courland, Livonia, Estonia, and the island of Oesel might be formed into a state and united to Germany. To these and similar representations made at Berlin the Kaiser replied that he would '*mit Rat und That zur Herbeiführung dieses Zustandes helfen*' ; and between requisitions, wholesale arrests, suppression of the press, and restriction of personal liberty, the occupation assumed everywhere the character of a *régime* of 'terror'. The foregoing details illustrate and tend to confirm the conviction, expressed at the time by certain observers, that Germany was really more interested in her eastern than in her western frontiers ; that Courland was the last of the

occupied territories that she would wish to surrender ; and that at the time of the Armistice negotiations no less attention ought to have been given by the Allies to the situation on the eastern frontiers than was given to the situation in the west.

During the spring and summer of 1918 it became apparent that the countries where Bolshevism made least appeal were those of new-born nationality. They were so taken up with their newly acquired individuality that disorder and class warfare had no interest for them. It, therefore, seemed that the best policy against Bolshevism, at that particular stage, was the support of incipient nationality wherever it began to show itself. An examination of the Baltic border states revealed the existence of a will to resist Germanism and Bolshevism alike, to which there was nothing comparable in any part of Slav Russia proper. So there developed in certain quarters the idea of helping the non-Slavonic Russian border states, both in the Baltic and in Trans-Caucasia, in their struggle for independence. That this was partly in the interests of self-determination there is little doubt, but it was also with a view to stabilizing conditions in a zone surrounding Russia, from which food and industrial necessities might be introduced into that unfortunate country. It is to the lasting credit of Great Britain, to whom these border states had looked for guidance and assistance, that she was the first of the Great Powers to adopt a policy of interest in them as a whole, although it was regrettable that this policy was not more extensively, opportunely, and energetically carried out. The opposition of France and the United States, based on reasons which have since proved to be unjustified, presented an element of difficulty, but the Latvian Provisional Government was recognized *de facto* by the British Government on the 11th November, 1918, and similar recognition was given to the Estonian National Council on the 3rd May, 1918.

When hostilities ceased between Germany and the Allies, the Germans had overrun the Baltic provinces, and from the terms of the Armistice Convention of the 11th November, 1918, it became clear that the attention directed to the

conditions on the eastern border had been based on inadequate information, although sound information was in fact available. The French and Italian political representatives on the Council of the Allies were, unfortunately, of the opinion that belief in a Bolshevist danger to the Baltic States and elsewhere was 'to let ourselves be deceived by German propaganda'. Unfortunately also, Mr. (now Lord) Balfour withdrew his more energetic and practicable proposals in view of Marshal Foch's opinion that they were not realizable. The French were naturally chiefly interested in their own frontier, and much less so with the eastern frontier of Germany, with the result that, while the principle of the evacuation of territory by Germany in east and west was agreed upon, an Allied Commission was appointed to superintend that evacuation in the west, but no corresponding commission was appointed for the east. Not only was this the case, but clauses XII and XIII in the Armistice convention, under which that evacuation was regulated, were so clumsily drawn up that their ambiguity was easily exploited by the Germans in their endeavour to hold on to the fruits of their conquest in the east. Under Article XII of the Armistice Convention the Germans were to withdraw from territory which formed part of the Russian Empire in August, 1914, 'as soon as the Allies shall consider this desirable, having regard to the interior conditions of these territories', while under Article XIII the evacuation was to commence 'at once'. Meanwhile a 'Progressive Bloc' of Latvian patriots, representative of many parties, who, under the leadership of M. Ulmanis, had been secretly organizing the life of their country as well as protesting against incorporation with Germany, were now joined by the members of the National Council, who had been expelled from Petrograd by the Bolshevists; and a conjoint National Assembly was held at Riga on the 18th November, 1918. This Assembly, presided over by M. Tschakste, proclaimed the sovereign independence of Latvia, and elected a Provisional Government to take charge of affairs until a Constituent Assembly could be elected on a normal basis. By this time, however, the Bolshevists had crossed the Narva on the

northern Estonian border, and a few days later crossed the Latvian frontier at various points. The Germans wished to avoid all conflict with the Bolshevists, yet they did everything in their power to hinder the Estonian and Latvian Provisional Governments in their endeavours to organize local forces of resistance. The German maintenance of control of telegraphs and railways, together with their removal of arms and ammunition, was all part of a policy directed in the hope that the Estonians and Latvians would seek their assistance in the imminent struggle, thereby providing the legal excuse which they required for remaining in these countries, in which they had established themselves on the grounds of protection and to introduce peace and order. Thanks to the general attitude of the Allies as a whole, there was more than one occasion when it looked as if the local German nobility, with the aid of the occupational forces, might succeed in their design of crushing the young nationalist governments or rendering them helpless against the Bolshevist invaders, with whom the Balts might have come to terms later with the help of the German Government. Great Britain was, however, giving assistance with arms, ammunition and supplies, while the presence of units of a Baltic naval squadron at different times at Tallinn and Liepaja gave both active and moral support. Finland also rendered valuable assistance to Estonia in the forms of a volunteer force and a loan, while Danish and Swedish volunteers fought side by side with the Estonians against the invaders. In Latvia the conditions were for a time even harder, the country being still entirely under German control, while a movement of slow retreat from Estonia had begun. The Provisional Government had no funds, and only a few companies of badly armed soldiers.

By January, 1919, the Government was compelled to evacuate Riga and retire to Liepaja, the Germans having retreated to the line Liepaja-Skrunda-Kuldiga. In and around Liepaja the Latvian Government strove to build up an army of defence from the patriotic students and peasants who were concentrating on that centre, but common

action on the part of the Latvian army with the Balts and Germans against the Bolsheviks was hindered by the fact that Von der Goltz, the German commander, made it apparent that he wished to be master of the country. His idea was to try still to carry out the eastern policy of Germany, which had been upset by the recent course of events, by coming to an understanding with the White Russians under the common standard of a campaign against the Bolsheviks. By this means he hoped to arrive at a close understanding with the Russia of the future. Russia, after the destruction of her *intelligentsia*, would need German merchants and technical men, while Germany needed land for many of her ex-soldiers; and it seemed to Von der Goltz that the settlement of the latter in the devastated border provinces would soon restore the prosperity of these regions. By promises of land out of the third part of their estates which the Baltic barons agreed to devote to this purpose, Von der Goltz was able to maintain an effective force of German volunteer soldiers alongside of the Balts, prepared to achieve his purpose on these conditions, even when the growing pressure of the Allies began to insist on the evacuation of these provinces by the German forces. The only obstacles to success were the young national governments, which the German commander did everything in his power to overcome. Although at first unsuccessful, he succeeded with the aid of the Balts in overthrowing the Latvian Provisional Government, which took refuge in a ship at Liepaja under British protection. He then proceeded to attack the Bolshevik forces, and with the assistance of the Balts and also of some Latvian national units which saw the necessity of ridding the country of the Russians, he recaptured Riga on the 22nd May, 1919. Meanwhile in the north of Latvia a mixed force of Latvians and Estonians had been successful in their operations against the Bolsheviks, but they formed an obstacle to the German commander's project of a reconquered Latvia, which was to be supplemented by the stirring up of a revolution against the Provisional Government in Estonia, with the result that there was a re-alignment of Estonian and Latvian national

forces against the Germans and Balts leading to the defeat of the latter in June of the same year.

By this time an Allied Commission had been appointed to supervise matters in the Baltic States, and under its authority the Latvian Provisional Government was reinstated and concluded an armistice with the Germans, who agreed to withdraw from Riga and to evacuate Courland. As soon as the Provisional Government returned to Riga they concentrated their attention on the task of consolidating the Latvian army; and an endeavour was made to conciliate the Balt element by offering them representation in the Government, and to secure their co-operation in the common struggle against the Bolsheviks. The purely German forces failed to carry out the terms of the armistice by remaining in Courland, where they were reorganized and joined by units composed of Russian prisoners of war. Eventually the Allies insisted on Von der Goltz's recall, but his successor, Bermond-Avaloff, continued for some time to inspire this 'Russian Army of the North-West', which was as dangerous to the young border states as in its original purely German composition. This force very quickly proved itself to be anti-Latvian rather than anti-Bolshevist, and by the 8th October it was marching once more on Riga. The Latvian army, however, succeeded with the help of Allied warships in holding the mouth of the Daugava,¹ and although the city was under fire for at least a month, Bermond's rabble eventually had to retreat owing to want of supplies. This retreat was carried out in the most disgraceful manner, and the Bermondist army thereby earned the distinction of excelling both the Germans and Russians in the degree of vandalism and wanton destruction to which it descended. But this time Courland was completely evacuated, so that the Latvian army could now concentrate on driving the Bolsheviks out of Latgalia, the only part of Latvia still remaining in their hands. Again success crowned the Latvian effort, but the operations were carried no farther than strictly ethnographical, rather than strategical, reasons demanded. Elections were held for the

¹ Formerly known as the Dvina.

Constituent Assembly in the middle of April, and at its first meeting on the 1st May, 1920, M. Tschakste, the president of the National Council, was elected President of the Assembly. At the beginning of the following year, on the 26th January, 1921, both Latvia and Estonia were recognized *de jure* by the Supreme Council of the Allies, and on the 22nd September were admitted as members of the League of Nations.

Latvia covers an area of about 25,000 square miles, slightly less than that of Austria, and is traditionally divided into four provinces, each of which has its individual characteristics. Although these provinces have preserved their old names of Vidzeme, Kurzeme, Zemgale, and Latgale,¹ they are no longer administrative divisions, and their significance is more cultural than anything else. Before the Great War there were over 2½ million people in Latvian territory, but this number was reduced by 40 per cent as a result of the fighting in this area. Since, however, the establishment of an independent state, the population has steadily increased owing to the return of war refugees from Russia, where they had fled during the advance of the German armies. From 1919 to August, 1924, 220,000 refugees and other people of Latvian origin returned from Russia to assume Latvian citizenship, and the present population of the country is nearly 2 millions. As regards occupation, nearly 80 per cent of the total population is engaged in agriculture and fishing, while the remainder devote their energies to industry, commerce, and transport services. Latvia is essentially an industrialized agricultural country. In character the Latvians differ widely from the Estonians and, although with the meagre resources at their disposal they have to some extent succeeded in their agricultural policy as well as in other directions, certain national shortcomings are making their task one of no small difficulty. The German families seem to play an important part in the country, while the Latvians are impregnated with certain racial qualities which make good government difficult of achievement, render the country liable to external

¹ Otherwise known as Livonia, Courland, Semgalia, and Latgalia.

pressure, and encourage the activities of foreign commercial adventurers. Yet, in face of all these difficulties, some of which are very hard to remove, this courageous little nation has put her shoulder to the wheel in a most remarkable way. Her statesmen and administrators have failed in some directions, but that has not prevented them from trying other ways and other means to bring prosperity to a land that was laid desolate by the ravages of war. Although the Government have made grievous mistakes involving financial losses which they can ill afford, there is a marked change for the better since the days of Russian rule. Indeed, it is necessary to judge the present conditions prevailing in all these Baltic States from the standpoint of their pre-war backwardness. The casual observer, arriving in Tallinn or Riga, is liable to be disappointed, and it is not until he compares the conditions of life under the new republican governments with the dark days of Tsardom that he begins to realize that these people have been working like slaves to bring their countries into line with the completely civilized nations of Europe. If they have not yet succeeded, it is through no want of effort on their part: it is due rather to immense difficulties, racial, financial, educational, and material, which have rendered their task almost superhuman. Should the Latvians succeed—and there is every hope that they should do so—they will deserve the unstinted admiration of all who attach any weight at all to the value of human endeavour.

Since the birth of the Latvian Republic, an important agricultural reform has been carried out, by which the large estates of the landlords, chiefly Baltic barons, have been split up to provide lots for landless peasants wishing to develop the land. Before the war 72 per cent of the population was landless, and the bulk of the land belonged to the owners of large estates. Even before the war these agrarian and social conditions caused the rural population to be dissatisfied, and this was noticeable as early as the disturbances of 1905. Then the Great War, the Russian Revolution, and the Bolshevist 'reign of terror' brought severe suffering to estate-owners, with the result that many

landlords deserted their estates, while others left them on account of the fighting round Riga and the Bermondst invasion of 1919. The Latvian Government had, therefore, taken under their control nearly half the estates in Latvia before the enforcement of the new Agrarian Law. At the end of 1920 the Government had taken over about 600 estates, with an area of over 800,000 hectares. As result of the reform, over 4 million acres of land were obtained for distribution, and over 90 per cent of this has already been apportioned. The result of this has been that as many as 87,000 new farms, from 5 to 50 acres each, have sprung up in different parts of the country. The acreage under cultivation has greatly increased, compared with pre-war figures. In 1923, the acreage under cultivation, which had been considerably reduced by the ravages of the war, rose to 2,610,000 acres, as compared with 2,580,000 acres in 1913. Production is steadily increasing with a marked increase in the use of agricultural machinery. The motor-plough, which was practically unknown before the war, has been introduced, and at the end of 1923 there were in actual use 127 tractors, 1,929 complete and 369 single threshing machines, 474 traction engines, and 55 wind turbines. Live-stock has also increased steadily in the last ten years. The increase in the number of horses and cattle is particularly large, the former having risen by 100,000 in the course of six years. During the same period, the number of cattle increased by 187,000 head, and exceeds pre-war level by 45,000 head. Pig-breeding, on the other hand, has developed much more slowly, but it may be assumed that progress will also be made in this direction, as the export of bacon is producing very satisfactory results. Owing to climatic conditions, sheep-breeding is not very successful ; pedigree stock cannot endure the winter conditions, while Latvian breeds are not very productive. It is, therefore, to be expected that sheep-breeding will continue to decline, and will ultimately be replaced by an increase in cattle.

Latvian agriculture has been turning more and more from the raising of crops to stock-breeding, and the export of meat under state control is gradually developing. But the

most striking results have been achieved in dairy farming. In 1926, over 10 million kilos of butter were exported, compared with just over 7 million in the previous year, and the whole industry is under Government control in order to maintain a high standard of produce. As there are now about 200,000 farms in Latvia, the country may be regarded as one of small farmers who work in co-operation with an organized agricultural industry.

But, besides the branches of industry connected with agriculture, there are various other industries dependent on the import of raw materials. Before the war, Latvia was one of the most industrialized parts of Russia, and the factories of Riga alone provided employment for about 100,000 workers. Various kinds of raw material were imported for the construction of machinery and rolling stock, and for the building of ships; while such articles as rubber goods, cement, cellulose, textiles, chemicals, foodstuffs, and household requirements were manufactured for export to Russia and other countries. Riga was, in fact, the industrial centre of the former Baltic Provinces of Russia, as well as one of the leading commercial ports of the whole Russian Empire.

Riga's industrial development was largely due to the economic policy of Count Kankrin, Russian Minister of Finance, who tried to encourage, as far as possible, the use of raw materials on the spot, and was lavish in the granting of state support for this purpose. The construction of the railway lines—Riga–Daugavpils¹ and Riga–Vitebsk—in the 'fifties of last century also contributed to the industrial development of the whole country by extending the hinterland of the Baltic border and reviving Baltic trade and industry. During the period 1870–90 large industrial undertakings were established, including the first branches of German enterprises, and by the end of that period Riga was already an industrial centre with which Russian consumers had to reckon. Unfortunately, the rapid progress of the border industries was subsequently checked by the economic policy of the then Minister of Finance, who aimed at industrializing the interior of Russia; but the crisis was soon

¹ Formerly known as Dvinsk.

overcome by the success of Riga manufacturers in adapting themselves to new conditions, and by competing in such a way that the privileged industries of the interior were eclipsed by the organization, reliability and precision of the merchants of Riga. Moreover, the crisis was all the more easily overcome owing to an influx of foreign capital, which was invested in various branches of local industry. Foreign manufacturers chose Riga on account of the efficient auxiliary industries existing in that centre, and because of the highly qualified workers, both of which were entirely lacking in the interior of Russia. These new, and financially strong, undertakings naturally stimulated the whole industrial tendency of Riga. The population of the city grew in proportion to the expansion of industry, and from 170,000 in 1870 the population increased to 500,000 in 1913. Before the outbreak of the Great War, there were in Riga 370 factories and over 100 small and medium-sized enterprises. The value of the output amounted to 19.7 million pounds sterling in 1910, as compared with 12.1 million pounds sterling in 1900.

The Great War entirely destroyed Latvian manufactures. The final collapse came in 1915, when, under pressure of the advancing German forces, the Russians decided to evacuate everything. About 60,000 wagon-loads of machines, valued approximately at 1 milliard of roubles, were transported to the interior of Russia to go to rack and ruin; and only a very small proportion of all this valuable plant was returned after the creation of the Latvian Republic. Indeed, the evacuation was so thoroughly carried out that not only the industrial plant, but raw materials, manufactured goods, and even the technical personnel, were included in the clearance. In some cases the entire staff was removed *en masse* to the interior.

In 1918 it was impossible to think of restoring the shattered industries, as the new state started with practically no resources, and had to face great difficulties that were only partially overcome by a circumspect and energetic financial policy. As Latvia is essentially an agricultural country, agriculture had to receive first consideration, but after

three years it became possible to support industry to some extent. The textile industry, one of the most important factors in the economic life of the country, was reconstructed in a comparatively short space of time. But Latvian manufacturers practically had to start all over again, and their difficulties were increased by the fact that Russia, which was their chief market before the war, was no longer a purchaser to any considerable extent. It is only recently, as result of the Latvian-Russian Treaty of Commerce, that there has been a slight change for the better. By 1926 the number of workers employed in factories had reached over half the pre-war figure, but there is a shortage of the necessary working capital to extend operations and bring about a corresponding increase of output. This is partly due to the inability of the Riga Municipality to meet a heavy debt contracted before the war, and the consequent want of confidence in Latvia's financial position. Yet there are reasons to believe that foreign capital is gradually finding its way to Latvia, although the conditions of the country are not yet as inviting as they might be.

Riga has also lost most of its transit trade with Russia, although its geographical position ensures for this port the largest share of that trade, in so far as central Russia and the Ukraine are concerned. The river Daugava is a most convenient means of communication, and is specially important for the transport of lumber, which is floated down its course to the shores of the Baltic. Moreover, the railway lines connecting the three large Latvian ports of Riga, Liepaja, and Ventspils ¹ with the principal manufacturing centres and agricultural districts of Russia may almost be regarded as a guarantee of the successful development of the transit trade. The Riga-Moscow line is the shortest line connecting the central industrial regions of Russia with a port on the Baltic, while the Riga-Tsaritsin railway gives access to the most fertile grain-producing areas. Yet to-day Riga, deprived of its vast hinterland, has been transformed into an empty shell: hundreds of factories are lying idle, and the activities of the port are a mere fraction of what

¹ Formerly known as Windau.

they were in former times. The Russians are concentrating their attention on a huge city which appears to be a distinct national debit, and one which may prove too burdensome for the young Latvian State to bear. If Russia has one eye on Tallinn, she has both eyes on Riga, which was formerly one of the most important cities of the whole Russian Empire and her chief port on the Baltic ; and not only is this the case, but the conditions existing in Latvia in general, and in Riga in particular, are such as provide little resistance to Russian endeavour. Latvia is in the unfortunate position of having to depend on Russia for her trade more than any other Baltic country, and in possessing as her capital a top-heavy city that practically constitutes the ' Key of the Baltic States '. It, therefore, seems that Latvia is rather heavily handicapped in her struggle for advancement, and that Riga is unlikely to retrieve its prosperity unless as a city much reduced in size or with the help of foreign enterprise.

Riga is a great solid-looking city with broad boulevards, imposing squares, and spacious parks. In part, it is still a typical city of Imperial Russia, with long straight streets paved with cobble-stones and lined with severe buildings of heavy dignity and yet of monotonous simplicity. I have never been in Petrograd, but I should think that the more modern parts of Riga closely resemble the architecture introduced into the former Russian capital by Peter the Great. On the other hand, there are quarters that make Riga a mediæval relic of the Hanseatic League. Indeed, the ancient and beautiful churches with their Gothic spires, the quaint-looking guildhalls, and the heavy masonry of the older buildings recall the solid power of the Teutonic Knights that governed the destinies of the Baltic in the Middle Ages. Modern Latvia has made but a small impression on the general atmosphere of the city, and the monuments of former *régimes* seems almost to overpower the struggling efforts of the Latvians to introduce their reorganization into this former Russo-German stronghold. The Latvian language is fairly general, but Russian, German, and Yiddish are still much used as languages of commerce. Although both

the Latvians and Estonians dislike Russia and everything Russian, they have to resort to the Russian language in communication with one another. I know of no other place in the world that can be compared with Riga. It is a great city, and it even has the air of a metropolis, but modern activity seems to be circulating in a setting that belongs to entirely different conditions. There is none of that great contrast between the ancient and the modern, which is to be found in Rome, Athens, or Constantinople; yet there is that which represents the great difference of temperament between what is Slav and what is not. Riga impressed me as a city that ought to be the capital of a vast country, a centre of gaiety and brilliant gatherings, but it is neither the one nor the other. For some obscure reason, one has in Riga the feeling of 'being all dressed up and nowhere to go'. At the Hôtel Petersbourg, which is situated facing the austere edifice of the Castle, one half expects to witness the arrivals and departures of mediæval landlords with large retinues of servants, and to find a meeting-place of noble families from hundreds of miles around. Although before the war this was to some extent a *rendezvous* of the Baltic barons, who came to Riga to attend the *Landsraten*, it is no longer so to-day. The old hostelry seems half dead. An occasional Balt strolls in to read a German newspaper, a few travellers arrive from the station in a taxi, and an English commercial gentleman comes to drink a whisky-and-soda, for which he pays a high price. Living is expensive in Latvia, compared with Finland and Estonia, as the local currency has been stabilized on the basis of the gold franc, or 25 lats to the pound sterling.

In her financial policy Latvia has been singularly successful. When the Republic was formed in 1918, the country was greatly impoverished owing to the requisition of corn, cattle, horses, etc., by the German armies of occupation, though part of the supplies, which could not be removed, were sold back to the peasants on the evacuation of the troops. In April, 1919, a new paper currency, the Latvian rouble, was issued by the Government to replace the ost-roubles and tsar-roubles previously used in different parts

of the country. This means of finance was continued for a considerable time, with the result that the exchange in terms of sterling rose from 215.5 roubles in January, 1920, to 2,000 to 2,400 roubles in May, 1921. After the demobilization of the army in the autumn of 1920, the fresh issues of currency were mainly for production purposes, and such produce as hides, flax and linseed were bought by this means from the peasants. The sale of the stocks thus acquired brought in 2,000 million paper roubles to the state, and enabled the Finance Minister, Ringold Kalning, to raise the value of the rouble to 1,140 to the pound sterling, at which point it was stabilized. The currency was backed by gold to the value of 15 million gold francs and by foreign balances amounting to 7,730,000 gold francs. The lat, which is equal in value to one gold franc, was fixed at 50 paper roubles, and the 2,270 million paper roubles in circulation were thus covered to the extent of about 50 per cent in gold. In 1923, the Bank of Latvia was founded and provided by the state with a capital of 10 million lats. Banknotes may be issued only for such an amount as there is available security in gold, stable foreign currency (pounds sterling and U.S. dollars), and short-term bills. Besides the Lat notes issued by the Bank of Latvia, a small quantity of Treasury notes in Latvian roubles, secured by state property, are still in circulation, the rate of exchange of the roubles being fixed at 50 roubles to the Lat. The budget is balanced, and the National Debt, incurred during the first period of the country's existence, has to a considerable extent been paid off during the last few years, so that the indebtedness of the country does not exceed 35s. *per capita*.

Although Latvia is geographically in a difficult position and financially at a disadvantage, the conditions such as I have described hold out hope of a prosperous future, provided that foreign capital and enterprise are introduced into the country. There are sufficient openings to induce foreign firms to establish themselves, if the Latvian Government recognize the necessity of adopting an attractive policy, and are prepared to accept external advice and some measure

of financial control until the country has accumulated sufficient strength to work out its own destiny.

Latvia's commercial policy is based on the principle of 'most favoured nation' treatment, limited by the so-called 'Baltic and Russian' clause, which stipulates that the rights and privileges granted by Latvia to Finland, Estonia, Lithuania, and Russia do not fall within the scope of 'most favoured nation' treatment, and may therefore not be claimed by third countries in virtue of the general 'most favoured nation' clause. The conception of this regional limitation has a double object in view. On the one hand, it represents the formal guarantee of economic co-operation among the Baltic States, possibly preparing the way for the creation of larger economic units and an eventual customs union; on the other hand, it represents the desire of Latvia and the other Baltic States to reserve to themselves the right to renew closer economic relations with Russia. Although these new states are politically separated from Russia, they hope to regain some part of their former importance as producers for the Russian market and as intermediaries in the traffic between Russia and the West. With regard to Russia, the Latvians are economically in a very delicate position. They do not want to be attracted within the Russian orbit, yet they realize that good commercial relations with Moscow are essential to their prosperity. It would be foolish for Latvia to allow political considerations completely to outweigh her economic interests, and there is little doubt that the principles underlying Latvian policy in this direction are sound. Whether there is wisdom in the means adopted for carrying out these principles is another matter, and only time will show what results are forthcoming. A Russo-Latvian Commercial Treaty was signed in June, 1927, and criticism was evoked both in Latvia and in Estonia by the terms of this instrument. The Latvian commercial community criticized it partly on the ground that the liberty of action accorded to Russian commercial organizations in Latvia was not accorded reciprocally in the same measure to Latvian citizens in the U.S.S.R., and partly on the ground that it

invested several of the members and portions of the premises of the Soviet trade agency, which was to be established in Latvia, with diplomatic immunities which had been notoriously abused in other countries—in Germany in 1924 and in Great Britain at the very time when the Russo-Latvian negotiations had been taking place. The Estonians, on the other hand, contended that this commercial treaty would render unworkable the recently concluded customs union between Estonia and Latvia. As this economic arrangement with Russia came right on the top of the initialling of a Russo-Latvian non-aggression pact, Latvian policy became the object of strong criticism in Estonia ; but it neither had the effect of disturbing Baltic solidarity nor of re-attracting Latvia into the Russian fold. If the Latvians have somewhat committed themselves, it has been through force of circumstances ; and should there be reason to suppose that they have gone farther than was necessary, allowance should be made for the difficulty of their position. In dealing with the U.S.S.R., there is always the danger that a small neighbouring country may be drawn farther than it intends to go ; and it is not easy to negotiate matters so that national interests are promoted in one direction and safeguarded in another. If Latvia had European backing of some sort, her difficulties *vis-à-vis* Russia would be immensely simplified.

The economic relations between England and Latvia are of long standing, dating back for centuries. Even in early times large English commercial houses established branches in Latvian seaports, and were soon followed by firms which settled in Riga and other towns. The descendants of these early pioneers have their homes in Latvia to-day, and it is noteworthy that the first industrial undertakings in the country were the result of British initiative. After the creation of the republic, England became the leading consumer of Latvian produce, and it is significant that the first commercial treaty of first importance concluded by the new Latvian Government was that with Great Britain. Since then conditions have changed, but for many reasons it is to be hoped that British interest in

Latvia's future will steadily increase for the benefit of both countries.

Perhaps the most hopeful feature of the situation in Latvia—and this applies equally to Estonia—is the fact that, while Russia is at present waning in political and economic strength, these two Baltic States are slowly increasing in vigour. Their great opportunity lies in consolidating themselves before a new situation arises which may make their task more difficult; and it is impossible to over-estimate the immense benefit which would accrue to them from the political and economic support of some foreign Power or Powers, in whose interests it would be to establish stepping-stones to the Russian market of the future. With the assurance of security and the ways and means of material progress, there is no reason why their misfortunes of the past and their uncertainty of the present should not lead to prosperity in the future.

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Let us now consider the international relations of Finland, Estonia, and Latvia, before pursuing this study farther south. Obviously the most important problem of foreign policy confronting each of these states has been their relations with Russia, who could be to each of them a profitable friend or a dangerous enemy, although Finland's position is now very much modified by the fact that the bulk of her export trade is with Great Britain and the United States. In theory, the Bolshevists fully recognized the doctrine of self-determination; but it was their policy to use this doctrine in order to reconstitute the former Russian Empire under their own system by bringing the seceding states together again as a federation of autonomous Soviet Republics. This could be achieved if in each of these countries there was a strong communist movement; for, even if the local communists were in a minority, internal revolutions might be organized and the seceding states brought into the Soviet system. For this reason the relations of these states with other countries were closely connected with their own internal affairs. In the cases of Finland, Estonia, and Latvia, the declaration of in-

dependence had been preceded and followed by a civil war between the ' Reds ' and other parties ; and the Governments in all these states had to be constantly on their guard against a revival of communist agitation, as it was a foregone conclusion that any movement of this kind would be encouraged and directly assisted by the Government of Moscow. The independence of these countries, therefore, largely depended on the skill with which they consolidated themselves at home ; and in Estonia and Latvia this task was all the more difficult because their recent achievement of independence had involved not only a political but an agrarian revolution.

The independence of Finland had been recognized by Russia at a comparatively early stage of the Revolution, but a state of war had arisen between the two countries and had continued until the signature of a Peace Treaty at Tartu on the 14th October, 1920. This treaty not only fixed Finland's frontiers on the Russian side and dealt with the status of East Carelia, but made provision for many other matters. The new Finnish-Russian frontier was approximately identical with the old boundary between the Grand Duchy of Finland and the former Russian Empire, except that Finland acquired a narrow strip of additional territory between Murmansk and the eastern frontier of Norway, which gave her an ice-free outlet in the Arctic and the site for a port at Petsamo.

Meanwhile, Estonia and Latvia had declared their independence, but could not obtain Allied recognition until after the conclusion of a Russo-Estonian Peace Treaty at Tartu on the 2nd February, 1920, and a Russo-Latvian Peace Treaty at Riga on the 11th August of the same year. These Treaties included a formal recognition of independence, and it is interesting to observe the actual wording of the clause in the case of the latter. The Treaty of Riga makes the following provision :

' By virtue of the principle proclaimed by the Federal Socialist Republic of the Russian Soviets, which establishes the right to self-determination for all nations, even to the point of total separation from the states with which they have been incorporated, and

in view of the desire expressed by the Latvian people to possess an independent national existence, Russia unreservedly recognizes the independence and sovereignty of the Latvian State and voluntarily and irrevocably renounces all sovereign rights over the Latvian people and territory which formerly belonged to Russia under the then existing constitutional law as well as under international treaties, which, in the sense here indicated, shall in future cease to be valid. The previous status of subjection of Latvia to Russia shall not entail any obligation towards Russia on the part of the Latvian people or territory.'¹

These Treaties, like the Treaty with Finland, also fixed the frontiers between these two states and Russia.

In the mutual relations between Finland, Estonia, and Latvia, the lead was naturally taken by Finland, as the strongest and longest established state, when the conduct of Finnish foreign affairs was in the hands of Dr. Holsti, now Finnish Minister at Bern and representative at the League of Nations. At first there seemed to be a movement in favour of Finland entering a Scandinavian *bloc*, but eventually Dr. Holsti began to work for a definite alliance between his country and the Baltic States. A series of conferences took place between representatives of the various countries having a common interest *vis-à-vis* Russia, and the idea of a Baltic Alliance was accepted in principle; but the path was not so easy as it seemed, which was abundantly clear when the relations between the aforementioned countries and Poland came to be discussed at Warsaw in March, 1922. The prevailing feeling in Finland was that of avoiding any commitments that might involve the country unnecessarily in a conflict with Russia, while at the same time it was necessary to look for external support in case of trouble. As the Scandinavian countries were determined to avoid Russian complications, a Polish orientation had to be taken into consideration by all these Baltic countries. As result of the Warsaw Conference, an agreement was made by which the parties undertook 'to observe benevolent neutrality towards any of the signatory states which might be attacked without provocation, and to consult immediately with regard

¹ The wording was a little different in the Treaty of Tartu.

to subsequent steps to be taken'. This, however, went farther than Finnish opinion approved. The Finnish Diet refused to ratify the agreement, and Dr. Holsti was forced to resign, which may be said to have definitely put an end to proposals for anything in the nature of a general military alliance between Finland, Estonia and Latvia, and Poland.

On the other hand, Estonia and Latvia were drawn together by the special circumstances in which they were affected by the Russian menace. Not only were they weaker than either Finland or Poland in territory, resources, population, and political experience, but, unlike their northern and southern neighbours, they barred the way between Russia and her natural outlets on the Baltic. I have already dealt with the difficult position of these two countries in this respect, and it may well be imagined how alarmed their peoples became at the continual activity of communist agitators, and how apprehensive they were of Russia's intentions. This brought about a strong movement in Estonia and Latvia in favour of a Baltic *bloc*, including the Scandinavian States ; or failing that, of a union including Poland. But if these two Baltic States were anxious to devise some plan for their common protection, there were others who did not wish to burn their fingers with Soviet fire. And so it came about that the first of the foregoing proposals was doomed by the refusal of Sweden to support it, while the second was hindered by the reluctance of Finland to commit herself to a combination that might land her in difficulties later on. Moreover, the *impasse* which had been reached in Polish-Lithuanian relations over the question of Vilna had the effect of bringing Estonia and Latvia into closer and more intimate contact with one another. A political and military agreement had been concluded between the two states in July, 1921, and two years later a Defensive Alliance ¹ was signed, the essential points of which were that the two Governments should pursue a purely pacific policy towards all nations, and especially towards the neighbouring countries ; that they

¹ 1st November, 1923.

should concert together and give each other mutual political and diplomatic support in their respective international relations; that if either were attacked on its existing frontiers without provocation, the other state should at once come to its aid with armed assistance; and that neither state should conclude an alliance with a third party without the consent of the other. Agreements of an economic nature were also signed, binding the two countries yet closer together, but there was a strong desire, which exists to this day, for the support of Western Europe, and especially of Great Britain. The British Government, however, was disinclined to accept any definite commitments or to make any engagements other than those incurred by membership of the League of Nations.

Like Finland, Estonia and Latvia have consistently pursued a wise and moderate foreign policy, while they have established themselves by means of commercial treaties in the general economic system of Europe. At the same time, both states did their utmost to foster the important transit trade between the Baltic ports and the Russian hinterland, fully realizing that their future much depended on their capacity to make Russia feel that she was not cut off from her sea outlets. They have done, and are doing, everything possible to facilitate Russian transit, and Tallinn harbour is being enlarged and improved with this end in view. This policy is broad-minded and, although Russia is inclined to play one port off against another, it is the best insurance policy against the realization of Russian ambitions at their expense. But, apart from the fact that Estonia and Latvia have become close friends and allies, the situation in the Baltic States has been greatly influenced by the Polish-Lithuanian dispute. Any effort by Estonia or Latvia towards a *rapprochement* with Lithuania is regarded as unfriendly to Poland, while Russia's attitude in that troubled area makes commitments to Poland dangerous. Moreover, Poland's relations with Germany have been more or less strained on account of the 'Corridor' and Upper Silesian questions, while the Baltic States have a commercial interest in remaining Germany's friends. Such is the tangled skein

of Baltic politics, and the farther south one travels the more tangled it becomes, with Lithuania as the sort of connecting link between the northern states and those of North-Eastern Europe.

CHAPTER V

LITHUANIA AND HER TROUBLES

WHILE Estonia and Latvia, who are bound by a political treaty, can be considered more or less together on account of their geographical positions as well as their political interests, Lithuania must be regarded as a separate entity, partly owing to her past history and partly to her different orientation. To attempt anything approaching an adequate description of Lithuania's past history would mean poking about in the dim ages before the Christian era, and a digression of this sort would scarcely be in keeping with the object of this book. I will, therefore, confine my attention to a very brief summary of the events, spread over centuries, which form the background of the new Lithuanian republic.

At some period between the seventh and fifth centuries B.C., various kindred tribes, forming an entirely separate branch of the Indo-European family, settled on the shores of the Baltic between the Dvina and Vistula Rivers. Here, protected by primeval forests and impassable swamps, they dwelt in peace for centuries, trading with their neighbours, but being little influenced by those by whom they were surrounded. They were a simple agricultural people, deeply attached to their ancient language and customs, and especially to their religion, by which they worshipped the forces of nature, their chief deity being Perkunas, the god of sky and thunder. These tribes first appear in history as Aestians or Balts, and later as Lithuanians, Borussians, and Letts. Tacitus in his *Germania* refers to them as Aestii ; he calls their country the ' Land of Amber ' ; and he states that their language is entirely distinct from German. The period of comparative peace ended with

the dawn of the eleventh century, and from that time forward the Lithuanians have had a most eventful history. Yet, in spite of the repeated invasions of Teuton and Slav, of foreign domination and unbearable oppression, the Lithuanian nation has maintained its individuality to this day and, what is still more remarkable, it has preserved its language in a very pure form. To-day the Lithuanian tongue, closely related to Sanskrit and bearing many resemblances to Latin and Greek, enjoys the distinction of being one of the oldest living languages in Europe. In this connection it is interesting to note that, while Estonian is akin to Finnish, the Lithuanian and Latvian languages are closely allied.

Unlike some of the other border states, Lithuania is not a new political formation, but, like Poland, is a state restored under new conditions. The Lithuanians had formed a state in more or less the present meaning of the term by the middle of the thirteenth century. Up to that time the various Lithuanian clans had their own political and military organizations under the leadership of their own chieftains, who became later known as 'dukes', and usually joined forces when threatened by a common enemy. At the beginning of the thirteenth century the Lithuanian peoples were distributed as follows: To the west, in East Prussia of to-day, lived the Borussians or Old Prussians, who had their own dialect and an original pagan culture, but towards the end of the tenth century the first Christian missionaries had visited this area. They had, however, achieved little success, and had lost two of their number in the martyrdom of St. Adalbert and St. Bruno-Boniface. To avenge their death, the Polish king Boleslaus Chrobry had undertaken military campaigns against the Old Prussians, which lasted with intervals during the whole of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. But the Old Prussians were a formidable enemy and were so successful in these campaigns that the Pope intervened, and summoned the Christian chivalry of Europe to arms against these northern pagans. All these efforts were, however, unsuccessful, until in the year A.D. 1230 the specially summoned

Teutonic Order (Orden der Ritter des Hospitals S. Marien der Deutschen zu Jerusalem) began a systematic extermination of the Old Prussians, thereby laying the foundations of German Prussia on the ruined homes and graves of these pagan people. The Old Prussians fought with heroic desperation for their faith and liberty, but the Teutonic Order was too strong for them, and they were practically exterminated to make room for a 'Christianized' country mainly composed of smouldering ruins and widespread desolation. This mission once achieved, the conquerors were free to turn their attention to the central Lithuanians.

South of the line Niemen-Grodno-Suvalki and the Masurian Lakes, between the Bobr and Narev Rivers and the Bieloviez Forest, lived a second Lithuanian tribe known as the Jotvingians, who became victims of their Russian and Polish neighbours at about the same time as the Teutons subdued their Old Prussian kinsmen, and disappeared from history as their lands were occupied by the invaders. To eastward the Lithuanians came in contact with the Russians. With the fall of the power of Kiev, the Lithuanian chiefs were often drawn into the continued strife among the lesser rulers of the Duchy of Polock, but they did not fail to take advantage of Russian chaos to occupy Russian territory. Hence, by the beginning of the thirteenth century, the extensive territories of Polock, Turov, and even of Smolensk, had fallen into the hands of the Lithuanian dukes, who saved the Russians in these territories from the Tartar yoke, often at the price of much of their own blood.

In the north the Lithuanians had the kindred Lettish tribes for neighbours. The Latvians, or Letts, then occupied much the same territory as they do to-day. The river Dvina was the ancient route to the east used by German traders, who travelled under the protection of German knights as a safeguard against the attacks of Letts and Livonians, and here also the Pope proclaimed a crusade against the pagans. The crusaders founded Riga as a military base, and in A.D. 1204 formed the 'Order of the Warrior Brethren of Christ', which later became known

as the 'Knights of the Sword'. Here, as in Old Prussia, the pagan inhabitants were baptized with fire and sword, and the crusaders devoted much more attention to the acquisition of goods and territory than to the promotion of the Christian faith. As most of the knights had returned but recently from the Holy Land or from some centre of plunder in Europe, they were distinctly demoralized. By the year 1235, the Order had conquered almost all Latvian territory, a large part of Estonia, and a part of Courland; and the Knights of the Sword tried to establish direct communication with the Knights of the Cross (the Teutonic Order) in Old Prussia, by way of Klaipeda,¹ thereby cutting off the central Lithuanians from access to the sea. And so it came about that the latter, attacked by the Germans from the west and north, and by the Russians and Poles from the east and south, were compelled to forget their differences and unite in a strong defensive organization. In this way the energetic Duke Mindaugas succeeded in uniting all the lands inhabited by Lithuanians into one principality, and became the founder of the Lithuanian State.

The new state had, however, to face a long period of bitter warfare with the Teutonic Orders, who became their hereditary enemies. Yet, in spite of the continual fighting with the Teutons in the west, a succession of Grand Dukes² tried to obtain a strong foothold in the east. By occupying extensive Russian territories which, undermined by internal dissension and threatened by Tartar invasions, sought aid and protection, Lithuania reached the summit of her power and prosperity in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and her territories in those days extended from the Baltic to the Black Sea. They comprised not only territories later included in the provinces of Vilna, Kaunas, Suvalki and part of Grodno, at that time inhabited mostly by Lithuanians *sensu stricto*, but also vast areas inhabited by various Slav tribes, now represented by the Soviet provinces of Minsk,

¹ Formerly known as Memel.

² Gediminas (1341), Algirdas (1377), Kestutis (1382), and Vytautas (1430).

Mohilev, Vitebsk, Smolensk, Chezniehov, Poltava, Kiev, Volhynia and Podolia. But this expansion was fatal to Lithuania, which was too weak a state to hold this immense territory. Continued warfare reduced the strength of the nation and forced it into an alliance with Poland against the Germans, who were a common enemy. The union between the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was brought about in 1386 by the marriage of the Lithuanian Grand Duke Jagello to the Polish Queen Hedwiga, thus establishing a political combination in which Lithuania was three times the size of Poland. The contracting parties were to retain their names, laws, administrative institutions, and financial and military organizations, and it was not until the pact of Lublin in 1569 that the foreign ministries of the two countries were amalgamated. An analogy may be found to some extent in the union between Austria and Hungary, the Lithuanian element in the former case bearing much the same relation to the Poles as the Magyar element in the latter case bore to the Teutons.

The first consequence of the union was the reception of the new king and the entire population of Lithuania into the Roman Catholic Church, which remains the religion of the country to this day. But it roused the bitter opposition of many chiefs under the leadership of Vytautas, who became Grand Duke and devoted his life to trying to secure Lithuanian independence. Vytautas wished to convert Lithuania into a kingdom and to receive a royal crown, an idea inspired by Sigismund, Emperor of Germany and of the Holy Roman Empire, with a view to shattering the alliance between Lithuania and Poland. This plan was never realized, and the Lithuanian patriot had to content himself with the defeat of the Teutonic Order at Grünwald by Polish-Lithuanian forces under King Jagello.

As time passed, Lithuania was weakened by long and difficult wars with Russia, who tried to free and unite the various Russian territories, while Polish influence increased and finally led to the Union of Lublin in 1569. Under this pact a federation was formed under one king,

who was also elected Grand Duke of Lithuania. There was a common Senate and Diet and a common foreign policy, but Lithuania had her own government, treasury, law courts, army, and administration. The union did create a certain feeling of cordiality between the two states, but the Lithuanians, many anxious to break away from the sway of Poland, gradually sank into a state of dependence. Polish culture, always infectious, made great headway among the nobility and educated class, and created an important gulf between them and the common peasants, who remained faithful to their native tongue and traditions. Indeed, the ruling classes in Lithuania became so impregnated with Polish civilization that it was only with the recent growth of Lithuanian separatism that it was possible to tell the difference between an educated Lithuanian and an educated Pole. Many of Poland's most distinguished men are of Lithuanian origin, and even Marshal Pilsudski himself acknowledges himself to be a Lithuanian Pole. Meanwhile, internal chaos and repeated appeals for foreign intervention provided the powerful neighbours of the federation with a pretext for dividing its territories among themselves, and in this way the dual state was involved in a common downfall. The final partition of Poland in 1795 marked the end of Polish and Lithuanian independence, and while Lithuania Minor had long before been annexed by Prussia, historic Lithuania came under the domination of Russia.

The period during which the country was subject to Russia, from 1795 to 1915, was the darkest period in Lithuanian history. The name was erased from the map of the world, and the territory was known merely as the North-West Provinces of Russia. It is difficult for us in England to realize the terrible burden of Russian oppression. Only Russians took part in the administration of the country and the towns; only Russians were eligible for employment on the railways, in the post offices, or even to repair the roads. The Russian language was forced upon the people; the Russian state religion was substituted for Roman Catholicism; and the people were not even allowed to pray

in their own language. The insurrections of 1830 and 1863 only made matters worse, and gave the Russians a pretext for closing the schools in Lithuanian and prohibiting all printing in the Lithuanian language. Determined completely to Russify their former conquerors, the Russians nowhere used such cruel methods of oppression as they did in this unfortunate country. But no amount of persecution could extinguish the national spirit of the masses which, fostered by intellectual men of peasant origin, grew in strength towards the end of the nineteenth century. Lithuanian books were smuggled into the country, the children were taught secretly at home, and national individuality became more and more consistent. An opportunity for the public expression of national aspirations came in 1905 with the wave of revolution that swept over Russia after her defeat by Japan; and a Lithuanian congress was convened at the ancient capital, Vilna, at which over 2,000 delegates from all classes demanded extensive autonomy for their country restored within its ethnographic boundaries, with Vilna as the capital. The Russians agreed to these demands and made promises which they had no intention of carrying out, but the hope of liberty only gathered strength for a better opportunity of expression on the occasion of the Great War.

With the outbreak of the Great War, Lithuania became the scene of extensive military operations, and the country was devastated many times over. Towns and villages were razed to the ground; farmlands were ruined; large areas of forest were destroyed; and the country's resources in live-stock were depleted through constant requisitioning, not only for the needs of the German army of occupation but also for the purposes of export to Germany. But the Lithuanians were no less determined to become an independent sovereign state. In September, 1917, a representative gathering was held at Vilna during the German occupation, at which the Taryba or National Council was elected, and expression was given to the demand that Lithuania should become 'an independent State, organized on democratic principles within her ethnographical frontiers'.

It was with the greatest difficulty that arrangements were made with the military authorities for the holding of this conference, but the Germans agreed on the understanding that there were to be no elections. German policy, though ultimately favourable to cultural autonomy, was at this time inclined to favour annexation, and it therefore seemed desirable to create some sort of Lithuanian Council that might be persuaded or forced to co-operate with the military authorities as an auxiliary body with limited powers. The Lithuanian difficulty was how to concede that measure of agreed co-operation with the Germans, which was laid down as a condition of their being allowed to hold a conference at all, without endangering the primary object of national independence.

The Taryba at once set to work on its two principal tasks of creating and organizing the Lithuanian State, and of attempting to restore the economic and social condition of the country. This meant that it had to protest vigorously against the heavy requisitioning that was half starving the population, the banditism of escaped Russian prisoners of war, exploitation of the forests, forced labour, and against the attempt to introduce the compulsory teaching of German in primary schools. All these protests had to be made with the prospect of the Taryba being forcibly dissolved by the local German authorities. Attempts were also made to get in touch with Lithuanians abroad, to put the national case before the representatives of the Allies, and to establish relations with the Central Government in Berlin. Germany made it quite clear that independence would have to be purchased by a perpetual alliance with Germany, and the negotiations on this basis were unsatisfactory. Meanwhile, on the 16th February, 1918, the Taryba proclaimed national independence 'founded on a democratic basis, with Vilna as capital, and the dissolution of all political connections that had existed with other peoples.' The Taryba declared at the same time that 'the basis of this State and its relations with other States will be definitely fixed by a Constituent Assembly', which should be convoked as soon as possible.

In the following month the Kaiser signed an Act recognizing the independence of the country, and in July, 1918, the Taryba rather rashly decided to invite Duke William of Urach to accept the Lithuanian throne; but events were moving in a direction that tended to weaken the German grip on Lithuania. Following the speech in the Reichstag of Prince Max of Baden,¹ who replied to President Wilson that the German Empire saw no objection to nations organizing their state and government in their own way, by virtue of their right to self-determination, the President of the Taryba was informed of the German decision to delegate legislative and administrative power to a Lithuanian Government, which was now the business of the Taryba to organize. The Taryba worked out the basis of a provisional constitution, and empowered its President to nominate a President of the ministers who should constitute the Provisional Lithuanian Government. Accordingly, on the 5th November, Professor Valdemaras was appointed President of a Cabinet which he formed a few days later, and the Taryba dropped its resolution with regard to Duke William of Urach, referring the final decision of the *régime* to the Constituent Assembly.

After the Armistice the Germans showed almost as little desire to evacuate Lithuania as they did in the case of Courland; and the new state, still unrecognized by the Allies, found her position increasingly precarious. While the Provisional Government was devoting their energies to organizing the state, they were confronted by three enemies. Towards the end of 1918, the Bolsheviks began to advance into the country on the heels of the retreating Germans. Still weak and without a vestige of outside help, the Provisional Government had to leave Vilna and retire to Kaunas,² but soon the newly raised army of volunteers succeeded in driving back the Bolsheviks along the whole front, and by April, 1919, were closing in on Vilna. At this point a new enemy appeared. The Poles, who had been fighting in the district of Grodno, occupied Vilna

¹ 5th October, 1918.

² Formerly known as Kovno.

by a rapid manœuvre, and thereby provoked the greatest indignation on the part of the Lithuanians, who addressed a strong protest to the Allied Powers. In order to prevent armed conflict between the two countries, the Supreme Command of the Allied Powers established a line of demarcation on the 26th April, 1919, but this line was promptly violated by the Poles, as well as that laid down by Marshal Foch in July of the same year.

While matters in the east and south were still unsettled, a third enemy appeared in the west. The Russo-German forces under Bermond-Avalov were ostensibly marching to the aid of General Judenich against the Bolshevists, but in reality their object was to restore the rule of the Baltic barons in Latvia with Lithuania as a base of operations. For the Lithuanians the situation was one of immense difficulty, and it was remarkable how they managed to extricate themselves from this threefold mess. By November, 1919, the Bermondists were utterly routed, and early in the following year the Russians offered to make peace. Negotiations were begun, and on the 12th July, 1920, a Peace Treaty was signed at Moscow by which Russia recognized Lithuania as an independent sovereign state, with Vilna as her capital. Meanwhile, the Constituent Assembly, elected by universal suffrage on the system of proportional representation, took the place of the Taryba, and decided that the state was to have a republican form of government. It was not, however, until the autumn of 1922 that the Assembly, having completed the land reform and drafted the state constitution, gave place to a regular Parliament. Lithuania became a member of the League of Nations on the 22nd September, 1921, and was recognized *de jure* by the leading Allied Powers on the 20th December of the same year.

After seizing Vilna in April, 1919, the Poles remained in possession until the summer of 1920, when under Bolshevik pressure they were forced to evacuate the city, which the Bolshevists handed over to the Lithuanians. In August, however, the fortunes of the Russo-Polish war completely changed, and the retreat of the Bolshevists

brought the Lithuanians for the first time into direct contact with the victorious Poles. From this time forward the history of the Lithuanian State became entangled with that of the Polish State, which at that time was suffering from a very aggressive attitude towards any of her weaker neighbours, but I will return to the Vilna dispute in the course of another chapter.

Looking back on these critical days, one wonders how the Lithuanians managed to raise an army capable of defending the country from so many enemies. It was a most remarkable achievement, and reflects the highest credit on the military qualities of this fighting race. At the end of 1918 the first Lithuanian regiment was raised at Vilna. The Provisional Government had little money, so that the question of providing barracks, uniforms, rations and arms was not easily solved, while almost the only officers available for staff duties were students or professional men who had been promoted to commissioned rank in the Russian army during the war. There were few regular or staff officers, because under the Russian *régime* only a few Lithuanians were allowed to enter the military schools, and none were permitted to attend the highest military institutions. Yet these young officers began their work with great enthusiasm and, with the help of Lithuanians who had been non-commissioned officers in the old Russian army, succeeded in training thousands of volunteers from all parts of the country. Practically all the work of organization had to be carried out under the most difficult war conditions until February, 1919, when the Compulsory Military Service Act was passed and the army came under a Ministry of Defence with a General Staff. From that time forward the organization was carried out under more or less normal arrangements, although war conditions still prevailed. The result is that Lithuania now has an army of efficient, smart-looking officers and men, the former being trained either in the military school at home or at similar institutions abroad, while the latter are raised from illiteracy to educated men and also made into soldiers in the newly formed regiments of the Lithuanian army. The

recruiting material consists of fine able-bodied youths who lend themselves easily to military training. Probably the cavalry is the most efficient branch of the service, and, if the regiment I saw in the neighbourhood of Kaunas is a typical example, there is little to criticize in the general appearance of both horses and men.

Kaunas, the present Lithuanian capital, has sprung from humble origin. A Russian fortress before the war and, therefore, limited to buildings not exceeding one story in height, Kaunas was until six years ago little more than a large village. Even to-day it has a distinct Russian atmosphere, which is only relieved by an equally striking likeness to an agricultural town in Western America. The streets are straight and paved with cobble-stones, and primitive trams drawn by one tired-looking horse rumble along at irregular intervals. Those who knew Oxford in the days of the horse trams can picture Kaunas to-day, but the Lithuanian species of this relic of antiquity is a much queerer-looking object than anything Oxford could produce. I tried to photograph one of these curiosities outside the railway station, but a skinny-looking horse responsible for the movements of another tram tried to bite my behind just as the shutter clicked, and a blur was the result. Evidently these beasts have a certain prestige to uphold. The town is rather depressing and there are few buildings of any prominence, except the Russian garrison church and one or two other ecclesiastical establishments; yet new buildings and improvements generally are beginning to show themselves in several directions, which seems to indicate that the Lithuanians regard Kaunas with some degree of permanence. Although M. Valdemaras governs as a dictator and personally settles even the most minor details of the administration, a Parliament building (which is not shown to visitors) is in course of construction; an imposing edifice has been built to house the Bank of Lithuania; and a new bridge is being built over the Nemunas.¹ Besides this, good progress is being made in the development of a residential area on the high ground over-

¹ Formerly known as the Niemen.

looking the river, and Kaunas generally is beginning to assume the characteristics of a small, and perhaps rather primitive, European capital. Although the Lithuanians prefer to build their houses of wood, the Government have decreed that in certain areas only stone or brick buildings are allowed, and in course of time it is hoped that all the wooden houses in the city proper will be replaced by solid stone edifices. Until recently the hotel accommodation in Kaunas was of the most primitive order, and it was only the general outcry of outraged and flea-bitten diplomatists that led to the building of what is now a moderately comfortable hotel. When a certain frontier commission visited these parts to draw lines of demarcation, they chose the middle of the night to arrive in Kaunas, and the only member of this august body who could obtain any accommodation at all at first was one who is said to have found *une petite amie* in the town. Otherwise, the members of the Commission had to go shares in the most odd billets vacated by others at a few moments' notice. Yet Kaunas is on the main railway line between Berlin and Riga, and has an excellent train service by the Nord Express.

It is impossible to visit Kaunas without realizing that Lithuania is a very poor country, but there are distinct signs of industry and of a determination to make the best of circumstances. But Lithuania is devoting the best part of her energies to defence, and it looks as if the greater proportion of her resources in men and money is being given to the army to the detriment of internal progress. The question of defence occupies the minds of government officials to an abnormal degree, and there is little doubt that efficiency has reached a much higher standard in the army than in any other department of the state. The reason of this is not far to seek, and will be explained later in this narrative.

Lithuania is an agricultural country, in which about 80 per cent of the people are peasants, and illiteracy is very prevalent. When the Republic was established, about one-third of the landed property belonging to the nobility lay fallow, and matters were even worse as far as buildings and live-stock were concerned. The landlords or their author-

ized agents were, for the most part, absent either in Russia or Poland, while many of those actually living on their estates gave little heed to the land, but devoted their energies to helping the Polish legions to occupy the country. In view of these circumstances the Provisional Government brought in a land reform much on the same lines as in the other Baltic States, and issued a series of decrees under which the Government (1) took over the estates which were obviously abandoned by their owners, and operated or rented them to the local inhabitants so that the land might not remain uncultivated ; (2) established a guardianship over all the forests of the country ; (3) prohibited the sale of the land of the larger estates without special permit ; and (4) promised land to those who fought for the liberty of Lithuania, and who were children either of the landless or of small landowners. Parcels of land, from 5 to 20 hectares, partly state and partly private property, were allotted, so that those who received them might immediately begin farming on their own account. In 1920 the Constituent Assembly ratified all the land measures taken by the Provisional Government, and these decrees served as a basis for the present agrarian law which is designed to provide land for the landless, and to increase the holdings of those who possessed an insufficient quantity. Other aims of this reform are to create conditions favourable to the development of small and medium-sized farms, and to place under state control those national resources which in private possession tend to be wasted. With this end in view the state is gradually taking over the so-called 'majorats', or entailed estates and lands granted by the former Russian Government either in fee simple or on privileged conditions ; certain lands belonging to the former Peasants' Land Bank and Nobles' Bank ; lands of private persons who own more than 375 acres in the first place, and more than 200 acres in the second place, leaving the owners with 200 acres which they can choose themselves. While the 'majorat' estates and lands granted by the former Russian Government, together with the lands of the above-mentioned Banks, are taken over without indemnity, the rest are

purchased by the State at a pre-war price. These lands will serve to create farms of from about 20 to 50 acres, and in this way it is hoped to settle between 35,000 and 40,000 families.

Although the country around Kaunas is fairly fertile, there are very few industries in the modern sense of the word, and there are few means of converting such produce as exists into marketable goods. The Government has little money for development, and such funds as are not spent on defence and are available for improvements are squandered on imposing public buildings instead of being devoted to the more urgent needs of the country. A new Mint has been built, although quite out of keeping with the financial condition of the country, and some of the new premises would be a credit to the architecture of either London or Paris. With few resources, Lithuania is notable for her economic backwardness and low culture, while it is usually found that those Lithuanians with real knowledge or experience are either of German origin or have spent a considerable time in America. The monetary unit, the 'litas', is equal to one-tenth of a United States dollar, is divided into 100 cents, and it has not depreciated since it was introduced in 1922. Most of the industries are closely connected with agriculture or forestry, and they suffered very severely from military operations during the war. Buildings were destroyed, machinery removed, and capital was lost either through the nationalization of the Russian banks or the catastrophic fall of the Russian and German currencies then in circulation in Lithuania. After the war, capital to restore the industries of the country was unobtainable, yet such industries as existed before 1914 have been restored in spite of the immense difficulties which had to be faced. But Lithuania was always a backward country, and it is backward to-day. Her exports consist chiefly of live-stock, eggs, grain, meat, and dairy produce, together with such raw materials as sawn wood and wood pulp, and semi-manufactured goods such as hides, furs, and bristles. As far as manufactured goods are concerned, her exports are practically confined to hardware, perfumery, and amber. The finest amber in the world

comes from near Klaipeda, where magnificent blocks are found containing specimens of insect life. Flies which were caught in the gum thousands of years ago look exactly the same as those that crawl up and down the window-pane to-day.

It is the fashion nowadays for new nations to demand as their right an access to the sea, and Lithuania's claim has been satisfied in this respect, although the process of settling the question was far from simple. At the mouth of the river Nemunas lies Klaipeda (or Memel) with an economic hinterland extending across Lithuania into Poland and Russia, the principal export being timber floated down the river. Politically, Klaipeda is now an autonomous district of Lithuania, although the population of the town itself is almost entirely German and has been so since the thirteenth century. It had belonged to the Kingdom of Prussia as part of its inheritance from the Knights of the Teutonic Order. Before the Great War, the town of Klaipeda, with a strip of territory east of the river, belonged to Germany, while the hinterland belonged to the Russian Empire; but under the Versailles Treaty Germany ceded all her territory east of the river to the Allies who occupied it and took over the administration. A provisional *régime* with a French High Commissioner lasted for three years, the delay in settling the matter being chiefly due to the Vilna dispute and the consequent delay in the official recognition of the Lithuanian Government; and it was not until the autumn of 1922 that the question was taken up by the Conference of Ambassadors. Meanwhile, it had been suggested that Klaipeda might be given a status in regard to Lithuania analogous to that given to Danzig in regard to Poland. But this was unacceptable to the Lithuanians, as the population of the country districts of Klaipeda was Lithuanian in nationality, while the port was almost the only possible sea outlet for the new state. Having seen the Poles seize Vilna in 1920, the Lithuanians thought they would play the same game. The Poles had brought off their *coup* without any evil results to themselves, so in January, 1923, the Lithuanians copied the Poles

and seized Klaipeda. The French garrison evacuated the town. What could be more simple? And, what is more, Klaipeda is still in the possession of Lithuania. The Conference of Ambassadors proposed that the Allies should transfer the sovereignty over this territory to Lithuania, subject to local autonomy and freedom of transit for Poland; but so many difficulties arose between Poland and Lithuania that the case was referred to the League of Nations. To cut a long story short, a Convention was signed in March, 1924, constituting the Klaipeda territory as a unit within the sovereignty of Lithuania, with a clearly defined measure of administrative and financial autonomy, and with a governor to be appointed by the President of Lithuania. The port was defined as one of international concern, to which the provisions of the Barcelona Transit Conference apply, and was placed under a harbour board including a technical expert of neutral nationality appointed by the League of Nations. All this seems a lot of fuss about a small place, but we live in times when it is often the smaller the place the greater the fuss.

The Lithuanians claim that one of the great advantages of Klaipeda is that it is ice-free in winter. A year ago I believed in the ice-free claims of many Baltic ports, but not so to-day. Last winter (1928-9) every port in the Baltic was frozen stiff. Before the war, Klaipeda was mainly a timber port for wood floated down the Nemunas from the Lithuanian and White Russian forests, and it is expected that it will play an important part in the Russian transit trade as soon as the Polish-Lithuanian frontier is reopened, besides providing an outlet for Lithuanian trade. The Government are, therefore, doing all they can to restore the port and adapt it for the export of agricultural produce, so that general trade may not suffer from the fact that Klaipeda is primarily a timber port. In this as in many other directions the Lithuanians show undoubted enterprise, but everything seems to be against them. I have a keen sense of sympathy for these people, who have few friends in the world. The will to progress is present, but the materials are absent. There is a certain tragedy

in the air of Lithuania to-day, and there is a feeling that the people are slowly bowing to some inevitable fate apart altogether from Vilna. But it is difficult to analyse one's impressions in this direction. The Lithuanians are good-natured, religious, hard-working and patriotic, and there seems no apparent reason why with time and perseverance they should not succeed in building up a nation. They need help, and there is little doubt that this would be forthcoming if they would change their general attitude. Formerly, they had many sympathizers both in this country and elsewhere, but M. Valdemaras has succeeded in turning nearly all their friends against them. Perhaps in recent years there has been a tendency to over-estimate the cultural qualities of the Lithuanians, and to believe too readily that they could weld themselves into a homogeneous whole. Their weakness in absorbing foreign cultures as easily as they do does not hold out any very hopeful prospect for the future, and it seems that they are now struggling to achieve their cultural independence with materials that scarcely exist. With the best will in the world it is impossible to construct an edifice without materials, and it almost seems as if some sort of advisory system would be beneficial from several points of view until such time as Lithuania has advanced sufficiently to thrive as an independent state. At present the Vilna question is absorbing all her energies, and the people are inclined to look back on the glories of the past and the standard of their culture in the Middle Ages, ignoring the period during which they have lived under the heel of Russia. Unless they are prepared to face the perhaps rather unpleasant reality of their position, and submit to the advice of those who are honestly anxious to help them, there seems little hope that they will be able to resist absorption by their neighbours. Although there is practically no Communism in the country and their territory holds out few inducements for Russian aggression, the Lithuanians are so placed on the map of Europe that they have dangers enough without being threatened from the Soviet direction.

In the strictly geographical sense, Finland, Estonia, and Latvia were not the only Baltic countries derived from the Russian Empire. Lithuania and Poland also possessed short seaboard on the Baltic—Lithuania just to the north of Klaipeda, and Poland just to the west of Danzig—but these two countries could not be regarded primarily as Baltic countries or exclusively as states derived from Russia. Both were essentially inland states, and the access to the Baltic which they had obtained by the reconstruction of Eastern Europe on the basis of linguistic nationality was considered inadequate to their economic needs. Lithuania wanted an additional outlet at Klaipeda and Poland at Danzig; and the fact that the nationality of these two ports was neither Lithuanian nor Polish, but German, created two problems difficult of solution. And neither of these problems was merely local in character, for these territories, inhabited by German populations, previously belonged to the German Empire; so that, if Lithuania and Poland, like Finland and the two Baltic States derived from Russia, had to fear the revival of Russian power on their eastern front, they were also threatened on the west by the possible revival of Germany, and their newly won independence could hardly survive a hostile combination of these two Great Powers such as was foreshadowed in the Treaty of Rapallo in 1922. Hemmed in as they were between Russia on one side and Germany on the other, they had every reason to hold together like Estonia and Latvia, and this immediate common interest had its counterpart in a common historical tradition; but, unfortunately, these considerations did not prevent the ancient city of Vilna from bringing them into complete estrangement, if not into open hostility.

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From an international standpoint, Lithuania is a country of considerable importance, and for this reason neither her internal condition nor her relationships with Poland over the Vilna question can be treated with indifference. Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania form a chain of buffer states between Germany and Russia, and it is important that they should develop as sound political structures independent,

if possible, of Russian and German influences. The military qualities of these three nations are not to be despised, and it must not be forgotten that the Imperial Russian Navy was chiefly manned from those shores of the Baltic. But the somewhat backward conditions at present prevailing in these countries make them a source of weakness, and in many respects Lithuania is the most backward of all. One of her chief dangers is to be found in the susceptibility of the Lithuanians to the cultures of their more powerful neighbours—Russia, Germany, and Poland. The extension of Russian or German influence across the frontier of Lithuania would convert the country into a bridge for uniting these two nations, and a Russo-German combination is a political possibility which can only be viewed with the strongest disfavour from the point of view of European peace. While it is possible that Russia may seek an opportunity to re-establish herself on the coast of the Baltic, it is not unreasonable to assume that Germany, stripped of her former colonies, is looking for some suitable line of expansion in a northerly direction ; and these two Powers may discover some basis of mutual understanding in the situation created by the present condition of the Baltic States. Indeed, there is reason to believe that the obstinate policy of M. Valdemaras has not been entirely disconnected with Russian and German influences.

If, on the other hand, Lithuania were to be absorbed by Poland, Germany and Russia would be provided with a different incentive to join hands directly against Poland, and indirectly against such small nations as have common interests with Poland *vis-à-vis* either or both of the two greater Powers. The enhanced prestige of Poland, with a further access to the sea, would be unacceptable to Russia, while the precarious position created for East Prussia would tend to precipitate a crisis between Germany and Poland over the already delicate question of the Polish Corridor, in which Russia could not but support the German claims. Although it is at present impossible to foresee the course which the Russo-German policy encouraged by the late Count Brockdorff-Rantzau, until recently German Amba-

sador in Moscow, will take, it is sufficient to bear in mind the following considerations to realize that it is not a matter to be treated lightly. First, Russia badly needs the help of foreign capital and organizing ability to reorganize her economic life, and is making great efforts to attract foreign enterprise; secondly, Germany is nearer and in a more favourable position than any other nation to supply Russia's wants, and she may consider it to be in her political and economic interests to do so; thirdly, for centuries Germany and Russia co-operated in a sense through the Baltic barons in the control of these Baltic provinces, and Germany is to-day steadily increasing her economic influence in these states; fourthly, Germany favours the policy of trying to draw Russia westward rather than of allowing her to drift towards Asia; and, fifthly, Germany and Russia have similar interests in certain of the many problems comprising the general Baltic situation, of which the Vilna question and that of the Polish Corridor are conspicuous examples. It is therefore not surprising that in the minds of Northern statesmen and diplomatists the Russian danger is considerably augmented by the possibility of a Russo-German combination, aiming to make these two Powers masters of the Baltic. Hence, there are abundant reasons why the Baltic States in general, and Lithuania in particular, should receive external support sufficient to enable them to preserve their independence and to prosper as political entities strong enough to resist the pressure by which they are surrounded.

CHAPTER VI

POLAND AND VILNA

WITH the retreat of the Bolshevists in 1920, the Vilna boundary dispute between Poland and Lithuania added a new controversy to the troubles of Eastern Europe ; and this question has never since ceased to act as a disturbing factor in the whole European system.



VILNA AREA

The Vilna question by itself is a comparatively small matter, but the situation and character of the dispute is such that it directly or indirectly affects other European problems of first importance, and thereby involves the interests of most of the European Powers. Although the dispute seems interminable and nearly exhausts the patience of statesmen

in Western Europe, it has to be treated seriously and as a question with dangerous possibilities. Vilna is to-day one of the danger points of Europe, and it is only necessary to visit this area to realize that there is enough explosive material on these rolling plains to set the whole of Europe ablaze once more.

Prior to the Third Partition of 1795, the territories inhabited by Polish and Lithuanian populations had constituted politically a single unit; their political union¹ had been voluntary and gradual; and it had been accompanied by an equally voluntary and gradual 'Polonization', in the social sense, of the Lithuanian ruling class. Even the linguistic barrier had been confined to the unpolitical peasantry, and was to some extent neutralized by the stronger bond of their common Roman Catholic faith, which they also shared with the White Russian peasantry in the district of Vilna. The city of Vilna, which had been the capital of Lithuania before the Union, had afterwards become a local centre of Polish culture. The separate consciousness of Lithuanian nationality on a linguistic basis only developed during the nineteenth century, when the Poles and Lithuanians were politically isolated from one another² under varying degrees of Russian rule; but this made the conflict all the more acute when the two nations emerged from the *débris* of the German, Russian, and Austro-Hungarian Empires. The Poles expected the Lithuanians to return voluntarily to the situation of 1795, and resented their new form of nationalism, while they wanted the outlet across Lithuania to the Baltic as an alternative to the Danzig Corridor. The Lithuanians, on the other hand, resented this attitude of the Poles, fearing that they

¹ Personal union of the crowns in A.D. 1386 and the constitutional union of the two states in A.D. 1569 and total unity in A.D. 1793.

² During the rare intervals between the years 1795 and 1918, when a mutilated and incompletely independent Polish State was re-established (e.g. the Duchy of Warsaw 1807-14 and the Kingdom of 'Congress Poland' 1814-30), it never included more than a small part of Lithuania.

would try to use their superior military strength and their special diplomatic influence with the chief Allied Powers in order to force upon Lithuania the Polish conception of what Polish-Lithuanian relations should be.

On the 8th December, 1919, the Supreme Council in Paris laid down a provisional eastern frontier for Poland, the so-called 'Curzon line', which followed linguistic boundaries as closely as was possible in view of the very mixed character of many of these border districts and the doubtful validity of some of the available statistics of population. The northern sector of this line would have formed the frontier between Poland and Lithuania, and would have excluded from Poland not only the significant Polish minorities in the long corridor extending north-eastwards through and beyond Vilna, but also the substantial Polish minority in the city of Vilna itself. For the moment the potential problem thus created remained in abeyance; for the 'Curzon line' was only provisional, and Polish forces were almost everywhere in occupation of territories far to the east of it, including at this time the district of Vilna. This district underwent many changes both during and after the Great War, and it is as well to re-state them shortly here. It was occupied in 1915 by the Germans, who, on their retreat in November, 1918, handed it over to the Lithuanians. The Lithuanians established Vilna as their capital and convened their National Assembly in the city; but their stay was short, for in January, 1919, they were driven out by the Bolshevists. The Poles then captured Vilna in April, 1919, and remained in possession until July of the following year, when it was re-taken by the Bolshevists in the course of their great advance into Poland. The Russians thought this an opportune moment to secure Lithuanian support, and accordingly signed the Peace Treaty of Moscow, providing for the cession of Vilna to Lithuania. Under this Treaty the Bolshevists handed over the city and the greater part of the province, but the Lithuanians still had to reckon with the Poles, who by August of that year were flushed with their victory over the Bolshevists. The Bolshevists

had legally given Vilna to Lithuania, but they were no longer present to enforce the execution of the Treaty. As was to be expected, it was not long before there was a collision between Polish and Lithuanian troops in the vicinity of Suwalki, as result of which the Poles made up a case of 'Lithuanian aggression' which they laid before the League of Nations.

Although Lithuania was not yet a member of the League, she accepted the necessary obligations for the purposes of this dispute, and eventually agreed to recognize the 'Curzon line' provisionally as the frontier between her territory and that of Poland. While this involved a sacrifice of her claims under the Moscow Treaty in the Suwalki sector, it had the advantage of strengthening her title to the more important territories coveted by Poland to the east of the 'Curzon line' which the Moscow Treaty had assigned to Lithuania. Poland, on her side, now undertook to respect these territories as neutral so long as their neutrality was equally respected by the Russians; and both Governments agreed to refrain from further hostilities, and consented to the appointment of a Military Commission of Control to secure the respective withdrawal of both forces to the limits assigned to them. Under the auspices of this Commission, representatives of Poland and Lithuania signed at Suwalki, on the 7th October, 1920, an armistice convention providing for a line of demarcation between the respective forces. The new line corresponded closely with the 'Curzon line' in the Suwalki sector, and then turned eastward till it reached a point on the Lyda-Vilna railway, leaving the city of Vilna well within Lithuanian territory. It was arranged that this agreement should come into force on the 10th October, but on the previous day General Zeligowski, an independent Polish commander, drove the Lithuanians out of Vilna city and reoccupied the greater part of the province for the Poles. Although this *coup de force* was formally disowned by the Polish Government as having been carried out without any authority, there is little doubt that it was in reality the subject of much rejoicing in Warsaw, and the fact remains that the Poles have since steadfastly refused

to regard Vilna in any other light than as a Polish city. Whatever view may be taken of the Polish claim to Vilna, the Poles cannot be excused for this high-handed action. If they disapproved of their signature at Suvalki being dishonoured by Zeligowski, they should have proved their indignation by the usual disciplinary action. This they not only failed to do, but the subsequent Polish attitude in the matter showed fairly clearly that it was a 'put-up job'. The Poles paid a big price for Vilna, for confidence in Poland dropped and Europe began to wonder whether, after all, a Polish State was conducive to general peace. Now, fortunately, the Poles realize that the Zeligowski *coup* was a grave mistake and, as they could probably have obtained Vilna without it, they regret it as an action leaving a tiresome stain on their national prestige.

This *coup de force* not only violated the Suvalki agreement, which the Poles had signed, but ignored the authority of the League of Nations and of the Commission which it had set up. The League was powerless, as words were its only weapon, and they did not make much impression where vital interests were at stake. All it could do was to summon the two parties to Geneva, where the Lithuanians protested violently against the action of General Zeligowski. The Poles took up the attitude that it was a *fait accompli* with which they could not interfere, and that in any case it was outside the scope of the original dispute referred by them to the League. On the 28th October, the League Council decided that the destiny of the Vilna area should be determined by a plebiscite to be held under League auspices, and to this both Governments agreed; but it was clear that no plebiscite could be taken until the district was evacuated by General Zeligowski and taken over by a neutral army of occupation. Therefore, during the winter of 1920-1, attempts were made to collect a mixed international force, but results, or rather lack of results, showed that no European Power was prepared to become mixed up with an uncompromising Polish general and an unknown population in an obscure and isolated corner of Europe within a few miles of the Bolsheviks. The prospect was not inviting,

and little more was heard of it, as difficulties rapidly grew like fungi on the plebiscite proposal, which was finally dropped in favour of direct negotiations between the Poles and Lithuanians under the presidency of M. Hymans (Belgium) as the representative of the League. In this dispute the League showed in a conspicuous way its utter inability to enforce its decisions, and it continued to talk to deaf ears, which made its position extremely difficult. The next phase lasted from March, 1921, to January, 1922, when M. Hymans exhausted his own patience and that of the League in constant and untiring efforts at conciliation. His idea was to promote a general *rapprochement* between the two countries as a prelude to the discussion of the local dispute over Vilna. He hoped to induce Poland, in return for a permanent military and economic alliance with Lithuania, to agree to the incorporation of Vilna in Lithuania as a separate autonomous canton subject to special guarantees. The time, however, was not propitious for negotiations of this sort. The Lithuanians, exasperated beyond measure by the Zeligowski *coup* and by the failure of the League and of the Allied Powers to take effective counter-measures, were not disposed to listen to counsels of reason and moderation ; while the Poles, whose ambitions were almost completely realized by the *status quo*, were unlikely to yield without some more attractive inducements than M. Hymans had to offer. The consequence was that all his proposals were rejected by either one or both parties concerned, and finally the Council decided to withdraw the Commission from Vilna.

By this last decision the League practically admitted its incapacity to solve the Vilna question, and left events to take their own course. Although the question was on the agenda several times in 1922, and the Spanish Consul-General in Brussels was sent on behalf of the League to investigate the position once more on the spot, no progress was made beyond the recommendation of a definite, though provisional, line of demarcation based on the *status quo*, which was, of course, accepted by Poland and rejected by Lithuania.

Meanwhile the Poles had been in possession of Vilna for more than two years; they had already organized a local Diet which, in the circumstances, was naturally of Polish composition; and they thought that the time had come for obtaining from the Powers an official recognition of their gains. On the 15th February, 1923, the Polish Government appealed to the Conference of Ambassadors and found that the political atmosphere in that quarter was propitious for their rather audacious proposal. Every one was sick of the controversy, and the Allied Powers represented at the Conference were unlikely to court disaster by proposing any solution that involved the use of armed force. On the 15th March the Conference, in virtue of Article 87 of the Treaty of Versailles, fixed in detail the frontiers between Poland on the one hand and Russia and Lithuania on the other. As between Poland and Russia they simply recognized the line already traced and delimited by the two parties 'on their own responsibility' in November, 1922. As between Poland and Lithuania, they confirmed the 'Curzon line' in the Suvalki district, between the East Prussian frontier and the Niemen, while between the Niemen and the Dvina¹ they laid down a definite frontier approximately coinciding with the provisional line of demarcation previously recommended by the League Council.² Basing their action on 'the *de facto* situation resulting from' that recommendation, and thus seeking to invoke the authority of the League in support of their decision, the Conference of Ambassadors proceeded to award to Poland the district which had been lawlessly occupied by General Zeligowski two and a half years before. The Lithuanian Government refused to accept this award and continued to regard itself as being in a state of war with Poland; but it had weakened its position by having requested the principal Allied Powers on several occasions to intervene in its favour in virtue of Article 87 of the Versailles Treaty, which it has thus appeared to recognize by implication; and it had displeased the League Council

¹ These two rivers are now known as the Nemunas and Daugava.

² 3rd February, 1923.

by attempting to arraign it before the Permanent Court of International Justice. The Lithuanians contended that the Ambassadors' decision was incompatible with the principles previously laid down by the Council; but the Council took the view that both parties had admitted the Ambassadors' competence to settle their dispute, and declined to submit the resolution to the Permanent Court for an opinion on its legality. Lithuania raised both questions once more in the autumn of 1923, but the only result was an adjournment of the discussion to the following year.

By the end of 1923 it looked as if the protracted controversy over Vilna had at last been brought to an end. The *de facto* situation created by the Zeligowski *coup* had been endorsed and regularized by the Allied Powers, and Lithuania was not in a position to alter it by force of arms. But the Vilna dispute is still with us at the time of writing, and it looks as if it will continue to haunt the chanceries of Europe for some considerable time. Bitterness and bad feeling, resulting chiefly from the circumstances in which Vilna passed into the hands of the Poles, have tended to obscure the real issue, and at times it is indeed difficult to find any definite connection between the city of Vilna on the banks of the Vilja and the voluminous orations delivered by the shores of the Lake of Geneva. Year after year this same question appears on the agenda of the League, and year after year it is either adjourned or referred to some committee or conference. Nothing is done, although words are not wanting. The Vilna dispute is to the League what a Scottish night is to the House of Commons—an opportunity for sleep, often well earned. The fact of the matter is that mistakes have been made on all sides, and each party concerned wants to justify its own position in the eyes of the world. This is not a very high ideal, and one would have expected the League of Nations to be above this sort of thing. But the League is not yet strong enough to adopt a candid and bold attitude in such matters. It is difficult to conceive that so many mistakes could have been made, and one can only attribute the general bungle to the abnormal and strained circumstances in which all post-war

negotiations were carried out at that time. Human beings were called upon to deal with situations almost beyond the scope of their capacity, and this at a time when brains were at the point of exhaustion and nerves were exceedingly frayed. It was only war-weariness that saved the situation, but it is very doubtful whether the decisions of these tired old gentlemen will survive a generation with fresh vitality and a new outlook on life. That, however, remains to be seen.

Let us now have a look at the scene of all this trouble, and put negotiations, conferences, committees, and talking machines in the background. I can thoroughly recommend the neighbourhood of Vilna and Kovno ¹ for natural beauty, human interest, mediæval architecture, romance, humour, and good food. There you have the best train services and the worst; plenty of languages you cannot understand; nice people in both countries; a queer mixture of religions; a good ration of indescribable ignorance; and an atmosphere entirely different from that of Western Europe. There is no want of variety. The Vilna dispute assumes rather a different aspect when viewed from the surroundings of its birthplace; for it has now become so bound up in questions of 'Haute Politique' that the more local considerations are apt to become obscured by the larger political problems, of which they form a factor of no small significance. Yet the local aspect is at the present moment of the greatest importance, partly because it directly affects the more immediate aspect of the question—the frontier *impasse* and the future of diplomatic relations between Poland and Lithuania—and partly because it indicates the lines of thought behind the stubborn policy of M. Valdemaras. If my visit to Vilna and Kovno did not inspire any great degree of hope, it was instructive in many new directions and showed that important influences exist, which tend to explain what would otherwise seem to be a wholly unreasonable and uncompromising attitude on the part of the Lithuanians.

Whenever I think of Poland my thoughts instinctively travel to Vilna, that majestic little city whose atmosphere is such a relief from the rude rush of the twentieth century.

¹ Now known as Kaunas.

It is one of these places in the world that takes the visitor completely by surprise, grips him, and sends him away with much to think about and a longing to return. As I approached Vilna in the Polish train from the direction of Dvinsk,¹ I expected to find a dirty, rather tumble-down town of little interest, with few modern conveniences, and an hotel providing little more than the bare necessities of life. It was in the evening that I drove from the station through the narrow byways with Hebrew signboards on all sides, and I began to wonder whether I had come to Jerusalem by mistake. There was a distinct resemblance. Then the car passed down a small street with people kneeling on the pavements: there were candles burning and there was a faint smell of incense in the air. Every one seemed to be bare-headed with hat in hand. The chauffeur took off his hat, and I followed suit. Was this an open-air church, or a funeral, or was I suffering from delusions? Presently the car passed through a great open square, turned into a sort of boulevard with trees on either side, and drew up at an hotel where there were bright lights, sounds of music, and Polish officers in uniform passing in and out of the door. After much juggling with various languages, I was escorted to a spacious bedchamber by a small boy not more than eight years old; and after struggling feverishly with a Polish menu, which was mainly composed of the letters *c*, *z*, and *w*, I succeeded in obtaining one of the best dinners I have ever eaten. The restaurant was gaily decorated, the officers were resplendent in their uniforms and decorations, the orchestra played divinely, and the 'touredoes' melted in my mouth. Every one looked good-natured and happy, and I will not easily forget the Hôtel Saint Georges at Vilna.

A visit to the Governor next morning, and a subsequent tour of inspection with an eminent professor of the University, dispelled all my illusions about the place. Not only is Vilna an ancient and a very beautiful city, but it is a holy city. Magnificently situated on a series of prominences overlooking the bends of the river Vilja, and rich in architectural treasures and historical associations, it is a

¹ Now known as Daugavpils.

city with well-defined characteristics and with a distinct atmosphere of its own. Although it is situated in the north, its nature is essentially of the south, and its mediævalism differs widely from that usually found in Western Europe. The Russians made determined efforts to give Vilna the character of a Russian provincial town, but the Latin influence was so strong that it overcame all resistance and remains to this day the dominating feature of the city. This is reflected in the large number of very beautiful churches with which Vilna is adorned, and these masterpieces of the Gothic and Renaissance styles are considered to be among the finest examples of their kind in the world. As far as external beauty is concerned, nothing in the city can surpass the church of St. Anne, a Gothic building of brick which appealed so strongly to Napoleon that he arranged to have it transported to Paris, and was only prevented from doing so by the circumstances of his retreat from Moscow. But the most impressive building internally is the church of St. Peter and St. Paul, the interior of which is as striking in richness as it is perfect in simplicity. The blending of these two qualities in Italian Renaissance has produced a carved effect in stucco which is almost unbelievable. And fortunate, indeed, is the visitor who happens to pass by the Cathedral at midday, where he can witness a time-honoured custom that is as beautiful as it is inspiring. As he admires the classic lines of the ancient and rather weather-beaten edifice, he will suddenly hear the strange music of trumpets playing a Mass as if from nowhere. At first this phantom music is bewildering, but a glance at the round Italian campanile reveals two military trumpeters standing at attention and sounding the sacred call of the Angelus. One would imagine that a Mass played on trumpets would produce a somewhat crude effect, but this is not so; for the sweet notes that ring through the Cathedral square are as solemn and mellow as the music of any organ.

Besides being an archbishopric of the Greek Orthodox Church and an archbishopric of the Church of Rome, the city has an ancient University, founded by the Jesuits about A.D. 1570, which is equal in status to the University

of Krakow, so that Vilna may be regarded as a centre of religious and educational culture of some considerable standing. These university buildings greatly suffered from crude reconstruction work carried out later by the Russians, but even to-day the principal court and that of the theological faculty are striking examples of that majesty and solemnity which are the main features of the 'Baroque' style. There is an impressive dignity about these vaulted passages and cloisters, with their visible reminders of the hours of trial through which Vilna has passed both in mediæval and more recent times. The union of the two countries is represented in the arms of the University displayed on the outside wall, where the Polish eagle is quartered with the Lithuanian knight.

But, apart altogether from this cultural aspect, the city has long been a centre of religious devotion to Poles and Lithuanians alike, and the miraculous image of the Blessed Virgin situated over the Ostra Brama Gate is greatly venerated by Greek Catholics as well as by followers of the Church of Rome. Indeed, the street leading up to this gateway is usually thronged with people, kneeling before the shrine, while all passers-by, irrespective of creed, take off their hats while walking or driving along this thoroughfare. On the southern wall of the gateway—that which is not occupied by the sacred shrine—the heraldic devices of both Poland and Lithuania are displayed over the gate itself, as may also be noticed elsewhere. Yet there is no doubt whatever that, although Vilna was once the capital of Lithuania in mediæval times and was a centre of Lithuanian culture, the outward and visible signs of culture in the Vilna of to-day are entirely Polish in character and construction. But the Poles are not unreasonable over the religious aspect of Vilna, and readily acknowledge the right of the Lithuanians to share in the devotions connected with the Virgin of Ostra Brama. In fact, on the occasion of the ceremony of the 'Coronation of the Virgin'¹ they opened the frontier to the Lithuanians, who availed themselves of the courtesy to a certain limited degree, although there was no

¹ 2nd July, 1927.

doubt a feeling of satisfaction in the Polish mind that the Lithuanians were coming to honour 'Our Lady of Poland'. This, however, is not the only sense in which Vilna may be regarded as a holy city, for it is a centre of eight different religious communities. Besides the followers of the Roman and Greek Churches, there is an ancient Orthodox sect, a large community of Jews headed by a Grand Rabbi, a sect of Jews which is noted for its rejection of the Talmud, a moderate number of Lutherans and Calvinists, and a settlement of Mohammedans with a Grand Mufti, who are descended from prisoners taken in the wars against Turkey and the Tartars of the Crimea in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. These Turks and Tartars settled on the land and, although they completely lost their old nationality and became Poles 200 years ago, they still adhered to their Moslem faith. All these Mohammedan families were ennobled, and now comprise about 10,000 people. Not only are they very patriotic Poles, forming in 1920 a special cavalry regiment known as the 'Tartar Cavalry', but they have gained considerable distinction in all departments of social life.

Vilna must, therefore, be regarded as one of those cities which possess, as most holy cities do, certain features scarcely conducive to political peace; and this influence, together with the city's natural dignity and cultural associations, makes it a pride of the Poles and an object of natural envy on the part of the Lithuanians, whose capital it is claimed to be on grounds which are not altogether unjustifiable. The Lithuanians do not merely want to possess Vilna as their capital city, but they feel that a centre with so strong a religious and cultural influence would be a national asset of no small significance. For the same reason the Poles are equally anxious to retain the city within the frontiers of Poland.

Although Vilna has a strong Jewish element in the population, which is very noticeable amongst the townspeople and shopkeepers, it is obvious even to the casual observer that it is a Polish city. The Polish language is predominant, French, German, or Russian being spoken by a very small proportion of the people, while Polish history has left its

mark deeply engraved on most of the buildings of any importance. While it is true that the period of union between Lithuania and Poland in the Middle Ages is represented to some extent in the ancient buildings of Vilna, it is equally true that there are to-day few traces of anything that was definitely Lithuanian.

Yet Vilna has the air of a decadent city. Its glory and prestige belong to the past, and its present appearance is that of a town commercially and economically dead. In ancient times it was an important trading centre between the Baltic and the Black Sea, and fifteen years ago it derived most of its trade from the main railway lines connecting Petrograd with Warsaw and Libau¹ with Rostov; but the Great War practically killed Vilna. Before the war it was the headquarters of a Russian army corps, and to-day it is a Polish military centre, but to describe it as associated with great military activity is to indulge in exaggeration. When I was in Vilna in August, 1928, certain military exercises of a very ordinary nature (corresponding somewhat to our brigade training) were in progress, and there were a good number of Polish officers in evidence, but there was certainly nothing to justify the reports of mobilization which appeared in sections of the European press and brought special correspondents from afar to ask the Governor for war news. Judging from the conversations which I had with the Governor of the Province of Vilna and other prominent Poles, the Polish attitude seemed to be essentially pacific; and there was even a feeling of sympathy for the Lithuanians, provided that the main dispute was left out of account. Poland's position in Europe is such that she could not possibly afford to embark on any more aggressive ventures, apart altogether from any obligations which she has undertaken.

M. Valdemaras,² on the other hand, firmly believed in a Polish policy of creating a Greater Poland, incorporating Ukrainians, White Russians, and Lithuanians, and he regarded the Polish seizure of Vilna as merely the beginning of

¹ Now known as Liepaja.

² M. Valdemaras resigned on the 19th September, 1925.

a general Polish movement supported by France, who wants to see a strong Power between Russia and Germany. He was duly alive to the fact that the Lithuanians are a people with little culture of their own, who only too readily absorb the cultures of their neighbours, and he feared that, with an open frontier, the Poles would not be slow to take advantage of this weakness for their own benefit. But when M. Valdemaras talked of Polish aggression it did not necessarily signify military action, and there is little doubt that the aggression that is feared is of a threefold nature. First, the Lithuanians fear an attempt on the part of the Poles to force their culture on the country ; secondly, they expect this to be supported by economic penetration ; and, thirdly, they foresee the climax in a military occupation of their country, possibly without actual fighting, when once the way has been well prepared from the cultural and economic standpoints. In fact, the Lithuanians anticipate a slow and methodical process culminating in the arrival of Polish troops in Kovno, when there will be so many Poles in the city and its surroundings that they will be received with acclamation. In order, therefore, to protect his country from Polish influence, M. Valdemaras has insisted on keeping the frontier closed, while he stirred up a strong national enthusiasm over Vilna in order to counterbalance the low culture and economic backwardness of the Lithuanian people. But a strong national sentiment, such as now exists in Lithuania, without any economic backing is liable to run riot, especially when high tension exists between the people and their next-door neighbours, and incidents are apt to occur which may have far-reaching consequences. The Lithuanians are a fighting race which supplied some of the best troops in the Russian army, and the qualities of their soldiers to-day are of a high order. M. Valdemaras apparently entertained the hope eventually of securing Vilna, but his immediate object was to prevent the Poles from penetrating farther into Lithuania and to avoid doing anything that would constitute an admission of Poland's right to Vilna. He contended that direct communications between the two countries are quite unnecessary from the Lithuanian standpoint, while their

reopening would benefit only the Poles, both economically and in a political sense. The foregoing circumstances, added to a natural desire to render Vilna as useless as possible to the Poles, constitute the chief reasons why M. Valdemaras refused to come to terms with Poland over the frontier question. But for reasons for his supreme obstinacy it is necessary to look farther afield.

Although it cannot definitely be stated that Russia and Germany are supporting Lithuania, there is reason to believe that Russia is not disinterested in her opposition to Poland, and that Germany would be glad to see the question kept open for some years, in order that she may use her influence when her position is stronger and thereby promote her interests in other directions. While it is a mistake to think that M. Valdemaras was relying on external support, yet he felt that his policy of obstinately refusing to consider the question of reopening the frontier and of delay in any form of settlement regarding Vilna was acceptable in certain quarters, which might be in a position to help him later on if it is in their interest to do so. He regarded the Vilna question as forming part of a much larger problem—the future settlement of Eastern Europe—and he thought that it will be many years, possibly twenty or thirty, before this more comprehensive question can be solved. Meanwhile, the Lithuanians expect Polish aggression in some form or another, not necessarily in the immediate future, but as opportunity occurs, and they have persuaded themselves that no one will protect them in the event of such aggression. This feeling is particularly noticeable in Kovno, where the people give the impression that they consider themselves doomed to fight a forlorn hope. Certainly up to date they have had no reason to expect that any Power or Powers would protect them, and the fact that Poland broke the previous lines of demarcation without any serious consequences to herself, and was not requested to evacuate Vilna as a preliminary to negotiations, makes them very apprehensive of the future. As far as Vilna is concerned, M. Valdemaras has stirred up a marked enthusiasm among the politically minded classes and throughout the schools, and he reached

a position from which he could not easily draw back. Indeed, he carried his Vilna policy so far that it was doubtful whether his life would have been safe if he had compromised with Poland. He has taught the Lithuanians to hate the Poles, and he related to me himself in Kovno how it was believed that Poland had resolutely opposed Lithuanian independence, had betrayed his people during the war to the Russians and Germans, and that natural animosity was the result. While it seemed that the prospect of M. Valdemaras attaining the object of his ambition was not very bright, he believed that time was all on the side of the Lithuanians, and he was pursuing a policy which he believed to be for the good of his country by doing everything in his power to safeguard what remains of Lithuania. This fear of Polish aggression, which seems to be the keynote of the present situation, has become an *idée fixe* almost obscuring the question of recovering Vilna, but it is sapping all the energies of the people, who trust no one and, therefore, cannot see the world in its proper perspective.

A study of the merits of the two respective claims is essential. From the standpoint of linguistic nationality, the Lithuanian claim to Vilna was unfounded. In the city itself the Lithuanian population was almost negligible, and there was only one district (Troki) in the whole province that had a clear Lithuanian majority. The only fairly reliable statistics available were those of the Russian census of 1897, and it was believed that these figures, though out of date, were free of prejudice. All later figures, whether compiled by Russians, Germans, or Poles, were incomplete and produced to support some particular political contention. The 1897 figures gave the following approximate percentages :

PROVINCE (including city)		CITY OF VILNA	
Russians	5.00	Russians	20.50
White Russians	56.05	White Russians	4.20
Poles	8.18	Poles	30.90
Lithuanians	17.59	Lithuanians	2.00
Jews	12.72	Jews	40.30
Others	0.46	Others	2.10

From the above it is fairly obvious that the province was more White Russian than anything else, and that the city of Vilna had a preponderance of Jews. In fact, neither Poles nor Lithuanians headed the list in either case. But, eliminating the Jews in the city, there were fifteen times as many Poles as Lithuanians in Vilna itself; while in the province there were twice as many Lithuanians as Poles. The distribution of nationalities, however, showed that the Lithuanian majority was all concentrated in one district, and did not justify a claim to the province as a whole. The distribution of the population according to districts is given in the following table, which was compiled from the 1897 census :

Districts	Popula- tion	Army	Mother Tongue							
			Great Russians	Little Russians	White Russians	Poles	Lithuanians	Germans	Jews	Others
Government of Vilna, total . . .	1,591,207	—	4·94	0·06	56·05	8·18	17·59	0·24	12·72	0·23
City of Vilna . . .	154,532	9·3	20·2	0·3	4·2	30·9	2·0	1·1	40·3	1·0
District of Vilna (not including city)	208,781	—	3·3	—	42·0	12·1	35·0	0·2	7·4	—
District of Disna ¹	204,923	—	5·9	—	81·2	2·4	0·3	0·1	10·1	—
District of Lida . . .	205,767	0·9	1·2	—	73·2	4·6	8·7	—	12·2	0·1
District of Oszmiany	233,559	0·2	2·3	—	80·1	1·7	3·8	—	12·1	0·1
District of Svenciany	172,231	—	5·4	—	47·6	6·0	33·8	—	7·1	0·1
District of Troki	203,401	1·6	4·6	0·1	15·8	11·2	58·1	0·2	9·5	0·5
District of Vileika ¹	208,013	—	0·9	—	87·0	2·5	—	—	9·5	0·1

¹ These districts were excluded from Lithuania by the Treaty of Moscow, 1920.

Of course these figures do not represent the position to-day. The Polish population has naturally increased considerably, and the Lithuanians have not been encouraged to remain in Vilna; but it must always be remembered that the merits of the respective cases rest, not on present conditions, but on those prevailing at the time when the dispute arose. The latest Polish figures for what they describe as the 'Region de Vilna' in 1919 are as follows :

Poles	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	341,491
Jews	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	61,012
White Russians	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	24,531
Others	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	70,206
Total	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	497,240

These last statistics are unsatisfactory, but as they do not affect the case they are only given as a matter of interest.

On historical grounds the Lithuanians claim their right to Vilna by producing material regarding the position in the Middle Ages, when Vilna undoubtedly was the capital of the Lithuanian Empire. But the Lithuania of to-day has no more resemblance to the Lithuania of the fifteenth century than the modern Kingdom of Iraq has to the ancient Kingdom of Babylon. Juridically, however, their claim had a much more solid foundation. It was beyond question that the Vilna territory had been under Russian sovereignty, and that it was ceded to Lithuania by the Soviet Government under the Moscow Treaty of the 12th July, 1920, although that Government had not been recognized by any of the existing Great Powers as the *de jure* Government of Russia. While it is true that the Soviet Government subsequently recognized the rights of Poland over territory lying to the east of the district of Vilna, this was not incompatible with their previous cession of the Vilna district to Lithuania, and cannot be considered to have annulled the rights of Lithuania under the Peace Treaty of Moscow.

The Polish claim, on the other hand, rested, in point of nationality, on the fact that there were many more Poles than Lithuanians in the city itself, although the Poles themselves were outnumbered by the Jews. Moreover, although the Polish population throughout the remainder of the province was small in numbers, it included a larger proportion of the landowning class. Juridically, the Polish claim rested on the decision of the Conference of Ambassadors, which was based on the provision in the Treaty of Versailles to the effect that 'the boundaries of Poland not laid down in the present Treaty will be subsequently determined by the Principal Allied and Associated Powers'. But the question arises whether the Allied Powers

had any legal right to make over to the Poles former Russian territory, which had been ceded to the Lithuanians by formal treaty. In a situation bristling with so many irregularities, it seems only logical that the outcome should be an irregular decision, and that is what happened at the Conference of Ambassadors. Yet this decision seemed to be the best solution at the time in that it gave Vilna to the country most represented in the city, and the only country that was capable of dealing successfully with the mixed population. Moreover, the district of Troki has been so divided that Lithuania has received the larger portion, with a Lithuanian majority, the part included in Poland having a Polish majority. Vilna was at the time essentially a Polish city and a long-established centre of Polish culture ; and I think it is fairly obvious to most people that in this question it is the city and its characteristics that really count. Even Ludendorff admitted that ' Vilna, Grodno and other towns were Polish ', and writes as follows : ' On August 28th the Secretary of State, after consultation with a Polish gentleman from Berlin, made certain proposals with regard to the territorial configuration of Poland and the regulation of our relations with her. In the first place, he wanted to give Vilna to Poland, as it would always be an alien body in a Lithuanian State.'¹

From the economic standpoint, however, the Lithuanians have put forward arguments that are worthy of consideration, and I think it would be an injustice to withhold them.

The river Niemen and its tributaries, they contend, constituted a natural system of navigable waterways, by means of which Lithuanian products reached the sea ; and the Niemen basin, in which was situated nearly the whole of Lithuania, formed an indivisible whole geographically as well as from the economic point of view. For working these waterways, the country was generally divided into the following four parts :

1. The Upper Niemen (Grodno).
2. The Vilja (Vilna).
3. The Middle Niemen (Kovno).
4. The Lower Niemen (Memel).

¹Erich Ludendorff, *My Reminiscences of the War 1914-18*. Berlin, 1919.

These divisions of the navigable rivers, with the lands which they water, were closely united in every respect, and the success of the river development and transport depended in each case on the prosperity of the others. Vilna was the principal junction of the Lithuanian railway system, and the division of this network of rails in the Niemen basin into two parts was calculated to have a disastrous effect on the working of the railways, and consequently on the whole economic life of the country. Vilna was the principal economic centre of the Niemen basin, whose prosperity had a direct influence on the prosperity of the city, which therefore formed economically an integral part of Lithuania. The Lithuanians further argued that to divide these Lithuanian territories in the Niemen basin would be to dissect a living economic organism, and that the amputation of the southern part of the basin would bring about the ruin of the separated territory. Indeed, they foresaw that Vilna, separated from its economic surroundings and annexed by Poland, would be transformed into a little provincial town far from the centre of that country, and would become a dead city. While this forecast regarding Vilna has proved to be more or less correct, there are other factors which have contributed to the undoing of Vilna. The result of the Great War, together with the closing of the Polish-Lithuanian frontier on the west and the present condition of Russia on the east, have rendered the city lifeless through the loss of its transit trade. While the present economic situation in that region is most unsatisfactory, there seems no reason why more normal conditions should not be restored as soon as the frontier is reopened to trade and commerce.

Looking at the Vilna dispute and its present settlement from a purely impartial standpoint, one has, I think, to agree that the decision to give Vilna to Poland was the best that could be done in the circumstances; but at the same time, one is also compelled to admit that Lithuania has come badly out of the controversy. The Poles consider the matter finally closed and are now disinclined to discuss the status of what they regard as a part of the Republic of Poland. But not so the Lithuanians, who foresee changes

in the *status quo* of Eastern Europe before that region is finally settled, and are biding their time in the belief that Vilna will again change hands before the final settlement. When M. Valdemaras told me on the 9th August, 1928, that he considered the Vilna question 'to form part of a much larger problem—the future settlement of Eastern Europe' he confirmed my impression that Vilna, like several other highly important questions, depends on the degree of permanency attached to the *status quo* established by the Treaty of Versailles. The fundamental question is whether this *status quo* is to be maintained as a *res immutabilis*, or whether it is to be regarded as subject to change in course of time and circumstance. The Poles pin their faith to the former conception of the *status quo*, and the Lithuanians to the latter, but much must happen before this matter is thrashed out. There is a prevailing opinion to-day that vital issues such as this can easily be settled by words or by pens, ink, and paper. It is much more likely that, in the long run, they will be settled by deeds. It is idle to forecast anything at the present time, but one thing is certain. The battle of the *status quo* has got to be fought out sooner or later, and on its result the future of Europe will depend. On the one hand, Europe must be shaped to fit the Treaty of Versailles; on the other hand, the Treaty must be revised to fit the conditions prevailing in Europe.

I do not propose to describe in detail the tedious series of negotiations and political explosions that have taken place in the last few years, but there are one or two incidents which are worthy of mention. Lithuania has continued to consider herself at war with Poland, but has confined her operations to closing her frontier to traffic of any sort and allowing no mutual diplomatic or consular representation. This has caused economic injury to Poland, especially to the Vilna Corridor, for which the natural outlet to the sea leads across Lithuanian territory to the Lithuanian port of Memel and the Latvian port of Libau. It was particularly injurious to the local timber merchants, who were seriously handicapped by being prevented from floating

timber rafts down the river Niemen. The situation was not improved by the fact that incidents were continually occurring along the frontier, and became distinctly critical as result of the *coup d'état* of the 17th December, 1926, which brought M. Valdemaras into power and made way for a Government that showed considerably less restraint than its predecessors in the conduct of foreign affairs. Unfortunately, this upheaval at Kovno came almost right on the top of a similar *coup* by Marshal Pilsudski at Warsaw. With a passive state of war existing all along the Polish-Lithuanian frontier and with a semi-military Government in power in both capitals, a small incident might easily lead to a violent explosion. Various attempts were made to bring to an end the 'state of war' and to reach a settlement about the frontier, but the Lithuanians insisted that any formula should include an admission that the Vilna question remained open, and this condition the Poles would not accept. Again there was much talking both in Geneva and out of it, several meetings between ministers, but nothing done. Then in October, 1927, the Poles excelled themselves by celebrating the seventh anniversary of the Zeligowski *coup* with national rejoicings at Vilna; and not only was this festival attended by Marshal Pilsudski and several Polish ministers, but actually by General Zeligowski himself. By this time national feeling was roused to a very high pitch on both sides, when another incident occurred in connection with the alleged internment of Polish teachers in Lithuania and Polish reprisals against Lithuanians in Vilna; and the situation was further complicated by the danger of a raid on Kovno by the Lithuanian *émigrés* who had fled after the *coup d'état*, and the fear of intervention on the part of Russia. M. Valdemaras accused the Poles of supporting the *émigrés* against his own *régime*, and a crisis was precipitated which became a matter of international concern, threatened to renew active hostility between the two countries, and brought M. Valdemaras face to face with Marshal Pilsudski in the Council Chamber at Geneva. The verbal encounter between the diminutive Lithuanian dictator and the Polish marshal had its humorous side, and closed

with a dramatic shaking of hands, but the only result was the mutual acceptance of a resolution which enabled both dictators to return home in triumph, and so to save their faces without having to continue the dangerous and not very edifying practice of spitting fire at one another. Yet, while it overcame the crisis of the moment, it did not remove its permanent cause, since it was explicitly stated in the text that it in no way affected questions on which the two Governments were at variance, and the parties were merely recommended to enter into direct negotiations as soon as possible in order to establish a good understanding as the basis of peace. Negotiations certainly have taken place in Berlin, Königsberg, and elsewhere, but the frontier question is no nearer a solution than it was at the beginning. In every case the conference breaks down or is adjourned owing to the respective attitudes towards Vilna. The Poles will not discuss Vilna, while the Lithuanians insist on it being made quite clear that their claim remains open; and so the process continues *ad nauseam*.

The monotony of the quarrel was at any rate relieved in 1925 by the participation of the Vatican in a lamentable, though rather humorous, episode. Poland, one of the oldest and strongest allies of the Catholic Church in Europe, concluded an important Concordat with the Holy See, under which the Catholic Church of Poland received ecclesiastical jurisdiction over all Poland, including Vilna. Lithuania was already on strained relations with the Vatican, owing to a dispute between the native clergy and those of Polish origin; and the news of the Polish Concordat was the signal for hostile demonstrations, which took rather a peculiar form. The residence of the Papal Nuncio in Kovno was subjected to a fusillade of rotten eggs, which was scarcely in keeping with the dignity of its august occupant, and the Lithuanian representative at the Vatican was withdrawn. History does not relate what happened to the Papal Nuncio, but all one can hope is that he did not put his head out of the window.

CHAPTER VII

THE NEW POLISH REPUBLIC

ONE of the most important and complicated features of post-war Europe has been the establishment of the Polish Republic, whose composition, character, and geographical position are such that her internal movements and external influences have their repercussions throughout the whole European continent. Poland is a country of minorities, of many tongues, and of many distinct races; it is a country of divers religions, and of great contrasts. Although the Poles head the list of nationalities, nearly a third of the population belongs to other races, and the Russian, White Russian, German, French, Ruthenian, Lithuanian, Czech, and Yiddish languages are all spoken in the new Polish Republic, restored from the territory of the former German, Russian, and Austro-Hungarian Empires. While part of the population lives upon the land and illiteracy is prevalent in certain districts, other sections of the people are occupied with industry and are in an advanced stage of civilization. Polish culture is of a very high order, and it has made a mark in Europe that requires no recommendation; but it must not be imagined that all Poles are musicians, artists, or literary 'stars', although the particular temperament that tends to produce artistic qualities is inherent in the Polish race. From the partitions up to the end of the Great War the Poles were a nation without a country, a fact which provided a singular opportunity for the exercise of their temperamental qualities, and the clash with reality has been rather a severe test for a new state faced with a heap of difficulties, unusual in their number and in their intensity. The Poles are great idealists, and they will go through anything in pursuit of their ideal.

They regard themselves as a people with a destiny, and if their national temperament accounts for much of their success it is also responsible for many of their failures. While some of the Polish people were born as German subjects, some as Russian, and others as Austrian, they have always been Poles in the first place ; but the fact remains that their domicile under foreign rule has had its effect. Although they may be entirely Polish in sentiment, their more material ideas are to some extent German, Russian, or Austrian, according to individual circumstances, and therefore the present generation cannot be regarded as truly representative of the new Poland.

British visitors to Poland are attracted by the romance of Polish history and the charm of Polish culture, and are not slow to realize that the Poles are a people among whom it is exceedingly pleasant to live. The atmosphere of the Polish cities, in many cases mediæval, is something quite new to those who have never explored the vast area of Eastern Europe ; and they find themselves among conditions totally different from those to which they are accustomed. Unfortunately, few of those who visit Poland to-day know and understand the conditions that existed when the country was divided up between the Hohenzollern, Hapsburg, and Romanoff empires, and therefore it is difficult for them fully to appreciate the progress which has taken place since the end of the Great War. Perhaps the most striking feature to-day is the very strong form of nationalism that permeates all sections of the people, from the old aristocracy to the humble peasant and from the cabinet minister to the railway porter. Now that Poland has come back to her own again, the future of the country is the first consideration in the minds of all patriotic Poles ; but Polish patriotism is by no means confined to words, for the average Pole is doing, and is ready to do a great deal more, to further the interests of the nation that is everything in the world to him. And not only is this self-sacrificing spirit present among the men ; it is equally noticeable among the women, who always have been, and are likely to remain, a great power in national activity.

Although the Pole is naturally more than pleased with the turn of events that restored to him his ancient heritage, he is at the same time subconsciously disappointed that the present frontiers are narrower than those of bygone days ; and, as his ideal has not been wholly fulfilled, he is still fired with ambition for the future. Nationalism and ambition are excellent qualities in themselves, but when combined with idealism they are apt to lead to trouble. Fortunately, this is realized by many of the Polish leaders, and there is now a distinct tendency in Warsaw to try and restrain these traits in the Polish character and to cultivate the qualities of caution and common sense.

Poland to-day seems to bear a certain resemblance to an old English county family that has just been reinstated in its ancient country seat after years of adversity in different parts of the world. The various members of the family return with different ideas and strange customs, and their position amongst their neighbours rests entirely on the achievements of past generations. Naturally they magnify the past, from which they derive their position, and, although their means are slender, they feel they are entitled to possessions equal to those of their more wealthy neighbours. If the estate is smaller than in former days, they feel that it must be restored to its old dimensions. Anything short of these requirements seems for the moment humiliating. But these people are living in a state of unreality, and fail to realize that the new is not the old. They are living largely on memories which they cannot dismiss from their minds ; they are snatching at the past which has fallen from their grasp for ever. Consequently, things lose their true proportion and these people become rather trying at times to their neighbours, who hope that for their own sake they will face the world afresh and leave the past to take care of itself. And so it is with Poland. If the Poles could only forget their frontiers of the Middle Ages, they would find their path in the twentieth century much easier to tread. It is necessary to study this Polish temperament, and to see how it has grown owing to the circumstances in which the Poles have been placed since the partitions ; for

it is chiefly owing to the fact that the nation was for long without territory that the present Polish character possesses certain well-defined features.

Poland is situated almost exactly in the centre of Europe. It forms part of the great plain which begins in France, extends across North Germany and Russia, and terminates at the Ural Mountains. It lies at the point where this plain, which is comparatively narrow in the west, widens out like a fan, owing to the southward bend of the Carpathians, to spread henceforth from the Baltic to the Black Sea. This position at the gateway from the broad plain of the east to the narrower one of the west has placed Poland across what has always been the great commercial and military high road between east and west, and also upon several important routes between north and south.¹ If this position has had its advantages, these have been fully counter-balanced by corresponding dangers. It has given the country considerable importance as a distributing centre and as a highway for transit trade; but, situated at the meeting-place of the Germanic, Scandinavian, Slav, and for centuries the Asiatic worlds, Poland has been exposed to attacks from all sides, and has served as the great battle-field of Eastern Europe. To-day the Poles in Europe number about 25 to 30 millions, and they are wedged in between two great nations, the Germans and the Russians, who outnumber them in the ratio of 2 to 1 and 3 to 1 respectively. The dangers of this exposed central position are increased by the fact that Poland has no good natural frontiers, the only natural boundaries in this region being the Carpathians in the south and the Baltic in the north, neither of which has fully served its purpose in the ethnographic or political sense. In the south the Polish population extends over the mountain ridges for a considerable distance, which has led in part to unnatural frontiers as in the case of the old Polish State. In the north the old Poland was never able to hold a sufficient frontage on the

¹ The route from the Black Sea to the Baltic via the Vistula, and that from the Baltic to the Mediterranean via Krakow and the 'Moravian Gate'.

Baltic, and the Polish population has been pushed away from the sea-coast, except for a small area to the west of Danzig. In the east and west it is difficult to find any serious barrier. The great European plain is broken only



In each county the position of the county borough is indicated; the name of the borough is given where it differs from the name of the county.

POLAND

Showing the Administrative Division of the Republic into Counties (Wojewodztwa).

by numerous rivers which serve rather to bring the peoples together. The valleys of the Oder, the Warta, and the Netze have brought the Germans into Poland, while the Niemen, the Pripet, and the Dniester have carried the

Poles far into Lithuania and the Ukraine. The one real obstacle to ethnic and political expansion that the plain presents is the great area of marshes and forests in the Pripet valley. This unattractive region never appealed to Polish colonists, who invaded the fertile lands on either side—the Grodno and Vilna regions in the north-east, and south-east towards Lwów, Volhynia, and Podolia. Hence the strangely bifurcated appearance of the eastern limits of the Polish ethnographic area and the consequent difficulty of drawing a good eastern frontier for Poland. The Polish advanced positions at Vilna and Lwów form two exposed salients, separated from each other by the wedge-like Pripet region, the population of which may be White Russian or Ukrainian, but certainly not Polish.

Whatever natural unity Poland possesses is chiefly due to the influence of the Vistula, which has always been the great artery of the country's economic life. Poland might, indeed, be described as the basin of the Vistula, together with the valleys of certain adjacent rivers which offer easy access to this river, are in part connected with it by canals, and with it practically form one system of waterways. This system of closely connected rivers has been of the greatest assistance to Polish expansion in the past, and should be of valuable service to the country in the future by providing communications with the Danube, the Niemen, and the Dnieper, which represent half of Eastern Europe. But the exploitation of these waterways must largely depend on political conditions at the mouth of the Vistula and on the extent to which the river is made navigable.

Poland was originally rather a small state. The early Polish kingdom, as it developed between the tenth and twelfth centuries, included what is usually known as 'Congress Poland',¹ Western Galicia, Silesia, Posnania, West Prussia, and sometimes Pomerania. It was practically confined to the region lying between the Oder and the Vistula, but it extended farther to the west and possessed

¹ A small kingdom set up by the Congress of Vienna in 1815, and incorporated in Russia a few years later.

a broader frontage on the Baltic than it was destined to do in later times. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the kingdom passed through a period of division, weakness, and confusion, owing to frequent partitions and civil wars among its princes; and unfortunately for Poland, this period coincided with one of the greatest ages of German expansion and colonization—the most successful period in the thousand years' history of the Teutonic *Drang nach Osten*. It was at this time that Brandenburg, Mecklenburg, Pomerania, and Silesia passed under German control and were flooded with German colonists; while even more serious was the establishment of the Teutonic Knights in East Prussia during the thirteenth century, when the original Prussians¹ were absorbed or exterminated by the foundation of a German colony that has always remained a thorn in the side of Poland. In 1308 the Teutonic Knights succeeded in seizing West Prussia as well, thereby bridging the gap between East Prussia and Germany, and cutting off Poland from the Baltic; and in this way began the struggle for the mouth of the Vistula, which even to-day is one of the greatest dangers to European peace. When Poland in the fourteenth century pulled herself together again as a united kingdom, it was too late to think of recovering most of the lands lost during the preceding period, but the Poles could never become permanently reconciled to the loss of West Prussia with all that it entailed. Indeed, the recovery of that province was the chief object of the Hundred Years War between Poland and the Teutonic Knights, which culminated in the historic victory over the Germans on the field of Tannenberg (Grünwald) in 1410.²

Looking for allies and additional resources for this struggle, Poland turned to the east and began a significant movement analogous to the Germanic *Drang nach Osten* of which it was the direct result. The first success in this direction was the conquest of Eastern Galicia, the first encroachment by Poland upon the domain of Ukrainian nationality and

¹ A people who were neither Germans nor Slavs, but were closely related to the Letts and Lithuanians.

² *Vide* Chapter V.

the beginning of a question that is still unsolved ; and this was followed in less than half a century by the personal union of Poland and Lithuania in 1386, which became an important landmark in the history of Eastern Europe. At that time Lithuania was a powerful state extending from the Baltic to the Black Sea, and including nearly the whole of the White Russian and Ukrainian peoples ; and it had been built up within two generations by able rulers and by the valour of the Lithuanian nation, which formed scarcely one-tenth of the population of its vast empire. Hence the union between Poland and Lithuania created a realm which was for a long time the strongest Power in Eastern Europe, and remained until the partitions the second or third largest state on the whole European continent. Reinforced in this way, Poland was able to carry through to a successful conclusion the struggle with the Teutonic Knights ; and by the Peace of Toruń in 1466 West Prussia, including Danzig and the mouth of the Vistula, was reunited to Poland with extensive rights of local self-government, while East Prussia was left to be held by the Knights as a fief of the Polish Crown.¹ But an even more important result of the union of 1386 was the gradual fusion of Lithuania with Poland. In this partnership Poland, the smaller but culturally more advanced state, constantly predominated and, without even so much as serious friction, absorbed to a large degree her sister nation. The connection between the two states, which originally consisted solely in their possession of a common ruler, was gradually tightened until in 1569 it was converted into a permanent organic union. As I have already referred to this in a previous chapter, suffice it to recall that the Lithuanian nobility, and to a large extent the Christian population of the towns, voluntarily accepted the Polish language, customs, and

¹ In 1525 the King of Poland allowed the Teutonic Grand Master, Albert of Hohenzollern, who had become a Protestant, to secularize East Prussia and turn it into a duchy hereditary in his family. In 1618 this duchy passed to the Brandenburg branch of the Hohenzollerns. The Great Elector succeeded in freeing East Prussia from Polish suzerainty by the treaties of Wehlau (1657) and Oliva (1660).

nationality ; that Polish colonists settled in large numbers in Lithuania ; and that Polish culture reigned supreme in Vilna, Minsk, Lutsk, and Kameniets. This process of Polonization—a process which is taking place to-day in Western Poland—did not, however, extend to the lower classes of the population. While one great obstacle was largely removed by the foundation of the Uniate Church ¹ in communion with Rome, the masses of the Lithuanian, White Russian, and Ukrainian peasantry still clung to their respective languages and national customs, and created an insuperable barrier to the solid establishment of Polish nationality throughout most of the eastern territories.

It is unnecessary to refer to the many fluctuations of the Polish frontiers during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, or to the reasons for the stagnation and decadence into which Poland fell during the eighteenth century ; but it is important to realize the position of the Polish Republic just before the partitions—the historic Poland to which the Poles so often compare the Poland of to-day. On the eve of the First Partition Poland ranked as the third largest state on the Continent, with an area of 282,000 square miles, while in population it stood fourth with over 11 million people. Its frontiers extended from the Baltic and the Carpathians to the Dnieper and the Dvina, and it included nearly the whole of that broad isthmus between the Baltic and the Black Sea that leads from eastern continental Europe to the peninsular Europe of the west. Within these boundaries Poland perhaps formed more of a geographical unit than the new Poland, but whatever may have been the physical merits of the old Poland, its population was far from homogeneous. The Poles cannot have formed more than about 50 per cent of the population, while more than one-third was made up of Ukrainians and White Russians, and the remainder consisted of Germans, Jews, Letts, Lithuanians, Armenians, and Tartars. Such a mixture of races was not destined to last as a single European

¹ A body founded in 1596, which accepted the supremacy of the Pope, but was allowed to preserve the Slav liturgy and many special rites and practices of the Orthodox Church.

state, and even if it had lasted until the nineteenth century it would have been faced with almost overwhelming difficulties from nationalist movements. Poland was also weakened by the fact that, while it was a republic both in name and in reality, political rights and privileges were restricted almost entirely to the nobility¹; a prosperous middle class was sadly lacking; and the peasants were held in serfdom. This gave the state a very narrow foundation; it tended to make the masses indifferent to the fate of the Republic; and it made Polish patriotism almost a monopoly of the nobility and clergy.

Before the partitions, Poland was rather an area of Polish domination than one enclosed by national frontiers. While the landowners were Poles, the majority of the population were serfs and foreigners. On the other hand, what now constitutes the middle class was then represented by foreign merchants, chiefly of German and Jewish origin, who settled in the towns and laid the foundations of industry and commerce.

Economically, the country was miserably poor and backward; the cities, apart from Warsaw and Danzig, were small and insignificant; commerce and industry were almost non-existent; and agriculture was the one healthy feature of economic life. Politically, the Republic had by the middle of the eighteenth century fallen into a sad state of impotence and lethargy. I do not propose to dwell on the abuses, defects, and peculiarities of the Polish constitutional system of that time, but as this depressing period of Polish history is rather apt to obscure the earlier and more prosperous periods in the minds of Western Europeans, it is as well to make it clear that the old Polish State at its best, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, was an adventure reflecting considerable credit on those who were responsible for its evolution. It was the largest and most ambitious experiment with the republican form of government that the world had seen since the days of the Romans: it was the only experiment on a large scale with a federal republic until the appearance of the United States. In the

¹ 14 per cent of the total population.

sixteenth and seventeenth centuries this Republic was the most liberal state in Europe, the state in which the greatest measure of constitutional, civic, intellectual, and religious liberty existed. In an age of religious persecution and continual religious wars, Poland was remarkably free from such troubles ; and her territory offered almost complete toleration and asylum to those fleeing from the persecution of Western tyrants. And if in the eighteenth century the Republic had fallen on evil days, the errors and shortcomings of that period can be equalled and surpassed in many other European countries, and in no way prove the incapability of the Polish nation for independent statehood.

At the moment when Poland had reached the lowest stage in her decline, the three monarchies of Russia, Austria, and Prussia united to deprive her of certain territories which they coveted. By the First Partition of 1772 Catherine II appropriated a part of White Russia (the later ' governments ' of Vitebsk and Mogilev) ; Frederick II took West Prussia (without Danzig) ; and Austria acquired most of what is now Galicia. This aroused the Poles from their lethargy and led them to inaugurate a promising movement for political, economic, and social reforms, but the neighbouring Powers were not disposed to tolerate this revival. Once more they fell upon the Polish Republic and, whereas on the first occasion they had partitioned it on account of its weakness and accompanying dangers, on the next occasion they did so because it was growing inconveniently strong. By the Second Partition in 1793 Prussia annexed Danzig and Posnania, while Russia seized all the country as far as a line closely corresponding to the Russo-Polish frontier laid down by the recent Treaty of Riga. This humiliation led to the Polish rising under Kosciuszko, a last desperate effort to free the country, but by way of punishment the three Great Powers then combined to wipe Poland off the map of Europe by the Third Partition in 1795. Then, after Napoleon's half-hearted attempt to restore Poland, the Congress of Vienna of 1815 made a new distribution of the Polish territories (including the establishment of ' Congress Poland '), which lasted with slight changes until the outbreak

of the Great War. By this Fourth Partition Russia was left in possession of about 82 per cent of the area of the old Poland; 10 per cent fell to Austria; and 8 per cent to Prussia. But as pre-partition Poland and ethnographic Poland (the area within which the Poles form the majority of the population) do not by any means coincide, it is necessary to point out that under the arrangements of 1815 about three-fifths of the Polish race were left under Russian rule, one-fifth under Austria, and one-fifth under Prussia.¹

The history of Poland from the time of the partitions to the outbreak of the Great War may be divided into two periods. During the first of these periods, up to 1863, the nation, refusing to believe that the wrong done to it could endure for more than a short time, made no less than nine efforts to regain its freedom by arms. This was a period of perpetual conspiracies, ever-recurring insurrections, and of heroic but fruitless sacrifices. It was a period when most of the *élite* of the nation lived in exile, forming the Polish Legions in the armies of Revolutionary France and of Napoleon. It was a period when Polish literature proved the vitality and power of the national genius, and romanticist poets sang the hopes and sufferings of 'the martyr nation'. After the failure of the insurrection of 1863, however, the Poles had to recognize that the methods hitherto pursued were utterly hopeless. As long as the three great military monarchies of Eastern Europe remained strong and united in their common purpose of keeping the country under their control, the restoration of a free and united Poland was entirely out of the question. After 1863, therefore, the Poles tended to renounce conspiracies, rebellions, and indeed any hope of fulfilling their national aspirations except in the very distant future. Many turned from politics in despair and threw themselves into the work of the economic construction of the nation; others devoted themselves to such modest opportunities for political work as existing conditions afforded. The one aim in view was to survive as a nation; to keep patriotism alive, and to strengthen its influence

¹ In 1910 there were about 13 million Poles in Russia; about 4.3 million in Austria; and about 4 million in Prussia.

among the masses of the people ; to prepare the nation morally and materially for the great day, when by a fundamental change of circumstances Poland might emerge from captivity.

The *régime* of oppression, persecution, and denationalization to which the Poles were subjected during most of the nineteenth century has, like most oppressions, been the subject of some exaggeration ; but conditions were certainly severe in Russian Poland from 1863 onwards, in Austrian territory during the period up to 1866 ; and in Prussia after the appearance of Bismarck in the political arena. In all three countries in varying degree efforts were made to drive the Polish language from the schools, from the courts of justice, and from all administrative intercourse ; to suppress Polish institutions and organizations ; and to suppress the external manifestation of Polish nationality. The Tsarist Government indulged in periodical outbreaks of considerable brutality, while the Prussian Government confined itself chiefly to colonization and expropriation of land. But the pressure to which the Poles were subjected was never uniform in all three parts of what had once been Poland, and there was always one part in which conditions were easier and it was possible to carry out some patriotic work. If Russian Poland served in such a *rôle* from 1815 to 1830, during the short existence of the constitutional kingdom founded by Alexander I, and Prussian Poland formed a haven of refuge during the middle of the nineteenth century under the lenient rule of Frederick William IV, Austrian Poland was in the last fifty years the region of relief. Forced by her expulsion from Germany in 1866 and by her dualistic reorganization in 1867 to look for a new orientation and to bid for the loyalty of her Polish subjects, Austria accorded to the Poles of Galicia a wide measure of local autonomy and practically turned over to them the government of that province. Hence, Galicia was enabled to become a centre of every sort of Polish intellectual, economic, and political activity, as well as the headquarters of every national movement, and a school whose output of parliamentarians, trained administrators, and soldiers has

proved invaluable to the resurrected Polish State. With traces of the political atmosphere of Austria, this school was far from what was to be desired, but it afforded the chief, and in many respects the only, training for national self-government that modern Poland has received.

The variety of political and economic *régimes* under which the Poles have lived for over a century has not failed to produce a considerable difference, and even a certain estrangement between the three long-separated parts of the nation. Every visitor to the country to-day is struck by the differences in ideas, customs, and character between the hard-headed, practical Posnanian Poles, among whom illiteracy is almost unknown and who have acquired much of the Prussian love of order, regularity, and efficiency; the Galician Poles, with their passion for politics and their tendency to slow, easy-going Austrian ways; and the Russian Poles of the 'Congress Kingdom' with their 50 per cent of illiteracy, their more backward economic and social conditions, their political inexperience and doctrinairism, and their greater devotion to art, literature, and music. While the unity of the nation has not been fundamentally broken, it is a difficult task to establish uniform laws and institutions where such diversity has hitherto existed, and to overcome the many and subtle effects of more than a century of disunion. The last hundred years have also produced a decided weakening of Polish influence in many regions that belonged to the old Republic, and in this respect the partitioning Powers have not laboured altogether in vain. At the beginning of the nineteenth century Polish culture and the Polish language were still predominant almost throughout the whole of historic Poland, at any rate among the educated classes, but since that time they have met with grave losses. The country gentry, who were the chief representatives of Polish culture in the more eastern territories, have lost a great part of their estates or influence through the policy of the Russian Government; and Nicholas I and his successors brought back to the Orthodox Church millions of Uniate peasants who, as long as they were obedient to Rome, had been sympathetic to Poland

rather than to Russia. Moreover, two at least of the peoples once united with the old Polish State have now developed pronounced nationalist movements of their own—the Lithuanians and Ukrainians—and both movements have assumed a strong anti-Polish tendency as result of their fight against the predominating influence of Polish culture. However incomplete these national revivals may be, they have in any case made it abundantly clear that the restoration to Poland of her frontiers of 1772 is at present out of the question.

At the same time, these losses have not been without their compensations elsewhere. If the Polish element has lost ground in areas where it was widely but sparsely disseminated, being chiefly represented by the educated classes, it has made progress in regions where it was more concentrated and where, in particular, there was a Polish peasantry as a foundation. In Eastern Galicia there has been a steady increase of Polish population,¹ and in the region round Vilna it appears that the Polish language has widely extended its influence in the most recent decades. Indeed, as far as statistics prove anything in this part of the world, there is now a continuous belt of predominantly Polish territory extending from the 'Congress Kingdom' through the Grodno and Vilna districts as far as the river Dvina. In the west the Poles have scored in a different way; for here it has been a case of awakening a national movement among Polish-speaking people, who had long been separated from Poland and were apparently devoid of any Polish national consciousness. Such has been the work accomplished during the past fifty years in Upper Silesia and Teschen, regions that had been politically detached from Poland since the fourteenth century, and in East Prussia by a few enthusiasts among the Protestant Poles or Masurians.

¹ 1857—20 per cent Poles; 1890—31·2 per cent; 1910—39·6 per cent. While it is true that this gain is partly due to the fact that the Jews, forming 12 per cent of the total population, have within this period transferred themselves from the German to the Polish figures, there is no doubt that the Poles alone have increased more rapidly than the Ukrainians.

More important, however, than these gains in the more or less outlying districts has been the internal transformation of Poland since the middle of the nineteenth century. The emancipation of the serfs and the agrarian reforms that sprang from this measure have produced a class of thrifty, industrious, and fairly prosperous peasant landowners which, owing to the influence of the educated classes and their own experience under foreign domination, soon flocked to support the national movement. In Prussian Poland, during the struggle for the land against the colonizing enterprises of the Government, the peasants were the salvation of the Polish cause. Meanwhile, since the middle of last century, Russian Poland has been passing through a period of rapid industrial development, which made that region one of the leading manufacturing centres of the Russian Empire. This helped to produce a numerous, active, and enterprising middle class, and a large class of industrial workers, both of which have displayed a sense of patriotism of great benefit to the Polish nation.

In the last half-century a new Poland has begun to make its appearance, and it is stronger, richer, and more harmoniously developed than the old Poland of the landowners and clergy. It is also better fitted for self-government. If the generation that had witnessed the abortive insurrection of 1863 had almost despaired of Poland, the present generation that appeared at the close of the century grew up with a more hopeful and confident spirit. They were proud of the material progress that was being made; they trusted the new democracy that was being created; and they were ready to believe that Poland's day would come in the not very distant future. The revolution of 1905 was the first indication of a general upheaval in Russia, while the Bosnian crisis of 1908 foreshadowed a great conflict in which the partitioning Powers would be ranged against each other. As in the case of Finland, Poland's hour was at hand. She prepared and she waited; and in 1914 the storm broke from Posnania to the Ukraine, and from the Baltic to the Carpathians.

With the outbreak of war the Poles found themselves in a

very difficult position. It was clear that, if the Polish claims were to receive attention at the close of hostilities, Poland must play some part in the great international struggle; but Poland's two great historical enemies—Germany and Russia—were fighting on opposite sides. France, which had been the mainstay of Poland's hopes for foreign help in the earlier decades of the nineteenth century, had latterly become the ally of Tsarist Russia; and neither France nor Great Britain were now likely to exert their influence for the independence of a country of which three-fifths belonged to their powerful Russian ally. Moreover, the Poles had become so used to carrying on their national struggle by peaceful means that military action was almost a forgotten idea among the people; and, while the Prussian Poles were no less fascinated by the power of Imperial Germany than the Germans themselves, the Russian Poles were bound to the empire of the Tsars by ties of increasing industrial and commercial interests. It was only in Austrian Poland that the idea of military activities cropped up again in the national mind before the war. Refugees from Russian Poland after the suppression of the revolution of 1905 had made propaganda for secret military organizations, which had found favour among the youth of the schools in Galicia; and the Austrian Government, foreseeing a clash with Russia over Balkan questions, supported the military societies which during the years immediately preceding the war were formed by different Polish political parties. The more radical of these were determined to support Austria in the event of a conflict with Russia, as they considered the overthrow of Russia the most important step towards the deliverance of Poland. But they did not fully realize to what extent Austria had become subject to Germany, and how little Poland had to expect from that quarter.

Obviously it is impossible here to go into the details of the war in Poland, which together with the Russian Revolution made Polish independence possible, but it is necessary to bear in mind a few essential points in the general movement of events. August, 1914, found the Poles of

Germany, Austria, and Russia estranged to one another, with their sympathies divided and no united national policy. Pilsudski crossed the frontier from Galicia with a few thousands of his men and opened hostilities with Russia, but the German and Austrian Governments refused to sanction an independent Polish army under his command, and the so-called 'Polish Legions' were placed under the command of the Central Powers. But the Polish National Committee, formed in Krakow, aimed at uniting Galicia and 'Congress Poland' as a third party in the Dual Monarchy, and required the Polish Legion to take the oath to the Emperor Francis Joseph. In Warsaw another Polish Committee under Dmowski denied the right of the Krakow Committee to speak in the name of the Polish nation; declared its loyalty to the Tsar Nicholas; and attempted to form a Polish Legion on the side of Russia. Meanwhile the Grand Duke Nicholas issued a proclamation promising to unite the three parts of Poland in an autonomous state with the Russian Empire and, when the Russian army occupied a great part of Galicia, supporters of the Russian policy openly adhered to this plan, and the Austrian proposal fell rather flat. In the summer of 1915, however, the Central Powers overran Congress Poland, and after the fall of Warsaw governments were set up on behalf of Germany at Warsaw, and Austria-Hungary at Lublin, it being now the turn of the Russian solution to dissolve into thin air. Thus Poland was divided into several camps, and not only did Poles in the different regiments of opposite armies fight each other under compulsion, but Polish volunteers stood on opposite sides of the front, and disputes between supporters of Russia on the one hand, of the Central Powers on the other, became the dominant feature of Polish life during the first two years of the war. While one side hoped for reunion of all Polish lands under Russia and the grant of liberal self-government under pressure of the Western Allies, the other side supported the conception of a united Poland federated with Austria on the same terms as Hungary. To neither of them did an entirely free state seem within the sphere of possibility, while the Prussian

Poles contented themselves with an attitude of passive resistance.

As the war proceeded, the Polish nation became more divided than ever owing to the passing of territory from one military command to another, and many national leaders migrated to Russia and to Western Europe. It was not until November, 1916, that the Central Powers, realizing that something must be done to allay dissatisfaction and obtain recruits in the occupied Polish territories, issued a manifesto creating some show of an independent Poland, which certainly had the advantage of raising the question as an international issue. But little was done by Germany and Austria to give effect to their declaration, and it was only due to the pressure of the military position that the Poles obtained some more concessions, such as the creation in 1917 of a Regency Council and a Provisional Council of State. By this time dissatisfaction was growing in the ranks of the Polish Legions, and their refusal to swear fidelity to the Central Powers led to their disbandment and the imprisonment of Pilsudski in the fortress of Magdeburg. It was necessary to await greater events before the dawn of the new Poland would break. The Russian Revolution had a more determining influence on the fate of Poland than any other happening of these eventful years, and it was the collapse of the Russian Empire that was the saving of the nation. Thereafter, the Allies were no longer tied by regard for Russia in the settlement of the Polish question ; for President Wilson included a ' reunited and free Poland, with access to the sea ' among his ' fourteen points ', formulated in January, 1918 ; and six months later the Prime Ministers of Great Britain, France, and Italy pledged themselves at Versailles to this solution of the Polish problem. But the defeat of Germany was still necessary in order to establish this conception as a reality, and it was not until the autumn of 1918 that Polish independence was proclaimed and established in Western Galicia and by the Regency Council in Warsaw. At Lublin, which had been the centre of the Austrian occupation, a special Government of a radical complexion was formed, but both this and the

Regency Council placed dictatorial powers in the hands of Pilsudski as soon as he returned from his German prison. In November, 1918, the Germans left Russian Poland without much resistance, and in the following month they were expelled from Prussian Poland.

Meanwhile, Paderewski, who had been working hard in America in the interests of Polish independence, arrived in Warsaw ¹ and was entrusted with the formation of a Coalition Cabinet; and it was under his guidance that the Constituent Assembly re-elected Pilsudski as temporary head of the state, and gave the new Republic a provisional constitution. The task of the new rulers of Poland was one of exceptional difficulty, and it is most remarkable to see to-day what has been done in the last decade. A political and economic whole had to be created out of three provinces which had been separated for over a century, and had become accustomed to different social conditions, legal systems, and administrative practices, as well as to different markets, trade routes, and communications by rail and water. The three parts of Poland had drifted far apart, and real unity will only be restored when the rising generation has reached maturity. In the early days it was rather a question of shaking things together provisionally and hoping for the best. Two-thirds of the country had actually been the scene of war; Congress Poland and Galicia had been devastated. Most of the factories were closed for want of raw material, if they had not been dismantled altogether. The fields of the peasants had been laid waste, their livestock slaughtered, and their farms burnt. Many districts were famine-stricken, while others were swept by epidemics. Communications were completely disorganized, and rolling stock was in a deplorable state. Marks, roubles and kronen circulated freely, but their value was low and precarious, and public and private finances were in a chaotic state. Moreover, Russia was seething with trouble, and the ideas prevalent there unsettled the peasants, who demanded a redistribution of land from the large estates, and also the workers, who were suffering from unemployment. Yet in

¹ 1st January, 1919.

spite of all the difficulties that confronted the new state, it was not long before the Poles put their back into the colossal task of reconstruction.

In Poland to-day we see the result of their labours. It took several years before the former provincial governments could be replaced by the outline of one general system, but now the country has been divided into small provinces or *województws*, as they were called in the old Poland, which are governed by councils partly elected and partly composed of officials, and presided over by an administrative governor. There are also urban and rural district councils. But the Poles have been faced with the difficulty of reconciling the necessity of establishing uniform administration throughout the country with the expediency of allowing for widely different provincial conditions, and of stimulating local effort by the largest possible measure of local autonomy. Consequently, uniformity has not yet been reached, and the systems in force at present vary in different parts of the country. Similar difficulties arose in the matter of education, and a uniform system had to be introduced. While compulsory education was necessary to overcome the ignorance of the people which had been rather encouraged by one partitioning Power, minority schools had also to be organized in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution. Before the war each part of Poland had its own individual system of teaching, and the work of codifying these systems into one uniform method required great efforts on the part of the authorities and co-operation on the part of the teaching staff. It was only in Austrian Poland that a complete body of Polish educational institutions really existed, and this had to help with personnel and advice those other parts of the country which, under Russia and Prussia, had been deprived of public education in the national language. However, after several years of untiring labours the Poles have established complete uniformity of educational methods. The greatest efforts have been directed towards the reduction of illiteracy, which in the former Russian provinces had reached alarming proportions. In the Congress Kingdom there were actually fewer schools

in 1904 than in 1840, and in 1900 36 per cent of the army recruits could neither read nor write, while in the eastern provinces nearly half the recruits were illiterate. In order to realize the significance of the educational campaign in Poland, it is only necessary to mention that the number of children attending elementary schools in the former Congress Kingdom in 1923-4 was 1,345,586, whereas the corresponding number in 1910-11 was only 370,576—an increase of 263 per cent—and that the number of schools in Galicia has been increased by 1,000 since the establishment of the Polish administration.

Other difficulties have been the drawing up of a uniform code of law to replace the three vastly different systems of Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Russia ; the establishment of the currency on a sound foundation ; and the creation of a united Polish army out of officers and soldiers of the three armies of the partitioning Powers and voluntary organizations formed during the Great War. The question of the currency presented a problem of unusual magnitude, and it was chiefly due to the energy and courage of M. Grabski, who may be regarded as one of the greatest financial statesmen since the war, that Poland was pulled out of her financial mess. The first five years of Poland's independence were marked by a continuous decline of the Polish mark, introduced by the Germans as the legal currency of the country during the war. Attempts at stabilization prior to 1923-4 could not be expected to be successful. During the first two years the administrative machine was in a stage of construction, and a war with Soviet Russia was raging on the eastern frontiers of Poland, which not only dealt a severe blow to the reviving country but necessitated the maintenance of a large army, thereby making the balancing of the budget impossible even during the years 1921-2. The unsettled questions of Upper Silesia and of Poland's eastern frontiers further impeded the work of financial reform, as, until these questions were settled, Poland could not expect a foreign loan of any importance. Efforts were made in 1922 to stabilize the currency on the basis of a balanced budget, but the scheme of financial reform,

elaborated by M. Michalski and based on a capital levy, was doomed to failure. The drop in the mark was rapidly increasing, reducing the gold value of notes in circulation as well as the state revenue from taxation. The dollar exchange, which was 9·8 Polish marks per dollar in January, 1919, rose to 141·9 marks in 1920, to 770 in 1921, to 3,416 in 1922, to 32,778 in 1923, until in January, 1924, the dollar was quoted at 9,350,000 Polish marks. During the second half of 1923 the depreciation became particularly heavy, and the value of currency in circulation was falling in proportion. M. Grabski's policy may be described as : no foreign control, no parliamentary interference, the immediate 'pegging' of the exchange, the introduction of a new currency on a gold exchange standard, the balancing of the budget concurrently if possible, and the obtaining of certain resources abroad on the credit of the reforms carried out.¹ From the outset M. Grabski concentrated his attention on the exchange question, and within three weeks of receiving his full powers from the Sejm he had completely arrested the fall of the mark. This he achieved by stopping the issue of further paper currency and declaring his readiness to sell exchange freely, thereby risking the whole gold reserve of the Treasury which only amounted to \$2,500,000 ; and this respite allowed progress to be made with the setting up of the Bank of Poland, and especially with the national budget. Eventually the cessation of further issues of Polish mark notes, together with the establishment of a balanced budget, enabled the Government to carry out the proposed currency reform ; and the public was called upon to find 100 million zlotys for the capital of the Bank of Poland at a time when increased taxation was absorbing the greater part of their capital available for investment. The zloty was fixed at 1,800,000 Polish marks, or equal to the value of the gold franc. During this critical time in the financial affairs of Poland the severest economies were exercised, including the abolition of two Ministries and the reduction by 20,000 of the Civil Service staff.

¹ The weakness which has since then overtaken the zloty should not obscure the great importance and high quality of M. Grabski's reforms.

The Poles take a great pride in their army, formed on a conscription basis and raised to a high standard of efficiency with the help of a French military mission, but the impression prevalent in some quarters that the Poles are militaristic is not an accurate estimate of the case. While it is true that a considerable sum is annually devoted to the upkeep of the army and the maintenance of its fighting efficiency, and that this department of the state receives great attention, it is only necessary to glance at the map to realize the necessity for these measures. It must also be borne in mind that the military uniform is one of the most popular outward and visible signs of the statehood of the Polish nation, and therefore it is the pride of those who have worked so hard for the realization of their hopes. In these post-war days there is an inclination to accuse others of militarism, and often the accusations are made by those who do not know the meaning of the term. At present the Poles are strong as a military Power ; but it is from necessity more than from choice.

Even the Peace Conference did not bring peace to Poland. Indeed, it created difficulties which involved the new state in conflict with her neighbours. A struggle with Czechoslovakia for the possession of the former Austro-Silesian Duchy of Teschen, with its valuable coal-mines, began early in 1919 ; Lwów,¹ the capital of Eastern Galicia, was a scene of conflict between the Poles and the Ukrainians, whom the Austrians had left in power before their departure ; war with Soviet Russia raged along the eastern frontier throughout 1919, and the very existence of Poland was threatened by a strong Soviet force which advanced far enough to hammer on the gates of Warsaw. Before the new Polish State was many months old, it was called upon to face a war of unusual severity ; and it needed a mighty effort to hurl back across their own frontiers the hordes of demoralized savages that threatened to overrun Europe. If Finland closed the European door to Bolshevism in the north, it should be recognized that Poland saved Europe in the east.

To pass from war to domestic affairs is to move from

¹ Otherwise Lemberg.

one kind of turmoil to another, for the domestic history of the new Polish State has been scarcely less stormy than the record of its foreign relations. Ministers have been coming and going at a great rate ; party strife has been raging fiercely in the Sejm and out of it ; and even when the Constituent Assembly had been succeeded by a duly elected two-chamber Parliament on a basis of universal suffrage, the first President of the Republic was assassinated by a political fanatic shortly after his election. Polish cabinets have never been able to rely on a solid parliamentary majority, and many favoured the idea that the dictatorial powers, temporarily granted to the Government for purposes of financial reform, should not only be prolonged but extended also to political matters. The Polish Constitution in its present state of uncertainty is rather bewildering to the foreigner, but when one realizes the complicated mixture of conditions which led up to the independence of the country, and the diversity of the requirements of the new Polish State, one begins to wonder why it is not still more bewildering. The constitutional *impasse* is undoubtedly a serious obstacle to smooth running of the internal political machine, and decisions of far-reaching importance will have to be taken sooner or later. Is Poland going to be governed by a dictator, or is she going to settle down to representative government on Western lines ? At present the Poles have in Marshal Pilsudski a leader of ability, patriotism, and personality, who has earned the respect and devotion of a great mass of the people ; but it is doubtful whether the Sejm will ever fulfil its constitutional function as long as the services of the Marshal are available for the benefit of the state. In the settlement of this question the Poles realize the value of time, and they are wisely allowing the political situation gradually to clarify itself before attempting to come to a definite decision. Many things decide themselves, and this may be one of them ; but a strong decision at an opportune moment seems more likely to become necessary.

Marshal Pilsudski is a most remarkable man, who carries organization even as far as the cells of his own brain. By consulting his mental time-table he can tell you exactly

what he will be thinking about at a certain hour this day next week, and he so allocates his thoughts that he knows precisely when he will reach a decision on any given question. His personality is a great power in Poland to-day, but his health is such that his influence is rather lacking in consistency. His life has been one long fight for Poland, and the hardships of which he has had to endure in prison and out of it have told severely on his advancing years. As he is essentially a soldier, his position in the state perhaps adds to the impression of militarism to which I have already referred, but in a nation of idealists it is often to the army that the state has to turn when looking for a man of action in times of national crisis.

In the administration enthusiasm is to be seen in every department of work, and the zeal of government officials is remarkable. Old bureaucratic methods have to be replaced by more practical ones, and the means employed by higher officials to train their subordinates are sound and likely to lead to good results. One provincial governor, realizing that Poles are naturally inclined to disregard the value of time, arranges appointments at odd minutes past or before the hour, as, by fixing the time of a conference at 11.3 or 14.7 he hopes to impress the value of minutes on those who work under him. A small thing in itself, this example shows the trouble taken in Poland to-day to bring things into line with the most modern and progressive systems of Western Europe. Indeed, one of the most important features of Polish political life is the realization of national defects and a determination to remedy them as far as possible. Poland has still a long way to go before the state is fully consolidated, and it will take some effort to restrain the tendencies that might at any time overrule wisdom and sound judgment. This effort is undoubtedly being made, but it will have to be sustained in times of stress, and possibly in times of national excitement, if it is going to succeed. To the average Englishman the Pole appears to be excitable and rather impulsive, romantic and impatient; he appears to be sensitive even to the most friendly criticism. For this reason there is a tendency to

refrain from saying things that might offend, and the Polish characteristic of resenting the criticism even of those who wish them well deprives them often of valuable assistance. There are two sides to every question, and a sympathetic understanding of the other side's point of view often brings material help to those who are blessed with that quality of human understanding.

Poland's political problems may be divided under the headings of national and social questions. Of the former the most important is the minority question and of the latter that of agrarian reform. While there are over 3 million Poles living abroad, in neighbouring countries, the Republic has many districts of mixed nationality, one-third of the population being non-Polish in race and speech.

While the rights of racial and national minorities are safeguarded by the special treaty signed by Poland at Versailles, the German, Ukrainian, and Jewish minority questions cause a good deal of internal unrest and lead to much misunderstanding, almost unavoidable at the present stage of post-war conditions in Eastern Europe. As yet only one province of mixed nationality, Silesia, with a large percentage of Germans, has its own provincial Szym. With regard to the 3 million Ukrainians in Eastern Galicia, Poland is under international obligation to give them self-government and a university, and the Government are taking steps to ease this difficult question, which arose out of the growth of Ukrainian nationalism encouraged by Austria to counter-balance Polish power in the Dual Monarchy. It was under the Austrian *régime* that a Ukrainian educated class rose from among the peasants, and the Ukrainian priesthood made the Uniate Church a bulwark of nationalist propaganda. While the Poles, who form 27 per cent of the population of Eastern Galicia, are Roman Catholics, the Ukrainians, who form about 60 per cent, are partly Greek Catholics (Uniate) and partly Greek Orthodox, and are nearly three times more illiterate in numbers. Moreover, the Poles form the chief population of the towns, and entirely monopolize the landowning class, so that racial differences are further accentuated by class antagonisms, although the

THE POPULATION OF POLAND ACCORDING TO RELIGION AND NATIONALITY (1921)

County	Total in Thousands. 1921	Religion per 100 of Population.					Nationality per 100 of Population				
		Roman Catholic	Greek or Orthodox Catholic	Protestants	Jews	Others	Poles	Ruthenians or White Ruth	Germans	Jews	Others
City of Warsaw	936	63.6	0.6	2.0	33.0	0.8	72.0	0.3	0.1	26.0	1.6
Warsaw . . .	2,112	85.0	0.2	4.1	9.6	1.1	89.8	0.1	2.2	7.7	0.2
Lódz . . .	2,251	76.9	0.2	7.6	14.5	0.8	83.1	0.1	4.6	12.0	0.2
Kielce . . .	2,536	87.4	0.1	0.4	11.9	0.2	90.3	—	0.1	8.5	1.1
Lublin . . .	2,088	77.5	7.2	0.9	13.7	0.7	85.4	0.3	0.5	10.9	2.9
Białystok . .	1,303	68.4	14.8	1.1	14.8	0.9	76.9	8.3	0.3	12.5	2.0
Wilno . . .	983	61.2	26.5	—	9.6	2.7	57.4	25.4	Lithuanians. 5.6	8.2	3.4
Nowogródek .	822	39.3	51.3	—	9.0	0.4	54.0	37.7	1.2	6.8	0.3
Polesie . . .	880	7.8	79.2	—	12.6	0.4	24.3	60.3	—	10.4	5.0
Wolhynia . .	1,438	11.5	74.2	—	11.2	2.8	16.8	68.4	—	10.6	4.2
Krakow . . .	1,990	89.3	2.6	—	7.7	0.4	93.1	2.4	—	3.9	0.6
Lwów . . .	2,718	46.5	41.3	—	11.5	0.7	56.6	35.8	—	7.0	0.6
Stanisławów .	1,349	14.5	73.8	—	10.8	0.9	22.2	69.7	—	6.8	1.3
Tarnopol . .	1,429	31.3	59.1	—	9.2	0.4	45.0	49.7	—	4.9	0.4
Poznań . . .	1,974	82.9	—	16.3	0.5	0.3	83.1	—	Germans. 16.5	0.1	0.3
Pomorze . . .	939	79.5	—	19.8	0.3	0.4	81.0	—	18.5	—	0.5
Silesia . . .	1,126	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total Poland	27,193	63.9	20.8	3.7	10.5	1.1	69.2	17.9	3.8	7.8	1.3

new policy of agrarian reform tends to diminish strife between the two peasant groups. On the other hand, there are differences between the Ukrainians in Poland and those under Russian rule, the former being mostly Uniate in religion and the latter Greek Orthodox ; and one section of the Polish Ukrainians undoubtedly wants union with Russia. Under Galician autonomy the Ukrainian language enjoyed equal rights with Polish in the public and official life of Eastern Galicia, and Ukrainian societies and newspapers had the same liberty as those of Polish origin ; but Polish landlords exercised a selfish influence in Ukrainian matters, and the old social gulf between the Polish landlord and the Ukrainian peasant added fuel to the fire of nationalism among the young Ukrainian *intelligentsia*. The history of the Galician Provincial Diet is an unbroken record of quarrels between Poles and Ukrainians, and at the beginning of this century the conflict began to assume violent forms. An attempt at reconciliation was made on the eve of the Great War, but it naturally led to nothing and, unfortunately, many of the germs of conflict then existing are still present in the Polish-Ukrainian dispute of to-day, which constitutes a very serious question for the Poles to solve.

The large number of Jews in Poland is due partly to the fact that the old Poland had given them shelter and allowed them to acquire almost a monopoly of commerce, although they had always maintained their own language, dress, and customs, and partly because the Tsar's Government forbade Jews to live in certain Russian districts, and compelled them to move in great masses to the former Polish provinces of the Russian Empire. Under Austrian rule the Jews were at first merely tolerated, but they eventually received full equality of rights which was in great contrast with their treatment under Russia and more favourable than their position under Prussia. Consequently, there were more Jews in Galicia than elsewhere in Poland, and they became assimilated to the Polish educated class. At the 1910 census more than 90 per cent of the Galician Jews registered themselves as Poles. Yet the modern separatist movement of Zionism has developed more fully in Galicia than else-

where, and Lwów has been an important emigration centre for Palestine.¹ Economically, owing to the commercial and industrial backwardness of Galicia, the Jews largely maintained their monopoly of trade, and enjoyed great prosperity, with the result that they began to acquire land and to enter the professions in large numbers. This led to counter-economic measures on the part of the Poles, while attempts to protect the peasants from exploitation led to violent anti-Semitism, especially when this became a definite feature of Austrian politics. Anti-Jewish riots occurred in Western Galicia in 1894, and just before the war there was an effective boycott of Jewish trade in Russian Poland, owing to the fact that persecution in Russia had driven masses of Russian Jews into Poland and had made the position still more difficult. In 1912 there were so many Jews in Warsaw that they were enabled to send a representative to the Russian Duma, while to-day there are many more in the Polish capital than in the whole of Palestine. Moreover, the increase of Jewish wealth during the war has not helped to solve the question. Their chief claim is that their language should be used in the state schools, which is no less absurd than a demand of Whitechapel Jews for the replacement of English by Yiddish in some of the schools of the London County Council. Although self-government would in this case be quite impracticable, there is a recognized Jewish party in the Polish Sejm which, in 1925, reached a *modus vivendi* with the Government by which they agreed to discontinue their hostile attitude in exchange for administrative and educational concessions. While there is no doubt that in Poland the Jews are heartily disliked, they have the same rights as other Polish citizens.

In previous chapters I have mentioned the agrarian reform movement in other countries, and Poland is no exception in this respect. The process of disintegration of the larger estates, and the development of medium-sized farms, has been going on in Poland ever since the emancipation of the peasants from serfdom ; but under the new agrarian legisla-

¹ For details on the Zionist movement, *vide The Middle East*, by the same author, Chaps. IV and V.

tion private estates are limited to 60 hectares in industrial and urban districts, 400 hectares in the eastern provinces, and 180 hectares elsewhere. The remainder is allotted to peasants with little or no land at a price fixed by the state, but owing to the party opposition of those who contend that a great slump in production will follow the sudden splitting up of all large estates, and the difficulty of financing the new holdings, the reform has so far only been carried out to a limited extent. As in all countries of Eastern Europe, landlords are suffering severe hardship in many cases, but the general development of the peasant class is a question that has to be faced in all agricultural countries of Europe.

Warsaw is a difficult city to describe, and from my own experience I should be inclined to say that snow was its chief characteristic, but I had the misfortune to visit the Polish capital in the coldest part of the coldest winter for many decades. I arrived in a blinding snow-storm at the Alexandrowo station of Russian memory and, after hunting for a taxi in the neighbouring streets, was rattled at a terrific pace over the most uneven thoroughfares to the Hôtel Europejski, opposite the great open space where the Russian cathedral once stood. On the far side is the imposing colonnade forming the front of what was once the palace of August II of the Saxon dynasty of Polish kings, and is now used as the headquarters of the Polish Army. Warsaw is full of palaces, some in use as such, others converted into government offices. The Brühl Palace is now used as the Foreign Ministry, while the Palace of the Potockis is a typical home of the old Polish nobility. Like all European capitals, there is the usual cosmopolitan atmosphere, but it is chiefly confined to the 'Europejski', where people sit and eat, and sometimes sleep, waiters run about with dishes, bands play, and porters hold out their hands for tips. But that is not Warsaw. To see the capital you must wander through the old town or *Stare Miasto* and its quaint byways, watch the strange mixture of races that throngs the cobbled streets; you must poke your nose into the houses of the ancient market-place, with their picturesque painted exteriors; and

you must 'do' the Castle of the Kings, which overlooks the Vistula and contains some of the most beautiful furniture and tapestries in Europe. But this is not all. You must visit the French Embassy and see what France does to impress the Poles with her prestige ; you should not fail to admire the beauties of the Lazienki Park with the elegant little palace of King Stanislas August ; and you should spend an afternoon in the fascinating gardens of Wilanów. A good look at the statue of Sigismund III standing on the top of his column, with sword and cross in hand, will give you ideas ; a look at one or two churches will convince you that the Church Catholic is the same as it is in London or Lisbon ; and an evening spent at the opera in the Teatr Wielki will supply impressions of another kind. When a short study of this sort has been carefully carried out, you should have much material for thought, and a certain insight into what constitutes modern Poland and her capital. But there are some 'don'ts' to bear in mind in Warsaw. It is useless to try and talk to policemen or taxi-drivers, who only speak Polish ; it is wiser to write addresses on slips of paper and present them as required. Don't expect an English newspaper, unless you are willing to pay a shilling for it ; don't try to find addresses by yourself ; and don't imagine French is generally understood, because it is only spoken among the upper classes. If Warsaw is not a typically Polish city, such as Krakow or Vilna, it is an exceedingly interesting place where much can be learnt of a more general European nature, but it is one of these places that is apt to produce rather a confused mind until the victim has time to orient his ideas.

When the industries of the world were experiencing an unusual boom after the Great War, Polish industries were in a state of utter ruin and disorganization ; and it was not until 1924 that things took a turn for the better, although the financial reforms of that year produced a severe industrial crisis. After agriculture, coal is the most important item in Polish economic life, and in actual production Poland occupies the third place in Europe. It is, indeed, the coal export that has enabled the country to attain a com-

paratively good trade balance in spite of the adverse conditions in which economic restoration took place. While the home consumption of coal in 1926 was a little over 21 million tons, the export figure was 15 million tons, or about 26 per cent of the total exports; and if in that particular year the Polish coal exports were abnormally increased owing to the coal strike in England, the increase was largely counterbalanced by the customs war with Germany. Coal export from Upper Silesia is now an important feature of Polish policy, from a political as well as from an economic standpoint. Poland is also fortunate to possess considerable oilfields, which rank next to those of the Caucasus and Roumania, and the whole industry is practically concentrated in a belt of oil-containing layers about 250 miles long on the northern slopes of the Carpathians.¹ Although only about 7 per cent of the oil deposits have yet been worked, it is estimated that the districts will yield up to 300 million tons of petroleum. But perhaps the oldest Polish industry of importance is the manufacture of textiles, and the ancient traditions of the textile trade are represented by the Drapers' Hall built at the time of Casimir the Great on the market-place of Krakow. Owing to protective measures and to the customs union with the former Russian Empire, the growth of the textile industries round Łódz was very rapid, but after four years' stoppage during the German occupation it needed great efforts to set the industry on its feet again. Not only had the mills suffered severely from military operations, but requisitions and confiscations of raw materials and semi-manufactured goods were accompanied by a wholesale removal of machinery. Since then the greatest progress has been in the cotton industry, and spinning production has even surpassed pre-war figures, while the jute industry has now reached the level of pre-war production. Roumania is Poland's best market for textiles, which are also exported to Austria, Hungary, Yugoslavia, the Baltic States, and Scandinavia, while in 1926 a beginning was made with exports to China and Africa. After textiles, the metal industry employs the greatest number of hands, and before

¹ The centre of the oil industry is the district of Boryslaw.

the war mechanical construction was well developed in Russian Poland and Upper Silesia. In the former region the factories suffered greatly during the war, but they have already recovered to a great extent, and in the production of textile machinery, steam and oil engines, electro-motors and machine tools, the Polish mechanical industry is competing successfully in world markets. Although Germany still occupies the leading position in Poland's foreign trade, there has recently been a marked decline in favour of the Scandinavian and Baltic countries, which, in 1926, absorbed 16 per cent of the value of the whole foreign trade of Poland.

Serious difficulties of a technical nature, however, have hampered Polish trade, and the establishment of good rail communications has been no easy matter. The Polish railways were built in the interests of the three partitioning Powers, and strategical considerations usually overruled Polish economic needs. While the Austrian lineage was only half that of the German provinces, the railways of the densely populated Congress Kingdom, with its centres of industry, were in the lowest stage of development. As early as 1919 steps were taken to develop the railway services, especially in the Russian provinces and in Galicia, and the proposed lines were begun according to their importance in the economic life of the country. The requirements of the coal districts received first consideration, as it was essential that the railway service from the Dabrowa basin in former Russian Poland should be brought into line with the excellent system in Upper Silesia and the adequate service in the Krakow basin. From the railway standpoint it was necessary that the coal districts should be treated as a whole, and the need of better transport facilities for the timber and oil resources called for early attention. From her own resources, Poland could do little by way of equipping the railways, as the repair shops in the Russian provinces were almost completely destroyed; but fortunately her great deficiency in rolling stock was largely made good by considerable allocations from Germany and Austria. Yet a large quantity of material had to be purchased abroad; repair shops had to be constructed; locomotive and carriage work

had to be created ; the broad Russian gauge in the former Russian provinces had to be converted to the Central European gauge ; immense damage in the eastern districts had to be repaired ; and a vast amount of other constructional work had to be carried out. The speed with which the railways have been put into working order reflects great credit on the energy and resource of the Poles, although they received valuable assistance from the American railway mission, and had at their disposal a large number of ex-employees of the Russian railways who had recently returned to Poland. Only those who have travelled in Poland in 1918 or 1919 over the devastated areas can fully realize the state of affairs at that time. Station buildings were replaced by wooden sheds, railway officials had to live in coaches and wagons, the trains were seldom heated, and the overcrowding was terrible. By 1923 the technical condition of the railways compared favourably with that of almost any European system ; and to-day travelling in Poland is more comfortable than in many European states ; a regular service of fast trains is maintained on all the more important routes ; and the standard of punctuality is high. But the greatest technical problem which the Poles have had to face is the adaptation of the railway system to the new direction of trade. The strategic and other lines leading to Petrograd, Vienna, and German centres had to give way to communications with Danzig, Gdynia, and Upper Silesia in order to suit the general direction of trade from south to north instead of from east to west. Unfortunately the railways have scored at the expense of the long and numerous waterways that are the natural means of transport for much of the Polish traffic. Much work is needed on the Vistula and other waterways, but owing to want of capital and organization little has been done to develop this important form of communication.

Although the space at my disposal is quite inadequate for dealing with the internal affairs of the new Poland, which is one of the most interesting developments of modern times, I hope I have given my readers sufficient material for an objective appreciation of the Polish attitude to

European affairs with its merits and shortcomings. Poland has a future of great possibilities. The material is present and there is no lack of motive power ; but everything depends on the direction of her slow and steady progress, on her readiness to profit from the example and advice of others, and on her adoption of a policy of ' Safety First '.

CHAPTER VIII

THE POLISH CORRIDOR AND DANZIG

I NOW come to what may be regarded as the culminating point of this narrative—the relations between Poland and her neighbours—which not only have a direct bearing on the future of the Polish State, but also have a profound influence on the future destinies of Europe. If the setting up of the Polish Republic is a significant fact in itself, of much greater significance are the reactions thereby produced in the respective policies of the Great Powers. As this book is essentially a study of the Baltic area, I have excluded such questions as do not wholly fall within this province, except where some reference to them is necessary for a better understanding of the case in point. For this reason I have omitted to deal with Poland's eastern frontiers and Upper Silesia, and have left to others the consideration of Poland's relations with Czechoslovakia and Roumania. With the Lithuanian question already stated, I will now deal with the all-important matter of the Polish Corridor and its effect on Germany and Russia.

The most fundamental need of Poland is peace ; and by 'peace' I mean not mere absence of war, but an atmosphere of political tranquillity in foreign and internal affairs, which will enable the state to consolidate its position in Europe and within the frontiers of Poland. This involves friendly relations with her neighbours, satisfactory conditions for foreign minorities, industrial co-operation, and an absence of political upheavals. It may not be possible to arrive at this desirable state of affairs all at once, but the mere effort of trying to attain this end cannot but further the interests of consolidation. To the outside observer Poland's position in Europe appears to be a difficult one.

With Germany in the west and Russia in the east, she is situated between two neighbours with neither of whom is she on the most friendly terms; and there is even a danger of these two Powers working in co-operation. It is chiefly a question of frontiers, and such a state of affairs creates an atmosphere of political uncertainty which is scarcely in the interests of Poland at the present stage of her development. The situation that exists is natural after a war of colossal magnitude, and ten years is a short time in reorganization of affairs in a part of the world where things move slowly; but, before this state of political



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tension and general uncertainty can give place to conditions suitable for progressive development, important changes of policy must take place. Indeed, it is difficult for an impartial observer to see how Poland can remain indifferent to the friendship of Germany and Russia.

The 'thirteenth point' of President Wilson's declaration at the Washington Congress of 1918 reads as follows: 'An independent Polish State should be erected which should include the territories inhabited by indisputable Polish populations, in which should be assured a free and secure access to the sea, and whose political and economic independence and territorial integrity should be guaranteed by international covenant.' This formed the basis of the

settlement that brought the Polish Corridor into existence and fixed the German-Polish frontiers as they are to-day. It was provided that there should be a plebiscite in Upper Silesia, which resulted in a decision by which the southern half of the area, containing valuable mines, passed to Poland, while the northern half returned to Germany. Two other plebiscites were provided for in East Prussia, in the Allenstein and Marienwerder districts respectively, both of which went in favour of Germany. The boundaries were then so fixed that a large part of the Posen and Bromberg¹ area went to Poland, and the Polish Corridor was run to the sea between East Prussia and Brandenburg, ending in the territory of the Free City of Danzig, which was to be administered by the League of Nations, although its foreign relations were to be under Polish control. By this means East Prussia was severed altogether from the main body of the German Reich, while in Posen² and West Prussia over a million Germans were assigned to Poland. The main principle underlying this settlement at the Peace Conference was one of nationality, although in certain cases it was found necessary to modify or even to overrule this consideration owing to economic and other factors. Modifications on strategic grounds received little support, except where they were involved in economic factors intimately bound up with geographical issues. Religion was only taken into account in so far as it threw doubt on the national sympathies of people who clearly belonged to a particular nation by race and language, but were of a different religion; while history could not be altogether ignored. Differences of opinion among the delegates were solely concerned with the extent to which these other factors might justly be allowed to overrule considerations of simple nationality, and it was not unusual to find the positions assumed by the representatives of the Great Powers entirely reversed in dealing with different individual problems. The necessity of taking into account factors other than nationality became obvious as soon as any attempt was made to deal with concrete questions, as it was clearly impossible to have

¹ Bydgoszcz in Polish.

² Poznan in Polish.

islands of one country in the territory of another, and there were geographical facts that put out of count the idea of a territorial jig-saw puzzle. In all such cases it was found necessary to decide contrary to the wishes of one or other of the two claimants, and to do so on grounds of general justice, taking into account matters of history and religion and the economic interests of the territories immediately concerned and of the nations that claimed these territories. Apart altogether from East Prussia, there had long been a German overflow into Poland, originally in the nature of peaceful penetration, but reinforced after the partitions by the policy of the Prussian Government ; and consequently there were large minorities of German race and language, possessing an influence out of all proportion to their numbers, claiming to belong to a higher civilization and culture, controlling most of the means of production, and constituting in general the middle or upper classes. While a proportion of the German influence in Posnania and West Prussia, assigned to Poland, was latterly due to Prussian colonization, its origin must be traced to the urban settlements, going as far back as the thirteenth century, which were in these early days promoted and furthered by the Polish princes.

A great stream of German immigration flowed into Poland during the thirteenth century, consisting for the most part of peasants and merchants who followed the summons of the Polish princes and founded towns and settlements in the Polish State ; and part of these immigrants became Polonized. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the process was repeated partly as a result of religious disorders and the Thirty Years War, when the low-lying plains of the Netze and the Vistula were intensively settled by Germans, who also immigrated in large numbers from the south into the province of Posen. Hence the area, which now constitutes the western districts of Poland, contained already a large proportion of German population when it came into the possession of Prussia—Upper Silesia in 1742, West Prussia and the Netze districts in 1772 on the occasion of the First Partition of Poland, and the greater part of the province of Posen in 1793 on the occasion of

the Second Partition. In the towns this German element had tended to become an actual majority, and even in the country districts there were probably considerable islands where the Polish element was in a definite minority. In these cases the Peace Conference had to decide whether the will of the ill-educated majority should overrule that of the well-educated minority, and whether the fate of the more compact and wealthy islands should be determined by the will of the larger and more sparsely inhabited country districts which surrounded them. In other words, was quality or quantity to be the determining factor? One method which suggested itself was to make a clean cut by majorities on both sides, and to invite the minority in each case to co-operate with the state in which they found themselves; and this was the method definitely adopted to the detriment of the Germans.

The application of the principle of nationality sounds the essence of simplicity, but when national divisions are as uncertain as they are in this 'corridor' region it becomes a most complicated affair. In some parts it is almost impossible to discover whether a man is a German or a Pole, and in some cases he does not care whether he is one or the other. Often Germans have Polish names, and vice versa, while the respective languages have been adopted to suit circumstances. Indeed, these peculiarities of nationality have been twisted and turned to suit the interests of both sides, and relatively insignificant details have been given prominence at the expense of the essential questions at stake.

The report of the Polish Commission of the Peace Conference formed the actual basis of the subsequent settlement, but certain modifications were introduced by the Supreme Council in regard to Danzig and the neighbouring regions, and still further changes were made in the German-Polish frontier after the receipt of the German observations on the Draft Treaty. The original proposal of the Commission was that in Posnanian and West Prussia the western limit of Polish ethnographical majorities should, with certain modifications, be made the frontier between Poland

and Germany ; and this proposal was supported by the representatives of all the Great Powers. It, however, took into account factors other than ethnographical to an extent which was afterwards thought, especially by the British representatives, to be excessive ; and, while much could be said in defence of its solutions in regard to any particular problem, the result as a whole, owing to the general tendency to give the benefit of the doubt to Poland, was unduly unfavourable to the German claims. There were three areas in particular where Germany had been treated with extreme severity. All three could show a large majority of Germans, but they had been assigned to Poland on various grounds. They were, however, given to Germany in the final version of the treaty. From a purely ethnographical point of view, it must be admitted that the resulting frontier line still shows a balance in favour of Poland. Almost every Polish excrescence has been included in Poland, while no such effort was made to include all German excrescences in Germany.

The British delegation was the only one that found itself in the position of opposing or trying to limit the Polish claims in all the main questions where there were substantial differences of opinion, and only time and history can prove or disprove the wisdom of the British attitude which was certainly not due to any unfriendliness towards Poland. Indeed, it was chiefly due to a deep-rooted belief that if Poland was to be strong both internally and externally it was necessary that self-determination should be the guiding principle of the settlement. Mr. Lloyd George expressed himself as follows¹ : ' I am therefore, strongly averse to transferring more Germans from German rule to the rule of some other state than can possibly be helped. . . . The proposal of the Polish Commission that we should place 2,100,000 Germans under the control of a people which is of a different religion and which has never proved its capacity for stable self-government throughout its history, must, in my judgment, lead sooner or later to a new war in the east of Europe.'

¹ Memo. 25th March, 1919 (Cmd. 1614, 1922).

Whatever may be the merits and defects of the local frontier settlement, the larger conception of giving Poland an access to the sea through this territory involved cutting off East Prussia from the rest of Germany ; and it is the clash of these two principles that have produced the 'Corridor Question' with all its ramifications and repercussions. It was most desirable that Poland should have free access to the sea, and at the same time it was most undesirable that the German State should be severed in the process. A proposal that commended itself at the time was that the Polish-Lithuanian union should be revived, and that the Polish access to the Baltic should be through Memel, but this proposal was dropped owing to Polish and Lithuanian opposition ; and an opportunity was lost of obtaining a settlement that might well have been satisfactory after the early stages of political estrangement had subsided, and might have solved the Vilna question at the same time. Indeed, this solution still finds favour in certain high quarters, although it is difficult to see how the opportunity of applying it can possibly return. The fact, however, remains that the Corridor exists to-day as a problem of the first magnitude in European politics, and that efforts have been made to balance things up for the Germans as far as possible, although not to their satisfaction.

In order to guarantee to East Prussia free communication with the rest of Germany, the Treaty of Versailles obliged Poland to grant free transit across the territories which had been allotted to her. Germany and Poland were to come to an agreement by which Germany was to obtain free transit across the Corridor, while Poland was to receive similar privileges across German territory on the right bank of the Vistula, for communication between Poland and the Free City of Danzig. An agreement on these lines was reached at Paris on the 21st April, 1921, and the Convention provided for railway, telephone and telegraph communications, while Poland was to regulate postal communications, navigation in territorial waters and internal waterways, and road traffic in general. On the strength of the Polish-Danzig Convention of 1920, Poland extended

her obligation to grant transit over the territory of the Free City of Danzig. In these matters the Poles showed a considerable degree of generosity, and did all they could to facilitate German communications in rather a difficult situation, even to the length of granting free transit to military convoys, although they were not obliged to do so by the Peace Treaty. In order to guarantee the normal functioning of these communications, the Poles proposed that all differences should be regulated, not through diplomatic channels, but by a special tribunal which was afterwards set up at Danzig. Up to the end of January, 1925, no differences of opinion were recorded, and the German Government did not submit one case to the Danzig Tribunal, but troubles have since arisen over the railway arrangements, especially the goods traffic, and there are administrative questions in which reform is rather urgently needed. Railway communication falls into two classes—'Privileged' and 'Ordinary' transit, the former being confined to definitely stipulated lines,¹ free of passport and customs formalities. Travellers are not allowed to alight from the transit trains, and they are not allowed to pass or receive anything through windows. Goods traffic is also exempt from customs if carried in special transit trains. Ordinary transit, on the other hand, takes place on all the lines of the western provinces of Poland, and in these trains German citizens must have passports and a Polish visa. Goods traffic does not come under any tariffs, but is subject to customs formalities such as the sealing of wagons. I have travelled in one of the transit trains with sleeping and restaurant cars from Marienburg to Berlin, and during a long night journey there was no indication whatever that this German train was passing through foreign territory, and the train reached the Friedrichstrasse station within a few minutes of scheduled time. Perhaps the most interesting centre of the traffic between the Reich and East Prussia and Danzig is Tczew,

¹ The principal lines allotted to privileged transit are—Lauenburg—Danzig—Tczew—Marienburg; Chojnice—Tczew—Marienburg; and Schneidemühl—Bydgoszcz—Torún—Deutsch-Eylau.

² Dirschau in German.

a Polish river port on the Vistula situated on the Polish-Danzig frontier. Here there is a general convergence of railways, and screens of wire netting separate the trains from one another to prevent abuse of the transit regulations. The Germans are entitled to one troop train weekly and to one train carrying war material, but arms must be deposited in a special carriage under the supervision of a Polish guard. Although this last provision does not seem altogether unreasonable in principle, it leads to some rather unfortunate incidents in actual fact; and one could not but sympathize with the German general who had to hand over his sword to a Polish railway guard on his way to manœuvres in East Prussia. The German mails are carried in German wagons, but these carriages, together with the German post office staff, are put under the charge of a Polish official; certain telegraph and telephone lines have been allotted to German use on payment; and motor traffic is limited on certain roads indicated by the Poles. It is impossible to go into all the details of this complicated system of communications in the Corridor, but suffice it to say that the arrangement works tolerably well in spite of certain conditions that must be exceedingly irritating to the Germans.

A recent journey through the Polish province of Pomorze (the Polish province constituting the Corridor) revealed some very interesting facts bearing on the present situation in that territory. In Torún, Bydgoszcz, and Grudziadz¹ I had long conversations with Polish and German officials, as well as with representatives of the local inhabitants, and I believe that my impressions are somewhere near the truth. On the German side I heard chiefly complaints to which the Poles replied in justification of the policy which they are carrying out. In Torún, where about 5 per cent of the population is German and the German language is still spoken, even by many Poles, the chief sources of complaint were: (1) the expropriation of estates; (2) want of adequate facilities for secondary education in German; (3) censorship of the press; and (4) a system of

¹ Thorn, Bromberg, and Graudenz in German.

taxation by which the Poles are often exempt but the Germans are always obliged to pay.

With regard to the expropriation of land, the German minority seem to think that the Polish Agrarian Reform Act is specially directed against German landowners, and that in many cases Poles are allowed to retain their property, a privilege that is always denied to Germans. The fact of the matter is that the policy of land expropriation and the splitting up of the large estates into small holdings is now fairly general in many countries of Eastern Europe. In such circumstances the large landowners are necessarily the greatest sufferers, and it so happens that in the province of Pomorze the majority of these landowners is German. The fact that the Germans previously bought up so much land in this territory, and obtained loans for this purpose, has caused them to be faced not only with the prospect of expropriation but also with the likelihood of their loans being called up. Undoubtedly the situation for these German landlords is very difficult, but expropriation has become a necessity. Many Polish farms have become very small owing to the land having been split up amongst large families, and without some measure of this kind it would be impossible for these poor peasants to acquire more land. While there are cases where the Poles have shown favouritism to their own people, and certain officials have been over-zealous to have 'Poland for the Poles', my impression is that on the whole the Polish Government are trying to treat the German landowners in a just and equitable manner. To expect perfection at this stage in the settlement of the frontier districts is to expect too much, and it is surprising to me that there is not more friction.

In the matter of secondary education, the Polish authorities informed me that the Government maintain the German gymnasium at Toruń as it was before the war, with German teaching, German teachers and German text-books; that the two gymnasia at Grudziadz have parallel German classes; and that there are three private schools staffed with German teachers, some of whom even to-day do not speak Polish. Taking into consideration

the percentage of Germans in this region, it seems that on paper the number of secondary schools is adequate, but I doubt whether there is yet adequate provision of German teachers or sufficient educational facilities for a community whose educational needs are exceptionally great. I do not think that the Polish authorities quite realize the needs of the German minority in this particular direction, but I feel that in the course of time this matter will receive their sympathetic consideration. The censorship of the press I have seen with my own eyes, but I have not seen the matter excluded, so it is difficult to express an opinion. Yet it seems more than probable that both sides are to some extent at fault, the Germans in printing matter distasteful to the Poles, and the Poles in being perhaps rather severe in the suppression of articles. I have before me a copy of the *Pommereller Tageblatt*, published at Tczew, in which an article on Polish schools in Prussia and German schools in Poland is completely deleted by the censor.

In Bydgoszcz, formerly a very German town but now with a Polish majority, I inquired into the striking change of nationality that had taken place and found it to be due to the following causes: the departure of German officials and their replacement by Poles; the fact that many Poles had previously accepted German nationality for convenience' sake; the Polish policy of introducing as many Poles as possible into the province of Pomorze; and the general trend of German migrations westward to the large industrial centres of Germany. The Poles have made remarkable progress in this province in accordance with their general policy of consolidation, especially in the setting up of hospitals, welfare centres, and other social institutions, which are open to all irrespective of nationality; and it seems to me that Poles and Germans work tolerably well together, except where nationalist tendencies assume an aggressive form. Unfortunately, German nationalism is rather prominent in Bydgoszcz, which probably accounts for certain difficulties experienced by the whole minority there. The Poles are trying to extend their influence, and the Germans are trying to defend their minority rights, in a frontier

district where friction is only to be expected, as both attitudes are the result of well-thought-out policies, framed with a view to determining the future of the Corridor. Another very natural cause of ill-feeling in Bydgoszcz is the opinion, freely expressed by Poles, that East Prussia will gradually be absorbed by Poland at the wish of the inhabitants themselves. When in Grudziadz, the most German town in the Pomorze, I visited the industries of agricultural machinery, hardware, and rubber goods, and found Poles working well under German foremen. There were no cases of Germans working under Polish foremen, but there was no friction among the workers. It seems to me that the *bourgeoisie* element gives rise to most of the bad feeling between the two peoples. In former times there was no middle class in Poland, and this gap had to be filled by foreigners, so that now the German and Jewish elements of the population clash to some extent with the new Polish middle class, which is rapidly developing. The arrangements for German railway transit across the province are better than I expected to find, and, although there are certain complaints about the restrictions on goods traffic, there is a general consensus of opinion that the passenger arrangements are satisfactory. Considering the difficulties in operating a traffic of this nature, my own impression is that, if the present system is not entirely satisfactory, it is through no want of effort on the part of the Polish railway authorities.

Let us now turn to the crucial question of Danzig, the port which controls the mouth of the Vistula and was to establish Poland's actual outlet to the Baltic. Although Danzig is almost entirely German in race and language, the Peace Conference took the view that this was an exception to the general principle of following the wishes of the majority of the inhabitants in regard to nationality, on the grounds that the national aspirations of a small body of Germans clashed with the vital necessities of a much larger body of Poles; and they contended that the interests of the smaller body must give way to those of the larger. They did not, however, view Polish interests with regard

to the general welfare of Europe in this light. The question of constructing another harbour on the Polish coast seemed out of the question at that time, so the Conference set themselves to consider the needs of a nation of nearly 30 million inhabitants, occupying the whole basin of the Vistula with certain ramifications and extensions, particularly to the west. It was contended that the natural outlet for this country was by the mouth of the river around which and upon which the whole fabric of Polish society had been built. Suggested outlets to the Black Sea and the Adriatic were ruled out of the count, and it was taken for granted that the greater part of Polish trade must pass by way of the Vistula and the port of Danzig.

In the early days German merchants settled in Danzig with the object of opening up Eastern Europe to navigation, and the town assumed quite a German character, while in the fourteenth century it came under the dominion of the Order of Teutonic Knights. In 1376 Danzig joined the Hanseatic League and took part in the extensive trade of that organization with the Scandinavian cities, with England, Holland, France, and Spain; but the struggles between the Teutonic Knights and Poland continually imperilled its independence, and Danzig came under the protection of the king of Poland, still as a free city, after the defeat of the Knights at Tannenberg in 1410. The fifteenth century was a period of commercial prosperity for Danzig, as the Hanseatic League was then at the zenith of its power, but within the next hundred years there appeared the first signs of the League's decay, and in 1669 it ceased to exist altogether. Meanwhile, Danzig's geographical position had brought it into close commercial relations with Russia and Poland, and the city received from the latter timber, pitch, potash, and a certain quantity of grain in exchange for salt and cloth. Shipbuilding has always occupied a prominent place in the activities of the Free City, and in the days of wooden ships Danzig's position was almost unrivalled owing to the proximity of the great oak forests of Poland and Russia. In fact, this industry developed to such large

proportions, when Danzig supplied ships to Spain and Italy, and even to England and Holland, that the members of the Hanseatic League were eventually forbidden to supply ships to foreign Powers. Danzig's most flourishing period was about the sixteenth century, when the Polish Republic was at the height of its development, and the Danzig merchants were the most important commercial medium between the lands of the Vistula and the grain and timber merchants of Western Europe. The well-preserved charters of the city show that under the Polish kings Danzig prospered and acquired such extensive autonomous rights that it had its own army and fleet, concluded treaties with foreign sovereigns, and even declared its neutrality in Poland's wars with other countries. In the archives letters exist from Henry VIII of England, Queen Elizabeth, Oliver Cromwell, Henry IV of France, Louis XIV, Philip of Spain, Gustavus Adolphus, Tsar Alexis of Russia, and many other sovereigns and princes, in which the magistrates of the city are treated as the chiefs of an independent state. Indeed, the city was at that time known as the 'Granary of Europe'. The grain exports reached 115,000 shiploads per annum, and the population 75,000, a figure which Hamburg did not reach till a century later. The most important fact, however, is that Danzig's natural hinterland throughout all these years was the basin of the Vistula, from which the city was cut off by the partitions of Poland. Between the First and Second Partitions, when the territory of the present Corridor was under Prussia and separated from Danzig, the city was almost ruined, but when in 1792, shortly before the Second Partition, Prussia annexed the whole of Western Poland up to the Vistula and including Danzig, the city's trade instantly began to revive. It was, therefore, in consideration of Danzig's economic dependence on the Vistula that the Polish Commission recommended the inclusion of Danzig in the Polish State. But such a settlement would have been to ignore the wishes of the population, 96 per cent of which was German, and the British delegates at the Conference stood out against this injustice.

The German Delegation protested against the whole settlement, and insisted that the sea-coast, Danzig and the mouth of the Vistula should remain in German hands ; but their protest was rejected by M. Clemenceau in the following terms :

‘ Poland will be given certain economic rights in Danzig, and the city itself has been severed from Germany, because in no other way was it possible to provide for that “ free and secure access to the sea ” which Germany has promised to concede. The German counter-proposals . . . deny secure access to the sea to a nation of over 20 million people, whose nationals are in the majority all the way to the coast, in order to maintain territorial connection between East and West Prussia, whose trade has always been mainly sea-borne. They cannot, therefore, be accepted by the Allied and Associated Powers.’

EAST PRUSSIA.—‘ . . . for Poland to have immediate and unbroken communication with Danzig and the remainder of the coast by railways which are entirely under the control of the Polish State is essential. The inconvenience caused to East Prussia by the new frontiers is negligible compared to that which would be caused to Poland by any other arrangement.’

DANZIG.—‘ The economic interests of Danzig and Poland are identical. For Danzig as the great port of the valley of the Vistula the most intimate connection with Poland is essential. The annexation of West Prussia, including Danzig, to Germany deprived Poland of that direct access to the sea which was hers by right. The Allied and Associated Powers propose that this direct access shall be restored. It is not enough that Poland should be allowed the use of German ports : the coast, short as it is, which is Polish, must be restored to her. Poland claims, and justly claims, that the control and development of the port, which is her sole opening to the sea, shall be in her hands, and that the communications between it and Poland shall not be subjected to any foreign control, so that in this, one of the most important aspects of national life, Poland should be put on an equality with the other states of Europe.’

PORTS, WATERWAYS, AND RAILWAYS.—‘ Similarly, it is noted that, with regard to the question of Danzig, Germany declares herself ready to accord, to assure Poland free access to the sea, facilities and advantages similar to those which are asked from her at Hamburg and Stettin on behalf of the Czechoslovak State ; but without raising any objection of principle she claims to make the matter in both cases the subject of and a counter in special negotiation with the interested parties only, without any international guarantee.’

The final decision reached in the matter of Danzig was a compromise between the Polish demand for the cession to the new Polish State of the most convenient outlet and inlet for Polish commerce, and the reluctance to place a city 96 per cent German under a foreign sovereignty. Over thirty alternative solutions had been rejected. The legal and political status of the Free City is that of an entirely separate state and dependent member of the community of nations under the protection of the League of Nations, represented on the spot by a High Commissioner, who decides in the first instance all differences between Danzig and Poland. Poland's rights are exclusively economic and ensure her free access to the sea. The legislative body is the *Volkstag*, consisting of 120 members elected on the system of proportional representation; while the highest executive authority is vested in the Senate consisting of a President, Vice-President, and twenty Senators. The President and seven Senators are elected for four years, and the Vice-President and thirteen Senators acting in a secondary capacity are elected for an indefinite period, the *Volkstag* having the right to cause their resignation. The Senate directs the policy of the Government and is responsible to the *Volkstag*, so it must not be confused with Senates elsewhere which form the Upper Houses of the legislature. The administration of the harbour and waterways is carried out by a Harbour Board, consisting of five representatives of the Free City and Poland respectively, with a Swiss President appointed by the League of Nations. The Harbour Board has energetically taken up the matter of improving the port, which can now accommodate even the largest vessels; many new warehouses and granaries have been erected; and loading operations have been greatly facilitated by the setting up of new electric cranes and the laying down of more railway lines. The management of the railways, in so far as they do not serve purely local requirements, has been entrusted to Poland, and is conducted by a special administration of the Polish State Railways in Danzig, to which a Danzig delegate is appointed to represent the city's interests. There have

been endless difficulties over this railway administration on the grounds that it was not confined to Danzig traffic, and it was decided several years ago by the High Commissioner that the offices should be removed from Danzig, but it is typical of conditions in the Free City that they still remain as before. The conduct of foreign relations is in the hands of the Polish Government, which is entrusted with the protection of Danzigers abroad, and in foreign centres where Poland is represented by a consulate and where Danzig has important commercial interests, Danzig officials are attached to the consulate. Further, owing to the numerous relations existing between Danzig and Poland, the Poles have a diplomatic representative in the Free City, while most of the other Powers are represented by Consuls-General or Consuls.

In some international conferences Danzig participates as an independent entity. The postal and telegraph services are administered by the post office of the Free City, but the Poles have been allowed to have their own postal arrangements in the harbour for the purpose of maintaining direct communication between Danzig and Poland, as well as between Poland and overseas countries. The area of the harbour, however, has recently been extended to include most of the city. The Polish post-boxes have in past years been a source of perpetual friction between Poles and Danzigers, and have led to incidents of an exceedingly childish nature, but fortunately both sides are now rather past the infantile stage of bickering, and are showing more sense in a difficult section of a delicate settlement. According to the Treaty of Versailles the Free City is in customs union with Poland, but the organization of the customs is under the government of Danzig. The Danzig Board of Customs levies duties according to the Polish tariff, but these are collected by the local custom-house officers; and arrangements have been made whereby the Free City receives a percentage of the Polish customs revenue. Although Danzig's prosperity is essentially dependent on her trade, there are some remarkable industrial enterprises in the city. The International Shipbuilding and Engineer-

ing Company, formerly the Imperial Dockyard and one of the largest engineering undertakings in the Baltic, employs 3,000 workmen and 400 officials and is supported by British, French, Danzig, and Polish capital. One of the private shipyards has built vessels up to 36,000 tons ; and the present building output could be largely increased. There are several floating docks to accommodate ships up to 6,000 tons, and there is every facility for the repair and maintenance of ships. Danzig has her own mercantile marine of about eighty vessels which fly the flag of the Free City—a red ground with a gold crown surmounting two white crosses—and ply chiefly between Danzig and the North Sea and Baltic ports. There is also a special currency, the *gulden*, based on the gold franc (25 gulden = £1), but German weights and measures are universally employed.

Danzig I found more German than Germany itself. German culture is firmly stamped on nearly every building, the population is almost entirely German, and German nationalism is strong, partly owing to the large number of retired civil servants who reside there, and partly because nationalists are free in Danzig to express themselves in a way that is scarcely possible in republican Germany.

The Danzigers resent Polish influence in the Free City, especially the Polish post office, customs, participation in the harbour control, and the railway administration. Owing to the customs barriers most foreign goods are expensive, the customs rates being fixed by the Poles to suit the interests of Poland generally ; and these rates scarcely coincide with the interests of the Danzigers, although the latter have some say in the fixing of the customs tariffs. While Polish goods, which are little in demand, are cheap, German goods, which are in great demand, are expensive. This is the natural result of there being no commercial treaty between Germany and Poland, and it is more noticeable in the small State of Danzig than almost anywhere else. The United States, on the other hand, having a commercial treaty with Poland, are able to import their goods on favour-

able terms, and consequently American motor-cars are common in the streets of Danzig. The Danzigers seem at present to be rather divided in their attitude towards Poland, some following the line of uncompromising hostility, while others believe in co-operation and hope for changed conditions in the future. Although the latter are increasing in numbers and there has recently been an improvement in Polish-Danzig relations, very few Danzigers believe that present conditions are permanent. The visit of the Polish Ministers in February, 1929, seemed to create a favourable impression, and it took place at a time when an overture of this sort was capable of producing beneficial results; but the status of Danzig is so much involved in larger issues that it is a mistake to expect any very marked change in mutual relations so soon after the general upheaval in these frontier districts.

What the future has in store for Danzig it is difficult to say, but there is little doubt that economic considerations will play an increasing part in the destinies of the Free City. Statistics show that the trade of the port has risen with leaps and bounds since the war, and that it has become the chief outlet for the Polish hinterland pending the completion of the new Polish port of Gdynia. But it must be remembered that most of the transit trade from Poland through Danzig consists of coal and other heavy bulk material from Polish Upper Silesia, which brings little benefit to the Danzig merchants, and that the forthcoming competition of Gdynia may prove to be very detrimental to Danzig's interests.

The new Danzig currency is also proving to be a serious drawback to the people, as most goods come from Poland and the purchasing value of the Danzig gulden is practically reduced to that of the Polish zloty. Similarly, agriculture is at a disadvantage, as it is cheaper to buy Polish produce than to rely on that of the local producer. Although Danzig is essentially German, it is a city with well-defined character of its own, and there are signs of foundations for a Danziger nationality. Tradition can do a good deal in this direction, especially in a city well endowed with

historical buildings representative of a period of former glory and prestige, but it is questionable whether this factor can make sufficient headway in an age when economic considerations play so important a part in national policies.

It seems that the most important question for Danzig, under present conditions, is the future relationship of the port to the new port of Gdynia. I visited Gdynia in the most severe winter that Europe has experienced for a very great number of years, and I saw the port under quite abnormal conditions. Both the Outer and Inner Basins were frozen, work was almost at a standstill, and sea communications were suspended; but the Poles may derive some consolation from the fact that every other port in the Baltic was in the same position at that time.

Gdynia is a vast undertaking, which receives the unstinted praise even of the Germans and Danzigers. Whatever may be the political motives behind this remarkable achievement, and whatever may be the future prospects of this monument to Polish enterprise and endeavour, the Poles have shown that no effort has been spared on their part to turn to the best account the newly acquired territory giving them access to the sea. A further proof of this is to be found in the construction of the new railway from Upper Silesia through Bydgoszcz to the new port, which will bring the coalfields within comparatively easy reach of sea communication. But the pure materialist will not see Gdynia in the light that the Pole sees it. To him this new port on the shores of the Baltic is not a mere construction of ironwork and masonry; it represents the ideal of Poland as a sea Power, and it is this ideal that makes Gdynia the most cherished possession of Poland to-day.

But the question arises whether Poland's export trade will develop to a sufficient extent to maintain prosperity both in Danzig and Gdynia. If this trade does increase in accordance with Polish expectations, it may then be anticipated that the one port will become the complement of the other. But, if on the other hand, there is not sufficient trade for both ports, it may reasonably be concluded that

Danzig will be the one to suffer. It is only natural that the Poles should concentrate their efforts on the trade of Gdynia rather than that of Danzig, but it is a mistake to lose sight of the fact that a serious diminution in Danzig's trade returns would not only bind Danzig closer than ever to Germany, but would give the Free City further reason to complain of her present status.

In Poland I was much impressed with the great optimism regarding the future outcome of the economic policy adopted for the exploitation of the new districts acquired under the Treaty of Versailles; but the Poles would be wise to satisfy themselves that the methods pursued are sound on economic grounds, apart altogether from political considerations. Economic idealism is a dangerous thing, and when blended with political idealism it needs a strong restraining influence.

The Poles maintain that the harbour of Danzig is unable to meet the demands of their increasing export trade, and that in order to adapt it to the increased volume of traffic it would be necessary to build a new harbour in the Free City. The question, therefore, arose whether it would be better to build a new harbour at Danzig jointly with the Free City, or only to participate in the modernization of the existing port, and to spend the balance on the construction of a purely Polish harbour at Gdynia. Although Danzig is situated at the mouth of the Vistula with direct communication with Poland and her waterways, and already possessed the necessary buildings and institutions, the Poles decided in favour of the Gdynia project with all the new construction work that it entailed. While it is impossible to say that this decision was influenced solely by economic considerations, the Poles have formed a comprehensive port scheme on the contention that Poland's future lies on the security of her outlets to the sea, which must be established on a firm economic basis by the development of the port system Danzig-Gdynia-Tczew. When the time comes for the development of the Polish waterways, the Poles intend to face the problem of Tczew and a canal to the sea; for only when a third outlet through Tczew has been secured

will it be possible to take full advantage of the Vistula as a means of communication.

I now propose to give some account of the actual Corridor controversy, stating the case put forward by the Poles in defence of the present settlement and the arguments of the Germans in favour of a revision of their frontiers with Poland. Both cases are stated with vehemence, and much importance is attached to unessential points and insignificant details, but in my endeavour to be scrupulously fair to both sides I will omit such contentions as have no direct bearing on the fundamental issue. The case may be divided into two headings, that of principle and that of detail. While the former deals with Poland's access to the sea and the consequent severance of East Prussia from the mainland of the Reich, the latter takes into consideration the respective claims on historic, ethnographic, and economic grounds.

The Poles, who are supported by those elements that maintain that the Versailles *status quo* must stand, contend that there is no 'Corridor Question'; but that the province of Pomorze (the Corridor less Danzig) is an integral part of Poland historically and ethnographically, with a Polish majority all the way to the coast. They argue that an outlet to the sea is vital for Poland; and that the vital needs of a nation of nearly 30 million people cannot be sacrificed for the convenience of 2 million East Prussians, who are thereby separated from the rest of Germany. East Prussia, they say, has preserved a certain specific character which clearly distinguishes her from the rest of Germany, and makes her practically a German colony. Moreover, the Poles claim that it is not possible to revise the Treaty of Versailles without causing new difficulties, perhaps greater than those already existing, and shaking the foundations of the *status quo* in Europe generally. Apart altogether from their claims to the Corridor, they fear that any alteration of the *status quo* in one locality would invite similar claims in other regions and, therefore, they consistently refuse to consider any such proposal on principle. It is also maintained that the Peace Treaties are not subject to revision in matters of territorial settle-

ments, as Article XIX of the Covenant only provides for revision in cases where the provisions of a treaty cannot be executed,¹ and that in this case the provisions have been executed in actual fact.

In reply to the claim that this part of West Prussia should be restored to Germany, the Poles contend that the Corridor would still exist only in another form; it would merely be turned round so as to run from east to west instead of from north to south, and this would cut off Poland from the sea, making Polish commerce entirely dependent on German goodwill. They further reject any suggestion that they should negotiate with Germany for a revision of their frontiers in exchange for German friendship as an insult to their prestige. While the Polish Corridor separating East Prussia from the rest of the Reich leaves German maritime communications free, the Poles urge that a German Corridor would cut off Poland from free communication with the world. In other words, they see two alternatives, viz., a Polish Corridor across the communications of a province which retains free access to the sea; or a German Corridor, which stands across the only outlet of a nation to the world's maritime routes. In Polish eyes, there is no question of which of the two countries has the stronger claim, but the whole world is not with them.

On turning to the more detailed aspect of the case, one is almost overwhelmed by a mass of literature, from which certain important facts stand out clearly, especially the historic, ethnographic, and economic contentions.

Historically, the Poles claim that Pomorze, or Polish Pomerania, has always been a Slav country, which was incorporated in the kingdom of the Polish King Boleslav I at the beginning of the eleventh century; and that thereafter, for several centuries, it was either an integral part of Poland or was ruled by its own sovereign princes resident at Danzig. In 1308 the Teutonic Order took possession of Pomorze and ruled there for 146 years until

¹ Article XIX reads as follows: 'The Assembly may from time to time advise the reconsideration by Members of the League of treaties which have become inapplicable and the consideration of international conditions whose continuance might endanger the peace of the world.'

1454, when the province once more became a part of Poland. This state of affairs lasted without interruption until the First Partition of 1772, which means that for 318 years Poland had her own sea-coast until Frederick II took possession of Pomorze and united it with Prussia in 1772. It was then not until 1920 that, by the Treaty of Versailles, the province was given back to Poland; and the Poles complain that they received it in part only, as the territory allotted to them did not represent more than two-thirds of the ancient Polish Pomerania. The Poles, therefore, claim that Pomorze was a part of Poland for more than six centuries (from the beginning of the eleventh century till 1772, except for the interval between 1308 and 1454), while Prussian rule only lasted 146 years.

Ethnographically, the Polish claim is based on the grounds that Pomorze is basically Polish in population; that the Kashubs, who inhabit the northern districts of the province, are also of Polish origin and of the same religion; and that, in spite of the Prussian policy of Germanizing Pomerania, the population has preserved its Polish character intact. It is claimed that out of a population of 800,000 only 12 per cent represent the German element, while 88 per cent are Poles. Moreover, the Poles state that from 1871 to 1918—the duration of the German Empire—five of the eighteen districts of Pomerania (now the Corridor) were continually and only represented in the Reichstag by Polish deputies; and that in the elections for the Polish Sejm in 1922 only 15 per cent of the total votes recorded were entered on the German list.

Economically, Poland maintains that the Corridor, together with Danzig, does not only occupy her only sea-coast, but also the mouth of her only big river. The Vistula is the backbone of Poland; her old capital, Krakow, her new capital, Warsaw, and her only port, Danzig (Gdynia is still under construction), are all situated on the banks of the Vistula. She argues that, if she were to be deprived of Danzig and her 76 kilometres of sea-coast, it would be the equivalent to taking away from Germany the whole 1,488 kilometres of coast from Emden to Königsberg, with two of the most important ports in the world, Bremen and Hamburg, her ports of secondary importance, such as Stettin and Königsberg, and about sixty smaller ports. The Poles even claim that the loss of Danzig alone would

mean as much as to cut off England from access to the sea, while they scorn the German suggestion that their communications with the overseas world could be well maintained by special facilities through the German ports, as is the case with other European countries like Czechoslovakia.

With regard to East Prussia, the Poles contend that in the thirteenth century the Teutonic Order began conquest and colonization of what was then Prussia (the present East Prussia), which in 1525 became a secular duchy and a fief of the Polish Crown; and that in 1657 it acquired sovereign rights, although a part of it was for over 300 years an integral part of Poland. This territory, they say, never belonged to the ancient German Empire which ceased to exist in 1806, but remained outside as a colony, and owing to its colonial character was excluded from the 'Deutscher Bund' which existed from 1815 to 1866. It was only in 1867 that East Prussia was incorporated in the 'Nord-Deutscher Bund', and in 1871 that it became an integral part of the German Reich. On these grounds the Poles argue that East Prussia's colonial character was inherited, and was not imposed upon her by Poland's access to the sea, and that it is not the first time that she has been separated from Brandenburg Prussia by the territory of Poland. East Prussia's decline in prosperity in recent years is attributed to the German customs barrier cutting off Königsberg from its natural hinterland of Poland, and the idea that the Corridor settlement has anything to do with it is regarded in Poland as quite ridiculous. In the matter of communications between the Reich and East Prussia, the Poles maintain that before the war the greater part of the traffic was sea-borne, but that transit across the Corridor has been so much facilitated that certain goods, which formerly used to be transported by sea, are now being sent by the Polish railways owing to the favourable tariffs.

In order to support their claim to an access to the sea, the Poles quote England as having 100 per cent of sea frontier, Spain about 66 per cent, France and Italy 50 per cent, Germany about 25 per cent, and Poland not even 2 per cent. England, France, and Spain border on the ocean, the latter two countries bordering on the Mediterranean as well; Germany has access to the ocean by the

North Sea, is the strongest country on the Baltic, and possesses Stettin, the largest port on that sea. A small country such as Finland, having a long coastline with twenty-three ports on the gulfs of the Baltic, obtained by the Peace Treaty of Tartu the Petsamo Corridor with access to another sea, the Arctic Ocean. Even Lithuania has 70 kilometres of coastline and 115 kilometres of the Gulf of Courland. Taking these facts into consideration, the Poles cannot understand anyone seriously denying them their own free access to the sea, especially when a country like Bulgaria possesses two ports.

The Germans, on the other hand, who have the backing of those elements who claim to regard the position from a practical and more materialistic point of view, maintain that the Corridor tears the German State asunder and isolates East Prussia, and that it is not even necessary to secure Poland's access to the sea. Access to the sea, they say, is an economic requirement, while the Corridor is a chapter in the history of Polish political imperialism. They claim that a Polish German understanding could provide Poland with much more comprehensive and advantageous access to the sea than that of the narrow and non-centrally situated Corridor. Such ports as Stettin, Danzig, and Königsberg could be placed at the disposal of Poland, who could receive privileges in these ports and guarantees of communications with them, and would thus be economically better off than under present conditions. Moreover, the Germans contest the claim of the importance of the Vistula to Poland, because four-fifths of its course are practically unnavigable, and the remaining fifth, which was regulated by Prussia and rendered navigable for ships up to 400 tons, has been so neglected since it came under Polish ownership that it is again choked with sandbanks. But even if the Vistula does possess the importance assigned to it by Poland, there are other European countries that are ethnographically landlocked. Czechoslovakia, with more highly developed industries and export markets far more vital to the country than those of Poland, sends her exports through Germany down the Elbe. The same principle applies to Austria, Hungary and Switzerland; and although Poland may exceed these countries in population, she certainly does not do so in industrial output.

Germany claims that East Prussia belonged to the Prussian

State, not as a colony, but as an integral member, and had been governed from Berlin since 1656 in common with Brandenburg and Pomerania. As far as the question of treaty revision is concerned, the Germans read Article XIX of the Covenant very differently from the Poles, and lay great stress on the phrase 'international conditions whose continuance might endanger the peace of the world'. In this contention they have considerable support in England and America, but not in France or those Northern countries whose interests are more or less bound up in the strength of Poland. What the Poles call a German Corridor the Germans view as their territorial unity being left intact, while they draw attention to the fact that, if Polish traffic were accorded privileged rights of transit to the coast, Poland would suffer no territorial injury as her geographical unity would remain unimpaired. Whereas the Poles claim that the Transit Convention meets Germany's needs as regards communications between East Prussia and the rest of Germany, the Germans naturally reply that even the most ideal agreement on this question can never compensate for the severe damage arising out of the separation by foreign territory of East Prussia from the rest of the country.

Historically, the Germans state that the Polish contentions are not in accordance with fact. They contend that the Corridor was originally inhabited by Germanic tribes, who, in the course of the general migrations, were replaced by Slavs. These Slavs, however, were not Poles, but Pomeranians, who are now represented by the race known as Kashubs. From the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries, native princes ruled in the territories of the Pomeranians, who frequently waged war among themselves and with the neighbouring Poles, always anxious to extend their dominion over Pomeranian territory, and the mouth of the Vistula in particular. There was never any question of the annexation, or even vassalage, of Pomorze¹ to the kingdom of Poland. Indeed, it was not until the twelfth century that a tributary relation with Poland was acknowledged, and this only lasted till it was cast aside by Duke Swantopolk of Pomerellia in 1220. On the death of the last Pomerellian duke, a war of succession broke out between

¹ Known also as Pomerellia.

the various relations of the extinct dynasty, among whom were the Germanized dukes of West Pomerania, the German Margraves of Brandenburg, and Przemislaus of Poland. On the death of Przemislaus in 1296, the Polish throne was seized by Ladislaus Lokietek, who, being dethroned shortly afterwards, could not make good his claim to Pomerellia against the Brandenburgers, but he instructed his vice-regent in Danzig to appeal for help to the Teutonic Order. The Knights defeated the Brandenburgers, but, as Ladislaus did not refund the expenses of the campaign as promised, Danzig and the whole of Pomerellia were handed over to the Order in 1308. The Germans, therefore, claim that till 1308 Pomerellia was never a Polish possession, but an independent country governed by its own non-Polish rulers.

But it is not only to the Polish claim to Pomerellia from 1000 to 1308 that the Germans take great exception, but also to their claim for the later period from 1454 to 1569. They say that West Prussia and the contiguous part of Pomerellia (the Corridor of to-day) were not incorporated with Poland in 1454, but only associated with it in a personal union under the Polish kings, otherwise maintaining their political independence. They had their own Parliament and laws; German, not Polish, was the official language; and Poles, as foreigners, were not eligible for ecclesiastical or temporal offices. This independence was acknowledged by the kings of Poland in the Charter of Union of 1454. Although the Peace of Thorn in 1466 put an end to the resistance of the Teutonic Order, it also consummated the personal union of Pomerellia to the Polish Crown, which was maintained until 1569. It was only then that West Prussia and Pomerellia were reduced to the status of a Polish province. The Germans, therefore, claim that Pomerellia was Polish only for 200 years (from 1569 to 1772), while it was under German sovereignty for 305 years (from 1308 to 1466 and from 1772 to 1919). The Polish claim that Pomerellia was a part of Poland for over six centuries is dismissed as fantastic.

The Germans also support their historical facts by the contention that Pomerellia greatly benefited materially under the German rule, and became extensively Germanized, while at the First Partition it was inhabited by a mixed population, the majority of which was probably German,

but certainly not Polish, as the Slavs of the district are mainly Kashubian.¹

Ethnographically, the Germans contend that, if the population of Pomerellia is taken as a whole, it is essential to include the Free City of Danzig; for, as the capital of West Prussia, Danzig was formerly the chief town of the Corridor territory. According to the German census of 1910, there were in the seventeen 'circles' (which have now become Polish), including the Free City, 651,855 Germans, 445,235 Poles, and 91,019 Kashubs—or 206,620 more Germans than Poles, 560,836 more Germans than Kashubs, and 115,601 more Germans than Poles and Kashubs together. These figures do not support a strong Polish majority, but the reverse; and the balance against Poland is much heavier if the separate identity of the Poles and Kashubs, which has been established both historically and ethnographically, is taken into account. Although speaking a language akin to Polish and sharing the same Catholic faith, the Kashubs are the remains of a particular Slav tribe inhabiting the northern part of the Corridor, and the Germans claim that Polish settlement has never reached the sea. In the German view, therefore, the result was a strong German majority for the whole Corridor before the transfer, and that it was only in the district of Posen that a large Polish majority existed. Since the Peace settlement, of course, the number of Germans has dwindled and that of the Poles increased, but that is immaterial to a fair judgment of the case.

Economically, the Germans accuse the Poles of ignoring the effects upon a great country by cutting it in two—effects which are most keenly felt by East Prussia. The loss of districts in Eastern Germany was a severe blow to the economy of the Reich, as these districts had a surplus agricultural output, but the loss to East Prussia is much more serious. Prior to the war, the trade between East Prussia and what is now the Corridor came to nearly 200,000 head of cattle a year, while in 1924 the figure was reduced to 870. This has reacted very seriously on agriculture, causing a migration of the rural population. Moreover, the entire trade of East Prussia with the ceded territories has suffered as well as her trade relations with

¹ This contention is supported by Professeur A. Meillet in *Les Langues de l'Europe Nouvelle*. Paris, 1928.

the east of Europe. In fact conditions in East Prussia, which is also almost cut off from the Vistula, are so bad that the Berlin Government has often been obliged to render assistance; and it is difficult for East Prussia to obtain private loans, on account of the constantly recurring Polish demands for annexation. Königsberg is almost a dead city, and it was here that the Prussian kings were crowned. Hence, as the cradle of German culture, East Prussia makes a strong sentimental appeal to all Germans.

In the foregoing statements of the two respective cases I have endeavoured to give fair statements, entirely free from prejudice, but space does not permit me to go much into details. Readers, I know, like authors to provide them with conclusions, but in this case I think it is better that each reader should form his own opinion for himself. In doing so, however, it would be as well to bear in mind one or two rather important considerations, and to regard the whole subject from the European standpoint as well as from the local point of view.

In recent years Poland has been carrying out an intensive policy of 'Polonization' in all the districts of the Corridor where there was previously a considerable German population, and every year the Polish majority is being increased by the departure of dissatisfied Germans and the arrival of more Poles, chiefly from Galicia. On the economic side Polish policy has found expression in the building of the new port of Gdynia and the construction of a new railway system connecting it with the Upper Silesian coalfields; and by this means the Poles hope greatly to increase their export of coal at very low prices, especially to the Baltic countries. With an export price of 27 zloty, as compared with the home price of 54 zloty, Poland is pursuing a dumping policy which must seriously affect the British coal industry. Undoubtedly the Polish coal industry incurs great loss from this non-paying export, which cannot be balanced by high prices at home, but the Polish Government provides compensation. Apart from favourable lease agreements with the Upper Silesian coal concerns, which further the interests of the port of Gdynia, the special railway rates for coal

are so low as to be equivalent to an export bounty. The special rate per ton from the pithead to Gdynia is a little over a third of the inland rate for the same distance, while the coal concerns in German Upper Silesia have to pay nearly two-thirds more freight charges from Gleiwitz to Stettin than those charged by the Poles from Polish Upper Silesia to Danzig or Gdynia. Although this policy is partly due to an effort to improve the economic position of the Polish State by helping the coal industry, which cannot live on home consumption, there is behind it the same political motive that inspires most Polish efforts in this area, e.g. the consolidation of the Corridor, and its justification in the eyes of the world as a political and economic necessity to Poland. Indeed, the outstanding feature of the present situation is that every year the Corridor is becoming more Polish owing to the determined efforts of the Poles to make it so.

The Germans, on the other hand, concentrate their attention on the position of their minority and their rights under the Minority Treaty; and they do everything in their power to resist the attempt of the Poles to strengthen their position by 'Polonizing' the population of these districts. It is estimated that about 800,000 Germans have left the country since the foundation of the Polish Republic, and that the German minority in Poland altogether amounts to between 1,100,000 and 1,200,000 people. But the chief aim of German policy is directed to the future, when the German Government finds an opportune moment to raise the whole question of the Corridor as an international issue. While the Poles are doing everything to avoid any discussion of the matter or to postpone it as long as possible, the Germans wish to hurry it on owing to the energetic efforts of the Poles to improve their ethnographic and economic position. During my recent visit to Germany and Poland I gained the definite impression that the late Herr Stresemann intended to raise this question as soon after the evacuation of the Rhineland as was practicable, which no doubt accounts largely for the Polish reluctance to see the Allied troops leave the Rhine.

Meanwhile, the Polish Corridor has produced a marked degree of mutual antagonism between Germany and Poland. The Germans are absolutely determined that their country must cease to be cut in two by a strip of Polish territory, isolating East Prussia. The Poles are equally determined that the *status quo* of the Treaty of Versailles must stand. While in Germany meetings are held all over the country protesting in the most vehement terms against the injustice of the Corridor settlement, in Poland there is the most violent opposition to any suggestion that the Peace Treaty should be revised. The Poles openly declare that they will fight rather than be deprived of what they regard to be an integral part of Poland, and even old men state their intention of joining the colours in the event of any threat to the province of Pomorze. I cannot stress too strongly the seriousness of the present position in this part of Eastern Europe, where racial feeling runs high, where nationalism is very strong, and calm contemplation is not regarded as a virtue. At present compromise is quite out of the question. Neither side will consider anything stopping short of its full claims. It has been suggested that an alternative solution might be found, but the Poles will not listen to any proposals, and the Germans stand by their suggestion at Versailles that the Poles could receive port facilities at the German ports of Danzig, Stettin, and Königsberg. In no European situation is the deadlock more complete.

Among neutral observers, who have no material interests at stake and can view the question impartially, there are two schools of thought, those who regard the Treaty of Versailles as a *res immutabilis* and believe that Poland's claims should be upheld at all costs, and those who are of the opinion that the present situation can only lead to war. In a Memorandum submitted to President Wilson at the end of 1918 and to the Peace Conference in Paris in 1919, Roman Dmowski, the leader of the Polish National Committee, stated: 'If East Prussia is to remain an integral part of German territory then . . . West Prussia must also remain in Germany's possession. If East Prussia

remains in German hands as an isolated Prussian possession, cut off from the main body of the country by the . . . districts lying in between, it will be a source of unending strife between Poland and Germany.' But it is obvious that Dmowski drew from this the conclusion that East Prussia should also be allotted to Poland, and this view is still prevalent in Poland to-day. After all, there are two sides to every question.

There is, however, a sinister side of all this wrangling over territory on the banks of the Vistula, and if the local situation between Germany and Poland is serious in itself, much more serious is the indisputable fact that the Corridor has joined the hands of Germany and Russia, and placed Poland between two strong and unfriendly states. Whether one supports the German claims or the Polish arguments, and whether one cares to admit it or not, no one to-day can shut his eyes to the German policy of drawing nearer to Russia, which is the direct outcome of the settlement of Versailles in Eastern Europe. This is a question which Europe will neglect at her peril, and in which the future peace of the nations depends. Already there has taken place over this very question that grouping of the Powers which preceded the Great War, and the symptoms of the political disease in that part of Europe are such as to give rise to grave apprehension. France, Belgium, Denmark, and the Baltic countries support Poland as a defence against Russia or Germany, while opinion in England is very divided at present. Italy is an unknown quantity, but it must never be forgotten that there will surely come a time in the programme of Mussolini when the surplus population of Italy must find room for itself in the world. As in the case of the Vilna question, the *status quo* is involved, and this issue cannot but make Europe divided contrary to her own interests. Although the outlook at present is dark, feelings on both sides may be very different ten years hence, and it is possible that economic realities¹ will eventually overcome the political and psychological factors which now

¹ An important German-Polish Financial Agreement was signed in October, 1929.

predominate, but meanwhile we must regard the Corridor question in a European sense, as a matter that affects European relationships generally, and on which the tranquillity of Eastern, if not the whole of, Europe depends. The possibility of a Russo-German combination makes the Corridor the greatest danger spot of Europe to-day, and it is interesting to know that the late Marshal Foch, shortly before his death, forecast that this area would be the scene of the next war. I have it on the best authority that the Marshal was sitting at his desk with a map of Europe spread out before him. He was discussing various questions with one whose statements are unquestionable ; and, when the subject of the next war cropped up, Foch at once took his pipe out of his mouth and pointed to the narrow strip of territory giving Poland access to the Baltic : ' There ', he said, ' lies the root of the next war.'

CHAPTER IX

POWERS AND POLICIES

HAVING described the new or restored states which have a direct interest in the Baltic, it is now necessary to turn to the policies adopted by these countries as protection against the possible aggression of their former dominating Powers, Germany and Russia. General Baltic policy in view of a possible Russo-German combination must also be considered.

Sweden, a wealthy country which has long enjoyed the blessings and profits of peace, deprecates any policy that might conceivably involve her in difficulties with Russia, while she would be very reluctant to impair her good relations of long standing with Germany. Although the Swedes still maintain their excellent military qualities and possess some of the best gun factories in the world, Swedish neutrality is almost a time-honoured axiom of Swedish policy, and the fact that political elements, largely Socialist, usually outweigh the military influence in the country tends to confirm the evidence of recent history, that Sweden prefers a prosperous neutrality to the cost and hazards of war. Norway, protected by Sweden, takes little part in international questions, and wisely prefers to follow a policy of independent detachment. Denmark, on the other hand, forms the 'Gate of the Baltic', so to speak, and would be at the mercy of any form of aggression resulting from a Russo-German combination, unless she could fall back on the support of one of the greater Powers. The natural inclination of the Danes is to lean towards Great Britain, and in the event of trouble it is more than likely that they would place themselves unconditionally under British control and protection. Moreover, the geographical position of

Denmark is such that she favours a strong Poland on the eastern frontier of Germany ; so that the Danes cannot but regard a combined policy of Germany and Russia with the strongest disapproval, although they prefer to keep outside the sphere of political entanglements.

In the Baltic States there is still strong support for a 'Baltic League', based on the existing treaty between Estonia and Latvia, and it is hoped by Baltic politicians, especially in Estonia, to draw Finland into this alliance. Some favour a more comprehensive union including Poland and other countries having a common frontier with Russia, while others go so far as to advocate the inclusion of Roumania in order to form a continuous defensive *bloc* stretching from the Arctic Ocean in the north to the Black Sea in the south. Although such a policy undoubtedly has its advantages for the actual Baltic States themselves, there are difficulties and disadvantages, if not indeed dangers, in the realization of such a project. As such an alliance would be directed against Russia, there is little doubt that Russia would exploit such a grouping to her own advantage ; and, as there would be so many weak links in the chain of defence that the stronger states would suffer for the shortcomings of the weaker, it seems that any policy likely to be provocative should be avoided. At present Russian aggression in this quarter is rather out of the question, and this being so, it seems better to leave well alone. Moreover, the present relationships between Poland and Lithuania prevent co-operation in that quarter. While neither Estonia nor Latvia, nor any Baltic country for that matter, could ally herself to Lithuania without incurring the hostility of Poland, the exclusion of Lithuania would render that country an easy prey to the first grabber, with the serious consequences that would undoubtedly follow. But as it is not in the interests of the Scandinavian nations or Finland to fall in with such a policy, the net result is that at present the Baltic League is not likely to extend beyond the Estonian-Latvian Treaty. Yet it must be admitted that these Baltic countries, although enjoying the good-will of the Great Powers and membership of the League of Nations,

are in a state of the utmost uncertainty as to what support, if any, they could expect in the event of aggression.

That a Russo-German *entente* would seriously affect British policy in the Baltic, which more or less harmonizes with that of the Baltic countries, is a foregone conclusion, and it is obvious that Great Britain could not tolerate the formation of a policy which would transform the Baltic from a *mare apertum* to a *mare clausum*. Nor could Great Britain possibly stand aside and watch the evolution of a policy destined to threaten the very existence of the Baltic States and to control at will the great timber trade of Finland. As it is a matter of the utmost importance that these new states should not be reduced to forming a mere connecting link between Germany and Russia, it is strongly advisable that such support as has been suggested should be given by one of the Great Powers which supported their independence and made that independence possible. British support is indicated, partly because it would be more acceptable on account of the power and prestige of the British fleet, and partly because Great Britain has greater interests in the Baltic than any of the said Powers. But, if the British Government should hold out some encouragement, and try to build up British interests in these countries, it is essential that the Baltic Governments should meet them half-way. While British interests in the Baltic are for the most part commercial, the strategic position of the Baltic States *vis-à-vis* Russia is a matter of importance in Anglo-Russian strategy generally. It may be true that British interests with regard to Russia are concentrated rather in the south and east than in the north, but it may be taken for granted that the maintenance of the Baltic as a *mare apertum* is among Britain's more important interests, which is capable of being strengthened by economic and other ties. For this reason the Baltic Governments should lose no opportunity of so directing their foreign policy so as to encompass considerations that might make their national independence indispensable to Great Britain.

Although the same principle applies to Finland, the situation of that country geographically gives her politically

a very independent position. There are two definite lines of policy open to Finland—a Scandinavian or a Baltic policy—but she prefers to compromise. It is of the utmost importance to Finland that Estonia and Latvia should maintain their independence, yet the Finns want a free hand for the future, and their best interests lie in a policy of detachment, in keeping on friendly terms with all their neighbours, Russia included, and in leaning towards Scandinavia with a prospect of continued peace. Finland is already able to stand firmly on her own feet for reasons which have been given earlier in this narrative, and the timber trade is an important commercial tie between her and Great Britain, but there is much room for improvement in the British export trade to Finland, and the Finnish Government would be well advised to attract British capital for the internal development of the country. There is a marked similarity between the British and Finnish dislikes of external commitments, and therefore a certain sympathy in policy between the two countries, but too much importance cannot be attached to the improvement of economic relations on which so much in the future depends. There is no doubt that England enjoys Finnish commercial good-will and financial friendship, and that there does exist in Finland a demand for high-class goods and a readiness to spend; but British firms do not exert themselves to provide for Finnish wants, and they do not send to the country suitable or sufficient representatives. In some cases they appoint sub-agents under Stockholm, which offends Finnish susceptibilities, while in other cases men are chosen owing to their knowledge of the Russian language and Russian methods for work in a country which has just thrown off the yoke of Russian domination. Neither course is likely to lead to good results. Finnish merchants complain that British manufacturers expect to be approached from the Finnish side, and make no effort on their part to obtain a footing in the market. For every British commercial traveller in Finland there are at least ten Germans, who push their goods with vigour and are successful. Yet the Finns want to trade with us and prefer dealing with us, but are compelled

to buy from Germany and America in order to obtain the goods they want, although they would willingly pay up to 10 per cent more to have British goods. It is the same story as elsewhere. The superior attitude of British firms is depriving them of a ready market, and they have largely themselves to blame for the loss of what must be added to the long list of lost opportunities which have characterized British foreign trade since the end of the Great War. But the fault is not entirely on our side, and it is clearly in the future interests of Finland to do everything in her power to strengthen the economic bonds between the two countries, and thereby to increase British interest in the security of her territory.

Since the war, the Finns have come to realize that the English language is of great importance to them commercially, as most of their export trade is now with Great Britain and the United States ; and there is a strong movement on foot to make English the second language of the country, compulsory in all the schools, and to make Swedish only optional for all Finnish-speaking people. While this measure would undoubtedly be in the commercial interests of Finland, it would also help considerably to promote British export trade to the Finnish market. The adoption of English as the second language would itself encourage English people to visit a country of great natural charm and attraction, and tourists are the forerunners of trade ; existing trade would be made easier on both sides ; and a natural sympathy would exist between this country and another land where the English tongue was spoken. The Geographical Society of Finland has done a great service to both countries by producing an atlas, with an explanatory volume in English, which I believe to be unique of its kind ; and even a casual study of this remarkable work is sufficient to provide much valuable and absorbing information about Finland, which is so painfully lacking in this country. Many people will study an atlas who will not read serious books about a country that is little known to them, and by this means they absorb knowledge without any apparent effort. While this publication is calculated to arouse British

interest in Finland, the Finns are trying to inaugurate a scheme by which they can obtain scholarships for study at British universities.

The Baltic peoples are realizing—what is undoubtedly true—that English is becoming more and more the language of international intercourse, and that it is taking the place of German in commerce just as it is supplanting French in social life. They are, therefore, prepared to do all they can with the modest means at their disposal to acquire and cultivate a language that can be of immense value to them culturally, commercially, and perhaps politically as well. But, in order thoroughly to establish English as a second language in any one of these countries, it is necessary that prospective teachers should have every facility to study in England, and to do so under the most favourable conditions. It is also essential that as many students as possible should receive such assistance as to enable them to attend courses at British universities. The countries in question cannot at present afford to subsidize this branch of education to any great extent, but they can contribute a certain proportion of the cost ; and it is surely not too much to expect the British Government also to contribute to a movement that is clearly in the interests of British trade in the Baltic. Other European Powers, such as France, Germany, and Italy, have spent, and are spending, considerable sums on the propagation of their cultures in foreign lands, and their efforts in this direction have met with no small success. Hitherto the British Government has left this work almost entirely in the hands of private enterprise, but they cannot afford to continue this policy indefinitely. These Baltic countries, especially Finland and Estonia, want to draw closer to Great Britain, and they now prefer the English language to any other foreign tongue. But it is necessary that the British Government should meet them half way ; give them every reasonable concession and facility ; and remove such unnecessary restrictions as are keeping out of England many honest and well-intentioned people from the North, who wish to study England and the English language. If we wish to seize this opportunity of

drawing closer to us a country that supplies us with a large proportion of our timber, and another that may help us to re-establish our connections with the Russian market, we should meet their linguistic proposals with a ready response. If we fail to do so, other European Powers will be only too ready to grant the necessary concessions and facilities in order to increase their cultural influence.

It may be argued that we have already too many foreign commitments—an argument which is usually put forward when any new feature of foreign policy is proposed. But are we, as a great world-empire with world interests and with our important prestige in the Baltic, prepared to forsake our principles of helping small nations to whose independence we have largely contributed, even when it is clearly to our own advantage to do so? It cannot be said that there is any part of the world which is not our concern, and we would not have it otherwise. We have good friends in the Baltic, who may be valuable friends in years to come; and it is a moral obligation as well as in our material interests to support them, letting it be clearly understood that they can rely on some degree of British assistance in accordance with their needs. There is no question of any definite commitments in the Baltic at present, but it should be made known that Britain's position there is such that she cannot view with indifference any policy likely to threaten the independence of any of these Baltic countries.

With Poland the British position is somewhat different, and, although to some extent the political road from London to Warsaw runs through Paris, the more direct relations between Great Britain and Poland are of increasing interest at the present time. On the Polish side, my impression is that there is a general feeling that the British public regard Poland as a distant state of Eastern Europe, with which there is little intercourse and little community of interest. There also seems to be a feeling that Britain shows little enthusiasm about a country which she helped to restore in the Peace Treaty. To some extent this is true, but it must be remembered that the great majority of English people take little or no interest in countries

outside the British Empire, and that foreign affairs only touch a very small section of the community, chiefly those who have commercial interests to consider. This state of affairs is certainly to be deplored, but it explains an important feature in the British attitude towards many foreign countries besides Poland.

Unfortunately, Polish history and culture are little known in Great Britain. In Paris and Rome there are considerable Polish communities with a deep and wide cultural influence, but in London most of the Poles are of quite a different class, being chiefly employed on work in and around the docks. The result is that the British people are more or less deprived of acquiring valuable knowledge about a country with which they might have a considerable degree of sympathy. Furthermore, comparatively few Englishmen make the journey to Poland except for official or business purposes, and those who do so have to contend with the language difficulty. All this forms a serious obstacle to a sympathetic understanding of Poland's interests and aspirations. At the same time, I have never met anyone who has visited Poland, and has not been impressed by what he has seen. The progress made in the last ten years, the work that has been carried out at Gdynia and the strong appeal of Poland's ancient cities, have always made a marked impression on British visitors.

In present circumstances, it is natural that Poland should wish to have British political and financial support, and I will endeavour to make the British position clear in both these directions. Great Britain occupies a special position of her own in regard to European affairs and her interests are world-wide. She follows a policy of very general formulæ—security of the British Isles from attack; protection of imperial communications; and the promotion of peace. The British Government, in their endeavour to contribute to the maintenance of peace in Europe, have accepted certain obligations under the Locarno Pact and in accordance with the Covenant of the League of Nations; but, by so doing, they have gone to the utmost limit in the matter of actual European commitments. There are many

states in Europe which would give a good deal to know the likely attitude of Great Britain in the event of their becoming the victims of aggression ; but I do not believe that there is any statesman or politician in England to-day who could give an answer to any one of these states, even if he were in a free position to do so. The fact is that the British Government are not prepared to anticipate events. They view the future with an open mind, and their attitude in any future crisis will be dictated solely by the circumstances of the case.

The British people refuse to be involved in European quarrels in which they have no direct interest, and British commitments in Eastern Europe would not receive the support of the electorate. The British people will not incur obligations which they may in the future be unable to fulfil. It may, therefore, be concluded that Poland cannot expect political support from Great Britain, except in so far as both countries are bound by the League Covenant. As far as Great Britain is concerned, an Eastern Locarno is out of the question. Yet it must not be imagined that for this reason Poland is deprived of British sympathy and moral support. The Polish Legation in London has been raised to the status of an Embassy, with a corresponding change in Warsaw. Englishmen watch with the greatest interest the consolidation and development of the resurrected Polish State, and those who know the circumstances in which the Poles have striven to regain their former position in Europe show a sympathetic appreciation of a remarkable example of national endeavour. But, unfortunately, those possessing the necessary information form a very small minority of the British public, although this ignorance of Polish affairs is through no want of effort on the part of the Polish Government.

From the financial point of view, there is a certain reluctance to invest British capital in areas where there is an atmosphere of discord, and there is no doubt that the situation with regard to Poland's frontiers forms a serious obstacle to investment. If Poland's future was associated with conditions of political tranquillity, in which only capital

was needed to assure steady commercial and industrial progress, the London market would not be slow to offer its co-operation. But, as things are, there is still a feeling of uncertainty, which can only be dispelled by material results.

The confidence of the London market is difficult to obtain and British financiers will not take the chances that are lightly shouldered by American financial houses ; but British interests are usually closely allied with British capital, and finance plays, perhaps, an unusually prominent part in British foreign policy. As far as Great Britain is concerned, much will depend on Poland's attitude towards her neighbours. While an uncompromising attitude on the part of the Poles will not find favour in Great Britain, a spirit of 'give and take' should inspire confidence as well as interest in political and financial circles.

Polish relations with France are on quite another footing. In a speech delivered in Paris on the 28th January, 1926, M. Jules Laroche, the then newly appointed French Ambassador to Warsaw, stated :

'Dès que les Etats commencèrent à s'évader de la conception féodale et à s'orienter vers une politique européenne, la France et la Pologne commencèrent à mêler leurs destinées. Et quand la grande bataille diplomatique du XVIII^{ème} siècle amorça les bouleversements qui devaient s'ensuivre, la diplomatie française eut vite fait de découvrir que la Pologne était un des piliers de l'équilibre européen, et par là même un élément essentiel de la paix.

'La Pologne, elle ne devait que tôt ressentir quelles conséquences désastreuses peut entraîner pour la liberté des peuples un affaiblissement de la France. C'est à la faveur de cet affaiblissement que peut être commis le grand crime qui devait martyriser, en l'asservissant et en la dépeçant, une nation tout entière.'

In other words, France and Poland are bound together by necessity as well as by tradition. The French regard the Polish State, the stronger the better, as indispensable to their security, while the Poles look to France for support in the event of trouble. M. Gaston Doumergue, President

of the Republic, formulated the first principle of France's Polish policy as follows: 'C'est dans la pratique toujours plus intime de l'alliance fondée sur le respect des traités que la France et la Pologne trouveront les plus sûres garanties de paix'; while M. Poincaré has said, 'Nous savons que nous pouvons compter sur la Pologne; la Pologne peut être sûre qu'elle a le droit de compter sur nous'; and M. Clemenceau declared, 'Nous voulons une Pologne vraiment forte.' On the 19th February, 1921, a treaty was signed in Paris which constituted a political and military alliance between France and Poland, and although the terms of the latter are not known, there is no doubt that there is a very close understanding between the two countries. Hence France plays an important rôle in the affairs of Eastern Europe, if not of the Baltic, and introduces a far-reaching complication with regard to Germany's orientation. Germany refuses to accept the Polish Corridor, and Russia would welcome a weaker Poland, while France is bound by her policy and interests to take the opposite course. This is a great obstacle to a Western orientation of Germany, which is most desirable for the most obvious reasons. The Poles maintain that Germany is doing everything she can to loosen the bonds that bind France and Poland together, and, although I am not in a position to say whether this is the case or not, it is clear that Poland's future position greatly depends on France.

The policy of France and Poland is a rigid adherence to the *status quo* established by the Treaty of Versailles, while Germany and Russia take the opposite view. It is on this vital question of the *status quo*—to be or not to be—that the whole settlement of Eastern Europe depends; and this principle may well decide the issue of peace or war. Both Germany and Russia want the Vilna question kept open, as it offers opportunities to both with a view to future political bargainings; and Lithuania hopes to make use of these bargainings to obtain what she wants. In fact, Vilna is wrapped up in the Corridor question, on which depends the settlement of Eastern Europe, which in turn is intimately bound up with the principle of the *status quo*. Hence,

Europe must face the question of treaty revision before things can settle down in Eastern Europe. As yet there has been no attempt to face this question on which the peace of Europe depends, and it is only necessary to pay a brief visit to Eastern Europe to realize that things cannot go on as they are going at present. Political situations do not often remain stationary. Either they improve or they get worse, and the situation in Eastern Europe is certainly not improving. I am neither a war-monger nor a pacifist, but I see some very ugly symptoms on the banks of the Vistula which Europe will ignore at her peril. Between Germany and Poland there is the making of a first-class crisis, which may come at a time when another Power in the south is looking about for trouble. Some months ago an influential European statesman told me that it was quite possible that the League of Nations would open the question without the initiative of the Powers directly concerned, but it is difficult to visualize this actually taking place. The tendency in some neutral countries seems to be to argue that, as the 1920 settlement has now worked for ten years, it is better to leave it alone. It is the old refrain of 'wait and see', sometimes quite a useful policy where tranquillity is assured, but distinctly dangerous where inflammable material is concerned. If the present Polish Government have no policy of aggrandizement and the Germans have no intention other than to seek a settlement by peaceful means, this does not remove the very hard 'nut that has to be cracked' before these two peoples can live and work together on friendly terms. Moreover, it is essential that they should co-operate in their own interests and in those of all Europe. Economically, they could help each other, and, politically, they could work together for the consolidation and improvement of Europe; but, as things are, it is impossible to think of them doing either the one or the other. With Poland allied to France, and Great Britain little interested in what happens in Eastern Europe, Germany has been forced to seek the friendship of Russia. I do not believe for one moment that Germany's Russian policy is that of her own choosing. It has been forced upon her by the manner

in which Britain and France have practically left her out of the Locarno policy, and by her present position in Eastern Europe. Indeed, there are many circumstances which point to the fact that Germany is at present in doubt whether to throw in her hand with Russia or to go with the Western Powers. She would naturally prefer the latter, but is doubtful whether she can obtain British friendship, which is the great determining factor. The British Government has it in their power to draw Germany away from Russia by offering her something more attractive, and this could be done by introducing some reality into our Locarno policy with regard to Germany, and by trying to bring Anglo-German relations as much as possible into line with Anglo-French relations. Britain can also do much to improve the position between Germany and France.

The first step towards the consummation of Locarno is the evacuation of the Rhineland, and Mr. MacDonald's Government have been wise to take the lead in this matter. With British and Belgian troops cleared out of the Rhineland, it would indeed be difficult for France to remain without prejudicing herself in the eyes of all those who are really working for a peaceful settlement. The military occupation has been the greatest obstacle to the progress of Western Europe on peaceful lines, and the gateway of Locarno is to be found at the bridge-heads of the Rhine. Indeed, it cannot be said that the war period has really come to an end until the last Allied soldier has left German soil. Then, and only then, will Europe be able to return to normal conditions of peace, and will it be possible to establish normal friendly relations between Germany and her late enemies. As long as the Rhineland occupation continued, Locarno remained a farce. Germany could not be expected to have any confidence in Britain's military obligations under the Locarno Treaty, as long as British troops remained on German territory in partnership with those of France, her possible aggressor.

Although an Anglo-German *rapprochement* is by no means capable of early attainment, a policy directed towards this end would do much to improve things all round. It would

improve the prospect of reaching a position in which London had the same ties of friendship with Berlin as with Paris ; it would tend to bring together the three Great Powers, Great Britain, France, and Germany, as a solid nucleus of European stability founded on mutual interests ; and it would introduce British influence as a beneficial factor in the settlement of Eastern Europe. If the Locarno policy is going to succeed, it is essential that Anglo-German relations should eventually become as good as Anglo-French relations, even if the latter were to suffer a little in the process ; but it must be remembered that France's full participation in the final settlement of Europe is a fundamental necessity. Franco-German relations, which would complete the Locarno triangle, are a difficult proposition owing to the close proximity of these two military Powers, and because of the fundamental differences in their national characters. Yet, there is good reason to hope that economic interests will gradually bring them closer and closer together, and that British policy may prove a determining factor in the process.

Of all the attempts that have been made since 1918 to ensure a peaceful Europe, Locarno is the only measure which provides any tangible guarantees for the future. The Locarno Treaties are based on reality and provide definite military commitments on the part of the guarantor Powers. In the Treaty of Mutual Guarantee ¹ between Germany, Belgium, France, Great Britain, and Italy, otherwise known as the Rhineland Pact, the contracting parties collectively and severally guaranteed the inviolability of Germany's existing western frontiers and the observance of the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles regarding the demilitarized zone. Germany and Belgium, and Germany and France, mutually undertook that they would 'in no case attack or invade each other or resort to war against each other' except in the case of legitimate defence against violations of the above undertaking, 'flagrant breach' of the provisions regarding the demilitarized zone, action under Article XVI of the Covenant, or under Article XV, para. 7, if directed against the state which was the first to attack.

¹ *Vide* Appendix.

They agreed to settle all disputes by arbitration or conciliation, as provided in the separate treaties for that purpose. In case of 'flagrant violations' of these undertakings, the contracting parties would 'immediately come to the assistance' of the party injured; in doubtful cases, the Council of the League should decide whether the violation had been committed; and the Council should also give a decision even in 'flagrant' cases. Great Britain and Italy guaranteed these stipulations, their guarantee becoming effective if one party refused to submit a dispute to peaceful settlement, or to accept an arbitral award, and attacked the other party, or violated the demilitarized zone; in the absence of such aggravation, the Council of the League should decide on the appropriate action.

While other attempts to eliminate the possibilities of war in Europe rest chiefly on sentiment and public opinion of the moment, Locarno has behind it the material power of modern armies. It is, therefore, a solid foundation on which to build. But, if the full value of this Pact is to be realized, its policy must not be confined to times of emergency. It should also animate the peaceful relations of the signatory Powers towards one another. Locarno must become an integral part of European political life, and the achievement of this end lies largely with Great Britain. British initiative, as shown in the evacuation of the Rhineland, must lead the way towards a real Locarno.

In these comparatively early post-war days, Europe is living in an atmosphere of political artificiality and false values, in which Locarno stands out as the only solid and statesmanlike guarantee of peace. There are important elements working for peace in a practical and far-sighted manner, but they are almost overwhelmed by a voluminous mass of international nonsense, arising out of the preachings of doctrinaire professors and the uninterrupted gabblings of irresponsible peace societies. The number of these latter bodies is legion, but the result of their endeavours is merely to hamper, if not to destroy, the sincere efforts of experts who know the subject with which they are dealing. All voice their notions in a multitude of conferences which lead

to nothing ; even sensible men and women pin their faith to ideals inconsistent with human nature ; and there exists a form of 'sloppy' internationalism, blind to the material interests of nations which are the only possible foundations of a lasting peace. Indeed, there is a form of internationalism which professes to further the interests of peace, but is in reality playing into the hands of Moscow. Communism, and all that is rotten in politics to-day, seeks the abolition of all national sentiments, and there is no more favourable condition for the dissemination of political evil than amongst people who cling loosely to their nationality. But there is an aspect which is even more detrimental still to the interests of peace. Many of the so-called pacifist societies are definitely working under the orders of Moscow, and are exploiting genuine international peace effort in order to spread Communism under the camouflage of international friendship. In these days it is very necessary to distinguish between the true and the false, and to remember that there are few forms of internationalism in Europe which can really stand the light of day. Nor is it desirable that the peoples of Europe should lose their national characters and become merged into one mass population. It is the individuality of the nations that has made Europe what she is to-day, and nationalism is one of the most cherished possessions of the human race. Any attempt to destroy this would be to invite a serious calamity to western civilization. Many of the pacifist societies do all they can to stamp out national patriotism, and by so doing prove that a common-sense peace is not their ambition. Only loyal Englishmen, patriotic Frenchmen, true Germans, and Italians who love their country, can produce a Europe that is held together by the mutual interests of them all. It is easy to say quite sincerely 'I will never do it again', but conditions change and the crime is repeated ; but, if the certain consequences of 'doing it again' continually stare one in the face, repetition is much less likely. Hence, all those who are really working for peace must see to it that Locarno is developed to the fullest extent of reality. Peace can only be reached through strictly practical channels, and when it

has become the greatest material interest of all nations, collectively as well as individually. All must therefore work for the harmonizing of individual interests, so that nations may prosper to the benefit, and not at the expense, of their neighbours. When the time comes that the prosperity of each nation is welcomed by all Europe, peace may be regarded as in sight, but not before.

Much has been said in recent years about the new Europe, the new diplomacy, and the new order of things ; but what is the essence of all this novelty that is supposed to have invaded the world since the war? A great catastrophe undoubtedly makes its impression on nations and people, but it does not change their whole nature. The war has brought about a change in methods, but the principles of diplomacy and politics remain the same. Europe has changed her shape, but she is still the same Europe and may quite possibly regain her old shape again. It is utter nonsense to imagine that the natural post-war desire for peace will override differences of material interest between the nations. The old order of things still remains with us, with the only difference that it is enshrouded in an artificial casing of idealistic dreams which will remain dreams until they vanish into thin air. Although for some this may be an unpalatable mouthful to swallow, it is a fact, and it is only facts that provide useful and profitable guides in efforts to bring about European consolidation. Of these facts perhaps the most striking is that Russia is one of the greatest obstacles to peace to-day, and that Germany is being forced to throw in her lot with her. Now, Germany was before the war the most powerful Continental nation, and there is every reason to anticipate that she will regain that position in the not very distant future. Are we going to stand aside and watch the formation of a Russo-German combination, combining the energy, organization, and enterprise of the Teuton with the revolutionary ideas of the Soviet? To permit such a possibility would be an unforgivable crime not only against Germany, but against the whole world. It is unthinkable, but it is there staring us in the face. Germany belongs to the West, and it is the bounden

duty of every civilized nation of Europe to see that she is not deprived of her western birthright. The way is clear. France is not in a position to make the first move towards bringing Germany within the order of Locarno ; it, therefore, rests with Britain, and if Mr. MacDonald's Government can 'set the ball rolling' in this direction, they will earn the respect of all parties in this country, the gratitude of the greater proportion of the German people, and the profound thanks of all the Baltic countries. If, on the other hand, things are allowed to drift until it is too late, we may rest assured that sooner or later there will be another war, more devastating and more far-reaching in its evil effects than that which we have recently experienced.

CHAPTER X

GREAT BRITAIN AND GERMANY

THE first thing to bear in mind in studying Germany's position as a factor in post-war Europe is that, although she is at present going through a period of difficulty and uncertainty, she has a great past and will probably have an even greater future. As a nation the German people are destined to play a highly important part in world affairs, and this must be accepted as an undeniable fact. The second point to remember is that the Germans are a hard-working and progressive race; and that these high-spirited people will not submit to such efforts as may be made to check their enterprising ambitions. This being so, Europe will be wise to adopt such an attitude towards Germany as will make the best use of her strength and able qualities for the building up of a strong and closely knit combination of Western Powers, whose material interests lie in peaceful conditions in which to progress. The influence of such an *entente* on the smaller Powers would have a steadying effect, and would tend to localize such periodic explosions as take place in the Balkans and elsewhere.

Since the war Germany has undergone a transformation as remarkable as it is complete. The imperial order of things has vanished, leaving only a few traces here and there, and has been replaced by an entirely different atmosphere showing a very different side of the German character. A bust of the former Kaiser in one hotel, a picture of him with his military commanders in another, and a collection of old Prussian *Army Lists* in a third, are amongst the few reminders of pre-war Germany that meet the eye of the casual stranger in Berlin. That the sweeping changes of the past decade

are for the better there can be no possible doubt, and no one realizes this more than the great body of the German people, who are now free from the bondage of military and official despotism, and are in a position to work out their destiny to their own advantage instead of for the benefit of those who exploited the nation for their own personal glorification.

Formerly Berlin was a great military *Kaserne*, of which the Kaiser was Commandant, and most departments of life were conducted as part of this vast military organization. Visitors to the capital could not help being impressed by the glittering splendour of the Prussian Guards, the soldierly bearing and smart turn-out of the officers in the Unter den Linden, and the outward signs of imperial power that almost dazzled the eyes of the foreigner. The military spirit of Imperial Germany permeated into every corner of Berlin, and the visitor had it firmly impressed upon him that the German officer was lord of all, and belonged to a sphere a great deal higher than that of his fellow-men. The officer was received almost royally wherever he went ; he had the best seats in the theatres and the best tables in the restaurants ; and every civilian, German and foreigner alike, was made to feel that these exponents of the art of war were fundamentally of much greater importance than those who practised the professions and occupations of peace. Germany of these days had, indeed, the appearance of a mighty Power destined to achieve great things in the world, and her army system was in itself the object of world-wide admiration ; but the German people were deprived of their individual personality in order to play their part in this vast organization that tended to cripple individual endeavour. At that time I had many friends both in the army and in the diplomatic service, and I was received with the greatest kindness on all occasions, but the profession of arms seemed completely to eclipse all other departments of state activity. The conditions of peace were regarded as secondary to those of war. At a luncheon which I attended, given by one of the heads of departments at the *Auswärtiges Amt* in honour of the German Delegation to The Hague Peace

Conference of 1907, the officers present were regarded as more important guests than the delegates for whom the luncheon was given, and I could quote numerous other instances showing how Germany was at that time completely hypnotized by the glamour of military prowess. But it was not only the immense prestige of the army that impressed the foreigner. The same system existed in a minor degree in all departments of the Imperial Government service. Any uniformed Government official, whether he was a railway guard, a policeman or postman, demanded a considerable amount of respect, and he saw that he always got it. The question was how long the German people were doomed to submit to this form of despotism, which was preventing them from giving expression to their true national characteristics and their beneficial influence in the world.

Through adversity, in which the Germans have the full sympathy of the British people, the old *régime* has gone and has given place to what we believe to be the true Germany. Although their difficulties are great and their future is at the moment perhaps a little obscure, the German people have now a greater chance than they ever had before; and, thanks to their national energy, remarkable industry and business capacity, they need have no misgivings as to their future position in Europe. To-day the foreign visitor to Berlin finds conditions which he never knew before. Courtesy is characteristic of every German official from the highest to the lowest; the German officer accepts his position as an ordinary member of the community; and policemen, railway guards and customs officials are more polite and helpful to the traveller than almost any other similar officials in Europe. The whole spirit of Berlin has changed to the benefit of the Berliners and in the interests of trade and commerce with other countries. The foreign business man no longer has obstacles put in his way by a host of officials whose exercise of authority was their most cherished possession. The officials of to-day go about their business in a quiet and unobtrusive manner, and they are none the less efficient. There is a sense of equality now and every one is well received, whether he be an ex-ally

or an ex-enemy. During my recent visit to Berlin in the winter of 1928-9 I had discussions with officials of the *Auswärtiges Amt*, and with prominent members of most of the political parties in the Reichstag on subjects that might easily have been the cause of bad feeling, but on all occasions these conversations were conducted with the greatest frankness and in the most friendly spirit.

Among the outstanding features of Germany to-day is a state of political uncertainty, arising out of the difficulty of reconciling party differences and the delicate position in which Germany finds herself in forming her lines of foreign policy. Both these burdens have until recently fallen to a great extent on the shoulders of Herr Stresemann, who, in spite of his very indifferent health, courageously worked to hold things together right up to the day of his death. So difficult, indeed, is the political position that a large number of Germans, especially in the country districts, are becoming opposed to the parliamentary system—a serious state of affairs when viewed side by side with Germany's economic obligations. Moreover, Reichstag members of the Right and Centre have nothing substantial to offer their electors, which creates an excellent opportunity for the Socialists to preach their doctrines to ready listeners. In foreign affairs Locarno has been a deep disappointment to all parties, who contend that, although the Pact looks well on paper, Germany has in reality been left out. In this contention they are undoubtedly right. Similar uncertainty prevails on the economic side. With the Reparations question still in the balance,¹ and the people still more or less in the dark as to the amount of the debt which they will be called upon to pay, uneasiness and reluctance to embark on new undertakings is noticeable in most departments of commercial activity.

Both politically and economically there seems at present to be a great want of hope in Germany, and the people seem to be imbued with the idea that they have nothing to look forward to. The heavy burden of taxation is always a

¹ The adoption of the Young Plan should bring about marked changes in this direction.

spectre before their eyes, and they cannot see the day when German enterprise will be free to develop to their own advantage. It has been said that Germany is recovering with great rapidity, that industry is forging ahead, and that Berlin reflects a considerable degree of national wealth. That there is some measure of truth in this statement there is little doubt. It is difficult to say at the present stage exactly how far this can be regarded as accurate, but I think I am right in saying that such signs of luxury and spending as may be noticeable in the German capital do not represent the true financial state of the country. The average German is undoubtedly counting his pfennigs, and personal economies, which are less noticeable than personal luxuries, are obvious to any foreigner who takes the trouble to look. In estimating the financial condition of Germany most foreign observers are inclined to think that the country is recovering by leaps and bounds, and therefore that her capacity to pay Reparations is greater than it is in actual fact, or they contend that the progress of the last few years is purely artificial, that everything is based on false values, and that the country is really on the verge of a serious crisis. While there are elements of truth in both these views, it seems to me that Germany, thanks to the capacity for work of her people, and their desire to participate to the fullest extent in what post-war Europe has to offer, has succeeded in recovering quicker than most countries would have done in similar circumstances; but that the state of German finance, industry and agriculture, combined with the uncertainty of the political situation, has given rise to a state of affairs that cannot stand any serious shocks. But, although this may be the case, it is clearly in the interests of Germany to face her war debts with a genuine determination to meet her obligations, thereby inspiring political confidence abroad and making her own path less difficult in years to come. It is only natural that the German people should feel a certain want of enthusiasm at the present stage of their recovery, but there are no reasons to suppose that they will be slow in regaining that position which was theirs before the war.

Germany has come through an unsuccessful war and a revolution which, although almost bloodless, was none the less drastic in its effects, and there are certain remarkable features in the new *régime* that throw important sidelights on the character of the people. Perhaps one of the most noticeable is the manner in which the Republic has been accepted by those who were formerly the strongest supporters of German imperialism. Former high officials of the Kaiser are now equally high servants of the Republic, which tends to show that in Germany there is a very strong love of country, stronger indeed than any bonds that bind subjects to crowned heads or ruling dynasties ; and nowhere is this more apparent than in the case of the *Reichspräsident* himself. 'Germany' is far more to the average German than any other idea of allegiance, and the word *Vaterland* means to him much more than is imagined by the average foreigner. It was this *Vaterland* spirit that drove the German legions time after time against the shattering fire of the fortress of Verdun ; it was this idea that sent rank after rank of Prussian students, little more than boys, to certain death in Flanders, singing as they went ; and it was this that inspired Hindenburg to remain at his post and to lead the broken army back to Germany. This same spirit will be an important factor in helping Germany to advance to that position in Europe to which she naturally aspires. With all their tribulations and misgivings as to the future, the Germans are fortunate to possess that characteristic mass patriotism which gives them strength to overcome difficulties as long as they are united, and the Republic has certainly strengthened the unity of the German nation. It is difficult to take German pessimism at its face value. The *Ausstellung* is popular in Germany just now, most sections of national energy having exhibitions of some kind, and it looks as if this idea is infecting the manner in which national conditions are presented to those who come from other countries. But the Germans are too methodical to excel at this art, and their pessimism does not deceive the careful observer.

One day when I was in Berlin, I hailed a taxi and told the man to drive to the Palace of the former Kaiser. 'You

mean the Palace Museum?' he replied. Then I realized that I had made a *faux pas*. The German of the Republic is determined that the Hohenzollerns and everything to do with them shall be firmly planted in the past, and he looks upon the former Kaiser's Palace as if it were a building of hoary antiquity. Yet, within these severe forbidding-looking walls is one of the most interesting rooms in Europe—the Kaiser's library, just as it was before he gave up the crown and fled to Holland. Although anyone can enter and see it at the cost of a shilling, I have only met one Englishman who ever knew it existed. There is much in the state apartments to surprise the British visitor. The first thing to attract his notice on entering the courtyard is a statue of St. George killing the dragon. In the ante-chambers and corridors hang portraits of the Georges, Kings of England, and the Royal arms of England are displayed with those of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha. But the most interesting room of all is the library. A collection of British *Navy Lists* occupies a good deal of space, and on every hand are accounts of British expeditions on land and sea. A blue-bound volume on *The British Naval Officer* looks as if it had been read and re-read. British sports also seem to have occupied the Kaiser's attention, for an English book on polo fills a position next to Rider Haggard's *She* and some popular novels of about twenty years ago. But when the visitor turns round to examine the writing-table he finds something genuinely astonishing. There is the actual table on which the Kaiser signed in July, 1914, the orders mobilizing the German army and navy, and it is made of the wood of Nelson's *Victory*—a present to the Kaiser from Queen Victoria. On this table, where it must have faced the Kaiser as he signed his name 'Wilhelm' at the end of the fateful documents, is a large oak paper-stand of the same wood. At the top of it is inset a silver medallion of Nelson, while below are the coloured flags of Nelson's famous signal—'England expects that every man will do his duty.' It was with this message before him that William II called the German nation to arms.

To-day there are few regrets at the passing of the old

régime, as most sections of the community realize the benefits of the Republic. The ex-Kaiser's seventieth birthday passed almost unnoticed. The ex-Crown Prince, who has a house in the outer suburbs of Berlin, is a familiar figure on the golf links when his time is not otherwise occupied with indoor sports. The ex-princes of the smaller German States live quietly on their properties as private individuals, and the ex-king of Saxony, when recently cheered at the railway station, told the people that they were 'nice republicans'. The Foreign Ministry and the diplomatic service have probably undergone less change than any other department of state, the old aristocracy still being well represented, and this is often a subject of comment in foreign circles. But when it is realized that the personnel of the *Auswärtiges Amt* was before the war inwardly inclined to disapprove of many of the policies emanating from the *Kaiserliche Schloss*, that their loyalty to Germany is such as I have described, and that it is in the personal interests of this particular class to retain its position in the state, it is not surprising that its members should serve the Republic in the meantime, hoping for a changed order of things in years to come. In spite of all the changes, real and apparent, that have taken place in Germany, the fundamental driving forces of the nation remain the same, although their activities are at present subordinated to the changed outlook of the *bourgeoisie* and workers who form the republican majority.

President von Hindenburg will soon celebrate the fifth anniversary of his accession to the Presidency of the German Reich, and it is impossible to look back on these last five years, and the events that preceded them, without realizing that this veteran soldier-statesman has been quietly guiding Germany through a most difficult period of her political life, and by so doing has been making an invaluable contribution to the general stabilization of Europe. Although at heart a monarchist and a soldier brought up in the most conservative of military *régimes*, he has shown wisdom in accepting changed conditions, and he is now doing everything in his power to help his country, often under conditions

that must inwardly be most distasteful to him. In doing so he has never failed to consider the dynasty of his former allegiance, yet everything he does is in the interests of the Germany he loves; and he works, as far as his advanced years will permit, to keep his country steady in a period of uncertainty and perplexity. Hindenburg's personality and prestige form a pillar of strength in Germany to-day, and his calm, unassuming control of affairs, together with a certain continuity of authority, inspires that confidence which is so necessary to a nation in times of disappointment and despondency. It is too soon to attempt to put a value on the achievements of the *Reichspräsident*, but there is little doubt that, with posterity as judge, his high character and outstanding qualities will be fully appreciated as an example for future generations. The difficulties which he has had to face, and the conditions, personal and otherwise, in which he has had to overcome them, are for the most part still to be disclosed; but there is every reason to believe that his influence on the new German Republic, and his self-sacrificing devotion to duty, have saved the country from many dangerous situations, and that Germany of the future will owe a heavy debt of gratitude to this old soldier of the Prussian army and new President of the German Reich.

Hindenburg's record is a remarkable one, and there are few indeed who have spent such a life of turmoil and contrast, of success and disappointment, and remain, at the advanced age of eighty-three, capable of discharging with wisdom and judgment the duties of *chef d'état* of a first-class Power. The President's memory carries him back to the field of Königrätz, to the assault of the Guards at St. Privat, and to the French *débâcle* at Sedan. He took part in the siege of Paris: he witnessed the proclamation of Emperor William I in the 'Hall of Mirrors' at Versailles. He played a prominent part in the work of the German General Staff during the period of preparation that preceded the catastrophe of 1914, although the call to arms found him living in retirement at Hanover. Back in uniform once more, Hindenburg proceeded to make history on the eastern front, where his victories of Tannenberg and the Masurian

Lakes raised him to the position of a national hero ; and later, as Chief of the General Staff, he became the great figure-head of Germany's fighting forces and the idol of the German people. In the west Hindenburg tried every device to ' shoot his bolt ', and when he had failed he still hoped by a strategic defensive to secure a peace compatible with the dignity of his country. Germany was beaten, but not so the spirit of Hindenburg. He saw the German Empire crumble before his very eyes ; he saw his Kaiser pack up and leave the country ; and he realized that Bolshevism was an imminent danger to Germany, if not, indeed, to the whole of Europe. Seeing the inward struggle with which his officers and men were faced, he performed the invidious task of leading back to Germany the defeated remnants of that mighty military machine which had been the pride of Prussia and of the whole German Empire. By this action alone Hindenburg performed a most important service to Europe, and it may almost be said that he saved Europe from Bolshevism. As a soldier his work was done, but there was still before him a formidable task which he has undertaken out of sheer sense of duty. After obtaining release from his vows of allegiance to his former Kaiser, he placed his services at the disposal of his fellow-countrymen in their time of crisis, and by his masterly handling of the situation has already gained for himself an almost unique position in the annals of national politics.

Germany to-day is a strange mixture of political and economic forces working in an atmosphere of uncertainty. She is like a weather-beaten ship in a heavy sea under the command of an aged but experienced captain. The crew, tired out by their struggle, have come to have little faith in the ship, but they inwardly believe that their captain will see them through. And so it is with Hindenburg, who from his arm-chair far in the background uses his strong and moderating influence to keep the political scales balanced. On the one side, the right wing of the Nationalist Party and the *Stahlhelm* organization have to be guided in the way they should go. To them Hindenburg is still the military commander, and as President of the *Stahlhelm* he

is in a strong position. On the other side, the left-wing Socialists and Communists have to be restrained. To them his personality as head of a democratic state has the effect of steadying their wilder schemes and activities. The President seldom shows his authority, and for several reasons prefers to avoid the limelight. His advanced age does not permit of his undertaking anything approaching arduous duties, and he is only allowed by his medical advisers to devote a certain number of hours in the day to work. For this reason he only sees the highest state officials, and them only when there is the most urgent business to be considered. Further, there is nothing more distasteful to Hindenburg than any idea of pushing himself forward. He occupies his position as President as a duty to his country, and he shrinks from anything that might conceivably create the impression that he wishes to occupy the position of his former master. In his old age he needs care and a good deal of rest, but from his modest palace in the Wilhelmstrasse he wields a power which is none the less effective. The President lives in the simplest possible way. A policeman at the gate, two sentries in the small courtyard, and the Republican flag at the masthead are the only outward signs that distinguish the palace from any other building in the street. Little or no ceremony attends his coming or his going.

Fortunate are those who have been admitted to the presence of this grey-haired soldier and statesman. None have been disappointed. The popular conception of a fire-eating Prussian general with a stern countenance and a domineering demeanour fade away in the company of this charming and benevolent old gentleman, who shows a keen interest in everybody and everything. With his intellect as quick as ever it was, Hindenburg has been known to follow closely on the map every move in an explorer's journey, and to ask questions showing that the President himself understood the difficulties almost as well as the explorer who was describing his adventures. While his kindly disposition is sympathetic to the human side of life, he has a strong sense of humour and loves a good joke. He will sit listening to something that amuses him for a consider-

able time without giving any indication of his emotions ; then gradually his face will light up and his eyes will twinkle with merriment. But when he hears a really good joke that tickles his fancy, he literally rocks from side to side with laughter. The name of von Hindenburg will go down to history as one of the greatest men of our time. He embodies to the fullest extent that spirit of German patriotism to which I have already referred. Loyal to the Empire and then to the Republic, he is serving the true interests of Germany by sinking all personal feelings and by placing the *Vaterland* before all other considerations. When his term of office expires, the question of a successor will be one of the most serious problems that the German Republic has yet had to face.

During a recent visit to Berlin, when I made a special study of Anglo-German relations in conversations with prominent members of all parties in the Reichstag, I obtained a fairly good idea of what was going on in German minds with regard to Great Britain, and I reached the conclusion that there was much to justify certain German contentions. One of my chief objects was to collect complaints, and in this my task was not difficult, although I was told that, if I were a Frenchman, it would be easier to comply with my request. Chief among the complaints brought forward were the Rhineland occupation and the execution of the Locarno Treaty. With regard to the former, it was stated that the Germans were disappointed that Great Britain had not used sufficient influence with France to bring about the evacuation of the Rhineland, and that the position of the German population in the occupied territory had for ten years been most humiliating. At the same time, most Germans agreed that nothing less than a general evacuation would be of any help to Germany. They argued that, were the British troops to be withdrawn separately, the position would be worse than before as far as Germany was concerned ; for France would at once occupy the unoccupied regions. There has since, however, been a change in the German view, which came round to favour a British withdrawal to the grounds that France's

position as the only occupying Power would be difficult in the face of general world opinion. Numerous and varied were the complaints regarding the occupied territory, and many of them were of rather a trivial nature, but it must be remembered that in a situation where the civil population is very susceptible to offence small incidents and indiscretions on the part of individuals are apt to be magnified beyond their true proportions. It is the occupation itself, not its conditions, that is of primary importance in the relations between the two countries. The Locarno policy was also the subject of much discussion, it being urged in many quarters that Germany had made a mistake in accepting that policy from the benefits of which she was practically excluded. There was also a fear, arising partly out of the Anglo-French Compromise, that the military guarantees of Locarno were altogether one-sided. Superficially this is quite understandable, and it needs a very deep knowledge of the British character to realize that it is scarcely the case. It was contended that, while it would clearly be in the interests of Great Britain to help France in the event of German aggression, the British people would find it very difficult to come to Germany's aid in the case of attack by France. The reply to this is, in my opinion, as follows. As it is reasonable to assume that peace is assured for the next ten years at least, it is only necessary to consider Great Britain's probable attitude ten years hence; and there is in my mind no possible doubt that, in the event of a crisis at that date, the British Government would readily fulfil their Locarno obligations to the fullest extent with the whole British people behind them, provided that both were satisfied that a clear case of aggression had been proved. If—what is most unlikely—a crisis were to arise in the near future, and it was proved that there was a genuine case of aggression on the part of France, it is probable that a very grave political upheaval would take place in this country; but I do believe that, possibly after some delay and prolonged discussions in Parliament, the British Government would decide in favour of supporting Germany. At present, such a situation would be one of very great difficulty, but,

knowing my country as I do, I have every reason to believe that even in present circumstances right would prevail over the inclinations of the moment.

At the time of writing, however, events are taking place at The Hague which hold out every hope that a new era is at hand in the position of Germany *vis-à-vis* her late enemies. The evacuation of the Rhineland is now definitely fixed, the Young Plan is taking practical shape, and the way will soon be clear for a real Locarno. Germany will soon regain her sovereignty over the Rhineland, and she knows the extent and conditions of her financial obligations. Much of this is due to the efforts of the British Government, with the result that the moment is opportune for the opening of a policy of Anglo-German friendship. The attitude of the British Delegation to The Hague Conference has clearly shown that Britain will henceforth pursue a definite peace policy in Europe, and will no longer be at the beck and call of our good friends across the Channel. But to imagine, as some French politicians seem to do, that for this reason the *Entente Cordiale* is dead, is a profound mistake. The *Entente Cordiale* is as real to-day as it was in the days of King Edward or in the strenuous days of the Great War, but like all true friendships it is unaffected by other ties of opinion. Great Britain and France must work together. It is in the vital interests of both Powers to do so. We are not only neighbours in the Channel, but in the Mediterranean, in the Red Sea, in the Mandated Territories east of the Mediterranean, in Africa, and in India. The world interests of Great Britain and France are intimately bound up in the close European relations of the two countries. But there is no reason why British friendship with Germany should impair that friendship with France, unless we hold to the principle that all national friendships are directed against a third party, and that nations can only prosper at the expense of others. Under modern conditions Europe must come to be regarded as an economic whole, in which the interests of one nation are dependent to a great extent on the prosperity of its neighbours and the co-operation of Europe's component parts. Although it may be difficult

at the moment for the French to see where their true interests lie in this matter, it is beyond question that in the long run Anglo-German friendship would be beneficial to France. As soon as France feels herself secure and is able to breathe more freely, she will gradually drop her national sense of fear, and she will realize that a combination of Great Britain, France and Germany, working together in the interests of the whole and of each in turn, would be an untold blessing to the politics and economics of all concerned.

The feelings of the British and German people towards one another form a subject of great interest, which should be carefully studied by all who wish to see co-operation to the mutual advantage of both countries. Although superficially the Germans have not disliked us in the same way as they have disliked the French, they have subconsciously disliked us more. They have been jealous of our achievements. Germans admire French intellectual activity and organized French effort in various directions, and can understand and appreciate French successes; but it deeply offends them sometimes to see their own carefully planned schemes, which they consider to be of the highest order, surpassed by the work of people who seemingly are apathetic and only put forward their best efforts as occasion demands. They find it difficult to appreciate the quality of 'common sense'—I use this for want of a better term—inherent in the British nation, which is often more valuable than the results of pure organization. I believe this to be responsible for a good deal of the anti-British feeling in Germany, but it will not last. The Germans will realize that it is contrary to reason and against their own interests. On the other side, Englishmen are not yet quite sure that the German Republic has come to stay, and are still a little doubtful of Germany's future intentions, yet in England there is much genuine admiration of German enterprise and capacity for hard work. A further sense of jealousy also exists, but it is confined to the commercial side. The German is jealous of the Englishman's mysterious 'common sense', while the Englishman envies the business capacity of the German. But there is another consideration which has made an unfavourable impression

on the average English mind—the volume of complaints that have met the demands of the Allied Powers in the matter of Reparations. If Germany had silently accepted the consequences of the war and had shown a determination to make the best of the unpleasant conditions imposed upon her, I believe that there would have been a general desire in England to reduce these demands to the lowest possible extent, and that British sympathy for Germany's difficulties would have been greatly increased.

One of the most hopeful signs for the future of Anglo-German relations lies in the return to Oxford of the German Rhodes scholars. My own recollections of the German Rhodes scholars before the war forms one of the most cherished memories of an impressionable age. Some of them were among my best friends at Oxford, and some are still among my best friends to-day. Too many, alas, have laid down their lives in the Great War, and their names are commemorated for all time in the war memorials of the Oxford colleges; but those who survived the great ordeal of 1914–18 are helping to carry out the intention of Cecil Rhodes by promoting the interests of Anglo-German friendship. Oxford has a lasting influence on all who pass through her quadrangles, and the atmosphere of this great university produces a breadth of view which is of constant value to those whose work lies in dealing with the affairs of nations. The German Foreign Office and diplomatic service each have several Rhodes scholars on their list, doing work of international importance which is greatly facilitated by the experience gained in their respective colleges. They have learned to understand the English character and mentality in a way which is denied to most foreigners. They have seen English youth at the time of life when character is formed. They have shared the successes and failures of their fellow-undergraduates. They have gained a unique insight into our national merits and shortcomings. I have renewed my old friendships with several of these Rhodes scholars in Germany within the last year, and I found them quite unchanged. Although they had not seen Oxford or England for many years, and some had almost forgotten the English

language, they were still Oxford men in every sense of the word. The return of the Germans will prove of immense value to an improvement in relations between their own country and ours, and it is to be hoped that it will be found possible to increase their numbers, and that the work begun in the colleges of Oxford will be continued in the *Auswärtiges Amt* in Berlin and at the German Embassy in London. A community of sympathy and interest born at Oxford may spread in many directions, and there are great opportunities for some common bond in those who play leading parts in the affairs of Great Britain and Germany. The Prince of Wales has welcomed the German Rhodes scholars back to Oxford, and the new-comers may be assured that they are welcomed not only by Oxford of to-day, but also by those who knew their predecessors and appreciated their good qualities.

It must not, however, be imagined that a *rapprochement* with Germany can be brought about without overcoming serious obstacles involving political decisions of the greatest importance. Whether such an understanding is possible much depends on the British attitude towards the *status quo* in Europe. If the British people intend to consider the *status quo* as unalterable, then there is a grave obstacle to any understanding. But if, on the other hand, they are prepared to regard it as subject to modification in course of time, then there are sufficiently good prospects of an Anglo-German *rapprochement*, which might well be regarded as an object of political endeavour in forthcoming years. If Great Britain can see her way to accept the latter view, there is a great opportunity, not only of depriving the Baltic situation of its more serious aspect, but also of ensuring a safer and brighter future for Germany, and making a very substantial contribution to a firm and practical foundation of European peace.

At the time of writing the British troops are busy 'packing up' on the Rhine, and the French have undertaken to complete the evacuation of their troops by the end of June, 1930. The question of control of the Rhineland after the evacuation has been settled to the satisfaction of Germany. The Saar is all that remains, and there are indications that agreement will soon be reached on this question. Great

Britain has taken the lead in the final settlement of this great obstacle to European stability. The way is clear and the policy is obvious. On the 19th March this year, Herr Scheidemann, the veteran Socialist deputy who in 1918 proclaimed the German Republic from the steps of the Reichstag, wrote to me as follows: 'We are sure that the great problems of peace will be settled, not against, but in co-operation with England, and they must be settled. We are not separated by political differences of opinion. We all have the same aim of rebuilding Europe and the peace of the world, an aim which we can only attain if England, France, and Germany join in the effort. Mr. MacDonald has shown us a programme of peaceful co-operation, and has thus obtained the support of all parties.' Mr. MacDonald can do what would have been difficult for Sir Austen Chamberlain. While the former Foreign Secretary consolidated our position with France, it rests with the present Government to complete the work of Locarno by applying itself to our relations with Germany, and the omens are at present distinctly favourable. Let 'London-Paris-Berlin' be the watchword of British continental policy.

* * * * *

Although we British may not realize the important influence we have on the affairs and policies of other countries, the fact remains that there are a great many nations in the world to-day which look to Great Britain for a solution of their difficulties and a dissipation of their dangers. This is particularly the case in the countries of Northern Europe and the Baltic. Northern statesmen feel that Britain can do much to guide European policies and that British example means a great deal. I have a deep regard for the clear-minded judgment of the North, and a firm conviction in the truth of what a certain Northern statesman said to me not many months ago. We were discussing the question of Germany, Russia, and the Baltic, when the conversation led to British policy with regard to the possibility of a Russo-German combination. My friend's last words to me were: 'Great Britain has the whole matter in the palms of her hands.' He was right.

APPENDIX

FINAL PROTOCOL OF THE LOCARNO CONFERENCE,
1925, WITH ANNEX A (RHINELAND PACT)

No. 1.

Final Protocol of the Locarno Conference, 1925.

LES représentants des Gouvernements allemand, belge, britannique, français, italien, polonais et tchécoslovaque, réunis à Locarno du 5 au 16 octobre 1925, en vue de rechercher d'un commun accord les moyens de préserver du fléau de la guerre leurs nations respectives, et de pourvoir au règlement pacifique des conflits de toute nature qui viendraient éventuellement à surgir entre certaines d'entre elles,

Ont donné leur agrément aux projets de traités et conventions qui les concernent respectivement et qui, élaborés au cours de la présente conférence, se réfèrent réciproquement les uns aux autres :

Traité entre l'Allemagne, la Belgique, la France, la Grande-Bretagne et l'Italie (Annexe A).

Convention d'arbitrage entre l'Allemagne et la Belgique (Annexe B).

Convention d'arbitrage entre l'Allemagne et la France (Annexe C).

Traité d'arbitrage entre l'Allemagne et la Pologne (Annexe D).

Traité d'arbitrage entre l'Allemagne et la Tchécoslovaquie (Annexe E).

Ces actes, dès à présent paraphés *ne varietur* porteront la date de ce jour, les représentants des parties intéressées convenant de se rencontrer à Londres le 1^{er} décembre prochain, pour procéder, au cours d'une même réunion, à la formalité de la signature des actes qui les concernent.

Le Ministre des Affaires étrangères de France fait connaître qu'à la suite des projets de traités d'arbitrage ci-dessus mentionnés, la France, la Pologne et la Tchécoslovaquie ont également arrêté, à Locarno des projets d'accords en vue de s'assurer réciproquement le bénéfice desdits traités. Ces accords seront régulièrement déposés à la Société des Nations mais dès à présent M. Briand en tient des copies à la disposition des Puissances ici représentées.

No. 1.

Final Protocol of the Locarno Conference, 1925.

(Translation.)

THE representatives of the German, Belgian, British, French, Italian, Polish and Czechoslovak Governments, who have met at Locarno from the 5th to 16th October, 1925, in order to seek by common agreement means for preserving their respective nations from the scourge of war and for providing for the peaceful settlement of disputes of every nature which might eventually arise between them,

Have given their approval to the draft treaties and conventions which respectively affect them and which, framed in the course of the present conference, are mutually interdependent :

Treaty between Germany, Belgium, France, Great Britain and Italy (Annex A).

Arbitration Convention between Germany and Belgium (Annex B).

Arbitration Convention between Germany and France (Annex C).

Arbitration Treaty between Germany and Poland (Annex D).

Arbitration Treaty between Germany and Czechoslovakia (Annex E).

These instruments, hereby initialled *ne varietur*, will bear to-day's date, the representatives of the interested parties agreeing to meet in London on the 1st December next, to proceed during the course of a single meeting to the formality of the signature of the instruments which affect them.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs of France states that as a result of the draft arbitration treaties mentioned above, France, Poland and Czechoslovakia have also concluded at Locarno draft agreements in order reciprocally to assure to themselves the benefit of the said treaties. These agreements will be duly deposited at the League of Nations, but M. Briand holds copies forthwith at the disposal of the Powers represented here.

Le Secrétaire d'Etat aux Affaires étrangères de Grande-Bretagne propose qu'en réponse à certaines demandes d'explications concernant l'article 16 du Pacte de la Société des Nations et présentées par le Chancelier et le Ministre des Affaires étrangères d'Allemagne, la lettre, dont le projet également est ci-joint (Annexe F), leur soit adressée en même temps qu'il sera procédé à la formalité de la signature des actes ci-dessus mentionnés. Cette proposition est agréé.

Les représentants des Gouvernements ici représentés déclarent avoir la ferme conviction que l'entrée en vigueur de ces traités et conventions contribuera grandement à amener une détente morale entre les nations, qu'elle facilitera puissamment la solution de beaucoup de problèmes politiques ou économiques conformément aux intérêts et aux sentiments des peuples et qu'en raffermissant la paix et la sécurité en Europe elle sera de nature à hâter d'une manière efficace le désarmement prévu par l'article 8 du Pacte de la Société des Nations.

Ils s'engagent à donner leur concours sincère aux travaux déjà entrepris par la Société des Nations relativement au désarmement et en rechercher la réalisation dans une entente générale.

Fait à Locarno, le 16 octobre 1925.

DR. LUTHER.
STRESEMANN.
EMILE VANDERVELDE.
ARI. BRIAND.
AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.
BENITO MUSSOLINI.
AL. SKRZYNSKI.
DR. EDUARD BENES.

ANNEX A.

Treaty of Mutual Guarantee between Germany, Belgium, France, Great Britain and Italy. (Initialled at Locarno, October 16, 1925.)

LE Président de l'Empire allemand, Sa Majesté le Roi des Belges, le Président de la République française, Sa Majesté le Roi du Royaume-Uni de Grande-Bretagne et d'Irlande et des Territoires britanniques au delà des Mers, Empereur des Indes, Sa Majesté le Roi d'Italie ;

Soucieux de satisfaire au désir de sécurité et de protection qui

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Great Britain proposes that, in reply to certain requests for explanations concerning article 16 of the Covenant of the League of Nations presented by the Chancellor and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany, a letter, of which the draft is similarly attached (Annex F) should be addressed to them at the same time as the formality of signature of the above-mentioned instruments takes place. This proposal is agreed to.

The representatives of the Governments represented here declare their firm conviction that the entry into force of these treaties and conventions will contribute greatly to bring about a moral relaxation of the tension between nations, that it will help powerfully towards the solution of many political or economic problems in accordance with the interests and sentiments of peoples, and that, in strengthening peace and security in Europe, it will hasten on effectively the disarmament provided for in article 8 of the Covenant of the League of Nations.

They undertake to give their sincere co-operation to the work relating to disarmament already undertaken by the League of Nations and to seek the realization thereof in a general agreement.

Done at Locarno, the 16th October, 1925.

LUTHER.
STRESEMANN.
EMILE VANDERVELDE.
ARI. BRIAND.
AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.
BENITO MUSSOLINI.
AL. SKRZYNSKI.
EDUARD BENES.

ANNEX A.

Treaty of Mutual Guarantee between Germany, Belgium, France, Great Britain and Italy. (Initialled at Locarno, October 16, 1925.)

(Translation.)

THE President of the German Reich, His Majesty the King of the Belgians, the President of the French Republic, and His Majesty the King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, Emperor of India, His Majesty the King of Italy ;

Anxious to satisfy the desire for security and protection which

anime les nations qui ont eu à subir le fléau de la guerre de 1914-18 ;

Constatant l'abrogation des traités de neutralisation de la Belgique, et conscients de la nécessité d'assurer la paix dans la zone qui a été si fréquemment le théâtre des conflits européens ;

Et également animés eu sincère désir de donner à toutes les Puissances signataires intéressées des garanties complémentaires dans le cadre du Pacte de la Société des Nations et des traités en vigueur entre elles ;

Ont résolu de conclure un traité à ces fins ont désigné pour leurs plénipotentiaires, savoir :

Lesquels, après avoir échangé leurs pleins pouvoirs reconnus en bonne et due forme, ont convenu les dispositions suivantes :

ARTICLE 1^{er}.

Les hautes parties contractantes garantissent individuellement et collectivement, ainsi qu'il est stipulé dans les articles ci'après, le maintien du *status quo* territorial résultant des frontières entre l'Allemagne et la Belgique et entre l'Allemagne et la France, et l'inviolabilité desdites frontières telles qu'elles sont fixées par ou en exécution du Traité de Paix signé à Versailles le 28 juin 1919, ainsi que l'observation des dispositions des articles 42 et 43 dudit traité, concernant la zone démilitarisée.

ARTICLE 2.

L'Allemagne et la Belgique et de même l'Allemagne et la France s'engagent réciproquement à ne se livrer de part et d'autre à aucune attaque ou invasion et à ne recourir de part et d'autre en aucun cas à la guerre.

Toutefois cette stipulation ne s'applique pas s'il s'agit :

1. De l'exercice du droit de légitime défense, c'est-à-dire de s'opposer à une violation de l'engagement de l'alinéa précédent ou à une contravention flagrante aux articles 42 ou 43 dudit Traité de Versailles, lorsqu'une telle contravention constitue un acte non provoqué d'agression et qu'en raison du rassemblement de forces armées dans la zone démilitarisée une action immédiate est nécessaire ;
2. D'une action en application de l'article 16 du Pacte de la Société des Nations ;
3. D'une action en raison d'une décision prise par l'Assemblée ou par le Conseil de la Société des Nations, ou en application de l'article 15, alinéa 7, du Pacte de la Société des Nations,

animates the peoples upon whom fell the scourge of the war of 1914-18 ;

Taking note of the abrogation of the treaties for the neutralization of Belgium, and conscious of the necessity of ensuring peace in the area which has so frequently been the scene of European conflicts ;

Animated also with the sincere desire of giving to all the signatory Powers concerned supplementary guarantees within the framework of the Covenant of the League of Nations and the treaties in force between them ;

Have determined to conclude a treaty with these objects, and have appointed as their plenipotentiaries :

Who, having communicated their full powers, found in good and due form, have agreed as follows :

ARTICLE I.

The high contracting parties collectively and severally guarantee, in the manner provided in the following articles, the maintenance of the territorial *status quo* resulting from the frontiers between Germany and Belgium and between Germany and France and the inviolability of the said frontiers as fixed by or in pursuance of the Treaty of Peace signed at Versailles on the 28th June, 1919, and also the observance of the stipulations of articles 42 and 43 of the said treaty concerning the demilitarized zone.

ARTICLE 2.

Germany and Belgium, and also Germany and France, mutually undertake that they will in no case attack or invade each other or resort to war against each other.

This stipulation shall not, however, apply in the case of—

1. The exercise of the right of legitimate defence, that is to say, resistance to a violation of the undertaking contained in the previous paragraph or to a flagrant breach of articles 42 or 43 of the said Treaty of Versailles, if such breach constitutes an unprovoked act of aggression and by reason of the assembly of armed forces in the demilitarized zone immediate action is necessary.

2. Action in pursuance of article 16 of the Covenant of the League of Nations.

3. Action as the result of a decision taken by the Assembly or by the Council of the League of Nations or in pursuance of article 15, paragraph 7, of the Covenant of the League of

pourvu que dans ce dernier cas cette action soit dirigée contre un État qui le premier s'est livré à une attaque.

ARTICLE 3.

Prenant en considération les engagements respectivement pris par elles dans l'article 2 du présent traité, l'Allemagne et la Belgique, et l'Allemagne et la France s'engagent à régler par voie pacifique et de la manière suivante toutes questions de quelque nature qu'elles soient, qui viendraient à les diviser et qui n'auraient pu être résolues par les procédés diplomatiques ordinaires :

Toutes questions au sujet desquelles les parties se contesteraient réciproquement un droit seront soumises à des juges, à la décision desquels les parties s'engagent à se conformer.

Toute autre question sera soumise à une commission de conciliation et, si l'arrangement proposé par cette commission n'est pas agréé par les deux parties, la question sera portée devant le Conseil de la Société des Nations, statuant conformément à l'article 15 du Pacte de la Société.

Les modalités de ces méthodes de règlement pacifique sont l'objet de conventions particulières signées en date de ce jour.

ARTICLE 4.

1. Si l'une des Hautes Parties contractantes estime qu'une violation de l'article 2 du présent traité ou une contravention aux articles 42 ou 43 du Traité de Versailles a été ou est commise, elle portera immédiatement la question devant le Conseil de la Société des Nations.

2. Dès que le Conseil de la Société des Nations aura constaté qu'une telle violation ou contravention a été commise, il en donnera sans délai avis aux Puissances signataires du présent traité, et chacune d'elles s'engage à prêter, en pareil cas, immédiatement son assistance à la Puissance contre laquelle l'acte incriminé aura été dirigé.

3. En cas de violation flagrante de l'article 2 du présent traité ou de contravention flagrante aux articles 42 ou 43 du Traité de Versailles par l'une des Hautes Parties contractantes, chacune des autres Puissances contractantes s'engage dès à présent à prêter immédiatement son assistance à la partie contre laquelle une telle violation ou contravention aura été dirigée dès que ladite Puissance aura pu se rendre compte que cette violation constitue un acte non provoqué d'agression et qu'en raison soit du franchissement de la frontière soit de l'ouverture des hostilités ou du rassemblement de forces armées dans la zone démilitarisée une

Nations, provided that in this last event the action is directed against a State which was the first to attack.

ARTICLE 3.

In view of the undertakings entered into in article 2 of the present treaty, Germany and Belgium and Germany and France undertake to settle by peaceful means and in the manner laid down herein all questions of every kind which may arise between them and which it may not be possible to settle by the normal methods of diplomacy :

Any question with regard to which the parties are in conflict as to their respective rights shall be submitted to judicial decision, and the parties undertake to comply with such decision.

All other questions shall be submitted to a conciliation commission. If the proposals of this commission are not accepted by the two parties, the question shall be brought before the Council of the League of Nations, which will deal with it in accordance with article 15 of the Covenant of the League.

The detailed arrangements for effecting such peaceful settlement are the subject of special agreements signed this day.

ARTICLE 4.

1. If one of the high contracting parties alleges that a violation of article 2 of the present treaty or a breach of articles 42 or 43 of the Treaty of Versailles has been or is being committed, it shall bring the question at once before the Council of the League of Nations.

2. As soon as the Council of the League of Nations is satisfied that such violation or breach has been committed, it will notify its finding without delay to the Powers signatory of the present treaty, who severally agree that in such a case they will each of them come immediately to the assistance of the Power against whom the act complained of is directed.

3. In case of a flagrant violation of article 2 of the present treaty or of a flagrant breach of articles 42 or 43 of the Treaty of Versailles by one of the high contracting parties, each of the other contracting parties hereby undertakes immediately to come to the help of the party against whom such a violation or breach has been directed as soon as the said Power has been able to satisfy itself that this violation constitutes an unprovoked act of aggression and that by reason either of the crossing of the frontier or of the outbreak of hostilities or of the assembly of armed forces in the demilitarized zone immediate action is necessary. Never-

action immédiate est nécessaire. Néanmoins, le Conseil de la Société des Nations, saisi de la question conformément au premier paragraphe du présent article, fera connaître le résultat de ses constatations. Les hautes parties contractantes s'engagent en pareil cas à agir en conformité avec les recommandations du Conseil qui auraient recueilli l'unanimité des voix à l'exclusion des voix des représentants des parties engagées dans les hostilités.

ARTICLE 5.

La stipulation de l'article 3 du présent traité est placée sous la garantie des hautes parties contractantes ainsi qu'il est prévu ci-après :

Si l'une des Puissances mentionnées à l'article 3 refuse de se conformer aux méthodes de règlement pacifique ou d'exécuter une décision arbitrale ou judiciaire et commet une violation de l'article 2 du présent traité ou une contravention aux articles 42 ou 43 du Traité de Versailles, les dispositions de l'article 4 du présent traité s'appliqueront.

Dans le cas où, sans commettre une violation de l'article 2 du présent traité ou une convention aux articles 42 ou 43 du Traité de Versailles, une des Puissances mentionnées à l'article 3 refuserait de se conformer aux méthodes de règlement pacifique ou d'exécuter une décision arbitrale ou judiciaire, l'autre partie saisira le Conseil de la Société des Nations, qui proposera les mesures à prendre ; les hautes parties contractantes se conformeront à ces propositions.

ARTICLE 6.

Les dispositions du présent traité ne portent pas atteinte aux droits et obligations résultant pour les hautes parties contractantes du Traité de Versailles, ainsi que des arrangements complémentaires, y compris ceux signés à Londres le 30 août 1924.

ARTICLE 7.

Le présent traité, destiné à assurer le maintien de la paix et conforme au Pacte de la Société des Nations, ne pourra être interprété comme restreignant la mission de celle-ci de prendre les mesures propres à sauvegarder efficacement la paix du monde.

ARTICLE 8.

Le présent traité sera enregistré à la Société des Nations conformément au Pacte de la Société. Il restera en vigueur jusqu'à

theless, the Council of the League of Nations, which will be seized of the question in accordance with the first paragraph of this article, will issue its findings, and the high contracting parties undertake to act in accordance with the recommendations of the Council provided that they are concurred in by all the members other than the representatives of the parties which have engaged in hostilities.

ARTICLE 5.

The provisions of article 3 of the present treaty are placed under the guarantee of the high contracting parties as provided by the following stipulations :

If one of the Powers referred to in article 3 refuses to submit a dispute to peaceful settlement or to comply with an arbitral or judicial decision and commits a violation of article 2 of the present treaty or a breach of articles 42 or 43 of the Treaty of Versailles, the provisions of article 4 shall apply.

Where one of the Powers referred to in article 3 without committing a violation of article 2 of the present treaty or a breach of articles 42 or 43 of the Treaty of Versailles, refuses to submit a dispute to peaceful settlement or to comply with an arbitral or judicial decision, the other party shall bring the matter before the Council of the League of Nations, and the Council shall propose what steps shall be taken ; the high contracting parties shall comply with these proposals.

ARTICLE 6.

The provisions of the present treaty do not affect the rights and obligations of the high contracting parties under the Treaty of Versailles or under arrangements supplementary thereto, including the agreements signed in London on the 30th August, 1924.

ARTICLE 7.

The present treaty, which is designed to ensure the maintenance of peace, and is in conformity with the Covenant of the League of Nations, shall not be interpreted as restricting the duty of the League to take whatever action may be deemed wise and effectual to safeguard the peace of the world.

ARTICLE 8.

The present treaty shall be registered at the League of Nations in accordance with the Covenant of the League. It shall remain

ce que, sur la demande de l'une ou de l'autre des hautes parties contractantes notifiée aux autres Puissances signataires trois mois d'avance, le Conseil, votant à la majorité des deux tiers au moins, constate que la Société des Nations assure aux hautes parties contractantes des garanties suffisantes, et le traité cessera alors ses effets à l'expiration d'un délai d'une année.

ARTICLE 9.

Le présent traité n'imposera aucune obligation à aucun des dominions britanniques ou à l'Inde, à moins que le Gouvernement de ce dominion ou de l'Inde ne signifie qu'il accepte ces obligations.

ARTICLE 10.

Le présent traité sera ratifié et les ratifications seront déposées à Genève dans les archives de la Société des Nations aussitôt que faire se pourra.

Il entrera en vigueur dès que toutes les ratifications auront été déposées et que l'Allemagne sera devenue membre de la Société des Nations.

Le présent traité, fait en un seul exemplaire, sera déposé aux archives de la Société des Nations, dont le Secrétaire général sera prié de remettre à chacune des hautes parties contractantes des copies certifiées conformes.

En foi de quoi les plénipotentiaires susnommés ont signé le présent traité.

Fait à Locarno, le 16 octobre 1925.

L.
STR.
E. V.
A. B.
A. C.
B. M.

in force until the Council, acting on a request of one or other of the high contracting parties notified to the other signatory Powers three months in advance, and voting at least by a two-thirds majority, decides that the League of Nations ensures sufficient protection to the high contracting parties; the treaty shall cease to have effect on the expiration of a period of one year from such decision.

ARTICLE 9.

The present treaty shall impose no obligation upon any of the British dominions, or upon India, unless the Government of such dominion, or of India, signifies its acceptance thereof.

ARTICLE 10.

The present treaty shall be ratified and the ratifications shall be deposited at Geneva in the archives of the League of Nations as soon as possible.

It shall enter into force as soon as all the ratifications have been deposited and Germany has become a member of the League of Nations.

The present treaty, done in a single copy, will be deposited in the archives of the League of Nations, and the Secretary-General will be requested to transmit certified copies to each of the high contracting parties.

In faith whereof the above-mentioned plenipotentiaries have signed the present treaty.

Done at Locarno, the 16th October, 1925.

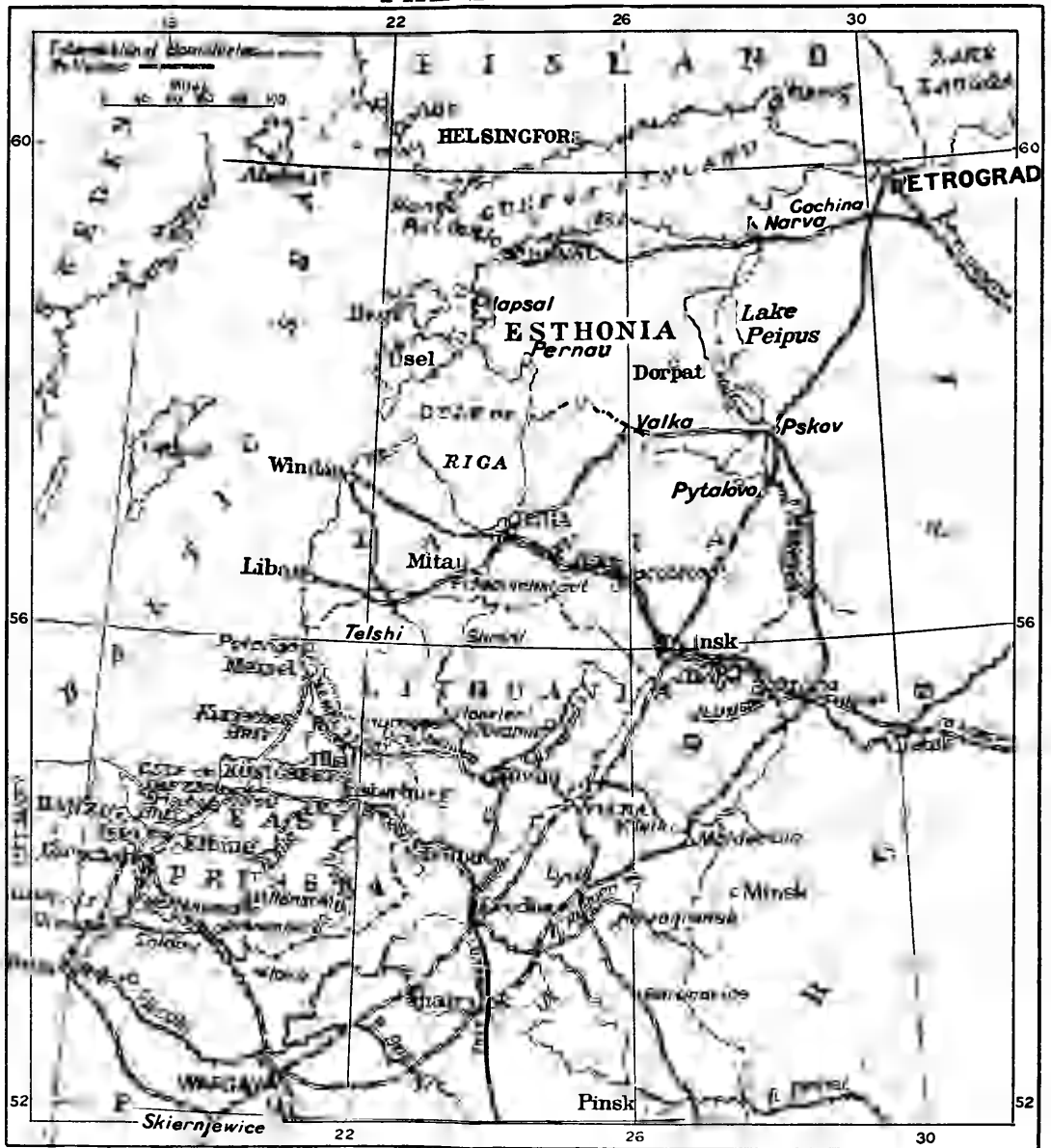
LUTHER.
STRESEMANN.
EMILE VANDERVELDE.
A. BRIAND.
AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.
BENITO MUSSOLINI.

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