

# THE BALTIC RIDDLE

# THE BALTIC RIDDLE

FINLAND, ESTONIA, LATVIA, LITHUANIA—KEY-POINTS OF  
EUROPEAN PEACE

by  
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## *Prejace*

On many occasions the Russians made it clear that the incorporation of the Baltic states into the Soviet Union is definite and that the status of these regions "could no more serve as a subject for discussion than, for instance, the status of California. "

Yet the Baltic question still remains, for the time being, on the order of the day of political discussions among the Allies, true, only as a *conditio sine qua non* set forth by the Russians. It is not difficult to guess that sooner or later this condition will be met by Britain and also by the United States; the situation on the fighting fronts, the actual diplomatic line-up and the present political relations throughout the Allied world are such that the United Nations can be expected shortly to recognize the incorporation of the Baltic states within the Soviet federation.

After numerous official expressions to the contrary, published with generally negative press commentary, recognition of the Soviet Baltic republics cannot but come as a shock to an unprepared public opinion, which has heretofore considered only the anti-Russian interpretation of the Baltic issue. Already there is a marked tendency to represent the expected decision as a form

of concession to force. That is what Russia wants, it is said, and she has the necessary force behind her; therefore, the concession must be made even though it means violation of the rights of small and sympathetic peoples. In this manner everything that has been said and done up to now is justified and, moreover, since the present system of power relations is not permanent, the decision remains *provisionary* in principle.

The implications of such an interpretation are clear for everybody and anybody can accordingly understand why those who are dreaming of a new war ten to twenty years hence, maintain this view with particular emphasis right now.

The view that if there had been no pressure from the Soviet Union there would be no Baltic question, is a misconception rooted in prolonged agitation that stems to a great extent from the foreign office and war ministry in Germany. For obvious reasons, Germany wants the Baltic running sores ever exposed and never healed. They hide behind a screen of false pity for small peoples, but as it usually happens, the first and foremost victims of the uninvited guardians are the small nations themselves. For they have always suffered most of all precisely from the insecurity of their status and from the consequent instability of their economic and political life. Above everything else they now want to arrive at a *final* and *organic* decision granting them a new lease on a free and robust life.

Fortunately for them and for the world such an opportunity now presents itself and, moreover, is such that the interests of the Baltic nations coincide with the current trend of international affairs. It is only necessary to crack down in time on those who still wish to keep the Baltic question open and, while ranting about democratic public conscience, conceal their own dark schemes fraught with disaster for all the world's peoples alike, not the Baltic nations alone.

If the facts presented in this book enable the reader to make

sense out of the welter of propaganda and misinformation spread about the Baltic nations and contribute toward giving American public opinion a clear conception of the "Baltic Riddle," the purpose of this work will have been fully accomplished.

\* \* \*

I take this opportunity to express full and grateful acknowledgment to two persons who have been of utmost assistance to me in the creation of this volume. They are: Andrew J. Steiger, author of *Soviet Asia*, who has given me invaluable editorial aid in the preparation of the English version, and E. Schloss, artist on the staff of the Fighting French newspaper *France-Amérique*, a Latvian himself, who has illustrated the basic content with excellent maps and charts.

G. M.

*October 25, 1943*

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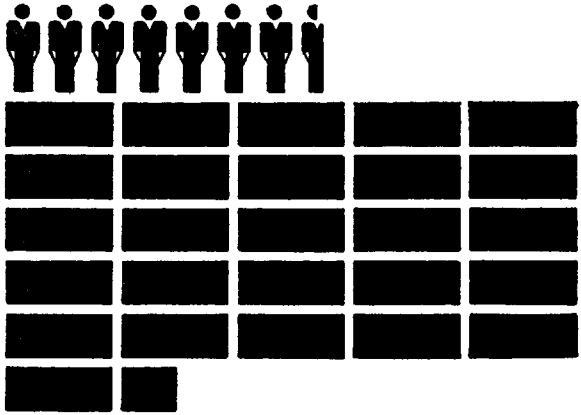
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MAP 1. POLITICAL MAP OF BALTIC AREA

# FINLAND



# ESTONIA



# LATVIA



# LITHUANIA



# VILNA



*EACH MANNEQUIN REPRESENTS  
HALF MILLION POPULATION  
EACH BLOCK REPRESENTS  
5000 SQ. MI.*

**CHART 1. POPULATION AND AREA**

PART I  
THE MEDITERRANEAN  
OF THE NORTH

## *The Baltic Area: Where the West and Russia Meet*

Not one of the Baltic countries has a total population much larger than that of Brooklyn, which has some two and a half million inhabitants. It is quite natural therefore that to the inhabitants of New York, Chicago, and San Francisco the complex national and social problems of the Baltic area cannot but appear to be a tempest in a teapot.

Not well versed in geography generally, the public loses orientation completely in the East European border states, with their unpronounceable names, unfamiliar political leaders, and unknown historic traditions. Many are not even clear about the geographic location of such small countries as Lithuania, Latvia, or Estonia, let alone the maze of entangled diplomatic controversy woven around them. It may not be amiss to begin this book on the Baltic states as did the London author Jan Apse, who wrote: "Let us make no mistake about it: Lithuania, Estonia, and Latvia are not the Balkan but the Baltic States. They owe their name to the Baltic Sea. "

The British author decided to begin his book on the Baltic states in this curious way because, as a lecturer on the Baltic, he

found himself constantly reproached for saying nothing about Yugoslavia. When he inquired in public libraries for books on the Baltic area he was frequently given volumes on Rumania and Bulgaria. The situation here is not much different. Should anyone in this country resolve to conduct a Gallup Poll on the Baltic problem he would find it expedient to supply an atlas, plainly marking the Baltic Sea and its eastern littoral states: Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and Finland, as the area in question. A biographical lexicon of political leaders would also help, as would also a concise Baltic history. Even then perhaps, a large percentage of the persons queried would answer: "What's all this to us, anyway?" or "So what?"

Yet there is something that does not allow us to dismiss or ignore the small Baltic countries. Hardly a day passes that the Baltic problem does not crop up in the news. The query, "What about the Baltic republics?" stands out like a cliché in editorials about the future of the world. Some writers are infuriated at what they describe as Bolshevik imperialism and hint that Allied military action against Soviet Russia is inevitable unless she renounces Baltic territorial claims. Others, more favorable to the Soviets, offer explanation saying that Russia lays claim to the eastern Baltic littoral for reasons of security. Compromise solutions are offered in proposed international agreements which would eliminate the threat of anti-Soviet aggression in Eastern Europe and so obviate Russian interest in territorial guarantees.

Everything points to the fact that the Baltic issue is bound to become one of the most hotly debated of postwar problems—and not for the first time. During the Moscow talks held between Russia, England, and France in the summer of 1939, discussion persistently revolved around the Baltic countries. The Baltic area was also the pivotal center of the Soviet-German pact which set the stage for the subsequent course of the present war. The dispute over little Finland developed almost into an armed

clash between the western democracies and Russia. On the eve of the Nazi invasion of Soviet Russia, Hitler and Ribbentrop issued a proclamation that was mainly a harangue on the same critical issue of the Baltic area.

The manifestation of intense world-wide interest in the Baltic area during every period of decisive political discussion cannot be explained alone by the fact that the deep-water Baltic harbors have frequently been objects of dispute between contending naval powers.

The reason the Baltic states stand out more prominently on the European map than either their relatively minor population or their inconspicuous geographic areas warrant is that behind the Baltic problem, relatively insignificant per se, there is another consideration, fundamental for our time: the Baltic area is the place where Russia and the West meet. That is precisely what brings the Baltic states into the news.

In a political sense the eastern Baltic area forms the frontier line between immense Russia and the Western world. The issues do not arise in the Baltic and, with rare exceptions, are not decided there. But they always find a clear reflection there. The Baltic area can be compared to a political testing ground where, as in a chemical process, intricate international relations combine in their essential elements and reveal their true color. And the reaction is always positive or negative—it is never neuter.

The territory of the eastern Baltic littoral has never been successfully neutralized in the sense that it ceased to be the meeting ground of Russia with the West. But attempts to isolate the Baltic area have repeatedly been made. Russia tried to do so in 1908 and in 1939. England and France sought to fence off the Baltic area from the Soviet Union in 1918 and in subsequent years.

Representatives from Russia, Sweden, Denmark, and Ger-

many, at a conference held in April 1908, passed a "declaration and memorandum on the Baltic problem" which aimed to delimit all foreign influence in the Baltic basin and exclude non-Baltic countries. After the war broke out, six years later in 1914, it became evident that this neutralization of the Baltic area was of advantage only to Germany, which held the safety catch to the basin. The Allied powers were locked out.

The Anglo-French attempt, following World War I, to make of the Baltic area a barbed-wire entanglement protecting the West from Bolshevik Russia had from the outset the most disastrous consequences. The immediate result of this effort, which found its clearest expression in Article 12 of the Armistice Convention, was that the Baltic area became Germany's last front, and it was so named by German military historians.

The German Army not only eagerly accepted the Entente's cordial invitation to remain in the Baltic and protect it from Bolshevism; it turned its military defeat in the West to advantage by continuing active operations in the East and exercising control over the Baltic area. As a consequence, German military influence became very powerful in this part of eastern Europe. Ultimately, the Anglo-French creation of the *cordon sanitaire* contributed to complete Fascist control in the Baltic area and its conversion into a German fortified outpost.

The peculiar role of the Baltic area in world affairs was demonstrated with almost classic clarity during 1939. The Moscow negotiations of that time sought to make the Baltic region a common defense zone, where the military forces of Britain and France could meet those of Russia to guarantee mutual protection. When the negotiations collapsed, the U.S.S.R. entered into a pact with Germany, which represented the *cordon sanitaire* in reverse, and which ultimately was also doomed to failure.

Even today many persons cannot understand why the Moscow



talks collapsed. Was the Baltic really the banana peel that upset the anti-Hitler coalition of the time? The idea seems preposterous. But if the Baltic actually was behind the collapse, then which party was to blame? Was it Russia which had designs on an insignificant strip of territory and, to obtain it, entered a pact with her worst enemy? Or was it Chamberlain and Daladier who suddenly became staunch supporters of the principle of sovereignty and opposed the Russian demands, thereby paving the way also for Dunkirk and Sedan?

Such alternatives are suggested naturally by analysis of the political atmosphere at the time of the ill-fated Moscow talks. Léon Blum's remarks come to mind. In *Le Populaire* he reviled the Bolsheviks for what was incomprehensible to him, their apparently obstinate desire to swallow the Baltic republics. On the other hand, de Kerillis reproached the French and English governments for want of political realism and called on them to yield Baltic sovereignty. At the same time Alfred Duff-Cooper, M.P., wrote in the *London Evening Standard* of June 13, 1939:

It appears that the Baltic states constitute the difficulty. These states form the frontier of Russia. If they are attacked, the integrity of Russia is in danger, and Russia wishes to be assured that her allies will come to her assistance.

The Baltic states—like rabbits in the presence of a boa constrictor [Germany] who has promised not to eat them—assure us in rather shaky voices that they feel quite safe and do not desire to be given any guarantee. The Prime Minister asserts that it is obviously impossible to guarantee a state against its will. Such an assertion sounds at first convincing, but does it bear closer examination?

Let us be realistic and face facts. We guarantee the frontiers of a country not out of love for its inhabitants, but out of consideration of our own security. If Russia considers that the integrity of the Baltic states is essential to her security, we cannot blame her, and if we are asking her to undertake to assist us in the case of emergency we cannot refuse to give her a reciprocal undertaking.

According to the above comments, the tiny Baltic states appear to have been in 1939 the real stumbling block that tripped up a great world-wide anti-Fascist coalition. It is naïve, however, to infer therefor that the Baltic problem was the reason for the collapse of the Moscow talks. The disagreement over the Baltic was merely a symptom, a manifestation of what was not yet apparent to all, that there was really no foundation for collaboration between the U.S.S.R. and Chamberlain's England or Daladier's France.

The Moscow talks were doomed to fail. Their collapse was predestined at Munich and before Munich, in Spain. Since post-Munich Europe lacked the prerequisites for the creation of a militant comradeship-in-arms between the western democracies and the U.S.S.R., the Baltic problem also found a correspondingly negative solution. Had such premises not been absent, the Baltic situation would also have been no less positive in solution. In other words, collaboration between the U.S.S.R. and the West did not collapse in 1939 because of inability to agree on the Baltic issue, but simply because there was no basis for collaboration in general. If today, with even firmer grounds for collaboration, the Baltic issue still remains a problem, one must be on the alert for more serious trouble.

In the spring of 1943, when British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden was in Washington to discuss postwar issues—as in the summer of 1942, when the Soviet Foreign Commissar, V. M. Molotov, visited London and Washington to establish the present Anglo-Soviet-American accord—the Baltic area suddenly became an issue in the world press. The question could be raised only in abstract form, since the territory of the Baltic republics was under German occupation and quite isolated from any of the United Nations. But the Baltic issue was raised nevertheless, and it was constantly emphasized that the Baltic area does not represent an independent question in world

affairs, but is only one aspect of the general problem of Russia.

Curiously, this is nothing new for Americans. After World War I the United States was the only country that officially declined to consider the Baltic problem apart from the general issue of Russia and rejected the very idea of these Baltic countries being separated from Russia. The twenty-year existence of the small Baltic republics has not altered this fundamental fact. The European political frontier of Britain and the United States with Russia still crosses the Baltic area, imbuing it with a meaning not to be misunderstood and an importance not to be underestimated.

The whole Baltic problem has frequently been distorted. For a long time Hitler has been exploiting it, and not without success, with the purpose of undermining the world anti-Axis coalition. To do so he employs the old and tested method of realistic international intrigue, the creation of frontier incidents to drive a wedge between those powers whose union Germany fears. As ever, the frontier incidents are mere symptoms of deeper irritations. But at times, if unrestrained, these incidents may develop into large-scale armed conflict. The Russo-Finnish War in the winter of 1939-1940 was such an incident, which might have become the Sarajevo of 1940 for Russia and the democracies.

German propaganda employs the Finnish and the Baltic question in yet another subtle way, one that is least appreciated although it affords Hitlerism an opportunity for close contact with democratic circles. Many progressive intellectuals, well-meaning persons, who can no longer be taken in by the crude anti-Bolshevik slogans of Goebbels, continue to nibble at the Baltic bait. By cunning maneuvers the wholesome sympathies that democratic circles have toward industrious and cultured small nations are transformed into violent anti-Soviet prejudices. A retinue of antiquated Baltic and Finnish diplomats

serve as the transmission belt. The result is that the relations between the democracies and the U.S.S.R., the foundation of the new world equilibrium, are disturbed to the satisfaction of Germany and with invariably disastrous results for the small nations. A helpful fool is thrice an enemy.

Current discussion tends to revolve around abstract formulations. Russia, it is said, would never dare to annex the Baltic states, because the native peoples themselves want to be independent in accordance with the principles of the Atlantic Charter. Again it is argued, that even if the native people wish it, the union of the Baltic peoples with the peoples of Soviet Russia is undesirable, because it would mean an expansion of Bolshevism's zone of influence. Posed in this negative form, the problem is insoluble. The western democracies and the Soviet Union cannot peacefully coexist because of the abstract principle of self-determination. Nor can the principle of self-determination be carried out to its logical conclusion, since that would imply an expansion of Soviet influence. In this impasse, such a view of self-determination can be of positive advantage only to Germany.

For every honest democrat and advocate of prolonged peace, however, the Baltic problem must be a question capable of harmonious and, therefore, durable solution. Enemy forces are consciously working to prevent such an outcome, and one redoubtable weapon in their arsenal is widespread ignorance of the essential facts. The factual information presented in this book aims to lay the groundwork for a reinterpretation of the entire Baltic problem.

Throughout the heated discussion about the future of the Baltic region it is taken for granted that Americans have definitely made up their minds on the need to re-establish the status quo ante in the Baltic. This is considered an important aim of the democracies, worth paying for—even dying for. How-

ever, the public actually is confused on the issue. It is not generally realized that Germans wrote the history books on the Baltic area and defined the Baltic problem for Europe and the world. They distorted it with scrupulous scientific exactitude, as the Germans alone can distort history. After the Versailles Treaty many Western writers adopted the German versions of this problem, in order to justify the Baltic policy determined at Versailles, which many Americans and Europeans thought to be irrational. These German-inspired versions now impede the search for a solution acceptable alike for the equilibrium of Europe and for the future of the Baltic nations.

To understand the needs and aspirations of the Baltic peoples, it is of prime importance to see clearly the respective roles of Germany and Russia in this area. In England and the United States much is heard about the age-old hostility of the Baltic peoples for the Russians, but we rarely hear about how these people feel toward the Germans. Yet the history of the Baltic area is a history of German oppression. This region of eastern Europe, which seven hundred years ago was overrun by the Teutonic knights, has today again witnessed a repetition of that historic invasion from the West.

The German inroads in the eastern Baltic, to which the next chapter is devoted, must be comprehended to obtain an undistorted view of the Baltic problem in its modern form.

## *Germandom in the Baltic Area*

### THE BALTIC SEA LITTORAL

To symbolize for school children the relations among the several small nations situated in the Baltic littoral, geography teachers sometimes compare the Baltic Sea to a woman kneeling in prayer. With her knees resting on Poland and Germany, she has turned her back on Denmark and Sweden, bows her head to Finland, and extends clasped hands to Estonia, Latvia, and Russia.<sup>1</sup> When history teachers use the same simile in lessons on the Baltic region, pupils begin to imagine the "Baltic woman" as praying for one thing only—for peace. But her prayer, alas, has never been heard.

Ever since the first deep-sea navigators set foot on the wooded, marshy shores of the Baltic Sea, there has been a "Baltic problem." On either or both shores of the sea powerful states arose, each in succession fighting for domination and striving to make the Baltic their own inland lake. In course of time sanguinary wars were waged, and almost invariably the decisive engagements were fought in the eastern Baltic area, the territory now occupied by Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and Finland. In this much-disputed area governments changed repeatedly, while the native inhabitants, too feeble to decide their own destiny, were

<sup>1</sup> Bibliographical notes on p. 259.

often victimized by the rivalries of great powers. Irrespective of the circumstances or the outcome of war, the natives always had to pay a heavy toll in blood.

For more than seven hundred years the Baltic peoples have been subjected to repeated conquests. Prior to the twelfth century, except for tribal incursions, the natives were more or less masters of their homeland, which extended from the Dvina to Lapland and was inhabited by the Finno-Ugrian (Uralo-Altai) tribes of Livonians, Kuronians, Estonians, and Finns. These tribes had, in the sixth and seventh centuries, been driven north and northeast by the Lithuanian-Lettish tribes—Letts, Latgallians, Semigallians, Lithuanians—who like the Borussians to the south of the Dvina were of Indo-European stock.\* But before the rudimentary state forms which evolved among these tribes could mature, their territory became an object of rivalry between the rising German, Scandinavian, and Slavic nations.

As early as the eleventh century the Swedes, Danes, and Germans began to penetrate the eastern Baltic for trade and plunder. The Baltic was also viewed with interest by the Russian princes of Polotsk and Pskov, who established the town of Yurjev (Dorpat, Tartu) in 1030. These early incursions, however, were for the most part limited to trading expeditions and armed sorties, aimed at the levy of tribute and the erection of fortified outposts.

The first foreign rulers in the Baltic were the Danes, who in the twelfth century conquered northern Estonia, but the actual subjugation of the people began later with the Teutonic invasions. Following the bloody Crusades to Palestine, Germanic

\* These two races in the Baltic area still preserve many of their distinguishing traits today. Only in Latvia have the Letts assimilated the Kuronians and Livonians. The stocky, broad-faced Finns and Estonians differ markedly from the tall, blond, and gray-eyed Letts. The Estonian language is almost identical with the Finnish, but it has no sound in common with the cognate Lettish or Lithuanian languages. For mutual intercourse, the Baltic peoples have been obliged to employ foreign languages, most frequently Russian or German.

feudal princes eager to enlarge their domains, knights-errant in quest of booty, monks and merchants swarmed into the Baltic region. In 1196 Pope Innocent III proclaimed the first Crusade against the Livonians. This ended in disaster when the Livonians slew the Crusade commander, Bishop Berthold. In reprisal, a second Crusade was proclaimed, marking the advent of a dark era in the life of the small Baltic peoples.

#### **BLACK KNIGHTS IN THE BALTIC REGION**

The Teutonic regime in the Baltic has survived in the folk memory as a reign of terror, preserved in plaintive folk songs and mournful legends passed on to each generation. In childhood every Estonian, every Latvian and Lithuanian learns with horror of the "Black Knights" who with fire and sword laid waste their free earth, enslaved its liberty-loving tillers of the soil and doomed them to age-long suffering, misery, and humiliation.

The first Prussian inroads into the eastern Baltic were made seven hundred years ago. Knights of the Teutonic Order formed the spearhead, and they followed what was to become a classic invasion route across eastern Prussia to the land between the Vistula and Nieman rivers, then inhabited by the Borussians. Struck by this first overwhelming Teutonic blow, the native Borussians were annihilated. Hardly a trace of them remains today, except in small fishing settlements along the east Prussian coast. In this region curious tourists are sometimes astonished to find scattered descendants of the blond, gray-eyed Borussians, segregated from the stocky Germans and speaking almost the same language as the Lithuanians and the Latvians.

In their expansion to the east and north, however, the Teutonic knights were brought to a halt by the powerful resistance of the Lithuanians and Slavs. It was in these struggles against



the Teutonic invaders that the Lithuanians united to found a nation. In 1410 Prince Vytautas, one of a famous line of Lithuanian princes, dealt the Teutonic knights a decisive defeat near Tannenberg, where their eastward advance ended. Allied with the Lithuanians in the battle of Tannenberg were powerful units of Slavic warriors. With their assistance Great Lithuania not only waged successful warfare against the Teutonic Order, but also gained control over much territory inhabited by the Slavs, territory on which the Ukrainian and Belorussian nations were later formed.

Because of the staunch stand made by the combined Lithuanian-Slavic forces, the Letts and Estonians were spared the fate of the Borussians. Although protected thus against invasion overland, they were, however, open to sea-borne assault.

After the first Crusade against the Livonians failed (1196), Bishop Albert mustered in 1200 a new body of avaricious Crusaders to invade the eastern Baltic from the sea. They landed on the shores of Riga Gulf, where the town of Riga was founded in 1201. Through a military-monastic organization known as the Livonian Order of Teutonic Knights or Order of the Sword, established by Bishop Albert, the conquest of the Baltic was undertaken. For one hundred and fifty years the Livonian Order waged a relentless struggle against the resistance of the unarmed Estonians and Letts, who stubbornly refused to submit to the master race.

In their struggle against the Teutonic knights, the Baltic peoples were often aided by the Slavs from the neighboring city-states of Novgorod and Pskov, who were not reconciled to the German trade monopoly in the Baltic region. Being very limited and inconstant, the Slavic assistance was not enough to save the Letts and Estonians from subjugation. However, when the Livonian Order sought to expand eastward into Slavic lands, the attempt proved a complete fiasco. In 1242 a crushing

defeat was administered to the Teutonic knights on the ice of Lake Peipus by the Russian commander, Prince Alexander Nevsky. Although the knights attempted several times thereafter to invade Russian land, they were unsuccessful.

By the end of the thirteenth century the eastern Baltic had been completely subjugated by the Teutons, who divided it into five episcopal districts and monastic estates. These feudal domains were united under the secular and clerical authority of the Archbishop of Riga, who acted as Papal vicegerent and was a vassal of the German emperor.

The former communal order and patriarchal life of the local tribes was wiped out. Feudal society was established. The German conquerors formed a ruling class of noblemen landlords. Except for the native princes, who became vassals of the Teutonic Order, the native population was a mass of feudal serfs.

In the struggle for power which ensued between the Livonian Order and the Archbishop, the Grand Master of the Order won, becoming the actual ruler of the region. In the early sixteenth century the Grand Master, many of the noblemen and the ruling circles of Riga, Tartu, Tallinn, all cities of the Hanseatic League, espoused Lutheranism. The Catholic clergy was driven from the Baltic region. The official church was the Lutheran.

But having spent its strength in the struggle against the Archbishop, the Livonian Order was no longer powerful. The *coup de grâce* was delivered by the rising Moscow czar, Ivan the Terrible, whose forces invaded Livonia in 1558 and occupied Riga in 1559. For assistance the knights turned to Poland, Sweden, and Denmark. The twenty-five-year Livonian War ensued, following which the Russians evacuated the Baltic region in 1583. But the Livonian Order, formally dissolved in 1561, was completely smashed. The swordsmen had become "peaceable," if no less avaricious and bloodthirsty feudal landlords. From the hazards of war they turned to intrigue, de-

signed to win support from one or another of the more powerful states. The maneuvers of the barons were always favorable to the side which might guarantee all their feudal rights, from hereditary landholdings to *jus primae noctis*.

Life was harsh for the Baltic peoples. Like ravaging storms, troops of Poles, Swedes, and Russians alternately swept through the towns and settlements. One ruling power displaced the other, each in turn victimizing the native population. But no matter which state was dominant, the ruthless, intolerable authority of the German barons, degenerate progeny of the erstwhile swordsmen, remained inviolable. Fiercely resisting any measures introduced to ameliorate the life of the serfs, the barons managed on every occasion to throw the weight of the war and devastation onto the backs of the peasants. When a ruling state in any way embarrassed the German nobility or undermined their privileges, the knights conspired against it, seeking new patrons.

In 1561, after the Livonian Order was dissolved, Livonia with Riga and Latgale were ceded to Poland. Kurland was converted into a duchy under Polish protection. But peasant life remained intolerably burdensome, the feudal dukes and barons appropriating peasant lands and monopolizing flour milling, hunting, fishing, and trading.

The Baltic map was again altered by the Polish-Swedish War of 1598–1621. Livonia and Estonia were ceded to Sweden. For the native people Swedish rule in Latvia and Estonia was a golden era. In need of grain and revenue the government of burghers in Sweden was strict with the arrogant German barons and lenient to the industrious serfs. The Swedes banned trading in serfs and encouraged public enlightenment. Under Swedish rule the Bible was, for the first time, translated into the native languages. Natives were instructed in rudiments of reading and writing.

As a counterstroke the German noblemen engaged in a complicated intrigue, which fell in neatly with the ambitions of the Russian czar, Peter the Great, who sought an outlet to the sea for Russia. In the great Northern War of 1700–1721 which broke out between Sweden and Russia, the German barons did their utmost to defeat Sweden.\* The war ended with the complete downfall of the Swedish empire. In accord with the Nystadt Peace of 1721, Livonia and Estonia were ceded to Russia. The Russian era which then began in the Baltic region led to three significant developments.

First, the power and influence of the German noblemen were consolidated in the Baltic region and made to be felt in Russia itself.

Second, under the general protection of the Russian empire a political union of the Baltic area was achieved. According to the terms of the Nystadt Peace, Livonia and Estonia were annexed to Russia. Latgale was annexed by Russia after the first partitioning of Poland in 1772, and Kurland after the third partitioning in 1795. During the same period, Russia also annexed Lithuania, whose earlier history had followed quite a different course from that of the other Baltic nations.†

Third, with the annexation of the Baltic areas by Russia, the native peoples came to participate in the mighty emancipation movement which arose in the vast Russian empire. Thus, the foundation was also laid for the rise of the Baltic national liberation movements.

\* Throughout the period, Baron Patkull resided at the court of Peter the Great as the envoy of the Baltic noblemen, advising Russia in her war against Sweden. The Swedes offered a reward for his capture.

† After uniting in the face of the Teutonic invasion, the Lithuanian tribes created a powerful state which extended from the Vistula to the Dnieper. In the fourteenth century the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Kingdom of Poland concluded a union, opening an era of Polonization in Lithuania; a movement which was restricted, however, chiefly to the upper classes. The Lithuanian people, having accepted Catholicism, retained both their national culture and their native language.

## USSIA IN THE BALTIC REGION

Like all previous eras in the Baltic, the Russian reign began in the "traditional manner," with bloodshed.

"God Almighty and the Most Holy Mother of God have accomplished Thy will! There is nothing left of that hostile land by ravage, the whole country has been laid waste and ruined. Iarientburg and Narva, yes Reval and Riga, alone remain. "

That is what the commander in chief, Sheremetiev, wrote to his superior, the young Russian czar, Peter, after Russian troops following the route of the Swedes swept like a whirlwind across the Baltic region, devastating the countryside, towns, feudal states, and ancient castles.

The ravages of war were almost insufferable for the native people, accustomed though they were to hardship. Most detrimental from the Lettish and Estonian viewpoint were the agreements which the German barons contrived to negotiate with the Russian authorities. The barons avowedly sought to preserve the "German spirit" in this "German" land and actually became still more autocratic masters of the entire country, overlords alike of the spirit and the flesh of the serfs.

As usual, the Baltic barons were rewarded for their customary acts of treachery and gained the signature of Sheremetiev to what is called the "capitulation," \* which nullified none of their rights and preserved all of their prerogatives. In accord with this agreement (more truly there were two—in 1710 and 1721) no Russian could become a free citizen of Riga or any other town. So it happened that citizens of the "ruling" nation settled in the suburbs outside the city walls. The dreariest suburb of Riga, called the Moscow Forstadt, thereafter came

\* No one has ever seen the original of the "capitulation" document; it was lost. But the Baltic Germans found a torn "copy" of this document in Riga archives. It is supposed to begin: "The German nation and its descendants in this land and this land for the German nation and its descendants . . ."

to be inhabited chiefly by Russians and Jews. Today, under Nazi occupation it has become a ghetto for Russian Jews.

While restricting the "Russian spirit" to the confines of these peculiar ghettos in Baltic German cities, the German barons themselves hastened, not without success, to reside at the Russian imperial court. The Baltic barons rapidly rose to prominence. To the Russian autocracy eager to Europeanize the court, they appeared to be most desirable "servants of the throne" and, moreover, such as would not hesitate to carry out the least honorable missions. The Duchy of Kurland became notorious as the spawning ground for ambitious barons, who developed into infamous governors general, police supervisors, or chiefs of the gendarme corps. Their sorry fame spread throughout all the Russias, even to far-off Siberia, where at one time the bloodthirsty Meller-Zakomelsky, who won his spurs as governor general of Kurland, did his hangman's duty.

The name of the Baltic German, General in chief Benken-dorff, has always been associated with the czarist "Gestapo" gendarmes which he founded and nurtured. German names were common in the roster of the highest Russian czarist administrators. The German party at the imperial court was for many years most influential.\* But the czarist "magnates" of Baltic stock never pulled up their Kurland roots. While advancing the destiny of the Great Russian empire, they did not forget to secure their own privileges in the Baltic region. To exclude the Russians and the "Russian spirit" from the Baltic remained one of their main concerns.

Under the czarist regime the Baltic barons were able to restore all the manorial rights and prerogatives which had been abolished under the rule of the Swedish burgher government. They were enabled to set up a closed corporation of less than

\* Of this fact Bismarck remarked, "The Baltic noble stock is really the full-blooded sire of Russian generals and diplomats."

two hundred families, who alone had the right to possess land. Administration of the region was put in the hands of the Landtags of the noblesse. Conditions were insufferable for the Latvian and Estonian serfs, who toiled six days a week at *corvée*. Serfs were bought and sold like cattle. Taxes and assessments despoiled the peasant economy. From 1765 to 1804 one peasant uprising after another broke out in the Baltic region, only to be suppressed by the German barons, who were assisted by czarist troops and police.

The barons proved to have stronger nerves than the czarist government, which in 1804 and 1809, seeking to ameliorate the peasants' lot and ease the rising pressure, forbade the sale of serfs without land. But the German barons met this reform with arms in hand. They gained the "agrarian reforms" of 1817-1819, which formally proclaimed the peasants to be "free," but without the right to migrate. At the same time the land passed more completely into the possession of the barons. Czarist and baronial historians mark this date as the first "emancipation of serfs in the Russian empire." This "bird's freedom," as the serfs called it, only provoked fresh desperate uprisings. These were even more brutally suppressed.

The incessant peasant uprisings forced the czarist government from time to time to intervene in the Baltic agrarian problem. But every time even modest efforts to relieve the peasant hardships and to allay the rising spirit of rebellion met with stone-wall resistance on the part of the barons. The czarist government gave in.

During the entire era of Russian dominance, the Baltic region remained under the power of the Muiža, the baronial estates. The Russian governors general were loyal servants of the German nobility. Every newly appointed higher official, even before opening his office door, would invariably begin his administration by paying his respects to the mighty Kurland

landowner, Count Manteuffel. Moreover, Russian officials usually held limited authority, and as a rule were ranked not higher than a police supervisor or tax collector. The highest officials were Germans. The civil laws,\* landholdings, regime, and customs were their own—German. The churches, schools, and newspapers were in German hands, and woe to him who tried to Russify them. Feeling themselves masters of the Baltic region, the barons did not hesitate in their press to abuse exponents of Russification, even those of high rank, calling them “incompetent loafers,” “connivers in revolution,” et cetera. In such instances influential hands also pulled strings at the court, and the ill-starred Russian official was usually kicked out of office with a demotion.

The native population suffered under a single yoke, that of the landholding barons. Since the representatives of Russian authority—the police, Cossacks, and officials—were subject to orders from the same barons and functioned also through the Muiža, the people came to regard them as merely protégés of their own oppressors, the German barons. Therefore, when their lot became grievous beyond endurance, the Latvian and Estonian peasants sought liberation from the baronial yoke under the wing of Russia, even czarist Russia.

#### THE RISE OF EMANCIPATION MOVEMENTS

When one uprising after another was drowned in bloodshed, the Latvian and Estonian peasants sought relief by flight. In the 1840's the peasants began to flock into the Russian Orthodox Church and then to migrate into the interior of Russia. But the barons and the Protestant clergy soon put an end to this

\* The Baltic *guberniyas* of Russia were not governed according to the common Russian civil laws. They were governed in accordance with a code of civil statutes, which was a combination of pure Roman law and German customary law.



"rebellion" advocated by Russian priests. The migration of peasants to South Russian regions was declared an "insurrection," and as such was suppressed with military force. The peasants were soon convinced that changing their religion to the "czarist faith" was no way to find salvation from the heavy hand of the German baron.

A more serious threat to the "German spirit" in the Baltic region arose in the 1880's, with the ascendancy of the Slavophil movement. A number of newspapers, particularly *Den* (*The Day*), edited by Ivan Aksakov and Yuri Samarin, waged a general campaign against Germanism in Russia, exposing the oppression of the Latvians and Estonians. For a long time before the anti-German wave reached an impressive crest in connection with the Berlin Treaty (1878), which was most humiliating to Russians, *Den* (in No. 50, 1862 wrote): "We would consider ourselves happy if we could in any way contribute to the emancipation of the Latvian people from German domination." Subsequently, the paper launched a more vigorous attack, and its editors, Aksakov and Samarin, tried to make contacts with the Latvian and Estonian nationalists.

The press campaign against the Baltic barons reached such a pitch that Czar Alexander II thought it necessary to plead for the "Czar's Mamelukes," as the Baltic barons were called in Russia. Speaking in French to appear impartial, he declared to representatives of the Baltic noblemen: "Je comprends parfaitement que vous soyez blessés par les menées de la presse. Aussi ai-je toujours blâmé, moi, cette presse infame, qui, au lieu de nous unir, tache de nous desunir. Je crache sur cette presse. J'estime votre nationalité et j'en serais fier comme vous." \* 2

A direct result of the Slavophil support given to the native

\* "I understand very well that you are painfully offended by the attacks of the press. Even I myself have always condemned this odious press, which is trying to divide us instead of uniting us. I spit on this press. I respect your nationality and would be as proud of it as you are."

nationalists was the rise of a nationalist press in the Lettish and the Estonian languages. It was necessary, however, to issue these papers in Russia, far from the oversight of the barons. Thus Krišjānis Valdemars, venerable father of the Latvian nationalist movement, founded the *Peterburgas Avīzes* (*St. Petersburg Gazette*) in 1862. It was published in the Lettish language in St. Petersburg, from which city it was distributed to the Baltic. The governor general of Kurland, at the insistence of the barons and after repeated protests that the newspaper was slipping through with censorious articles, ultimately obtained censorship rights over the Lettish-language press.

The friendship of the Slavophiles with the Latvian and Estonian nationalists was short-lived, however. On the one hand the Slavophiles lost ground after the Polish insurrection, while on the other the "Young Lett" and "Young Estonian" movements, at first progressive, later degenerated and acquired the reactionary character of chauvinistic nationalism. Neither movement offered any solution to the oppressive social problems of the Latvian and Estonian peoples.

Moreover, the peculiarity of the Baltic situation lay in the predominant position held by the autocratic German nobility. The line of cleavage in the nationalist movement coincided with that of the social movement. All Estonians and Latvians were alike oppressed, whether they belonged to the peasants and workers, who formed ninety per cent of the population, or to the thin crust of well-to-do natives. Both nationally and socially they were polar opposites to the monolithic group of German barons, with their serving personnel of supervisors, priests, barristers, engineers, bankers, and merchants. Latvian and Estonian signified serf, bondsman. German meant baron, master.

For this reason the blend of Estonian and Latvian nationalism was peculiar, and its explosive scope was magnified tenfold.

This was noted with contrition after the 1905 revolution by the German historian, Professor T. Schiemann. He wrote: "The casual circumstance that the social problem is at the same time a national one lends the movement its singular coloring, the most desirable possible for demagogues. The nationalist movement enflamed the slumbering passions and covetous instincts of the people to the utmost violence. The artfully incited hatred against the German oppressors, the nationalist egoism which reached morbid proportions, the antagonism to the church—all these were factors that rendered excellent service to the Social Democrats." <sup>3</sup>

In Latvia and Estonia the profoundly social character of the national emancipation movement also predicated the course of its development. The efforts made by Slavophiles to align this nationalist movement with official or semiofficial institutions in Russia, was doomed to failure because the Czarist government was itself a landocracy. Exponents of Russification were perforce limited to half measures. In any question involving landholding or labor relations the czarist officials invariably lined up with the German barons. That is what happened to the famous commission under the chairmanship of Senator Manasein, which investigated, in 1882, landholdings in the Baltic region. After completing its survey, the Manasein commission submitted modest proposals aimed at correcting some of the many injustices suffered by the peasants. The baronial press hooted down the proposals, and the barons finally gained an imperial injunction that restrained anyone from interfering in any way with Baltic agrarian relations. Peasants who had dared to voice complaints before the commission were flogged to death.

The Baltic peasants were thus driven into the same camp as the industrial workers, and together with them they waged a common struggle against both the German barons and the Rus-

sian autocrats. This became the slogan of what was called "Jaunā Strāva" (New Movement), which arose first among intellectuals at the end of the nineteenth century, but gradually gained wide influence among the mass of the workers and peasants. A powerful labor movement came into being, headed in 1904 by the Social Democratic Workers Party.

From the start Jaunā Strāva, which in Latvia was led by the Great Baltic poet, Janis Rainis, cultivated relations with those elements of the Russian population that conspired to overthrow the autocratic czarist landocracy. Strong ties were formed between the Russian proletarian movement and the workingmen of the rising Baltic industries at Riga, Tallinn, Liepaja, and Ventspils. Accordingly, when the national liberation struggle of the Latvian and Estonian peoples reached a culminating point in the 1905 revolution, it was organically associated with the general Russian revolution.

#### THE 1905 REVOLUTIONS IN RUSSIA AND THE BALTIC

When the Baltic barons regained composure, after being almost frightened to death in 1905, they set about with German thoroughness to investigate the causes and the culprits that had brought them so near to disaster. The fruit of their labor was *Die Lettische Revolution*, a collection of documents and reports about the 1905 revolution in the Baltic, published by the Baltic noblemen in Berlin in 1907. This compilation sought to incriminate exponents of Russification, radical Russian intellectuals, petty officials who encouraged Latvian and Estonian nationalists, even orthodox priests, who "deprived Latvian and Estonian peasants of religion, the basis of their morals." The work of Professor Schiemann, this book aimed to prove that "just as a fashion—such as the thoughtless policy of the Slavophiles demoralized the youth and drove them into the arms

of the Social Democrats and anarchists—Russification paved the way for the revolution.”<sup>4</sup>

In their own way the Baltic Germans were correct. There was an indisputable connection between the Baltic uprising and the Russian revolution. But the revolutionary fervor was most certainly not imported into the Baltic by orthodox priests and Russian officials, as the barons assumed. This becomes clear when the role of the Russifiers is examined.

The early Russification campaign led to the rise of the nationalist Lettish and Estonian press. Moreover, early in the 1880's, when Slavophiles permeated the administration, several Latvians and Estonians were appointed to subordinate posts in the Baltic *guberniyas*, to the consternation of the Germans, who complained that an ignorant clerk, the Estonian Neu, a rustic without even a rural-school education, was being allowed to run gubernatorial affairs. Naturally, the situation was highly exaggerated, yet a certain breach had been opened in the armor of German domination.

As for the Russifiers engaged by the czarist government, they sometimes exhibited unexpected loyalties. At a stormy congress of Russian public-school teachers held in Riga, November 14, 1905, the Russian teacher Zelenko declared: “They spent six years making a Russifier out of me, but picked the wrong person. My mind and sympathies pulled me in the opposite direction. For a long time I sought for the truth and finally joined up with the Latvian Social Democrats. Now I am happy.”

In the Baltic revolution an active role was also played by the students—Latvians, Estonians, Russians, and Jews alike—of the Riga Polytechnic School and the Dorpat (Tartu) University. Of them we read: “The Latvian, Jewish, and Russian students in the university and polytechnic school were particularly active. The German pupils of the city high school who declined were publicly branded German ‘hooligans.’ In Dorpat there

were wild demonstrations staged chiefly by the numerous socialist Jewish and Russian students.”<sup>5</sup>

But all these were mere trickles in the broad stream of the Latvian and Estonian national liberation movement bedded in the unified mass of peasants and workers. A movement as old as their grievances, it had burst into repeated desperate uprisings only to be as often crushed by the German barons and czarist administrators. But in 1905 the dam burst, to the surprise of the ruthless rulers. The Baltic region, seething with unrest, experienced a much more violent revolution than Russia itself. However, there was a close association throughout with the Russian revolution.

When the guards at the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg opened fire on unarmed workers bearing icons and marching in a peaceful demonstration on January 9, 1905, their shots evoked a menacing echo in Riga and other Baltic cities. On January 13, a mammoth protest meeting was held at Riga. Flaming leaflets were distributed, with the slogan: “QUIT WORK—JOIN IN THE PETERSBURG GENERAL STRIKE.” At the Riga railway bridge the police fired into a crowd of demonstrators; fifty persons were killed and hundreds wounded.\*

This served as a signal for a general strike, which spread to the villages and rapidly flamed into revolution. Everywhere czarist officials were overthrown, and power passed into the hands of leaders elected from among the peasants. The people's rule lasted for several months in the Baltic region, but collapsed with the failure of the Russian revolution.

A terrible reaction ensued in the Baltic region. The infuriated barons hastened to call out troops—disposing them on

\* This marked the rise of the Latvian liberation struggle, and to commemorate it during the democratic period the street in Riga near the bridge was renamed “January 13 Street.” Under the Ulmanis Fascist regime it was renamed “Karlis Street,” not to honor King Karl of Sweden, but after Karlis Ulmanis himself.

their estates, riding vengefully with them through the countryside—and directed a reign of terror. Their methods were like a rehearsal of those employed by today's Heydrichs and Himmlers. They burned down villages, shot scores of hostages from among the peasantry, hung teachers in the presence of their students.

The peasants fled to the forests, where they organized groups of "forest brothers," the forerunners of today's guerrillas. Then as now, the loyalty of the "forest brothers," their hopes of vengeance, reposed in Russia, in the hope that united with the great Russian people they could win through to mutual liberation from common oppression.

#### SPECIAL CONDITIONS IN LITHUANIA AND FINLAND

In Latvia and Estonia the Russian administration was always on the sidelines. The immediate struggle was waged between two national-social groups: the Latvians and Estonians against the Germans. Russians were to be found on both sides. The czarist officials who ran errands for the barons were in the enemy camp—the *German*. But there were also Russian industrial workers who lived in such places as the Moscow Forstadt in Riga, under even worse conditions than those endured by the long-suffering Latvians or Estonians. There were Russian peasants who inhabited gubernatorial borderlands and were more poverty-stricken than their Latvian or Estonian neighbors. These groups and their representatives in the centralized Russian revolutionary party with which the Baltic organizations were affiliated, were all in the Latvian and Estonian camp. The situation was clear to everyone, even "den dummsten Bauer," as Professor Schiemann expressed it.

But the picture was more confused in Lithuania and Finland, where there were native ruling groups: the Lithuanian-

Polish gentry and the Swedish-Finnish landowners, respectively. Here efforts at Russification ran counter not to the Germans but to the indigenous population. Moreover, the police terror and policy of oppression were under the immediate supervision of czarist officials and police inspectors. National enmity toward the Russians had more occasion to flourish than it had in Estonia or Latvia, where the public ill-will was directed against the German barons.

Following the annexation of Finland to Russia in 1809, the local privileged classes became accomplices of czarist power and conductors of its policy. From the beginning this was sensed by the Finnish peasantry, who rose in protest against the annexation. During the disorders which flared up in 1809, they burned down the mansions of local landowners who had connived with the czarist government.

Soon both the Finns and the Lithuanians became convinced that their czarist enemies were also enemies of the Russian people. Consequently, collaboration with the Russian people's movement was inevitable, with the result that the liberation movements in Finland and Lithuania became synchronized with revolutionary turns in Russia. The 1905 revolution in Finland was expressed in a general strike of Finnish workers, who presented far-reaching demands for national autonomy and self-government. Being united with the general Russian revolution in timing and organization, the strike forced concessions from the czarist government, which was obliged to restore to Finland the autonomous rights taken from her.

Revolutionary events in Russia also led to enlarged opportunities for the national liberation movement in Lithuania, where the czarist government was compelled to annul its prohibition of the use of the Latin alphabet. In 1905 the Lithuanian people's councils began to dislodge the local administration. Likewise, when the revolution in Russia was suppressed



in 1906, a period of black reaction started in Lithuania and Finland, as elsewhere in the Baltic region.

It became increasingly evident that the Russians, Latvians, Estonians, Lithuanians, and Finns were waging an interrelated struggle for "our and your freedom." The ebb and flow of the Baltic liberation movements depended largely on the success or failure of the general Russian emancipation movement, without which the future held no real prospects for the small Baltic peoples. For these people, who have been subjected to so many conquests and who have a strong sense of their own weakness when faced by powerful neighbors, freedom becomes something real and enduring only if it can find substantial support and protection. Therefore, without exception, the common aim of all the popular liberation movements in Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, and even Finland (where, for historic reasons, the aspiration for complete independence was stronger than in other Baltic states) was the free autonomy of their own countries within a free Russia.

This was the slogan under which the people in all the small Baltic countries fought for national liberation during the early twentieth century, up to and through the period of World War I. Under the same banner they passed through the stormy days of 1917-1918. The world political situation, however, proved to be such that it was not the Baltic peoples themselves, but outside forces that determined the fate of the Baltic. The post-Versailles world saw the rise of Baltic states which, though pulsing with youthful unutilized energy, were stifled in the stuffy atmosphere of a semicolonial economy and of a "Balkanization" policy carried to the extreme.

## *Between Brest-Litovsk and Versailles*

### THE GERMAN ARMY IN THE BALTIC AREA

The outbreak of war in 1914 found the Baltic area wholly in the hands of the local German landed gentry. Thoroughly alarmed by the violent Latvian revolution of 1905, the czarist government had completely abandoned the idea of Russification. Czarism's mainstay in the Baltic had once again become the Baltic Germans, who took full advantage of the cultural-administrative hegemony afforded them to promote Germanization and prepared gradually for incorporation of the Baltic area in the Reich. The idea of settling Germans in the Baltic was advanced, an idea which has found embodiment today in Nazi policy toward their occupied Eastern territories (Ostland).

But the idea of German colonization in the Baltic arose even before World War I. A project to settle Germans in Livonia, Kurland, and even Belorussia was elaborated in Otto Tannenberg's book, *Grossdeutschland*, published in Berlin in 1911 with the approval of official institutions. With an eye to the future, enterprising Kurland barons like the Broederich brothers and Count Manteuffel brought in German colonists from the Volga region for settlement on their estates along the Baltic frontiers nearest Germany. These Baltic barons were

preparing for the day when the German Army would appear in the Baltic area. That day arrived during the World War I.

The outbreak of the war obliged the czarist government to revise its policy in the Baltic area. Aware of the violent anti-German feeling of the local population, the Russian command did not hesitate to create special Baltic units, composed of native soldiers either recruited as volunteers or singled out from troops mobilized in general with the Russian Army. The Latvian rifle corps, consisting of two divisions, or eight regiments, especially distinguished itself. These Latvian and Estonian soldiers had previously participated in the offensive against eastern Prussia and had proven very militant fighters. United in national military units commanded by their own native officers, they fought for more than two years in the ranks of the Russian Army, from the Mitau (Jelgava) battles in July 1915 to the heroic defense of Riga in September 1917 against von Ludendorff's powerful push.

After the battle of Tannenberg the German armies advanced eastward, rolling up to the Dvina. In the autumn of 1915 they occupied Lithuania and Kurland, areas which remained under German occupation for almost four years. For one year only were the Germans masters in Estonia, Livonia, and in the city of Riga, areas occupied only after the Russian revolution broke out and the eastern front collapsed.

By that time the conduct of the German occupants resembled closely the infamous behavior of the present-day Stulpnagels and Terbovens. Punitive expeditions swept through the villages, hostages were seized and shot, thousands were thrown into concentration camps. Civil property was unceremoniously plundered. Transports full of stolen goods passed daily into Germany. The looting zeal of the German occupation authorities is well illustrated by the fact that in Lithuania they hewed down and despoiled a fourth of the nation's forests.

But a still greater danger threatened the Baltic area in those days: that of either complete absorption or, like the original inhabitants of eastern Prussia, extermination. Encouraged by the presence of soldiers, the local Baltic Germans raised loud voices demanding that the area be annexed by Germany. Petitions and resolutions were sent by the hundreds to Berlin. The German reactionary press began to clamor, growing literally ecstatic about the profits Germany would derive from incorporation of this "altes deutsches Siedlungsland" (old German colony).\*

The plan envisaged was organized colonization of the Baltic areas by German soldier-farmers who, with arms ready, would stand against the "Slavic wave" and bring German *Kultur* to the local population. Although during seven hundred years they had failed to Teutonize the Latvians and Estonians, the Baltic barons were resolved to correct their historical error. The Baltic nations were to disappear from the face of the earth, as the Borussians had vanished in eastern Prussia.

The president of the Kurland Landrat (Regional Council), Rudolf von Hörner-Ihlen, clearly formulated these plans in the conclusion of his program pamphlet published in Berlin in 1917: *Baltische Zukunftsgedanke (Ideas on the Baltic Future)*. He expressed the hope that the Latvians and Estonians will finally themselves understand that "the great turn in their fortunes signifies for them nothing other than the transition to a higher culture, whose base they already bear in themselves, and which represents the only possible and natural advance also of their higher development in a spiritual, moral, and economic sense. They will become Germans of a special type, but this need not diminish their worth for the German nationality as a whole."

\* Expression of von der Goltz, commander of the German armed forces in the Baltic and Finland ("The present independent states of Latvia and Estonia are an old German colony") in *Als Politischer General im Osten*.

"The Lettish and Estonian tribes will but fulfill their historic destiny when German influence shall blossom among them."

The very existence of the Baltic nations was at stake. If Baltic Germans faced the clear alternatives of either incorporation in the mighty German Empire or departure forever from the Baltic where they had been for seven hundred years, the Latvians, Estonians, and Lithuanians saw with equal clarity that annexation of the Baltic area to Germany meant the end of their national existence. After age-old trials and adversities these small peoples had become aware of their helplessness when face to face with the great powers and their military forces. Yet the experience of the successful revolution of 1905 had taught them that their national aspirations could be realized if they joined up with the more powerful Russian liberation movement.

With the slogan "A free Latvia in a free Russia" on their lips, Latvian insurgents had gone to the scaffold in 1906, the year of reaction. The same slogans uttered in 1911 and subsequent years again served to inflame the smoldering fires of the national and social liberation movement.

The Latvian, Lithuanian, and Estonian peoples were again moved by the same feelings in the period following the Russian February revolution of 1917, when not a single person or public organization throughout the Baltic territory would have advanced the slogan of complete separation from Russia. Of this disposition we have the reliable witness of the leader of the extremely nationalist Latvian Social Democrats, Fricis Mendērs, a man of singular prominence during the Latvian parliamentary period. Mendērs said, "The leading circles of the Baltic peoples found complete satisfaction of their national aspirations in an autonomy or federation with Russia." <sup>1</sup>

This view is confirmed also by the Information Department

of the Royal Institute of International Affairs in London: "In the spring of 1917, none of the Baltic provinces contemplated or desired complete detachment from Russia, although they certainly seized the opportunity of making a bid for a measure of autonomy and for much-needed reforms." <sup>2</sup>

To be sure, the ill-fated Russian "Provisional Government" took a hostile attitude to the idea of autonomy for the Baltic peoples, adding another blunder to its ledger of errors great and small. But this could not radically alter public opinion among the Baltic peoples, who were well aware of widespread public support in Russia. They became more insistent in their demands, taking an increasingly active part in Russia's turbulent political life. In Petrograd the "Latvian Refugee Committee" was formed by Latvian deputies to the Duma (Representative State Assembly of Russia). Lithuanian deputies likewise formed their national committee in Petrograd, presenting demands for Lithuania's political autonomy within the frontiers of Russia. The Latvian and Estonian regiments, which had carried out a fighting retreat into the interior of Russia, took an active part in the general Russian revolution. Half of Kurland's population were refugees in Russia. For the Baltic peoples, as well as for the Russians, it was clear at the time that the fate of the entire region would be jointly decided.

The seizure of power by the Bolsheviks led to a division of opinion among the well-to-do circles, who by that time were fairly influential in town and country. Even before the war these circles waged a sharp controversy against the political ideas held by the majority of the Latvian, Estonian, and Lithuanian populations, which were pre-eminently industrial workers or peasants and had actively participated in the Russian liberation movement. The Latvian liberation movement, *Jaunā Strāva*, for example, had launched its political career with bitter ideological attacks on the unsound fictitious na-

tionalism of these circles, which were disposed to compromise with either the German or the Russian czarist administration.

This conflict now flared up with renewed energy, rapidly assuming the proportions of a civil war among the Baltic peoples, who shared, in this way also, the fate of all the other peoples in the Russian empire. After more than three years of World War I, they too were plunged into civil war.

The respective strength of the forces arrayed in the Baltic was quite evident. The "Reds" were overwhelmingly superior to the small groups who raised the banner of social conservatism. Had the Latvians, Estonians, and Lithuanians been left to themselves, victory would have undoubtedly been won by the "Reds," backed as they were by the popular majority and by the only armed forces, the rifle corps.

But by this time the Baltic area was completely under German occupation. Until 1917 the Russian troops, in whose ranks the Latvians and Estonians fought, had held the Germans on the Daugavpils-Riga-Baranovichi line. After the eastern front collapsed, the Germans advanced. On September 3, 1917, von Ludendorff captured Riga, and by February 1918, following the break-off of the Brest-Litovsk negotiations, the Germans occupied Livonia and Estonia. The fate of the Baltic area was decided primarily by German officers who were under orders to master these provinces for colonization.

The defeat of Germany on the western front slightly complicated the situation. The Allied Commission appeared on the scene first under the English general, Sir Hubert Gough, later under the French general, Henri Albert Niessel, injecting a new force, which sought with one hand to oust the Germans and with the other to retain them in the Baltic area until the Bolshevik menace was eliminated. The point was that the Allies did not and could not have any military forces, with the

exception of a few warships. They were obliged to ask the Germans to "defend" the Baltic area from the Bolsheviks. Thus Article 12 of the Armistice Convention made its debut, providing that the Germans must evacuate all the territories formerly belonging to the Russian empire, but only "as soon as the Allies shall consider this desirable, having regard to the interior conditions of these territories."

In this connection the findings of the Royal Institute of International Affairs state: "It was the intention of the Allies that the German forces should do their utmost to stem the Bolshevik advances, and that, when their services were no longer needed, they should withdraw from the Baltic Provinces without reaping any political reward for their efforts."

"This was too much to expect," justly remarks the Royal Institute. The Germans, of course, employed the opportunity presented them to further the military tasks assigned the German Army in the East.

The head of the Allied Commission in the Baltic area, General Niessel,<sup>3</sup> relates how the German Admiral Hopmann, with whom he had an official talk in Berlin on November 8, 1919, while en route to Liepaja, insistently stressed that "The German troops in the Baltic countries are convinced they are fighting against the Bolsheviks. Their conviction has only been strengthened because the Entente until May has demanded that they remain in the Baltic area. I am certain that as soon as the Germans leave this area Bolshevism will rise again."

In this case it must be noted that the danger in question was not from Russian Bolshevism. After Brest-Litovsk the remnants of Russian troops were withdrawn from the Baltic, while the general situation was such that the Soviet leaders could not even have thought of revenge. The Bolsheviks had abandoned the Finnish, Latvian, Estonian, and Lithuanian socialists of the Leninist school, to whom they were attached with thousands



of organizational and ideological ties. They had done so with grave misgivings. For those who realized that without industrialization socialist Russia could not hold out, it was not easy to wave aside the best coastal industrial centers of Russia. But the Bolsheviks did so because there was no other way to defend and save the revolution in Russia. The revolution could not migrate from Russia to the Baltic area. But it could rise again, as Admiral Hopmann said, from the bosom of the native population, the revolutionary workers and peasants of Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and Finland. The German admiral had every reason to frighten General Niessel with the prospect that an internal revolution would break out in the Baltic area as soon as the Germans left.

What took place was downright intervention in the internal socio-political struggle raging among the Baltic peoples. The Allies' plan to have the Germans drive out the Bolsheviks and then get out themselves came to naught. By smashing the national movements in Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia and raising to high office corrupt politicians rescued from obscurity, the Germans wrecked the future of all these countries. Their activity was fraught with consequences for the entire subsequent life of the Baltic states. It was the same in Finland, where Mannerheim's employment of German troops to win out in the early civil strife ultimately led to the complete downfall of Finnish democracy.

#### GERMAN INTRIGUE

Flushed with the victories of 1915, the Germans in the Baltic area were not inclined to make deals with any local political forces whatever, except the Baltic barons. The territory was to be German and its population to be converted into Germans of a special type (the term used today would be Volksdeutsche, or

low-caste Germans), who would be subordinated to the soldier-farmer imported from the Reich.

But the year 1917 and the upset political situation in Europe compelled the Germans to employ more flexible means to the same ends. They suddenly realized that this Baltic territory, where the Germans never numbered above two per cent, was not so much German as Lithuanian, Latvian, and Estonian, after all. The setting up of at least the semblance of a local public administration had become an urgent necessity.

During the Brest-Litovsk negotiations and later, the Germans repeatedly laid out as a trump card their plan to create a German military government based on the local Landrats, which had passed countless resolutions on separation from Russia, annexation to Germany, the establishment of a Baltic monarchy, having personal bonds to the Prussian crown, et cetera. However, even then everyone knew the Landrats were only committees of the local barons, to which a limited number of chosen Latvians, Lithuanians, and Estonians were appointed. Only tried and trusted reprobates were admitted, and even these outcast natives sought to avoid voting in the Landrats, often doing so only under duress.

The first such Landrat was convened in Kurland, September 21, 1917. The Lithuanian Landrat assembled on the same day; the Livonian, on April 8, 1918; the Estonian, on April 9, 1918; and, finally, on April 12, 1918, the united Landrats of Estonia, Livonia, Ösel Island, and city of Riga convened, passing a decree that begged Wilhelm to accept the crown of the "Baltic Kingdom." The Kaiser at once benevolently gave his consent on April 21, following which von Hindenburg issued an order on the establishment in Berlin of the Kurland Colonization Company, with a capital of fifty million marks, to engage in the recruitment of colonists for the Baltic area. Another von Hindenburg order issued on June 17, 1918, obligated all Ger-

man landlords in the Baltic to sell not less than a third of their land to the colonization company. The Lebensraum (living space) was to be further expanded by the first contingent of colonists, who would themselves oust native peasants.

The German plans appeared near to fruition especially after Brest-Litovsk, when the Russians were obliged to concede to the Germans all the territory to the west of the Riga-Daugavpils-Lida-Pruzhany line and consent to the presence of German police forces in Livonia and Estonia.

After the Germans were defeated in the West, however, they were obliged to adopt a very subtle policy of almost incredible duplicity. One of the most talented generals of the German Army, Count Rüdiger von der Goltz, was dispatched to Liepaja on a mission more political than military. He was charged with the task of preserving German influence in the Baltic countries despite the collapse of the German armies, the victory of the Allies, the local national liberation movements, and the contagion of Bolshevism. In all fairness to this "political general," as he styled himself, it must be said that he accomplished his mission brilliantly.

Having already taken advantage of the weakened German pressure in December 1918, revolutionary Bolshevik organizations had seized power in Riga and Tallinn to establish Latvian and Estonian soviet republics whose power extended throughout Estonia, Livonia, Riga, Daugavpils and Kurland to Ventpils, embracing also a large part of Lithuania. On February 1, 1919, when von der Goltz arrived from Finland at Liepaja, headquarters of the German military forces in the Baltic area, he found little to encourage and much to dishearten him. The November events in Germany had demoralized the German soldiers in the Baltic, who wanted most of all to return home.

At the moment of von der Goltz's arrival, "the Bolsheviks

stood in a great ring around Libau [Liepaja], on the Windau [Venta River] with the front to the west and thence south of Goldingen [Kuldiga] with the front to the south." <sup>4</sup>

Besieged in this manner from three sides, Liepaja was also unsafe within. Von der Goltz feared the Liepaja workers, not less than six thousand of whom were armed. Of the forces under German command, the only reliable troops were the "Iron Division," composed of soldiers who were not subordinated to the Liepaja Soldatenrat, and the Landeswehr units under Colonel Fletscher, composed of local Baltic Germans. Also joined to the Landeswehr were small detachments under the Latvian colonel, later general, Karlis Balodis, and the Russian White guard detachment of Prince Lieven.

However, von der Goltz was able to win a series of victories over the Red troops less through his own strength than through the weakness and inexperience of his adversaries. Moreover, by this time the Red government of Latvia, ruled by unimaginative urban industrial workers and soldiers, had antagonized the peasantry through complete disregard and underestimation of agrarian problems. The way was thus opened for the pro-German Balodis and other conservative leaders to recruit small military bands among the peasants for the anti-Bolshevik campaign.

But the main blows were delivered by the Germans. They drove the Bolsheviks eastward, occupied Ventspils, then Riga, and forced the Red Latvian rifle corps to retreat into the interior of Russia, where they were rapidly shifted to other fronts in the civil war raging there. The Bolsheviks were driven from the north by Estonian units, to whom the Allies gave ample material assistance and the able support of Admiral Sinclair's British naval forces.

Previously, von der Goltz had occupied Finland, landing on Hangö to rescue the half-beaten White detachments of Manner-

heim. The Germans had every reason to believe that they had accomplished the task assigned them. Yet, as though with a catch in his voice, von der Goltz later admitted, "Only a few comprehended and silently tolerated the 'adventurous' policy of Count von der Goltz, for which I had waged a desperate struggle from March to October, 1919."

The local population, according to the count, consisted either of Bolsheviks in hiding, or at least of people who preferred the Bolsheviks to the Germans. After the Moor had done his work, had driven out the Bolsheviks, the Entente was anxious to get him off the stage. The Entente acted directly through the "Allied Commission" and the puppet "national" governments who, seeing their German card was trumped, had hurriedly beaten a retreat to the Allied camp. The Latvian government of Ulmanis, for instance, was quartered on board an English ship anchored in Liepaja harbor.

Von der Goltz tried to face the Allies with an accomplished fact. On April 16, with the assistance of local Germans, he carried out a "state revolution." The otherwise powerless Ulmanis was formally deposed, and to complete the delusion a new "national" government was proclaimed, with Pastor Niedra at the head.

The German troops were supposed to disappear. Therefore, in September 1919, von der Goltz obligingly handed over the command to the comic-opera General Bermond, who sometimes posed as Prince Avalov. A muster of German officers decided to merge von der Goltz's army into Bermond's "Russian army." From the German, Colonel Fletscher, an English officer took over command of the German Landeswehr. The famous von der Goltz-Bermond adventure was launched with the purpose of using the Baltic area as a springboard for a big campaign against Russia. Thereby the Germans hoped to gain at least the tolerance, if not the co-operation, of the Allies and also to

establish closer connections with the White guard detachments of Yudenich and others then operating in northwestern Russia. A special Baltic mission headed by von Rosenberg, a cavalry captain, arrived, bringing along detachments of White guards recruited from among Russian war prisoners. These were merged into Bermond's army, in the detachments of Sobolevsky, Virgolich, and others.

But what the Baltic Germans needed was a German Baltic, their own estates and a docile peasantry. They bothered the German commander, imploring him to establish order even before the larger undertakings were launched. In this atmosphere the idea of the Bermond's *Putsch* was born, an attempt to seize Riga from the Latvians. Von der Goltz explains that he began open warfare against the Latvians and Estonians, who were allied to the Entente, because it was the only way to face the Allies with an accomplished fact and compel them to consent to the German colonization of the Baltic area.

Bermond's adventure failed. His forces were smashed by the Latvian-Estonian regiments and by the gunfire from English warships in Riga. The Germans were obliged to evacuate completely, which they did in December 1919, greatly disheartened but resolved to return. At the first opportunity they began to prepare for retaliation. With pride von der Goltz writes that the Baltic Germans were the first military men whom Hitler was able to recruit.

"Thus the Baltic fighters are not only those of the last front and the last to remain with the enemy. They are almost the very first soldier fighters for the new Germany, the Third Reich."

Von der Goltz's activity in the Baltic was not without consequence. He did not fail to leave his mark on the future Baltic republics, since he installed unprincipled politicians who during both the World and the civil wars rushed about between the Germans and the Allies, a policy of dissimulation they later

continued to pursue. During the momentous months of 1938-1939 the Baltic republics were headed by unbridled dictators. Although chiefs of state, they were still the same petty politicians who, at the cradle of these republics, had traded the national interests by wholesale and retail. They could not do otherwise than mislead their countries into the Fascist bog.

#### HOW THE "NATIONAL FÜHRERS" ROSE TO PROMINENCE

The role of these statesmen during the stormy months of the German occupation and the civil war is worthy of close attention. During those days Antanas Smetona,\* not without notoriety today, first rose to prominence in Lithuania.

The country had been governed by German occupation authorities from 1915. At first the Germans would not condescend to negotiate with representatives of the lower Lithuanian race. But after the 1917 events in Russia, it became impossible to restrain the population by military terrorism alone. German "political" generals began to search for support in the local reactionary circles. With their co-operation the so-called Taryba (Lithuanian National Council), was set up. At the insistence of the German command not a single progressive statesman was admitted. In September 1917 the Taryba issued its first public statement, formally called the "declaration on the independence of the Lithuanian state." But the "independence" was of a special kind, for in the same declaration the Taryba appealed to the German empire for aid, asking that it be honored with a military, economic, and customs union!

At that time the president of the Taryba and the author of

\* He is now in America, having come here from Germany. After the change in government in Lithuania in 1940, Smetona fled to his friends in Berlin. With their blessing he set out on the long voyage to America shortly before the outbreak of the Russo-German War. In this country he poses as a representative of democratic Lithuania.

the declaration was Antanas Smetona. On March 23, 1918, Smetona was handed the mandate of the Kaiser, who declared himself pleased to sanction Lithuanian "independence" on the basis of the Taryba resolution.

Influenced by news of the course of the Brest-Litovsk negotiations, a section of the Taryba revolted against the leadership and even passed by majority vote a resolution on the necessity to convene a constituent assembly. Then the German general staff resorted to a new ruse, launching the idea of a Lithuanian monarchy joined in personal union with one of the German states. Rising to the occasion, the adroit politicians, Smetona and Voldemaras, at once caught up the idea, and on June 14, 1918, against a majority opposition in the Taryba, invited the Württemberg duke, Wilhelm von Urach, to the Lithuanian throne. To sugar-coat the pill for the Lithuanians, Smetona dug up a certain relative of Duke Wilhelm, whose royal lineage supposedly traced from the original Lithuanian King Mindaugas himself. Everything seemed in perfect order.

But the throne toppled and fell in Germany itself. Smetona had to make his way without a scion of the Lithuanian royal family. In November 1918 he declared himself ruler jointly with two collaborators—Staugaitis and Šilingas—and commissioned Voldemaras to form a cabinet.

Such was the origin of Lithuanian democracy. During a few subsequent years liberal circles were able to oust Smetona and Voldemaras, who, however, again seized power in 1926 and led their country rapidly without deviation to a new capitulation before their old patrons, the German militarists.

In Latvia the pattern of forces which led the state from a corrupt democracy to complete Fascism was also shaped in the troubled years of 1918-1919. Here, likewise, the German command, after failing to establish a formal basis for incorporation in the Reich through Landrat resolutions, searched for sup-



port in local circles. The need for native support became especially urgent after the German defeat of the West.

The German representative in Riga at that time was a cunning diplomat, August Winnig, who although a member of the Social Democratic party, zealously looked after German plans for conquest. On November 18, 1918, and with his benediction, the "national" government headed by Ulmanis was set up in Riga. A week later Winnig presented Ulmanis with the formal recognition of the German government. Then, after a second week passed, on December 2, Winnig and Ulmanis signed an agreement providing for the establishment of the German Landeswehr on the territory of Latvia. Ulmanis undertook the obligation of granting land to forty thousand German soldiers and accepting them as Latvian citizens, in this manner giving official sanction to long-cherished German dreams for colonizing the Baltic area with soldiers.

The future "Führer of the Latvian people" thus emerged on the political arena. His devotees abroad in later years conveniently forgot this page of his biography, emphasizing instead that Ulmanis studied farming somewhere in the state of Nebraska. But the Germans did not forget his promissory note, and during 1936-1939 demanded payment in full. Nor did the Latvian peasantry forget, defeating their "beloved Führer" at elections until, after becoming dictator, he no longer cared about elections. He used to obtain a seat in the Saeijma (Diet) only because of party discipline in his "Peasants' Union," several of whose candidates declined mandates in his favor.

In Latvia the Landeswehr (home defense) came to be known as the Landeszvers (home beasts), because instead of protecting the native population the Landeswehr perpetrated brutal outrages against it. It was a military tool of the German landed gentry and was used on April 16, 1919, to carry out a *coup*

*d'état*, seating in the presidential chair Pastor Niedra, whom the Latvians declared a national traitor. In this way the German barons countered the Ulmanis intrigue with the Entente. At that time Ulmanis sought refuge on an English warship anchored in Liepaja harbor. Seeing, however, that power was on the side of the Landeswehr and von der Goltz, this worthy national statesman immediately decided to betray his English patrons. Ulmanis opened negotiations with von der Goltz, who has written as follows about this malodorous episode: "Ulmanis was to have entered the government and his adherents were to receive seven-twelfths of the ministerial chairs. Niedra was to have been sacrificed." <sup>5</sup>

The general rejected this proposal, suspecting intrigue on the part of the Allies. But he recognized later that he had been mistaken: "The later development has shown that both the Baltic Germans and the Right Latvians with energetic and skillful action could perhaps have been able to work tolerably with the very clever Herr Ulmanis, had he been separated from his evil ministerial colleagues."

No less adroit than Ulmanis in recommending himself to the Germans was his future war minister and accomplice in the organizing of a Fascist *Putsch*, General Karlis Balodis. He came to prominence in December 1918 as commander of a Latvian detachment under the German Landeswehr commanded by Fletscher and later, under the general command of von der Goltz. Second in command of the Latvian detachment was Colonel Kalpaks, who was, however, in German disfavor for being too independent. Since fate usually serves those who can master it, this officer was "accidentally" killed by Landeswehr soldiers. According to the von der Goltz version, the men of the Landeswehr, unable in the darkness to distinguish between friend and foe, opened fire on Kalpaks' detachment and managed by chance to kill the ill-favored commander.

But Balodis had ingratiated himself with the German command. He served them to the utmost of his ability. He even took part in preparation of the *Putsch* carried out by the Landeswehr on April 16, informing the Germans about the weak spots in Ulmanis's government. However, at the last moment this brave soldier ran for cover and took no part in the overthrow. Yet he continued to collaborate with the new government set up by von der Goltz.<sup>6</sup>

Although the situation in Estonia at the time was less reprehensible, the persons in power were devoid of public support and maintained themselves chiefly through the courtesy of the local Allied commanders. Their faithful service to the Anglo-French control commission, however, gave them a flair for international intrigue. Later, when Hitler became master in the Baltic, they served him with equal zeal. In passing, the record of Päts, who became dictator of Estonia, is recalled. He also connived with the Germans. In 1918, when he feared internal disorder in Estonia, Päts sent a delegation to the German commander of Saaremaa (Ösel) Island, asking for armed assistance. On February 24, 1918, the troops of General von Seckendorff occupied Tallinn.

With characters such as Smetona, Ulmanis, and Päts playing decisive roles in their parliamentary regimes, the Baltic nations were naturally led into many disastrous pitfalls. But when subsequently, and coincident with the Nazi intrigue directed to prepare for Hitler's conquests, they became the actual dictators of the Baltic countries, the fatal die was cast.

A measure of responsibility also lies with certain Allied politicians, who, to erect a wall against Bolshevism, prolonged the German occupation in the Baltic area. This gave von der Goltz an opportunity to seat in power the pro-German politicians who later misled the nascent Baltic democracies into the camp of reaction and potential Fascism.

**PART II**

**BETWEEN TWO WORLD WARS**

## *The Baltic Lungs*

### RECOGNITION OF THE BALTIC STATES BY THE GREAT POWERS

Early in 1920 neither German soldiers nor armed Bolsheviks remained in the Baltic area. In December 1919 the last echelon of German troops to depart was escorted by the mixed Allied Commission under General Henri Niessel; in January 1920 the Latvian Bolsheviks were driven by the Polish army from Latgale, the last district held by the Reds in southern Latvia.

The "national" governments, now the sole local power, had clarified their affiliations. With the Germans removed, both Ulmanis and Smetona definitely leaned for support on the Allies. But the great powers still wavered in recognizing the Baltic republics *de jure*.\*

The reason was that neither in Europe nor in America did anyone then question Russia's need for an outlet on the Baltic Sea. Detachment of the Baltic provinces from the former empire was thought tantamount to asphyxiation of Russia by carving out her lungs. This was just what some influential circles wanted. But there were others who, for various reasons, objected to the strangulation of Russia.

\* The Baltic republics had been granted *de facto* recognition by the Allied powers at varied dates during 1918-1919.

The hope that the Bolsheviks would be deposed and czarism restored in Russia inspired one group of those who opposed recognizing the independence of the Baltic states. Therefore, they were anxious to preserve the territorial integrity of Russia. Other, more fair-minded, opponents of recognition were simply unreconciled to the idea of creating lifeless microscopic state formations at the expense of Russia, who had been a belligerent ally and had sacrificed much in the common struggle. This was evidently the viewpoint of President Wilson, and for a long time the United States Department of State defended the idea that it was undesirable to create independent Baltic states.

In 1919 Secretary of State Robert Lansing declared, regarding the Baltic situation: "The Baltic Provinces of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia shall be autonomous States of a Russian Confederation." <sup>1</sup>

The same views were repeatedly expressed in statements of other American officials. It should be noted that the corresponding chapter in the official *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States* (for the year 1920) is entitled: "Baltic Provinces: Continued Refusal by the United States to Recognize the Governments in the Baltic Provinces."

Norman H. Davis, Acting Secretary of State, answering a letter from the Lithuanian Minister of Foreign Affairs, A. Vileišis, said: "The American people sympathize with the desire of the non-Russian people along the border for the largest possible measure of self-government, but it believes that any attempt to reach a permanent settlement of the complex problems involved without the consultation and cordial consent of a government generally recognized as representing the great Russian people will be futile." <sup>2</sup>

When, in July 1922, the American government finally yielded to pressure and decided to recognize the Baltic re-

publics, it was emphasized that the United States took notice of the actual existence of these governments and nothing more.

Secretary of State Charles E. Hughes made it clear on July 25, 1922, pointing out: "The United States has consistently maintained that the disturbed conditions of Russian affairs may not be made the occasion for the alienation of Russian territories, and this principle is not deemed to be infringed by the recognition at this time of the governments of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania which have been set up and maintained by indigenous population." <sup>3</sup>

"At this time" was the limit of obligations of the United States government. By no means was it implied that the situation was permanent and that the United States guaranteed its immutability. On the contrary, the report of Evan Young, American High Commissioner in Riga, published together with the declaration of the Department of State, plainly indicated that leading men in the Baltic region were under no illusions as to the future relations of these states to Russia and realized that with an orderly, well-established government in Russia, the Baltic provinces would again become part of Russia. Young further reported to his government: "It is not improbable that through the operation of fundamental economic laws these countries will become a part of a federated Russia or will retain autonomous powers but will be linked with the Russian government through close economic and political treaties and agreements." <sup>4</sup>

American statesmen simply did not believe that workable state and economic systems could be reconstituted from fragments of the Russian empire. Later events proved how right they were and how much more farsighted than contemporary English and French statesmen.

Even the European powers were not enthusiastic about recognition of the Baltic states. In a surprising turn of history,

their recognition was actually hastened by none other than Russia. The Soviet government was the first state to recognize them *de jure*: Estonia on February 2, 1920, Lithuania on July 12, and Latvia on August 11. This recognition was granted in the form of peace treaties signed with each of the Baltic states: with Estonia in Tartu, with Lithuania in Moscow, and with Latvia in Riga.

These peace treaties regulated disputes about mutual frontiers, reparations, repatriation of refugees, demobilization of White detachments then operating in the territory of the Baltic states, et cetera. The Soviet-Lithuanian treaty provided also that the frontier between Poland and Lithuania must be established by mutual agreement of the Polish and Lithuanian states. Inasmuch as Poland had gained Vilna by aggressive seizure, neither the Soviet nor the Lithuanian governments ever subsequently recognized the Polish occupation of Vilna.

In concluding those treaties the Soviet government acted like an accomplished journeyman who with his finger caught in a machine, cut it off to save his hand.

For hard-pressed Russia the treaties with the Baltic states meant the removal of at least one front and a small breach in the Allied blockade. The Soviet treaty with Estonia was the first general agreement to be concluded between the Soviet Union and a bourgeois state.

After this, the great powers could do nothing else but recognize the Baltic states themselves, the more so because the "northwest" army of Yudenich had by this time been defeated. England and France recognized Estonia and Latvia *de jure* on January 26, 1921, while at the end of the same year both were accepted into the League of Nations. But Lithuania was able to gain recognition only in December 1921, because the great powers could not make up their minds about the Vilna controversy between Lithuania and Poland.



In this manner the great powers sanctioned an accomplished fact. After the Bolsheviks had recognized the Baltic countries, further wavering of England and France could only drive these new states into Russia's embrace, and that was quite undesirable.

#### NASCENT POPULAR MOVEMENTS AND ELEMENTS OF DECAY

From the beginning, the course of independent state development in the Baltic countries was marked by two conflicting trends, at times interwoven, at others mutually obstructive, with the result that the general situation became extremely complicated.

One trend was represented in the pressure exerted by the newly liberated native peoples in Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. With youthful zeal the Latvians, Estonians, and Lithuanians energetically applied themselves to the restoration of their ravaged countries. Astonishing results were achieved in education, public welfare, and the arts.

The political ideas of the Baltic peoples were inspired with the militant democratic spirit of their long struggle for national and social rights. After going through the school of two revolutionary uprisings, the Baltic working class had become politically mature.

The emancipated peasantry were immensely enthusiastic and, after radical agrarian reforms had distributed among them land of the baronial estates, they wielded vast influence on the economic life.

Opposing this upsurge of forward-looking public spirit were other forces bearing the seeds of decay and ruin. The equivocal policy of the Versailles statesmen gave the German occupation authorities enough leeway for them to dismember the political forces whose program was a direct succession of the prolonged

liberation struggle waged by the Baltic peoples. All four Baltic states, Finland and Latvia in particular, inherited from von der Goltz corrupt government cliques which converted their countries into colonies and followed an economic policy of maximum dependence at first on England, later on Germany.

As is customary in colonial or semicolonial countries, the economy itself was subordinated to politics. Economic measures were accepted or rejected on considerations of foreign policy on the approval or disapproval expressed by the current master power.

This was illustrated vividly in the conflict between the two main trends of public economy in the eastern Baltic: the opposition between agrarian and industrial life.

#### AGRARIANISM VERSUS INDUSTRIALIZATION

Before World War I the Baltic provinces within the Russian empire were largely industrial areas. The industrialization of Latvia and Estonia and the development of an extensive railway system began at the end of the nineteenth century. Before the outbreak of war in 1914 the country had metal, rubber, textile, shipbuilding, and canning plants developed around big industrial centers like Riga, Tallinn, and Liepaja. Riga, for example, had about 90,000 industrial workers in a total population of half a million (482,000 in 1913).

In the prewar Baltic, industrial expansion was extremely rapid. The following table illustrates this growth in Latvia.<sup>5</sup>

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of plants</i>	<i>Number of workers</i>
1874.	150	13,000
1900.	.520	65,000
1910.	.650	93,000
1914.	.810	113,000

In Estonia industrial workers numbered more than 50,000 by 1914.

Baltic manufacture was to a large degree concentrated in heavy industry, such as machine building, metal fabrication, and chemical production. It operated on imported raw materials and produced largely for export.

The Baltic area in general played an important part in the foreign trade of Russia; not less than a third of the total pre-war foreign commerce of Russia was transshipped through Baltic ports. During the period from 1909 to 1913 the distribution of Russian foreign trade according to border points was as follows:

<i>Border points</i>	<i>Percentage of total turnover</i>
White Sea	1.2
Baltic Sea	32.0
Western overland	31.1
German border	24.3
Finnish border	3.5
Asiatic outlets	7.9

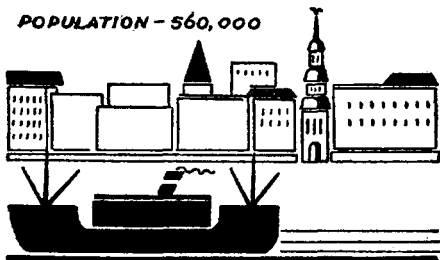
After World War I the situation was radically changed. There was, first of all, vast devastation caused by the world conflict, the civil war, and the German occupation. Industrial machines and workers had been evacuated from the Baltic. The organic connection with the mighty hinterland of Russia, which had provided raw materials and the best markets, was broken. The whole industrial structure had to be reconstructed. From the very beginning a conflict rose between two economic trends. The Baltic area stood at an economic crossroads, facing the question of either industrialization or agrarianism.

Industrialization meant concentration of public effort on the

1913

RĪGA

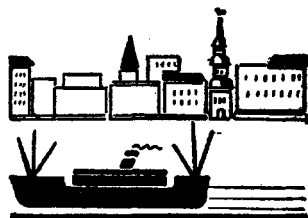
POPULATION - 560,000



SHIPPING - 2 million tons

1939

POPULATION - 385,000



SHIPPING - 1/4 million tons

LIEPĀJA



POPULATION - 95,000



SHIPPING - 825,000 tons



POPULATION - 57,000



SHIPPING - 300,000 tons

WORKERS IN METAL AND CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES

ESTONIA

1913

1939



22,000



10,000

LATVIA

1913

1939



45,000



26,000

CHART 2. DECLINE OF BALTIC URBAN LIFE

restoration of industry to the prewar level and progressive industrial expansion thereafter. The social and political consequences of this course were clear: the number of industrial workers would increase with a resulting proportional growth of radical and socialist political views; economic ties with the Soviet Union would be strengthened, because otherwise the Baltic factories would be unable either to dispose of their products or to obtain the necessary raw materials for production.

The path of industrialization was fervently advocated by progressive circles whose members argued that a strong industry would stabilize the agrarian economy by providing it with a home market among the urban workers and thus make native agriculture less dependent on the fluctuations of the world market for farm products. This course, it was shown, would provide the best foundation both for national welfare and for politico-economic independence.

But the path of agrarianism was chosen instead. The choice was made under the influence of Baltic chiefs of state who enjoyed the powerful support of England and played on the primitive aspirations born of the agrarian reforms.

Not only were these statesmen reconciled to the ruin of Baltic industry; they declared it was "good fortune." In Estonia it even became extremely popular in 1922 to shout the silly slogan "Away with Heavy Industry."

All measures were taken to retard the development of heavy industry to strengthen the position of agriculture in the economic life of the Baltic states. Behind this policy stood a political grouping, acting in close collaboration with the master foreign power and finding support at home among what were called the "gray barons," or newly rich peasants. The "implications" of this policy were that the peasantry—or, more precisely, its most active and conscious segment, the rich peasants

—had become the backbone of the country, and the workers were doomed to vegetate in various service industries or in undersized factories producing for the tiny local market. In foreign policy it meant orientation on that great power which purchased the farm products; concretely, on England or Germany. Moreover, this meant the absence of local capital resources, with consequent dependence on banks abroad.

The Baltic states chose this course only because of pressure from outside and because their leading statesmen wanted to fence them off from Russia. Had the native people been left to themselves they would, no doubt, have sought a way out of the impasse into which the policy of semiforced agrarianism had driven them. For this agrarian policy created in the Baltic area a morbid atmosphere of desolate despair.

The flourishing industrial cities for which the Baltic was celebrated before the war withered away. Vacant factory buildings were mute testimony in the once busy centers of Riga, Tallinn, Pärnu, Liepāja. There, amid dust-covered heaps of scrap metal and dilapidated equipment, could be seen off in some adjoining corner, what became the customary tiny artisan machine shop, sometimes still exhibiting to passers-by the once proud name of the former industrial establishment.

Some fifteen to twenty years after the end of the civil war, when industry in Russia was making giant strides ahead, the factories of Latvia and Estonia still resembled such sad reminders of the "industrial establishment" of 1918–1920, when, finding a spot in the corner of a former factory building, workers produced cigarette lighters by hand.

Vacated in Tallinn were the Russo-Baltic shipbuilding docks, which before the war employed 5,000 workers, and the Dvigatel car-building works, where 15,000 workers were once engaged, was closed down in Riga. The Becker wire-drawing mill in Liepāja, which once had 10,000 workers, gave part-time em-

ployment to less than a thousand. The huge Krenholm textile mills in Narva, which in 1914 had 12,000 workers, was reduced to 2,000.

Whereas the manufacture of the Baltic provinces within the old Russian empire concentrated chiefly on heavy industry for export—machine building, metal fabrication, and chemical production—that which was developed in independent Latvia, for instance, confined itself to those branches producing consumer goods for the home market. In 1937, of the total industrial output in Latvia, about twenty-seven per cent was food-stuffs, nineteen per cent textiles and fifteen to eighteen per cent for other branches of light industry. Machine building, metal fabrication, and chemical production did not reach even a quarter of the prewar output.

Huge establishments had marked the earlier industrial development in the Russian Baltic, where the number of workers employed in three or four plants of the rubber, car-building, and metal fabrication industries, with 10,000 to 15,000 workers each, comprised about fifty per cent of the total number of industrial workers. In the new Baltic republics industry was confined wholly to small plants. In Latvia, for example, about ninety per cent of all enterprises employed less than twenty workers each.

The same was true also in Estonia, where, in comparison with the period before 1914, the number of workers employed in the metal industry was reduced from 17,000 to 4,000, in the textile industry from 19,000 to 9,000.

The one-time busy Baltic ports were even more desolate and neglected. In the port of Riga rare English, German, and small local merchant vessels would drop anchor from time to time, but what a comedown from the glory of the past, when a third of the Russian empire's foreign trade passed through the Baltic ports. Ships hardly ever called at the ports of Liepaja, Ventspils,

or Tallinn, although they had port installations scaled to handle entire fleets.

Just prior to World War I the Liepaja roadstead had been enlarged to provide anchorage for the entire Russian Baltic fleet. After the war huge traveling cranes stood motionless on the deserted docks and grain elevators were unused—a sad commentary on the general hopeless outlook.

Tracks on the railways were rusty and empty warehouses showed disrepair. The decay of transit railways bore perhaps most striking witness to the tragic fate of the Baltic countries, which were cut off from the organism that had nourished them. All the railways in the Baltic area were essentially terminal spurs of lines driven out from Russia. Riga, Dvinsk (Daugavpils), and Kaunas were railway junctions where wide-gauge Russian lines ended and standard-gauge European lines began. Here, before the war, all outbound and inbound transit freight was reloaded for shipment, either on standard-gauge cars to Europe or on wide-gauge ones to Russia. Into the port centers railways had been driven to connect central and even Asiatic Russia with the "window on Europe." When this transit freight was discontinued or greatly reduced, the railway junctions of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia became ghost towns. Young people sought escape by going to the capital cities, which had an influx of officials and tourists, because of the central state institutions, and lived a life apart from the general depression.

But even the capitals of the Baltic states, Riga and Tallinn, ignoring the small town of Kaunas, which had been converted into a capital, never did recover their former flourishing status. Riga remained also less densely populated than before the war.

With reduced populations these fine, well-built cities of the best European architecture were an oppressive burden on the people of the tiny Baltic nations, whose "heads" had grown too big.





## THE PERMANENT CRISIS OF AGRICULTURE

The aftermath of these interwoven political and economic policies was that the Baltic countries became almost exclusively agrarian lands, in which agriculture had so outgrown the neglected urban economy that it could thrive only on the export of farm products. The chiefs of the Baltic states had "voluntarily" created a situation such as Hitler is now achieving in Rumania, Bulgaria, and other Balkan countries and, to some degree, also in France. Under Nazi control local industry in these countries is *verboten*, either being destroyed where it already exists or being given no chance to develop, while local agriculture is promoted to convert these countries into bread baskets for the Reich. The Nazi policy is, however, only partially successful. The industry of conquered countries has been thoroughly ruined, except for war plants which produce for Germany; but somehow agriculture has not gained thereby, for it is no less retarded than is industry.

The results were the same in the Baltic area. Since local agriculture was dependent on the foreign market, its development was subject to constantly changing price levels on the world farm products market and to alterations of the political situation. The opportunity for normal development was absent, and during all these interwar years the structure of Baltic economy continued to rock on this unstable foundation, more shifting than the sand dunes on the Baltic shores. The curve of agricultural growth in the Baltic countries is not a rising one, as should be expected from states which have made a "peasant policy" their watchword. The curve goes from crisis to crisis, with sweeping drops between, and following each drop it begins again the slow painful climb upward to the next crisis.

In 1928, before the big depression, former Minister of Finances in Latvia, J. Blumbergs, speaking at a conference of

the Latvijas Lauksaimnieku Centrālā Savienība (Central Association of Latvian Farmers), complained: "The agricultural crisis which began several years ago is becoming ever more acute. The situation in the countryside goes from bad to worse. It is no longer a question merely of a crisis, but of the very existence of agriculture as such."

During the following years the situation did not improve, while from 1930 onward it became catastrophic, giving rise to strong Fascist tendencies and the baffling "rope dancer" economic policy carried out by the dictator governments.

The development of agriculture in the Baltic states during the interim between the two World Wars can be broken down into three characteristic historical phases.

The first phase was the institution of agrarian reforms. As a result of the Russian revolution, and under its influence, extremely radical reallocations of land were carried out in all these Baltic countries. The land was taken away from the landed gentry, who, for the most part, were the Baltic German barons in Estonia and Latvia, and the Polish, Lithuanian, and Russian noblemen in Lithuania. In Latvia and Estonia the former landowners received no reparation, while in Lithuania they were given nominal compensation in ostmarks, which rapidly became valueless.

Until 1919 about sixty per cent of the land area in Estonia was in the hands of landowners holding about twelve hundred estates, with an average acreage of more than 2,000 hectares (5,000 acres). The agrarian reform was designed to redistribute this land among landless and poor peasants. However, a large part of the expropriated land fell into the hands of rich peasants, political leaders, military men. This is shown most clearly by the findings of the agricultural census, according to which, in 1929, there were in Estonia 46,000 farms of less than ten hectares (half being less than five hectares), 28,000 farms of

from thirty to one hundred hectares, and five hundred landowner estates of more than one hundred hectares. The number of hirelings had reached 66,500.

The reform of 1920 in Latvia affected more than forty-eight per cent of the total land domain, which until the war had been in the hands of big landowners. Each Kurland baronial estate had on the average about 2,000 desiatins (5,400 acres), much larger, in fact, than the Russian landed estates which averaged from five hundred to six hundred desiatins. This landowning stratum was eliminated by the agrarian reform. However, political corruption and a patronizing attitude to rich peasants contributed to keep low the standards of the average peasants. Out of the total of 225,000 farms, 160,000 had plots of less than twenty hectares (two-thirds of these were less than ten hectares), and 50,000 had farmsteads exceeding the quota of twenty-seven hectares per farm set by the agrarian reform law. Of these latter farms 18,000 had plots of from fifty to one hundred hectares, and 2,000 farmsteads had above one hundred hectares. One entire Latvian southern district, Latgale, consisted mainly of landless and poor peasants who became a source of cheap labor for the well-to-do farms of Livonia and Kurland.

The agrarian reform led to similar results in Lithuania, where in 1931 there were 132,000 farms of less than ten hectares, and 93,000 farms of from ten to twenty hectares.

Although the Baltic agrarian reforms eliminated in this way the power of the old landed gentry, they laid the basis, however, for a new class struggle among the peasants in the Baltic countries. The peasants became much more differentiated in rank than they had ever been before, when the lot of all peasants, oppressed by a small landowner class, was equally miserable.

As time went on, this differentiation became increasingly

marked. The small farmers could never get out of debt to the state for agricultural machines, for timber which had become generally state property, for land even, since in Estonia land was "leased" by the state. They also became indebted to banks and rich peasants. For a time public auctions of bankrupt farms were a common sight. Every period of crisis, with rising demands for funds to withstand rapidly falling prices, brought its crop of ruined farmers, who sold out under the auctioneer's hammer. Moreover, the economic policy of all the Baltic governments, whether under democratic or dictator control, was guided by the interests of the "gray barons." Consequently, support was generally given to those branches of agriculture in which the small farmer was at a disadvantage. Moreover, since the "gray barons" needed farm labor, the elimination of small farms was to some extent carried out by design.

Following the reforms then, the second phase of agrarian development was marked by an increasing differentiation in rank among the peasants and by the reorientation of agriculture in Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia. The sown area under rye, oats, barley, and flax expanded slowly, scarcely reaching the prewar level. Only the acreage under wheat was greatly expanded to compensate for the loss of wheat formerly imported from the Ukraine. The Ukrainian supply was now cut off because a guiding aim of the new orientation was to erect a wall isolating the Baltic states from Russia.

While grain farms developed unevenly, dairy and livestock farms were liberally encouraged. Compared to prewar output the production of butter and bacon was immensely increased in Latvia, Estonia, and in Lithuania, particularly.

This enlarged output was not intended, however, for the more or less stable home market; it was exclusively for export and, therefore, susceptible to price fluctuations and competition on the market abroad. The result was that when prices

plunged disastrously in 1930 and competition sharpened accordingly, the small Baltic states lacked resources to meet such powerful competitors as the Soviet Union and Denmark.

Competition with stronger nations constantly imperiled two other export branches of national economy in the Baltic states: the production of flax and mast timber. Here, as generally in Baltic foreign commerce, much depended on finding foreign financiers to subsidize the export trade. Indeed, there were almost no local capital resources.

The crisis of 1931 marked the beginning of the third phase in the development of the Baltic national economy, a phase in which its semicolonial character and hopeless condition became most clearly evident.

On the world market prices took a catastrophic drop. All countries began to introduce quotas restricting the import of farm produce. An era of economic isolation began. In the Baltic states the economic system knocked together for better or worse simply collapsed.

The resultant depression and unemployment culminated in the political disturbances of 1932–1933, when Fascist regimes were set up. At their heads, especially in Latvia, were arrant gamblers who regarded the public economy as their own private concern and, with misappropriated public funds, plunged into an orgy of speculation. In Latvia alone about forty new joint stock companies sprang up, all of them associated in some way with the name of Ulmanis and his protégés. The clear profits of these companies rose from six million lats in 1933 to eighteen million in 1937, and meanwhile the rate of profit had increased from 3.4 to 8.3 per cent.<sup>6</sup>

The Ulmanis-sponsored joint stock companies engaged in all kinds of shady business transactions, from the construction of the Kegums power station, where no power was required, to the erection of the fashionable health resort in Kenneri for

rich tourists who never came. They also put up fine buildings to house the government, which was in turn, by cunning schemes, made to foot the bill for everything. They speculated on the stock exchange with the investments of small depositors in savings banks and even with postal savings, despoiled the state timber reserves, and saddled the countries with foreign debts. The public-tax press was screwed down to the limit, and finally the lats exchange rate was devaluated by forty per cent.

An impression of economic activity was thus created. But the motions were not those of a healthy organism. Rather they resembled the convulsions of a dead frog galvanized into action. The electric charge remained export trade, or what was left of it. For out of sheer political considerations—the fear of losing control in the Baltic area—England and Germany had established for Baltic products quotas relatively favorable, but offering little prospect for expansion.

The economic position of the Baltic countries in 1938 was summed up by the Royal Institute of International Affairs in London as follows: “ the economic prosperity of the Baltic states depends largely on their export trade, and this, in turn, depends largely upon the United Kingdom. Provided, therefore, that they can maintain the commercial relations they have built up with that country since 1934, and that agricultural prices do not fall substantially below present levels, the stability of their present economic existence should be assured so long as the respective governments can avoid the dangers of State capitalism. But this means little more, in the last resort, than that the current income of the economic system will roughly suffice to cover current outgoings, and that the standard of living will remain at or around its present level. If reserves are to be accumulated, whether to endure against a future depression or to finance the development needed to raise the standard of living, foreign capital will be indispensable.” 7

## *The Cordon Sanitaire*

The political philosophy animating Europe's rulers in 1918 has been expressed without ambiguity by Lord Bertie, then British Ambassador to France, who wrote in his diary: "Bolshevism is a contagious disease. The Entente must establish an old-fashioned quarantine to guard against infection. . . " <sup>1</sup>

To do so, the English diplomat deemed the following steps necessary. "If," he wrote, "we can achieve the independence of the buffer states, that is, Finland, Poland, Estonia, the Ukraine, et cetera, and whatever others we can fabricate, then in my opinion let the rest be damned and stew in its own juice." <sup>2</sup>

The power policy pursued by the victor nations in 1918 was patently designed for wider objectives than the solution of urgent socio-economic problems within the "fabricated" quarantine zone. For the Entente, the Baltic states in themselves had little significance. The Baltic states were erected as a political tool for negotiation with Germany and pressure on Soviet Russia, as a link in the "policy of barbed-wire entanglement from the Arctic Ocean to the Black Sea," as Clemenceau aptly expressed it.

If this was true in 1918, it remained so during two subsequent decades. As late as 1938 British official circles estimated the international significance of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithu-



ania thus, in a report of the Royal Institute of International Affairs: "Together with Poland, they form a buffer between two first-class modern powers, the Third German Reich and the Soviet Union." <sup>3</sup>

The report proceeded: "If either Russia or Germany were to take possession of these countries, the Baltic Sea would be in danger of becoming little more than a private lake."

The British policy in the eastern Baltic area, pursued consistently from 1918 to 1938 and especially during the Moscow talks, therefore aimed to keep both Germany and Russia out. To the conservative mind of the Tory governments, the Baltic countries represented a double-faced imperial rampart on the continent, one face turned against Russia, the other against Germany. However, as with many other such ramparts, it was strong only in appearance, and caved in when assaulted.

After 1933 England steadily yielded her Baltic bastion to Hitlerite Germany, which reaped the benefits of prolonged Tory intrigue. The complete bankruptcy of Downing Street's antiquated policy was revealed most strikingly when Germany, in accord with the dictates of *Hochpolitik*, was obliged to submit to Soviet pressure and evacuate the Baltic area. When the Soviet Union took over control of Baltic destiny, she had to deal with Germany alone. Without even being fully aware of it, Britain had long since yielded hegemony in the Baltic to Germany.

But until German military might had been restored, the Baltic countries were political vassals and semicolonies of Great Britain. The result was that the Baltic nations were driven into an economic impasse which, according to English economists, rendered hopeless any efforts to improve their living standards or to develop local productive forces, except through ever-increasing dependence on foreign finance capital.

Politically the Baltic capitals became hotbeds of interna-

tional intrigue, wherein the Baltic states themselves were merely small change to bargain with. The sponsors neither sought for nor encouraged as collaborators genuine native leaders held in high public esteem. They preferred to deal with less scrupulous but more compliant politicians. Over a period of years Baltic diplomacy grew accustomed to being kept by someone. No sooner had Nazi Germany's stocks risen on the world exchange than the Baltic diplomats fluttered into Hitler's embrace.

Orientation on Hitlerite Germany, from 1934 to 1939, did not signify for the Baltic states a lapse in their customary political or diplomatic morals. Subordination of foreign policy to one or another powerful patron state had become habitual for the postwar state leaders, who kept a weather eye on world politics to see "which way the wind was blowing." They always found some big power to shelter them in a storm.

The record of Baltic diplomacy since 1918 can be divided into four main stages:

First, until 1920 the tone was set by the Entente, whose fleet arrived in Baltic waters in December 1918. England then granted commercial credits and supplied essential war materials to the armies of the Baltic states.

Second, the period from 1920 to 1925 was marked by intensified French influence, reflected through increased efforts to establish Polish hegemony within the framework of the anti-Soviet Baltic union.

Third, after 1925 Britain again assumed wardship over the Baltic, which was an important link in her policy of the encirclement of Russia. Poland remained the conductor of this policy, now acting as an agent of Britain.

Fourth, with Hitler's rise to power in Germany, the British influence in the Baltic became gradually interwoven with the German, until toward the end of 1938 and the beginning of

1939, Hitlerism had gained complete control of the entire eastern Baltic from Petsamo to Königsberg.

#### POLISH INTRIGUES IN THE BALTIC AREA

In the formation of Baltic policy Poland played a tragicomic role. Here more than anywhere else the spotlight was thrown on the fantastic blend of servility and megalomania inherent in Polish foreign policy from 1920 to 1939.

According to the design of the master minds at Versailles, Poland was to be only a conductor for bringing her sponsor's policy to fruition in the Baltic area. She was to have been the strongest link in the *cordon sanitaire*, to play the "elder sister" to the Baltic border states and to cement them into a military-political union pointed against the U.S.S.R.

Polish foreign ministers zealously attempted to accomplish this task. However, as had often happened with the Polish gentry, their greed outdid them, and Poland in the Baltic area began to resemble the retriever hound which instead of retrieving the game for its master, slunk off into the bush to devour it.

The dream of a great Polish empire "ot morza do morza," (from sea to sea)—from the Baltic to the Black Sea basin—always remained a fixed idea behind Polish policy, making it both fruitless and dangerous, primarily to Poland herself! Imperialistic designs of great powers are a danger to weaker neighbors, but when weak states catch this "sickness of the rich" it can result only in their own doom.

The Polish gentry regarded the Baltic as a "channel of expansion for the Polish state," as Colonel Baginsky, official spokesman of the Polish general staff, once said. Therefore, they behaved like a gang of thieves and spoiled every chance they had of ever becoming really influential in the Baltic area.

After Polish troops, commanded by General Smigly-Rydz, had aided the White Latvians to drive the Red Latvian rifle corps from Latgale in 1920, the Poles remained there suspiciously long. It was soon disclosed that the "good neighbors" of the Latvians had "historical claims" to Latgale, which had at one time, as the Principality of Inflantia, belonged to the Polish state, before being annexed to Russia. With much embarrassment the Latvians finally got rid of their unwelcome guests, who would most likely have remained but for British disapproval. Only under pressure from London did the Polish empire seekers depart.

Following this came the famous Vilna coup. Under the pretext that it was Pilsudski's birthplace, the capital of young Lithuania was occupied at midnight, October 8, 1920, by military forces under the Polish General Zeligovsky. At the moment this act of open violence passed with impunity. Lithuania had not yet been recognized by the great powers, and her protest did not count. Of her neighbors only Russia expressed displeasure at the Polish rape of Lithuania, but Russia was then licking her own wounds, and her protest was merely platonic.

Later, however, Vilna stuck in the throat of Polish politicians more than once when, in their repeated attempts to gain control over Baltic policy, they met with the unbending resistance of Lithuania.

In international diplomatic circles Polish intrigues in the Baltic area were known under the honorable name of "the idea of a big Baltic bloc." The essence of this idea was that the three small Baltic states would conclude a military and political union with Poland, to which Finland and Rumania would also be attached, and, so constituted, this bloc would then sit down for round-table talks with Russia.

Behind this scheme loomed the distinct contours of an anti-Soviet bloc under Polish hegemony—*ot morza do morza*—for

the Poles never abandoned their dream of gaining control over the whole Baltic area as well as the Niemen and Dnieper basins to the Black Sea. Naturally, the Soviets were strongly opposed to such an arrangement in the Baltic.

In his time Maxim Litvinov declared: "We are ready to conclude guarantee pacts with the Baltic states, with each separately, all collectively, or some of them. Unfortunately, all our efforts are disrupted by the attempts of Poland to manage the foreign policy of the Baltic states. Poland talks incessantly in the name of the Baltic states, which, as we know, have not yet commissioned her to do so." <sup>4</sup>

But the persistent work of the Polish diplomats and militarists was not altogether fruitless. In early 1925 the Polish intrigues almost succeeded. Following the failure of the Communist uprising in Tallinn, extreme reactionary elements came to the fore in Estonia. The Estonian government supported Poland, which was enabled to assemble a conference of the northeast states in Helsingfors. Lithuania took part in that conference only as an observer. On September 7, 1925, a general convention was concluded and hailed in the world press as a "barrier in defense of European civilization against the Asiatic barbarism."

As a political curiosity it should be observed that this attempt to establish Polish dominance over the Baltic states failed chiefly because of Finland, and it was the most reactionary circles in the Finnish Diet which defeated the motion to ratify the convention. The motives of the Finnish reactionaries, though somewhat surprising for the uninitiated, were comprehensible to everyone who knew what was brewing in the Baltic. After the Mannerheim episode, Finland had established intimate connections with the German militarists and their general staff. Since the Germans were violently opposed to Poland at the time, because of Danzig and the Polish Corridor,

the Finnish clients of the Reichswehr were instructed to defeat the Polish combination.

The revelations of Anton Birk, Estonian envoy to Moscow, who quit his post and exposed in the Moscow press the machinations of the Polish general staff with Baltic diplomats, also served to bring the Baltic countries, Lithuania and Latvia in particular, to their senses.

However, during 1926–1927 events took place in the Baltic area which throw the spotlight on the very substance of the Baltic problem, revealing the fundamental nature of relations with the former parent state, Russia.

#### **RUSSIA AND THE BALTIC**

The very rise of the Baltic states, their role in the post-Versailles system, and their own economic problems could not but make their relations with Russia the pivot of all Baltic politics and diplomacy.

These relations are marked by an extremely important feature. The driving forces which have determined the course of mutual relations between the Baltic countries and the U.S.S.R. have been political repellers and economic attractors. While political differences tended to keep them apart, common economic needs drew them together. Those Baltic circles which worked to establish and maintain friendly relations with the U.S.S.R. did so primarily because therein lay the basis for the normal economic development of the Baltic area. The opponents of a pro-Russian orientation, on the contrary, argued from purely political considerations. In reality they had to cripple the area's whole economic life to create the premises for a pro-English or pro-German orientation against the Soviet Union.

The opposing trends of this politico-economic conflict have

marked every phase of political history in the Baltic states during the past twenty years. The mainspring of mutual relations between the Baltic states and their great eastern neighbor is most clearly seen in two political events: the Lithuanian-Soviet guarantee pact of 1926 and the Latvian-Soviet trade agreement of 1927. The bitter controversy waged around both agreements brought into focus the motives and trends of every single political party in the Baltic countries, as well as of forces operating behind the scenes.

Because of her dispute with Poland about Vilna, Lithuania held a special position. To counteract Polish predominance in the Baltic, she was always more inclined than Estonia or Latvia to establish friendly relations with the U.S.S.R. This tendency was further strengthened in May 1926, when the Left government of Slieževičius came to power. The new premier, also being foreign minister, undertook a special journey to Moscow, where he signed the Lithuanian-Soviet guarantee pact on September 28, 1926. In brief this pact provided: both parties shall refrain from any aggressive action whatever directed against the other; in case a third power attacks one of the parties to the pact, the other is obliged not to support the attacking third power; both parties obligate themselves not to participate in an economic or financial boycott directed against either of them; disputes must be settled by a conciliation commission; both parties are obligated to respect the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and inviolability of each other. The pact was concluded for five years.

After the pact was signed, Slieževičius and Soviet Foreign Commissar Chicherin exchanged notes. In his note, Chicherin especially emphasized that the Soviet government did not recognize the seizure of Vilna by Poland.

What appears to be such a normal act of state as establishing more or less good-neighbor relations between two peaceful

countries aroused, however, a veritable tempest in European diplomatic circles. Poland, in particular, was alarmed, sending an indignant note of protest to Moscow. British financiers at once subjected Lithuania to a credit blockade. The entire London city press rose in arms against the Lithuanians, with intermittent attacks, "friendly directions," and "warnings." But despite all this diplomatic excitement, the Lithuanian Diet ratified the pact. Thereby was signed its own death warrant. In December 1926 the Left government was deposed by a Fascist clique which gradually, under a screen of anti-Polish verbiage, led Lithuania back into the camp of the anti-Soviet bloc.

Still more illustrative of the situation in the Baltic countries was the fate of the Latvian-Soviet trade agreement.

Toward the end of 1926 the opinion prevailed in the Latvian public mind that expansion of trade relations with Russia was essential to prevent national bankruptcy. Despite the endeavors of the "agrarian" government, agriculture had found no way out of its permanent crisis. Factories were shut down. The otherwise excessive unemployment increased. Trade was at a standstill. One commercial concern after the other went into bankruptcy, following which banks began to suspend payments. The foreign trade balance became increasingly passive.

When, during 1926-1927, the Social Democratic and Bourgeois Democratic parties in Latvia were for the first time able to form a Left coalition government, one of its first steps was to initiate negotiations relative to a Latvian-Soviet trade agreement. The negotiations lasted only a month, and the agreement was signed on June 2, 1927. This agreement provided for a manifold expansion of the trade exchange between the two countries, offering great advantages to Latvia, which was thus given an opportunity to export to Russia leather, glass, hardware, agricultural machines, railway cars, knitted fabrics, canned fish, et cetera, in accord not only with the usual most-favored-



nation principle, but also with the exclusive-rights privilege, which no third party could demand for itself. (Exceptions were made on the Latvian side for the benefit of Estonia, Lithuania, and Finland; on the U.S.S.R. side for the benefit of Estonia, Lithuania, Finland, and the continental countries of Asia on the other borders of the U.S.S.R.) The U.S.S.R. obligated itself greatly to increase its shipments through Baltic harbors, thereby opening the way for expansion of Latvian railways and port facilities.

Although this agreement was very advantageous to Latvia and had no strings attached to complicate internal affairs, since Russia neither asked for nor received any kind of indulgence and the Communist party as before remained illegal, it was viciously attacked at home, but chiefly outside Latvia. Both assaults evidently stemmed from one source.

Despite worthy traditions of tactful diplomacy, British Ambassador Vaughan at Riga interfered in the political controversy waged over the ratification of the Latvian-Soviet trade agreement. An influential local newspaper printed an interview granted by him in which he artlessly said that "the rumors about England supposedly having no objections to the Latvian-Soviet trade agreement are untrue." <sup>5</sup>

Opponents employed both "truncheons and bribes" against the agreement. In secrecy, behind closed doors, deals were made with insurgents to overthrow the recalcitrant government. Lacking confidence in the state secret police, which had reactionary connections, the Left government set up its own agency for surveillance of suspicious characters. They were able to uncover in time and suppress the officers' *Putsch*, known as the Olin affair, in Cesis. All clues in the conspiracy led to an embassy mansion.

Other methods employed are suggested by an article which

appeared in the leading paper of Ulmanis's party at the time. The article reads: "We cannot fail to take into account that England will watch closely the conduct of the Baltic states. Recently an English capitalist combine proposed to enlarge considerably its investments in local industry. Representatives of certain Latvian firms have even been invited to London for negotiations. It is evident that the situation with regard to obtaining large English credits is now more favorable than ever before. By entering the sphere of Russian influence we risk the loss of this opportunity." <sup>6</sup>

The bitter struggle against "insubordinate" Latvia was not only an internal dispute. Estonia, in particular, exerted vigorous pressure. In August 1927 Estonian Foreign Minister Akkel made a special trip to Riga to persuade Latvia not to launch a policy that threatened a collision with England. This was not an empty threat. British Tories were actually exasperated by the "effrontery" of little Latvia, which had dared to open a breach in the blockade that the United Kingdom then sought to erect around Russia. All this was also coincident with the raid on the Arcos Soviet trading concern in London.

Further evidence of English annoyance has been related by Emile Vandervelde, leader of the Belgian Socialists and at that time Foreign Minister of Belgium. In Geneva Vandervelde approached Austen Chamberlain to introduce him to the young Latvian foreign minister, Felix Cielens, who had just delivered a stirring speech at a session of the League Council. The British Tory turned away, saying he did not wish to see "that Communist."

The crime of Cielens, a Social Democrat of very moderate views, was that he had concluded the most ordinary kind of trade agreement and customs convention with a big neighboring country that agreed to purchase from Latvia all she was able to produce. But Latvia had to be within the English system of

the *cordon sanitaire*. Hence, the effort to open trade relations with Russia was a grievous transgression.

Later, when the Latvian Left government began to negotiate with the U.S.S.R. for a guarantee pact, analogous to that concluded by the Soviet Union and Lithuania in 1926, the clamor raised can well be imagined. Since the draft of the guarantee pact was drawn up with the greatest clarity for one purpose only—to neutralize the Baltic—its opponents were obliged to employ the least ambiguous arguments.

At the time Arvids Bergs, a clever but cynical politician and leader of the reactionary wing in the Diet, wrote with undisguised frankness: "England will not tolerate the policy of a bridge between the U.S.S.R. and Europe. If Cielens wants to try this policy, he can do so only against the will of England. To speak of any kind of neutrality for Latvia in a conflict between England and Russia, is childishness. "

Anticipating by ten to twelve years the coming Chamberlain deal, this reactionary politician of vision then wrote: "For Latvia there is now only one way, to reach an accord with England and her future ally, Germany." <sup>7</sup>

These clear-cut ideas express in essence the guiding maxims held during the entire period between the two world wars.

The brief episodes of the Lithuanian-Soviet and the Latvian-Soviet agreements were almost the only efforts made by the Baltic governments to conduct their own independent policy. They were duly spanked, and the Baltic area again settled down where it belonged in the post-Versailles Europe, remaining a *cordon sanitaire* against Bolshevism, a center of espionage, a potential springboard for attack on the U.S.S.R., and a semi-colony for any current leader of the anti-Soviet bloc. Nevertheless, the U.S.S.R. continued her efforts to neutralize the Baltic area. She did not dare then to dream of more.

Soviet policy in the Baltic area has long been associated with

the name of Maxim Litvinov, recently Soviet Ambassador to the United States. In June 1922, under his signature, identical notes were sent to Estonia, Latvia, Poland, and Finland, later in November, also to Lithuania, inviting them to a conference on disarmament in Moscow. Because of opposition from Poland and the Baltic states, the conference dispersed without achieving any results. Shortly before this, the desperate resistance of Finland had wrecked Litvinov's attempt, on March 30, 1922, to have interested countries sign a protocol "reaffirming the sanctity of the treaties, agreeing to the establishment of neutral zones, and renewing trade relations with the U.S.S.R."

The Soviet attempts to conclude economic agreements and guarantee pacts with separate Baltic states were equally unsuccessful. These endeavors encountered the stone-wall resistance of great powers, which were then patrons of the Baltic.

At the end of 1928 and early in 1929 Litvinov was able to record a measure of success. After prolonged negotiations, the U.S.S.R., Latvia, Estonia, Poland, and Lithuania in turn signed what was called the "Litvinov protocol," which extended to this part of Europe the "Pact of Paris for the Renunciation of War" (Kellogg-Briand Pact), signed August 27, 1928. Finland, however, declined to sign this pact.

The last attempt to secure the safety of eastern Europe and thus balance the entire system of collective security was made by Litvinov in conjunction with French Foreign Minister Barthou.

The history of this endeavor merits detailed examination, for it exposes most lucidly those concealed forces which later pushed Europe and the world into the abyss of World War II. According to the report of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, events developed as follows:

On May 18 [1934] M. Litvinov visited Geneva and discussed with

M. Barthou the possibility of resuscitating the project for an Eastern Locarno, first put forward by M. Briand in 1925 at the time of the Locarno Treaty negotiations. The Quai d'Orsay proceeded to draft a project for an eastern European pact of security and mutual assistance.

It was proposed to invite the Governments of the U.S.S.R., Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Finland, and the Baltic States to enter into a pact binding them, not only to refrain from supporting any signatory committing an act of aggression against one of their number, but also to consult and concert measures in support of any signatory who should be the victim of such an act. Simultaneously with the conclusion of this pact, it was suggested, France and the U.S.S.R. should adhere in the capacity of additional guarantors to the Eastern Pact and the Locarno Pact respectively.

Germany and Poland were opposed to the pact on the ground that the security of eastern Europe was already sufficiently guaranteed by the existing bilateral treaties. Poland's change of front in this respect is probably explained by the signature of the pact of "understanding" with Germany in the previous January.

It was difficult for Germany to reconcile a pact with the U.S.S.R. with the tenet that the Reich constituted the chief bulwark of Europe against Bolshevism.

The Baltic States themselves maintained a noncommittal attitude, while Finland appeared to be definitely opposed to it. Official visits paid by the Polish Foreign Minister Colonel Beck, to Tallinn and Riga in July, with a view to discouraging Estonia and Latvia from supporting the pact, resulted in a cautious statement that the governments of Estonia, Latvia and Poland were agreed that they must await further information.<sup>8</sup>

After this, negotiations about an Eastern Locarno were literally swamped in scores of notes and counternotes, secret and open talks, petty intrigues and big events, until the Italo-Abyssinian War thrust this project into the background.

The rupture of collective security in the East was the first major setback for Litvinov's policy. It paved the way for the catastrophe of June 1939. The Litvinov policy was destined to become political reality again only after the sanguinary trials of nearly two years of World War II.

## THE END OF ENGLISH INFLUENCE IN THE BALTIC AREA

At the time when the Polish version of a big Baltic bloc collapsed, the idea was advanced of a "minor Baltic entente," that is, a military-economic union of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia alone. Neither in European diplomatic circles nor in the Baltic states themselves could anybody be found naïve enough to believe such a union might have independent significance. Everyone realized that since not one of the Baltic states had or could have a foreign policy of its own, combining their policies would result only in a new subordination of the foreign policy of all the Baltic countries to the control of that particular great power which was then master in the Baltic area.

The foreign ministers of the Baltic states meanwhile had given themselves away completely by asserting maximum "realism" at its worst. At the time when Lithuania was invited to enter a union with Latvia and Estonia, the Estonian foreign minister explained to uneasy diplomats in Warsaw that "Estonia and Latvia made their offer conditional. They had not obligated themselves in any way to side with Lithuania in case she became involved in conflict with Poland and Germany."

The implication was more than clear. The union was designed only against the U.S.S.R.

But as already suggested, there were few persons naïve enough to believe in the possibility of an independent policy for the Baltic states, whether separately or united. The idea of a Baltic entente met with approval in the West, because it was taken to signify a strengthening of British influence. Losing confidence in Poland as an instrument for organizing the Baltic area, England wanted to take control of this affair into her own hands. To do so it was essential that the three small countries be welded into one unit. It was too much trouble to deal with

each one separately. England, for example, assigned only one ambassador to the Baltic area. From the embassy in Riga, he also served Tallinn and Kaunas. But events soon revealed that the basic policy of the Baltic statesmen, the very men whom von der Goltz had in his time lifted from obscurity, was not merely "sympathy with Western ideas" nor orientation on England, as many still think today.

Despite economic and other ties, the Baltic states turned their backs on England as soon as Great Britain ceased to be the spearhead of the anti-Russian policy in Europe. Despite public revulsion to Fascism at home, these states entered the orbit of Hitlerite Germany as soon as Hitler undertook to organize the crusade against the U.S.S.R.

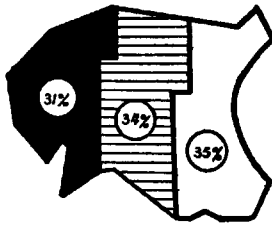
When the minor Baltic entente came into being during 1934-1935, Germany was virtual master of the Baltic situation. Therefore, in time this union became a mere appendage of Ribbentrop's cunning diplomacy.

To their amazement, Baltic observers came to realize that England, which for so many years had been in complete control of Baltic financial and economic life and had skillfully manipulated the mainsprings of Baltic government, was losing grip. It is true she continued to exercise vast influence to counteract any combination beneficial to the Soviets. But once Britain herself entered into negotiations with the U.S.S.R., the Baltic chiefs of state began to fly to Berlin or to get their instructions from German envoys.

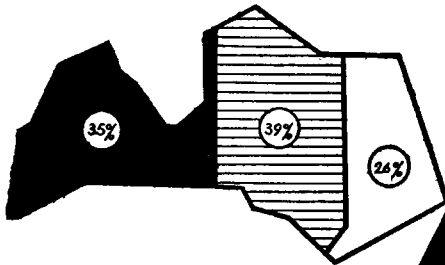
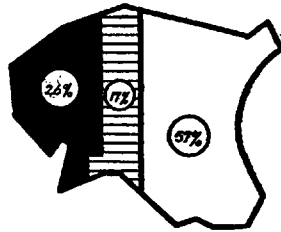
Meanwhile, England continued as before to dominate the economy of the Baltic countries. In the year from 1937 to 1938 her share in the total Baltic foreign trade still remained between a third and a half. The Estonian banking system was under the thumb of English financiers. British capital investments in local industry were still at a high level. But econom-

*Exports*

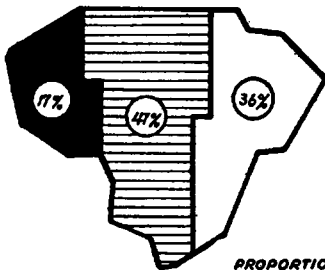
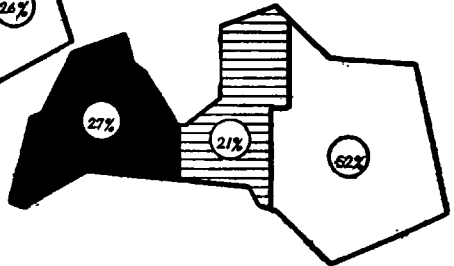
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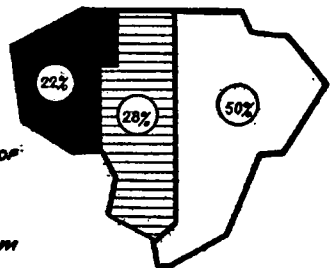
**ESTONIA**



**LATVIA**



**LITHUANIA**



PROPORTIONAL SHARE OF:



CHART 3. FOREIGN TRADE IN 1938



ically Germany, as well, was gradually forcing the United Kingdom out of the Baltic area.

The German share in Baltic foreign trade was an obviously rising curve. In Estonia, from 1933 to 1937, Germany's share in exports increased from twenty-one to thirty-one per cent, in imports from twenty-two to twenty-six per cent. It was the same in Latvia, where, from 1933 to 1937, Germany's share in total exports rose from twenty-six to thirty-five per cent, and in total imports from twenty-four to twenty-seven per cent. After the catastrophic drop in German-Lithuanian foreign trade in 1935, Germany's position steadily improved in Lithuania also.

But Germany gained her greatest triumph in the political arena. The Anglo-German naval covenant of 1935, on the concord of naval fleet tonnage, virtually gave the Baltic basin to Nazi Germany. Meanwhile, her successful "internal aggression," or the conquest from within through local Fascists, served Germany better than any army of occupation in her work of "mastering" the Baltic area.

## *The Baltic Vichy Governments*

### FASCISM WINS IN LITHUANIA, ESTONIA, AND LATVIA

At the time when the anti-Hitler forces in Europe gained a certain power through the Popular Front in France and Spain, Fascism won a rapid and noiseless victory in the Baltic area of eastern Europe. The 1934 *coup d'états* in Estonia and Latvia completed the liquidation of the young Baltic democracy, a process begun with the smashing of the democratic regime in Lithuania in 1926. A narrow-minded clique of pro-Fascist and pro-German politicians rose to power, setting up regimes that differed from the Nazi state only in the absence of the executioner's block and open pogroms, and differed from the Italian Fascist or corporate state in the want of mass Fascist parties and from Austrian Fascism in being a great deal more totalitarian.

Only now in the wake of many recent developments has our political terminology been given a new conception embodied in the word Vichy, which defines without ambiguity the character of the Baltic dictator regimes. For in essence these regimes were merely political screens behind which militarized Germany could accomplish its work. The rise of the Baltic Fascist regimes was the first bloodless victory of Hitlerite Germany.

However, Baltic Fascism had native roots, and its rise was not simply a direct extension of German influence. The ascendancy of Smetona and Valdemaras in Lithuania, of Ulmanis in Latvia, and of Päts in Estonia, was favored by abnormal politico-economic developments and specific social divisions in the Baltic, making their triumphs relatively easy. Hitler simply took able and skillful advantage of a convenient situation to initiate the era of what is called "internal aggression" in the Baltic region.

The deformed economy of the Baltic countries could not but have political consequences, which in turn influenced both foreign and domestic policy and prevented a return to normalcy in Baltic economic life. By disclaiming economic collaboration with the U.S.S.R., the only natural market for the Baltic region, the heads of the Baltic states doomed their industry to stagnation. The center of gravity necessarily shifted to agriculture, and that too was hampered by marketing difficulties. The peasants, who cultivated the small and medium farms created through the agrarian reforms of 1918-1920, eked out a mere existence on the land. A few of them became just well enough off to break loose from the political influence of Social Democracy, a movement formerly solidly supported by the mass of peasants. But independent farming on a small scale had no prospects. Only those landowners who could secure large government subsidies, export premiums, and other favors were able to prosper and make money. It stands to reason that the lion's share of these government subsidies was granted to the big farmers, the so-called "gray barons," who were proficient in trading, especially in export operations, and had binding ties with the government offices. What is more, as is usual in small "provincial" areas, the system sometimes worked even more simply. The main subsidies were voted to those farms whose

owners directly or indirectly held government seats and were present when the fiscal pie was cut.

The few hundred subsidized farms prospered overnight. Flushed with new wealth, their owners felt restricted in the country and hastened to the city. But there the anti-industrial policy of their own government thwarted the expansion of new industry. To establish themselves, they had to clear out old, chiefly Jewish, industrial concerns of long standing. To do so they required still more state funds, a limitless drain on the state treasury to finance new enterprises, to speculate on the stock exchange, to rescue themselves from pecuniary embarrassment.

This class of *nouveau riche* politicians did not want to risk, and could not rely on, the hazards of parliamentary action. To them the short-lived but profoundly consequential periods of Left coalition governments in Lithuania (1926), in Latvia (1927), and in Estonia (1928) were as nightmares, terrible to recall. Then the governments, consisting of Bourgeois Democrats and moderate Social Democrats, fell short of "revolution," striving primarily to cut the umbilical cord which nourished the sham "national" enterprises with public funds. The consequences were immediate, and for certain statesmen who had become seriously embroiled in speculative ventures as a sideline, they were extremely unpleasant. For instance, in Latvia a few months during 1927 under the Left government, with the Social Democrat Bastjanis as finance minister, sufficed to bankrupt several concerns, whose directors happened to be Karlis Ulmanis, General Balodis, and their intimates—the very men who later established Fascism.

These men felt that they must be insured against a repetition of such parliamentary action. They desired also to put an end to the kind of government that needed the support of minority bourgeois groups, which at the same time represented

the very industries that the "national" parvenus had to clear away. Thus, the democratic regime was sentenced to death. It was necessary to await only propitious circumstances to accomplish the coup.

The success of the *Putsch* was insured by three circumstances.

First, the democratic institutions in the Baltic countries were young and had no stable, deep-rooted traditions. They were all anemic following the bloodshed of the civil war, during which, in one way or another, the finest and most active progressive democratic elements either perished or passed into political oblivion. Having risen out of World War I and the civil struggle, the Baltic republics were under excessive militarist influence. Their body of generals had too much influence on policy for democracy to become stabilized.

Second, the Baltic democratic regime was lacking in public confidence, because its ruling circles failed to cope with economic hardships and the permanent depression. The public also viewed with disgust the corruption and extortion which were rife under the aegis of grasping rulers. As is often the case in such circumstances, the very circles which were responsible for all the misery of the population and whose policy and behavior had disgraced democracy were the first to shout "stop thief" and to vilify the democratic regime they themselves had befouled and which they now wished to be rid of, since it no longer left them in peace.

Third, through their foreign and economic policies the Baltic states maneuvered into the fringe of anti-Soviet international intrigue and became politico-economic dependencies of stronger powers, which used them to attain ulterior ends. Within the small Baltic countries internal policy was semi-colonial, because that native government which acted counter to its protecting power never could hope to remain in power. Experience proved that a democratic regime does not guar-

antee complete "docility." The experience of the Left governments of Slieževičius, the Lithuanian prime minister who concluded a guarantee pact with the U.S.S.R., and of the Latvian Foreign Minister Cielens, who concluded the Latvian-Soviet trade agreement, proved that the unexpected may happen under a democratic procedure. It is a great deal simpler to have dealings with "authoritarian" regimes. Such was the opinion both of Pilsudski's Poland and Tory England, when they had decisive influence in the foreign policy of the Baltic states. When Hitlerite Germany gained the hegemony in the Baltic capitals, it naturally preferred to do business with tractable dictators.

The above interrelated factors, in conjunction with the lack of a will to struggle common to all supine democratic forces, paved the way for an easy victory of Fascism in all three Baltic countries.

In Lithuania democracy was crushed on the night of December 17, 1926. A few months earlier Pilsudski came to power in Poland. This inspired two ambitious politicians, Antanas Smetona and Augustin Voldemaras, who had been in disrepute from the first days of the republic and held no public office. In conspiracy with a group of high officers—General Ladyga, Colonel Skorupskis, Generals Plechavičius and Grigaliunas—they overthrew the coalition government of Sleževičius, formed by the Populists (Liaudininkai) and the Social Democrats. All the prominent democratic leaders were arrested. The Lithuanian Diet (Sejmas) in which Smetona's party had only three out of seventy-eight deputies, nevertheless did not surrender and dared to vote no confidence in the new "leaders." Appointing himself premier, Voldemaras dissolved the Diet in April 1927. After this, Smetona appointed himself president, replacing Dr. Grinius, who had been chosen by democratic election. A drastic purge was conducted throughout the coun-

try, with the result that all former democratic organizations and parties were decimated.

All political power was concentrated in the Smetona group, Tautininkai, and the Catholic clerical party of so-called "Christian Democrats" who were favorable to the dissolution of the Diet. In September 1929 Smetona succeeded in expelling Voldemaras, who had become too ambitious. Before the expulsion "somebody" sent an assassin to remove Voldemaras, who managed to escape the attempt. Then Voldemaras began to plot his own *Putsch*. But Smetona learned of it, and Voldemaras fled to Germany.

In Latvia and Estonia the democratic regimes lasted until 1934, when Hitler's triumph in Germany put an end to them. The Estonian *Putsch* was carried through by Konstantin Päts, the chief of state, as a formal countermeasure against the influential pro-Hitler party of Vabs, who called themselves "Liberators." Modeled after the Nazi party, this organization within a few months grew into a movement which, though not as powerful, was fully as aggressive and active as the Hitlerites were. By means of a referendum in October 1933 the Vabs secured the introduction of a new constitution that seriously undercut the democratic order. Then Päts took advantage of the new constitution to establish his personal power. Aided by the army commander, General Laidoner, he struck a blow at the Vabs on March 12, 1934, dissolved the organization. But in passing he also smashed the democratic and labor (Social Democratic) parties, rendering the Diet powerless.

Although formally under a ban, the Vabs suffered little from the extremely mild "repressions" of Päts and continued to exert an influence on the life of the country. The dictatorship swung all its oppressive weight against the democratic and labor organizations, which Päts pretended to defend against the Vabs. The situation became so aggravated that four of the most

prominent democratic figures—former chiefs of state, Tönnisson, Piip, Kukk, and Teemant—issued a manifesto to the Estonian people protesting against the antidemocratic Fascist dictatorship of Päts. However, the army command backed up Päts, and he gained the political support of Germany, which quickly appraised the situation, lent him a hand in his prospering business, and left the ill-starred Vabs to its fate.

In Latvia the Fascist overthrow had from the start the active collaboration of German Hitlerites. The *Putsch* was carried out by a narrow clique of the most disreputable politicians from the wealthy Peasants' Union, assisted by the bankrupt General Karlis Balodis and several officers of Fascist leanings. Shortly before the coup the leader of the clique, Karlis Ulmanis, went to Germany for instructions. He was granted an audience by Alfred Rosenberg, the Nazi specialist on Baltic affairs. On his return, by cunning parliamentary maneuvers, Ulmanis forced the government to resign, as a move to eliminate the Jaunsaimineki, or new Peasant Party, which represented the small farmers who had received land through the 1920 reforms. He became premier of a bourgeois coalition government, including the Peasants' Union, the Fascist National Society, and the minority bourgeois representatives of Jews, Germans, Poles, Russian monarchists. His first step was to control the police authorities. Fascists were appointed to every key police post. Alarmed at the rising dictatorship, the Diet (Saejma) put up a fight. Early in May the Diet passed an ordinance dismissing all Nazi and Fascists from state and municipal service. This was a signal for Ulmanis and his Nazi clique.

During the night of May 16, 1934, mass arrests were carried out by detachments of police and Aizsargi (a semiofficial Fascist organization similar to the Finnish Civil Guards) especially brought in from the villages. All the Left deputies, municipal leaders, unreliable officers, writers, and such others were placed



in a concentration camp at Liepaja. Ulmanis became the "Führer of the People," a title which he officially bestowed on himself. The German Junkers plane which had been waiting for him near Riga in case of emergency took off without any passengers. The operation had been successful.

The Ulmanis regime found it unnecessary to hide behind a democratic screen such as Päts had used in Estonia. The new order in Latvia was openly proclaimed to be a Fascist, corporate state based on the leadership principle. Elections were abolished, the Diet dissolved, and municipal self-governments banished. Führers were appointed in all organizations ranging from dissolved political parties to sports societies. Only the diplomats who accepted service under Ulmanis were commissioned to observe, when abroad, the illusion of democracy in Latvia. Latvia itself became a thoroughly Fascist state with the Hitler greeting, a uniform centralized press, corporate councils, Aizsargi (an equivalent of the Nazi S.S.), police terror, and all the flimflam of Hitlerite stage play.

#### MONARCHS FOR A DAY

The rise of Fascism in Latvia, which in a political sense is the key Baltic state, marked the beginning of Nazi Germany's successful penetration into the Baltic region. This penetration was accomplished through what is termed "internal aggression" under the guise of a feigned independence policy carried out by authoritarian regimes. The method of internal aggression contributed not only to the establishment of Ulmanis's avowed pro-Hitler government; it also aided Päts and Smetona to set up regimes that publicly disclaimed any contact with Germany and the Nazis. Several objective conditions dictated this policy.

After smashing the democratic order, Päts, Smetona, and Ulmanis alike naturally sought for some other ideological sup-

port. They found it in the Hitler theory of dictatorship, all-embracing nationalism, the corporate state, and anti-Semitism.

Moreover, in foreign policy Germany had become the champion of anti-Sovietism in Europe. The social sympathies and political aspirations of all reactionary circles drew them to the Nazi "defender against Bolshevism." Besides, the Baltic countries became increasingly dependent economically on Germany which competed with success in the Baltic against England.

Finally the dictators themselves were personally very favorably oriented to Germany. All of them had past records of collaboration with the Germans. In 1918, the Lithuanian Smetona, then president of the *Taryba*, had turned to Germany with a proposal to collaborate in the investment of the Württemberg duke, Wilhelm von Urach, on the throne of the "Lithuanian principality." In 1918 Ulmanis had concluded an agreement with the German Landeswehr and had undertaken the obligation of providing land for colonization in Latvia to all Landeswehr soldiers.

These political opportunists, who had decided to hold onto their power no matter what happened, since its loss would also entail the financial collapse of their swollen enterprises, naturally had neither the desire nor the strength to oppose the Hitlerite aggression carried into the Baltic region, both along diplomatic and military lines as well as through native fifth columns. On the contrary, these wretched Baltic puppets, who trembled before their own people and were frightened at their own shadows, almost dreamed of what seemed to them a peaceful existence under the protecting wings of Nazi Germany.

The ambition to get rich quick was manifest in all the government measures of the Baltic dictators, especially in Latvia, where the regime was most totalitarian. The economic measures were literally plunderous. With apprehension the whole country observed how timber, for instance, the green gold of

public wealth, was despoiled. But more, all the national resources were squandered. The Baltic Fascists employed a trick which had worked in Nazi Germany. Private concerns and industrial subsidiaries, which were financially embarrassed or belonged to "aliens," were nationalized, then subsidized by huge government investments, and finally "denationalized" by being transferred to new private owners.

The resultant artificial boom, being without economic prospects and serving only to make a few concerns rich, was detrimental to the whole national economy. Reserve funds which had been accumulated to tide through depression were wasted. The savings of small investors in co-operative and postal savings banks were shamelessly seized and put into speculative ventures. Feeling the ground quaking beneath them, the Baltic rulers acted like "monarchs for a day" and burned the candle of public wealth at both ends. Meanwhile, without let-up they talked incessantly about "Great Lithuania" (or Latvia or Estonia) that was to survive unto "eternity."

At the same time, the international situation grew more strained and the small nations became increasingly alarmed at German aggression. The mounting public fears were met by Ulmanis, Pāts, and Smetona with a crescendo of hysterical clamor; louder and louder they shouted to the population, "Be calm, there is no invasion threat, *except* from the East."

#### GERMAN INTERNAL AGGRESSION

Behind their smokescreen of double-talk which lulled both the native population in the Baltic countries and the diplomats in European capitals, the Nazis carried out some hasty, nevertheless methodical and accurate, work. Quietly, without risking an open clash of arms, Germany surreptitiously sapped the approaches to Russia and Scandinavia. As the Reichswehr was

still unprepared for military action, it was necessary to operate under cover of the Baltic Vichymen. It is significant that a peculiar "demarcation line" was drawn in the Baltic region. In Estonia and Latvia a local "Doriot" and "de Brinon" were in power, and Germany dealt with them directly. Lithuania was the "Pétain" zone, which was obliged only to yield gracefully. On both sides of the "demarcation line" Hitler's machine worked with equal success.

Under the protection of the dictator governments, "ideas" of German manufacture were peddled wholesale to the native population. In the Baltic as elsewhere yeoman's service to the Nazis was rendered by that "socialism of fools," anti-Semitism. Teachers in schools, priests in churches, officials in institutions, the police, all were obliged to instill in the population a hatred of the Jews, a consciousness of "superior" race.

A bloodless massacre was carried out. Jews were neither slaughtered nor confined in concentration camps. They were strangled in business life. The gates of factories and offices were closed to Jewish workers and clerks. Artisan Jews were prohibited as shoemaker, tailor, or turner, unless they passed an examination in Lettish or Lithuanian grammar of college grade. For Jews of professional training virtually all doors were closed. The specter of complete ostracism began to stalk the Jewish masses in Latvia and Lithuania. In Estonia the "Jewish problem" was raised only artificially by Eenpalu-Einbund, Minister of Propaganda, who was a pocket edition of Goebbels. There were only 5,000 Jews. But in Lithuania the Jews numbered about 150,000; in Latvia, about 90,000. Jewish factory owners and tradesmen were crushed by taxes, discontinuance of bank credits, refusal of licenses and export and import permits. In this way the businessmen of the dictators' clique quietly, "painlessly," and for practically nothing obtained control of almost all the so-called alien concerns.

Along with anti-Semitic measures went another routine line of pro-Hitler propaganda—defeatism combined with anti-Soviet lies. The propaganda offices of the Baltic Fascist governments zealously spread such ideas as the following: small states cannot withstand the approaching world conflict; the Baltic countries have two neighbors—U.S.S.R. in the East and Germany in the West—and since the Baltic area belongs to the sphere of “Western civilization” it cannot have anything in common with Eastern barbarism; therefore, the Baltic countries are obliged to lean toward Germany.

This viewpoint was expounded by the Latvian Minister of Propaganda Alfreds Bīrzinš in 1939 at an anniversary muster of the Fifth Regiment of Aizsargi held in Riga. The assembled officers were charged with the duty of propagating this idea among the people.

During the summer of the same year the “society women” in Reval and Riga gathered signatures to a petition in which they implored the governments “not to permit needless bloodshed and not to resist almighty Germany.” It is known on good authority that the delegation, which handed this petition to the Latvian Führer, Karlis Ulmanis, was headed by the wife of Wilhelm Munters, Minister of Foreign Affairs. Among the delegation were also the wives of some generals, as, for instance, the wife of General Balodis, a German woman.

The new policy was demonstrated in other characteristic actions. The memorial day previously celebrated annually to mark the liberation of Riga from the Germans was stricken from the calendar of holidays. Instead, the residents of the Baltic capitals witnessed a celebration arranged to honor General Fletscher, a former commander of the Baltic German Landeswehr, noted for inordinate brutality. Together with Lettish and Estonian Fascists, General Fletscher took the salute at

parades of troops held in Riga and Tallinn on the anniversary marking the victory over the Bolsheviks.

The appearance of German "brown shirts" parading through the streets in semimilitary dress, with the white stockings that distinguished the Baltic storm troopers, was not reassuring to the population of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. It was all the more alarming, because disquieting news was being spread by those who read East Prussian editions of the German papers. These papers reported that in Marienburg (East Prussia), a special Führer's course had been founded for Baltic Germans.

When German conspirators were caught from time to time in subversive acts that were too obvious to be ignored, they were handled with leniency by the government and the courts. Mild sentences were handed out to put away members of the Baltische Bruderschaft, which had branches in Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia and aimed to Germanize the Baltic region. The German smugglers who inundated Lithuania with appeals for the nonpayment of revenue were likewise let off easily, as were the Estonian Nazis, the Vabs, whose connection with Germany was an open secret, known to everyone. At the same time, with unceremonious harshness, the dictator governments trampled underfoot all non-German organizations of democratic or socialist tendency and cracked down on any Lithuanian, Estonian, or Latvian caught in anti-Fascist activity by sentences of six, eight, even ten years at convict labor.

When the entire Lithuanian, Latvian, and Estonian press was "normalized" and converted into official or semiofficial organs, the German newspapers *Rigasche Rundschau* and *Revalsche Bote*, became openly Hitlerite sheets. All the German organizations without exception, from the Sports Union to the Volkshilfe and the Jugendbund, came under the control of the Nazi party and its agents especially dispatched from East Prussia. Inasmuch as all local organizations were placed under the

control of the dictator governments, the German Vereine were in reality the only "independent" organizations in the Baltic region. They did not hesitate to conduct civil-war maneuvers, undergo training in street warfare, travel to Germany for instruction, and entertain German Nazi officials.

The governments of Smetona, Ulmanis, and Päts not only tolerated this disruptive activity, but also became themselves very much dependent on the German envoys, who began to assume the functions of Gauleiters. In Lithuania this took the form of yielding to the threats and blackmail of the Germans. In Estonia, and particularly in Latvia, it was done voluntarily and with evident satisfaction. Naturally so, since the Germans, Wilhelm Munters and Karl Selter, had become heads of the foreign ministries. These two statesmen, distinguished for extraordinary activity, held the course of Baltic policy sternly oriented on Germany, but at the same time they ably pretended an attachment for the West. Munters even made his mark in the Council of the League of Nations and was chairman of one of its last sessions. He did not fail to use the Geneva tribune for pro-German propaganda, declaring in the summer of 1939 that a third of the population of Latvia spoke German. In this way the soil was cultivated for "peaceful" annexation.

In May 1939 the *Brīvība (Freedom)*, organ of the Latvian Socialist party, wrote with alarm about the German occupation of Memel: "The greater part of our [Latvian] army as before is disposed along the frontiers with the U.S.S.R. and Poland, while only one division is garrisoned in Liepaja and Ventspils. No fortifications are being erected along the southern frontier of Latvia, although the German troops are now only twenty miles from the Latvian border. The first thing the Germans did was to build a highway from Klaipeda [Memel] to Palanga. Now their motorized units can, in a few hours, be at Liepaja. In case of a sudden German attack it will be impossi-

ble to transfer our troops from Latgale to Vidzeme [Livonia]; while if Kurzeme [Kurland] is occupied general mobilization will be rendered impossible. Since Ulmanis does not concentrate our whole army in Kurzeme and Zemgale [Southern Kurland], the officers interpret this as a sign that the government does not intend to oppose the Germans. The officers also ask why the Seventh Siguldas and the Ninth Rezeknes infantry regiments are disposed at the very border of the U.S.S.R. Does this not mean they will be used to bar the way for the units of the Red Army that will hasten to the aid of Lithuania in case Germany attacks her?"

On the days when Memel was being occupied, the commander of the Latvian Army, General Berkis, together with the chief of staff, General Hartmanis, abandoned their posts and went off to Finland for maneuvers. A more demonstrative illustration of the course pursued by the Latvian army is the fact that during the Memel days the commander of the Liepaja garrison, which is the nearest frontier post to Germany, went off to Berlin, accepting Hitler's personal invitation to attend his birthday party. This officer, General Dankers, was promoted to the rank of Quisling when the German troops occupied Riga. It is obvious that the Germans had their henchmen hand-picked a long time in advance and were keeping them in storage.

Very revealing was the conduct of the Latvian and Estonian governments during the Lithuanian crises of 1938-1939 when Poland and Germany in succession issued ultimatums demanding territorial concessions from Lithuania. It became evident that when faced with the blunt coercion of neighboring Lithuania, the Estonian and Latvian Fascist rulers had one concern only: to keep the people quiet, to prevent them from awakening to the magnitude of the danger, and to remove from their minds any idea of the need for the support of anti-Hitler forces.



As the European crisis deepened, it became increasingly evident that the Baltic Fascist regimes had changed their protectors. Instead of England and Poland, Hitler had become their master. During the Moscow talks between England, France, and Russia, the U.S.S.R. demanded international guarantees for the Baltic countries against German aggression, whether internal or external. The Baltic governments fiercely opposed any such guarantees. At first sight it seemed inexplicable, for the issue was vital to the interests of England, whose influence in the Baltic after Versailles was incredibly great. It was also a matter of life or death for Poland, with whom the Baltic countries had had close political ties for many years.

It turned out, however, that Ulmanis, Päts, and Smetona were on the inside track with Downing Street only as long as there was hostility toward Russia. During the Anglo-Russian talks these puppet governments suddenly conducted an "independent" policy. The strings were pulled in Berlin, and perhaps by the Munichites in London. For many years Beck's Poland had been an "elder sister" in the Baltic capitals, and Polish militarists had taken the young armies of Latvia and Estonia under their wings. But no sooner was Poland in the position of seeking aid from Russia, than Polish influence abruptly ceased in Riga and Tallinn. The visit of Marshal Smigly-Rydz to Riga, planned for shortly before the war, did not come off, because Ulmanis opposed it.

When the Moscow talks were at their height, Munters and Selter flew to Berlin and hastened to conclude an agreement with Germany (June 7, 1939), thus hurling an impudent challenge at the three great powers—U.S.S.R., England, and France. The Baltic diplomats played "va banc," and the card on which they bet was a Hitler victory.

## OPPOSITION AND LAST EFFORTS AT SALVATION

The Baltic region became essentially a German province. Everything was done to convert it into a military base for German plans of aggression. From the Latvian, Lithuanian, and Estonian armies officers were purged if they were suspected of anti-German or pro-Russian sympathies. Fortifications were erected along the eastern frontiers, and German officers, including General Halder, chief of the German general staff, arrived to inspect them. A huge field, Spilves Plava, near Riga was converted into an airdrome, ten times larger than was necessary for the paltry Latvian air force. German specialists supervised the work.

With horror the population expected what appeared to be inevitable. Peasants could already hear the crack of the baron's whip. Officials, intellectuals, officers, all had a premonition that they would be reduced to the status of an outcast lower race. The workers sensed a life of convict labor driven by German overlords. Jews awaited pogroms and banishment with trepidation.

Opposition circles of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia made desperate efforts to keep the country from plunging into the abyss. The strength and organization of the opposition varied in all three countries.

In Estonia the opposition centered in a small group of Socialist deputies, headed by Nigol Andresen, a group also in direct contact with workers, nationalist intellectuals, and students. Strong ties were developed with the best forces in the trade-union movement, with university circles, and with Left social workers like the writer Dr. Vares-Barbarus. Among them at this time were also certain bourgeois politicians, as, for instance, the former chief of state, Professor Piip.

In Latvia the opposition was more active and militant. The

people's front against Fascism had been formed by a fusion of three important forces: the Communist party, which, though illegal, had a firmly knit skeleton organization, the Socialist peasant-labor party, embracing those active elements which illegally kept alive the remnants of Social Democracy after its suppression in 1934, and finally individual Bourgeois Democratic intellectuals, technicians, and radical officials.

These forces formed a coalition at a conference in Stockholm early in 1939 and formulated a political program, one platform of which was: "The only way for the Baltic countries to preserve their independence is to conduct a common struggle against the Fascist aggressors, hand in hand with the peoples of the U.S.S.R. The Red Army is the only real force capable of waging a successful struggle against the imperialist aggressions of Germany in eastern Europe. Under these circumstances only conscious traitors to their country can renounce this sole and natural way of self-defense. An immediate guarantee pact with the U.S.S.R. on the joint defense of the frontiers of the Baltic states is mandatory." <sup>1</sup>

This position so clearly enunciated by the Latvian anti-Fascist opposition was more or less the platform also of the opposition circles in the other Baltic countries. But the forces of resistance were strong only potentially. In a determined effort to take the fate of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia into their own hands, they might have upset the top-heavy dictator regimes. However, the time granted the Baltic countries was running out. With dismay the opposition groups realized that they were losing the race against time.

A momentary ray of hope flashed in Lithuania. Although democratic and labor opposition was weak and unorganized, outraged national feelings known as the "Memel and Vilna complex" were very powerful political factors. The people and the army felt a grievance against the dictator Smetona and

Premier Mironas for their capitulation to Hitler, who had demanded and had obtained Memel.

For a long time before March 22, 1939, the Lithuanian government knew that Germany was preparing to deliver an ultimatum, and it resolved to yield without resistance. Therefore, the population was informed about the cession of Memel only after the government had capitulated.

During the decisive days alarming rumors circulated in Kaunas, but the press and radio were forbidden to report the events. The question of Memel was decided by the government at secret sessions to which even the higher officers and officials were not admitted. In this surreptitious manner the "national" dictatorship of Smetona, which had, in March 1938, capitulated to Poland, handed over to Hitler on a silver platter its only harbor into which 150,000,000 litas of public funds had been sunk and where not less than 70,000 Lithuanians resided.

The situation created in Lithuania was analogous to that which developed later in Yugoslavia after the treachery of Stojadinovich. The opposition parties, supported by the general staff, compelled the Smetona government of Mironas to resign. It was replaced by a coalition government formed by General Černius, chief of the general staff, and consisting of two generals, two deputies of the Populist party, the Liaudininkai (party of the former premier Slieževičius), two Christian Democrats, and two non-party officials.

The new government emphatically declared its intention to oppose any further German claims and formally announced its friendship with the U.S.S.R. The reform of the regime was, however, only half-hearted. A court revolution had taken place. Smetona remained as the president. Representatives from the pro-Fascist Christian Democrats, but none from the labor parties, entered the new government, which refused either to grant complete democratic freedom to the people or to mobilize

the citizens for the desperate struggle against Fascism. On the contrary, it sought to escape disaster through diplomatic dodges and compromise.

Moreover, the development of a strong Baltic democratic opposition was also hampered, because in Latvia and Estonia the Fascist regimes survived, although their abject cajolery to wheedle German favors, even after neighboring Lithuania had been violated, cost them their last adherents among patriotic circles.

The moment of decision was wanting in those forces which could have converted the Baltic countries into small democratic bastions supporting Russia and the Western democracies in their struggle against German Fascism. Power was in the hands of local dictators who were to become Quislings. The staunch Estonian democrat, Nigol Andresen, was banished to a desert island. A number of progressive Estonian deputies were arrested. In Latvia the political police made frequent raids on the illegal labor organizations, most of whose leaders were either arrested or driven abroad. Among those arrested were the former deputy, K. Lorencs, a well-known co-operative leader, together with many active young members of the movement. Former Foreign Minister Cielens, leader of the Social Democrats; Rudevics, vice chairman of the Social Democratic faction in the Diet; Bruno Kalniņš, chief of the anti-Fascist military organization, were exiled. The anti-German officers, Generals Robert Klavinš and Robert Dambītis, Colonel Lielbiksis, and others were dismissed.

On April 29, 1939, the Paris paper, *Le Temps*, reported that the Soviet government had given a warning to the Baltic governments, asking them to bear in mind that the independence of the Baltic states was essential to the vital interests of Russia. If the Baltic governments were to conclude agreements which nullify their independence, the U.S.S.R. would feel justified

in protecting her interests with every means at her disposal.

In reply to this, when the Moscow talks were in full swing, on June 7, 1939, Munters and Selter concluded agreements with Germany. Chamberlain's England, which still held not a few commanding posts in the Baltic region, did not raise a finger to curb the impudent puppets. On the contrary, London used this ("it is impossible to guarantee a state against its will") as a pretext to reject the Soviet demands for guarantees to the Baltic states. The catastrophe developed normally.

With a crash that reverberated for a long time afterward throughout uneasy Europe, the Moscow talks collapsed, having slipped on the banana peel of the "Baltic problem." Trailing a hearse bearing off the deceased collective security, a war chariot entered the scene, marking the advent of power policy, of which Frederick Schuman wrote:

" This familiar game has often been played for centuries. The rules are simple. Each player strives to increase his power and to enhance his 'prestige' which is nothing more than reputation for power. Since there is no central authority in the unruly family of nations to enforce justice and keep the peace, no rules save the 'international law' of custom and treaty, and no police or courts to compel obedience to law, the players of necessity play against one another under the law (or lack of law) of anarchy. Hence force is the most effective tool of sovereignties in bending other sovereignties to their will. The measure of power becomes the measure of a state's capacity to win its case in trial by battle. " 2

We suggest an epitaph for the tombstone of the Fascist regimes of Smetona, Ulmanis, and Päts: "The denouement of the great world drama which was performed during the Moscow talks in the summer of 1939 did not, of course, depend on these three puppets of Hitler. But within their means they did the best they could to help in the ruin of their own countries and of all Europe!"

## *The Baltic in the First Year of World War II*

### THE GERMAN BREST-LITOVSK

In 1927, twelve years before Soviet forces appeared in Baltic ports, the Latvian Foreign Minister Felix Cielens, a brilliant young Baltic diplomat, warned his compatriots:

“If we permit any state hostile to Russia to establish its political influence in our territory, we can with mathematical certainty forecast political pressure from the East. If we permit such places as the terminals of Russian sea-bound railways, the harbors of Riga, Ventspils, Liepaja and the strategic islands of Ösel and Dago to become bases for operations hostile to Russia, I say emphatically that under such circumstances counter-operations from the East are inevitable. Russia will strive to eliminate influence hostile to herself and seek to establish her own political hegemony.”<sup>1</sup>

After 1934 the Baltic dictator clique acted in every way to establish the political influence of a state hostile to Russia. By 1939 the Baltic area was a German outpost, needing only a few finishing touches to become a modern system of fortifications suitable alike for defensive and offensive action.

The growth of German influence led to correspondingly in-

tensive counteraction by Russia. At the All-Union Congress of Soviets in Moscow in November 1936, Andrei A. Zhdanov, leader of the Leningrad Soviet, significantly declared: "We wish to live in peace with the Baltic peoples, but if these tiny countries allow big adventurers to use their territories for big adventures, we shall widen our little window on Europe with the help of the Red Army."

This threat of the Soviets was carried out only after the lapse of three years, during which Russia exercised its diplomatic and political influence in every way to restrain the Baltic countries from entering the Hitlerite camp.

The last attempt was made in the summer of 1939, during the Moscow talks. The international guarantee of the Baltic states against foreign and internal aggression, which in concrete terms merely meant the restoration of democratic parliamentary regimes headed by anti-German statesmen, appeared to be the ideal solution, providing both for defense of northeast Europe against German attack and for placing the independence of the Baltic states on a solid foundation, naturally in close military and political alliance with Russia.

But neither the Baltic dictators nor the governments of Chamberlain and Daladier wanted it. The Moscow talks collapsed, with the result that in Russia the Baltic question passed from the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs to the Commissariat of Defense.

The Soviet government ordered units of the Red Army to move into the Baltic area. The opening phase of the war with Germany had really begun. That the Germans offered no resistance did not alter the situation. Retreat is one form of military operation, remaining so even when conducted under the formal label of a nonaggression pact. In the Baltic area more than anywhere else it was clear that the cat of latent conflict was out of the bag sealed by the Russo-German Pact.



With the formal consent and sanction of Germany, the Soviet government peremptorily called representatives of the Baltic regimes to Moscow. Bereft of outside backing, they submitted without a murmur. At that moment Germany could not support them, because, interested in the maintenance of peace along her eastern frontiers, she conceded to a kind of Brest-Litovsk in reverse. This time not the Russians but the Germans evacuated the Baltic area.

Just as, following the earlier Brest-Litovsk, the Germans had in the surrendered territories begun to prepare for offensive operations against Russia, so now the Russians conversely initiated defensive operations obviously directed against Germany.

On the quiet Germany and Russia closely watched each other. All was calm and proper on the surface. Every step was seemingly taken in mutual accord, with pardoning smiles and obeisance. However, only in western Europe and America, where influential circles sought to represent the Russo-German Pact as permanent and inviolable, were people misled by this dissimulation.

The approaching crisis was clear to all in the Baltic countries. With sinking heart the population looked on, watching the main adversaries contend cautiously, as chess players who move toward the inevitable finale.

#### THE GERMAN-RUSSIAN DUEL

Both sides were well matched. As formerly, Germany acted through her pawns, the dummy governments of Smetona, Päts, and Ulmanis, who employed the only political cards left to them, anti-Semitism and the Soviet phobia felt by certain circles.

Agitators suddenly appeared in Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, assuring peasants that the Bolsheviks would take away

their land, would "confiscate" their wives and children. Wealthy urban folk were frightened with horrific accounts of the imminent Red terror.

In Latvia and Lithuania police spies and government agents organized widespread anti-Semitic propaganda. In Latvia, the government hurried to pass a series of anti-Semitic decrees. Jews were barred from entry into large urban centers. For Jews to acquire real estate was *verboden*, while in Lithuania's newly restored Vilnius (Vilna) Jews were mobbed and slaughtered by the Lithuanian police and Polish Fascist hoodlums, who staged a savage pogrom, an outrage unheard of in the Baltic area, although pogroms were notorious in Poland and the czarist Ukraine.

Until World War I the Baltic peoples, especially the Latvians and Estonians, were quite free of anti-Semitism. In those regions where the peasantry was wholly literate and the national struggle was headed by labor parties, no police stratagems could create a wave of anti-Semitism. In 1906, the year of darkest reaction, although roving bands of hooded police and anti-Semitic "Black Hundreds" organized massacres of Jews throughout Russia, they failed to do so in areas inhabited by Latvians or Estonians. No sooner did a rumor spread that czarist lynchings were en route to some Latvian town, than the whole population rose en masse against them. In repeated clashes the Latvian and Jewish people usually gave a good account of themselves and administered a sound thrashing to the cowardly mob of bloodthirsty marauders.

After the independent Baltic states were established, reactionary circles began to encourage anti-Semitism by artificial stimulation, for want of better arguments in political dispute. Certain student groups were victimized by this agitation. Anti-Semitic excesses became more frequent in the universities of

Riga and Kaunas. In Latvia a Fascist anti-Semitic organization, Perkonkrusts (Swastika), was set up to promote Jew-baiting on the streets of Riga. But its activity was paralyzed by the opposition of the Riga Latvian labor unions. In a short time the Latvian capital and provincial towns were cleared of this evil, because members of workers' athletic societies stood guard. On occasion violence flared up with an exchange of gunfire on the streets.

After Fascism had established itself, anti-Semitic ruffianism gave way to a calculated official policy of economic pogroms. Later, when the Fascists saw their end approaching, they staged outrageous massacres to distract the public and demoralize the growing opposition.

But all their efforts proved vain, for the opposition was encouraged by the presence of Red Army men, who had removed the immediate threat of German intervention. In Lithuania and Estonia the dictator regimes relaxed their grips, presenting an ever-weakening resistance to the restoration of democratic freedom. In Latvia, however, the Ulmanis dictatorship remained strong. The Riga police opened fire on workers' demonstrations held in honor of the Red Army men. There were casualties in killed and wounded. Although evidently indignant at this outrage, the Red Army men remained unmoved. Their orders were not to interfere in the internal affairs of the Baltic states.

The unarmed workers, peasants, and minority groups whom the Fascists had fired upon under the very eyes of the Red army men were dumbfounded. Whispers began to circulate against the Soviet Union, which in the name of formality declined to assist progressive circles struggling against the Fascist henchmen Ulmanis, Pätis, and Smetona. All was in vain. In September 1939 the Red Army had entered the Baltic area not to

implant a new order, but to defend strategic approaches to the U.S.S.R. The internal political struggle was, therefore, outside the sphere of its activity.

But the Russians naturally kept a vigilant watch on all hostile intrigues and on every internal movement that might prove of military importance. Moreover, they strove also to win favor among the mass of the population. Unlike the Germans, who never ceased to regard the ruling Fascist cliques as their mainstay, the Russians from the very first day staked their hopes on the people.

The billeting of Red Army units in Baltic ports and other points contributed greatly toward winning public sympathy for the U.S.S.R. The population of the Baltic countries had heard much about the "vicious Bolsheviks" and the "Asiatic Russians." Now the people were face to face with Russian officers and soldiers, finding them to be good-natured fellows deeply attached to their Socialist fatherland and with a hatred for Hitlerism no less vehement than that of the Baltic people. Nor had the Red Army ceased its preparations for the struggle against Fascism, even during the "peace that fostered revenge in its bosom," as the Russians aptly called the Russo-German Pact of August 22, 1939.

The local inhabitants were pleased with the deportment of the Red Army men, who, according to eyewitness reports, acted modestly, making no effort to impress the public with a show of force. They acted courteously, petted the children, and never permitted any rudeness to women.

The Soviet government, however, never overlooked the German danger. It took steps to eliminate the known fifth column among the local Germans. As a result of semicompulsory evacuation from the Baltic, 53,000 Germans left Latvia, 12,000 left Estonia, and 50,000 left Lithuania. By this measure the Russians killed two birds at once. They removed the outright Nazis

and at the same time rendered an inestimable service to the local inhabitants, ridding them of the hated progeny of German barons. For this "favor" the Latvians and Estonians pardoned many transgressions of the Bolsheviks. Even though belated, it was repayment for an old account of long-standing violence with interest compounded over seven hundred years. The heritage of arrogant depredation handed down from the Teutonic black knights to generation after generation of local German tyrants was avenged.

#### THE RUSSIANS STRIKE FIRST

But the danger lay not in Germans alone. For with time the German "internal aggression" had borne its fruits, and in all the Baltic countries strong pro-Hitler forces were still holding government positions. As ever, they looked with hope to Germany and were preparing for the hour when the inevitable clash would occur, making their treachery again an asset to their patrons in Berlin.

The disposition of the higher administration in the Baltic area was well expressed by the chairman of the Kaunas Chamber of Justice when he declared: "If the Germans come, they will destroy the Lithuanian nation, but leave our houses and property intact, while the Soviets will leave the Lithuanian nation intact, but confiscate our houses and property. I prefer the former."

In January 1940 the chiefs of staff of the Latvian and Estonian armies, General N. Rozenšteins and Colonel A. Jackson, respectively, exchanged visits, for undisclosed reasons. In June 1940 a Baltic congress was convened in Tallinn to discuss the problem of a Baltic federation. Behind the scenes Finns were active.

Tension mounted. The Baltic countries stood still, watch-

ing the silent duel of the giants. Their fate depended on the outcome and they knew that behind the pro-Fascist governments stood Germany.

The Russians struck the first decisive blow. It was rumored they had forestalled the Germans only by a few days or even hours. The words of Premier Gedvilas passed from lip to lip in Lithuania, to the effect that on the day before Hitler's troops in conspiracy with the Smetona government were to have entered Lithuania, the pro-Fascists were ousted and a people's government installed. This may be merely dramatization, but one thing is certain—Hitler had no intention of giving up Lithuania even after he was obliged to reconcile himself temporarily to letting the rest of the Baltic slip from his hands. The best evidence of this is that he postponed by every pretext the date set for evacuating Germans from Lithuania.

It happened at the time when the French front collapsed. Nobody could predict which way the Germans would choose to move. Rather than take further risks, the Russians decided not to tolerate pro-Fascist regimes any longer. Strong warnings were given to these governments. Soviet tanks rumbled through the frontier posts, rushing to enter the capitals of the Baltic states. This served as a signal for the popular opposition. It became clear at once that without the support of Germany the "iron" Fascist regimes were powerless. No sooner had the U.S.S.R. withdrawn its objections to a change of government, than the long-standing Fascist regimes collapsed like a house of cards. Even the average Baltic citizens were somewhat surprised to see how widespread the opposition was, coming not only as expected from illegal or semilegal Socialists, Communists, and united-front groups. The opposition was also vigorously supported by the nationally minded bourgeoisie, intellectuals, and even military officers.

The new people's governments of Premier Gedvilas in Lithu-

ania, Professor Kirchenšteins in Latvia, and Dr. Vares in Estonia bore no resemblance to local administrations set up by occupation authorities. Both in composition and mass support they were typical democratic coalition governments of the people's front type.

#### BOLSHEVISM—THROUGH NATIONALISM AND ATTACHMENT TO THE LAND

The small Baltic countries went through a profound crisis. The old tenor of life, the economic and political system, were all radically and irrevocably changed. It would be a mistake to regard this break-up as simply the result of military occupation, which naturally exerted a certain pressure. But the mere presence of Soviet troops alone cannot explain the immediate response of the huge public majority which supported the new government and accepted the changes as inevitable and necessary. Not only could public elections be held without hindrance; the new government also had at its disposal an administrative and even military apparatus. With resistance limited to isolated instances, terrorist measures were hardly necessary. Behind the new government stood all the labor elements, the intelligentsia, and part of the bourgeoisie, motivated by national no less than social aspirations.

The threat of a German invasion had hung for years over the Baltic countries. Meanwhile, events in Europe and the criminal, suicidal policy of the Baltic dictators had blocked every road of national salvation except that associated with loss of independence. The Latvians, Lithuanians, and Estonians faced the dilemma: either Germany or Russia. They chose Russia. The choice was made not only by workers who shared the social viewpoint of the Soviets. It was made, as well, by peasants in the face of prospects of collectivization, and by propertied

classes, to whom the new regime signified loss of social status. Overriding all these social and political prejudices was the fear of Hitler tyranny and the desire to preserve their national existence and national culture.

In Baltic countries, where the peasantry forms a majority of the population, peasant aspirations cannot be ignored with impunity, and the local peasants knew that the former Baltic German barons, whose estates had been divided among them by the postrevolutionary reform, would once again return in the baggage trains of Hitler's invading troops. It can be said that *the Baltic area was led to Bolshevism by the national self-consciousness of the people and by the peasants' attachment to their land.*

The almost unanimous preference of most Latvians, Lithuanians, and Estonians to lean on and even merge with the U.S.S.R. is more deeply rooted in the local economy, which had been stagnating in a permanent crisis. The peasantry either lived from hand to mouth or, among the well-to-do, was always imperiled by the prospective loss of foreign markets and bankruptcy. Workers could not even dream of improving their lot in the decaying Baltic industry. The intelligentsia and young people languished as a result of unemployment, despondency, and the lack of anything big to do. In detaching the Baltic peoples from Russia, the Versailles Treaty did them a bad turn. "The big idea" was to carve out the Baltic "lungs" from Bolshevik Russia. But big Russia learned to breathe even without the Baltic ports, while these "lungs," the Baltic states, carved from the body which nourished them, were left to decompose on the sands by the Baltic seaside.

In the post-Versailles period many political, national, and social obstacles stood in the way of a Baltic rapprochement with Russia. But once they had been removed by the sweep of historic events, the Baltic people, in particular the workers, the



urban and rural youth, and the intellectuals wanted to become fully merged forever with the mighty organism from which they could obtain vital nourishment and connections opening up perspectives of constructive labor and growth.

#### WHO'S WHO IN THE SOVIET BALTIC

The new statesmen in Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia proved to be old acquaintances for all who remembered the leading figures and factions of the parliamentary period in the Baltic republics.

If the solidity of the administrative and state apparatus was surprising, the composition of the top-flight ruling circles in the new Soviet regimes proved wholly unexpected. Leadership was exercised not by deputies of the official Communist parties, as might be thought, but by the most prominent statesmen of the earlier parliamentary regimes, Bourgeois Democratic and Social Democratic writers, journalists, scientists, and co-operative leaders.

This does not mean that the Communist party was weak. In all three Baltic countries, though illegal during twenty years, even under the democratic regimes, the Communist party had survived. Despite repression and the constant loss of its best members, who invariably found themselves consigned to convict labor, the Communist party in the Baltic area retained its organized solidarity and considerable vitality.

After the change of government Communists were released from prison, some of them having been confined for six, eight, and ten years. They were naturally glorified in party circles. Moreover, the Maximalist mood, the thirst for power and intolerance of anything alien, was no less strongly developed in the Baltic Communist party than in any other illegal movement.

One might expect that these people would now get their inning. Under both democratic and Fascist regimes they had known the bitterness of dungeon life, had hungered for retribution through long years of desperate, often hopeless, struggle. Now they would take everything in hand, become dictatorial, and impatiently push through their own policy.

But it did not happen that way in the Baltic. In composition the new government and the leading circles generally were in a singular way the successors of the old parliamentary regimes which had existed in Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia until they were suppressed by Smetona and Voldemaras in Lithuania (1927), by Päs in Estonia (1934), and by Ulmanis in Latvia (1934).

The Soviet governments in the Baltic states would have corresponded, let us say, in France to a cabinet of Herriot, Blum, and Torrez with de Gaulle included; in Czechoslovakia to a cabinet of Beneš with Social Democrats, Communists, and some higher officers included.

Such was the Soviet government created in the Baltic states upon their entry into the U.S.S.R. Herriot, Blum, Beneš, de Gaulle at the head of Soviet governments—the sensation is easy to imagine. But if analogous regimes arose in the Baltic area without even “making the headlines,” it was merely because the Baltic states are hard to discern on the map of Europe. The names of Baltic statesmen mean nothing to the European or American reader. People have hazy notions about two or three dictators, and only because these men in their time spent considerable sums from the state budget for personal advertisement abroad.

The parliamentary regimes did not re-emerge identically in all the Baltic countries. Where the Fascist intermezzo was too prolonged, few of the well-known democratic statesmen survived in the public memory. But in Latvia, for example, where

the Fascist regime was relatively short-lived, out of thirty persons who composed the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Latvian Socialist Soviet Republic and its Council of People's Commissars, only seven were originally Communists; of these, three were former deputies of the democratic Diet, and one was Andrejs Upitis, recognized as modern Latvia's most distinguished writer. The remaining twenty-three were prominent Bourgeois Democratic or Social Democratic parliamentarians, journalists, scientists, and technicians.

Former democratic party circles were least influential in Lithuania, the first Baltic country to go Fascist. There the parliament had been crushed before it even developed. During the long intervening years of Fascism the country had forgotten its former parliamentary leaders.

If it was easy in Latvia and Estonia for the new power to determine the degree of public confidence given to one or another leader, it was most difficult in Lithuania. The test in Latvia and Estonia was the political activity of persons and parties during the earlier democratic regime, the degree to which they opposed the Fascist regimes, and, above all, the resistance they offered to German penetration in the Baltic. In Lithuania this measure could not be employed, because Fascism had had time to break down almost the entire fabric of public life. Moreover, the Memel and Vilna disputes there had shuffled the cards of the international setting, so that the dividing line between anti-German and anti-Soviet forces was not so clearly defined as in Latvia and Estonia.

In Lithuania, therefore, the Soviet power had to feel its way, seeking collaborators. According to a rather trite but nevertheless demonstrative anecdote, one criterion employed to determine whether one or another candidate for a leading post in Lithuania could be trusted was to examine the dossier filed on him by the former secret political intelligence office. If the

person was under suspicion or on the blacklists of the former Fascist pro-German government, he could expect to be well received by the new government.

But even in Lithuania the Soviet government was not formed of unknown Communists formerly repressed. Widely represented in it were well-known popular democrats, army officers, writers, who had been able to remain personally independent of the former regime. Among the writers were Justas Paleckis, Lithuania's most brilliant journalist, and Ludas Gyra, seer of Lithuanian literature, known throughout the country. During the more than twenty years of independent Lithuania's existence, under every regime, Gyra's portrait embellished the covers of official student notebooks distributed to pupils in the state schools.

In Estonia, both during the transition period and later in the Soviet republic, the new power was formed of persons who represented the most respectable and influential democratic parties of the country.

Various government posts were held by Social Democrats, whose deputies in the parliament were headed by Nigol Andresen, Minister of Foreign Affairs and later People's Commissar for Public Education. A leading spirit of the new regime, Andresen has remained head of the Estonian people's organized resistance against the German occupation. Together with the entire government of the Estonian Soviet republic he is now in Moscow.

As a personality Andresen merits attention. A son-in-law of Martna, "father of Estonian freedom," he has always been revered in Estonia. In Scandinavia and Finland as well, he is widely acclaimed as a champion of Estonian democracy. During the days of the Päts dictatorship, Socialist Deputy Andresen was deprived of his salary as a form of repression. Despite extreme hardships, he continued to wage an active struggle, or-

ganizing workers, publishing literature on his own small means, sending information to the western European and Scandinavian Socialist press. Repeatedly Päts sought to do away with this indomitable fighter against Fascism. More than once Andresen was repressed; the last time he was banished by the government to a desert island.

Also among the new Soviet ruling circles was Doctor Vares-Barbarus, a typical representative of the highly cultured rural intellectuals in Estonia. A national poet and country doctor, Vares-Barbarus enjoyed the complete trust and esteem of the peasants in his native province, where he lived during these twenty years.

If the groups on which the Estonian Soviet republic was erected be roughly compared to those composing the democratically elected Riigikogu (Estonian Diet), it becomes evident that had the new government required a vote of confidence from the old democratic parliament it could certainly have mustered forty to fifty per cent of the votes. From 1922 to 1932, of the one hundred deputies in the parliament twenty-five were Social Democrats, ten were of the Labor Party, and six were of the independent workers' group, which stood close to the Communists. In the parliament of 1932-1934, the last one before the rise of Fascism, twenty-three deputies were of the national middle party, which was a union of Piip's labor party with other central parties, twenty-two were Social Democrats led by Andresen and Rei, while five were Left workers.

The succession of regimes was even more marked in Latvia, where the Fascist period had only been short-lived (1934-1940), and where the former democratic parties, especially the Social Democrats, had in close collaboration with the illegal Communist groups continued to carry on an incessant struggle against the Fascist regime.

The top leadership of Soviet Latvia is essentially a coalition

government, which both by party membership and by the individual prominence of deputies could have obtained a vote of confidence in the former parliament.

The president, Doctor Augusts Kirchenšteins, later also chairman of the Supreme Soviet; the chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, Vilis Lācis; and the People's Commissar for Public Education, Jūlijs Lācis, were associated with the editorial board of *Jaunākās Zinas* (*Latest News*), Latvia's most widely read bourgeois newspaper and organ of what was called the democratic center. Although it had only six deputies in the last democratic Diet, the democratic center wielded far greater influence in the country through its newspaper. This party, by the way, gave Latvia its first state president, Jānis Čakste.

The Social Democrats, who formed the strongest faction of the parliament during all the years of Latvia's existence—always having twenty-one to thirty deputies among the total one hundred—gave all-out support to the Soviet Latvian regime. The Social Democrats in the government's ruling circles were A. Rudevics, the party's vice president; A. Buševics, the party's financial and economic leader as well as former mayor of Liepaja; the engineer, J. Jagars, one of Riga's municipal leaders; Bruno Kalniņš, the Social Democratic leader best known abroad and head of the party's military and sports organization.

The Minister of Justice in the people's government and later a member of the Presidium of the Latvian Supreme Soviet was Jūris Pabērzs, a prominent member of the former magistracy and leader of the party of Latgallian progressives \* which had four deputies in the old Diet. Repeatedly, Pabērzs held the post of Minister, including that of Minister of Justice in one of Ulmanis's cabinets.

Representatives of the Russian, Polish, and Jewish minorities, who together held not less than ten mandates in the for-

\* Peasant Party of Latgale, the Catholic region of Latvia.

mer parliament, supported the new government without reservation.

Finally, the Soviet government coalition was naturally backed by the worker-peasant faction of the old Diet, where it held seven seats. The members of this faction, through which Communist workers found parliamentary representation, together with a few party leaders, comprised also the Communist stratum, but only a stratum, of the new power in Soviet Latvia.

A splendid characterization of the rulers in Soviet Latvia from the viewpoint of their democratic conviction and party membership has been given by none other than A. Bilmanis, the former Latvian Minister to Washington. In his article, "Recent Events in Latvia," which appeared in the Information Bulletin issued by the Latvian Legation in Washington,<sup>2</sup> Bilmanis describes the persons whom he is now trying to slander and misrepresent as vicious Communists with daggers in their teeth, as follows:

*Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs ad interim: Dr. Augusts Kirchenšteins; born September 18, 1872, in Mazsalaca, Latvia; studied in Valtenberg elementary school, Mazsalaca parish school, the Alexander high school in Riga and the Veterinary Institute of Dorpat; was involved in the Latvian revolt for freedom in 1905 and therefore emigrated abroad; in 1919 was made associate professor of the University of Latvia, from 1923 to 1939 was professor of microbiology in the University of Latvia, since 1939 has been professor of agricultural microbiology and of cattle diseases in the Academy of Agriculture; was also Chief of the Veterinary Administration of the Latvian army and director of the Latvian serum station, has studied specifically problems of microbiology, bacteriology, and cattle diseases; since 1903 has written numerous articles and books on questions of bacteriology, vitamins, national health, et cetera; organized the magazine *Tautas Veselība* [National Health] and now edits this section in the *Jaunākās Zinas*, the largest newspaper in Latvia; has been decorated with the Latvian Order of Three Stars and with several foreign decorations.*

*Minister of War: General Roberts Dambītis*; born May 2, 1881, in Trikata, Latvia; after graduating from the Trikata parish school entered the Vilna Army Cadet School and later graduated from the Petrograd Military Academy of Intendancy; participated in the World War as an officer of the Latvian Rifles; is one of the founders of the National Association of Latvian Soldiers and was its president in 1918; was the first soldier to enlist in the army of the newly proclaimed Latvian Republic and in 1918 organized its Ministry of Defense; was appointed Superintendent of the Ministry of Defense and later Assistant Minister of Defense; in 1919 commanded the Latvian reserve forces of the southern front against the army of Bermond-Avalov; from 1920 to 1924 was Chief of the Supplies Administration of the Latvian army and later was appointed Assistant Chief of Staff; has been decorated with the Latvian Military Order of Lāčplēsis and the Order of Three Stars, and the Polish Order Polonia Restituta.

*Minister of Interior: Vilis Lācis*; born May 12, 1904, in Mangali, Latvia; graduated from the Daugavgrīva parish school and the Baraula normal school; is one of the best-known modern writers of Latvia, being the author of such works as *Fisherman's Son*, *Ancessor's Call*, *Old Seamen's Nest*, and others.

*Minister of Public Relations: Pēteris Blauss*; born August 23, 1900, in Engli, Latvia; graduated from the Ribielt high school and the Latvian Military Academy and studied architecture in the University of Latvia; participated in Latvia's war for independence; is an officer of the Latvian National Guard; for several years has been chief editor of the *Jaunākās Zinas*, Latvia's largest newspaper; has been decorated with the Latvian Order of Three Stars and the Order of Vesthardus.

*Minister of Social Welfare and Minister of Education ad interim: Jūlijs Lācis*; born December 25, 1892, in Ledurga, Latvia; studied in the high school of the well-known Latvian patriot Kēniņš in Riga, the Nicholas Institute in Petrograd, the Riga Polytechnicum, and the University of Latvia; graduated from the Journalistic Department of the École des Hautes Études Sociales in Paris; was foreign correspondent of the newspaper *Jaunākās Zinas* and recently has been chief editor of the magazine *Atpūta* [*Rest*]; has written several plays, a novel, and a collection of poems.



*Minister of Justice and Minister of Finance ad interim: Jūris Pabērzs*; born July 17, 1891, in Kalupe, Latvia; studied law in the University of Petrograd; was a member of the Latvian Constitutional Assembly and a member of the Saejma [Latvian Parliament]; Minister without Portfolio in 1927; Minister of Justice from 1929 to 1931; Minister of Social Welfare in 1934; up to the present time has been Vice-President of the Daugavpils District Court.

*Minister of Communications: Jānis Jagars*; technical engineer and well-known Latvian public worker; formerly chief of the Department of Communications of the City of Riga.

*Commander-in-Chief of the Army: General Roberts Klavinš*; born November 10, 1885, in Graši, Latvia; graduated from the Vilna Army Cadet School and studied in the Nicholas Military Academy; during the World War was Commander of the Latvian Rifles; joined the National Army of the New Latvian Republic on November 18, 1918; in 1919 was sent to Denmark as military specialist of the Latvian government; was chief of staff of the Frontier Guard Division and commander of the Valmiera Regiment; has been decorated with the Latvian Military Order of Lāčplēsis.

As a general characteristic of the new ruling group, Mr. Bilmanis found it necessary to say the following:

In view of the rumors carried by the foreign press it must be emphasized that the new government, although friendly toward Soviet Russia, is not Communistic in any sense of the word and not a single cabinet minister is a Communist.

#### A BRIDGE TO EUROPE

An analysis of Soviet policy in the Baltic following the German Brest-Litovsk of 1939, makes clearly evident two underlying motives: One aim was to warm the cooling ardor of collaboration between Russia, Great Britain, and the United States. The other aim—quite in keeping with the desires of the Baltic nations, which were exhausted by economic vegetation in the

backyard of world economy—was to incorporate the anemic Baltic economy in the fast-growing organism of the U.S.S.R. During the early stages of Soviet penetration into the Baltic in 1939, the first-mentioned trend was uppermost.

Although garrisons were established at designated strategic points, these were elementary defensive measures, because the Russians, already rich in territory and population, did not aim simply at the annexation of the Baltic states to the U.S.S.R. In a military sense their aims were much wider. Incorporated in Russia the Baltic served as what Peter the Great called "a window on Europe," very necessary to Russia in peacetime, but of questionable value if Russia was isolated in time of war. The U.S.S.R. needed greater security and envisaged the Baltic as a "bridge to Europe." In this light the Soviet government raised the Baltic problem during the Moscow negotiations, proposing that the Baltic area become a mutual-defense zone where Red tanks would operate jointly with the British navy and Allied air forces. Although this proposal had to be abandoned after the failure of the Moscow talks, the Russians continued with characteristic persistence but with waning hopes to work in a circuitous fashion for the establishment of such a zone of mutual defense.

Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and Finland were viewed as political intermediaries between Russia and the democratic West. The military front against German aggression was to be established through mutual-defense treaties and given the necessary strength through Soviet garrisons stationed in the Baltic. Obviously, in forging such a chain of defense, Finland was a key link, not only strategically but also politically, being a country with a democratic form of government and excellent international connections in Scandinavia, in western Europe, and even in the United States.

From this standpoint the maintenance of completely inde-

pendent Baltic states was a trump card for the U.S.S.R., because it would allay apprehension in Finland and Scandinavia and make a favorable impression on public opinion in western Europe and the United States. Moreover, Baltic independence would be regarded with favor in the Balkans, where the Russians could reap benefits from the encouragement given to the local bourgeois democratic and peasant classes.

Accordingly, after the Bolsheviks had established their garrisons in Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, they pursued without deviation and with rigid formality a policy designed to attain the desired zone of defense.

To avoid provoking violent demonstrations of pro-Soviet feeling, the Russian garrisons behaved with exemplary modesty, holding aloof from the local population. In Baltic domestic affairs this policy of noninterference was actually carried to extremes. The Fascist, anti-Soviet governments of Smetona, Ulmanis, and Päts remained in office, and their dictatorial rule continued unmolested.

Lacking popular support, these dictator governments sat uneasily in power. The Russians could have upset them without exertion, merely by encouraging the popular pro-Soviet democrats and labor leaders, who had been driven underground. But the Russians maintained a hands-off policy. They even warned their sympathizers against the use of force. The Red Army was not to be employed in political reform. Such changes as occurred must be the fruit of ripened public opinion and be carried through with the observance of every democratic formality. The U.S.S.R. actually applied this policy against the ardent hopes of the democratic opposition in Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, which had regarded the Red troops as their potential liberators from hateful Fascist oppression.

Nor was this policy inconsistent with Soviet aims in general. It was a specific example of the ultrarealistic attitude assumed

by the U.S.S.R. in their foreign policy as a whole. The issues at stake were too important, the dangers menacing the U.S.S.R. too great for them to risk wrecking the last hopes of an anti-Hitler encirclement by pursuing a minor goal such as acceleration of socio-political changes in the Baltic states.

Today we can readily understand why the Russians placed major emphasis in the policy of halting or isolating Hitler aggression. At the time, however, all their efforts were in vain. The Soviet "bridge to Europe" was left suspended, a Soviet bridgehead only, without supports elsewhere in the West. Soviet policy in the Baltic states was thus undermined, even maliciously misrepresented, by foreign correspondents; one, for example, was Donald Day.\*

The death blow was struck by Finland. The Russo-Finnish War put an end to this variant of an anti-Fascist front, the last effort made to set up a democratic front before Europe was plunged into the darkness of Fascist occupation. Thus, the fate of any independent existence for the Baltic states was sealed.

Minus Finland, the Baltic could not serve as a mutual-defense zone for joint anti-Fascist operations carried out by the East and the West. Minus Finland, the Baltic became an exposed salient of the U.S.S.R. This new development determined the course of subsequent Soviet policy. The Baltic bastion must necessarily be consolidated militarily, politically, and administratively. If previously the Russians had not desired to annex the Baltic area, annexation now became an urgent military necessity, intensified by the catastrophic outcome of "the phony war" in the West. Not until then, not until France was on the run, did the U.S.S.R. give the signal to act, setting into motion the latent opposition forces within the Baltic states. To these

\* Baltic correspondent for the Hearst papers, who has since joined Mannerheim's army as a volunteer.

forces, the overthrow of the Fascists was the realization of old and cherished dreams. Moreover, the Baltic internal opposition attached major importance to the stabilizing of the economic life of their respective states. Soviet military and diplomatic calculations were secondary in their minds.

Responsibility for the loss of independence suffered by the Baltic states, regarded by some persons as a great calamity, should not be misplaced. It lies with the Western democracies which declined to unite with the U.S.S.R. for the common defense of the Baltic. The *coup de grâce* was administered by Finland, by that same "little, heroic Finland" whose cause was so ardently espoused by many sincere democrats in all countries. Their admiration and labors on Finland's behalf have been disdainfully spurned by their own protégé, now a member of "the international gang of robbers, murderers, and incendiaries."

To avoid further rude awakenings, these sincere democrats could, with profit, ponder the reasons why Finland failed to play the role in which the Soviet plans of the Litvinov collective security policy would have cast her.

## *Finland: Legend and Reality*

### FINLAND AND RUSSIA

According to a simplified version of Russo-Finnish relations, Russia is Finland's perpetual enemy, regardless of the Russian regime in power or the policy pursued, and the Finns are so welded together by a common hatred of Russia and Russians that they will accept any allies in their anti-Russian struggle.

This version is the more readily believed because of Finland's political evolution during recent decades, and because the historical record generally lends itself to such interpretation. Ever since Finland was annexed to Russia in 1809 by agreement with Napoleon, the Finns have actively opposed Russian domination. A century after annexation in 1918, Finnish leaders called the Germans in to assist their struggle against what they termed "the Russian influence" in Finland. Moreover, throughout the past two decades the Finnish outlook has been markedly anti-Russian, although Soviet diplomacy has maintained a constant friendly attitude and never has wearied of reminding the world that Lenin was the first world statesman to recognize Finland as an independent small nation. Yet in 1939, when international guarantees extremely advantageous to Finnish interests were offered, Finland con-

sistently declined every offer because Russia was one of the guarantors. Rather than accept the mutual guarantees, Finland preferred to wage war against her great neighbor. Again in 1941, although exhausted by one war, Finland allied herself with Hitlerite Germany for the "crusade" against Russia.

Such being the record, it is not surprising that even the most serious students of the Finnish question are prone to view the problem in the light of this "historical and innate" hostility which Finland has toward everything that suggests the Russian spirit or savors of Russia. This interpretation, like all versions which summarize complex political relations in a simple black-and-white pattern, ignores many essential facts, with a resultant distortion of reality and misleading conclusions.

A careful survey of Finland's historical development as it bears on her relations with Russia discloses that Finnish policy was determined by mutually conflicting influences and cross-currents of history which, at every turning point, were reflected in the differing attitude of various social groups in Finland. Moreover, Finnish sentiment for and against Russia has shifted, and the differentiated attitude of various Finnish groups has varied at different periods in a manner as sharply defined as were corresponding social and political changes in Russia itself.

During the first period of Russian domination in Finland, as in all Baltic states, Russian czarism was the welcome guest and protector of the ruling classes, a circumstance which determined Finnish public sentiment for or against Russia. Finnish nobles, despite their Swedish descent and culture, believed reasonably enough that their interests would be better guarded under dominion of the czar of Russian landowners than under aegis of Swedish burghers. History confirmed the belief. Up to the reign of the last czar, Nicholas II, who attempted to Russify the Finns, Finland was to all intents and purposes ruled by the native Swedish aristocracy. For the most part, Russian author-

ities observed the autonomy which had been granted Finland in 1809. But the meaning of this autonomy lay precisely in the fact that once and for all Finland had been handed over to her Swedish nobility. The Russian czars and their officials hardly suspected the dour "Chukhontzi," as the native Finns were contemptuously called, of having any national aspirations distinct from those of either the Russian conquerors or their own nobles. Nor did the czarist administration even imagine that these Chukhontzi had a national culture and language of their own, such as they might dare to uphold against the proud culture and language of the Swedish aristocracy. Therefore, it is scarcely remarkable that the "Finnomans"—the first Finnish nationalists to defend their native language against Swedish oppression—hated equally their haughty Swedish aristocrats and the latter's protector, the czarist Russian government. There was only one brief period during which the clash of Russian and Swedish ambitions prompted the czars to show an interest in the Finnish language: that was during the reign of Alexander II (1855-1881), when intensive pro-Swedish propaganda, directed from Stockholm, induced the czarist government to play Finnish national aspirations against Swedish nationalism. Short-lived as it was, this policy bore important results. One consequence of the whim was the founding in 1858 of the first Finnish language school with government funds, which was in fact the first elementary school in Europe maintained by a government.

Despite this temporary coolness, ties were maintained and co-operation was continued between the Russian government and the Swedish-Finnish aristocracy, who realized that czarist sovereignty was their sole protection against the national wrath of the Finnish masses, burgeoning in the hotbed of existing social inequalities.

These ties remained unbroken even by the events of 1905. In



that year all Finland was shaken by a general strike which lasted for six days, forcing the Russian czarist government to permit establishment of a democratic system with a legally recognized Social Democratic party in what was virtually the backyard of St. Petersburg.

The effect of these events on Russo-Finnish relations was a certain crossing of currents. The Finnish aristocracy realized more fully its dependence on the continued existence of the czarist regime. They came to hate sincerely not only the Finnomans, but also the Russian masses, who were bent on undermining the czarist throne and thus destroying the golden trough where pedigreed Finnish "servants of the throne" came to feed. Typical of these Swedish aristocrats in Finland was Baron von Mannerheim, the future Marshal, who served the Russian czar as an officer of the Imperial Horse Guards, on such assignments as suppressing revolutionary Persians or coercing mutinous Poles.

In time the Finnish national liberation movement outgrew the Finnomans phase, when stress was laid chiefly on the language problem. This problem of language and a national school was rooted in social antagonism. The Finnish vernacular was upheld in opposition to the language of the Swedish aristocracy. The social and political basis became clear during the 1905 crisis, when the Finnish Social Democrats who assumed leadership in the national liberation movement advanced definite demands, such as political democracy and protection of small tenant farmers and workers. By the logic of events they became associated with parallel movements in Russia, establishing ties with anti-czarist circles there, ties which proved mutually beneficial. This led to growing enmity against the czarist regime, persecutor of Finnish nationalists and protector of the Swedish-Finnish aristocracy against whom the nationalists rebelled.

Events of a truly symbolic character were enacted in Finland

in 1905. The Swedish-Finnish aristocracy poured oil on the troubled waters of the insurgent popular movement, but Russian garrison troops stationed in such Finnish cities as Tampere, for example, refused to take up arms against the Finnish liberation movement and fought hand in hand with Finnish Social Democratic "Red Guards" against the troops dispatched from Russia to suppress the uprising.

The events of 1905 clearly focused the political forces in Finland along a social rather than a national line of cleavage, which cut through differences of language and administrative position. No longer was the conflict a single combat between Finns and Russians; nor was it even a triangular struggle between the Finnish aristocracy, the Finnish people, and Russia. The forces were arrayed around a rectangle of struggle criss-crossed with conflicting sympathies and antipathies. The Finnish people hated both the Swedish-Finnish aristocracy and the czarist officialdom, while they sought support from progressive public forces in Russia. Swedish-Finnish aristocrats, like Mannerheim, feared and hated nationalist Finns, who spoke a language alien to the aristocracy. Likewise, they detested the Russian workers and peasants who made common cause with the Finnish popular movement and were shaking the foundations of czarism at home. The highly placed gentry in Finland assembled more closely around the footstool of the czarist throne.

The rectangular lines of conflict emerged with particular force in 1917, when the overthrow of czarism focused attention on the future status to be accorded different parts of the Russian empire.

#### THE CIVIL WAR IN FINLAND

During World War I, a new public group emerged, one destined to play a decisive role in the creation of a new Finland.

Alone among all the territories of the Russian empire, Finland escaped mobilization in the gigantic struggle of 1914-1918 and was exempted from all czarist war measures. As a "neutral" territory of an empire at war, Finland prospered. Her enterprising merchants and manufacturers, who were able to adjust their businesses to the war needs of their great neighbor country, grew wealthy. With this potent impetus the Finnish bourgeoisie increased in number and flourished in power. This new class in 1917 differed in political outlook both from farmer-worker Social Democracy and from the ruling aristocratic faction.

The Finnish Social Democrats viewed the unfolding Russian revolution with sympathy. As the revolution upset more completely the old order in Russia, the Social Democrats expressed a growing disinclination to break their ties with the Russian workers, especially since the alternative meant embracing the cold steel of German militarism. The Swedish-Finnish aristocracy on the other hand pinned its hope on various White movements inspired by former czarist officers who sought to enthrone the Little Father again and restore the Russian monarchy.

But Finnish bourgeoisie staked their future on a different card; they sought to advance their fortunes in Germany, which they firmly believed would emerge victorious. They began moving in this direction while Russia and Germany were still at war. Unlike the Mannerheims, who at that time distinguished themselves in czarist service, and unlike the masses of the Finnish people, who in co-operation with the Russian progressive movement were struggling to liberate their own country as well as all of vast Russia, the sons of the well-to-do burghers and the Finnish parvenus began to side with Germany. As the so-called "Jaegers," they fought in the German army against Russia. In their dreams they saw Finland as a German principality. From the outset, the intellectual leader of this pro-German group was

Per Svinhufvud, who to this day remains behind-the-scenes overlord of Finnish politics.

The Finnish Social Democracy, which had the backing of the people as a whole and had a majority of deputies in parliament, tried to find a peaceful solution to all the conflicting tendencies. This faction had strong habits of parliamentary compromise. Moreover, the Finnish farmers and workers had abundant faith in democracy and did not think there were insurmountable differences of opinion between themselves and the representatives of the Finnish bourgeoisie, who now formed a powerful group. A compromise was actually arrived at on December 6, 1917, when the Social Democratic Diet and the bourgeoisie-controlled Senate jointly proclaimed the independence of Finland on the basis of complete democracy, national culture, and a good-neighbor policy toward Russia. A month later, the Soviet government of Russia declared the Finnish proclamation to be fully in accord with its own policy.

New vistas were opened to little Finland for peaceful development, on the broadest basis of Social Democracy. But such a development was completely at variance with that envisaged either by the Finnish or by the Swedish-Finnish reactionaries. Both Svinhufvud and Mannerheim commenced active preparations for a *coup d'état* which they had long been contemplating.

Disguised as fire brigades or sports clubs, bands of White Guards were organized all over the country. These bands were under the command of demobilized czarist officers with Mannerheim as their chief, and by the end of 1917 they had some 37,000 members. Their weapons were smuggled across the border, as was admitted by the Finnish White Guards in 1923. In a pamphlet entitled *Finland's Civil Guard*, this organization confessed: "Happily enough, at the end of October and the beginning of November, the central organization succeeded in importing one shipload of rifles, cartridges, machine-guns, and

pistols,—altogether 6,500 rifles, 25 machine-guns, 2,500,000 cartridges, 800 pistols, and 5,000 hand grenades.”<sup>1</sup>

Arms were supplied to the Finnish White Guards by the English (through one John Smith, owner of the S.S. *John Grafton*), by the Germans, and by the czarist officers who had fled from their commands following mutiny in the ranks.

The declaration of an independent Finnish republic (on December 6, 1917) far from halting this feverish arming merely intensified it. Svinhufvud, who signed this declaration and was a member of the Finnish government, maintained secret relations with the “putschists.” Parliament was forced to act without delay. On January 28, 1918, Kullervo Manner, president of the Diet, and Tokoy, president of the Senate, proclaimed that Svinhufvud was deprived of his powers, all of which were transferred to a people’s government they themselves claimed to lead.

The White Guards established an insurgent committee at Vaasa and immediately opened negotiations with Sweden and Germany, appealing for intervention. Mannerheim began to reform the White Guard bands into regular army units. Presently the antigovernment leaders were joined by Svinhufvud, who succeeded in escaping from Helsingfors. He traveled through Germany and from there arrived at Vaasa. Thus civil war came to Finland.

J. Hampden Jackson, who is a great admirer of Mannerheim and the Finnish White Guards, permitted himself the luxury of a certain objectivity when he wrote:

The civil war is officially known today in Finland as the War of Independence, the implication being that the Whites fought for Finland’s independence against Russian Bolsheviki and the misguided native proletariat whom the Russians had fooled into supporting them. This is the view of the Finnish writers, such as Soderhjelm and Koistinen, of Englishmen such as Sir Frank Fox

and T. A. Atchley, of Frenchmen such as J. L. Perret and Henri de Montfort, and of German and Swedish writers almost without exception. The truth, however, is not so simple. Actually each side fought for Finland's independence as they saw it, and each side relied on help from abroad. Without foreign interference there could have been in the first place no war on any serious scale, and in the last no such rapid victory. The Reds asked the Bolsheviks for help: from Russia came stores and armaments. The Whites asked the Scandinavian countries and Germany for help: from Sweden came volunteers, from Germany came first Jaegers, then equipment, guns, and even aeroplanes, then soldiers and marines under General Von der Goltz, then a fleet under Admiral Meurer. When the civil war was over the White politicians showed their gratitude to Germany in a fashion that boded ill for Finnish independence: they invited a German sovereign to rule over Finland.<sup>2</sup>

Svinhufvud found no difficulty in persuading the former Russian monarchists of the Mannerheim ilk who collaborated with him that German orientation was essential to the success of their cause. They had no alternative. The White Guards, numbering a scant 40,000, had no chance whatever of winning in a struggle against the entire Finnish people standing behind the popular government, regardless of how untrained and ill armed the citizenry might be.

The character of this popular government deserves brief consideration. Was it actually a Bolshevik government, as it has been branded by nearly all historians, Finnish and non-Finnish?

A different view of the Manner-Tokoy government is taken by J. Hampden Jackson, although he is a Mannerheim partisan who sanctioned the Baron's terrorism against the Reds. Mr. Jackson points to the ties the popular government had with the Bolsheviks and accuses it of unleashing the civil war. He nevertheless admits:

But it is not true that they had any intention of sacrificing one

jot of Finland's independence or even of imitating the methods of their Bolshevik friends. The provisional constitution which the Socialist Workers' Republic drew up contains no reference to class dictatorship or to Soviet administration. This document—and it is no more than a document for it never came into force—is interesting as the first socialist constitution in history. It provided for a parliamentary government by a Diet consisting of the same number of members and elected by the same methods as before. Executive power was to be in the hands of a Prime Minister elected by the Diet and watched over by committees chosen by the Diet for that purpose. Provision was made for a referendum on the petition of one-twentieth of the electorate, and direct legislation could be made if a petition signed by 10,000 citizens was presented to the Diet.

On the whole it shows the Finnish Social-Democrats to have been much closer akin in their ideals to the Viennese Socialists than to the Russian Bolsheviks.<sup>3</sup>

German intervention decided the issue of the civil war, for prior to it the position of the White insurgents was critical. In March 1918, Mannerheim telegraphed Berlin: "I consider it an urgent duty to hasten the arrival of the German expedition. Delay fatal."

The Germans arrived in time and in sufficient strength. The game was worth the candle. On March 7, 1918, Svinhufvud signed a treaty with the Kaiser's government establishing a virtual protectorate of Germany over Finland. The considerations prompting the Germans to undertake the intervention were more exigent demands than any professed "historical" claims. The commander of the German expeditionary corps, General Rüdiger Count von der Goltz, in a book published in 1936 by the Nazis, states the motives with complete candor.

After quoting the statement by General von Ludendorff that "I made all my decisions with my head, but the decision to help Finland I made with both head and heart," General von der Goltz justly remarks that "heart" motives alone naturally would have been inadequate, but "It was necessary to bar the

way of Soviet Russia, which stood behind the Finnish insurrection, to check the extension of her influence, to prevent the creation of a new eastern front. At the same time it was necessary to prevent the influence of the Entente from reaching Russia." 4

Assisted by the well-armed German expeditionary corps, Baron von Mannerheim was able to smash the popular government. Terrible punishment was inflicted on his opponents. Josiah C. Wedgwood, speaking in the House of Commons in May 1919, characterized the behavior of "Lahtari" (butcher) Mannerheim in these words:

"With the help of German armies which were landed in Finland, and in co-operation with the White Guards of Finland under General Mannerheim, the Red revolution was suppressed. They stamped it out by a most shocking series of atrocities.

"The number of men and women arrested during the first weeks of May 1918 came to about 90,000—and of these 15,000 to 20,000 were shot out of hand. Red prisoners were commonly decimated, sometimes twice over, and then the survivors were searched for suspects."

To obtain a parliamentary majority, Baron von Mannerheim was obliged to deprive forty-six per cent of the Diet members of their legal status as elected representatives of the people. He did so swiftly in the Mannerheim fashion: some Diet members were shot, others jailed, and still others forced to flee the country. Of ninety-two who were members of the Social Democratic party, ninety-one were deprived of their standing, and of these, fifty were arrested and many executed.

Following the successful operation, the baron and Svinhufvud found little difficulty in gaining parliamentary approval of their decision to invite Prince Friedrich Karl von Hessen, Kaiser Wilhelm's son-in-law, to occupy the Finnish throne.

The collapse of the German military machine saved the



Finnish people from complete subjection to Germany. In this connection, Count von der Goltz makes this melancholy comment: "The German catastrophe prevented him [the Prince] from taking up his post, and thereby not only achieving a most desirable extension of the German sphere of influence, but also realizing the favorite dream of the majority of the Finnish people."

Svinhufvud had done his utmost to turn Finland into a German protectorate, and Germany demonstrably appreciated his efforts, for he was awarded the German Iron Cross. His only mistake was in failing to foresee an Allied victory. He apparently has not profited by his experience of 1917, for today he has again staked everything on Germany, never for a moment considering it possible for the Germans to be defeated in the present war.

When the project to enthrone a German prince in Finland collapsed, Svinhufvud, Mannerheim, and their faction hastily took refuge in disguised democratic professions, an almost compulsory fashion during the Wilson stage of the Versailles Peace negotiations. Thereafter, Finland found a new existence as a democratic republic with a broken democratic spine.

#### THE HINDENBURG DEMOCRACY

Many obscurities in the contemporary policy of Finland, deeply perplexing to her friends, are clarified when it is realized that in 1918 the organic evolution of prewar Finnish democracy was violently ruptured. In this respect Finland differs from the Scandinavian countries with whom she otherwise has so much in common.

Her new political system was built upon bloodshed; the smashing of old democratic institutions and the physical extermination of persons who were democracy's standard bearers.

Tens of thousands of farmers and workers who had tasted the delight of freedom were slaughtered, or tortured in prisons.\* Finnish democratic fighters of distinction and high public esteem were supplanted by men of the type of Svinhufvud, a German agent, and Mannerheim, a Swede who as late as 1918 could not speak Finnish and who was a czarist hanger-on despising the Finnish working people as low serfs. In place of the popular forward-looking leaders, who for two decades had directed the movements of city workers and country landowners, Finnish Social Democracy came to be headed by the neutral-tinted bureaucrat Tanner, a leader of the co-operative movement.

An American journalist, H. B. Elliston, anxious to extol this "Finnish Jefferson" † could find nothing more flattering than the dubious remark that in reply to someone who suggested certain changes in the government budget, Tanner said, "But, my dear friend, I have already had the budget printed." ‡ Elsewhere trying to show Tanner a man of great courage, Mr. Elliston quotes the episode in which Tanner, disregarding protests of fellow Social Democrats, consented to review the parade of the Civil Guards, at a celebration commemorating the entry of German troops into Helsingfors and the rout of Finnish Social Democracy.

Such were the leaders and circumstances under which Finland emerged during the stormy post-Versailles period. Behind the formal democratic façade of her republic lay concealed the

\* Oddly, of the numerous journalists who rhapsodized about the era of the war of liberation of Finland, hardly one found time to read the work by the Nobel Laureate, the Finnish writer Sillanpää, entitled *The Holy Poverty*, with its vivid descriptions of the savage punishment inflicted on Finnish farmers by the White Guards. Sillanpää is not a Red.

† Mr. Elliston's eagerness to belittle great men of America by bizarre comparisons is noticeable. Not content with picturing Tanner as "the Finnish Jefferson," his excessive zeal leads him to compare General Mannerheim, who dragged his country into perilous adventures, with Washington.

insidious dry rot of bitter reaction. The forces of Finnish reaction, potentially Fascist, were led by able men who knew what they were after. The democratic ranks had been thinned out, were bereft of leaders, and followed policies formulated by colorless "sergeants," who in some way had survived the blood bath of General Mannerheim and the Germans.

But democratic traditions were too deeply rooted in the Finnish people. All sections of the Finnish populace esteemed the example of neighboring Scandinavian countries to the west. The esteem could not be ignored with impunity. Moreover, the proximity of the U.S.S.R. compelled even the most reactionary circles to observe a great restraint in dealing with the social gains of the farmers and workers. The result was that the "Scandinavian spirit" of social reform and genuine democracy became firmly implanted in the internal socio-economic policies of Finland. Issues were bitterly contested, yet by dint of hard struggle democratic groups were able to maintain certain rights at home in the face of repeated attacks by the capitalistic circles backing Svinhufvud and Mannerheim. However, Finland's foreign and military policy came to be wholly controlled by reactionary circles. True democrats were not allowed within gunshot of these "delicate matters." Although some democrats did manage to get into the government, they were regarded as politically unreliable and held in check by the army, which General Mannerheim commanded.

In the early 1930's, just when Finnish progressive circles were gradually recovering from the 1918 bloodletting, they were struck another devastating blow from which they have not yet been able to regain strength. The blow was delivered by Svinhufvud, the evil genius of Finland.

After Italy, Finland was the first among European nations whose progress in Fascism came to be heralded in sinister headlines which began to appear in the world press as early as 1930.

However, developments in other countries later diverted public attention from Finland, and the activities of Finnish Fascists were almost completely ignored. Yet their influence was felt throughout the subsequent history of the Finnish nation.

Finland was particularly hard hit by the economic crisis of 1929–1933, which stirred the reactionary elements to intensified activity. The Finnish Fascist movement, known locally as the Lappo movement—a name derived from the fact that the movement had its center in the small town of Lappo, near Vaasa—took its cue from German Nazism, for which it became agent in Finland.

When democracy still flourished in the Baltic states and throughout Europe, governmental power in Finland fell into the hands of Svinhufvud, in July 1930. Immediately, all Baltic progressive circles were alarmed. At first Svinhufvud obtained the post of premier; soon afterward, in February 1931, he succeeded in being elected president of the republic. With the support of the Lappo movement, he made himself virtual dictator of Finland. The Lappo adherents began terrorizing the populace. They practiced lynching, carried off the Social Democratic deputies into the forests to be flogged, and committed other atrocities. They likewise deliberately sought to provoke armed conflicts on the U.S.S.R. border. With the aid of General Wallenius, an attempt actually was made to kidnap the former president of the republic, K. J. Ståhlberg (a Left democrat), and his wife; they were to be taken across the Soviet border and there murdered, charging the crime to be a Bolshevik assassination and a just cause for Finno-Soviet armed conflict. By a lucky accident, the kidnapers' automobile was halted on the road and the plot frustrated. General Wallenius was brought to trial. Although during preliminary examination Wallenius had admitted the kidnaping plot, he renounced his admission at the trial. Like other turbulent Lappoists, he escaped with a

few weeks' detention. As a reward for this "exploit," Mannerheim later appointed him chief of staff.

Although the Lappo movement never secured formal authority, it was skillfully employed by Svinhufvud and Mannerheim to gain their ends—political domination of Finland. Once they held the reins of power, these clever politicians ceased to support the village Mussolinis, such as Kossola and others. Certain capitalist circles also discontinued financial aid to the Lappo movement, which had received fifteen million marks from the banks and huge sums from the neutral co-operative movement, a competitor of the Social Democratic co-operatives. The Fascists had done their job and were paid off. They left behind badly mauled remnants of freedom of the press, of speech and assembly; parliament, reacting to the Fascist pressure, had passed the usual Fascist law curbing democratic liberties.

Apart from the Lappo movement itself, General Mannerheim found support in his pro-Fascist Civil Guards, numbering 100,000 bayonets, as against the 20,000 men in the Finnish army.

With Fascist elements in such strategic positions, the government composition at one or another period had little bearing on the actual power exercised. The Socialist and democratic ministers were perched on top of a volcano. At best, the actual status of Finnish democracy most resembled that of German democracy during the Hindenburg era.

As the crisis in the European situation approached, Finland's position became increasingly strained in the sphere of foreign relations. Hitler's seizure of power in Germany resulted in the tightening up of the ties between Finnish military circles and the German Nazis. After 1937, Nazi officials paid ever more frequent visits to Finland. In August 1938 the German navy called at several Finnish ports.

Throughout the controversy about the "neutrality" of the Aland Islands, Finnish military circles were backed by Germany, whose anti-Russian plan assigned a strategic role to these islands. For many years, "scientists" from Germany had been active there preparing bases for an eventual attack on the Soviet coast from the sea. As early as 1934, a German agent named Grussner lived as a native on the Alands, where he married a local woman. Reporting this episode, the Swedish press also sounded a warning about German "scientific research" on the islands.

In the summer of 1939, General Halder, chief of staff of the German army, visited Finland with the specific purpose of inspecting Finnish troops and the progress of construction work on the Mannerheim Line. In the autumn of 1939, almost on the eve of the Finnish war against Russia, the German government conferred one of the highest German decorations on General Esch, chief of staff of the Finnish army.

Against this feverish activity of the Fascist military and reactionary circles, Finland's so-called progressive factions had no realistic and considered opposition policy. Like all the small democracies of the early Hitler period, liberal Finland was mesmerized by the illusion of neutrality. Adopting an ostrich policy, Finnish Social Democracy turned its back on the Baltic and buried its head in the sands of the West, saying that Finland was not a Baltic nation, but a nation belonging to Scandinavia and, consequently, unconcerned with the affairs of eastern Europe. When the persistent activities of the military clique was involving the country ever more deeply in all German intrigues, and in view of Finland's geographic position as a destined arena of conflict between the two principal actors of the world drama, Germany and Russia, this ostrich policy played directly into the hands of the Nazis, making these Socialist politicians both the tools and the victims of Nazi aspirations.

A handful of statesmen, among them Karl Wiik, for many years secretary general of the Social Democratic party, realized the precarious nature of the official "neutrality" policy adopted by the Finnish government. Karl Wiik and his political followers foresaw that the course of events would ultimately confront Finland with the choice between Russia and Germany. They realized also that the domination exercised by reactionary elements in the country would force Finland into an alliance with Hitler. In accord with these considerations, the group led by Karl Wiik adopted a program advocating that internal political demands—such as suppression of the fifth column, disbanding of the Civil Guards, liquidation of Fascist bands, et cetera—be co-ordinated with a foreign policy aimed at establishing friendly relations, or even an alliance, with Russia.

But Karl Wiik did not have a majority even among the members of his own party. Finland, as it proved, lacked political forces capable of carrying out such a policy even when an opportunity unexpectedly presented itself during the Anglo-Soviet negotiations of 1938–1939. International guarantees for the inviolability of Finnish territory were under discussion at that time, not permission for Russia to establish military bases in Finland. It would seem that no better prospect could have been desired by a small country placed so dangerously close to aggressive Germany. Yet the Finnish minister of Foreign Affairs Erkkö flatly declared: "I know that the guarantees demanded by the U.S.S.R. have for their object the insuring of its own safety, since the U.S.S.R. is disturbed by the threat coming from a country which might use Finnish territory for an attack against the Soviet Union. But Finland rejects the entire system of guarantees—because acceptance of these guarantees would be incompatible with the policy of neutrality." <sup>6</sup>

By refusing to become a partner in an anti-Nazi defense bloc, Finland adopted a course, upon which most influential circles

had already embarked, leading inevitably to the Nazi camp. As a result, Finland came to represent a real and serious menace to the security of Leningrad, of the northern sea route and the whole north Russian front.

During the negotiations, the policies involved were the subject of wide public debate. Soviet demands on Finland were not generally accepted as being dictated by considerations of Russian security. Mr. Elliston, cited earlier in these pages, speaks of two schools—the school of Paasikivi and the school of Erkko. “Mr. Paasikivi,” he says, “believes that the Soviet aim is primarily military or defensive—pathologically defensive, if you insist. Mr. Erkko, on the contrary, thinks the aim to be primarily political, or world-revolutionary.”

Before the outbreak of the Russo-German war, the second version was most preferred. In spite of its being so obviously forced, Mr. Elliston explains, saying, “The Finns will the sooner obtain allies if the outside world comes to believe that world-revolution is the primary Stalin motive.”

Moreover, even among those who accepted the Paasikivi thesis, the majority disputed Russia's right to demand strategic guarantees. Only now, after years of cataclysmic events, during which Hitler's military machine carved up almost the whole of Europe, has democratic public opinion come to realize that the formal sovereignty of individual states cannot be permitted to obstruct the safety of the whole world. Today, such preventive operations as those of the Russians and the British in Iran, of the British in Syria, Iraq, and Madagascar, of the United States in Iceland and North Africa, are accepted and approved as necessary. The Russian campaign against Finland, although complicated by Finnish resistance, was not different in principle. It merely happened at an earlier stage of the war. But in the autumn of 1939 the Soviet government had good reason



to hasten fortification of the approaches to Murmansk and Leningrad.

At one time the whole Russo-Finnish dispute was pictured as an attempt of big Russia to devour little Finland. For some reason the view persisted that cession of Hangö and the Rybachy peninsula was tantamount to abandoning Finnish independence. This idea has been disproven by subsequent events. In 1939, although Finland maintained a firm grasp on Hangö and Rybachy, as well as the strategic islands and the Mannerheim Line, she was defeated by Russian troops. Yet, in 1941, after losing the Mannerheim Line, Rybachy, and the islands in the Gulf of Finland, and although a strong Russian garrison was installed on Hangö, Finland showed no signs whatever of having lost her independence, at least so far as her attitude to Russia was concerned. So "independent" was Finland that at the moment of Hitler's attack on the U.S.S.R. she was harboring entire German divisions in full fighting array, and her government proved itself a loyal agent of Hitler, Russia's bitterest enemy.

The reiterated declarations of the Soviet government that the friendship of Finland is of vital interest to Russia can be fully appreciated only today. When, however, such declarations appeared in the press at the time of the Stalin-Molotov-Paasikivi-Tanner negotiations, "experts" dismissed them with knowing smiles, as if to say, "We know the sort of friendship you're after." But it is now clear that in this question, as in many others, the Soviet government displayed an extraordinary sense of reality, as was later demonstrated. Strategic bases and Russian garrisons in Finland were only minimum requirements necessary to strengthen the defenses of Leningrad, to hamper German communications in the eastern part of the Baltic, and to protect the approaches to Murmansk, port of entry for Allied

supplies today. An anti-Nazi, genuinely democratic Finland working shoulder to shoulder with the army and navy of a friendly Russia could have put the Germans in a very dangerous position along the entire northern front, if not rendering such a front impossible. The Russians abandoned efforts at mutual defense only when it became obvious that the Finnish government wished no relationship of friendship and collaboration with the U.S.S.R. under any guise. The alignment of forces in Europe and the internal contradictions in Finland all pointed in one direction: Finland was entering the anti-Soviet camp. An illusory neutrality could allay the apprehension only of the most naïve politicians. War was inevitable.

A study of the progress of negotiations between Russia and Finland in 1939 makes it clear that the Russians were anxious to secure not only military bases and territorial concessions. What they wanted was political accord—an agreement for joint defense against a common enemy, whom nobody named, but who lurked in the background. Paasikivi is reported to have stated afterward: "Stalin tried to teach me the wisdom of Finland as well as Soviet interest in compromise." <sup>7</sup>

On their part, the Russians conceded so much that the reports of the negotiations do not read at all like talks between an enormously powerful state, militarized to the limit, and a small border state, with a population of 3,800,000.

The official *Finnish Blue Book* describes the course of the negotiations and states that in responding to the note of October 5, 1939, inviting delegates to Moscow, the Finnish government issued these instructions to the chief of its delegation, Juho Paasikivi: "He was to refer to Finland's decision, made in conjunction with the Northern States, to observe a policy of neutrality, and was to reject all demands which would infringe the political status and neutral policy of Finland." <sup>8</sup>

Negotiations continued from October 14 till the middle of

November. The Soviet government gave ground on all points except two, which the *Blue Book* formulates thus: "The Soviet Government insisted on a base at the entrance to the Gulf of Finland and the frontier referred to [i.e., to Koivisto] on the Karelian Isthmus." <sup>9</sup>

Although the Soviets no longer demanded bases on Hangö, but were agreed instead to bases on the islands of Hermanso, Koon, and others at the entrance to the Gulf of Finland, the Finnish government felt constrained to break off negotiations. By so doing it took responsibility for embroiling Finland in a war which brought only disaster to the country.

The Soviet government was fully aware that war was the worst possible solution of the problem; it realized that affections can never be forced. Even after the war began, the Russians apparently still hoped for political developments inside Finland which would render war unnecessary.

The Russians were not the only ones to delude themselves in this fashion. At the very outset of the war between Russia and Finland, when news reached Riga, Kaunas, and Tallinn that the old Finnish government had resigned, and that the Social Democrat Tanner had taken over, there was widespread jubilation in these Baltic capitals. Ignorant of Tanner's true role as scuttler of the negotiations, the inhabitants of these Baltic cities thought the Social Democratic leader would thrust aside the pro-German Fascists and bring the senseless war to a halt.

There is little doubt that had Finland possessed a political group or a single statesman capable of taking such a step, the U.S.S.R. would have presented to them, with a flourish, terms of peace extremely advantageous to Finland, and that anybody so acting for Finland could have been as enthusiastically acclaimed in Soviet Russia as the English or Americans are hailed today. It cannot be too often repeated that what the Bolsheviks

needed most was the friendship of a democratic Finland. Such a friendship was far more important to them than territorial acquisition, and in many respects more advantageous than a Soviet Finland, which would have been headed by the Communist Kuusinen and have been plunged headlong into internal turmoil.

There was, however, nobody in Finland to wrest power from Svinhufvud and Mannerheim, who had steered the country with unflinching hands in the direction of war, sure of support from Germany.

The German general staff naturally knew that military operations on the Finnish border signified only preliminaries to the great clash of arms for which they were feverishly preparing, the inevitability of which, as they were thoroughly aware, was also thoroughly understood by the U.S.S.R. So far as they could, within the prescribed limits of diplomatic decency—the time for breaking the Moscow Pact had not yet arrived—the Germans fought on the side of Finland. The American journalist Elliston, who was in Finland and maintained contact with the Finnish statesmen, writes of this:

Before the war was more than a week old they [the Germans] had shown misgivings about the Soviet attack on Finland. Again to revert to a personal experience—they eventually allowed the use of their land lines for my broadcasts from Finland. They even began to put on their radios the official Finnish war news. They allowed Italian planes destined for Finland to pass through Germany in sealed cars till the world's press got wind of the transit and the Soviet protested to Berlin. Later they began to send some war materials to Finland themselves, and it is said that all the wrong-calibred material for German use from the Czech Skoda works is going to Finland. German officers speak openly about Soviet *Schweinerei* and give money to Swedish campaign chests for Finland. Finally, I am of the opinion that Hitler must have given the Swedes a sort of tacit go-ahead signal, when, on Stalin's sixtieth

birthday, December 21, the Swedes decided to let the first contingent of Swedish volunteers go to Finland.<sup>10</sup>

There can be no doubt whatever concerning the motives, aspirations, and objects of the Fascist clique in Finland. This group has long since been pursuing a persistent, a consistent, pro-German policy, which, after 1933, became pro-Hitler. But Finnish democrats and Social Democrats were drawn into the Fascist morass by more devious ways. They were led to destruction by the chimera of neutrality, which proved a lure and a snare to many other small states and which was given currency by the dangerous "activist" form of Munichism professed during that period by many bourgeois politicians in France, in England, and in the United States. At that time also, a project was being discussed in France and in England to send an army under General Weygand to attack the Soviet Caucasus simultaneously with an Allied landing in Finland. The prospect of shunting the war against Germany onto the anti-Bolshevik track was extremely tempting. The anti-Hitler war brought no delight to the hearts of the Munich gentry.

The avalanche was loosed. Bourgeois democratic Europe of Munich was rushing into the abyss. The first pebble to go over the precipice was Finland.

PART III  
TOWARD A NEW LIFE

## *The Soviet Baltic Republics*

### THE COUP D'ÉTAT

As the German blitz soared in triumph over fallen France in the West, Hitlerism was obliged to stage a retreat in the East. The Germans in the Baltic area had, since August 1939, been under silent Soviet pressure, which suddenly intensified with the collapse of France. On May 16, 1940, Russia gave a sharp warning to the Fascist or semi-Fascist governments of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, which had never ceased to look hopefully for German intervention. Immediately thereafter, Soviet motorized units rolled across the Baltic frontiers to advance on Kaunas, Riga, and Tallinn.

As a preliminary to the armed invasion the democratic-socialist opposition, co-operating with the local Communist parties, staged *coups d'état*. In all three capitals People's governments were set up. These governments gave power to local political forces grouped in the Left bloc; formal in Latvia and Estonia, informal in Lithuania.

Then lumbering Soviet tanks, with helmeted young men frowning but otherwise good-natured as they peered from the turrets, rambled down Laisves Alleja in Kaunas, Brivibas Bulvars in Riga, and Vabaduse Plats in Tallinn. The popula-

tion greeted them variously. They were a very welcome sight to workers and all previously suppressed groups—Socialists, Communists and opposition democrats. From the nightmare of the political underground or of imprisonment, these people emerged to enjoy new liberties, after power had been wrested from the Fascists. Among the peasantry and the urban middle classes, however, there were mingled feelings of relief at having escaped Nazi oppression and of apprehension about their economic future. Would they be allowed to keep their land and carry on their businesses? Obscured in the crowds lining the streets were collaborators of the old regime, who, fearful of retribution, hooted at the passing Soviet tanks.

The policy of the new authorities was met with universal astonishment. The new people's governments, while backed by the Red Army and adhering to Marxian socialism, were exceedingly careful to observe the strictest possible democratic procedure in establishing their power. Their moderation was totally unexpected, and some correspondents who had prepared and sent in their stories beforehand actually reported Bolshevik atrocities, terrorization, and bloodshed which never took place. The transfer of power was a bloodless victory of the democratic forces, who were restored to the relative powers they had enjoyed prior to the Fascist coups.

Of paramount importance in the peaceful course of events was the fact that power passed into the hands not of outsiders but of responsible local leaders highly esteemed by the people. However, this is only a partial explanation. Soviet Russia also exercised a restraining hand. Had the local, formerly oppressed, political leaders been given free rein, it is quite possible they would have conveniently forgotten parliamentary formalities in the early stages of the Baltic socialist revolution and indulged their desire for revenge against the Fascists who had unceremoniously ousted them from power. Yet not a single execution



was carried out in either Lithuania, Latvia, or Estonia; the chief of the secret police in Riga, notorious for maltreatment of political prisoners, was merely retired, with a payment of a monthly salary. For one reason only was such reserve exercised. The central Soviet government desired moderation.

The motive behind Soviet policy in the Baltic was realistic "cost accounting"—the desire for maximum efficiency with minimum loss. The Soviets did not consider the Baltic area to be war booty or occupied territory; they regarded the Baltic states as newly acquired allies for the life-and-death struggle looming ahead. Allies are naturally cherished, and Russia proved no exception, adjusting herself to the democratic habits and established traditions of the Baltic nations, which, though small, were valuable assets in the impending struggle against Germany.

In all three countries, two months after the coups, elections were held on the basis of universal, direct, secret balloting. Although the native Communists with Russian support could probably have easily gained a clear majority of votes, they chose rather to foster a broad democratic front, a genuine people's front in which the Communist party was allied to all established democratic parties, Social Democrats included. The erection of a democratic front was more than a mere gesture. Neither the Communists, who could have seized power without resorting to deceptive maneuvers, nor the Russians, who were not obliged to disguise their real intentions by tolerance of democracy, had any reason for double-dealing. Soviet "flirtation" with Baltic democrats, mortal enemies of the Nazis, could only alarm the Germans. Moreover, concessions in the Baltic, or a policy of appeasement such as the Russians had already rejected, would not placate the Western democracies; in short, Russian dissimulation would have been completely pointless. The alliance with Baltic democratic circles was real, and the objective pur-

sued by the Soviet government was consolidation of the new Baltic governments and the erection of a new social order on the basis of democratic collaboration.

#### WITHOUT TERRORISM

Erected on a broad democratic base, the new governments had no need to employ terrorism. Conversely, they could display great magnanimity and make the transition from the old and semi-Fascist way of life to the new socialist life as painless as possible. Realizing that their power was underwritten by the might of the U.S.S.R., the new governments were given neither to hysterical excess in domestic policy nor to fear of reprisal from the few remaining Fascist adherents.

The powerful economy of the U.S.S.R. provided means to solve pressing economic shortcomings without haste or delay. If the gasoline supply ran low, more was imported from Russia. Increased demands for agricultural machines, seeds, et cetera, multiplied; they were met forthwith, and local Baltic industries were given a new lease on life, for there was no need to worry about markets.

Under Soviet regime the Baltic states enjoyed a far more lenient policy than did the neighboring, formerly Polish, provinces of western White Russia and Ukraine. Apart from the general factors outlined above, and equally relevant to all the newly annexed territory, there were distinguishing features.

In the former Polish "Kresi," land reforms were long overdue, and the solution adopted by the Soviet government was confiscation. The estates of the Polish gentry were nationalized and handed over to the Belorussian and Ukrainian peasants. Land reforms, naturally, are seldom carried out with a sculptor's chisel; the ax is the more likely weapon. A less drastic land policy could be adopted in the Baltic states, because following

World War I and the Russian revolution land reforms had been carried out (more thoroughly in Latvia and Estonia than in Lithuania). All that was necessary was to rectify certain distortions which had developed during the twenty years since the reforms were instituted.

But there was an even more far-reaching difference in the problems faced by the new administrations. In the "Kresi," from the viewpoint of security the Soviets considered it their first duty to destroy the old Polish state apparatus root and branch. They wanted all ties of these borderlands with Poland severed. Therefore, Polish nationalist groups and political parties loyal to the Pilsudski-Beck government or unreconciled to the loss of Polish estates were severely repressed. But the situation was reversed in the Baltic, where the Russians gave full support to local nationalism, because it was hostile to Fascism and a potential ally in the approaching struggle against the Nazi invasion.

#### ALLIED REPUBLICS

One of the first acts carried out by the U.S.S.R. in the Baltic was to restore Vilna to Lithuania. This was ointment to the offended national pride of the Lithuanians, who had never forgiven the illegal annexation of their historic city by the Polish general, Zeligovski.

The early days of the new regime in Latvia were marked by some isolated excesses, when the old Latvian colors were pulled down from buildings and Soviet flags hoisted in their place. In opposition, the central committee of the Latvian Communist party published a warning in its official organ, *Cīņa* (*Struggle*), on July 30, 1940, saying:

"We have reports of a few cases in which some persons tore down the Latvian national flag, subjecting it to insulting treat-

ment. Such actions are to be severely condemned, since nobody can be allowed to insult the national flag. Instead, it should be raised together with the red flag of the working classes."

In Soviet Russia proper the ceremony of receiving the Baltic republics into the framework of the U.S.S.R. was invested with the pomp and solemnity of a great state occasion. At the session of the Supreme Soviet, representatives of the allied republics, including some from distant lands, greeted the new members with congratulatory speeches. Thereupon the small Baltic countries took their places in the U.S.S.R. as allied republics, their new status entitling them to representation in the Council of Nationalities on an equal footing with Soviet republics of the Ukraine and Russia proper.

On this occasion the official Soviet press printed several directive articles, while the speeches by the Baltic delegates, including Professor Kirchenšteins, Lācis, Paleckis, Vares, Andersen, were published in full in *Izvestia*, both in their native languages and in Russian.

The question of citizenship was solved in a most liberal fashion. All residents of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia were automatically granted Soviet citizenship, even those who, although living within the territories of the three Baltic states, were not citizens. Thus, Soviet citizenship was accorded to hundreds of former Russians who, as Whites, had participated in the civil war and escaped from Russia to the Baltic states. Citizens of these Baltic nations living abroad were also admitted to Soviet citizenship by a special decree of the Supreme Soviet, provided they were registered in Soviet consulates by a given date.

All these large and small tokens of consideration produced a favorable reaction in the national consciousness of the small Baltic peoples, who remembered the hypnotic paralysis they had experienced under the glare of the Nazi boa constrictor.

Even the national intelligentsia and a segment of the bourgeoisie were reconciled to the loss of formal sovereignty.

#### "SLAUGHTERED" INTELLECTUALS ON THE SOVIET OF PEOPLE'S COMMISSARS

The change of regime did not lead to the "internationalization" of Baltic life. It deepened the national and cultural life. Not one government official, one school or university teacher, not one plant director was imported from Russia. The new machinery of government was manned by local residents and, particularly, by the local ultranationalist intelligentsia. The native languages—Lithuanian, Lettish, Estonian—remained the official languages. Instruction in the schools was increasingly conducted in the native languages. Publication of books expanded greatly. Classics were reprinted. Young authors who had been knocking in vain at the doors of publishers found a cordial reception.

Folksong festivals were held everywhere, attended as of old by peasants in colorful national costumes. Now, however, urban workers, just as colorfully attired, also joined in the festivals.

At the time one American correspondent, Donald Day, reported that the Bolsheviks in Estonia and Latvia had abolished all doctors, lawyers, engineers, and teachers. The nimble-minded journalist even quoted figures on the number of intellectuals destroyed, never pausing to consider that his zealous estimates exceeded the total number of professional people in the Baltic.

Any unprejudiced observer who judged what was really taking place in the Baltic could hardly have failed to realize that it was the intelligentsia, above all, who most fully supported the new regime and who were, moreover, most completely rep-

resented in the higher organs of the new governments. The list of People's Commissars, higher officials, and new deputies reads like a roster of the most prominent professional workers, especially writers, teachers, and engineers. Here are a few examples: the chairman of the Supreme Soviet in Latvia was Kirchenšteins, a professor of biology; the chairmen of their respective Council of People's Commissars were the writer Paleckis in Lithuania, the writer Lācis in Latvia, the doctor and poet Vares in Estonia.

Among the People's Commissars, besides several old Socialist parliamentarians, such as Andresen, of Estonia, and Jagars (former deputy mayor of Riga), were many young engineers, doctors, and writers drawn from progressive students' organizations. Almost half the members of the Council of People's Commissars of Latvia, for instance, were alumni of the oldest Latvian student society, Zemgālia, which, prior to World War I, had nurtured most of the statesmen who rose to prominence in the Baltic region. Subordinate administrative personnel was chosen along the same lines.

The choice of personnel was influenced greatly by the circumstance that the intelligentsia in the Baltic states still had close ties to the working people. Intellectuals, for the most part, sprang from poor peasant and working-class stock. The biographies of most Latvian, Lithuanian, and Estonian writers seem to follow a set pattern: a man is born in a poor peasant home, works as a herdsman, through great effort reaches the parish school, and finally gets to the Gymnasium, where he is beset by all-pervasive Germanism; then come the lean years of a persecuted, nationally minded writer, stimulated by national opposition. Most native doctors, lawyers, and engineers of the older generation followed similar careers. Although the younger professional men grew up under somewhat different

circumstances, their ties with the village remained unbroken. The Baltic intelligentsia "came from the land."

Plainly, the Bolsheviki trusted the patriotism of the Baltic intellectuals and relied on their anti-Nazi, anti-German sentiments. In Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia the Russians did not hesitate to broaden their basis of support, which was not restricted to politically orthodox and socially loyal circles. From the very first these new territories assumed the position of allied republics not only officially but in fact.

#### REORGANIZATION OF THE BALTIC ARMIES

Conservation of the popular anti-German forces at full strength was a basic principle of Soviet administration in the Baltic. Accordingly, although the Baltic armies were capitalist armies with anti-Soviet traditions and Fascist elements among the officer personnel, the Russians did not disband them as might have been expected. They set to work to reorganize the Baltic armies for reasons at once subtle and simple.

Since the Baltic armies were raised on the basis of national conscription from a population which was in the main pro-Russian, the Soviet government had no ground to fear "citizens in military uniforms." While the officers were less favorably disposed toward Russia, they were not all of one mind, and there was room for a satisfactory *modus vivendi*. Anti-Soviet prejudice was rife among the top-ranking officers in the Lithuanian, Latvian, and Estonian armies, most of whom were former czarist officers. Yet they were not necessarily hostile to Russia, for nearly all Baltic generals had once served as captains or colonels in the Russian army. Most officers of subordinate rank sprang from the common people, were thoroughly plebeian in outlook, and had strong ties to the peasantry and

industrial working class. For these younger Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian officers with professional ambitions but of plebeian native extraction, the caste-bound German Wehrmacht offered no prospects of advancement, for as members of a "lower race" the Baltic officers were doomed to subjection. Such was not the case with the Red Army, in which, as these younger officers well knew, their working-class origin was an advantage and their national status as Lithuanians, Latvians, or Estonians no handicap. Many of their compatriots had achieved distinguished service records in the Red Army, with which every young Baltic officer was familiar.

Under the Russians the organizational nucleus of the Baltic armies was accordingly preserved; the discipline, languages, and territorial structure remained as they were. Only gradually, with great caution and almost without painful incident, were the Baltic armies absorbed in the Red Army.

As a first step, the Baltic armies were converted into people's armies by the expulsion of officers hostile to the popular movement. The old high command in the Lithuanian, Latvian, and Estonian armies was dismissed and replaced not by Soviet appointees who were strangers to the natives, but by high-ranking Baltic officers who had either been active opponents of the Fascist dictators or had stood aloof from the pro-German ruling clique. All the officers, whom the governments of Smetona, Ulmanis, and Päts had deprived of their commissions or neglected to promote on political grounds, were recommissioned and promoted to higher ranks.

In Lithuania the people's army was placed under the command of Brigadier General Baltusis-Zemaitis, one of the founders of the Lithuanian republic and its army, which he had led in decisive engagements during the war of liberation in 1918-1919.

In Estonia the people's army was organized under the com-



mand of Colonel General Tõnis Rotberg. Generals Klavinš and Dambitis headed the people's army of Latvia. General Klavinš had been assistant commander of the Riga garrison during the parliamentary regime. On the night of the coup staged by Ulmanis (May 15, 1934), he had been dismissed from his post and placed under house arrest, charged with being a potential organizer of defense for the old democratic regime.

As for General Dambitis, tribute was paid him by none other than General Balodis, Minister of War and closest collaborator of the dictator Ulmanis. Speaking at the Officers' Club in Riga on December 19, 1939, on the occasion of General Dambitis's retirement, ostensibly because of age, General Balodis said:

"General Dambitis is among the foremost soldiers of our national army. More than that, he began his work of creating our military forces as a member of the Presidium of the Latvian Military National Union before the existence of the Latvian state was formally proclaimed. In 1919, with a rifle in his hands, Dambitis took his place among the defenders of the Daugava River. In later years, General Dambitis served on the staff of the Latvian army, as assistant chief of staff."

The command of the Baltic people's armies, later organized into the Baltic military district of the Red army, was therefore in the hands of a native officer corps left almost intact by the Russians.\* Nor were the views or habits of native officers ruffled much by the introduction of the institute of Political Commissars, a characteristic Communist innovation which the Russians carried through with much tact.

To head the political administration in the Latvian people's army, for example, the Russians appointed a non-Communist, Captain Bruno Kalniņš, a former officer and a Social Democratic deputy of the Diet. People familiar with the situation in

\* The total number of officers retired in the Latvian army was fifty, according to the report of Captain Bruno Kalniņš, chief of the political administration of that army.

Latvia could scarcely conceive a more unexpected choice. As head of the Social Democratic Labor Sports Union, Bruno Kalninš had waged a determined fight against the Communists. In Communist circles he was, without exaggeration, the most thoroughly hated of all the native Social Democrats. But he was also known to everybody as an implacable foe of Germany and Nazism, and the secretary of the anti-Fascist International, headed by the Austrian Social Democrat Julius Deutsch. The courageous struggle Kalninš had waged against the Fascist regime of Ulmanis, who had him confined for three years in jail and later banished from the country, inspired all anti-Fascists with confidence in him. Moreover, as a result of his part in the war of liberation fought against Bermond's German forces, Kalninš had good connections among Latvian officers and excellent qualifications as head of the political administration—the central political nerve of the Latvian army. Neither his Menshevik party standing nor the old, bitter enmity felt by Latvian Communists were charged against him, for the Soviets were not interested in settling ancient party feuds in the Baltic. They had business to do, preparations for the inevitable fight against the Nazis; and for this business, men of Captain Kalninš' type were most suitable.\*

Even after being incorporated in the Red army, the Baltic people's armies retained their national character as territorial military forces and continued to wear their national uniforms. The Latvian army was renamed the Latvian Territorial Rifle

\* The deliberate distortion of facts by some of the Baltic diplomats residing in the United States is astonishing. The *New York Times* published on July 23, 1940, a long statement by the Latvian Minister in Washington, A. Bilmanis, setting forth as proof of Communist coercion of the Latvian army the allegation that the Russians had "a Latvian Communist at its head as political commissar." The Minister could hardly have been ignorant of the name and political affiliations of Bruno Kalninš—son of the president of the Diet—who for many years had been a prominent Social Democratic deputy and altogether one of the most brilliant representatives of the Latvian intellectual aristocracy

Corps, a name giving emphasis to its historic predecessors, the old Latvian riflemen, who had distinguished themselves during the famous Russian offensive in East Prussia in 1915 and later, in 1917, in the defense of Riga. But the association was deeper than a mere name for some of these former riflemen were still in service as instructors and officers of the new army. Aware of the national role played by the Baltic territorial armies, the Soviets were preparing them to resume their struggle against the Germans.

#### FACTORY DIRECTORS FOR SOCIALIST RECONSTRUCTION

The trend of Soviet policy in the Baltic states was most apparent in domestic affairs, particularly in economic life. The general line of this policy in Latvia, a policy likewise applied in other Baltic states, was set forth in clear and unmistakable terms by an editorial published on July 4, 1940, in one of the first issues of *Cīņa*. Said the editorial:

Changes in the economic system created by the old regime are essential. Everybody realizes that, but only the body of freely elected national deputies can settle the issues. The workers' party demands limitation of the economic powers of big capitalists and landowners; at the same time, it is convinced that all changes in this direction must be made only on the basis of laws adopted by the freely elected representatives of the people. This means there must be no recurrence of the malodorous actions of 1919.

Thus, in plain, unequivocal language the Latvian Communist party condemned the policy adopted in 1919 by the short-lived Latvian Soviets, under the direction of the old Bolsheviks, Stučka (later a prominent lawyer in Russia, where he died) and Daniševskis (at present a director in the Soviet lumber industry in north Russia). The terrorist methods employed by Soviets in Latvia in 1919 were aimed at destroying

the bourgeoisie as a class, but little distinction was made between small farmers or shopowners and real "capitalistic sharks." The Communist paper *Cīna*, in the editorial quoted above, proceeds to dot the *i*'s and cross the *t*'s:

During the twenty years of reaction the working class has learned that its economic demands must not be directed against the property rights of small and moderately prosperous peasants and the productive bourgeoisie of the towns. Small peasants and artisans who themselves work on their farms or in their workshops, and also those somewhat more prosperous persons who, although hiring labor to assist them also work under the same conditions themselves, are not, properly speaking, enemies of the working class. Workers have no interest whatever in opposing the peasant's rights to his land or the artisan's rights to his workshop and means of production.

Moreover [continues the editorial] in respect to large enterprises of a capitalistic nature it is a mistake to believe that sweeping experiments are now in order. Such experiments would only cause disorganization of the economic life and difficulties in the supply of the population.<sup>1</sup>

Voicing an official view of the government, the Communist party organ directed its appeal both to owners or directors of large enterprises whose support was doubtful and to the small proprietors in town or country who were already staunch supporters of the new regime. It was hoped, said the paper, that "the owners and directors of big enterprises will also continue to work conscientiously and will not permit closure of their business or reduction of output."

Their means of "ensuring for themselves a place in the new order," suggested the editorial significantly, is "to perform their duties toward the people and the state as well as they did for their own interests"; whereas sabotage will prove tantamount to "exclusion from the people's collective organism and classification as enemies."

These pronouncements were not mere gestures, for the new government authority left former owners at the heads of many business concerns, and former executives and technical personnel almost without exception were allowed to remain at their posts. The only persons dismissed were those who had made themselves particularly objectionable to the workers. Even workers' complaints were viewed with moderation. Jānis Spure, member of the Presidium of the Latvian Supreme Soviet and the secretary general of the Communist party, speaking at a meeting of the Riga Printers' Union on September 1, 1940, warned against "the ignorant elements who, instigated by the enemy, compromise the members of the workers' committees engaged in assisting the director, engineer, and management to organize industrial work." He continued, "It is an intolerable situation when the heads of factories are not supported in their work, when they are kept in fear and under threat of dismissal."

#### NO SWEEPING EXPERIMENTS

Soviet reorganization of the entire economy of the Baltic countries was governed by the principle: go easy. Complete nationalization was carried out for railways and other means of transportation, and for banks. Nationalization of industrial enterprises was limited only to big concerns: in Latvia eight hundred were affected; in Lithuania, six hundred. All these enterprises were owned by persons whose annual income ranged from 20,000 to 500,000 litas (or lats)—which by local standards made them very wealthy.

Small industrial and commercial firms were not nationalized nor were small apartment houses. Former owners remained in possession in all houses having less than 220 square meters of floor space in large urban centers like Riga, or less than 170 square meters in smaller towns.

To give the populace a sense of economic stability, the new measures, apart from publication as decrees, were written into the constitutions adopted by the Baltic states and providing, in Article 6, that only big plants and big houses in towns and industrial centers shall become the property of the state. Whereas fisheries are nationalized in the U.S.S.R., decrees were passed in the Baltic excluding all fisheries from enterprises subject to nationalization.

Thus, the new regime took pains to avoid anything that might provoke the opposition of large sections of the petty bourgeoisie. Having established their control over the key industries, transport, foreign trade, large dwelling houses, and public utilities, the Russians in the Baltic left private initiative in the saddle over the vast remaining "sector" of national economy. How extensive this "private sector" was can be judged by the fact that the portfolio of People's Commissar of Labor, the supervisor of labor conditions in private industry, had to be introduced into the administrative system of the Baltic republics. No such post exists in any of the other republics of the U.S.S.R.

### THE PEASANT POLICY

The Baltic peasantry is extremely individualistic. Unlike that of Russia, it had never known communal economy. In Latvia and Estonia, but not so much in Lithuania, the peasants are farmers of the Danish or American type, who live not in villages but on isolated farms in the midst of fields. When Soviet garrison troops appeared on Baltic territory, anti-Soviet factions attempted to frighten the peasants with horror stories of collectivization, including prospects of sharing wives and children in common.

For this reason, the first decree of the new Baltic govern-

ments was as follows: "Every attempt to encroach on the private property of the peasants, or to compel working peasants to organize collective farms against their wishes, will be severely punished, since such attempts injure the interests of the people and the state."

Following this, several leaders issued statements making it clear that the Russians were particularly anxious to avoid any thing at all likely to arouse anti-Soviet feelings among the peasants. For example, the Premier of Lithuania, on July 11, 1940, declared the aim of his government was to carry out the land reform in such a way that not a single peasant should be made to suffer.

The basic provision of this land reform was a standard land ownership of thirty hectares, thus duplicating the standard of Latvian land reform which was carried out by the bourgeois-peasant-Social Democratic governments of the first period of independence. Since in the Baltic economy a peasant farm of this size ensured a prosperous existence, the government reform in no way lowered the standard of peasant life. The only elements repressed were the so-called gray barons, who had built their fortunes and had risen to the class of landed gentry through buying up the land of bankrupt farmers; whereupon, they would migrate to the cities to engage in speculation, becoming in time absentee owners, no longer living on their land.

Since hardly any land was taken away from individual peasants for redistribution, the state land funds of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia were not large. The governments were unable to make large land grants. The usual allotment was from eight to ten hectares to landless peasants, and from three to four hectares to substandard farmers.

During the first six months of reform in the three republics, no fewer than 200,000 homesteads received new land as additional acreage. In Latvia 50,000 farm hands were granted land

allotments totaling 475,000 hectares; 23,000 substandard farmers received additional land totaling 75,000 hectares. Thus, out of the total state land fund of 1,000,000 hectares in Latvia, half was distributed during the first six months.

In Lithuania 600,000 hectares of land were divided among over 70,000 farm hands and landless peasants. In Estonia about 60,000 peasants received allotments and additional land from the Estonian land fund.

Whether a peasant had previously owned land or had newly been granted it by the government, his right of private ownership still was secured by the constitutions of the Baltic republics, in which the words "collective farm" are absent. Article 9 proclaims: "Land occupied by peasant homesteads, within the limits set by law, is secured for their free use for unlimited time."

The land situation in the Sovietized Baltic merits special attention, because the Russians had to deal with a peasant population of the western European type. The policy pursued to organize collaboration between the peasantry and the workers' governments in the Baltic countries was different from that followed in the U.S.S.R. In the Baltic, the Russians made no attempt to introduce the system of collective farming, the very foundation of Soviet rural economy. On the contrary, they multiplied by tens of thousands the number of small independent farmers. In doing so the Russians did not relinquish, even temporarily, their control over agriculture, the most important branch of Baltic national economy. Although collective farms were not set up, state control was actually enforced in a most effective manner. The rural system of co-operative societies, which during the preceding twenty years had been firmly established, became the instrument of state control in the Baltic agrarian economy.

These co-operative organizations had become, especially in



Latvia and Lithuania, very powerful as centers for marketing the chief farm products—export produce, in particular. Dairy products, bacon, eggs, and the like were handled through special central organizations. In time these marketing bodies lost much of their original co-operative character and developed into what were substantially private enterprises, operated by the gray barons for personal gain and to the disadvantage of the average peasant. The trade in certain farm produce—such as flax or seeds, for example—was a state monopoly. Under the general system in force before the Russians entered the country, special receiving centers had been set up all over the country, and to them the farmer was accustomed to bring all his surplus products for sale either to the co-operative or to the state at a fixed price. Therefore, the Russians were able to secure, simply by taking over the co-operative apparatus, immediate control over the entire mechanism of rural economy without interfering with the proprietary interests of the peasant.

In dealing with the religious sentiments of the peasants, the Russians also showed consideration, especially, in countries of strong clerical influence and prevalent Catholic faith, such as Lithuania and Latgale (the Catholic region of Latvia).

Priests in country districts were placed on an equal footing with the peasants and were granted the same rights of land tenure, being allowed likewise to own not more than thirty hectares. The Lithuanian government even granted a further concession, by ratifying the following regulations of the State Land Commission: "In every parish where at the present time the clergy officiate at the altar, the rector and the priest appointed by the canon shall receive for their use out of the parish land owned by the Roman Catholic Church three hectares of land each, including garden and arable land."

A lot of water did flow under the Soviet bridge in the interim between 1918 and 1940.

## DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION

How public sentiment in the Baltic countries was transformed before one's eye under the driving "winds of history" has been described by a well-known Polish writer, who was in Lithuania during the entire period of Soviet administration. She writes:

The new reality came upon the dumbfounded average citizen in the shape of lines outside the stores, pictures of labor heroes in the papers, posters on the walls, films without a happy ending and the kiss, and overcrowded houses. Every day life became more and more ascetic, and lacking in comfort. People began to realize there was no returning to the past. Ahead was a tremendous straining of energy; ahead lay the spreading of the world conflagration. In that conflagration the prewar world would be consumed to the ground. Sitting in cafes, nibbling at minute synthetic cakes, ladies said mournfully: Capitalism is coming to its end all over the world. What is not yet clear to many intellectuals in countries spared by the war, is here understood by everyone, from the sharp-witted lad who sells mittens under an archway to the banker's wife who shivers and wraps herself in a knitted shawl.<sup>2</sup>

It was this realization of the world catastrophe, of the irrevocability of supervening changes, which prompted certain sections of the Baltic population to offer a wholly unexpected and equally loyal support to the new regime. Everyone put all he had into the rebuilding of life on a new basis. It was discovered that what had seemed fantastic was actually possible, that under certain circumstances democrats, even of the bourgeois variety, and Social Democrats, too, were able to co-operate loyally with the Bolsheviki on the platform of thorough socio-economic reforms.

On the other hand, it was made plain that, given an opportunity for "a second youth," Bolshevism makes wide use of its

Russian experience, follows a flexible policy, and knows how to avoid the errors of terrorism, sectarianism, and a class narrowness which constricts the social foundation of the regime.

Through the collaboration of Communist with Social Democrat and Bourgeois Democrat, of peasant with city intellectual, of worker with former capitalist, a unique system was created in the Baltic, prior to the German invasion—a system democratic in spirit and method, socialist in tendency, and displaying a strong though certainly not dominant socialized segment of national economy—side by side with co-operatively organized peasants. The war interrupted this highly promising laboratory experiment of an original synthesis of revolutionary ideas and democratic habits and traditions. After liberation of the Baltic from the Germans, the experiment will no doubt be continued.

It can be maintained that no generalizations are permissible on the strength of a single experiment in the Baltic. That may be true. Even so, the experiment of successful collaboration of such diverse public elements is vested with considerable interest at present, when so much depends on the possibility of collaboration between democratic and social-revolutionary forces.

The significance of this experiment is heightened by the fact that the agent entering into the collaboration with the democrats was not a local Communist party, but the U.S.S.R. itself—the Soviet administration. It was thus demonstrated in the Baltics that the U.S.S.R. and the Soviet government are capable of doing business with democrats sincerely and over a period of time not only in matters of foreign policy, but also in the field of internal socio-political reconstruction.

Since this proved to be possible in one small locality, it is reasonable to believe that it would be workable in other parts of the world.

*Ostland: Reichsminister*  
*Alfred Rosenberg*

SETTING THE STAGE FOR WAR—FINLAND: MARCH 1940 TO JUNE  
1941

A clash between the U.S.S.R. and Germany was inevitable. This was clear in 1939 and 1940 to all in the Baltic nations, although the newspapers maintained a tense unbroken silence. But the inhabitants of Kaunas, Riga, and Tallinn needed no editorials to explain what the Russians were driving at in the Baltic area. They saw Soviet policy unfolding before their eyes.

Meanwhile, across the Gulf, they could easily follow the deliberate designs of the Germans in Finland. With genuine alarm the population observed the danger signals in the Finnish policy of 1940–1941. If Anglo-Saxon circles were then unaware of the situation, it was chiefly because many persons were still complacent and would not face disturbing facts.

When military operations ceased along the entire Russo-Finnish front at noon on March 13, 1940, it became apparent that Russia had exacted minimum demands from defeated Finland. In his address to the Sixth Session of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R., the Soviet Foreign Commissar V. M. Molotov had every reason to point out that “the Soviet Union, having

smashed the Finnish army and being thus enabled to occupy the whole of Finland, did not do so and did not demand any reparations for her war expenditures as any other power would have done." <sup>1</sup>

After the victory of Soviet arms, as during the diplomatic negotiations preceding the outbreak of hostilities, the Soviet government sought to gain military security alone and not to liquidate the Finnish state or to debase the national dignity of Finland. Even after her successful military encounter, the U.S.S.R. pursued her peculiar policy of appeasement.

The Russians persisted in their efforts to placate the Finnish military and government leaders, whose involvement with Germany and the Hitlerites was apparently underestimated by the Russians. Soviet troops, who had for some months occupied Petsamo, evacuated in accord with the peace terms, after working several days to restore order in the town. There was no counterdemolition to retaliate for the wholesale destruction carried out by the Civil Guards in the Finnish territory ceded to Russia.

Nor did the Russians protest when their base in Hangö, which had been leased to them for thirty years, proved to be literally encircled. To the north of Hangö the Finnish government erected fortifications mounting heavy guns aimed at the back of the Soviet garrison.

According to Article 7 of the Finnish-Soviet peace treaty, both parties were obliged in the shortest possible time to construct a railway spur to their respective borders, connecting Kandalaksha with Kemijärvi. Although Finland dallied with construction of the line east from Kemijärvi, the U.S.S.R. within six weeks had completed their spur west from Kandalaksha to the Finnish frontier.

Moreover, the Finnish-Soviet trade agreement provided for a limited trade exchange, but the Finnish government was in

no hurry to trade with Russia. During the first year Finland exported to Russia only twelve per cent of the agreed quota. Yet the U.S.S.R. refrained from protest. Despite the Finnish lapse, the Soviet foreign trade commissariat was ordered not to delay grain shipments to Finland.

This policy of "turning the other cheek" did not do the Russians any good. The purpose was to win the sympathy of the Finnish people, but time was running short and the art of winning friends takes a long time. The Soviet government was certainly not so naïve as to expect that Mannerheim and Svinhufvud, who had originally started the war against Russia, now could suddenly be reformed.

Even while Finnish delegates were negotiating in Moscow about stopping the war and were imploring the Russians to display magnanimity, the veteran plotter Svinhufvud visited both Berlin and Rome and talked with Hermann Goering, the Reich Air Minister. He was given to understand, as it was later reported, that at the moment the Führer could not openly side with the Finns, but he promised to do so in the future. On his return Svinhufvud immediately contacted the proper ruling circles in Finland and persuaded them to prepare for the coming joint German-Finnish armed front against the U.S.S.R.

The preparations made were both political and military.

Hardly had the peace treaty with the U.S.S.R. been signed than the Finnish government endeavored to involve Norway and Sweden in a defensive union of the Scandinavian countries. A favorite child of German diplomacy, which always conceived this "defensive" union as a link in a German-controlled military bloc against the U.S.S.R. in northern Europe, this plan was too familiar for the Russians not to recognize the danger at once.

The immediate and resolute opposition of the Soviet government disrupted this Finnish scheme. Besides, influential circles

in the Scandinavian countries were not so eager to become involved in the current anti-Russian conspiracy. The disposition of these circles, who have now become more convinced in their opinions, especially in Norway, was recently distinctly expressed by the Norwegian Halvdan Koht. In reply to a Stockholm dispatch from George Axelson to the *New York Times* about a projected Scandinavian bloc for defense against Russia, Koht wrote to the editor of the paper, as follows:

Your Stockholm correspondent, George Axelson, certainly misreads Norwegian ideas when he, in his telegram in your edition of May 2, ventures to state that, after this war, Norwegians will be glad to have Sweden say the decisive words about their alliances, and that they would be willing to enter a union with Sweden with the first, last and perpetual aim of forming a bulwark against Russian aggression.

According to all reports from Norway, there is no doubting that the Norwegian nation is perfectly satisfied by her present alliance with her two great neighboring powers, Great Britain to the west and Russia to the east, and she will not be willing to let Sweden draw her out of this alliance, no more than out of the alliance with the United States and the other United Nations.

Norway certainly will be glad to see Sweden enter again the Nordic co-operation after this war, but it is just as certain that nobody in Norway can conceive of such co-operation as founded upon suspicions or fears of Russian plans.

By virtue of a friendship of long standing between Norway and Russia, Norwegians feel convinced that the Soviet government has no plans of encroaching upon their independence or their territory. Rather, they should feel their country endangered if they allowed themselves to be lured into such policies as foreshadowed by your correspondent. .<sup>2</sup>

When the idea of the Scandinavian bloc came to naught, the Finns advanced a proposal to create a military-political union of the Baltic states to be known as the "Zone of the Baltic Sea." Behind this proposal loomed the shadow of the German gen-

eral staff, seeking a devious path for its return to the Baltic area. This scheme was not merely condemned by Russia. Russia was also obviously impelled to hasten complete Soviet control over the Baltic area because the dictators, who still held office in the Baltic states, were evidently ready to enter the conspiracy. Their intentions were revealed in secret and open diplomatic acts as well as in conferences between the chiefs of the respective general staffs.

The military preparations of the Finns and Germans on Finnish territory were an open secret. The Finnish government and generals realized that Finland was an outpost of the German army and that the U.S.S.R. would hesitate long before undertaking anything which might swing into movement the mighty war of the titans. Therefore, they were brazenly insulting to Russia.

On the very day military operations ended, March 13, 1940, General Mannerheim, in an order to the Finnish army, announced that "the sacred mission of the army is to be an outpost of Western civilization in the East."

The end of hostilities did not bring demobilization in Finland. On the contrary, large-scale fortification work was immediately begun along the new frontiers. The workers employed were recruited from among those previously engaged at armaments plants. During 1940-1941, Finland placed big munitions orders in many countries, chiefly Sweden, Germany, and the United States, purchasing hundreds of heavy guns, thousands of warplanes, and other arms.

Germany openly encouraged all this activity. The Germans supervised the construction of defense works along the new frontier with the U.S.S.R. Germany supplied all the ferro-concrete installations for the new Mannerheim Line.

Nazi activity in Finland assumed large proportions after Sep-



tember 1940, when German troops were allowed to enter Finnish territory on the pretext of transit passage to Norway. In reality, this signified the occupation of Finland by Germany. The railways of western Finland passed into Nazi hands. The Germans were garrisoned chiefly in the Lapland region, where Finnish military forces were commanded by the notorious General Wallenius, a mature Fascist conspirator, who gladly turned over his residence to the Germans.

The comradeship-in-arms between Finnish militarists and the Hitlerite Reichswehr was marked by such demonstrative acts as the German and Finnish staffs sharing the same quarters, often under a single sign, such as "Defense Staff of the Gulf of Bothnia." Through the ports of Helsinki, Turku, Vaasa, and Petsamo the Germans, with almost no attempt at concealment, delivered large shipments of arms to Finland. Joint German-Finnish war maneuvers were held.

After March 1940 the German mission in Helsinki was enlarged, becoming the largest diplomatic mission in the Finnish capital. Apart from the very active German envoy, Blücher, the mission comprised ten other ranking diplomats, five of them military, as well as innumerable officials of the embassy itself, the press bureau, the Nazi party, and the Gestapo. Scattered throughout Finland were eleven consulates, each with an oversized staff.

It was smooth sailing for the German diplomats and the Gestapo in Finland, where the government and the army received them with open arms, while the fifth column was fattened on the nourishing beef tea of subsidized propaganda.

In April 1941, some 12,000 German troops disembarked at Turku with tanks and arms: reinforcements for the increasingly impressive Hitlerite garrison in Finland. At the time it was said that the landing was carried out at Mannerheim's request.

However, the Germans did not need any prodding, since to them Finland was a springboard for attack on the U.S.S.R., and they were determined to use it to the utmost.

During 1940 and 1941 the Finnish state radio broadcasting service was engaged in a systematic pro-German campaign. Glamorized biographies of German leaders were regularly transmitted for Finnish listeners. Hitler's *Mein Kampf* was printed and circulated in huge editions. An endless stream of German journalists, actors, and others came to Finland on excursions.

To swing the population toward Fascism at home many Fascist and semi-Fascist societies were organized in Finland. Thriving on State subsidies they sprang up like mushrooms after a rain. A most active part in these new organizations—the "Comrades in Arms," "Revival of Finland," "Union of Invalids," et cetera—was taken by the former Jaegers: that is, the Finnish soldiers who had been trained during World War I in Germany and had fought then in the ranks of the German army. Again the militant youth of Finland were likewise sent to Germany to be trained for the new Jaeger units in process of formation.

At the beginning of January 1941 an official Fascist magazine, *The National Socialist*, appeared in Finland. Not without reason did the German press hail Finland, observing that "the main line of the authoritarian regime there became set after March 1940"<sup>3</sup> and that the German Reich's friendly policy toward Finland over recent decades remains a golden tradition.<sup>4</sup>

Although the unusually cautious policy of the U.S.S.R. toward Finland strengthened the anti-Fascist forces, the opposition was impotent to halt the march of Finnish Fascism toward the abyss of war. The democratic politicians headed by Karl Wiik, who had himself been ousted from Social Democratic leadership by Tanner, and the established liberal groups were

able to muster several thousand followers in an organization for "Finno-Russian understanding," but all together they were too feeble to withstand the police and Fascist hoodlums who broke up their meetings and suppressed street demonstrations.

At the opportune moment, democratic leaders were thrown into prison and the unopposed Finnish government could then call up the reserves on June 17, 1941, just five days before the Nazis launched their invasion of Russia. On that same day Finland declared her "political connection with the League of Nations broken."

A few days later Risto Ryti made an unctuous radio speech, saying that "the whole genius of Hitler and the entire might of Germany will assist Finland in the war." Then Mannerheim, again at the head of Finnish forces, issued his battle order reminding the troops that "already in 1918 he had told the Finns and Karelians he would not sheathe his sword until Karelia is liberated."

Trailing behind the Hitler war chariot, jackals licked their chops in anticipation of promised booty.

#### WAR BEGINS IN THE BALTIC AREA

June 22, 1941. Sweeping all before it, the Hitlerite avalanche descended on the Baltic area. Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia bore the full impact of the blitzkrieg launched by the German Wehrmacht, heralded as the world's most powerful war machine and glorified in the legend of invincibility. No country in Europe had been able to withstand or bring it to a halt. What could be expected of the tiny Baltic states?

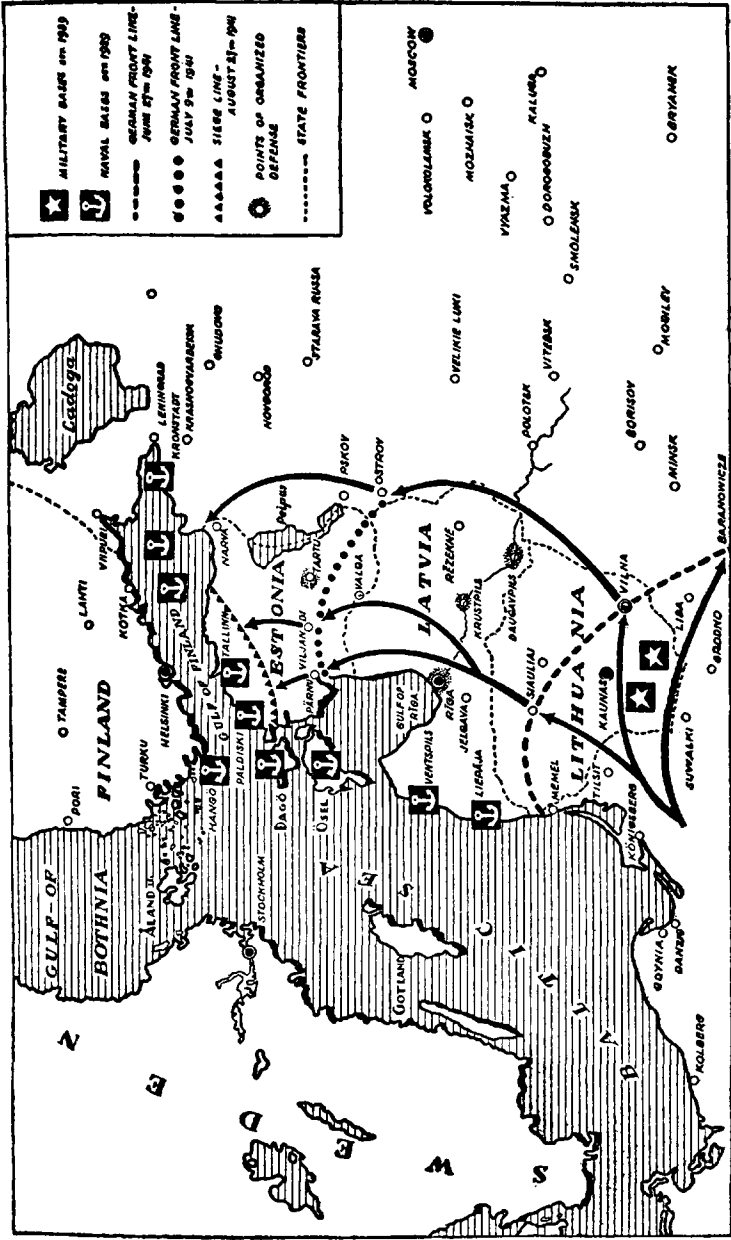
But had the arrogant German generals, then intoxicated by unbroken victory, been able to reflect on their experience in the Baltic area, they might well have hesitated before plunging to their doom in an offensive against the main Russian land. For

in assaulting the Baltic outposts, the German army at the very outset encountered a stubborn resistance that multiplied tenfold as these modern woebegone Napoleons advanced to invade Russia itself.

In the Baltic nations the population rose in arms. Resistance came not merely from the few Soviet garrisons stationed at coastal points; and not only from the national regular armies of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia, whose trained regiments put up a fighting retreat to the northern shore of Riga Bay and the Gulf of Finland, for a last stand in the north of Estonia, while recruits were being dispatched to the interior of Russia to be mobilized into new fighting units. The resistance was universal; even civilians joined in the battle, erecting street barricades, disrupting communications, and acting as snipers. Such local action first blocked the German mechanized forces in Daugavpils, where armed railway workers and local young people, mostly Jews, blew up the ferry crossing the Dvina River and then converted every house in this small town of 40,000 inhabitants into a fortress, compelling the Nazi troops to storm it street by street. Enacted here in miniature were the later legendary defenses of Leningrad, Moscow, Sevastopol, and Stalingrad.

The stripling lads of Daugavpils had not been trained for this struggle. All they knew of military affairs had been acquired during one year's compulsory service in the antiquated Latvian army. Almost none of them had ever seen a tank, while the flight of an airplane was a great event in Daugavpils. Yet they were determined to make a stand against the monstrous weight of invading tanks and dive bombers.

Had the Germans used their heads, they would have realized what awaited them in Russia itself, where people knew how to handle a tank and an automatic rifle. In the Baltic area, civilian resistance was also stanch at Krustpils, Riga, Tartu, and Lie-



MAP 3. GERMAN INVASION OF THE BALTIC AREA—1941

paja. Liepaja was only a few score miles from the nearest German frontier post. Surprised there, the soldiers had no time to evacuate, but they sold their lives dearly. For a whole week the Wehrmacht could not overcome the resistance of the Liepaja garrison. Even after the Germans had occupied the town and their main army was far advanced to the east and the north, fierce street fighting suddenly flared up in Liepaja. Only with field artillery could the Germans blast out the last barricades erected by the enraged citizenry. More than 10,000 Liepaja workers were shot by the Germans.

According to the plans of the Soviet general staff, the Baltic area was viewed as a field for rearguard action designed to delay the enemy. Taking up defense positions in northern Estonia on a line from Paldiski to Narva, units of the Latvian, Lithuanian, and Estonian national armies operating jointly with Soviet airmen, Red Army infantry and tanks blocked the onslaught of the German army, and for ten weeks they prevented the Nazis from closing the siege ring around Leningrad. Only after firing their last shells did they stage a Baltic Dunkirk, evacuating the coast under terrific pounding by Stukas. In bombarded vessels and with heavy losses, heroic remnants crossed the Gulf of Finland to Leningrad, where the last-ditch successful stand was made.

### THE BARONS RETURN

Following in the van of the Wehrmacht, the Gestapo arrives in every country occupied by the Germans. But the Baltic area suffered a still greater misfortune, since the Nazi troops brought with them, bag and baggage, the German barons who had been driven out. For the Baltic nations this meant that those who arrived were not simply hangmen and impassive jailers, but hangmen who knew every corner of the country and every person intimately, who bitterly hated the local inhabitants, nursed

a consuming desire for vengeance, and regarded themselves as hereditary masters to whom the people were but chattel.

To be sure, not all the Germans who had left during the Soviet-German Pact returned. Permission to return was given only to those who, during the intervening two years, had proven themselves loyal Hitlerites.

Lacking enough German colonizers, the Nazis proclaimed the Baltic area a land for the resettlement of the Dutch as well. In Holland, young zealots of the Dutch Nazi leader Mussert have not had marked success in recruiting settlers of good Fascist repute. Nevertheless, the first contingents of Dutch Fascists appeared in the Baltic countries shortly after the Germans had been reinstated there.

The new masters demanded from the local inhabitants indemnity for all losses incurred by the Germans during their former evacuation, although it had been carried out by formal agreement with Hitler. From all dwellings that Germans had previously occupied, Lithuanians, Latvians, and Estonians were ousted to make room for their "rightful owners." The Germans also proclaimed themselves to be sole owners of all denationalized property and of all Jewish holdings. Posing as the heirs apparent of the Teutonic order, Germans in the Baltic area have now organized what is called the Deutsche Orden, which aims to fulfill a long-cherished dream of reactionary Germany: the Germanization of the Baltic territory.

The very names Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia have been abolished. In their place has appeared the province of Ostland headed by Reichskommissar Heinrich Lohse.\* Ostland is divided into four General-Bezierke—Latvian, Lithuanian, Estonian, and Belorussian—which are administered by military commissars, among whom the Lithuanian Governor General von Rintelen is most distinguished for brutality. The Com-

\* Recently killed by fearless Belorussian Partisans.

missar for Latvia is Dr. Drechsler and for Estonia—Litzmann. The occupation authorities are subordinate to the Ministry of Occupied Eastern Provinces in Berlin, which is headed by Alfred Rosenberg, who is a Baltic German and high priest of Nazi philosophy.

The establishment of a special "Grundstück Gesellschaft" (real estate company), which has jurisdiction over all real estate, buildings, and industrial plants, was one of the first acts taken by the German authorities. This Gesellschaft is directed by commissioners sent from Berlin; it certifies the rights of private persons to property which had formerly been nationalized. If a given person has rendered meritorious service to the Reich, he becomes the owner of the property in question; otherwise, it is handed over to German or Dutch settlers.

Since the collective-farm system had not been introduced in the Baltic area, the peasants remained in permanent individual possession of their land, and the Germans could not represent themselves to the peasantry as restorers of private property. They began, on the contrary, to confiscate those peasant plots which either had been added to the holdings of small farmers by the Soviet government or were claimed by German barons as their property through "historic" right. In this way, literally many thousand—not merely isolated—peasant farms were confiscated.

The peasants now once again felt the heavy hand of the barons. The Germans sought to take from the Baltic whatever provisions they could get hold of quickly. In the rural areas it was common talk that the Baltic Germans had replaced the usual greeting "Heil Hitler" with the more appropriate "Butter, Eier und Speck" (butter, eggs, and bacon), since they thought of nothing else. A natural assessment was levied on the peasants, obligating them to deliver a certain quota of farm products to the authorities. These assessments were most



exorbitant. The amount of butter, eggs, and other products which the peasants in certain districts were required to deliver to the Germans exceeded even the highest local output ever attained in the best years. Besides, all the peasants were held mutually responsible for quota deliveries, while nonfulfillment entailed confiscation of their land. In an age-long unequal struggle against the German barons, the Baltic peasantry had remained unsubdued. Nor would they now allow Hitlerite offspring of the feudal barons to oppress them with impunity. Partisan warfare flared up immediately after the first German forces appeared in the Baltic area, and a fierce unrelenting struggle against German occupation is waged today in the rural areas of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia.

#### PARTISAN WARFARE

At the outset, the partisans operated in large detachments, actually small armies, whose leaders are now legendary figures. To cope with them, the Germans had to deploy from offensive military action large forces used on purely punitive operations. Partisan activity embraced whole districts and contributed to delay the advance of the enemy's main armies. According to a German newspaper report, during the month of July 1942 alone the German command had to dispatch in succession two punitive expeditions into the Jaunlatgale district of Latvia to stamp out guerrilla warfare. The first expedition had been decoyed into swampland and wiped out.

In combating the partisans, the Germans resorted to very efficient countermeasures. To establish control over the peasantry from whom the partisans sprang, they introduced a complex intelligence system, with agents stationed in rural areas and reporting by field telephone to the nearest military command. The agents were recruited from among local Germans

or trusted Fascists from the ranks of the Aizsargi in Latvia or the Saulistai in Lithuania; that is, from the membership of organizations which had formerly been the main props under the Ulmanis and Smetona regimes.

This German action compelled the large partisan detachments to disperse into small bands operating along lines similar to those followed by the "forest brothers," who had made life miserable for the barons in 1905. Instead of organizing general uprisings of entire districts, the partisans directed their struggle at limited objectives, striking the Germans from ambush by day or by night in surprise raids.

To the credit of these partisan bands is a long record of raids on enemy detachments, innumerable acts of sabotage and general subversive work.

Latvian partisans blew up the bridge near the Valka station, dynamited the railway shops in Daugavpils, demolished the railway depot at Krustpils, seized a truckload of arms near Riga, burned down, near Pļaviņas, the house occupied by the German commandant together with storm troopers dispatched to confiscate peasant products—and all this within a short period. These actions were reported in an early account, one of scores now regularly received from Lithuanians, Latvians, and Estonians at the fighting front. At a recent meeting in Moscow to celebrate the third anniversary of the Baltic Soviet Republics, representatives of the Baltic units in the Red Army reported accomplishments of the Latvian and Estonian Partisans and of the Lithuanian guerrilla armies "Vilnius" and "Zalgiris." These fighters are said to be abundantly provided with automatic arms and hand grenades.

The ground under German feet is no less hot in the Baltic cities. The arrogant conquerors were not long in reminding the Baltic people of those forgotten days when the German master race had without restraint made laughingstock of the natives.

Everything is done to impress the Baltic people with a sense of their inferiority. Even the quota of hostages—two hundred to be shot for every slain German—is higher in the Baltic than it is in western European countries. In Kaunas four hundred Lithuanians were executed recently as hostages for two slain German soldiers.

Jim Crow regulations are enforced. The natives are not permitted to ride in the same trains or streetcars that the "master race" travel in. Natives receive a third of the wages paid to Germans for the same kind of work. Rations for natives are also scaled correspondingly lower than rations for Germans. For example, a Latvian in Riga is allowed 1,750 grams of bread, 200 grams of meat, 50 of sugar, and 50 of salt a week. A German gets 3,500 grams of bread, 700 grams of meat, 130 of butter, 125 of fats, 100 of cheese, 250 of sugar, 125 of salt and 3 eggs.

Newspapers, which are not German-language papers, must be published both in the native language and in German translation. The German language is compulsory in government offices and courts of law. Court procedure resembles the former foreign concessions in China, with separate courts for the trial of Germans. Natives stand trial before native judges, who are of a lower grade and whose decisions can be appealed or reversed in a German court.

The greatest humiliation which the inhabitants endure, however, is the incessant slave trade. Daily, scores of Lithuanians, Latvians, and Estonians are transported to Germany for slave labor in the RAD—Reichsarbeitsdienst. They are rounded up in a very simple manner. A police cordon surrounds some district, checking up all identification documents. Only those are released who have a special pass issued by the German occupation authorities. The rest either disappear completely or are loaded immediately on freight cars for shipment to work in Germany. The rare letters that reach relatives from

persons exiled to Germany tell of almost incredible hardships. The working day is unlimited. Punishment for infringement of discipline includes loss of rations and starvation.

The degradation imposed on the Baltic prisoners in Germany is worst of all. It affords the Hitlerites a special sadistic pleasure to compel native Baltic students to work as street cleaners in Berlin; as much as to say, "What right have you, menials of a lower race, to study science?" On good authority it is now also known that many of the Baltic girls, abducted to Germany, have been forcibly put into brothels for soldiers. This is confirmed by letters from several of the girls and by the testimony of a few girls who managed to escape. These unfortunate girls, we learn, are branded by red-hot irons or tattooing with the letters SM, meaning Soldaten-Mädchen (a soldier's girl).

Considering the outrageous conduct of the Nazis, it would be surprising if groups of city folk, students, workers, and others simply driven to frenzy did not from time to time join up with the peasant partisans. Hundreds of Jewish young people, refugees from foul ghettos, have also joined the partisans.

Dreadful reports have been made of the horrible persecution of Jews in the ghettos of Riga and Kaunas. It is a tale of the unmitigated horror in which the German Gestapo has become past master, surpassing even the worst nightmare. On the basis of information received in Switzerland about events in the Riga ghetto, American Jewish organizations have compiled a report for the United States Department of State. Here are excerpts:

On November 29, 1941, an additional order was issued, saying that all men able for work and between the ages of 18 and 60 years had to line up in a street near the newly established small ghetto on November 30, while the rest of the population would be sent to camps. Each person was allowed to take along 20 kg. of luggage.

On November 30, the announced selection among the male population took place.

All people over 60 and all people ill or disabled were sent home to the large ghetto and also all doctors were sent home. The result of the selection was that as from November 30, about 4,000 men were settled in the small ghetto. The living conditions there were awful. There was even less space than in the former ghetto. In a small room 16 people were living, five persons sleeping in one bed.

In the night of November 30, all people living in one part of the large ghetto, numbering 8,000, were assembled. They had their luggage of 20 kg. with them. They had to stand there during the whole night without shelter and in the early hours of the morning of December 1, they were led away by Latvian auxiliary police under German supervision.

They had to pass along the fence which separated the large ghetto from the small ghetto, so that the men inside the small ghetto were seeing what was going on. During their march, the group of 8,000 was treated with the utmost brutality. Those who were unable to keep pace were shot. The group of 8,000 was led to the woods, the so-called wood of Bickern and the wood near Zarnikau, and there all the 8,000 were shot.

After this mass execution, only 16,000 Jews remained in the old ghetto.

In the following week nothing special happened. Only 800 women were arrested, 400 were imprisoned while the other 400 returned some time later to the ghetto.

On December 7, an order was issued that all women had to be at home by 7 o'clock in the evening. In the night of December 7 to December 8, the 16,000 people still in the old ghetto were assembled and taken away, just like the 8,000 a week before.

According to a statement of the commander of the Latvian ghetto guard who later told about these things to some people with whom he took drinks, the 16,000 people were led to the woods. Russian prisoners of war had to dig trenches 3 to 4 meters deep. Then the men were separated from the women and children, each group standing to one side of the trenches. Anything of any value they possessed had to be laid down at a certain spot. Then the 16,000

had to undress so that the men were completely naked while the women were allowed to keep their skirts.

All the clothes had to be put down and were collected by the police. Then the naked men were ordered to lie down in the trenches after which five or six German soldiers with machine-guns arrived and shot the men lying in the trenches. The next group had to lie down on the bodies and were shot in the same way. Women and children suffered the same fate.

The shots of public avengers ring out in the city streets ever more frequently. More and more German barracks in Baltic cities are blown up in a crescendo of retributive explosions. The Germans reply with mass arrests and executions. Underground sources have informed the Baltic people living in Russia that the number of Lithuanians killed by the Germans has already reached 30,000, and more than 100,000 Lithuanians are confined in prisons or concentration camps. Not less than 120,000 inhabitants of Latvia have been slain. Meanwhile, the Nazis threaten new repressions against recalcitrant Baltic people and cast ironic slurs at those muzhiks who think themselves above cleaning streets in manorial Berlin or serving the glorious German army in a brothel.<sup>5</sup>

The full weight of German vengeance has fallen on the centers of cultural life of the Baltic countries. Recent reports from Sweden brought news from occupied Lithuania that practically all prominent intellectuals—including professors, physicians, lawyers, and priests—have been arrested by the German authorities. George Axelson, the *New York Times* correspondent in Stockholm, writes:

All universities and public libraries have been closed and Gestapo hordes sent out willfully to destroy or remove the equipment of scientific institutions and the books of national libraries.

Thus, it is believed here the Nazi occupation powers have now set about systematically to wreck the countryside, break up cultural institutions and ruthlessly persecute the educated classes.

In Vilna, for instance, it is reported, Gestapo gangs smashed up all apparatus at the Academy of Medicine. Police came down also on the Academy of Sciences, burning manuscripts for a Lithuanian dictionary which had required forty years to compile, as well as smashing up 2,000 gramophone recordings of Lithuanian folk-songs.

The Academy of Arts was also ransacked. In Kaunas, archives of the Academies of Science and Music and of the Faculty of Law were destroyed. Ten thousand volumes were stolen from the State Library and 23,000 more from the University Library, it is asserted.<sup>6</sup>

Recently, the small partisan bands again began assembling into large detachments concentrating their forces in districts near the Lake Ilmen-Velikie Luki line, where the Red army is evidently preparing a big striking force. Regular liaison has now been established between the partisans and units of the Red army, and at the appointed time their action will be co-ordinated.

#### BALTIC REFUGEES IN RUSSIA

Kaarel Pusta, who was Foreign Minister at the time Estonia followed a pro-Polish policy, recently published in America a pamphlet about Estonian-Russian relations. He writes that the Russians no doubt aim to liquidate the Estonians as a nation, and as evidence thereto presents the following figures:

On December 1, 1941, the population of Estonia numbered 1,010,135, i.e., 111,865, or 10 per cent less than in 1934. According to the estimates of the local authorities, 60,911 people were deported to Soviet Russia—40,737 from the towns and 20,174 from the country.

Similarly, in Latvia the disappearance of 60,000 people, including 20,000 women, 7,300 children and 3,100 killed, has so far been accounted for. Until recently the names of 30,000 deportees had been registered in Lithuania.

The honorable diplomat indulges also in a count of the economic damage done by the Bolsheviks:

The economic life of these countries has been seriously stricken. Estonia lost the greater part of her shipping, 85 per cent of her motor vehicles, 70 per cent of her railway equipment. The number of horses either destroyed or requisitioned is over 52,000; 219,504 head of cattle were lost as were also 274,350 sheep and 123,439 pigs. About 6,000 farms and 3,000 town houses were blown up or burned in execution of the "scorched earth" strategy.

In the statistical exercises of the Baltic ex-diplomat this mention of the scorched-earth strategy is the only hint that the migration of the population and economic destruction occurred in connection with an important event which took place in 1941—German invasion of Russia and its Baltic regions. Passing this information, which is based exclusively on data published by the German occupation authorities, to the American public, the Baltic ex-diplomat purposely attempts to create the impression that the Russians deported the Baltic population in order to denationalize these countries. Other Baltic ex-diplomats, like the Latvian A. Bilmanis and the Lithuanian A. Zadeikis follow Pusta's lead and repeat in their publications his assertions. The true facts are that the Baltic peoples migrated into the interior of Russia coincident with the German invasion. The Latvians, Lithuanians, Estonians, Jews, and Russians sought escape from the enemy, and they found asylum in Russia. Before evacuating, they burned down their homes so as not to leave them to the enemy, and in this way applied the scorched-earth strategy earlier than it had been officially proclaimed by Stalin. What the Baltic pro-Fascists seek to represent as Russian violence against the Baltic peoples is actually merely the normal reaction of the population, who together with their own armies retreated into the interior of their country. Pusta and Com-



pany might glory in their misrepresentation. Goebbels himself could envy them!

After long journeys full of hardship and the danger of enemy air raids, scores of thousands of Baltic refugees found their way to collective farms in the Volga region, Turkmenia, and eastern Siberia. Some of the most important factories of the Baltic area were evacuated completely with machines, workers, and engineers. After a brief period of restoration, they were soon in operation again behind the Urals, producing for the Red army.

The governments of the Baltic republics, their scientific institutions, schools, and public organizations, were also evacuated to Moscow and other cities. From the very first day, the refugees in Russia took steps to maintain the cultural traditions of their own people. In the most trying conditions, schools were organized with instruction in the Lettish, Lithuanian, and Estonian languages. Since most of the Baltic intelligentsia escaped from the Germans to Russia, it was possible not only to set going the publication of newspapers, magazines and even books in Lettish, Lithuanian, and Estonian. It was possible also to create skeleton organizations of the Riga and Tartu universities, under the leadership of Professor Kirchenšteins, chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the Latvian republic, and Professor Hans Kruus, principal of Tartu University. Recently, the Estonian theater opened in Moscow. Troupes of Latvian and Lithuanian actors also give performances to soldiers and to refugee settlements.

The greatest national achievement was certainly the creation of national military cadres—Latvian, Lithuanian, and Estonian units in the Red Army. They originated as follows: Faced with the lightning assault of the Hitler armies, the Baltic republican governments did not attempt mobilization. They preferred to evacuate all persons capable of bearing arms, except those who were commissioned to remain behind and lead the partisan war-

fare. Covered by the rearguard action of the small regular units comprising the Baltic military district's Red army, almost all the Baltic young people were enabled to escape into the interior of Russia. There, in Turkmenia and Kazakhstan they were mobilized and mustered into special national units under the command of their own officers.

The Baltic units received their baptism of fire in the autumn battles before Moscow in 1942—especially in the battles for Borovsk and Naro-Fominsk. For distinguished service there many Latvian, Lithuanian, and Estonian regiments were awarded the honorary title of Guard units, and many individuals received citations for bravery. At present the Latvian Rifle Corps comprise two Guard divisions commanded by Major General Brantskalns, Colonel Barkalis, and Colonel Zutis. They have already destroyed about 30,000 Germans, according to a late report. Although the Estonian national unit, commanded by Colonel Kukk, and the Lithuanian are smaller than the Latvian, they have frequently been mentioned in communiqués.

Thus, with their own armies, schools, cultural institutions, and governments transferred to Russia, the Baltic republics survive as nations-in-exile. They will not fail to preserve for posterity the national character and culture of their people, now crushed under the jackboots of German occupation.

#### WHO BECAME THE QUISLINGS?

For many years prior to 1941 the Nazis promoted energetic internal aggression in the Baltic area, and not in vain. Their long labors could not fail to uncover some persons useful as Quislings. To be sure, all their tall talk about creating a Baltic army "for the struggle against Bolshevism" proved an empty boast. Nothing more was forthcoming than a few despicable units of auxiliary police recruited from local Fascist cutthroats.

Yet the Nazis have endeavored to create a semblance of voluntary local action and have conducted propaganda abroad about the independence of the Baltic states. With an eye perhaps on "foreign consumption," Alfred Rosenberg, therefore, in March 1942 issued a decree about "landeseigene Verwaltung" (self-administration) for the Baltic provinces. According to this decree the occupation authorities naturally retained their prerogatives, remaining the dominant power over the territory's entire economic and political life. But the authorities appoint "self-governing" Quislings, both great and small. At the head of the administration are special general directors, appointed likewise by the occupation authorities.

In Lithuania Brigadier General Rastikis was appointed general director. He had been at one time the Defense Minister in Smetona's administration. His assistant is General Kobelunas, who participated in the coup staged by Smetona and Valdemaras. Chief of the general staff of the Lithuanian army until 1934, Kobelunas then became implicated in the feud between the dictators and was retired in disgrace.

In Latvia the general director appointed was General Oscar Dankers, one of the prominent officers of the Ulmanis period. This man was the officer whom Ulmanis sent in 1938 to Berlin to be his proxy at Hitler's birthday party. Ulmanis had also appointed Dankers to be commander of the Libau (Liepaja) garrison, the one nearest the German frontier. One of his assistants is Alfred Valdmanis, who also was a minister in Ulmanis's cabinet.

The Estonian Quisling is Dr. Mae, a physician, who had been active in the Vabs Fascist organization. Once, when he had been thrown into jail, he obtained his release through complicity with the Päts police. In 1940, classed as a Volks-Deutsche (low-caste German), Mae was evacuated to Germany.

Most heads of local "autonomous" institutions, district bailiffs,

and burgomasters were appointed from among local Germans or trusted Fascists trained also in the schools of Ulmanis, Smetona, and Päts. In the Baltic countries the Germans failed to win the support of any single public group. Their sole support is a gang of Fascist collaborators, who were thrown out of office in the Baltic Soviet republics and thereafter conspired against the governments. Representing only themselves and upheld by German bayonets alone, these Nazi henchmen live in constant dread, fearing the hate of the patriotic citizens.

Abroad, however, they are portrayed by their masters as statesmen who personify the "national aspirations" of the Baltic peoples, who collaborate with the Germans, but only against the Russians; therefore, they are men to be relied on. Also the diplomats who pretend to represent the Baltic nations in the United States and England today are the same persons who formerly served as envoys for Ulmanis, Smetona, and Päts, local Fascist dictators known to have imprisoned or banished every real democrat in the Baltic area. Those diplomats who, like Felix Cielens (until 1935 Latvian Minister in Paris), did not consent to carry out the Fascist policy were either replaced or retired. Only those remained envoys who were in accord with the Fascist and pro-Hitlerite governments. In 1940 these diplomats also were out of office, like Rastikis, Valdmanis, and Dankers. They also are inclined to forgive and forget the Nazi crimes while raising a clamor about Bolshevik transgressions.

As envoys abroad they continue to "represent" nonexistent regimes in the Baltic analogous to the Pétain government in France, and whether consciously or not they have actually become the mouthpiece of the Baltic Laval. Their information bureaus released to the American and British press the rumor about an alleged uprising against the Russians in Lithuania, and still poison public opinion with malicious slanders about the anti-Baltic policy of the U.S.S.R., about the hostility of the

Latvians, Lithuanians, and Estonians toward Russia, et cetera, although this kind of propaganda could originate with and be of service only to those who now control the Baltic area and exploit it to the utmost.

The supposed uprising against the U.S.S.R. in Lithuania during June 1941 actually occurred as follows. At the outset of the Soviet-German war the Russian troops and republican institutions were evacuated from Kaunas before the German forces entered, and for several days the city was without a government. All the law-abiding citizens who could do so had either fled the city or gone into hiding. The streets remained in the hands of hoodlums and Fascist riff-raff who, led by a certain Ambrozevičius, engaged in a riot of looting and a massacre of what Jews remained. Thereupon they proclaimed the establishment of an "independent" Lithuanian republic under German protection. The Germans, however, with customary arrogance, booted out the uninvited sycophants and three days later established a real occupation authority.

In Estonia and Latvia where this "no-man's period" was absent, there were neither "national governments" nor massacres of Jews except those organized by the Germans.

Making it plainly understood from the start that no independent governments of any kind were wanted in this Deutsche Siedlungsland, the German authorities engaged all the mercenaries and Landsknechts (hired soldiers) available for dirty work. Such collaborators were found only, as previously mentioned, among the Aizsargi in Latvia and among the šaulistai in Lithuania—the two pro-Fascist groups which had upheld the former dictator regimes and which are still "represented" here by Zadeikis, Bilmanis, Pusta, and others.

The Latvian, Lithuanian, and Estonian servants of the Nazis were drawn from elements totally unfit for the dangerous service at the front. They were, accordingly, mustered into auxiliary

police units entrusted with guarding the exits of ghettos and also serving as secret or open agents of the police authorities. Some of them were sent into Poland to be guards at concentration camps and ghettos. According to eyewitness reports, these mercenaries are inveterate ruffians whom the population hates worse than Germans.

Strange to say, the "Committee to Promote the Restoration of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania as Free Independent and Democratic States," organized in the United States under the leadership of the Baltic ex-diplomats, maintains complete silence about these traitors and Hitlerite hangmen at home in the Baltic nations. Therefore, it is not surprising that the Latvians, Estonians, and Lithuanians now in America steer clear of these ex-diplomats, whose only associates are confirmed Fascists and friends of the Russian Fascist Anastase A. Vonsiatsky, now confined in an American prison for treasonable activity. On the day Germany invaded Russia, the local Lithuanian pro-Fascist newspaper issued by these men had the banner headline: "Glory to God! At last Lithuania has been liberated!"

*The Baltic and the Future*

## WHEN WE CONQUER!

The stream, silvery clear, impetuously shall race  
 Through meadows green from native uplands to roam.  
 My heart shall be in blossom as the sapling willow.  
 I'll see the banks along the Niemen at home.

Then breeze will waft away the fog above the river  
 And rafts down waves of blue will slip in a string.  
 I'll see a flock of storks serenely cleave the water  
 And hear you call me in the summons of spring.

Your voice will be resounding in a hearty welcome,  
 Your babe in arms outstretched for me to embrace,  
 Your smile of greeting wreathed in a fresh willow garland.  
 A tear of dewdrop will be stained on your face.

I'll see my native Niemen River when we conquer,  
 The smoke on my roof, willow buds and you, my country.<sup>1</sup>

This simple poem, full of homebred emotion, written by the Lithuanian poet A. Venclavas, gives utterance to the undesigning aspirations of the small Baltic peoples, who share a common patriotism. It could have been written by a Latvian or an Estonian, but scarcely by a Finn. What a difference in their outlook and sense of destiny!

By capitulating to the great U.S.S.R., it was argued, the small Baltic republics of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia doomed themselves to national nonexistence, while by taking up arms against Russia "heroic little Finland" defended her independence.

Yet more than three years have now passed since 1940, most momentous years for the Baltic area, and only the blind fail to see that in contrast to Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, Finland has much less favorable prospects today.

Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia are, of course, now occupied by Nazi troops, just as Finland is. Their native inhabitants receive more relentless persecution, suffer greater humiliation, and endure far greater hardship than the unfortunate Finns.

But the enemy is not given a moment's respite. Gunfire flares up incessantly in the streets of deserted Baltic towns, where repressed patriots continue their unequal yet unyielding struggle. In the forests of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia are redoubtable partisan detachments embracing every peasant and young person capable of bearing arms. Many a German supply train has been derailed, and not a few Hitlerite storm troopers have met their doom in bivouacs set ablaze by partisans.

Meanwhile, many thousands of refugees from Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, who have found asylum in the interior of Russia, do not idly await the happy day when they will again see their native Niemen, Narva and Dvina rivers. Whether serving at the front in the Latvian, Estonian, and Lithuanian regiments, or working in collective farms and mills behind the Urals, they are mobilized in the great "fatherland war." Their aspirations are no less home-felt than those of the Ukrainian tiller of the soil who yearns for his own collective farm in the Dnieper valley or of the Minsk worker who dreams of returning again to his own workshop. All are alike firmly convinced that victory will be theirs, and they do everything to attain it. "When we conquer" means to them the day of common victory for all anti-



Hitler forces. For them the outlook is clear, unreserved, and hopeful. Their future is aligned with the destiny of all freedom-loving peoples.

Can the Finns look forward with hope and joyous anticipation to the day when the anti-Hitlerite coalition is victorious? Guided by a delinquent policy, Finland has become entangled in disastrous contradictions, and by tolerating an unnatural coalition with Hitlerite gangsters, the Finnish people have become powerless to resist Mannerheim and Ryti, who are dragging them ever deeper into complicity with Germany. With every passing day she spends in such company, Finland's prospects deteriorate. For such crimes history has exacted and will take a heavy toll. The Finnish people, even those who now strive singly to throw off the yoke of their own and German Fascists, cannot have the same unfaltering assurance in victory and righteous hopes for justice that inspire the Latvians, Lithuanians, and Estonians.

The Lithuanians, Latvians, and Estonians feel it is highly unjust to identify them with the Finns, as some American circles try to do. As nations, the Latvians, Lithuanians, and Estonians declare themselves forthright to be full-fledged members of the family of United Nations. In the ranks of the Red Army their national troops discharge their obligations, sometimes with a heroism beyond the call of duty. For their own countries the governments of Kirchenšteins, Vares, and Paleckis represent what de Gaulle is to France and what Beneš is to Czechoslovakia. These nations and these governments have, accordingly, every right, both juridical and moral, to build their future on those foundations they deem most suitable.

But Finland is in the camp of the enemy. The United Nations can come to terms with her only after the unconditional surrender of Mannerheim and Company. Her fate must be decided by the Allies from the viewpoint of their own future

safety, and woe to Finland if by that time she lacks genuine democrats like Karl Wiik, now languishing in prison, with sufficient influence to give the Allies a guarantee of complete and irrevocable reversal in policy. Otherwise, the Allies will be obliged to secure themselves with military guarantees.

After this war, when the Lithuanian, Latvian, and Estonian peoples lay the bases of their future, they will remember the bitter lessons of the past and strive to avoid its pitfalls: the grave danger of again becoming an instrument of intrigue manipulated by some alien power.

### THE FUTURE OF THE BALTIC NATIONS

The Baltic nations are small and weak. They are well aware that their own destiny depends upon the outcome of the wider conflict embracing Europe and the world. But it behooves even the smallest nations to lay such plans as will coincide with European development and to adjust their national endeavors within a framework of international equilibrium.

Therefore, the most vital political question faced by the Baltic nations today, and perhaps not by them alone, is whether a solution is possible that will secure their national existence and, at the same time, contribute to European and world stability. Is it organically possible to reach a final settlement for the eastern Baltic nations?

During a long and arduous history the Baltic area's destiny has been variously resolved. Every new project now advanced can be scrutinized in the light of this historic experience.

History has shown that, of numerous possible solutions, one is impossible. The existence of the Baltic republics as "independent" and isolated states has proven to be a pathetic fiction, false and harmful in effect. During the entire twenty years of their existence, these states were neither independent nor self-

governing in any real sense. They were always under the wing of one or another patron state. Their "independence" amounted to their being regarded as suitable for nothing else than to carry out temporary political tasks. Such was their status whichever the patron state, and hence the Baltic states became objects of international intrigue and exploitation, besides being passed from hand to hand.

The very origin of this "independence" was perverse. The fault lay in the local state cabals sponsored by the great powers. At the outset, democratic America raised objections, although these cabals functioned under the guise of national self-determination. Since the midwives were the "Political General" von der Goltz and the cunning Prussian diplomat Winnig, it was no wonder that their nurslings, the Baltic "national" statesmen Ulmanis and Smetona, later became useful tools in Hitler's hands.

The "independent existence" of the Baltic states was not only a mockery of independence. It could hardly be called an existence at all. During twenty years these countries did not have a single year of prosperity; they knew only prolonged and unrelieved depression. From crisis to crisis their standard of living and degree of security steadily deteriorated. Entangled in a net of international intrigue which obstructed satisfactory co-existence with the great and growing economic system of Russia, these countries, led by state cabals, turned their own economy upside down. Going counter to common sense and ordinary business calculations, the local governments declared war on industrialization and forcibly drove agriculture out to become a peddler hawking native farm products in the vestibule of the world market.

At the source of the economic strangulation of the Baltic nations lay the fiction of independence which proved a dangerous screen as well for international conspirators. So it remained un-

til, with independent Baltic Fascist and semi-Fascist regimes for disguise, Hitler completed his preparations for an offensive in the East and disrupted all attempts to create an anti-Nazi encirclement.

Anyone who views the Baltic problem without hypocrisy from a sober and realistic standpoint realizes that an isolated state existence is out of the question for the Baltic nations. Many observers have pointed to this, especially in America, where strong objections were raised to the dubious plans of the Versailles schemers. It is all the more obvious today when the interrelation of world economy has become clear and when the conviction is steadily gaining ground that the principle of state sovereignty for any price has, to a considerable degree, become obsolete.

As the Baltic peoples see it, a final settlement of their problem is possible organically only if they are given an opportunity for normal economic life and for industrial and social progress. Above all, an end must be met to an intolerable "buffer" existence, which can eventuate only in national disaster. This means that the Baltic nations must find their place in some other more powerful economic and political organism.

In all, there are three possible solutions, each of which has, to a certain degree, been tried out. The Baltic area has in the past leaned either on Russia, on Germany, or on nonneighboring powers. All three variants can now be evaluated not merely abstractly but on the basis of experience.

#### VARIANT 1: ORIENTATION ON NONNEIGHBORS

This orientation on nonneighboring states was generally known abroad and in the Baltic countries also as the "independence" of the Baltic states.

A peculiar political aberration made this possible. The pa-

tron states "from afar" had little economic interest in the poor Baltic countries and found little profit in exploiting them. To their sponsors the Baltic states were essential for the attainment of their own political objectives. In the post-Versailles period this objective was the creation of a barrier against Russia. A paradoxical situation arose. The masters demanded that their vassals be "independent."

In this sense the periods of English and Franco-Polish dominance were very much alike. Although Poland is a neighbor of the Baltic states, she acted there merely as the representative of a nonneighboring sponsor. Since she had no independent policy, and in general was not a great power either in an economic or political sense, Poland was only a conductor and instrument of French or English influence.

This meant that the Baltic states were subjected to all the degradation and dangers associated with vassalage to a great imperialist power, without enjoying any of the advantages connected with well-managed colonial status. For in its colonies the patron state usually fosters the native economic life, even though it is better to exploit them.

But the Baltic countries were left to shift for themselves economically. England interfered only when Baltic economic action led to undesirable political affiliations, like the opening of trade relations with the U.S.S.R. Warnings were then duly sounded and the vassal was rapidly brought to reason, as happened with Latvia and Lithuania. If the finances of the Baltic states became unsteady and a country was on the verge of bankruptcy, as was Estonia, the high contracting power sent in a financial expert dictator. But elimination of economic poverty could not even be considered, since the main problem in the Baltic area was the impossibility of establishing a "balanced" economy in which agriculture and industry would supplement and reinforce each other. Markets were needed to develop in-

dustry, and the home market was too restricted. Western powers had no markets for Baltic industrial products, and trade with the East was taboo for political reasons. The natural result, therefore, could be only a complete deadlock.

Translated into the terminology of international diplomacy, the orientation of the Baltic area on nonneighboring powers meant its conversion into an area of special designation, a buffer or quarantine zone. The implications remain unaltered even today.

Never mind whether the formal relations of one or another Western power with Russia are improved or not after this war. If England, the United States, or any other non-Baltic power desires to establish its own sphere of influence in the Baltic area, this in itself will be evident proof that they again seek to recreate the old *cordon sanitaire*, which has brought so much misfortune to Europe.

Such a policy now, as in the past, can have only one outcome: the *cordon sanitaire* will in time, by the logic of events, be converted into a springboard for attack. Whether the sponsor of the *cordon* becomes the aggressor or is himself shoved aside by a more energetic sponsor is not important. The essential point is that the logical evolution of a policy of *cordons* inevitably leads to preparations for aggression.

#### VARIANT 2: ORIENTATION ON GERMANY OR POLAND

Orientation of the Baltic states on Germany would be the only possible and inevitable variant should victory go to Hitler in the present war. Even now, while war is raging, the Germans have been attempting to achieve it. To the good fortune of the Baltic peoples, the situation is such that postwar German hegemony in the eastern Baltic is a purely academic question. Nevertheless, the question is worthy of attention, because certain

Baltic emigrants are inclined to prefer German control to union with Russia; and this variant may be advanced, even after the defeat of Germany, as a last resort to keep Russia out of the Baltic area.

Judging from the experience of German occupation during World War I and from what has been learned about the Nazi depredations during the past two years, the prospects are gloomy indeed if German postwar dominance in the Baltic area be assumed. As in 1915-1918, so today the country and its inhabitants are subjected to systematic despoliation, while the German landed gentry are forcibly restored to power over native peasants, who are reduced to the status of semifeudal serfs.

For the sake of argument, the lamentable experience of two German occupations can be ignored on the hypothetical assumption that a decent and considerate Germany will come into being. Even then the prospects are not very promising for the economic development of a Baltic area incorporated within the sphere of greater Germany.

German industry has no need for the auxiliary industries in the eastern Baltic area. Germany has no need for the eastern Baltic harbors to trade with the West. She has harbors enough of her own. In the German economic system the Baltic area, therefore, could be only an agricultural hinterland producing for the parent state. Although this would be somewhat better than existing in a vacuum, as Baltic agriculture has done during the past two decades, it would mean that for generations the Baltic area was doomed to be exclusively agrarian. Besides, many social and national factors make this variant wholly unacceptable for the Baltic nations.

The conception of the Baltic area as a German area for colonization has become firmly rooted in the mind of the German public generally. In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler raves about reviving the crusade of Teutonic knights to the East. General Karl

Haushofer expounds the geopolitical significance of the Baltic territory, which in his opinion is "a void" very much suited for the settlement of militant Germans. But the conception antedates the Nazis. In 1917, when the plans of Wilhelm II and Hindenburg to colonize the Baltic area with German soldiers seemed close to fulfillment, the entire German press, including the Social Democratic *Vorwärts*, rose in exultation. Even the future Weimar Republic's Foreign Minister, Gustav Stresemann, made a jubilant speech in the Reichstag about the "penetration of German Kultur in the East."

The inclusion of the Baltic area in the German sphere of power, whatever the make-up of Germany, would imply the colonization of the territory with Germans and the denationalization of the native peoples. Whether this liquidation is to be carried out by sterilization of "surplus" natives or by more humane methods is not the point. The fact remains that the seven-hundred-year dominance exercised by the progeny of the Teutonic crusaders and the Hanseatic merchants has profoundly influenced the attitude of Germans, who have grown accustomed to regard Riga, Libau (Liepaja), and Reval (Tallinn) as their own German towns. And it has, conversely, influenced public opinion in the Baltic area, where the natives know only one breed of Germans: the bloodthirsty arrogant Baltic barons.

In the event of a German victory, the Wehrmacht and the Gestapo would, of course, be able to herd the Baltic peasants back again into the estates of the German landed gentry. This solution, however, could hardly be regarded as an organic settlement. For seven hundred years these peasants have resisted the German subjugators. Should the attempt be made to saddle them again with German barons and Prussian Kultur, the age-old struggle would merely be resumed.

In its international aspect, this variant, the inclusion of the



Baltic area into a German power sphere, could imply only preparation for a new *Drang nach Osten*.

To be more precise, a peace-loving and democratic Germany has no need for the Baltic area. Only for those imbued with the spirit of the Teutonic crusaders does this area have value as a point of departure for further expansion into Russia and the East.

Writing in the Russian newspaper *Pravda* recently, Academician E. Tarle, author of *Napoleon in Russia*, revealed that the myth makers of the Nazi imperialist school have proclaimed the foremost heroes of German history to be not Bismarck nor Wilhelm I, nor even Frederick the Great, but the "collective hero," the Order of Teutonic Knights.

Quoting German sources, Tarle exposes the Nazi point of view, as follows: "We, Germans, found ourselves surrounded by several civilized nations who barred the way for our expansion and development. In front of Germans was a vast Slavic enclosure extending from sea to sea. Hence, for us Germans, the first and foremost heroes are those who went to break a way through this enclosure. For us they are heroes who endeavored to give us living space in the East." <sup>2</sup>

The issue of German influence in the Baltic area has, therefore, two possibilities: either a democratic Germany will be created which must renounce forever German claims to the eastern Baltic area, or Germany will remain an imperialist power which will again attempt to carry on where the Teutonic knights left off. In such a case the Baltic area will be the starting point for fresh aggression.

Although the dream of a Polish empire embracing the entire eastern shore of the Baltic Sea is largely a product of the Polish gentry's delirious fantasy, a few words about the Polish variant are in order. For there is no guarantee against the advancing

even of such a plan, if only to prevent Russia from gaining access to the Baltic Sea.

In this connection a book, *Poland and the Baltic*, written by Colonel Henryk Baginsky, an official lecturer of the Warsaw Army Staff College, is much to the point. Its subtitle is "The Problem of Poland's Access to the Sea," and the foreword is written by Alan Graham, M.P. In this book we read: "The northern Baltic road is the natural channel of expansion for the Polish state. Poland has always been the guardian of Europe in the East and she carried out her task successfully whenever her flanks on the Baltic and the Black Sea were secure." Therefore, the colonel demands "a union of Poland, Czechoslovakia and Lithuania allied to other neighboring countries and having adequate access to the sea, with several ports [Tallinn, Riga, Memel, Danzig, Königsberg] and a navy protecting them" and, in addition, "a Polish canal between the Baltic and the Black Sea."

Former Baltic diplomats now in the United States (some of whom, like the former Estonian Foreign Minister, Kaarel Pusta, for instance, have a long record of underhand intrigue with the Polish general staff) are again trying to cultivate connections with the Polish government-in-exile. Official meetings of Polish diplomatic representatives with local Lithuanian, Latvian, and other ex-ministers and ex-ambassadors have been reported in the press. It is rumored that they are trying to settle among themselves the old vexing question of Vilna, in order to present a common front against Russia. If that is so, may the Lord preserve the Baltic countries from fulfillment of their plans, as that would be catastrophic for Latvians, Lithuanians, and Estonians.

It would be senseless from national, cultural, and economic viewpoints to incorporate the relatively advanced Baltic nations into the backward, atrophied, and anaemic organism of Poland. Politically, it would mean their inclusion into a decadent impe-

rialist system. Here, again, a democratic, restored Poland will find enough to do at home without even thinking about the annexation of foreign territory. Only a robber Poland of shabby noblemen can hanker after the Baltic states; and such a Poland, even if resurrected after this war, will no doubt be finally subject to a new partitioning—time without number! And the Baltic countries would once again be left out in the cold.

### VARIANT 3: THE BALTIC INCORPORATED IN THE U.S.S.R.

The prospects for orientation of the Baltic peoples on massive Russia remain to be examined. Mutual relations of the Baltic countries with Russia are many-sided. Before 1905 the conception of Russian people was unknown in the Baltic area, where there were only czarist soldiers, Cossacks, police, officials, teachers, governors, and priests. The natives identified these persons with the German barons, for whom the Russian officialdom was a compliant servant. The people hated czarist satraps no less than the age-old German enslavers, who became still more arrogant after czarist Russia took over the Baltic region.

The 1905 revolution marked a dividing line between czarist power and the Russian people. The Latvians, Lithuanians, Estonians, and Finns took a most active part in this revolution, associating their national demands with the emancipation struggle of the best elements of Russian society. The workers' parties of the national minorities became component units of the general Russian revolutionary movement, sharing its doctrines and organizational work, and even participating in the internal dissension between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks.

Because of a series of historical events, the Baltic area was detached from Russia at the very moment when forces in Russia came to power with whom the Baltic peoples had long-standing ties. Later the forces of repulsion and attraction were again at

work, but along new lines. National enmity toward the multinational U.S.S.R. was completely out of the picture. Antagonism was developed along the lines of social and state organization.

Encouraged and inflamed by powerful patrons of the Baltic states, this antagonism, at one time, superseded "geography" and economic common sense. In an economic sense Russia is a natural outlet for the products of existing and potential Baltic industry, even for disposal of surplus Baltic farm products; and, at the same time, Russia herself has great need of Baltic railways and ports for her foreign commerce. Both economies are, as it were, made for the closest collaboration. The social and political contradictions, however, seemed insurmountable. In the Baltic countries the working class was weak and scattered, and the peasantry was largely of the isolated farmer type, with the standards and mentality of rich peasants, or kulaks—as the Russians call them. The cities were run by a handful of big capitalists, for the most part foreigners, and the urban petty bourgeois were disposed to dread the Communists. In foreign policy and finances the Baltic states were dependent on great powers, which required of them one thing only: to keep clear of Russia. At home the Baltic chiefs of state were men who made a career in the struggle against Bolshevism.

However, when the conflagration of war spread through Europe, the superimposed influences and political depositions failed to withstand the dictates of historic growth and geographic necessity.

At one time, progressive circles in the Baltic states sought relief from economic decay through trade relations with Russia. Later, when the tentacles of German Nazism began to reach into the Baltic area and take hold in the ministerial cabinets and army staffs, the mass of the public led by national intellectuals sought salvation of national and cultural values through politi-

cal agreements with Soviet Russia. Though this involved radical social changes, the Baltic peoples agreed to pay the price without hesitation. Afterward, it turned out that their fears were exaggerated. The Bolsheviks eliminated only a clique of big capitalists, who managed to save part of their investments. Most of them have come to live, and to prosper, in Sweden and the United States. At the time, a certain number found refuge in Nazi Germany. These, of course, have since returned to run things as business managers in occupied Ostland.

The transition regime established in the Baltic area by the U.S.S.R. proved acceptable to the peasantry, the petty urban apartment-house owners, state officials, the workers, intellectuals, and parish clergy. Based on wide public support, the regime had surmounted the political divisions which had been, perhaps, the main obstruction to the organic co-existence of the Baltic area with the vast, rapidly developing Russian economic system.

Although the war has brought this experiment to a halt, in a certain sense it has solidified the union. Together with their own evacuated plants, thousands of Baltic industrial workers and office employees are now at work in the interior of Russia. Organized in special national units of the Red Army, young Latvians, Lithuanians, and Estonians are fighting against the Germans and the Finns. For the sake of a common liberation, Russian soldiers—Ukrainians, Belorussians, Siberians, Georgians, and others—give their lives storming Baltic frontiers.

In the occupied Baltic area, partisans receive supplies flown in by Soviet airmen and deliver their reports to the Red Army staff. All this can only contribute to the creation of a community of interests, aims, hopes, and destinies. Any who endeavor to break up this union, welded in common struggle and suffering, will face a most formidable task.

This is the situation from the viewpoint of the national and

economic interests of the Baltic nations themselves. But the Baltic problem, as pointed out, has not ceased to be an international one. In the search for an organic settlement, therefore, the international aspect cannot be overlooked.

In a geographic sense, the Baltic area in the mass of Russia is the westernmost territory. In old Russia it was officially designated as the "Western Territory," which from Peter I onward served for commerce with the West. It comprised what became known as Peter's famous "window on Europe." Through a window, however, one can smile amiably at a neighbor, and also stick out a menacing rifle. What kind of window to Europe the Baltic area becomes will not be decided either in Riga or in Kaunas. Indeed, the Baltic territory has always been only an index of the mutual relations between Russia and the West. It will be so in the future also. But here one can easily ascertain just what these relations are in reality. Moreover, through the attitude assumed by this or that circle toward the Baltic problem, one can get the drift of their genuine intentions toward the future peace.

Those who are interested in the normalization of future relations with the U.S.S.R. are not thinking of restoring buffers, *cordons*, and blockades; on the contrary, they are searching for more points of contact. From the viewpoint of democratic powers, what could be more desirable than to have the Russian bridge to Europe erected across a territory which for twenty years has been accustomed to participate in European life, which has a socio-economic system intermediary in form between the Soviet regime and the Western democracies, and a population profoundly "Westernized"?

#### WHAT WILL A PLEBISCITE YIELD?

It can be asserted with conviction that those circles in America and England who are still talking and dreaming today of

isolating the Baltic area from Russia either have in mind serious disagreement with the Soviet Union and regard the Baltic area as a good pretext or are victimized by misunderstanding, false information, and hostile propaganda. At any rate, they have not realized that the era of the *cordon sanitaire* has passed, never to return if Russia can help it. The effort to restore such a policy can only force the U.S.S.R. to erect a *cordon sanitaire* in reverse against a world hostile to her, and then the *cordon* will extend far to the west of the Baltic area.

Whereas, if following this war, normal relations are established between Russia, England, the United States, and the rest of the world, what would be the sense of ousting Russia from Baltic ports which serve her for commerce with the outside world?

After World War I the United States displayed greater common sense in handling the Baltic question than the other Allies did. Or, to be more precise, the United States was less interested in the covert machinations employed for the repartition of the map of Europe. Therefore, the United States was the last of the Allies to recognize the "independence" of the Baltic states.

Only in 1921, after a vigorous campaign by certain congressmen, was recognition granted. The advocates of recognition, however, had to employ arguments which, from the present standpoint, appear somewhat ridiculous.

On April 20, 1921, at a session of the House of Representatives, the Hon. Walter M. Chandler of New York made an address in which he argued that the existence of the Baltic states as independent units was both permissible and possible. In closing his speech, he was obliged to admit that it would be a far better solution for the Baltic area to enter some large federation. But since the only possible federation was Russia, Mr. Chandler thought this solution quite inappropriate. He said:

"If England, France, the United States or some other masterful and intelligent nation could be placed where great Russia is, a federative republic might be possible, since the dominating race would then form the intelligent head of a confederation of people of different races and religions. The United States, Great Britain and France illustrate this truth in their governments today. But it is inconceivable to think that great Russia could govern a federative republic where the non-Russian members of the confederation would form the only intelligent and educated elements. "

At the time, such arguments were convincing enough to gain approval for the creation of stillborn state bodies. It cannot be said that reasons no less rash and ill-founded will not again be advanced after this war. But the sweeping arguments of Mr. Chandler, which then proved "exceedingly good," can hardly be used again. Indeed, in the European bedlam, where different nations now are wringing each other's necks and where the smoldering fires of national discord will be a menace to peace for many years after the war, the only cases of deep-rooted federation, national tolerance, and cultural multiformity are little Switzerland and the U.S.S.R.

The Latvians, Lithuanians, and Estonians are intelligent and enjoy a high level of cultural life, but they are not in any danger of becoming, as the honorable congressman surmised, "the only intelligent and educated elements" in the Soviet confederation. For them federation is not a menace but an opportunity. After long years of sedentary isolation, they would be able to apply their talents to a great collaboration in a vast new economic organism.

Very much is said about the necessity of a plebiscite in the Baltic states to determine their future course. The implication is that the elections of 1940, in which an overwhelming majority of votes was cast for the Soviet governments, did not express



the real desires of the Latvians, Lithuanians, and Estonians, because the electorate was under the pressure of Red Army units stationed in the country.

But the question must be raised, in all frankness, with a complete sense of reality. Under what conditions would the present advocates of a plebiscite conduct the public poll this time?

Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia are at present occupied by the Nazi army. The most active elements of the Baltic peoples either have evacuated into the interior of Russia or have joined the ranks of the Red Army and partisan detachments. The best minds of the Baltic nations are now in Moscow, among them the majority are well-known writers, scientists, and statesmen. All big factories together with their workers have been evacuated from the Baltic area to the Urals. The peasants and urban middle classes who have remained on the spot are being subjected to unrelenting persecution. The more patriotic among them, if they have not escaped to join up with partisans, are regularly led before firing squads. Thousands and thousands are being sold for slave labor in Germany.

Under whose control will the plebiscite be conducted this time? Under German control? This would merely mean a repetition of von der Goltz's epic correlated with a revised form of the Armistice Convention's disremembered Article 12. And to transport (would it be on Soviet ships?—there are no other Allied ships in the Baltic) American soldiers halfway around the world to the Baltic to conduct a plebiscite there, without waiting until the Baltic refugees have returned home from Russia, would be a travesty of democracy, depriving a large group of the most active inhabitants of suffrage.

All that can be done then is to postpone the plebiscite until the day when the liberating army enters the Baltic area, clears out Germans and Quislings, rehabilitates factories, assists the partisan peasantry to resume farming, et cetera. But everyone

seemingly must know that this liberating army will and can be only the Red Army, with its Latvian, Lithuanian, and Estonian troops in the vanguard marching home again. The governments of these republics, the universities, the factory workers and young people, will also return. Who would dare to stop them? It is certain also that the inhabitants who have been oppressed under the German yoke will meet them as their own longed-for deliverers. The outcome of a plebiscite is, therefore, predetermined.

It is time for sound-thinking people to realize that history has passed her verdict on the Baltic problem, and the Baltic people will not appeal for a retrial.

APPENDIX I

SPECIAL PROBLEMS OF BALTIC  
POLITICS

## SPECIAL PROBLEMS OF THE BALTIC AREA: VILNA, MEMEL, ÅLAND ISLANDS

The discussion of the Baltic issue as a whole is from time to time complicated by certain related controversies over territories which have repeatedly been the object of dispute in power politics. Most significant among these side issues are the three special problems of Vilna, Memel, and the Åland Islands.

Lithuania and Poland have more than once been on the verge of armed conflict over Vilna. Memel (Klaipeda) has been a stumbling block not only in Lithuanian-German relations. Memel has, like Danzig, been a pivot of an international controversy which, in some degree, contributed to the outbreak of World War II. While the question of fortifying the Åland Islands has been a friction point in the relations of the U.S.S.R., Finland, and Sweden, there is reason to presume that these problems may remain points of international friction even after the Baltic issue as a whole has been settled satisfactorily. Although the controversy would be less sharp, Vilna, Memel, and the Åland Islands may yet prove obstacles in the path of those who are called upon to win the peace in northeastern Europe. The public in the democratic countries will probably have repeated occasion to discuss the claims and counterclaims involved. It seems fitting, therefore, to present a few dry facts and figures to serve as landmarks in the labyrinthine maze of contradictory distortions created around those tangled issues.

### 1. THE VILNA CONTROVERSY

Involved in this long-standing dispute between Lithuania and Poland are both Vilna city (Wilno in Polish, Vilnius in Lithuanian), of 200,000 inhabitants, and the Vilna district, having a population of 1,200,000.

Unlike many other territorial disputes of the post-Versailles Europe, the controversy over Vilna was not merely a frontier incident. For Vilna is the capital of Lithuania, and the Polish claims to it were disguised efforts to bring the whole of Lithuania under Polish domination. In seizing Vilna by force, the Poles forewarned Lithuanians of what they could expect from Poles in general.

Vilna was declared the capital of Lithuania in the fourteenth century, in 1320, when the Lithuanian Prince Gediminas moved his castle to that city. It remained the capital of the Lithuanian principality until the Lublin union of Poland with Lithuania in 1569, after which the city began to decline.

When it was incorporated in the Russian empire, Vilna became the center of a *guberniya* and a noted railway junction for the important Minsk-Kaunas, Dvinsk-Bielostock-Warsaw, and Vilna-Rovno railroads. Through it passed a busy traffic of grain and timber from Russia. It was also important for leather and woodworking factories, and hosiery mills.

Later, under Polish domination, Vilna was a provincial town. Its once flourishing industry and trade declined, because the anaemic Polish economic organism lacked the resources to sustain its own hinterland, the so-called "Kresi."

With the rise of the new Lithuanian state after World War I, in 1918-1920 Vilna again came to prominence as a capital city. During these first two years Vilna changed hands several times, being occupied in turn by the White Lithuanians, the Reds, the Poles, again the Reds, and once more the Poles. After the

Reds had finally withdrawn in September 1920, Vilna was ceded to Lithuania, according to the treaty concluded by the Lithuanian government with Moscow.

At Suwalki, in October of the same year, the Lithuanians and the Poles signed a treaty based on the "Curzon Line," the demarcation line established by a British commission on the basis of the ethnic and national composition of the local inhabitants. This treaty provided that both parties would cease military operations and that Vilna as well as Vilna district would remain within the boundaries of Lithuania. However, on the following day, October 8, the Polish General Zeligovsky occupied Vilna, and after flimsy maneuvers—like the proclamation of the "independence" of the Vilna municipal council—practically annexed it as a Polish possession. As soon as it became evident that the seizure would go unpunished, official Polish circles hurriedly took General Zeligovsky under their auspices and formally incorporated Vilna into Poland.

In desperation Lithuania sent a protest to the League of Nations. A League commission was dispatched in October 1920, and it acknowledged the Polish occupation of Vilna to be "a violation by Poland of obligations she had undertaken." However, the Council of the League of Nations, with an eye to "big" European policy, did not want to check Poland. Rather than approve the commission's report, it began to search for a solution favorable to the Poles. On October 28, 1920, the Council decreed that a plebiscite be conducted in Vilna, but on March 3, 1921, it revoked this decree, proposing that both parties negotiate directly. Since the negotiations failed to regulate the dispute, the Council was obliged to appoint several new commissions and to hear additional contradictory reports about the Vilna district. On January 13, 1922, the Council declared that it considered "the Polish-Lithuanian controversy a closed case."

However, the Lithuanians remained unreconciled, and the

Council was forced time and again to re-examine this formally "closed case." But the Lithuanian protests were, at best, purely demonstrative. Meanwhile, Poland remained firmly in control of Vilna, and only rare diplomatic "incidents," such as the signing of the Soviet-Lithuanian guarantee pact on September 28, 1926, in which Russia declared the seizure of Vilna to be illegal, served to remind the world that the case was not "closed."

With the rise of Hitlerite revisionism in Europe, Beck's Poland endeavored to make Lithuania "behead herself" and recognize as legal the Polish occupation of a city which the Lithuanians never ceased to regard as their capital.

During 1937 the Polish authorities in Vilna undertook several measures aimed at the humiliation of the Lithuanians. The only Lithuanian cultural society in Vilna was closed. Lithuanian daily newspapers were banned. Local Lithuanian leaders were arrested. Frontier incidents between Polish troops and Lithuanian border guards multiplied. There were endless pretexts for these incidents, because during all these years the Polish-Lithuanian frontier had remained closed. Even mail and passenger traffic from Latvia and Estonia to Poland had to detour around Lithuania.

At this time, the Nazi troops invaded Austria. The odor of the "New Order" filled the air. Poland regarded the moment opportune, so Colonel Beck handed the Lithuanian government a forty-eight-hour ultimatum, demanding the unconditional establishment of regular diplomatic relations. In other words, Lithuania must forever renounce her claims to her own capital.

The Lithuanian government of Smetona-Mironas accepted these conditions, defying the wave of public indignation. The general staff later overthrew the government, but at that time it could not stay the inexorable march of events.

The catastrophic development of European politics in 1939-

1940 proved an unexpected turn of destiny for Vilna. When Poland was again, as many times before, repartitioned, Russia obtained Vilna and promptly ceded the city to Lithuania, with which she had just concluded a guarantee pact.

Lithuanian officials, police, and troops dispatched by the Fascist government of Smetona arrived in Vilna. They clashed with remnants of the infuriated Polish officialdom and militarists. A violent conflict ensued between two bands of vain-glorious chauvinists. The chief victims were the local Jews, who comprised not less than forty per cent of Vilna's total population, and for whom Vilna had always been a most important cultural center.

Without halting their own bitter feud, the Lithuanian and Polish Fascists often united for joint pogroms perpetrated on the Jews. The local population was distraught.

The inclusion of Lithuania in the U.S.S.R. and the coming to power of progressive and cultured Lithuanian leaders had an immediate effect in Vilna. The venerable Lithuanian poet, Ludas Gyra, was appointed Commissar for Cultural Affairs. With astonishing talent he gained control over the melting pot of national passions represented in Vilna. By giving unbiased and equal support to Lithuanian, Polish, Jewish, Russian, and other cultural institutions, Ludas Gyra won the respect and trust of all circles of the population. Every citizen could decide for himself in what language he wished his children to be instructed. After knowing nothing but racial antagonism for decades, multinational Vilna was on the road toward cultural collaboration, but the German occupation reversed the trend and again plunged the district into a morass of national decay.

## 2. MEMEL (KLAIPEDA)

Article 99 of the Versailles Treaty provided that Germany was obliged to relinquish the territory of Memel, comprising



the port of the same name, with 39,000 inhabitants, and a corridor seventy miles long by ten to twenty miles wide, with 150,000 inhabitants. This corridor is bounded on the north by Lithuania and on the south by Eastern Prussia.

Memel passed to the jurisdiction of Allied commissioners under the predominant influence of the French, who maintained their police forces in Memel. However, Lithuania presented claims to the Memel territory on the grounds both of historic rights and of her need for an outlet to the sea.

Memel was founded in 1252 by the Teutonic knights who overran the land inhabited by the Lithuanian tribe of Borussians. After the Borussian tribe had been completely wiped out by the Germans, immigration of Lithuanians from near-by districts was encouraged to obtain serfs for farm labor. In this way a considerable stratum of Lithuanians had come to inhabit the Memel district.

Being dissatisfied with the red tape of the Allies and smarting under the Zeligovsky outrage at Vilna, the Lithuanians decided to face the great powers with an accomplished fact. They were also moved by a report circulated in Lithuania that the French intended to incorporate Memel within a "greater Poland."

In a surprise attack on January 10, 1923, Lithuanian troops seized control of the Memel administration, setting up a local Diet which voted at once for the incorporation of Memel in Lithuania.

The great powers were reconciled. On May 17, 1924, a League of Nations commission, headed by Norman Davis, worked out the Memel convention, which went into force in 1925. It provided for the constitution of the Chamber of Representatives elected by universal, equal, direct, and secret suffrage for three years by citizens of the territory. The convention also provided that the governor general of Memel be

appointed by the president of the Lithuanian state and that the Memel port, of international importance, be therefore governed by a special Harbor Board made up of representatives from the Lithuanian government, the Memel directorate, and the appropriate commission of the League of Nations.

Since the majority of Memel's population were Germans, whose economic and cultural ties with the Reich remained unbroken, the Memel convention swung suspended between two opposite poles: the local directorate always German and the governor general always Lithuanian.

The Royal Institute of International Affairs thus describes the working of the Convention: "The Governor appointed by the Lithuanian Government was expected to choose a Directorate having the confidence of the Diet. If he did so, he was bound before very long to lose the confidence of the Government in Kaunas; if he did not, his rule was unconstitutional. The result was that events in Memel tended to repeat themselves in a more or less regular series. Elections were usually followed at first by a period of relative calm; then came a phase of conflict between the Diet and the Governor, accompanied by frequent changes of Directorate, this was terminated by the dissolution of the Diet, and a period of unconstitutional administration by the Governor, finally Germany would appeal to the League Council, and the Governor would feel compelled to allow new elections. Between 1925 and 1933 this cycle recurred three times." <sup>1</sup>

The rise of Hitler to power naturally made the situation in Memel more acute. In the summer of 1933 two separate Nazi parties were founded: the Left party of Pastor von Sass and Doctor Neumann's party, with direct contact in Berlin. The Memel Nazis at once launched a furious political campaign, combining legal action with conspiracy and preparations for an armed uprising. The Lithuanian government put up an irres-

olute struggle. Charged with treason, 122 Memel Nazis were brought to trial in Kaunas in December 1934. England, France, and Italy immediately made a *démarche* in Kaunas and notified the Lithuanians that they must not "irritate" Hitler. This happened at the very time that Sir John Simon and Anthony Eden were visiting Berlin. The Lithuanians were pacified, and the Germans began to manage "Lithuanian" Memel almost without interference.

In 1939 Hitler handed Lithuania an ultimatum, demanding renunciation of her formal right to Memel. From aboard a German battleship which had entered Memel port, the Führer watched the swastika being hoisted over the town hall.

Through this action Lithuania lost her only outlet to the Baltic Sea and the shipping center through which passed three-fourths of all Lithuanian exports and two-thirds of her imports, not counting the additional transit cargo coming from Russia and Latvia.

The role of Memel in the national economy of Lithuania before her inclusion in the U.S.S.R. is shown in the following table:

## MEMEL

Year	Exports (in mil. litas)	% of Total Lithuanian Exports	Imports (in mil. litas)	% of Total Imports	Shipping (in 1000 net registered tons)
1932	123.6	65.4	78.3	46.9	519.7
1933	106.6	66.6	79.0	55.6	600.7
1934	97.3	66.1	83.9	60.5	622.8
1935	118.2	77.6	80.0	62.2	691.3
1936	149.4	78.4	106.2	68.0	782.5
1937	157.0	75.3	145.0	68.0	844.7

Of the total 844,700 net registered tons which passed through Memel in 1937, 295,000 tons went to Germany, 150,000 to Sweden, and 146,000 to Great Britain.

Also concentrated in Memel were about fifteen per cent of

all the Lithuanian industrial concerns employing more than five workers, about a third of all persons employed in Lithuanian industry, and thirty-five per cent of all mechanical motive power in Lithuania.

### 3. THE ÅLAND ISLANDS

The Åland Islands, *Ahvenanmaa* in Finnish, are an insular group at the entrance to the Gulf of Bothnia. They embrace the large Åland Island, of 475 square kilometers, ten smaller islands, and about three hundred isles, rocky islets, and sea rocks. The total population of the entire group is 27,000, of which ninety-seven per cent are Swedes. The chief city is Marienham, on Åland Island.

The Åland Islands were ceded to Russia by Sweden in 1809, in accord with the *Friedricksham* peace.

When Russia's international position was greatly weakened as a result of the Crimean War, the Franco-British fleet took advantage of the situation to force the Baltic Sea, where they bombarded Sveaborg, compelling the Russians to agree on the demilitarization of the Åland Islands. According to the Paris peace of 1856, Russia was obligated not to fortify the Åland Islands, nor to erect or maintain either military or naval installations there. Russia observed this agreement up to World War I, in 1914. The Franco-British allies, who had previously been interested in demilitarization of these strategic islands, were now interested in having Russia do as much damage as possible to the Germans in the Baltic Sea. The Russian high command then fortified the islands.

One of the demands of the Germans at Brest-Litovsk in 1918 was the demilitarization of the Åland Islands. Article 6 of the Brest-Litovsk peace provided that "the fortifications erected on the Åland Islands must be removed at the first opportunity."

Nor did the Germans neglect to use the Åland Islands as a steppingstone, when Mannerheim, finding himself hard-pressed by the troops of the Finnish people's government in 1919, sent an urgent telegram appealing to the German high command for assistance. The troops of von der Goltz were landed on Hangö via the Åland Islands.

Subsequently, the question of the Åland Islands was raised as an insoluble international problem, cast as a dispute between Sweden and Finland. The Swedes had occupied the islands with military forces. The Finns later accused them of using false documents, saying that the Swedes were able to lure the Finnish detachment from the islands by sending a forged command, in which Mannerheim allegedly ordered the evacuation of the islands. That is the Finnish version. But the Swedes declared that their troops arrived just in time to forestall the Red Finns, who sought to occupy the islands.

At the initiative of the Swedish government the Åland Islands controversy was presented for discussion in the League of Nations. On their side the Swedes had the local population and had collected among them a long list of signatures to a petition asking for annexation by Sweden. However, the commission of three lawyers appointed by the League Council decided in favor of Finnish sovereignty. Their decision was adopted by the Council in July 1920. The Swedes protested, reminding the League of the words of Napoleon, who said, "Åland is the key to Stockholm." Moreover, they distrusted the pro-German Finns. They were somewhat pacified only after the Geneva convention of October 20, 1921, between Germany, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, the United States, Italy, Latvia, Poland, and Sweden had once more established the principle of the demilitarization of the Åland Islands. The League of Nations was supposed to see to it that Finland carried out her obligations.

According to the standards of international relations then in force, it was thought quite proper to exclude Russia from the convention on a question so vital to Baltic powers. The Soviet notes of protest remained unanswered. On November 14, 1921, the Soviet government declared that since she was not consulted, she did not regard herself bound by the Geneva convention.

Prompted by lessons of long experience, the Russians remained apprehensive, fearing that the Åland Islands, which nearly control the northern part of the Baltic Sea, might become a weapon in the hands of an enemy menacing the security of the U.S.S.R. Finnish "sovereignty" and formal demilitarization, without any real guarantees for execution, were regarded as extremely frail reeds to rely on for defense against the plans of determined aggressors. The Russians maintained that even if a small state wanted to remain true to the convention, it would, in fact, be powerless against a strong and insistent aggressor.

The Russians' views proved well founded. When the aggressive Nazi Germany appeared on the world scene, the Reichswehr had no difficulty in using the Finnish screen to penetrate the Åland Islands. During the entire period from 1933 to 1939 alarming reports about suspicious German "scientific research" on the islands appeared in the world press, especially in Russian and Scandinavian newspapers.

Then, in January 1939, Finland and Sweden, with the permission of all the signatories of the Geneva convention, agreed to refortify jointly these islands. Some foreign correspondents pointed out at this time that it was Germany who advised the Finns to fortify the Åland Islands.

When the Finno-Swedish agreement came before the League of Nations in May 1939, Mr. Maisky, the Soviet Ambassador to Great Britain, suggested that the decision should be postponed

at least until Russia had time to study the question and to find out "what the purpose of the fortifications was, the extent of the proposed fortifications, against whom they were to be built and, above all, what guarantees there were that an aggressive power would not occupy and utilize these fortifications against the U.S.S.R."

And Foreign Commissar Molotov added to this, on May 31, 1939: "The Soviet Union could not stand aloof from this question. Armed Åland Islands could be used to close for the U.S.S.R. all the entrances and the outlets of the Gulf of Finland."

The League Council turned down the Finno-Swedish proposal. But inasmuch as Finland later became merely an appendage of the Third Reich, the Åland Islands were handed over to the Nazis without any fuss.

In the present war, the Åland Islands are a very convenient base for the German fleet to protect the convoys from Sweden to Germany and Finland, to keep Stockholm under a permanent threat, to dominate the Gulf of Bothnia, and to blockade the Red fleet in the Gulf of Finland.

APPENDIX II  
STATISTICAL SUMMARY



# A ESTONIA, LATVIA, LITHUANIA†

## TABLE 1—Area and population (1937)

	Area (in Square Miles)	Population	Density— Inhabitants per Square Mile
Estonia.....	18,353	1,131,000	62
Latvia.....	25,395	1,971,000	78
Lithuania*.....	21,489	2,550,000	119

\* Including Memel (Klaipeda). In 1939 (without Memel, but including the Vilna region) Lithuania had 22,958 square miles and a population of 2,879,000.

## TABLE 2—Main cities

<i>Estonia</i>		Population (1936)
Tallinn (Reval).....		146,500
Tartu (Dorpat).....		60,000
Narva.....		24,200
Pärnu.....		21,500
<i>Latvia</i>		Population (1935)
Riga.....		385,100
Liepaja (Libau).....		57,100
Daugavpils (Dvinsk, Dünaburg).....		45,200
Jelgava (Mitau).....		34,100
Ventspils (Windau).....		15,700
<i>Lithuania</i>		Population (1937)
Kaunas.....		106,800
Sauliai.....		24,700
Panėvėžis.....		21,400
Memel (Klaipeda).....		38,500
Vilna (Vilnius).....		200,000

† Sources—Information Department of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, London: *The Baltic States*, 1938. Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R.: *World Economics and Politics; Bulletins of Conjuncture*, Moscow, 1939 and 1940. *Statistisches Jahrbuch für das Deutsche Reich*, Berlin, 1937 and 1938. League of Nations: *Monthly Bulletins of Statistics. Eesti Statistika*, Tallinn, 1938 and 1939. *Latvijas Statistikas Gada Gramata*, Riga, 1935–1938. *Lietuvos Statistikos Metraštis*, Kaunas, 1938 and 1939. *International Year-book of Agricultural Statistics*, Rome, 1937–38. *Documentation de Statistique Sociale et Economique, Dosse No. 150*, Paris, 1939.

TABLE 3—Use of land (1937)

	ESTONIA		LATVIA		LITHUANIA	
	Area (in Thou- sand Acres)	% of Distribution	Area (in Thou- sand Acres)	% of Distribution	Area (in Thou- sand Acres)	% of Distribution
Total.....	10,793	100.0	16,257	100.0	13,756	100.0
Arable land.....	2,683	24.9	5,355	32.9	6,764	49.2
Cereal crops....	1,350	12.5	2,533	15.6	3,465	25.2
Other crops....	852	8.0	2,118	13.0	2,279	16.6
Fallow land....	471	4.4	704	4.3	1,020	7.4
Meadows, pastures	4,341	40.2	4,077	25.1	2,817	20.5
Forests.....	2,298*	21.3	4,317†	26.6	2,599‡	18.9
Unproductive land	1,471	13.6	2,508	15.4	977	11.4

\* Of these, softwoods, 63%; birch, 19%; aspen, 10%; alder and other, 8%.

† Softwoods, 77%; birch, 15%; alder, 3%; other, 5%.

‡ Softwoods, 62%; aspen, 13%; birch, 11%; alder, 4%; other, 10%.

TABLE 4—Occupations

OCCUPATION	ESTONIA*		LATVIA†		LITHUANIA‡	
	Number	% of Total Employed	Number	% of Total Employed	Number	% of Total Employed
Total gainfully employed	666,000	100.0	1,104,700	100.0	1,372,000	100.0
Agriculture, fishing.....	453,900	68.2	767,300	69.5	1,088,800	79.4
Industry and handicraft..	105,500	15.8	166,100	15.0	119,100	8.7
Trade, transportation, communication.....	47,200	7.1	82,000	7.4	45,500	3.3
Military forces.....	11,700	1.8	19,000	1.7	23,100	1.7
Civil service, professions..	30,800	4.6	41,400	3.8	21,800	1.6
Domestic and personal services.....	16,900	2.5	28,900	2.6	73,700	5.3

\* 1934.

† 1925.

‡ 1923. Memel (Klaipeda) excluded.

TABLE 5—Industry

INDUSTRY	ESTONIA*					LATVIA†			LITHUANIA‡		
	Number of Establishments with		Number of Workers in Establishments with		Total Value of Production (in Million Kroon)	Number of Establishments§	Number of Workers	Total Value of Production (in Million Lats)	Number of Establishments¶	Number of Workers	Total Value of Production (in Million Litai)
	20 or More Workers	5 to 19 Workers	20 or More Workers	5 to 19 Workers							
Total.....	372	846	44,344	8,035	140.2	5,717	111,917	636.8	1,316	28,377	405.6
Extraction of minerals (including stone quarrying).....	22	6	5,732	71	6.0	22	1,741	3.7	19	1,296	2.9
Pottery, cement.....	21	51	1,913	555	6.1	193	6,407	22.7	130	3,212	9.4
Metallurgical.....	45**	105	5,299	948	15.8	733	18,549	74.3	97	2,981	23.4
Chemical.....	15	31	1,971	314	6.7	185	5,114	45.5	53	1,695	20.7
Leather and leather products....	14	21	579	181	4.9	94	1,615	20.3	50	865	14.3
Textiles.....	44	51	11,129	472	43.1	400	17,220	93.2	84	4,611	40.3
Woodworking.....	56	121	4,643	1,209	10.1	1,093	18,452	77.6	238	2,864	14.3
Paper.....	14	10	2,168	97	14.7	57	3,470	24.6	} 81	} 1,613	} 17.6
Printing.....	17	46	1,342	511	3.6	148	3,480	13.9			
Foodstuffs.....	38	248	3,013	1,972	20.8	1,850	17,639	170.1	347	5,925	223.4
Apparel.....	28	86	1,390	731	4.0	364	6,474	24.4	186	2,841	26.7
Building and construction.....	48	39	4,147	734	..	445	8,954	43.9	..	..	..
Public utilities.....	10	31	1,018	240	4.3	133	2,802	22.6	31	474	12.6

\* 1936. † 1937. ‡ 1939. Memel (Klaipeda) excluded. § Establishments using mechanical power or employing five or more workers. ¶ All establishments. || Peat-cutting only. \*\* Machine construction only.

TABLE 6—Indices of industrial production  
(1929 = 100)

YEAR	ESTONIA			LATVIA			LITHUANIA
	Total	Capital Goods	Consumption Goods	Total	Capital Goods	Consumption Goods	Total
1929...	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
1930...	98.7	97.6	99.0	108.8	114.1	111.6	108.3
1931...	90.8	90.6	90.4	89.2	94.7	89.4	140.7
1932...	78.3	76.2	77.6	82.4	60.9	87.2	153.2
1933...	81.9	79.3	80.7	111.8	72.8	122.0	..
1934...	96.4	103.8	90.6	130.4	95.0	141.7	166.5
1935...	106.4	112.1	100.6	137.3	100.4	149.9	185.9
1936...	120.0	129.8	111.4	143.1	118.3	154.3	244.2
1937...	138.7	169.9	118.3	160.8	138.1	168.9	272.0
1938...	145.5	..	..	174.5	..	..	309.4

TABLE 7—Number and size of holdings\*  
One hectare = 2.471 acres

Size of Holdings (in Hectares)	Estonia	Latvia	Lithuania
Total holdings.....	133,500	225,000	287,000
Under 10.....	46,000 †	109,000	132,000
10 to 20.....	35,000	51,000	93,000
21 to 30.....	24,000	24,000	34,000
31 to 50.....	22,000	21,000	21,000
51 to 100.....	6,000	18,000	6,000
Over 100.....	500	2,000	1,000

\* After agrarian reforms (data for 1929-1930).

† Of these, 24,000 were under 5 hectares.

TABLE 8—Crops  
(Annual averages in thousand quintals \*)

	1909- 1913†	1921- 1925	1926- 1930	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939
<b>Estonia</b>								
Rye.....	1,852	1,639	1,594	1,728	1,535	2,115	1,840	2,280
Wheat.....	..	182	321	617	662	718	832	855
Barley.....	1,348	1,190	1,139	918	868	809	974	899
Oats.....	1,234	1,380	1,273	13,44	1,113	1,391	1,697	1,498
Potatoes...	8,340	7,014	7,570	8,927	10,306	9,856	9,451	8,740
Flax.....	169	101	95	105	87	103	73	62
<b>Latvia</b>								
Rye.....	3,254	2,422	2,471	3,639	2,860	4,214	3,787	4,291
Wheat.....	384	388	731	1,775	1,435	1,715	1,919	1,974
Barley.....	1,728	1,519	1,570	2,046	1,650	2,184	2,206	2,088
Oats.....	2,790	2,642	2,561	3,859	2,844	4,050	4,466	4,498
Potatoes...	6,385	6,707	8,458	14,612	10,115	17,820	17,514	16,559
Flax.....	302‡	213	196	454	369	454	425	192‡
<b>Lithuania</b>								
Rye.....	4,967	5,948	5,184	6,406	5,413	6,069	6,261	6,510
Wheat.....	853	1,019	1,859	2,747	2,189	2,207	2,469	2,565
Barley.....	1,588	2,150	2,113	2,516	2,330	2,740	2,688	2,571
Oats.....	2,659	3,318	3,370	3,995	3,320	3,878	4,248	4,106
Potatoes...	7,959	17,170	15,261	17,738	21,112	25,099	20,683	23,548
Flax§.....	242	312	339	319	288	313	262	289

\* One quintal is equivalent to the following United States measures: 220.46 pounds; 3.674 bushels of wheat or potatoes; 3.937 bushels of rye; 4.539 bushels of barley; 6.888 bushels of oats.

† Relate to a smaller territory than that of the subsequent years.

‡ Flax and hemp.

§ Flax only.

TABLE 9—Livestock  
(In thousands)

	<i>Cattle</i>	<i>Sheep</i>	<i>Pigs</i>	<i>Horses</i>
<b>Estonia</b>				
1913-14*	478	518	275	165
1930.....	627	467	290	204
1938.....	661	650	385	219
<b>Latvia</b>				
1913*	912	996	557	320
1930.....	1,026	873	523	359
1938.....	1,224	1,360	814	400
<b>Lithuania</b>				
1913*	918	1,152	1,358	451
1930.....	1,170	1,097	1,136	559
1938.....	1,172	614	1,192	552

\* Relate to a smaller area than that of the subsequent years.

TABLE 10—Distribution of foreign trade

A. Exports

(% of total)

To	ESTONIA				LATVIA				LITHUANIA			
	1923	1927	1932	1937	1923	1927	1932	1937	1923	1927	1932	1937
Total.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Germany.....	10.8	29.8	26.2	30.6	7.6	26.4	26.2	35.3	43.3	51.6	39.1	16.5
United Kingdom.....	34.1	31.4	36.7	33.9	46.3	34.1	30.8	38.4	26.9	24.8	41.4	46.4
Belgium.....	9.0	5.4	4.5	*	19.7	10.8	6.0	5.2	1.8	2.0	1.8	3.7
France.....	1.5	1.2	4.7	3.2	6.6	2.2	5.5	1.8	1.2	1.1	1.6	4.7
Estonia.....	..	..	..	..	1.4	*	1.5	0.8	*	*	0.1	0.4
Latvia.....	8.0	5.2	3.7	1.0	..	..	..	..	15.9	8.8	2.4	0.8
Lithuania.....	*	*	*	*	1.7	*	4.2	0.8	..	..	..	..
Sweden.....	10.0	4.4	2.8	3.9	1.4	1.4	0.9	1.2	*	1.6	1.0	2.2
Norway.....	0.4	1.6	1.1	*	*	0.4	*	1.6	*	0.1	*	0.1
Denmark.....	6.2	3.5	3.8	*	3.2	1.9	1.2	0.5	2.5	0.3	0.5	1.3
U.S.S.R.....	6.7	6.3	0.4	4.1	3.7	1.7	14.7	2.5	*	0.5	3.5	5.3
Finland.....	8.5	4.8	4.7	5.8	0.3	1.2	0.4	0.8	*	0.2	*	0.5
Poland and Danzig.....	*	*	1.2	*	0.8	4.0	1.2	0.3	*	0.1	*	0.4
United States.....	1.3	1.2	3.6	2.7	2.4	2.5	0.9	1.1	1.8	1.8	0.6	3.3
All others.....	3.5	5.2	6.6	14.8	4.9	13.4	6.5	9.7	6.6	8.1	8.0	14.4

\* Included in "All others."

TABLE 10—Distribution of foreign trade—Continued

*B. Imports*  
(% of total)

From	ESTONIA				LATVIA				LITHUANIA			
	1923	1927	1932	1937	1923	1927	1932	1937	1923	1927	1932	1937
Total.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Germany.....	51.0	26.5	32.0	26.1	45.2	40.6	35.6	27.1	80.9	53.2	40.3	21.8
United Kingdom.....	19.7	14.3	13.8	16.7	17.0	10.6	13.9	20.7	5.3	6.7	10.8	27.9
Belgium.....	2.3	1.9	2.3	*	2.4	1.8	3.8	8.7	*	1.2	4.5	7.9
France.....	0.6	3.5	2.8	2.2	1.4	2.3	4.3	1.7	0.3	1.3	3.4	2.6
Estonia.....	..	..	..	..	2.4	*	1.0	0.6	*	*	1.3	0.4
Latvia.....	3.8	3.1	4.1	1.4	..	..	..	..	3.3	*	4.6	1.0
Lithuania.....	*	*	*	*	5.4	*	2.1	0.7	..	..	..	..
Sweden.....	3.2	5.1	4.5	6.6	2.4	4.2	2.0	3.6	0.2	1.9	2.1	3.3
Norway.....	0.1	0.3	0.1	*	*	0.1	*	0.8	*	0.3	*	0.4
Denmark.....	3.1	1.7	1.3	*	3.1	6.7	1.2	2.2	0.1	1.1	1.2	3.3
U.S.S.R.....	4.0	9.1	5.7	5.7	3.6	7.3	10.1	3.8	*	2.4	6.1	8.4
Finland.....	3.2	2.2	3.7	4.9	0.4	0.7	0.7	0.6	*	0.5	*	0.2
Poland and Danzig.....	*	*	3.9	*	6.0	8.0	6.0	2.0	1.0	7.8	2.1	*
United States.....	3.7	14.2	10.0	8.2	2.9	2.8	3.7	6.9	2.1	5.5	3.8	3.5
All others.....	5.3	18.1	15.8	28.2	7.8	14.9	15.6	20.6	6.8	18.1	19.8	19.3

\* Included in "All others."



TABLE 11—Exports by commodities (1936)

COMMODITIES	ESTONIA		LATVIA		LITHUANIA	
	<i>Value in Million Kroon</i>	<i>% of Total Value</i>	<i>Value in Million Lats</i>	<i>% of Total Value</i>	<i>Value in Million Litas</i>	<i>% of Total Value</i>
Total.....	83.2	100.0	138.3	100.0	190.5	100.0
Butter.....	16.6	19.9	25.3	18.3	35.2	18.5
Livestock.....	4.9	5.9	..	..	20.9	11.0
Other foodstuffs.....	10.6	12.8	10.1	7.3	55.0	28.9
Hides and skins (including leather)....	2.0	3.8	1.2	0.9	3.7	1.9
Timber.....	7.9	9.4	51.6	37.3	32.0	16.8
Paper.....	8.9	10.8	3.0	2.2	*	..
Flax.....	7.9	9.5	20.2	14.6	31.8	16.7
Rubber boots and shoes.....	*	..	1.0	0.7	*	..
Other.....	24.4	27.9	25.9	18.7	11.9	6.2

\* Included in "Other."

TABLE 12—Exchange reserves and external value of currency

	EXCHANGE RESERVES OF CENTRAL BANK (In Million Kroon, Lats, or Litas)			External Value of Currency Expressed as % of Gold Parity
	Total	Gold	Foreign Exchange	
<b>Estonia</b>				
1929.....	27	6	21	99.8
1930.....	23	7	16	99.6
1931.....	22	7	15	99.8
1932.....	20	15	5	100.2
1933.....	22	20	2	82.4
1934.....	32	28	4	62.1
1935.....	36	34	2	60.1
1936.....	43	34	9	60.8
1937.....	51	34	17	60.4
<b>Latvia*</b>				
1929.....	80	24	56	99.9
1930.....	65	24	41	100.0
1931.....	47	32	15	99.9
1932.....	48	36	12	100.0
1933.....	48	45	3	99.2
1934.....	50	46	4	98.3
1935.....	53	46	7	98.7
1936.....	105	77*	28	89.6†
1937.....	120	77*	43	60.0
<b>Lithuania</b>				
1929.....	113	35	78	99.7
1930.....	125	39	86	100.1
1931.....	83	50	33	100.2
1932.....	65	49	16	100.3
1933.....	67	52	15	100.1
1934.....	60	52	8	100.0
1935.....	54	36	18	100.0
1936.....	83	73	10	99.7
1937.....	85	79	6	99.4

\* After revaluation and the abandonment of the gold standard.

† Until the end of September the old parity of the Lats was maintained in theory.

TABLE 13—Railways

	Railways in Use (in Miles)	ROLLING STOCK			CARRIED BY RAILWAYS			
		Engines	Passen- ger Cars	Freight Cars	Passen- gers (in Mil- lions)	Freight (in Million Tons)	Passen- ger- Kilome- ters (in Mil- lions)	Ton- Kilome- ters of Freight (in Mil- lions)
<b>Estonia*</b> .....								
1926-27....	732	204	454	5,397	6.0	1.9	258	201
1929-30....	777	201	477	5,557	9.5	2.7	293	262
1932-33....	897	211	440	5,623	7.9	2.0	212	195
1935-36....	897	213	440	5,623	9.5	2.5	277	246
1936-37....	897	204	438	5,602	10.7	2.7	321	258
<b>Latvia†</b>								
1920-21....	1,580	206	338	4,260	6.3	1.4	468	161
1925-26....	1,622	330	558	5,519	11.0	3.3	546	311
1929-30....	1,639	317	697	5,456	12.5	5.2	623	591
1932-33....	1,681	306	766	5,453	10.6	3.3	453	315
1935-36....	1,911	295	775	5,564	14.1	4.1	625	410
1936-37. . .	1,950	291	789	5,571	14.8	4.4	659	438
<b>Lithuania‡</b>								
1923.....	902	196	347	3,371	2.7	1.1	179	113
1925.....	989	242	435	4,349	5.4	1.2	..	..
1929.....	961	239	400	4,500	5.1	2.1	186	339
1932.....	980	239	356	4,484	4.5	1.7	164	264
1936.....	1,015	210	316	4,305	3.2	2.2	203	309
1937. . . . .	1,015	205	313	4,351	3.7	2.3	222	315

\* 21 square miles of total territory per mile of railway in use.

† 13 square miles of total territory per mile of railway in use.

‡ 19 square miles of total territory per mile of railway in use.

TABLE 14—Shipping  
(In thousand net registered tons)

YEAR	ESTONIA ( <i>Tallinn</i> )		LATVIA		LITHUANIA <i>Memel (Klaipeda)</i>
	<i>Total Tonnage</i>	<i>Shipping Entered*</i>	<i>Total Tonnage</i>	<i>Shipping Entered*</i>	<i>Shipping Entered*</i>
1920.....	45	631	40	480	153
1925.....	46	768	53	1,444	329
1929.....	60	892	150	1,873	503
1932.....	100	796	189	942	520
1936.....	155	1,053	170	1,084	788
1937.....	168	957	185	1,856	845

\* Including coastal traffic.

TABLE 15—Number of motor vehicles

	<i>Estonia</i>	<i>Latvia*</i>	<i>Lithuania</i>
Cars.....	2,767	3,500	1,790
Trucks.....	2,252	3,000	570
Omnibuses.....	266	350	370
Motorcycles.....	2,035	2,500	1,380

\* Estimates.

## B FINLAND\*

## General characteristics:

Population (1938).....	3,834,662
Urban .....	825,848
Rural .....	3,008,814
Area .....	132,589 square miles
Including water.....	149,943 square miles
Forests (73.6 per cent of total land).....	62,500,000 acres
Arable land.....	6,425,000 acres
Total value of industrial production.....	21,076,000,000 Finnish Mark
Railways (1939).....	3,706 miles
Motor vehicles (1938).....	55,955
Merchant marine.....	669,000 gross registered tons

Cities:	Population (1938)
Helsinki .....	293,237
Tampere .....	74,736
Viipuri .....	73,917
Turku .....	72,981
Vaasa .....	32,108
Oulu .....	27,224
Lahti .....	25,714
Kuokio .....	24,691
Kotka .....	21,448
Pori .....	20,974

\* Sources: *Finnish Trade Review*, Helsinki, August 1939. *Statistisk Årsbok för Finland*, Helsinki, 1938. Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R.: *World Economics and Politics; Bulletin of Conjuncture No. 1*, Moscow, 1940.

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