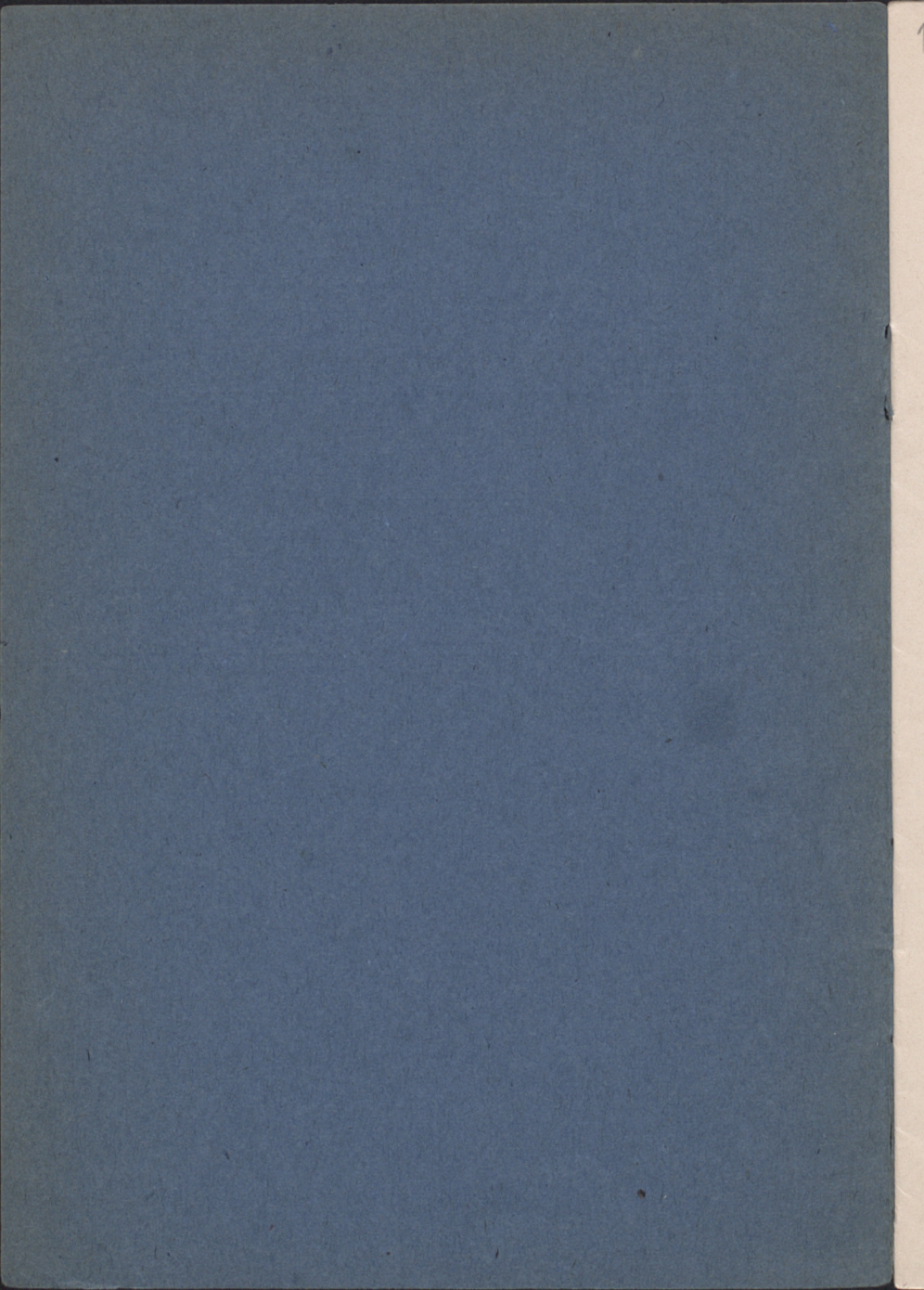


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Two Polish attempts to bring about a Central-East European Organisation

A Lecture given by Adam Tarnowski at the
Polish Hearth, London, October 19th, 1943



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I PROPOSE addressing you to-day on the subject of two attempts which Poland made to bring about a Central-East European Organisation. It is not my intention to discuss any of the many present-day paper plans for a Union of Central Europe. Our next lecturer will probably speak on this subject. I should like to carry my audience back to the period preceding this war, to the period between the two great wars; I want to recall two realistic attempts at a Central-East European Organisation. They were not confined to journalistic articles, or brochures or even books, as is the case of almost all the present-day plans to which I have just referred, but took the form of a vigorous, co-ordinated and concrete political action on the part of several states and countries of Europe surrounding Poland, which lasted for several years. The two attempts I refer to are the Baltic Bloc and the Agricultural Bloc of Agrarian Countries of Central East Europe.

The idea of forming these two blocs was conceived in Wierzbowa Street, Warsaw (strictly speaking, the first of them was born in Miodowa Street, the original headquarters of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

The first Polish attempt in the organisation of Central-Eastern Europe concerned a Bloc of the Baltic States.

This idea of a Bloc of Baltic States arose during the Polish-Finnish talks at Warsaw in 1919. On a suggestion made by the Polish side, the first conference of representatives of the Baltic States—Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Poland—was to take place in Vilno on the occasion of the formal opening of the Vilno University in October, 1919. For various reasons, among which the opposition of Lithuania was foremost, the first conference of Baltic States—Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania—took place in November of that year at Dorpat (later Tartu) without the official participation of Poland. This conference bore no positive results, except that the governments taking part in it came to realise that a Baltic understanding in which Poland had

no part would have no basic reason for existence. So it was decided that, despite opposition from Lithuania, a further conference was to be called at Helsinki in January, 1920, this time with Poland participating.

A number of unfavourable circumstances, among them the Polish-Lithuanian conflict, the Soviet Government's pressure on Estonia, which was then carrying on peace negotiations with that Government at Dorpat, and the unfriendly attitude of the great Western Allies, led to the Helsinki conference achieving no positive results.

The next Baltic conference was called at Riga in August, 1920, or, more accurately at Bulduri near Riga. Its object was to initiate a confederation of the countries taking part in it. Such, at least, was the intention of the Polish delegates.

The conference began at a tragic moment ; not only tragic for Poland but for the other deliberating states. The Red Army was approaching Warsaw. During the early days of the conference the attention of all the delegates was turned to Warsaw. The communiques of the Polish General Staff were awaited with the greatest impatience. None of the members had any doubt that the fate of Rewal (Tallin), Riga and Kowno was closely bound up with the fate of Warsaw. The Latvian and Finnish Governments endeavoured to save their countries by accelerating their peace negotiations with the Soviets—negotiations which they had previously been trying to draw out. Lithuania had already concluded with the Soviets a peace treaty which for the time being seemed satisfactory to her. The work of the conference made no progress, neither at the plenary sessions nor at the committee meetings. Fear of a Soviet victory paralysed all thoughts and efforts. All realised that the fall of Warsaw would make the continuance of the conference meaningless. We know what did in fact happen. We know that Poland was saved, and with her the Baltic States too.

When the threat of a Soviet victory which hung over the conference was removed, its work went ahead quickly.

At the beginning delegations from Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland took part in the conference. A few days after its opening however, delegates from democratic Ukraine and democratic Byelorussia demanded admittance to its deliberations.

The Ukrainian delegation represented the Governments of Ataman Petlura, which was recognised by Poland, Finland,

Estonia and Latvia. Its request to attend the conference was accepted, despite the opposition of the Lithuanian delegation, which declared that it considered the Ukrainian question an internal Russian matter and voted against acceptance.

The Byelorussian delegation represented the Lastowski government, which was not recognised by any of the states participating in the conference, and was allowed to attend in the character of observer.

Thus six states, including democratic Ukraine, took part in the work of the conference, which was held in the picturesque townlet of Bulduri near Riga, situated on the Baltic at the mouth of the river Aa.

It is self-evident that the Polish-Lithuanian conflict weighed on the work of the conference. None the less its deliberations were not without result. Despite the fundamentally unfriendly attitude of the Lithuanians to the Polish plans and proposals, despite reservations on the part of the Finns (the Finnish Government was then negotiating peace with the Soviets), the Polish, Estonian, Latvian and Ukrainian delegations collaborated harmoniously in the advancement of the aim they had set themselves, *i.e.*, an organisation of close understanding and close co-operation among the Baltic States, Poland and the Ukraine.

A number of conventions covering political, military, economic and cultural affairs were adopted by the conference, conditional upon their approval by the respective governments. Owing to Lithuania's attitude it was provided that these conventions would come into force even if one of the states taking part in the conference did not ratify them.

Among the more important agreements concluded at Bulduri one may mention : (1) A political agreement embodying a promise of reciprocal *de jure* recognition, the peaceful settlement of disputes, non-toleration of any activity directed against other signatory states, the conclusion of a convention for military defence, the protection of minorities, abstention from all obstacles to free transit, etc. (2) A consular agreement. (3) An agreement for compulsory arbitration. (4) An agreement on option and settlement (recognising *inter alia* that the citizens of the agreeing states should possess certain political rights in the territories of each of these states. (5) An agreement on extradition. (6) An agreement on sanitation and hygiene. (7) An agreement for the protection of literary and artistic works.

The conference also passed a series of desiderata recommendations (vœux) aiming at the unification of the financial, industrial and social legislation of the contracting states, the unification of currencies, weights and measures, etc.

In order to assure the execution of its resolutions and of its conventions as also to make preparations for further conferences, the conference in Bulduri provided for a number of joint permanent institutions. At the head of these joint organs of the Baltic States was to be a Council of plenipotentiaries of these states, which was to meet periodically. An Economic Council was entrusted with the task of watching over matters pertaining to finance, industry, trade, agriculture and communications, etc. In addition, the following organs were to be set up: a military and maritime commission, a bureau for literature and art, a bureau for internal propaganda, and a bureau for sanitation and hygiene. An arbitration tribunal of the Baltic States was also to be set up. The locality to serve as headquarters for these various joint institutions was to be decided upon later.

With a view to initiating practical activities by the Baltic States the conference at Bulduri decided that on September 15th, following a congress of delegates of postal and telegraph administrations should be convened at Riga, and on November 1st a conference of railway administrations of the Baltic States at Helsinki.

The resolutions adopted by the Bulduri conference gave a fairly definite outline of a confederation of states lying between the Black and Baltic Seas. Unfortunately, these resolutions were not acted upon. The agreements formulated at the conference were not ratified. The political agreement alone formed the basis of an agreement concluded later, in March, 1922.

The peace treaty concluded on March 18th, 1921, between Poland and Soviet Russia, Soviet Ukraine and Soviet Byelorussia nullified the framework of the Baltic Bloc, or more strictly speaking the Baltic-Black Sea Bloc, projected at Bulduri. A democratic Ukraine ceased to exist, the possibility of a democratic Byelorussia coming into existence was eliminated. Polish policy in the East definitely took the road indicated by the Paris National Committee. The conceptions by which the authors of the great Baltic Bloc were animated were relegated to the archives. However, the Baltic Conferences did not fade out of existence at once.

After a break of almost a year the Foreign Ministers of Poland and the three Baltic States of Finland, Estonia and Latvia met

again at Helsinki, from July 25th to 29th, 1921. Lithuania was not invited to this conference owing to the tense relations between her and Poland at this time. The closing protocol declared it was necessary that the conferring states should give one another mutual support, should communicate to one another all treaties they concluded, should not conclude any treaty directed against any one of them, should settle disputes by peaceful means, should co-ordinate policy in relation to Russia, and, finally, should conclude commercial treaties. As can be seen from the foregoing, little remained of the far-reaching plans of Bulduri.

From September 22nd to 30th, 1921, a conference of representatives of railway administrations from Poland, Finland, Estonia and Latvia was held at Warsaw. The results were formulated in the protocol of the meeting.

The Helsinki conference of the Baltic Foreign Ministers decided that the next conference would be held in Warsaw. The Polish Government called this conference in March, 1922, shortly before the great international conference at Genoa, and soon after that of the Little Entente and Poland held at Belgrade. Four Baltic States took part in the Warsaw conference; Lithuania was not invited. Its object was to create a "united front" of the Baltic States at Genoa. A political agreement was signed which included the reciprocal recognition of peace treaties with Russia, declared the necessity of diplomatic collaboration, and bound the parties not to adhere to any agreement directed against any other of the parties; it promised the conclusion of economic, consular and other agreements, and the peaceful settlement of all disputes. In addition, it contained a declaration that if any one of the agreeing states was attacked the others would maintain a friendly attitude to it and would discuss methods of action. The Warsaw agreement was ratified by the contracting parties, but did not come into force.

An economic conference of the Baltic States: Poland, Estonia, Finland, Latvia and Lithuania, was held in Helsinki from March 5th to 8th, 1923, the Lithuanian delegation taking part as observers. Questions of communication with Western Europe, freedom of transit, etc., were discussed.

A conference of the Foreign Ministers of Poland, Estonia, Finland and Latvia was held at Riga from July 9th to 11th in the same year.

In 1924 a congress of Foreign Ministers was held in Warsaw on July 16th and 17th. This was the eighth conference of the

Foreign Ministers of the Baltic States. Two commissions sat in committee, a political and an economic one. A protocol was signed, and a Polish plan for an arbitration convention was noted.

The ninth, and last conference of Foreign Ministers of the Baltic Bloc was held at Helsinki on January 16th and 17th, 1925. Poland, Finland, Estonia and Latvia were represented. A protocol closing the conference was signed, and a conciliation and arbitration convention was finally adopted; the necessity for political co-operation, and for encouraging peaceful methods of settling disputes was again confirmed, as also for establishing press co-operation and facilitating mutual communications.

No further conference was called. The Bloc of Baltic States de facto ceased to exist. Why?

To answer this question, one must first distinguish the successive existence of two Baltic Blocs during the years 1920-25; a great Baltic Bloc, or strictly speaking, a Baltic-Black Sea Bloc, and a small, or smaller Baltic Bloc. What hindered the realisation of these two blocs?

So far as the great Baltic Bloc is concerned, the conception failed because of the idea of a Polish-Russian compromise which, as we pointed out, was expressed in the Riga Treaty and because of a plan that the eastern areas of pre-partition Poland should be shared between Poland and Russia. The programme for Poland's eastern policy laid down at Riga over-rode the policy outlined at Bulduri.

As for the fate of the smaller Baltic Bloc, obviously the fate of the great Bloc largely prejudged the fate of the smaller Bloc. For that matter, a number of other factors also contributed to the failure of our Baltic policy, aiming at linking Poland with the Baltic States. Among these other factors were: (1) the sceptic attitude to the Baltic countries of a large part of Polish political opinion, especially that part which was still under the influence of the National Committee; (2) Russian and German activities, vigorously combating our activities and our influence in the Baltic; (3) England's reluctance and, in the best case, France's indifference to our Baltic conceptions.

If to this we add our dispute with Lithuania and Lithuanian influence over Latvia, our misunderstandings with Latvia temporarily quite grave, and finally, Finland's increasing gravitation towards the Scandinavian countries, we get a fairly complete, though very summary picture of the reasons which led to the

failure of our policy for a Baltic understanding during the years 1919 to 1925.

* * * *

The second Polish attempt to bring about an organisation of Central-Eastern Europe was the Bloc of Agricultural States, in the years 1930-33. Eight states lying between the Baltic and the Aegean, the Black and the Adriatic Seas belonged to this Bloc. They were: Estonia, Latvia, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia. All these States, with one exception, were akin in their economic and social structure, the exception being Czechoslovakia, which had a structure more like that of the industrialised western European States. The Bloc came into being for the purpose of the joint protection of the economic interests of agricultural States which were faced with the economic crisis affecting the whole world in the years 1929-35. The countries of Central-eastern and South-eastern Europe, were particularly affected since they were economically weak, devastated by the recent war and inflation and were without capital.

The idea of a joint protection of the interests of these countries came into being soon after the world economic conference at Geneva took place in 1927. This conference clearly revealed opposed economic interests and conceptions between the highly industrialised European countries on the one hand, and the agricultural states on the other. Obviously the great industrial powers played the dominating part in this conference, and the agricultural countries were treated as very poor relations, whose interests and even existence were not of special account. The general tendency of the convention for the abolition of prohibitions and restrictions on imports and exports adopted by the conference, was in the direction of restoring the free exchange of industrial commodities. The conference showed hardly any interest in the difficulties already evident in connection with the circulation of agricultural products. It ignored the isolated voices of the agricultural states raised in defence of their own interests. The 1927 conference not only did not understand the interests and requirements of the agricultural states, it did not understand, and did not even want to understand the great benefit that would accrue to the industrial states of Europe, not only economically, but also politically, by the creation of a great, capacious, wealthy market in the countries of Central and Balkan Europe.

Speaking generally, the Geneva and other international formulae aimed at the re-organisation of post-war economic relations in Europe were adapted to the needs of the highly industrialised states, and did not take into account the needs of the agricultural countries.

So far as Poland was concerned, the result of the 1927 conference was that soon after its close Polish delegates to various international economic conferences, received instructions from Wierzbowa Street, to make the closest of contacts with the delegates of other agricultural states in Central-eastern Europe. At the economic conference held in Geneva in February and March, 1930, dealing with the means and methods of eliminating obstacles to international trade (*Conférence sur la trêve douanière*), which was a kind of continuation of the great economic conference of 1927, an open united front of the delegations from the agricultural states of our region was formed. These delegations came to an understanding before each session of the conference, and during the deliberations took up a single standpoint; as a rule one delegate of the agricultural states spoke in the name of all.

At the beginning of June, 1930, the Polish Government sent invitations to the states of Central and South-eastern Europe proposing that a conference should be held in Warsaw for the purpose of considering ways and means of protecting their common economic interests. In addition to the eight states already mentioned, Lithuania also was invited, but did not accept the invitation. Finland sent an observer, and Greece also was invited and was to have sent an observer. It must be added that Greek and Turkish observers were present at one of the later conferences.

The conference lasted from August 28th to August 30th, and was held in an atmosphere of hope and confidence. The work went on harmoniously and smoothly. There was almost complete unanimity among the delegations. Only one delegation, that of Czechoslovakia, announced a number of doubts and reservations in the course of the deliberations, but that country also adopted the conference resolutions.

The discussions were marked by a profound conviction that only the united action of the agricultural states could save them from a further intensification of the agricultural crisis, could improve their economic situation and gradually bring them to prosperity, up to an economic level approximating that of the Western-European states.

Foremost among the numerous postulates formulated by the conference were: (1) the necessity to obtain preferences for the agricultural countries of Central-eastern Europe from the European industrial states importing agricultural produce; (2) the necessary to obtain international credit for the agriculture of these states, but above all medium-term credit; (3) the necessity to eliminate inter-competition on the foreign markets by the agricultural states, primarily by a rational organisation of the export of those states, and then by way of wide international agreements.

I should like to recall that one of the main postulates of the second conference of the Bloc, that at Sofia, was the postulate that the agricultural countries be industrialised. To-day such a postulate would appear to arouse no doubts whatever, but at that time it provoked intense controversy among the economists of the agricultural and of the industrial states.

The resolutions of the Warsaw Conference and of those which were held thereafter started from the assumption that there is undoubted solidarity of economic interests, properly understood, along the agricultural and the industrial countries of Europe, and that it is to the interests of western Europe to see an economic upliftment of Central-eastern Europe.

At the end of their extensively motivated resolutions the first conference of the Agricultural Bloc proposed that their governments create a permanent organisation for co-operation among the agricultural states of Central-eastern Europe, an organisation which would aim at assuring the permanent co-ordination of the economic policies of these states in the agricultural sphere. This organisation was to be headed by the directors of economic policy, who would assemble at least once a year to determine the guiding principles of the Bloc's common activities. To ensure execution of the resolutions of the Warsaw conference and to make preparations for following conferences it was decided to call into being a Permanent Committee for Economic Studies of the States of Central-eastern Europe. In addition it was decided to call suitable commissions of experts when necessary.

The conference resolutions were approved by the governments taking part in it.

Two further general conferences of the Bloc were held: at Sofia, from the 10th to 13th December, 1931, and at Bucharest, from 4th to 6th June, 1933.

The Sofia and Bucharest conferences developed and strengthened the theses and recommendations of the Warsaw conference, and laid down the guiding principles for the Bloc's common international action in the years 1932 and 1933. The chief task of the Bucharest conference was to prepare for the great international monetary and economic conference which was to be held a few weeks later in London.

Meanwhile, between the Warsaw and Bucharest conference the Permanent Economic Committee of the Bloc met a number of times, as did also the special commissions called into being to work out particular problems interesting the agricultural states.

The Permanent Committee held plenary sessions at Bucharest, February 16th to 18th, 1931, at Belgrade, April 24th to 26th, 1931, at Geneva, June 23rd to 27th, 1931, at Geneva again, October 28th and 29th, 1931, at Warsaw, August 24th to 27th, 1932. In addition, the Committee met several times before the second and third general conferences.

For three years (1930 to 1933) the Bloc developed very vigorous international activity. At various international economic conferences, which, it will be remembered, were plentiful in those days, the Bloc acted as the exponent and protector of the interests of all the states of Central-eastern Europe, and endeavoured to realise the postulates laid down at the three general conferences of the agricultural states.

Inter alia, as a result of the Bloc's activities the Finance Committee of the League of Nations drew up a convention for the formation of an international loan association for agricultural credit (*Société Internationale Hypothécaire de Crédit Agricole*). The proposal was approved by the League of Nations Assembly in 1931.

Under the influence of the Bloc the International Grain Conference at Rome in March, 1931, and the Wheat Conference at London in May, 1931, drew up a convention regulating international trade in grain. The agreement was rendered impossible of fulfilment by the opposition of the United States, despite the agreement of Canada, Australia, Argentine and Russia.

On the Bloc's initiative the Rome Grain Conference took up the question of international short-term credits, and the International Agricultural Institute at Rome set to work to draw up a plan for the same.

The culminating point of the Bloc's international activities was the conference of the fifteen states at Stresa, held from 5th to 26th September, 1932. This conference, called in pursuance of the recommendation of the Lausanne conference, had as its purpose the drawing up of a programme for the agricultural betterment (redressement économique) of the agricultural States of Central-eastern Europe. The conference accepted a number of proposals put forward by the Bloc, including those concerning preferences for agricultural states, agricultural credits, and the revalorization of grain prices.

When the Stresa conference concluded its labour it seemed for a time that the objects which the Bloc had set itself had been achieved. Unfortunately, this was not so. A few months later we had the sensational fiasco of the Monetary and Economic Conference at London (June 12th to July 27th, 1933). Sixty-four states took part in this conference, and the hopes of many nations were fixed on it, including those of the nations belonging to the Agricultural Bloc. The London conference was "torpedoed" by America, and with the conference went all the hopes, fused by the world crisis, of any international economic action.

The London conference was the last international conference in which the Bloc worked as a single solid entity. The decline of its activities dates from that time, and for a number of years the only visible exponent of the Bloc was the excellently edited and very interesting periodical "L'Est Européen Agricole," published in Paris. This was the joint organ of the agricultural states of Central-eastern Europe. However, formally, the Agricultural Bloc never ceased to exist.

While on the subject of the Bloc's activities, I want to emphasise that the object which the Polish organisers of the Bloc set themselves was not only the protection of the agricultural interests of the Central-european States, but also the economic rapprochement of those States. It was the intention of its authors to aim at a gradual economic fusion of the countries lying between the Baltic and the Aegean Seas. The means foreseen to achieve this end was a system of customs preferences inside the Bloc, as a preliminary to a custom union, a monetary agreement and the development of a system of land, air and water communications linking up the member countries. It is obvious that the economic rapprochement would have had to be followed by a political rapprochement, and the customs union by a political union, or a confederation.

At the Bucharest conference the Polish delegation was to put forward a great plan for the development of international highways, railways and airways along the routes Gdynia, Danzig, Warsaw, Cracow, Budapest, to the Adriatic, and from Tallin, through Riga, Kovno, Vilno, Warsaw, Lwow, Bucharest, and Sofia to Salonica. Unfortunately, it was decided to postpone the presentation of this plan to the following, *i.e.*, fourth conference of the Bloc, and this conference was never held. Part of the plan was on the agenda of the Communications Conference of Poland, Rumania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Greece, initiated by the Polish Government, and held in Bucharest in November, 1938. When, on the threshold of 1939, it was obviously too late to set about improving communications between the Baltic and the Black, Aegean and Adriatic Seas.

The formation of the Bloc of agricultural states of Central-eastern Europe and its subsequent activities were subjected to much criticism and many attacks from various directions. The Bloc was attacked most of all by the Germans, for quite understandable reasons. The Germans had long regarded the countries of Central-eastern and South-eastern Europe as their economic "Lebensraum," as the area of their economic and consequently their political expansion. The realisation of the Bloc's plans, the consolidation and economic strengthening of this European "Middle Zone" would have checkmated the Germans imperialistic plans. So it is not surprising that from the very beginning of the Bloc's existence Germany declared diplomatic and propaganda war on it. Mussolini came very effectively to Germany's succour, for, with the purpose of restoring a new Austro-Hungary based on Italy, he bound Hungary with Austria and Italy by the Rome protocols of March 18th, 1934, and so drew her away from the Agricultural Bloc.

The Soviet Union also adopted an unfriendly attitude to the Bloc. The leaders of the Bloc of Soviet Socialist Republics were always haunted by the vision of a "cordon sanitaire." Nevertheless, the Soviet reproach that the U.S.S.R., an outstandingly agricultural country, had not been invited to join the Bloc of agricultural states, surely does not call for an answer.

The overseas countries, or, strictly speaking, the transoceanic countries, the great exporters of grain, were not too friendly disposed to the Bloc's aims and objects, for they regarded it as a dangerous competitor. These countries most strongly attacked the Bloc's insistence on preferences, and defended the principle

of the most favoured nation. However, America gradually changed this attitude of hers, and grew much more accommodating.

French opinion was favourable to this Bloc's plans and the French Government promised its support and financial aid. The French Minister of Finance, E. P. Flandin, speaking "in terms of the utmost praise" to the representatives of the Bloc states at Geneva in September, 1930, ended his speech with the words: "Continue, Gentlemen, your successfully initiated activity, and France will provide you with the financial resources necessary for the realisation of your excellent plans."

British opinion was rather indifferent to the Bloc's activities. In principle the British Government was against derogations to the most favoured nation clause.

In the countries of Central and South-eastern Europe the idea of the Bloc steadily won more and more adherents.

The Bloc's activities lasted only three years. It did not achieve the tasks which it had laid down for itself in Warsaw in 1930. It baffled the hopes laid in it by the peoples of Central-eastern Europe. It did not contribute to any large extent to a reduction or alleviation of the crisis, neither in Poland, the Danubian States, nor in the Balkans.

What was the reason, or reasons for the failure of this Polish attempt at an organisation of Central-eastern Europe, which at first was so promising of success? Undoubtedly there was more than one reason. Certain of them we have already indicated; the unfriendly or even hostile attitude of the majority of the great powers certainly played a considerable and detrimental, though not decisive role. Undoubtedly, too, the Polish-German rapprochement of 1934 was not favourable to the Bloc policy. Yet it seems to me that the chief cause of the Bloc's failure has to be sought in the circumstance that after the first conference, the Polish Government, on whom rested the "Leadership" of the Bloc, ran short of breath, lacked the imagination and will necessary to the building of a Central-European understanding. After the first prestige and propaganda successes of the Warsaw Conference the Polish Government failed to rise to a planned, consequential programme of an organisation of Central-eastern Europe, or to achieve the constant effort necessary to the realisation of this programme. Of course, the other states taking part in the Bloc were not without fault. To a certain extent they can be reproached equally with the Polish Government.

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Yet it would be erroneous to say that the Bloc's activities were completely fruitless. Its intensive propaganda left its traces. The idea of the Bloc slowly penetrated into the obstinate minds of the Geneva and other international economists. These ideas also won the hearts of many ordinary mortals. The vigorous and unified activities of the States belonging to the Bloc made the world conscious of the existence of many questions upon the happy solution of which depended not only the prosperity of the agricultural states, but also the successful economic development of the other highly industrialised European States. The Bloc's activities made world opinion realise that in Central and South-eastern Europe there are a number of smaller and larger states which constitute a certain separate entity possessing common interests and desiring to co-operate closely with one another.

Yet perhaps the most important result of the efforts of the Agricultural Bloc was that in the agricultural countries of Central-eastern Europe it awakened a consciousness of the community of their interests, the necessity of united defence. The war has not weakened that consciousness, nor has the German occupation. Quite the reverse. And, if to-day there is an increasing realisation in these countries of the necessity for a political and economic Central-European confederation, undoubtedly it is largely due to the Bloc.

Enda



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