

The entire cover is framed by a prominent zigzag border. The background is a deep red, and the zigzag pattern is formed by thick white lines. The central text is contained within a black rectangular border.

**EAST PRUSSIA
MUST
DISAPPEAR**

BY
CASIMIR SMOGORZEWSKI

Free Europe Pamphlet

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No. 10

EAST PRUSSIA
MUST DISAPPEAR

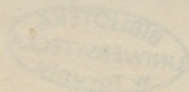
By

CASIMIR SMOGORZEWSKI

With 4 Maps

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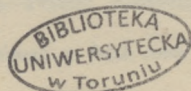
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EAST PRUSSIA MUST DISAPPEAR

I.—NO ROOM FOR COMPROMISE

FIELD-MARSHAL COUNT HELMUTH VON MOLTKE wrote in a book on Poland in 1832* : " After the first partition of Poland, Prussia cut her off from the sea and from the rest of the world. Everyone understands why Poland has been unable to keep her independence without Royal Prussia. Either Prussia had to become Polish or Poland had to become Prussian." In a memorandum presented to President Wilson on October 8, 1918, Roman Dmowski, the Polish statesman, said† : " If East Prussia is left to Germany there will be created thereby a source of unending German-Polish conflict, for Germany will continually try to unite East Prussia with the rest of the Reich." These two quotations illustrate the two irreconcilable aspects of the problem. A third course is no longer possible. A compromise solution was attempted in the settlement drawn up at the Paris Peace Conference, but the result was exactly as foreseen by Dmowski.

At the mouth of the Vistula the vital interests of one nation clash with the unbridled ambitions of another. Hence only one of two drastic solutions has any chance of enduring : East Prussia either remains with the Reich, in which case Germany must be given access to that province through Polish Pomerania ; or it goes to Poland together with Pomerania. The former solution, however, would be politically absurd, for it would place Poland at the mercy of Germany. The second solution would guarantee to Poland political independence and economic prosperity, while depriving Germany of neither.

* * *

If we are to spare ourselves future disappointments, if we are to prevent a third disaster, let us remember that in the last war

* See MOLTKE, *Essays, Speeches and Memoirs*, New York, 1893, vol. II, pp. 59 *et seq.* The chapter on Poland is a translation of a booklet published by Moltke in 1832, in Berlin, entitled : *Darstellung der inneren Verhältnisse und des gesellschaftlichen Zustandes in Polen.*

† R. DMOWSKI : *Polityka Polska i Odbudowanie Państwa* (Polish Policy and the Restoration of the State), Warsaw, 1925, Appendix X, p. 606.

the German people did not scruple to back William II in his adventure as long as he was successful, and they have given the same support to Hitler. William II and Hitler epitomise the German outlook, the Teutonic lust for conquest. The Germans forsook the Kaiser when he failed to conquer Europe for them, and they will turn from the Führer when the time comes; but in another twenty years they will be again ready to follow a new leader who comes forward with a plan that promises to be successful and avoids the mistakes of both his predecessors. The character of a nation will not change overnight and we may not yet bank on the creation of a new spirit in Germany through "re-education."

There are many in Great Britain and in the United States who fail to see this. Either their devotion to ideals makes them refuse to acknowledge unpalatable facts, or they are more concerned with the welfare of Germany than of those who have been mauled by her. They say that the Germans have been unfortunate in the choice of their leaders, but will, given another chance, choose better. Do they but realise that this in itself is a most devastating criticism of a nation? These are the people who advocated international protection for the German minorities after the last war, a right which Berlin so successfully used to further its own imperialist aims by building up German fifth columns. They distrusted France and Poland and all those in other countries who saw the real trend of German policy, and they were in no small measure responsible for the disarmament of Britain and the United States, which only paved the way for the easy triumphs of Germany and Japan.

Those concerned with the welfare of Germany reason thus: "It is true that the Germans have shown an incorrigible lust for domination, and at times it has been necessary to use force to bring them to their senses, but to reduce Germany from a leading position would upset the balance of Europe. The absence of an organised force in the area between Russia and the Atlantic would create a vacuum which would soon be filled by another Power that has drive and is capable of expansion." We heard this view expressed in 1919 when the fate of Germany was in the balance; we heard it repeated in the days of Munich; to-day we have read it again in the newspapers of the American Isolationists. Those who hold it regard Germany as the source of power on the Continent, and they intend to use it to maintain what they call a "European equilibrium." To attain this they are ready, as they were in the past, to sacrifice the smaller nations of Europe's Middle Zone. They pride themselves on being "realists," but their "realism" consists merely in submission to blackmail.

If the "idealists" refuse to face facts and the "realists" are unable to plan ahead, there is yet a third group whose attitude

is marked by complete apathy. If it is true, they say, that we are at war with Germany and not merely with the Nazis, our victory can never be complete, for after this war 65 million Germans will continue to live in the heart of Europe.

All these three schools of thought, or rather sentiment, which are to be found in America and also in Britain, frequently take advice from German counsellors, Protestants or Catholics, Conservatives or Socialists. These Germans in exile have suffered at the hands of Hitler, but their hatred of National Socialism does not make them less anxious to save their country and its position; some would even wish to see it retain its power. Their concern and even devotion to their native land is easily understood. But in listening to their counsel we must not forget whence it comes. The crux of the problem is that Germany must be deprived of power: she has abused it twice within a generation.

How is Germany to be deprived of power? There can be no question of exterminating the Germans, or even keeping them in permanent subjection, although these are methods they themselves have employed. Nations accepting Christian standards revolt against terror. In our view a permanent diminution of Germany's power can be brought about by a change of her territories through a change of her frontiers. All other preventive measures—occupation, disarmament, control and sanctions—can be effective only for a very limited period. Their effect will not last very long. To maintain these there would have to be constant vigilance and a permanent and concerted effort on the part of the victors. Experience, however, has shown that it would be risky to build on such foundations.

Is it, then, possible to draw the frontiers of Germany in such a way as to disable her war machine? To answer this question let us look at the map of Germany as it was immediately after the *Anschluss* of Austria. From the compact main body of the Reich three powerful arms stretched out to the East and South-East. The East Prussian arm was clutching Poland's lifeline by barring her road to the sea; the Silesian arm wedged in between Poland and Czechoslovakia was scooping up the wealth of the industrial region inhabited by Czechs and Poles; while the Austrian arm was encircling the Czechs and, by separating the Western Slavs from the Southern, was reaching out in the direction of Trieste. These three arms must be separated from the body of the Reich.

The elimination of the fortress of East Prussia would knock the bottom out of the military might of Germany. The return of the Masovian and Lithuanian lands, which make up East Prussia, to their original owners would deprive Germany of a powerful fortress in the East and, what is more important still, would make it impossible for Germany to dominate Central Europe.

The return to Poland of all Upper Silesia (i.e., Opole Silesia) and those parts of Central Silesia which have a Polish population to this day would be an act of ethnographic justice. Moreover, it would deprive Germany of a most important war smithy; it would reduce the industrial potential of the Reich, while increasing the economic independence of the countries of Europe's Middle Zone.

Finally the independence of Austria must be restored and her position strengthened by means of sound economic agreements with the other countries of the Danubian basin and the Balkans.

If we add to this, Allied control of the Kiel Canal and a revival of the plan of Marshal Foch that France's military frontier should be established along the Rhine, we have territorial provisions which will far more effectively curb the armed might of the Reich than the most carefully elaborated treaties.

There is also this consideration: The more effectively Germany is disarmed by territorial provision, the easier it will be to apply to her a liberal policy in future and the sooner it will be possible to admit her to a future world organisation.

There is every reason to believe that the leaders of the Big Three fully understand the problem of Germany and are ready to take the necessary decisions. Marshal Stalin is not likely to have any difficulties with Russian opinion; indeed the Russian people who have suffered at the hands of the Germans see eye to eye with their leader. It is to be hoped that both Mr. Churchill and President Roosevelt will find the same support among their peoples for decisions which they will have to put before them in not too distant a future.

II.—THE LESSON OF HISTORY

AFTER the fall of the Roman Empire, when the Catholic Church "took over" from the Cæsars, the Poles, like the Czechs, were separated from Rome by a German curtain. The Christian missionaries could not raise it, and Christianity could not reach Polish territory, except by passage through Germanic countries.

When Charlemagne unified all the German tribes into a Frankish State the Slavs found themselves in danger. In 911 the Carolingian dynasty became extinct and the German lands were separated from the French. The *Drang nach Osten* started. A great idea inspired it, and demographic and economic conditions gave it force. The idea was the creation of a universal empire. For more than two centuries, from the Saxon dynasty to the Hohenstaufens, the emperors tried to impose their rule on Europe. They finally came into conflict with the Papacy, but failed to win.

This check was advantageous to the Polish State, then in process of formation. By the eighth century France, with her eight million souls, was the most thickly populated country in Europe. A great increase in the birth-rate also followed the establishment of Germanic tribes in what is now Western Germany. The density of population was greater on the Rhine and Weser than on the Elbe and Oder.

To escape extermination like the Slavs of the Elbe, and to hold up the German advance, the Polish tribes—or Polanes (from *pole*, field)—of the Oder, Warta and Vistula, speaking the same language and being of common origin, formed themselves into an independent State. In 966 the Polish Prince Mieszko, founder of the dynasty of the Piasts, seeking at Rome support against the Emperor, married the Czech Princess Dubravka (a Christian) and adopted Christianity with his people.

German sources give abundant information about the manner in which the Germans accomplished their "civilising" mission in Central and Eastern Europe. Thietmar of Merseburg, a chronicler of the eleventh century, calls Gisilerus, the Archbishop of Magdeburg, *non pastor sed mercennarius*.^{*} Helmold, another German chronicler, criticising the missionary activities of his compatriots in Polish lands, says[†] "their motive was not all at Christianity, but gain alone." It was in the following terms that Archbishop Adelgot, of Magdeburg, in 1107, appealed to the Germans to carry the Christian faith to the Poles:‡ "They are the worst of pagans, but their land so abounds in the best of meat, honey, corn and all products of the earth that no other land may be compared with it. Wherefore you can there save your souls and gain the best of land in which to live."

At the beginning of the thirteenth century the balance of the *Drang nach Osten* seemed weighted in favour of Germany. The Elbe was no longer the western limit of Slavdom: it flowed now through countries subjugated by the Germans; the Oder was seized along its lower reaches; the indigenous Slav peoples of what is now Mecklenburg, Brandenburg and Saxony were conquered or exterminated. The Poles alone resisted the German flood; there was as yet no German colony east of the German-Polish frontier. But this state of affairs was not to continue; the struggle was soon to be resumed in a new quarter.

The Germans, expanding eastward, followed the roads along which they encountered the least resistance: one led to Vienna, the other passed along the Baltic shore. Since the end of the

* *Thietmari Merseburgensis Episcopi Chronicon*, IV, 45. (*Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum*, Hanover 1889.)

† "Nulla de Christianitate fuit mentio sed tantum de pecunia," I, 68.

‡ *Mecklenburgisches Urkundenbuch*, Schwerin, X, 457.

eleventh century German traders and missionaries had been established at the mouth of the Dvina. In 1207 the German Order of Knights of the Sword was in possession there; eight years later the archbishopric of Riga was created. This politico-religious German order conquered, in the name of the Holy See, the country peopled by the Latvians and Estonians, then still pagan. Later the Knights of the Sword tried to conquer the Russian and already Christian (Orthodox) State of Novgorod, but Alexander Nevski defeated them on the Lake Ilmen in 1242.

Meanwhile Poland was not directly threatened; the Lithuanians of the Niemen valley and the Prussians of the lakeland further to the west separated Poland from this new field of German colonisation. For two centuries the Poles tried to convert the pagan Prussians, but the popes did not support them. Rome preferred to entrust the conversion to the missionary knights of a nation not too near to the country which was to be converted. So the popes in good faith encouraged the work of germanisation. There was at the beginning of the thirteenth century a "German Order of St. Mary the Virgin," better known as the Teutonic Order, which was seeking a fresh field of activity. Founded originally to combat the infidels in the Holy Land, this Order preferred missions nearer Germany, whence its Knights came. Its Grand-Master, Hermann von Salza, was a clever diplomat, favoured by the Papal Court and on excellent terms with the Emperor Frederick II. He realised that the evangelisation of Prussia was desired by Poland, whose territories these pagans constantly raided. And he knew the wishes of the Pope. He offered his services. Conrad of Mazovia, the Polish Duke who controlled the lands of the Middle Vistula, proposed to the Order in 1225 that it should evangelise Prussia and protect his duchy. In exchange he offered the territory of Chełmno (Culm) as a temporary donation, without, however, renouncing his sovereign rights. The suggestion was accepted. Poland was hence to pay dearly for the Duke's rash action.

Before reaching agreement with the Polish Duke, the Order very prudently had the donation confirmed by the Emperor (1226) and the Pope (1230). In addition, it submitted to the latter a forged document in virtue of which the Pope accepted the territory of Chełmno *in jus et proprietatem beati Petri* and gave it to the Order "for ever." In 1237 the Knights of the Sword of Riga joined forces with the Teutonic Order. Having thus prepared the foundation of a sovereign German State in the Baltic region, the Order began the systematic conquest of Prussia. It lasted for half a century. In 1285, Skurdo, the last chieftain of the Prussians, crossed the Niemen and took refuge in Lithuania with the remnants of his race. Johannes Voigt wrote in his *Geschichte Preussens* (Königsberg, 1827) that in the land of the Prussians,

“where only recently men used to till the ground in the spring and gather in the harvest in the autumn there was the silence of the grave.” Another German scholar, Nesselmann, in the introduction to his *Die Sprache der alten Preussen* (Berlin, 1845), said: “A bloody war, a war of extermination, destroyed most of the population. Only the name remains and we have adopted it.”

By the conquest of Prussia and the western part of Lithuania—Samogitia—the Order established territorial connection between its domain on the Eastern Baltic up to the Gulf of Finland. At the beginning of the fourteenth century it turned its eyes westward to conquer Polish Pomorze* (Pomerania) and thus to gain territorial access to the German Reich. In 1308 the Order acquired Gdańsk (Danzig) by a trick and invaded Pomorze. On November 14, 1308, the Polish inhabitants of Gdańsk and Tczew (Dirschau) were put to the sword. According to Löschin, the Danzig historian, the killed numbered 10,000.† A German general named Gustav Köhler, the author of a history of Danzig (1893), explains the slaughter as follows‡: “The conduct of the Order was nothing less than the Mongol manner of waging war. Genghiz Khan acted in that way because he did not have a sufficiently strong army to allow him to leave garrisons in the most important towns. The Order, having only a small armed force, was obliged to employ the same method.”

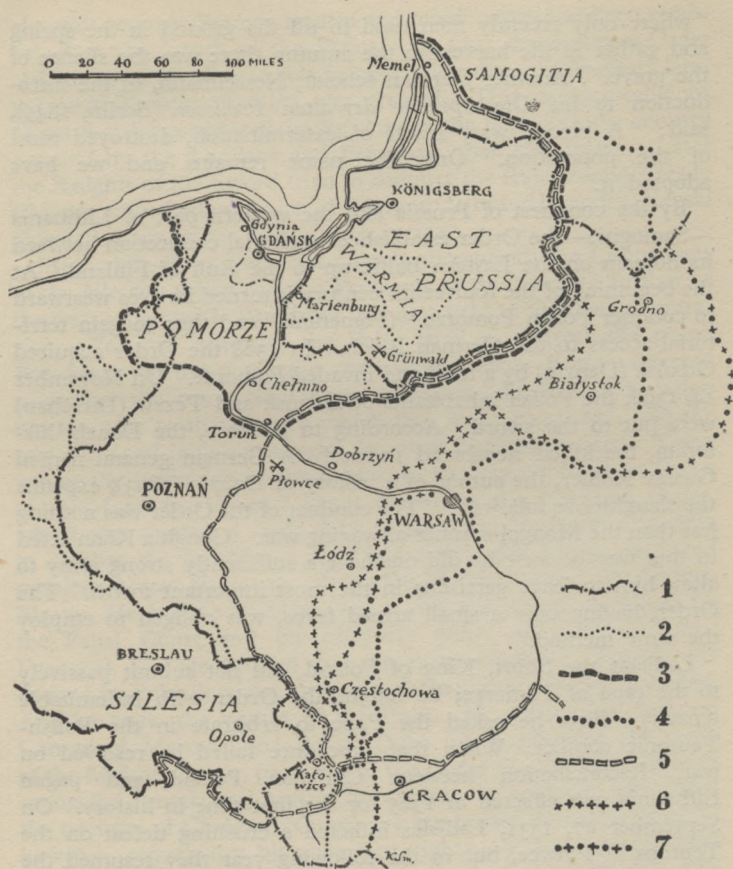
Ladislas the Short, King of Poland, did not submit passively to the rape of Pomorze; he fought the Order with indomitable tenacity. First he asked the Pope to arbitrate in the Polish-Teutonic conflict. When that procedure failed he resolved on war. Reconciliation between Christian Poland and pagan Lithuania was effected in 1325 for the first time in history. On September 27, 1331, Ladislas inflicted a crushing defeat on the Teutons at Płowce, but in the following year they resumed the war, which ended in an armistice. In the meantime Ladislas died, and his son, Casimir the Great, decided on compromise, without renouncing his rights over Pomorze. Peace with the Order was signed at Kalisz in 1343. Casimir retained the title of *Pomeraniae dominus et haeres*.

The Teutonic Knights were at the height of their power. For the first time they succeeded in barring Poland from the Baltic and annexing Polish lands, much later called the Polish “Corridor.”

* Pomorze can be translated “along the seaboard”; *po* means along, *morze*—sea.

† GOTTHILF LÖSCHIN, *Geschichte Danzigs*, Danzig, 1822, I, 38.

‡ *Geschichte der Festungen Danzig und Weichselmünde*, Breslau, 1893, I, 20.



MAP No. 1—GERMAN FRONTIERS ACROSS POLAND

1. Frontiers in 1938.
2. Poland's frontiers before the first partition (1772).
3. Frontier between Poland and the Teutonic Order from 1308 to 1454.
4. Eastern frontier of Prussia after the third partition of Poland (1795).
5. Frontiers between Prussia, Russia and Austria after the Vienna Congress (1815-1914).
6. Rectification of the German frontier proposed by Hindenburg and Ludendorff and adopted by a German War Council under the presidency of Emperor William II at Spa on July 3, 1918.
7. Eastern frontier of "Greater Germany" after the "incorporation" with the Reich of Western Poland (1939) and of the Białystok district (1941).

Having acquired Polish Pomerania, the Order of the Teutonic Knights set about germanising the depopulated province by settling Germans there. Indeed, the foundation deeds of new villages expressly mention the object: *ad locationem villae teutonicalis* or *hominibus teutonicalibus locare*. In 1310 the Grand-Master Siegfried von Feuchtwangen ordered that at Marienburg, the capital of the Order, "anyone who has in his service persons speaking Prussian (*Preusch*) must teach them German and forbid them to use the local language." The Order did not rest content with cutting a "corridor" across Lithuania to Latvia; in 1377 it undertook a large campaign against the Lithuanian State, at the time ruled by the Grand Duke Algirdas (Olgierd), the son of Gediminas, who half a century previously had been allied to Ladislas the Short of Poland.

The Teutonic Order also contemplated a southward extension of its possessions at the expense of Poland. A struggle with these *latrones cruce signati*, as Długosz, the Polish historian of the fourteenth century, calls them, was inevitable. The Polish-Lithuanian Union was born of the German menace. Jadwiga, the young and beautiful Queen of Poland, in 1386 married the Grand Duke of Lithuania, Jagaila (Jagiełło), son of Algirdas. With his people he embraced Christianity and was crowned King of Poland as Ladislas II. The Order, realising the threat, embarked on propaganda against Poland in the West, accusing the Kingdom of encouraging paganism. Under the pretext of "anti-Christian aggression" by Poland, the Order declared war. The Polish-Lithuanian Army, assisted by a Czech corps under the command of Žižka and a Russian corps from Smolensk, defeated the Teutonic Order between Grünwald and Tannenberg on July 15, 1410. The Grand-Master, Ulrich von Jungingen, and 18,000 knights were killed. Among them were two French *chevaliers*, Jean de Ferrière and Dubois d'Anequin, who had joined the Order in the belief that they would be fighting against the "Saracins." The Poles advanced up to Marienburg, but after a two weeks' siege failed to take the town. Their victory was not complete. Under the Treaty of Toruń (Thorn) of February 1, 1411, the Order restored to Poland only the territory of Dobrzyń, and to Lithuania, Samogitia; it undertook to pay an indemnity, but retained Pomorze. Ladislas Jagiełło, however, like all his predecessors during the fourteenth century, called himself *Pomeraniae dominus et haeres*.

At that time Poland was a great Power, and did considerable trade with the West of Europe via Gdańsk. This trade enriched the port, and the Pomeranian towns, which objected to paying heavy taxes to the Teutonic Order and to its brutal rule. The towns and the local nobility formed a league and revolted against the Order in 1454, declaring for union with the Polish State. A new war between Poland and the Order broke out and lasted for

thirteen years. Poland won and on October 19, 1466, the second Treaty of Toruń was signed. This time all Polish Pomorze, with Gdańsk, Marienburg and Elbing was restored to Poland. For the second time, however, Poland failed to crush the Order. With the exception of the bishopric of Warmia (Ermland), which became an integral part of Poland, all Prussia was left to the Teutons, and Poland contented herself with her sovereignty over the lands of the Order. From that time the King of Poland bore the title *omnium terrarum Prussiae dominus et haeres*.

This set-back to the idea of united empire did not, however, stop German expansion. The great landed properties, ecclesiastical and lay, were thenceforth the principal factors in the germanisation of Slav territory. These lands saw the sudden rise of unscrupulous but determined princes who later became powerful in Germany. On the other hand, the growth of the German burgher class had been going on since the twelfth century. The towns sent their surplus of traders and artisans to the east, and these brought municipal rights to the towns of Poland, Bohemia and Hungary. The princes of these countries, anxious to hasten the economic development of their domains, encouraged German immigration. The Hansa League, founded in 1241, and which by the second half of the fourteenth century comprised all the important ports from Amsterdam to Reval, had its counting houses at Chełmno, Toruń and Cracow. But germanisation was resisted. The clergy were Polish and the knights were gaining power. The German settlers were lost in a sea of Polish peasants. In the towns, too, the same process was observable, although it was slower. Polish was henceforth the language of a civilisation. For a century Poland continued her own expansion to the east, but she had sufficient strength to regain her maritime province, and for more than three centuries the German-Polish frontier was stable. The *Drang nach Osten* had been arrested.

Fearing that one day the Polish kings might dislodge them from Prussia altogether, the Teutonic Knights sought permanent support against Poland in Germany. In 1498 they conferred the title of Grand-Master upon a Saxon prince. He was succeeded in 1520 by a cousin of the Elector of Brandenburg, Albert, of the Franconian line of Hohenzollern. This was the first step towards the fusion of Brandenburg and Prussia into a single independent State.

In 1525 Albert embraced the Lutheran faith, with the majority of the Order, and the secularised State became an hereditary Duchy. Zygmunt I, King of Poland, sanctioned these changes by the Treaty of Cracow on April 8, 1525, and the Duchy of Prussia* became a fief of Poland. Albert and his successors were

* From then on it was usual to call this country *Ducal Prussia*, where Polish Pomorze took, to balance it, the name of *Royal Prussia*. Later, after the partitions of Poland, the former became *East Prussia* and the latter *West Prussia*.

granted the title of Duke *in* Prussia, not Duke *of* Prussia. Albert, having accepted these terms, solemnly took the oath of fealty to the King of Poland.

In 1568, Albert Frederick succeeded his father, but the young Duke was mad. In 1569 the King of Poland, Zygmunt August, agreed to an arrangement whereby the Duchy became hereditary in the Brandenburg line of the Hohenzollern; he decided, however, to strengthen the ties which united Pomorze to the crown of Poland by incorporating in it three voivodships of Prussia. George Frederick, Elector of Brandenburg, became curator of that Duchy. In 1603 the curacy passed to Joachim Frederick, and in 1608 to his son John Sigismund. In 1611, as curator of a vassal Duchy, John Sigismund paid homage to Zygmunt III Vasa, King of Poland. The irresponsible Albert Frederick died in 1618. John Sigismund, Elector of Brandenburg, became the rightful Duke *in* Prussia. The second step was taken.

The Electors did not relish the position of vassals of the Polish Crown through the Duchy of Prussia. George William, however, son of John Sigismund, reigned from 1619 to 1640 without any change in the situation. In 1621 he went to Warsaw, the new capital of Poland, to take the traditional oath. We are now at the beginning of the Thirty Years' War, from which Poland, governed by the Swedish dynasty, did not profit. The project of the Vasas, which was to create a Polish-Swedish bridge across the Baltic, was not vindicated by the test of events. On the contrary, this dynastic union initiated a struggle of sixty years between the two countries, of which the fruits were gathered by the Russians and the Germans. In 1655, Charles X, who had no other ground for invading Poland than the refusal of John Casimir Vasa to recognise him as King of Sweden, declared war. Polish Pomorze was the principal object of his cupidity; it was *la belle Hélène* of the war, as a German historian, H. Kania,* called it, for there was a third competitor, Frederick William, Elector of Brandenburg since 1640, and Duke *in* Prussia. This clever and unscrupulous prince put himself first of all at the disposal of Sweden and later took up the attitude of a faithful vassal of Poland. A year later he betrayed her. Nevertheless, John Casimir of Poland needed the Elector's help. He therefore, in 1657, under the Treaty of Welawa (Wehlau), renounced the sovereignty of Poland over Ducal Prussia. The third step was accomplished.

Frederick William, the Great Elector, is rightly considered in Germany to be the real founder of Brandenburg-Prussia, straddling Polish Pomorze, and from that time a sovereign State. His son, the Elector Frederick III, reigned at Berlin and at Königsberg from 1688 to 1713. He desired a royal crown, to which he had no

* H. KANIA, *Der Grosse Kurfürst*, Leipzig, 1930, p. 63.

right in the German Empire, and so on January 18, 1701, he had himself crowned at Königsberg as King *in* Prussia. As the Duchy of Prussia was outside the German Empire no one could oppose the whim of Frederick, who took with his new dignity of kingship the title of Frederick I. There was in fact no fundamental change of status, but it was a symbol and a presage of the fourth and last step, the territorial reunion of the two halves of Prussia, as the Hohenzollern dominions were henceforth to be called.

Frederick William I, the "Sergeant-King," succeeded Frederick I. He organised a strong army which was useful to his son, Frederick II, known as the Great. After his accession in 1740 he profited by the difficulties of Maria-Theresa to establish his claims to Silesia. The conquest of Silesia, sanctioned by the Treaty of Breslau (1742), considerably strengthened the position of Prussia in Germany. Meanwhile, however, Frederick the Great had another task. "Whoever possesses the mouth of the Vistula and the city of Danzig will be more master of Poland than the King who rules there," wrote Frederick.* Filled with pride by the conquest of Silesia, Frederick from that time styled himself King of Prussia and asked the Powers to recognise him as such. Poland consented to this only in 1764, but Frederick had to sign a declaration agreeing that the recognition "in no way prejudiced the rights and possessions of Poland." Six years later the first partition of Poland, initiated by Frederick, took place, and Prussia laid hands on Polish Pomorze, with the exception of Danzig and Toruń. These two towns, with a great part of Western Poland, were annexed to Prussia in 1793 by Frederick William II (who in 1786 succeeded his uncle, Frederick, the Great). The second partition was soon followed by the third and last (1795): the frontier of Prussia was pushed to the Niemen; Warsaw and Białystok became frontier towns of the new Prussia.

For the second time in history the Germans succeeded in excluding Poland from the Baltic, and this time, to make their conquest of Polish lands permanent, they coupled their annexation with the destruction of the Polish State.

* * *

During all his life Prince Otto von Bismarck was haunted by the idea that the Polish State might be restored. In 1848, reacting against the temporary Polonophile sentiments of his compatriots, the Iron Chancellor wrote in the *Magdeburger Zeitung* (April 20)†: "We may wish to re-establish Poland in her frontier of 1772, and return to her all of Poznania, West Prussia and Warmia. We should then cut the vital muscles of Prussia. All this in the

* *Die politischen Testamente*, edited by F. MEINECKE and H. ONCKEN, V, 223.

† F KOCH, *Bismarck über die Polen*, Berlin, 1913, p. 12.

hope of gaining an unreliable ally who would profit by the first difficulty of Germany to take East Prussia and Polish Silesia." And shortly before his death, on September 23, 1894, at Varzin, when he received a deputation from the German minority of Pomorze, he summed up his opinion and anticipations of the Polish question in these words*: "I have painted before you the fantasy of a Polish State such as, I hope, will never come into being. Nevertheless it is a fantasy with which many of our countrymen reckon as a possibility. If that were so, you in West Prussia would become the main object of temptation for Polish greed. Danzig is for a Polish State, centring round Warsaw, a much more urgent necessity than even Posen."

Bismarck was right. Without territorial access to the sea the independence of Poland is but an illusion. After the First World War, when the Polish State was restored, the Paris Peace Conference acceded to the Polish demand for Pomorze, which had been Polish from the formation of the Polish State until 1308, and from 1454 until 1772. Danzig, however, was denied to Poland. A complicated and unworkable solution was adopted instead. The Peace Conference did not endorse Dmowski's suggestions for the future of East Prussia.

An old peril was revived; twice previously it had menaced Poland and the peace of Europe. The policy pursued by the Teutonic Order during the thirteenth century and at the beginning of the fourteenth, and revived by the Prussian kings in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, was again followed by the German statesmen of recent times. In this respect there is no difference between Gustav Stresemann and Adolf Hitler. Stresemann, writing to the Crown Prince on September 7, 1925, said that his Locarno policy aimed at getting Pomorze and Silesia back from Poland.† But Hitler wanted more: to take not only Pomorze, but also Central Poland in order to "straighten out" Germany's eastern frontier. And to make sure that Poland should never regain these lands (she had been robbed of them twice previously, yet each time they were restored to her) the German Führer decided to destroy the Polish State and to reduce it to a kind of ghetto—a *Nebenland*, as he called it, in which a reduced number of Poles would be allowed to eke out a pitiful existence. Hitler's solution could be realised completely only if he won the war. Fortunately, he has as good as lost it.

After the war Poland, once more independent, must have a wide access to the sea: not only through Danzig, but also through East Prussia. It is in the interest of Poland and all Europe that

* BISMARCK, *Die Gesammelten Werke*, Berlin, 1930, XIII, pp. 544 et seq.

† GUSTAV STRESEMANN, *Vermächtnis*, Berlin, 1932, Vol. II.

the East Prussian enclave should disappear from the map and that the status existing before the penetration by the Teutonic Order should be restored.

III.—A FAILURE OF “NEW” DIPLOMACY

THE Paris Conference, which opened on January 18, 1919, outshone by the magnitude of its task the two previous peace congresses, of Westphalia and Vienna. No sooner had the Treaty of Paris been signed than the merits and durability of the work of the Conference were questioned. In his book *The Economic Consequences of the Peace* Mr. John Maynard (now Lord Keynes) called the Treaty of Versailles a “Carthaginian Peace,” born of the poisoned and greedy atmosphere of Paris.

M. André Tardieu thought differently: “Seldom,” he wrote in *La Paix*, “was human labour more honestly and scrupulously prepared.” Refuting the allegation “that this most powerful peace treaty was improvised and haphazardly put together by misinformed people,” Tardieu gave the following figures: Up to the signing of the Treaty of Versailles (June 28, 1919) more than 50 technical commissions were attached to the Peace Conference, and they held 1,646 meetings. The conclusions of these commissions were tested on the spot in 28 cases, and were discussed by three different bodies: The Council of Foreign Ministers, who held 39 meetings; the Council of Ten, who held 72 meetings; and the Supreme Council, who met 145 times. The above figures apply only to questions related to the signing of the Treaty with Germany. In addition peace treaties were prepared for signature with Austria, Bulgaria and Hungary. There was also the unratified Sèvres Treaty with Turkey, which was subsequently replaced by the Lausanne Peace.

But whatever the merits or demerits of the treaty it could last only if all the principal Allied statesmen had the same end in view and if their peoples were prepared to use force to uphold the treaty. Both conditions however were lacking.

The Peace Conference consisted of two stages: the first lasted from January until the beginning of May, 1919, when the victors agreed among themselves on the terms of peace; the second began on May 7, 1919, the day the terms were handed to the German delegation, and ended after a brief period of discussion with the signing of the Treaty.

The first stage is long-drawn, and more interesting to the historian. As long as the war lasted the aim of achieving victory united all the Allies. The political aims of the war, however,

had not been agreed upon. Right up to the end of the war France, for instance, dared not start negotiations with Great Britain regarding her territorial claims against Germany. The only power which even during the war had pledged itself to support France's claim to Alsace and Lorraine and the Rhineland was Russia, but she was not present at the Conference. For that concession France had to pay by accepting the view that Poland's independence was an internal Russian problem.

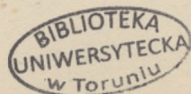
According to the procedure imposed upon the Conference by the Great Powers, both in the drafting of the Peace conditions and during the following brief discussions with the Germans, the final word always rested with the Big Four.

On the Allied side 27 countries attended the Conference; among them were 22 Powers with "limited interests," including only seven European States. It is clear that in view of the sacrifices made by the great Allies and for practical reasons, it was impossible always to apply the principle of equality.

It was mainly due to ignorance that Poland was treated at the conference as a "liberated" nation for whom something should be done, while her territorial claims against Germany were viewed with considerable scepticism. Roman Dmowski, the head of the Polish Delegation, was one of the few statesmen at the Conference who really understood the German problem. His demands were however regarded, as Tardieu put it, as a symptom of a "disquieting imperialism of the youngest beneficiaries of the victory." Dmowski had raised the question of East Prussia as early as 1918 and was advocating a radical solution. But his ideas met with no response. Why? To answer that question we must briefly outline the attitude of each of the Big Three to the Polish question and define the place it occupied within the general policy.

It was the main object of French policy to weaken Germany. To achieve this France demanded that the territory west of the Rhine (*ce fleuve qui règle tout*, as Marshal Foch expressed it) should be severed from Germany, that Polish territory should be freed from Germany and that the question of Slesvig should be revised. As for eastern Germany, France, up to the Russian revolution, had hoped, though she had no certainty, that Tsarist Russia would be ready to annex most of these lands or join some with the Austrian part of Poland, setting up a kind of autonomous Poland under the Tsars. After the Russian revolution, however, the French promptly abandoned that scheme and in the summer of 1917 decisions taken in Paris showed that they were ready to support the idea of a strong and independent Poland.

British policy was mainly concerned with making such use of victory as would thwart German attempts at becoming a world Power. The British were therefore intent upon depriving



Germany of all overseas possessions and of her fleet and merchant navy. They opposed, however, the taking from Germany of any territory, however small, inhabited by a German or germanised population. The only exception was Britain's consent to the French claim to Alsace and Lorraine.

In the Polish question Britain at first adopted an attitude of great reserve, bordering on disinterestedness. After the Russian revolution, however, she took the line that the Polish State should be re-established, but both her words and gestures were marked by a compromise between a sense of justice and her traditional policy that no single power should dominate the Continent. Thus after Germany was beaten it was now a question of preventing "French domination." Hence the British veto to the French claims to the Rhineland, hence Mr. Lloyd George's determination to give Poland, whom he regarded as a potential follower of France, as little territory as possible. It did not regard the weakening of Germany's position in Europe as being in Britain's interest and was therefore a niggardly benefactor as far as Poland was concerned. Greece, however, was treated very generously by the Welsh wizard, for, according to his lights the weakening of Turkey was desirable.

President Wilson was not concerned with the balancing of political forces in Europe. He arrived in Paris with the idea of creating a new form of international co-operation. He saw the necessity of territorial changes in Europe, and realised that the European order could not be based on political conglomerations, held together by dynasties. A firmer foundation was needed; it had to be based on nations determining their future themselves. At the same time he regarded himself as a prophet, the representative of "the only disinterested people" at the Peace Conference. Believing that the League of Nations would guard the peace and effectively arbitrate in disputes, he totally ignored strategic considerations and therefore rejected both the French claims to the Rhineland and the Polish ones to East Prussia.

* * *

On January 29, 1919, the Polish delegates, Roman Dmowski and Erazm Piltz, submitted the Polish territorial claims to the Supreme Council. Dmowski asked for Upper Silesia, Posnania, Polish Pomerania (called by the Germans *Westpreussen*) and Danzig. As for East Prussia, he claimed the southern and western parts for Poland. With regard to the remainder, he said that if Poland was to be really free and independent of Germany, only two alternatives were possible: either to incorporate the province of Königsberg in Poland, giving it local autonomy or to make it an independent Republic bound to Poland by a Custom's union.

In either case he thought Memel (Klaipeda) and the land on the right bank of the Niemen should go to Lithuania*.

"You have made a masterly statement," said Clemenceau to Dmowski who had spoken for two and a half hours. Mr. Lloyd George remained inscrutable. He avoided Dmowski, with whom, during both the war and Peace Conference, he never conferred. Wilson, however, had a message sent to Dmowski through Colonel House that he "was thenceforth convinced that Danzig must be Polish and that in this affair he would be with Poland."† Nothing however was said about the future of East Prussia.

On February 12, the Supreme Council entrusted the Polish problems to a Commission, of which Jules Cambon was President. The members of the Commission were Sir William (now Lord) Tyrrell (Great Britain), the Marquis della Torretta (Italy), Mr. Isaiah Bowman (United States) and Mr. K. Otchiai (Japan). The Commission formed a sub-Committee for the tracing of frontiers on March 1; it was presided over by General le Rond (France), assisted by Professor Bowman and Lieutenant-Colonel F. H. Kisch (Great Britain). Dmowski sent a note to the Commission developing the demands already made before the Supreme Council and asking for "the separation of East Prussia from Germany" (February 28).

The Commission on Polish Affairs lost no time. On March 6 a report prepared by the Sub-Committee was sent to Cambon and the full Commission gave a long hearing to Dmowski who warned against the dangers of a compromise about Danzig and East Prussia. The final test of the report of the Commission was delivered to the Supreme Council on March 12‡.

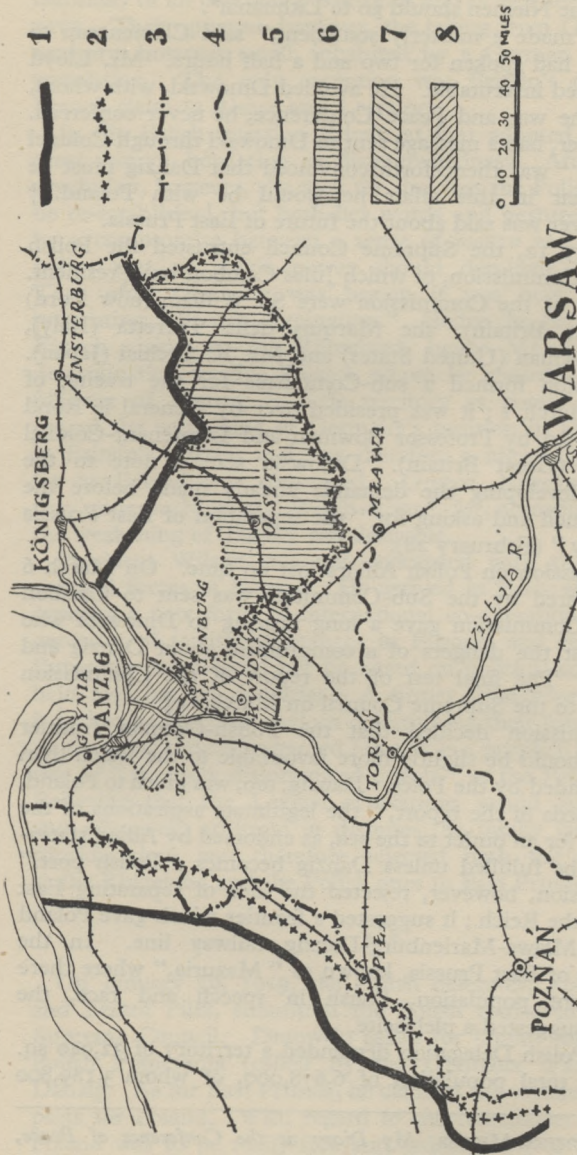
The Commission decided that the Polish-German frontier in the West should be slightly more favourable to the Reich than the line demanded by the Poles. Danzig, too, was given to Poland, for, in the words of the report, "the legitimate aspirations of the Polish people for an outlet to the sea, as endorsed by Allied statesmen, cannot be fulfilled unless Danzig becomes a Polish port." The Commission, however, rejected the idea of separating East Prussia from the Reich; it suggested a frontier which gave Poland the Warsaw-Mława-Marienburg-Danzig railway line. In the southern part of East Prussia, known as "Mazuria," where there is a Protestant population, Polish in speech and race, the Commission suggested a plebiscite.

In all the Polish Delegation demanded a territory of 32,940 sq. miles with a total population of 6,678,000, of whom 3,189,800

* DAVID HUNTER MILLER, *My Diary at the Conference of Peace*, New York, 1924, vol. XIV, pp. 54-67.

† DMOWSKI, *op. cit.*, p. 436.

‡ MILLER, *op. cit.*, VI, pp. 350 *et seq.*



MAP No. 2.—EAST PRUSSIA AT THE PEACE CONFERENCE

1. Polish frontiers proposed by Dmowski at the Peace Conference (February 28, 1919). 2. Frontiers proposed by the Commission on Polish Affairs (March 12, 1919). 3. Final frontiers adopted by the Treaty of Versailles (June 28, 1919). 4. Russo-Prussian frontier between 1815 and 1914. 5. Main railways. 6. Olsztyn (Allenstein) Plebiscite area. 7. Kwidzyn (Marienwerder) Plebiscite area. 8. Free City of Danzig.

were, according to the German statistics, Poles. The Commission proposed the restitution to Poland of an area of 22,550 sq. miles, with a total population of 5,469,000, of whom 2,854,600 were Poles. The Commission reduced by nearly a third the Polish demands. It was at this price that it reached unanimity. For it may be pointed out that all the decisions of the Commission were reached unanimously, that is to say not only the American delegate but also the British delegates had to be in favour of a decision before it was reached.

The Supreme Council had asked the Commission on Polish Affairs to complete its report by March 9, but it did not discuss it until March 19*. Mr. Lloyd George said that the bulk of the recommendations of the Commission represented views that had secured general agreement, but he thought that 2,132,000 Germans to be included in the future Polish State was a considerable figure and might spell serious trouble for Poland in the future. He asked if the Commission could not reconsider its recommendations, leaving to Germany at least the districts of Danzig and Marienwerder (Kwidzyn), with a German majority. Despite the opposition of President Wilson and MM. Tardieu and Cambon, the Council decided to refer the report on the Polish-German frontier back to the Commission for reconsideration "in the light of the foregoing discussion."

On March 12 there occurred an event unique in the annals of the Peace Conference. Mr. Lloyd George had insisted before the Supreme Council that the British experts were reluctant to accept all the recommendations of the Commission; yet on the proposal of Sir William Tyrrell the Commission voted unanimously in favour of the text of a note sent on the same day to the Supreme Council, in which all its original recommendations were maintained without exception.†

The Supreme Council again discussed the question on March 22. Mr. Lloyd George did not wish to criticise the work of the Commission, but was still alarmed that a large German population was given away to Poland. He feared that Germany would not sign such a treaty. On March 25, the British Prime Minister sent to his colleagues of the Supreme Council a memorandum, in which he said‡ :

I cannot conceive any greater cause of future war than that the German people, who have certainly proved themselves one of the most vigorous and powerful races in the world, should be surrounded by a number of small states, many of them consisting of people who

* MILLER, *op. cit.*, XV, p. 411 *et seq.*

† MILLER, *op. cit.*, VII, p. 75 *et seq.*

‡ H. W. V. TEMPERLEY, *A History of the Peace Conference of Paris*, published under the auspices of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, 1924, vol. VI, pp. 546-47.

have never previously set up a stable government for themselves, but each of them containing large masses of Germans clamouring for reunion with their native land.

Clemenceau retaliated that because *il y a vingt millions d'Allemands de trop* it is wrong to draw a conclusion from that statistical reality that the Poles and the Czechs must always be German slaves. On the instructions of the "Tiger," Tardieu drew up a note refuting one by one the points advanced by Mr. Lloyd George. We need cite only one passage from this remarkable document (dated March 28)* :

The Conference has decided to call to life a certain number of new States. Can the Conference, without committing an injustice, sacrifice them out of consideration for Germany, by imposing upon them unacceptable frontiers? If one is obliged, in giving to these young peoples frontiers without which they cannot live, to transfer to their sovereignty the sons of the very Germans who have enslaved them, it is to be regretted and it must be done with moderation, but it cannot be avoided. Moreover, while one deprives Germany totally and definitely of her colonies because she maltreated the indigenous population, by what right can one refuse to give Poland and Bohemia normal frontiers because the Germans have installed themselves upon Polish and Bohemian soil as guarantors of oppressive pan-Germanism?

The French Government's reply also pointed out that though the peace must be truly just, "it is not sure that justice is conceived by the Germans as it is conceived by the Allies." On the other hand, "it should not be forgotten that this impression of justice must be obvious not only to the enemy, but also and principally to the Allies."

None the less the Supreme Council embarked upon a long internal dispute about the town of Danzig and the district of Marienwerder. On April 6, Ignacy Paderewski, then Prime Minister of Poland, hurried to Paris. More fortunate than Dmowski, he saw Mr. Lloyd George, but the British Prime Minister had not changed his views. On April 12, the Commission on Polish Affairs, after having heard Paderewski, sent a note to the Supreme Council, unanimously arrived at, like all its predecessors; in this note it adhered to its previous recommendations and added that "any other solution would be of a nature to compromise the establishment and maintenance of peace in Europe."

Unfortunately after a rather feeble resistance, Wilson gave in to Mr. Lloyd George on the question of Marienwerder, by agreeing to a plebiscite to be held there on the lines of the one the Cambon Commission had suggested for Mazuria. As to Danzig, Mr. Lloyd George proposed a solution similar to that

* RAY STANNARD BAKER, *Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement*, New York, 1923, vol. III, p. 249 *et seq.*

decided upon for the Saar Basin, that is to make Danzig a territory administered by the League of Nations and joined to Poland by a Customs' union. After ten or fifteen years its inhabitants should be asked to say whether they were for or against the continuance of this regime. In the end, in spite of Poland's opposition, the Supreme Council decided to set up Danzig as a Free City, united to Poland by a series of economic ties—of which the Customs' union was one—but autonomous in its internal administration, with the League of Nations as guarantor for the smooth operation of the system.

On May 7, 1919, at Versailles, the Germans were presented with the Conditions of Peace, which included the Polish frontiers, proposed by the Cambon Commission and revised by Mr. Lloyd George with respect to Danzig and to East Prussia. On May 29, the German Delegation, presided over by Count von Brockdorff-Rantzau, addressed to the Supreme Council its observations on the Conditions; they vehemently protested against giving to Poland Pomorze (West Prussia) and Upper Silesia. They declared themselves "ready to assure to the Poles, by the cession of free ports at Danzig, Königsberg and Memel, by a charter regulating navigation on the Vistula and by special treaties concerning railways, free and secure access to the sea without international guarantees." This would have resulted in the complete economic dependence of Poland upon Germany.

A new dispute started before the Supreme Council. The German suggestions had some effect in Upper Silesia, but happily not on the Baltic. Mr. Lloyd George made great play with the German argument with regard to Upper Silesia, which was given to Poland in the Conditions of May 7, and won his case, as a plebiscite was finally decided upon for this territory.

The Treaty of Peace between the Allied and Associated Powers and Germany was signed on June 28, 1919, in the famous *Gallerie des Glaces* of the Palace of Versailles, where the unity of Germany had been proclaimed 48 years previously.

Guided by Mr. Lloyd George, Great Britain mistrusted France's interest in Poland and did not care very much about Wilson's idealism. The British Premier said at the meeting of the Supreme Council on March 15, 1919, that "the Poles had no idea of organisation; they had no capacity to direct or govern." Such prejudice, based mainly on ignorance, was widespread before the first world war. Professor H. J. Patton, author of the chapter on Poland in the excellent collective work edited by Mr. H. W. V. Temperley*, states that this opinion rested "partly upon certain historical facts, but more largely upon German propaganda."

Mr. Patton says that there was a clash between two schools of

* See vol. VI, chapter on *Poland at the Peace Conference*, pp. 223 et seq.

diplomacy at the Peace Conference: "old" and the "new." The traditionalists, supporters of the "old" diplomacy, tried to strengthen friends at the expense of enemies not by proposing patently unjust solutions, but by insisting that in all doubtful cases the favoured nation should have the benefit of the doubt. The moderns, the upholders of the "new" diplomacy, on the contrary wished to ensure abstract justice always and everywhere, for friends as well as enemies. Which school has triumphed? To answer this let me quote Mr. Patton:

In spite of a widespread impression in England to the contrary, it was, on the whole, the second tendency which prevailed. As far, at least, as the frontier with Germany is concerned, strategic considerations were for the most part completely ignored. This was done deliberately in the belief that in this way alone could justice be secured.

Neither justice nor peace were secured. On the whole the solution of the problem of Polish-German frontiers was unworkable. It could last if Germany was a peaceful nation, capable of good will and able to collaborate with her neighbours on an equal footing. But Germany is anything but a good neighbour, as the French and the Russians, the Belgians and the Poles have always known, and as the Dutch, the Danes, the Norwegians, the Danubian and Balkan peoples and finally the British have learnt more recently. Germany never accepted the frontiers of Poland, not because they were unjust, but because they assured a large measure of economic independence for Poland. All Germans—the Eberts and the Hindenburgs, the Stressmanns and the Hitlers—have always considered Poland as a God-sent *Lebensraum* for the German people.

In the peace settlement which will follow this second and let us hope last European war, the traditional diplomacy of common sense must prevail, and strategic considerations must not be ignored. This time the solution must be final and not only Danzig but East Prussia, too, must go to Poland.

IV.—AN ECONOMIC ABSURDITY

DURING the years between the two world wars, German propaganda claimed that the existence of the Polish "corridor" was a severe economic blow to East Prussia whom it was depopulating. In actual fact, however, the cause lay elsewhere. Both geographically and economically East Prussia and Poland are a unit, and a political and customs' frontier cutting across that unit is bound to have an adverse economic effect on the province. Before the partition of Poland, at the end of the eighteenth century, the political and customs' frontiers did not have the same

economic effect as they had in the nineteenth century, when consumption goods began to be mass-produced and the railway and steamship replaced older means of transport. At a time when the union of Königsberg and Warsaw became an economic necessity, Hohenzollern diplomacy succeeded in gaining a territorial corridor linking Berlin and Königsberg. The Hohenzollerns, however, realised that East Prussia, if it was to develop, had to be allowed to trade with its hinterland, and in the third partition in 1795 they united Prussia with Warsaw. But this did not last long, for in 1807 Napoleon I made Warsaw the capital of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw. The Vienna Congress, however, shifted the frontiers between Russia and Prussia as far as Toruń (Thorn), that is by about 130 miles down the Vistula; East Prussia was thus deprived of that hinterland which Frederick the Great and Frederick William II had assured to that province.

* * *

The frontiers fixed between the three Partitioning Powers at the Congress of Vienna lasted till 1914. East Prussia was wedged in between the sea and foreign territory. It is true that the Treaty of Vienna provided for free navigation and trade in general within the Polish frontiers of 1772, but this stipulation was never carried out. In 1818 a special trade agreement was signed between Prussia and Russia, and it was significant that East Prussia was included in the list of former Polish territories which were to benefit by the new arrangement. This agreement, however, did not last long. It was denounced by Russia in 1821, and a Prusso-Russian tariff war broke out in the following year. A new trade agreement between the two countries signed in 1825 did not perceptibly improve the condition of East Prussia. The same is true of the German Customs Union (*Zollverein*) formed in 1834. The inclusion of East Prussia in an economic area with a large number of rich and favourably situated districts placed the poorer provinces in a position of inferiority while not meeting its peculiar needs. Throughout the nineteenth century which saw the rapid rise and an unparalleled growth of prosperity of the Prussian Monarchy and the German Empire, two features dominated the situation of East Prussia: its backwardness and poverty in comparison with other German provinces, and its dependence on the economic relations with Russia, at that time master of the adjoining Polish and Lithuanian lands. The first published *Proceedings of the Königsberg Chamber of Commerce*, 1849, show that the authors of this report had no illusions about the situation of the province.

We can close this account of our proceedings (says the report)* with a melancholy glance at the past and an anxious one towards the

* *The Bridgehead of East Prussia*, Edited by the Polish Research Centre, London, 1944, pp. 26-27.

future. Mistakes and troubles of all kinds, over a number of years, have annulled all the advantages conferred on us by nature. It is true that the most important factor here is the commercial system of Russia, cut from us by a tariff wall. Yet the Customs' Union bears part of the blame for the fact that the tariff for Poland may be changed without previous consultation with Prussia, since the provision of the Vienna treaties to the effect that customs' tariffs for Prussia and Poland are not to be altered without mutual consent, is not observed by it. Our trade with our great neighbour has been influenced to no small degree by the restraints and difficulties arising out of the customs' regulations introduced, especially of late years, at the demand of the Customs' Union.

It is not possible here to examine in detail the complex economic history of that period, but it should be noted that East Prussia experienced spells of prosperity whenever Russia had to use that province and its ports for the transit of her goods. This occurred several times: during the Crimean War, during the Turkish campaign of 1877-78, and again in 1881 when Russia envisaged a possible conflict with Britain over Afghanistan. But, as a rule, Russia's policy was highly protectionist, opposed to free trade. Moreover, Russia possessed Baltic ports of her own which she did her best to develop and to protect against the competition of the Prussian ones.

The three victorious wars of Bismarck brought great industrial development to the new German Reich, but East Prussia, with her geographical situation unchanged, remained in a position of marked inferiority compared with the rest of Germany. In the records of the debates of the Merchants' Association of Königsberg in 1878 we read*:

As a result of its isolated situation on the closed Russian frontier and its lack of communications, our province has remained far behind the other provinces. In connection with the building of roads, the regulation of rivers and the improvement of port facilities, as well as the building of the Prussian provincial railway, its requirements were always met later and with less good will than those of the west and central sections of the Kingdom. It alone had to make sacrifices for the Customs' Union, though it received but few benefits in return.

A long-term commercial treaty was concluded with Russia in 1894. It was beneficial to East Prussia, for whose people it provided new openings as traders, middlemen and manufacturers. New industries sprang up; they worked for the Russian markets, or processed Russian raw materials. Sea traffic increased, the shipbuilding industry thrived and housing conditions greatly improved. These favourable developments were more firmly established in 1904 when a new trade agreement was signed with

* Cf. *Berichte des Vorsteheramtes der Kaufmannschaft zu Königsberg-i.-Pr. über den Handel und die Schifffahrt von Königsberg, 1877-1884.*

Russia for a further ten years. Russia at that time was involved in a war with Japan and politically weak. Thus Germany was able to enforce a number of stipulations more favourable to her than to her eastern neighbour. Russia now agreed to grant the German Baltic ports the same railway tariffs for goods as she accorded to her own harbours on that sea. From an average of 479,000 tons in the years 1873-77 the goods traffic in the port of Königsberg rose to 1.7 million tons in 1913; Russian corn, sugar and timber represented 35 per cent. of this tonnage.

Great efforts were undoubtedly made by Berlin to secure the economic advancement of East Prussia, but the province was still far behind other parts of the Reich. In 1871, the year the Second Reich was founded, Germany had a population of slightly over 41 millions; by 1910 it reached nearly 65 millions. Yet East Prussia had 1,891,800 inhabitants in 1871 and only 2,147,500 in 1910. The contrast is striking. In thirty-nine years the population of the Reich increased by 58 per cent.; but in East Prussia there was an increase of only 14 per cent. although the birth-rate in East Prussia was higher than anywhere else within the German frontiers. The reason was that there was a steady flow of emigrants to the west, where wages were higher and conditions generally more attractive. Researches made by Dr. von Batocki and Dr. Gerhard Schack* show that from 1871 to 1914 more than 770,000 persons (or 17,500 a year) left East Prussia for the towns of Central Germany or the industrial area of the Rhineland. The economic situation of Germany in general and of East Prussia in particular explain this natural westward drift. "The economic balance was upset by industrialisation," complains a German political writer, Herr Wilhelm von Kries,† "and as the water will flow out of a tub if we place it aslant, so the population quite naturally emigrated to the west." This general tendency among the inhabitants of the eastern provinces of Prussia was the real cause of the German outcry against the "Polish peril" in pre-war Germany. Emigration was not confined to the German community, but as a rule the Pole clung to the land which he strove to possess, while the same restraints did not operate in the German who could feel as much or even more at his ease in western Germany than in his native district in the east.

* * *

During the last world war the Germans hoped to improve the position of East Prussia by incorporating with it further Polish territories. They remembered the short-lived solution of 1795. At the beginning of 1918 the Königsberg Chamber of Commerce addressed a petition to the Emperor William II asking for the

* Cf. *Bevölkerung und Wirtschaft in Ostpreussen*, Jena, 1929.

† In *Deutschland und der Korridor*, Berlin, 1933, p. 427.

incorporation of Russian Poland in the Reich, "an incorporation indispensable to the prosperity of East Prussia."

Past experience has taught us (the document says*) that Poland will not be the friend of Germany, and that in an emergency she will not be a reliable ally. We cannot expect from this State, hostile to Germany, an economic and commercial policy to satisfy our needs—unless we possess sufficient means of pressure. Poland separates East Prussia from important parts of the old Russia, and commands the way by Polish canals and railways to the Ukraine. Economic relations with the Ukraine, the establishment and development of which are indispensable to East Prussia and upon which the prosperity of Königsberg depends, are not possible without the use of Polish territory. The customs' and railway tariffs of Poland can be made unfavourable to us. We ask your Royal Majesty to protect us against this possibility by separating from the old Russian Poland territories sufficient to ensure the military security of East Prussia, and at the same time to force this State to base its economic policy on the interests of Germany.

The solution suggested in the above petition was supported by Field-Marshal von Hindenberg and General Ludendorff. On their proposal the German Crown Council assembled under the presidency of Emperor William II at Spa, on July 3, 1918, decided to incorporate in the Reich a large part of Russian Poland along a line running slightly to the west of that of the third Partition of 1795. It was also decided that Grodno and Białystok would go to "independent Lithuania," recognised by Germany on March 23, 1918, a Lithuania, as the Kaiser proclaimed, "eternally united with Germany." Brześć (Brest-Litovsk) and Chełm had been given to Ukraine by the peace treaty signed on February 9, 1918, with a phantom Ukrainian Government. As the existence of a Polish nation could not be gainsaid, the Germans decided to restore some sort of Polish State, within the triangle Warsaw-Lublin-Cracow, and made dependent on Germany.

The whole plan was torpedoed by the defeat of Germany and the restoration of Poland, but the "law" of economic geography, which required co-operation between East Prussia and its Polish hinterland, still operated. Dr. Fritz Simon, of the Königsberg Chamber of Commerce, thought out another solution in accordance with the new situation† :

Although without any great attraction for a Prussian (he wrote in a report in 1919), the idea of a Customs union between East Prussia and Poland imposes itself as a necessity. As a result of this union, East Prussia would in fact benefit by all the facilities offered by the

* Cf. *Polnische Blätter* (edited by Wilhelm Feldman), Berlin, April 15, 1918.

† Quoted by "Prutenus," in his article entitled "The Problem of East Prussia in the Light of the Laws of Nature," *Przegląd Polityczny* (Political Review), Warsaw, January-February, 1928, p. 29.

movement of trade in Poland in connection with Germany and the neighbouring countries, and by the same measure all the inconveniences in which this province is involved by incorporation in the economic system of the Reich would be done away with. On the other hand, it would be to the interest of Poland to assist the economic development of Königsberg and henceforth not to devote all her attention to Danzig.

The Government of the Weimar Republic ignored Herr Simon's proposal. Instead it decided to make full use of the right of privileged transit between East Prussia and the Reich, across Pomorze, given to Germany under Article 89 of the Treaty of Versailles. A special Polish-German convention was signed in Paris on April 21, 1921. The smooth working of the German transit traffic across Pomorze was occasionally recognised even by the Germans themselves. Dr. Holz, a high official of the German railway administration at Königsberg, wrote in a pamphlet in 1923*:

It can be stated with satisfaction that the German Reich Railways have succeeded in removing the difficulties of transit after prolonged negotiations with the Polish Railway Administration. From the point of view of transit East Prussia is no longer an enclave. The railway of the Reich has thrown a bridge across Polish territory. Transit traffic has been carried on without friction, as though Germany herself had the management of the traffic passing through the Polish corridor.

This testimony, however, did not keep in line with German propaganda and Dr. Holz was dismissed and his pamphlet suppressed. German revisionist propaganda tried to convince the world that East Prussia was suffering because it was separated from the rest of Germany by Polish territories, suggesting the re-annexation of Pomorze as the only practicable solution.

The peace settlements of Versailles and Riga changed the economic position of East Prussia. The chief blow the province suffered was the almost total disappearance of the Russian market. In 1913 East Prussia received 440,000 tons of cereals and 575,000 of timber from Russia; in 1928 the figures were only 56,000 and 57,000 respectively. Again, East Prussia's exports to Russia were only 25,000 tons in 1928 as compared with 118,000 in 1913. There was no improvement in the years 1929-33. It was not, however, the "corridor" that was responsible for this situation, but the Russian Revolution and the economic changes in the Soviet Union.

The restitution of Pomorze and Poznania to Poland was of incontestable economic advantage to East Prussia: mainly because it virtually did away with the competition of the agricultural

* *Ostpreussens Wirtschaft und Verkehr vor und nach dem Kriege*, Königsberg, Gräfe und Unzer, 1923, p. 9.

produce of these two Polish provinces in the German market. Before 1914 the producers of Poznan and Pomorze were nearer to the great markets of Berlin and the Ruhr than their East Prussian competitors. After 1919 the distances remained the same, but the farmers of Pomorze and Poznan were cut off from their old markets by frontiers and customs barriers, while the agricultural industry of East Prussia was not. So the volume of trade between East Prussia and the Reich was greater in 1928 than in 1913. Professor Albert von Mühlenfels*, of the University of Königsberg, estimated that the volume of this trade, which amounted to 3,945,201 tons in 1913, reached 4,386,163 tons in 1928. There was also no great change in the livestock-breeding industry of East Prussia. In 1913 it consisted of 513,000 horses, 1,264,000 head of horned cattle and of 1,325,000 pigs; in 1928 there were 465,000 horses, 1,176,000 horned cattle and 1,410,000 pigs. The port of Königsberg itself in spite of the loss of the Russian market succeeded in re-establishing its traffic, which in 1929 attained pre-war level (1,745,600 tons in 1913; 1,726,200, in 1929).

Does this mean that conditions in East Prussia were improving? No, for this province remained a sort of *cul-de-sac*. Warsaw was only 60 miles from it, whereas Berlin was 240 miles away. The Polish industrial districts of Katowice and Sandomierz were about 215 miles from East Prussia, while the principal German industrial region of Westphalia was 480 miles distant. To retain the outlying province of East Prussia within the customs framework of the Reich has always been a costly luxury. "It is clear from any examination of economic conditions in East Prussia prior to the World War," writes Mr. Morrow†, "that its present economic plight is not a new phenomenon."

The crisis of the great landed properties continued to be acute in East Prussia. In 1925 approximately 3,440 Junkers, or gentlemen farmers, whose estates exceeded 100 hectares (250 acres) held 39.3 per cent. of all the cultivated land. The outlook for these large proprietors was no brighter in East Prussia than elsewhere in Eastern Europe. They did not adapt themselves to changed conditions; they failed to reduce their style of living after the first world war. They complained bitterly, asking the Government for help. There was nothing particularly new in that. Already in 1822 von Schön, Lord Mayor of Königsberg, wrote to Prince Hardenberg, the Prussian Chancellor‡: "The landed

* *Ostpreussen, Danzig und der polnische Korridor als Verkehrsproblem*, Berlin, 1930, pp. 18-19.

† IAN F. D. MORROW, *The Peace Settlement in the German-Polish Borderlands*, published in 1936 under the auspices of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, p. 357.

‡ Quoted by Herr KEMPNER in *Bank-Archiv* of March 13, 1931.

proprietors have no money. They are vigorously demanding some. But what government can have enough money to buy off from Providence the natural order of events?" Dr. von Hippel, former Director of Prussian Real Estate Credit at Königsberg, writing in the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* on December 4, 1929, expressed the view of East Prussian Junkers thus:

East Prussia is faced with the impossible—she has to share in the expenditure of the rest of Germany. Human stupidity can be active in politics as long as it finds followers, but economic laws are as strict as the laws of nature, and those laws will solve the East Prussian problem. Theoretically two solutions exist: Either Germany will provide its eastern fortress with a standard of living which East Prussia by itself cannot afford—which means yearly subsidies of at least 200 million marks, or else the burdens in East Prussia must be suited to its economic situation.

The policy of State subsidies was adopted. From 1924 onwards the Reich Government regularly assisted Eastern Germany. Up to January 1933, Germany had expended more than 2,600 million marks on assisting its Eastern provinces (*Osthilfe*). In spite of this, emigration continued and between 1919 and 1925 East Prussia lost 53,900 of its inhabitants in this way, according to the researches made by Herr von Batocki and Herr Schack. The annual emigration during the following three years was 13,000; in 1929 the figure rose to 21,000. If we allow only 17,500 emigrants (pre-1914 ratio) for the years 1930-32, we get a total of 166,400 persons who left East Prussia before Hitler came to power in Germany.

* * *

Hitler put an end to the revisionist propaganda*, for he realised that Poland would not agree to a change of the frontier fixed by the Paris Peace Conference. He therefore chose different tactics. He decided to isolate Poland from the West and to prevail upon her to enter into an alliance with him against Russia. Later he would wrest from her territorial concessions in Silesia and Pomerania, and probably in other parts of Poland. That policy, however, failed; it resulted in the Second World War. Germany is now losing the war, but the territorial schemes made by Hitler in Poland are in so far significant that they bear out the view that East Prussia depends, for her prosperity, on the Polish hinterland. The frontier of the Polish provinces incorporated

* My book *La Poméranie Polonaise* published in Paris in 1932 was a reply to German propaganda about the German "corridor." An English translation, under the title, *Poland's Access to the Sea* (Allen & Unwin) appeared in 1934. It is significant that the German reply to my book came only in September 1939. It was contained in the book *50 Korridor Thesen—Abrechnung mit Polen* by Arnold Zelle (Volk und Reich Verlag, Berlin).

during the war in the Reich almost coincides with the line of the third partition of Poland of 1795 and the line fixed by the German Crown Council which met at Spa on July 3, 1918. The *General-Gouvernement*, designed to be the home (*Heimstätte*) of the Polish nation, differs little from the diminutive Polish State planned by the German Government during the first World War. Like Frederick William II, Hitler incorporated the districts of Ciechanów Białystok and Suwałki in East Prussia.

V.—THE FORTRESS OF EAST PRUSSIA MUST BE ELIMINATED

A COMPACT mass of 65 million Germans lives in Central Europe. They are an industrious people, with considerable organising abilities. Nobody can deny this. But they are bad neighbours, believing that anything that benefits them as a nation is permissible. Their Christianity is only a thin crust, for the rights of the individual and respect for the dignity of man are not among the values they hold in high esteem. No wonder, therefore, that democratic régimes had only a short run in Germany, or were confined only to certain areas. The Germans gladly accept the orders of leaders who hold out promises of domination over other peoples. In their policy they rely on physical force, and if they lack it, ruse is the political alternative for them.

Twice in our lifetime we have seen how the Germans have prepared and started a war for the domination of Europe and the world. In both wars they were near victory. No statesman can discount the possibility of a third attempt. Consequently the Germans must be disarmed so as to make this impossible. Among the measures to be taken against German militarism those of a territorial nature will be the most enduring ones.

There are two territories which play a decisive part in German strategy: in the West—the Rhine province; in the East—East Prussia. The first allows them to attack Belgium and France. The second serves as an assault base against Poland and Russia. There can be no permanent system of European security if the German General Staff is allowed to use these two provinces. As for the Rhine province, the suggestion made by Marshal Foch in 1919 still holds good. And as for East Prussia, it is clear that it must be taken away from Germany and the German population transferred to the Reich.

* * *

For the fifth time in thirty years the East Prussian fortress is playing the part assigned to it by the German strategists: in 1914 its rôle was defensive; in 1915, 1939 and 1941 East Prussia was

the starting point for successful offensives. And again now in 1944, its rôle is defensive.

East Prussia is a country which seems to have been set apart by nature itself. The wilderness of the Mazurian lakeland still marks thereabouts the passage of the main line of the moraines; the lakes themselves, particularly the vast Spirding (*Sniardwy*) or Mauer (*Mamry*) lakes, are rather reminiscent of Finland. In the forests, which extended formerly over most of the land, and which still clothe the heights, the firs and pines prevail. The country lends itself to defence, for there are only two gates through which it can be invaded: through the Insterburg gap from the east and in the direction Działdów (Soldau)-Marienburg from the south.

Both these roads were used by the Russians in 1914 when they launched their ill-prepared offensive against East Prussia. The army of General Rennenkampf advanced westwards, achieving some successes at Stallupönen (August 17) and at Gumbinnen (August 19). Meanwhile General Samsonov at the head of another army was to strike northward, thus threatening to cut off the defending German army from the Reich. Its commander, General von Prittwitz, was ready to retreat beyond the Vistula, but he was ordered to stand firm until he was replaced by General von Hindenburg, who was recalled from retirement and given Ludendorff for Chief of Staff. Daring for the time being to disregard Rennenkampf, Hindenburg faced Samsonov near Grünwald and Tannenberg—on the same historic battlefield on which the Poles and Lithuanians defeated the Teutonic Knights in 1410. The Tannenberg Battle lasted four days (August 26–30), ending in a complete German victory. Turning on Rennenkampf, Hindenburg drove him out of East Prussia (September 8–15).

In the summer of 1915 East Prussia was used by Hindenburg as a base for his offensive which resulted in his occupation of Lithuania and half of Latvia up to the river Dvina.

The restoration of Poland with an access to the sea, yet leaving East Prussia to the Reich, made it impossible for the Polish General Staff to work out any effective plan of defence. The Polish-German frontier was so long that to fortify it would be exceedingly difficult and costly. Moreover, the existence of the East Prussian enclave in Poland's rear made any scheme of defence impossible. Indeed, General Weygand was right when he told me in 1930 that the "corridor" was *indéfendable en temps de guerre*.

In order to give Poland a defensible frontier Roman Dmowski, the Polish statesman, in a talk with Woodrow Wilson at the White House in September 1918, urged the complete neutralisation of East Prussia. The strategic argument, Dmowski relates in his memoirs*, was utterly distasteful to the President.

* DMOWSKI, *op. cit.*, pp. 389–92.

"My dear Mr. Dmowski," Wilson interrupted, "after this war who will talk any more of strategic reasons? We shall have the League of Nations. . . ."

"I believe in the League of Nations as I believe in the justice of the United States," the Polish statesman answered. "To guarantee it you need not only laws and tribunals, but also police and prisons."

"But we shall have an international police force," put in Wilson.

"Who will form it?" asked Dmowski. "Will you maintain the American Army in Europe? Such a police force could only be formed by local armies. You know well that if there is an unsafe quarter in a town, extra police are sent there. Well, Central and Eastern Europe is an unsafe quarter. Poland, in order to safeguard peace and her security, will be called upon to make a great effort. We cannot forget strategic considerations."

Unfortunately strategic arguments were ignored. And in September 1939 a German army under General von Kùchler struck southward from East Prussia, outflanking the main Polish armies facing the German armies under the Generals von Kluge, von Blaskowitz and von Reichenau attacking eastward.

In 1941 East Prussia again served as a starting point for an offensive, but this time a whole army group was concentrated there. Field-Marshal von Leeb's group, which was to occupy the Baltic countries and take Leningrad, comprised the armies commanded by the Generals von Kùchler, Hoepfner and Busch.

The present Russian offensive, started on June 23 outside Vitebsk and Orša, has brought, up to the end of July, three victorious Russian Army Groups (under the Generals Bagramian, Černiakhovski and Zakharov) right up to the frontier of Germany, but the East Prussia fortress up to the time of writing is still holding out.

* * *

The present Minister of State, Mr. Richard Law, M.P., in an address delivered more than two years ago to the Cambridge Society for International Affairs,* said that the mistakes of the Treaty of Versailles were "not of tactics but of strategy." He added: "In the purely intellectual field our greatest blunder, perhaps, was the blithe assumption that the problem of peace was a political problem." Indeed, international relationships cannot be considered in isolation and apart from their economic and strategic aspects. Mr. Richard Law also spoke of "moral failure," which he described as follows: "We conceived of peace as a purely passive condition. We thought of peace as being nothing more than the absence of war. Peace is more than that. Peace, like war, demands the offensive spirit. Peace, like war, demands vigilance. It demands more than vigilance. It demands will." Mr. Law

* Reported in *Time and Tide*, London, March 21 and 28, 1942.

then touched on the "central problem in the military sphere"—the problem of Germany. "It is a fact," he said, "that Germany is politically immature, politically irresponsible and immensely powerful. It follows, therefore, that Germany must be kept under control."

His words are particularly topical to-day, now that victory is within sight. Britain's friends can only hope that after this war she will not confine her foreign policy to the problem of disarmament, will retain conscription and not lightly do away with the instrument which would enable her to pursue a vigilant peace policy, and command respect for her views even without her resorting to war. Yet in as much as the Germans are brutal and cunning, the British have, and it seems will always show, a tendency to let bygones be bygones in their dealings with a vanquished foe. In these circumstances it would be dangerous for Europe to rely solely on British vigilance and willingness to avert disaster in time.

If we accept that the main defects of the Versailles settlement were "mistakes of strategy," if we recognise the evil side of the German national character, it logically follows that to disarm Germany and keep her disarmed, French, Belgian and Dutch garrisons must be stationed along the Rhine and a political and military régime must be created on both sides of the Kiel Canal on the lines of that in the Panama Canal Zone. But above all Germany must lose that province which Treitschke described as "a German fortress in the Slavonic mud": the East Prussian fortress must be razed to the ground and its German garrison sent back to Germany.

VI.—TRANSFER OF POPULATION UNAVOIDABLE

IF Germany is to be deprived of East Prussia, the question arises: "What is to be done with the German population of the province?" Although its inhabitants are in the majority non-German by origin, they use German as their mother tongue and regard themselves as Germans. The ruling élite is aggressively nationalist, like all those in border provinces. And if Poland is to be strong and internally homogeneous she must not have a German minority within her frontiers. The only solution therefore is to transfer the Germans from those parts of the Reich which will be incorporated in Poland after victory.

The total area of East Prussia before this war was 14,281 sq. miles, i.e., the province is somewhat larger than Holland, but has a

population four times smaller.* In 1933 East Prussia had a population of 2,333,300, or 163 souls to the square mile, as against 347 to the square mile in the German Reich as a whole. Thus



MAP No. 3.—NATIONALITIES IN EAST PRUSSIA

1. Frontiers of East Prussia 1919-1939.—2. Limits of the Plebiscite Zones of Olsztyn (Allenstein) and Kwidzyn (Marienwerder).—3. Limits of districts (Kreise).—4. Polish ethnographical area according to Dr. Paul Langhans' Nationalitäten-Karte der Provinz Ostpreussen (1907).—The Territory of Memel, with a Lithuanian majority, was given to Lithuania by the Allied Powers in 1923, and retaken by Germany in March 1939.

* East Prussia in 1919-39 covered practically the same area as it did before 1914. It is true that the province has been reduced by the cession of the district of Klaipeda (Memel), or 1,081 sq. miles, to Lithuania, and of Dziądków (Soldau), or 198 sq. miles, to Poland, but the parts of pre-1914 "West Prussia" (Polish Pomorze), or 1,129 sq. miles on the right bank of the Vistula, which were allowed to Germany, largely compensate for the districts cut off.

East Prussia occupied 7.9 per cent. of the total area of the Reich, but contained only 3.6 per cent. of the total population.

The brutal methods of germanisation used by the Teutonic Knights and their successors—the Prussian Junkers—proved successful throughout the whole coastal zone, but the germanisation has not impressed itself noticeably upon the principal moraine upland where the Polish-speaking Mázurs still hold out. Old Prussian, a Baltic dialect related to Lithuanian, died out towards the sixteenth century. In 1772, the year of the first partition of Poland, the Polish language predominated in all the southern part of the province (half of its total area), though north-east of the line Labiau-Insterburg-Goldapp Lithuanian was more common. A little more than one-third of East Prussia was thoroughly germanised at that time. During the nineteenth century germanisation made great progress, especially against the Lithuanians. A German authority on the subject has prepared the following table to show the progress of germanisation in the Lithuanian districts* :

DISTRICTS (<i>Kreise</i>)	Proportion of German-speaking people	
	1825	1910
Darkehmen	85.4	99.6
Gumbinnen	99.2	99.5
Goldapp	69.9	98.1
Niederung	50.1	89.7
Pillkallen (Schlossberg)	60.2	92.7
Stallupönen	77.9	98.5
Tilsit-Ragnit	52.2	86.6
Insterburg	75.0	98.5
Labiau	66.7	91.6

These figures are certainly exaggerated. According to a handbook on *East and West Prussia*, prepared for the Peace Conference under the direction of the Historical Section of the British Foreign Office† :

The number of Lithuanians in East Prussia, according to the census figures of 1910, was 95,470. This shows a drop of 16,000 since 1900, instead of the expected natural increase of 12,000. It is probable that this discrepancy of 28,000 (—25 per cent.) is partly due to some

* Dr. R. KELLER, *Die fremdsprachige Bevölkerung in den Grenzgebieten des deutschen Reiches*, Berlin, 1929.

† At the suggestion of Lord Balfour, the Historical Section of the Foreign Office was commissioned, in the spring of 1917, with the preparation of necessary material for the British delegation at the Peace Conference. This task was placed under the direction of G. W. PROTHERO. The documents resulting, originally confidential, were published by H.M.S.O. in 1920.

form of falsification of the figures, similar to that which appears to have occurred in the figures affecting the Poles.

In the Polish districts, according to Dr. Keller, the use of the German language as the mother tongue made progress as follows :

DISTRICTS (<i>Kreise</i>)	Proportion of German-speaking people	
	1831	1910
Ortelsburg (Szczytno)	7.2	29.0
Neidenburg (Nibork)	7.5	37.0
Johannisburg (Jańsbork)	7.5	31.9
Lyck (Elk)	12.0	48.8
Sensburg (Żądźbork)	10.0	48.9
Lötzen (Lec)	13.7	64.0
Allenstein (Olsztyn)	15.8	57.3
Osterode (Ostroda)	36.1	58.7
Treuburg (Olecko)	15.8	70.4
Rössel (Reszel)	—	80.8

A certain number of the inhabitants was germanised in the years 1831-1910, but the drop in the number of Poles recorded by the German censuses does not denote the actual decreases. It simply reflects statistical fraud and the effect of the administrative pressure. The above-mentioned British handbook says :

The census figures are normally rendered somewhat unreliable by three factors :

(1) The tendency to allow national sentiment to outweigh fear of authority varies in strength from one census to another.

(2) The census tables are based on "mother tongue," not on the language actually used at home.

(3) The regiments recruited from Polish provinces are usually quartered in other parts of Prussia and vice versa.

Mazurian was classified as a separate language for the purpose of the census, although it is one of the several Polish dialects. This was another means of falsifying the returns. Thus the Polish group was divided into four separate groups, i.e., those speaking (1) Polish, (2) Mazurian, (3) Polish and German, and (4) German and Mazurian.

The inaccuracy of the German statistics of nationality was commented upon by Dr. Ludwig Bernhard in his preface to Paul Weber's book *Die Polen in Oberschlesien* (Berlin, 1914).

It is a strange fact (said Dr. Bernhard) that German censuses are used, especially in their least reliable parts, for most significant political conclusions. But these just politically so important figures are not absolutely reliable in Germany to-day. Only after close and critical examination can they be utilised for the practice of policy.

But the statesmen who had to draw up Europe's future frontiers at the Peace Conference accepted the figures of the German census as true. The only concession they made to the Polish case were the articles of 94 and 96 of the Treaty of Versailles, which laid

down that in the southern area of East Prussia, as well as in the four districts of West Prussia on the right bank of the Vistula, the inhabitants should be called upon to indicate by a vote the State to which they wished to be incorporated.

* * *

Are international plebiscites a reliable means of ascertaining the will of the voters? Theoretically the method seems sound. Let us see how it works out in practice. In his book, *Conditions of Peace* (Macmillan, 1942), Professor E. H. Carr mentions the East Prussian plebiscite as one having been "conducted with sufficient fairness to ensure that all, or virtually all, the voters recorded their political preference without interference or intimidation." He found the result of the plebiscite most illuminating. "Whereas people speaking German as their mother-tongue did as a rule desire to be citizens of the German State," he claims, "only a proportion of people speaking Polish preferred to be citizens of the Polish rather than the German State." Another defender of a "soft peace" for Germany, Mr. H. N. Brailsford, states in his recent book *Our Settlement with Germany* (A Penguin Special, 1944):

East Prussia is solidly German. There are, it is true, two districts (?) round Allenstein in East Prussia and Marienwerder in West Prussia which contain a population indisputably Polish by origin. It is bilingual and uses as its home language the Mazurian dialect. But much of it became Lutheran at the Reformation, and is by culture and choice decidedly German. This was tested by the plebiscite which the League of Nations (?) conducted with all the customary guarantees in 1920.

An examination, however, of the conditions in which these plebiscites were held proves the falsity of Professor Carr's and Mr. Brailsford's sweeping statements. Far from being fair, these plebiscites might be described as farcical.

The East Prussian plebiscite zone of Allenstein (Olsztyn) comprised nine districts (*Kreise*) in the Regency of Allenstein and one district in the Regency of Gumbinnen, namely Treuberg (Olecko). The zone had a total area of 4,800 sq. miles with 565,000 inhabitants, of whom, according to the noted Polish geographer, Professor Eugenjusz Romer, 70 per cent. used Polish as their mother-tongue.

The West Prussian plebiscite zone of Marienwerder (Kwidzyn) comprised the whole of the districts of Stuhm (Sztum) and Rosenberg (Susz), that part of the Marienburg district east of the Nogat, (the eastern estuary of the Vistula) and the Marienwerder district east of the Vistula. In this zone of 1,036 sq. miles there was a population of 174,000, of whom 32 per cent. spoke Polish.

On July 5, 1919, immediately after the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, the Polish delegation sent to the Secretariat of the Conference its observations on the measures to be taken by the Inter-Allied Commissions for the plebiscites. It was suggested *inter alia* that all Prussian civil servants should be evacuated for the duration of the plebiscite and free municipal elections be held. It may be recalled that directly after the fall of the German imperial rule, democratic communal elections were held throughout the Prussian State except in provinces where the Polish population predominated. The Socialist Government in Berlin frankly admitted that this exception was made for fear that the communal administration should be "invaded by the Poles." The Polish suggestions were turned down and German civil servants remained at their posts. The municipal authorities, elected under the old laws, remained strongholds of the Germanic intolerance on Polish soil. Indeed, General Albrecht, commanding the East Prussian Army Corps, organised "security troops" (*Sicherheitswehr*) in the two plebiscite territories.

The President of the Allenstein Inter-Allied Commission, Mr. E. A. Rennie, seemed to regard the plebiscite as a mere formality to be gone through as quickly as possible. And the Marienwerder Commission was presided over by Signor Angelo Pavia, who never concealed his pro-German sympathies. The Allenstein Commission brought with it 700 British soldiers, of whom 600 stayed in Allenstein; 600 Italians arrived later in Marienwerder. Thus in all there were 1,300 Allied troops, not a great number for a territory half the size of Belgium.

In the region of Allenstein 353,655 votes were cast for Germany and 7,408 (2.5 per cent.) for Poland; in the Marienwerder zone 97,634 votes were cast for Germany and 7,682 (8 per cent.) for Poland. Three important factors gave the Germans an unfair advantage:

(1) At the beginning of June 1920 when the Polish Army was retreating in the East, the Conference of Ambassadors fixed the East Prussian plebiscite for July 11. The vote was taken when the Soviet forces were at the gates of Warsaw, a fact which was duly exploited by German propaganda.

(2) More important, however, was the fact that the Poles had no freedom of speech or propaganda. The Germans stopped at nothing to terrorise the Polish population. For example, they arrested the four Polish national leaders, Bogumił Linka, his son, and the brothers Adam and Joseph Zapatka, who went to the Paris Peace Conference to demand the return of the land of the Mazurs to Poland. On returning home they were each sentenced to one and a-half year's imprisonment. Linka senior was beaten up at the time of his arrest and died soon after. The Inter-Allied Commission ignored such incidents. It is easy to imagine the

intimidating effect of these events on the Polish peasants in Mazovia.

(3) Not only residents took part in the plebiscite. The Treaty of Versailles stipulated very unwisely that the right to vote should be extended to persons who had been born there. Thus emigrants who had left the province for good had the right to vote. For a fortnight seven trains daily arrived in the plebiscite areas bringing thousands of "emigrants," mostly members of different German nationalist "Free Corps." They totalled 45,500. Even more "emigrants" came by sea. The German Admiralty brought 157,273 people from Swinemünde and Stolpmünde to Pillau. "In certain communes," said the *Kreuz-Zeitung* on July 11, 1930 (from which we have taken the above figures), "the emigrants made up nearly half of the voters." Deducting the number of emigrant votes (202,700) from the total number of votes cast in the two plebiscite zones (466,400), we see that only 263,500 votes were cast by residents, although the total number of residents was 739,000.

After the fraudulent plebiscite German terrorism did not cease in the ethnographically Polish districts. And the official German census of 1925 found in East Prussia only 109,276 persons who dared to register either Polish or "Mazurian" or German and one of these two languages as their mother tongues.

* * *

Although the population of East Prussia is not "solidly German" and although the 1920 plebiscite was a major fraud, it is a fact that the majority of the inhabitants of the province are German. They must therefore leave the country. Mr. Brailsford was right when he said that "if many additional millions of Germans were placed under Polish rule they would be, if they remained, a disloyal and restless minority and a source of danger to Poland."

Poland's frontier with Germany should be short and easily defended, but only territories that can be settled with Poles should be incorporated in Poland. The incorporation of East Prussia, Danzig, Opole Silesia and part of Prussian Pomerania (which would move the German frontier away from the Polish ports of Danzig and Gdynia) and some narrow strips of land in other parts of the frontier would not be beyond the demographic powers of the Polish nation. Between January 1, 1919, and January 1, 1939, the population of the Polish State rose from 26.2 to 35.1 millions. The coefficient of the excess of births over deaths was 15.5 per thousand in Poland in 1922; it reached 17.0 per thousand in 1930, being three times as high as in Germany. The average coefficient for the years 1920-30 was 16.1, i.e., 420,000 inhabitants annually.

The Polish nation has suffered terrible losses during this war,



MAP No. 4.—POLISH-GERMAN BORDERLANDS

Frontiers of Poland on this map are those of 1939.

not only killed in action or murdered by the Germans, but also as a result of the increase in the number of deaths owing to war-time privations and the decrease in the number of births during the war years. Final figures however are not available. In January 1943 the Polish military losses in killed, wounded and prisoners since September 1, 1939, were estimated by the Polish headquarters in London at 903,000. The number of Poles executed, murdered and tortured to death during the first three years of German occupation were estimated at 200,000. The Polish underground authorities estimate that out of three million Jews who lived in Poland before the war not more than 200,000 are still alive.

On the other hand, the German losses in this war are probably much higher than they were in the last, when the number of killed and missing totalled two millions. And according to the figures published in 1930 by Dr. Burgdörfer, Director of the Statistics office of the Reich, the increase in the number of deaths owing to war-time privations was 750,000 and the decrease in number of births during the war years in comparison with normal years was 3,250,000.

This makes a total loss of six millions, which, however, does not allow for what Germany lost as a result of the restitution of territories to Poland, France and Denmark. It seems that the losses in this war will exceed that figure and this should make easier the transfer of the German population to the Reich.

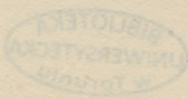
No doubt hundreds of thousands of Germans, fearing reprisals, will flee from the invaded countries and Germany's border provinces before the advancing Allied troops. During the first world war the Germans treated the Polish population incomparably better than they did in this war, yet when they were defeated in 1918 and the Polish State restored, they voluntarily left the Polish provinces. A description of that flight was given by Dr. Franz Lüttke in *Die Ostmark* of August 8, 1919 :

Tens of thousands are quitting the Eastern provinces in disorder, leaving their possessions behind them, selling their stock and their lands at absurd prices. The Poles triumph. "There go your so-called natives of the soil," they said. "If this were their Fatherland they would not leave it in such a fashion."

And Dr. Lüttke mournfully concluded that "in the great majority of cases cowardice and lack of national dignity were the motives of this flight."

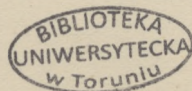
We shall yet witness an exhibition of still greater "cowardice and lack of national dignity." There are about one and a half million Germans in East Prussia, 350,000 in Danzig and district, about half a million in that part of Pomerania which should be incorporated with Poland, and upwards of one million in Opole Silesia and those districts bordering on Poznania which did not return to Poland in 1919. If we add the number of Germans who lived in Poland before the war, we get a total of over four million whose transfer seems inevitable.

A transfer of population is no doubt a severe measure, but in this case it is not only morally justified but also practicable. After the last war a small Greece with a population of four and a half million, had to accept 1,400,000 Greeks transferred from Turkey. It is true that they suffered some privation until the economic system of Greece was able to absorb them, but their transfer proved a success and finally solved the age-long Turkish-Greek feud. If small Greece could absorb immigrants totalling almost one-third of her original population, a German Reich with a population



of over sixty millions can surely find room for six million Germans—*six* because we must not forget those of the Sudeten Germans who supported Hitler and the Nazis among the German minorities in the Danubian countries.

The transfer is also a political necessity because there is no decent alternative solution. The advocates of a "soft peace" in Britain and America claim that such a measure would cause bitter dissatisfaction in Germany. That may be so, but what peace settlement would the Germans regard as satisfactory? The United Nations are not waging this war, provoked by the Reich, in order to decree a peace settlement that would please primarily the German people. No settlement is perfect and if there is to be dissatisfaction, it is best, from every aspect, including the moral one, if the aggressor and not his victim is dissatisfied. If it is a choice between several evils, the disarmament of Germany by far-sighted territorial arrangements and the transfer of the German population to the Reich in a most humane manner is certainly the least of the evils.



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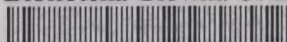
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