

## THE CAULDRON BOILS.

THE CAULDRON  
BOILS  
*Poland and its Minorities*

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## CONTENTS

CHAPTER °	PAGE
INTRODUCTION - - - -	9
I. IN THE CORRIDOR - - - -	15
II. A CORRIDOR CAREER - - - -	61
III. ON THE BALTIC SEA - - - -	77
IV. IN TEUTONIC LAND - - - -	122
V. VISITING THE FRONT - - - -	144
VI. WHITE RUSSIAN INTERMEZZO - - - -	173
VII. THE CHAMBER OF HORRORS - - - -	183
VIII. IN THE GHETTO - - - -	213
IX. THE BLAST FURNACE - - - -	241

THE CAULDRON BOILS .

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## INTRODUCTION

“WHERE is Sarajevo?” a member of the French Government asked, after being informed that the Austrian Crown Prince had been assassinated in the Bosnian city.

“Where is Bromberg?” the members of many governments would ask if one spoke to them about that Corridor city.

The danger point of Europe has moved northward, to the banks of the Vistula. Danzig is in the newspaper headlines and the Corridor is a thorn in Europe's flesh. The old balance of power has been disrupted, the Habsburg monarchy is no more and Wilhelm is an exile in Doorn. Russia has gone back to Asia, and new nations have sprung into life.

Poland is the largest of the new countries and the most important. Yesterday she was a name only, but to-day she is a great power. She had been wiped out of existence because she had had many shortcomings and because she had been in the way of three empires. The Holy Alliance was concluded over the dead body of Poland. In that part of the world historical hurricanes are not infrequent.

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

When Poland's day came to settle accounts she was once more a battlefield, the most tragic country. France saw the enemy only in her northern regions, but Poland had the enemy all over the country. Then, on an autumn day, Poland was resurrected.

She vowed to transform the fervent resolves of starless nights into living realities. Not only a new country but also a new mentality was to be created. The "spirit of negation," the bane of the oppressed nations, had to be made into the "spirit of creation." The policy of oppression to which the Poles had been subjected under the three emperors was to inspire a policy of friendly co-operation among all the citizens of a free republic. Here was a gifted nation, bursting with the energy of creation, to take the leadership in eastern Europe and to justify the faith of those who had never despaired of a glorious resurrection. The Messianic faith of Poland in her missionary power, of which her great poet, Adam Mickiewicz, sang, was to be the keynote of a new policy. The world was to see the emergence of a country dedicated to progress and justice, engaged in the task of making this globe a better place to live in. A New Jerusalem was beckoning on the banks of the Vistula and the Wavel was to become the announcer of glad tidings.

But Poland had been pieced together from the remnants of many lands and she was handicapped more than any other nation. In Congress Poland—which had been set up by the Vienna Congress



## INTRODUCTION

—judges had to settle cases according to the Code Napoléon, and in the eastern provinces of the new republic they were bound by the ukases of the tsars. In those parts of Poland that had been detached from the Reich the German law continued in existence, while in old Galicia Austria's law was the writ.

These were only the minor difficulties. The Polish republic found herself confronted with the problems presented by her two neighbours. She was wedged in between two countries which promised the world a new message. Was she to be the intermediary or the shock-absorber? In the East, Russia was knocking at the gates of history, asking for recognition as the creator of a plan bolder than anything Peter the Great had ever conceived. In the West, Germany was struggling to cast off the fetters of a dying world. Both movements had a driving power born of desperation.

What is the result of the Polish experiment? Does it justify the birth of a great hope or does it give cause to disappointment? The eyes of the world turn uneasily to the Vistula. "Will it be peace, or will it be war?" Poland's dictator asked a few years ago Lithuania's dictator in the council chambers of the League of Nations. "Peace," was the prompt answer, and yet every time an automobile tyre bursts near the Polish-Lithuanian frontiers, peasants look around for cover, for the enemy may be near.

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

Vilna tries to live behind a battlefield on which the telegraph wires are dead and the trains cannot move. Germany is in an aggressive mood and feels that the shame of the Vistula must be removed. Every time a German crosses the Corridor he cannot help thinking of the arrangements which divides a great country into two parts.

Danzig laughs at the name of the "Free City." Free indeed it would be if it were not bound to abide by the covenant which Germany was made to sign under duress. From time to time word comes from the outside world of Danzig's fears of a Polish invasion and frantic S O S calls are flashed to Geneva to save the German town from new humiliation.

Then word comes to the West that the Jews of Poland—the most numerous Jewish community in all Europe—are being deprived of their livelihood and that a bloodless pogrom is taking place in the ghetto. Quietly, without undue haste, reports come through that Jews are dying of starvation and that the end of the horror is not yet in sight.

The flare of international publicity reveals pitched battles between Polish soldiers and peasants, belonging to the White Russian race. They show us the gallows of the Ukraine, which play such an important part in the history of these regions.

Then the question comes from Upper Silesia: What has Poland, an agricultural country, done

## INTRODUCTION

with our industrial riches? The observer wants to know whether Upper Silesia's population has resigned itself to its fate or whether it is still in a rebellious mood because the most important industrial region of Europe's East had been dismembered so as to satisfy Polish ambition for supremacy in the Orient.

The following chapters deal with these problems. About one-third of Poland's more than thirty million inhabitants belong to the minorities which claim that their rights have been ignored and that Poland treats them worse than she herself had been treated under the rule of the three emperors. Nearly one-third of Poland's 150,000 square miles is inhabited by the disaffected nationalities which declare that the Polish republic is a monstrous failure and that if it does not take counsel and mend its ways its fourth partition is bound to come.

What is true about the claims that Poland is the greatest failure among the contemporary nations and that her doom is sealed? Is Marshal Foch's prophecy coming true that in the Polish Corridor the next war will begin? Great problems cannot be settled by hushing them up and one comes nearer the core of history only by facing the facts.

The following account of Poland's minority problems, the most dangerous problems of eastern Europe, follows the author's itinerary in the summer of 1932. It begins in the Corridor, the most conspicuous powder box in the East. A

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

chapter is devoted to a famous son of the Corridor, Marshal von Hindenburg, whose life is a connecting link between the German East that was and German East that is.

Danzig's Marienkirche arrests our attention next and in the Free City we analyse an experiment in foreign relations. From Marienkirche to the castle of Marienburg the air journey takes only half an hour, and the time spent on it brings its rich reward, for the East Prussian country must be seen by all who want to know what the new deal in Europe's relations has done.

After East Prussia we visit the Polish-Lithuanian front and shake hands with the Polish sergeant, who tells us that all is well with the world as long as Poland stands guard before the gates of Vilna. We visit the White Russians, who know little about themselves and reveal even less to the world. The next station on our itinerary is the Ukraine, known also under the aliases of Ruthenia and East Galicia. We make a trip to the ghetto in which "genius lives the madman's dream, as hope is lost for ever," to hear about the disillusionment of the present and the hope of next year in Palestine. And so the trip ends in the smoke of Upper Silesia, which makes the man of the West feel at home.

## CHAPTER ONE

### IN THE CORRIDOR

LLOYD GEORGE said once that Poland has five Alsace-Lorraines: the Corridor, Upper Silesia, Vilna, the Ukraine and White Russia. Among these new Alsace-Lorraines the Corridor is the most hotly contested land. The Polish policy is clear: "We have it and we will continue in possession. The Corridor is inhabited by Poles and the Germans form a small minority. We concede that this land was held by the Prussians since the end of the eighteenth century, but illegal possession gives no right to ownership. Moreover, Poland has the right to claim an access to the sea."

The German position is just as clear. "Nobody denies the right of the Polish nation to live its own national life," said Dr. Otto Braun, Prime Minister of Prussia, at Koenigsberg, "but we will always protest against the violation of our rights. We will never recognise the arbitrary and unjust frontiers."

Everything about the Polish Corridor is disputed, even its name. The Poles contend that the

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

word "Corridor" was given wide currency by German propagandists to suggest an unnatural territorial settlement. Poland calls this territory, the province of Pomorze, her "sea-cost," and refuses to speak about the Polish Corridor.

The Germans themselves are not fully agreed on what the Polish Corridor means. According to some authorities, it designates those parts of the former Prussian provinces of West Prussia and Posen that were assigned to Poland at the end of the war. According to others, it designates former West Prussia, which the Poles call Pomorze—a narrow strip of land connecting central Poland with the Baltic Sea. Dr. Carl Budding, president of the East Prussian Regency of Marienwerder, has formulated the most popular definition of the Corridor. According to him, it consists of the Polish province of Pomorze, together with the Netze District, which was part of the province of Posen under German rule.

This definition is popular because it suggests a solution of the Corridor problem. The Corridor thus defined contains those parts of Poland which had the largest German population before the new settlement. By restoring this territory to Germany, the two parts of the Reich, which are now separated by the Corridor, would be joined together.

The southern boundary of the Corridor was the ethnical and governmental frontier of fourteenth-century Poland. It corresponds roughly to the

## IN THE CORRIDOR

Prussian-Polish boundary after the first partition of Poland in 1772. At the same time, it corresponds to the line of demarcation between the Germans and the Poles, agreed upon in January 1919.

“The Corridor was uninterruptedly under German rule since 1772,” the Germans say, “a fact which in itself would suffice to establish our right to its possession. If this title were insufficient, then England would have a right to claim the north of France and Spain could claim Florida.”

In this land some of the heroes of German science, philosophy, and military strategy were born : Copernicus and Kant, Herder and Schopenhauer, Fahrenheit and Hindenburg. The high level of civilisation in the Corridor, German spokesmen claim, is the result of German work.

The very existence of the Corridor is an affront to Germany. What will the new generation say to their fathers' tolerating such indignity ? How can Germany face the world with her shame ? What would the French say if they had to traverse Swiss territory on their way from Paris to Marseilles ? What would the English say if Birmingham were separated from Liverpool by a Corridor ? What would Americans say if Mexico had a stretch of land around New Orleans ?

For years after the war the Corridor seemed to be a dormant issue to the outside world. Germany needed peace at any cost if chaos was to be avoided. Russia was the bugaboo and Bolshevism was

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

• knocking at the gates. Gold was needed to repair the ravages of war and Germany needed a respite to demonstrate her immense capacity for work. The chant of the machine rose to the heavens and gave promise of a better day.

Yet never for a moment has Germany believed that the Polish Corridor was made for perpetuity. Those who hoped for a cataclysm to settle new accounts realised that this was their powder box. Those who feared the day of reckoning looked at the map with a shudder, because here was the new Balkans of the world.

Then came Germany's day of a new defiance, and the revolt against the Peace Treaty became the most distinctive part of her foreign policy. Deep notes of dissatisfaction among the masses lent emphasis to a dæmonic symphony. The day of liberation was drawing close. Although the moderates cried, "No more war," they too wanted to end the Corridor. "The sword will decide," cried the nationalists and Europe looked around uneasily. To-day all parties of Germany are agreed that the situation calls for urgent remedy.

"The nonsense of the Corridor," was first voiced by Roman Dmowski, Polish delegate to the Paris Peace Conference and well-known champion of Poland's cause. "Without East Prussia," he said, "the Corridor is worthless for Poland." But East Prussia belongs to Germany.

"I don't deny Poland's interest in an outlet to the sea," the Prussian Prime Minister said, "but



## IN THE CORRIDOR

just as the new Czechoslovak State obtained it through the Elbe and Hamburg, so Poland could have obtained it through the Vistula and Danzig."

During the economic crises of the early thirties, Czechoslovakia, a country without a sea, was better off—the Germans point out—than Germany or Poland. Switzerland has no access to salt water and yet there was more prosperity in her mountains than on the sea-coasts of the maritime powers. Although Austria looks back upon a past of rapid industrial growth which necessitates foreign markets, she, too, is cut off from the ocean highways.

"No serious statesman ever believed," said Count Carlo Sforza, former foreign minister of Italy, "that the solution of the Corridor problem would not be temporary."

The former Italian premier, Francesco Saverio Nitti, wrote: "The Polish Corridor is the greatest political and economic absurdity of contemporary history."

Il Duce suggested to the Poles to change their attitude about the Corridor, so as not to jeopardize their national independence. Czechoslovakia's president, Thomas Garrigue Masaryk, declared in an interview: "It is certain that the Germans will never resign themselves to the separation of East Prussia from the Reich."

Lord d'Abernon, former British ambassador to Berlin, summed up the situation: "After Locarno had eased the situation on the Franco-German

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

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## THE CAULDRON BOILS

'frontier, the Polish Corridor has become Europe's powder box.'

In his much-discussed interview at the time of the American visit of Pierre Laval, the French premier, Senator William E. Borah startled Poland by suggesting that economic conditions cannot improve as long as the Treaty of Versailles is unmodified. "First of all the frontiers of Upper Silesia and of the Polish Corridor must be rectified. The present peace in Europe is the peace of brutal force."

A member of the Polish committee at the Peace Conference, Dr. Rydlewski, revealed that even Poland's hero, Marshal Joseph Pilsudski, had not taken the agitation for his country's access to the sea very seriously, and had poked fun at a dramatist as suffering from "sea-sickness," when the latter made propaganda for the Polish sea.

The Germans see the French as the wire-pullers behind the Warsaw scene. The Third Republic has consistently striven to have an ally on Germany's East. Before the war the French rentier was encouraged to invest billions in Russia's snow-fields as a patriotic duty and to stop Germany's "Drang nach Osten" by stuffing uncounted millions into the Balkan States.

When Russia went Bolshevik, Quai d'Orsay received a setback. Wilson's idea of the self-determination of the small countries proved to be a dangerous suggestion. Too many new republics were clamouring for a place in the sun and in the

## IN THE CORRIDOR

moon. Paris was vitally interested in a strong country on the Reich's east and it was necessary to have that country owe its diplomatic success to the benefactions of the French.

"Poland was forced to accept her national existence," says an anonymous German observer, "as a present from the Allies. . . . She is bound to France by a treaty of alliance which forces her to maintain a large standing army. . . . Poland was thus crippled at her birth."

As an international shock-absorber between Russia and Germany, Poland had to be made stronger than her position in eastern Europe warranted. If the Germans concentrate their fury on the Poles, Georges Clemenceau speculated, they will have less time to think about Alsace-Lorraine and the Saar. Alsace-Lorraine is, indeed, nearly forgotten but the Corridor lives as a burning issue.

The Poles did not realise that they were being used for alien purposes. When they had the Corridor, they began to dream about the realm of Boleslaus the Great, and cast covetous eyes at East Prussia, even at Bohemia, Lausatia, Moravia and Slovakia. They thought that the world owed them compensation for the griefs of the past. Over their distant steppes the *fata Morgana* rose and the Slavic temperament indulged in Napoleonic ambitions.

The Peace Conference had found the Germans guilty and the Poles were to be the prison guards.

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

Germany was disarmed, while Poland was armed to the teeth ; Germany was outlawed, while Poland was proclaimed the hero of the arena. The Germans were in despair and the Poles were elated.

Then the Germans began to take stock of their achievements and compared their place in the world with Poland's standing. They counted their Nobel Prize winners and found that their number was more numerous than any other nation's. They made an inventory of German ingenuity and found that they had the most efficient industrial plants, the fastest steamers and the safest aircraft, that they provided the best education in continental Europe and that they had practically no illiterates.

They looked back on their history. They have been the leaders of Europe for many centuries, and they have given the world new ideas and a new religion. Were Luther, Kant and Goethe not Germans ; were Frederick the Great, Moltke and Bismarck not of their race ? Why should Germany be quarantined as if she were a leper ?

Then the Germans began to look at their eastern neighbour. They found it a gifted nation with much imagination and vitality, but could its accomplishments be compared with those of Germany ? Was it right to give arms to a nation which had not passed its test in stormy weather and to disarm a leader of civilisation ? Are all nations equal, the Germans asked, the nation that



## IN THE CORRIDOR

was born in the chaos of yesterday and the nation, which has proved its worth?

“We don’t mind so much Germans being made French citizens,” the Germans said, “because the French stand in the vanguard of civilisation. But we do mind being the subjects of Poland, and we do mind being treated by the Poles as jailbirds. We do not like the searchlights focused on us to see that we are in our cells, and we do not like being treated as the scum of humanity. We have been a great nation for centuries, but what are the Poles? They had made a terrible mess of their lives and were wiped out of existence. Their punishment was unjust and they are entitled to a new deal. Now they have their country and what are they going to do with it? Where is that dæmonic urge which is driving them toward destinations undreamt of before?”

This indictment of Poland may be unjust, but it sums up what Germany thinks of her eastern neighbour. Hitler had a hand in making not only the man-in-the-street but also the child-in-the-street Treaty-conscious. Whatever damage he may have caused to the Reich, he has helped to accomplish one thing: he has popularised the discontent against Versailles.

\* \* \* \*

The Germans protest against the Corridor not only on the grounds of prestige but also for economic and political reasons. Although the Corridor is about twelve miles wide wherever it is

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

narrowest, and its population is only about 1,500,000, its importance as an impediment to traffic is incomparably greater than its size. The very fact that it cuts the Reich into two parts makes its existence impossible in German eyes.

"The Corridor is invisible," say the Poles. "Passengers of the Corridor trains, running between the two parts of the Reich, are not required to have passports."

"The Corridor is invisible only to those who don't want to see," the Germans reply.

If one rides in a car from East Prussia to the Reich or in the opposite direction, he has to cross five frontiers: - the German-Danzig frontier at Marienburg, the Danzig-Polish frontier at Dirschau, the Polish-Danzig frontier at Muehlbanz, the Danzig-Polish frontier at Zoppot or Gross Katz, and the Polish-German frontier at Boscpol.

The railway traffic across the Corridor is regulated by the Paris Agreement of 1921, and so far as it goes it is a good regulation. The German railway administration at Koenigsberg had every reason to declare: "In railway transit matters East Prussia is no longer an enclave. The Reichsbahn has built a bridge across the Corridor."

The bridge, however, needs repairs. It is charged that German freight service across the Corridor is delayed. Before the war the running time of freight trains from Berlin to Marienburg was sixteen hours, and now it is twenty-four or

## IN THE CORRIDOR

more. The Corridor trains of the Deutsch-Eylau-Freyhan and of the Fraustadt-Breslau line run four miles an hour and are retained at frontier stations so long that they take three to four days to cover 200 miles.

German military transport trains are subject to special regulations. They must traverse the Corridor by day only and two military trains cannot be in the Corridor at the same time. In one day no more than three military trains may be despatched through the Corridor and all such trains must be reported to the Polish railway authorities fourteen days in advance. Corridor trains must actually have a corridor alongside the compartments, and their length and the minimum number of passengers are prescribed in international agreements.

Another complaint is that the Free City of Danzig is cut off from the main arteries of privileged Corridor service. The tourist from the Reich must first take a train to Marienburg via Dirschau, and from Marienburg he must return to Dirschau, from where he can proceed to the Free City.

What would happen, the Germans ask, if there were a railroad strike in Poland? What would happen if the strike took place at a time when the Reichswehr troops were crossing the Corridor? Who could prevent an inebriated Polish policeman from arresting President Hindenburg while his train was stopping at a Corridor station? The supposition is absurd but people have been known

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

to commit absurdities. Warsaw's apologies would not be adequate compensation for the incident.

German youth likes to tramp, but the young people of the Reich cannot walk to East Prussia without a passport and a visa from the Polish government. In their case, and in the case of the cyclists, it is literally true that the permission of a foreign government is required to go from one part of one's own country to the other. The airplane service has its difficulties, too, with headwinds over the Baltic and the necessity of keeping away from the Corridor without permission.

"A comparison of the economic interests of the two nations shows," say the Poles, "that the importance of the Corridor is much greater for Poland than for the Reich." According to Warsaw, the east-west traffic across the Corridor is less than one-third of the north-south Polish traffic. From this comparison the Poles conclude that by taking the Corridor from the Poles the economic injustice would be greater.

"The north-south Corridor traffic has been artificially stimulated," answer the Germans. They charge that in an effort to justify the economic basis of the new arrangement the Poles diverted traffic from its normal channels. They had forced the trade, intended for Elbing, Koenigsberg, Stettin and partly for Hamburg, to take the road to Gdynia, the new Polish port. Until 1931, the Germans point out, Poland paid her railways for every ton of coal that left the

## IN THE CORRIDOR

republic via the Polish sea. In order to attract freight to Gdynia, Poland has been carrying on an expensive campaign in the succession States of the former Austro-Hungarian monarchy.

“Nearly 600,000 travellers every year take the transit trains across the Polish Pomorze (the Corridor),” says the Polish Committee for the Defence of Peace by Respecting Treaties, “while only 5,000 persons make use of the sea route.” This means, according to the Committee, that the Germans do not find the road across the Corridor beset with hardships.

“This proves only,” the Germans say, “that most travellers have not the time to take the long sea trip, but it does not disprove the contention that the Corridor is an absurdity.” The Corridor, according to the German view, is resting on bayonets. Six Polish army corps, equipped with airplanes, tanks and gas instruments, are stationed in the Corridor and on the frontiers of East Prussia. The militarised frontier defence corps, the customs force and the State police swell the number of combatants. The Polish population of the Corridor is being given instruction to protect itself against gas attacks. Yet, General Maxime Weygand, chief of the French General Staff, is quoted by the Germans: “The Corridor is useless in peace and cannot be held in war.” A German pocket cruiser could keep the Polish coast under control, and by snapping together the two blades of a pair of scissors—the two parts of

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

the Reich—Poland would be shorn of the Corridor.

If you abolish the Polish Corridor, say the Poles, you create a German Corridor. Which of the two is more useful, the existing Corridor which separates less than 2,500,000 Germans from the Reich, or the German Corridor which would cut off more than 30,000,000 Poles from the sea?

The Germans reply that Poland is not wedded to the Baltic Sea. They advise you to look at the map and see for yourself that southern Poland is nearest to Galatz, that the Polish north-east would be best served by Koenigsberg in East Prussia and that the port of Posen is Stettin.

As a grand finale of the debate the Germans argue that economic justice, too, militates against the Polish occupation of the Corridor. When the Prussians took over that part of Poland, the investigators for Frederick the Great reported that the "country was dismal and vacant, the cattle poor and degenerate, the ploughs lacked iron, and other agricultural implements were useless, the fields were exhausted, and the forests were destroyed."

After more than a hundred years of Prussian rule the Corridor was the richest part of the Polish republic. While raw sugar and cattle seem to be out of place when discussing national sentiments and listening to the rumblings of a distant thunder, it is well to point out that in the thirty years preceding the World War the raw sugar produc-

## IN THE CORRIDOR

tion of the province of Posen increased more than 500 per cent. and the number of cattle by about 170 per cent. Against 60 miles of rails for every thousand square miles in the German province of Posen, there were 30 miles in Austrian Galicia, 18 miles in Central Poland, and 13 miles in the eastern regions which were under the sovereignty of Russia.

During their rule of about a hundred and fifty years the Germans reduced illiteracy to a minimum in their territories, so that to-day only 5 per cent. of the population of the Corridor is illiterate, against 30 per cent. of Galicia and the central provinces, and 70 per cent. of the eastern parts. There is a public school to every square mile of the Corridor, against 2.2 square miles in the central provinces and 40 square miles in the east of Poland.

Where is our present civilisation coming to, the Germans ask, if the result of a nation's hard work is confiscated?

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"The Corridor has a Polish majority to-day," say the Poles.

"The Corridor had a German majority yesterday," answer the Germans. This majority was computed by including the population of what is to-day the Free City of Danzig in the population of the Corridor.

The Corridor has, in fact, a Polish majority

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

to-day which is much larger than the figure the Poles ever claimed before the war. How has the change taken place? The reply to this question can be found in the story of a twentieth-century "Voelkerwanderung."

According to Dr. Hermann Rauschning, author of the standard work on the exodus of the Germans from the Corridor, the German population of the two Prussian provinces which now belong to Poland—except Danzig and its environment—was 1,200,000 before the war and is now in the neighbourhood of 300,000. The cities of this territory have lost about 85 per cent. of their German inhabitants and the countryside about 55 per cent. According to the German census of 1910, the province of West Prussia, excluding Danzig, had a population of 42.5 per cent. whose native language was German. According to the Polish census of 1931, the corresponding figure is now 10.1 per cent.

These figures reveal a tragedy in the extent of the German migration from Poland that has been going on for years, depleting the German population of the Corridor and placing new burdens on the Reich, which has to take care of hundreds of thousands of refugees. How much these *émigrés* have contributed to the rise of the extremist parties in the Reich is a subject for the study of an historian of the future.

A few more figures must be quoted to illustrate the extent of the ravage among the Germans



## IN THE CORRIDOR

of the province of Posen, which even before the war had a considerable Polish majority. What was German Posen is now divided into two Polish provinces: Poznan and Bydgoszcz (Bromberg). In Poznan the German-speaking population decreased from 28·5 per cent. in 1910 to 7·4 per cent. in 1931, and in the district of Bydgoszcz the decrease was from 45·2 to 13·5 per cent.

The Poles say that the Germans doctored the census before the war. The Germans admit this with the reservation that the doctoring was in favour of the Poles. Prussian officials were entitled to extra pay for service in the Polish districts and they feared that it would be withdrawn from them if the percentage of the Germans were too high.

If we want to learn the fate of the Germans of the Corridor, we have to compare the Polish and German versions.

“The Germans have inflated the population of the East,” a spokesman of the Warsaw Foreign Office told me. “Their ‘Statistisches Jahrbuch’ admits that there was a constant stream of Germans to the East, composed of soldiers and government officials. In the first decade of the twentieth century about 250,000 Germans settled in the eastern provinces of Prussia. The object of this colonisation was to break Polish resistance and to introduce a German majority into those regions. Posen had the strongest military garrison in the East and it was the paradise of the Prussian officials.

### THE CAULDRON BOILS

“ Our population, on the other hand, could make no headway in the German East and was forced to emigrate and seek work in the mines. This was the origin of our ‘ Drang nach Osten.’ In the year 1910 about half a million Poles were working in the industries of Westphalia. Between 1880 and 1910 another half a million of our people left eastern Germany for overseas countries, particularly the United States.

“ The Reich complains that we have forced hundreds of thousands of Germans to leave the Corridor. What has happened is this. Shortly after the war, the Polish Minister for the Prussian Territories asked the government of the Reich to leave the German officials at their posts until we could put in our own force of government employees. Berlin was willing to accede to this request only on the condition that the frontiers would be rectified. We could not accept that suggestion and about 200,000 Germans, former Prussian officials and their families, left the Corridor, as a protest.

“ Another 140,000 Germans chose to retain their German citizenship. The international authority whom we consulted about the optants’ rights informed us that international practice provided in such cases that those who opted for the Reich should leave Poland.”

The story of the Germans is different. They say that only about one-tenth of the Corridor population consisted of public officials and their depen-

### IN THE CORRIDOR

dents, and that their migration would explain the whereabouts of not more than 120,000 persons. What has happened to the others? How can the Poles account for 800,000 Germans?

It began with pogroms. "The Germans of Poland must be hanged!" the priest of Adelnau exhorted his flock. "Buy no land from the swine," his colleague in Neunburg concurred, "as they will be expelled anyhow." In Lissa and Rawitsch there were anti-German pogroms and more than 10,000 Germans fled their homes in the Corridor.

"The 'baty' for them," a Polish official harangued his audience in Reichthal, and the whip had plenty to do. With one exception, of which more will be said anon, the German self-defence organisations were wiped out of existence.

Article 91 of the Treaty of Versailles provides that the Germans living in the territories adjudged to Poland acquire the Polish citizenship automatically, but they need a special authorisation if they have settled in the Polish Corridor after January 1st, 1908. A strict interpretation of this article was responsible for the expulsion of thousands of Germans. Polish citizenship was denied to those of them who had left their residences to go to watering places or to visit relatives, who were absent from home because of military service and who attended school outside of the Corridor.

The great exodus of the Corridor Germans began, however, when their livelihood was taken

### THE CAULDRON BOILS

- away from them. Hans Ramm and Franz von Gordon, two Polish citizens of German ancestry, submitted a petition to the League of Nations about the discrimination against German-born citizens in the execution of the Polish agrarian reform, and their petition sheds much light on the German exodus. They complain of the "relentless frustration of every attempt on the part of the Germans to acquire property," because the authorities deny them the permission to buy and if they do succeed in acquiring a parcel of land the State usually exercises its right of pre-emption. The petitioners claim that while in 1910 the German population held about 56 per cent. of the land in West Prussia and in Posen, ten years after the armistice their holdings were reduced to 25 per cent.

In order to help the landless proletariat in the acquisition of property, the Polish agrarian reform law provides that a certain amount of land shall be expropriated by the State for their use. A minimum, however, must be left to the previous owner and the minimum may be increased to take care of special needs. The Land Distribution Offices determine whose land shall be expropriated and what the minimum shall be. No landowner wants to be expropriated, as the State appraises his land at a low figure and he receives only 40 per cent. of the expropriation money in cash, while the rest is paid in government bonds. The Distribution Offices are manned by Poles and their

## IN THE CORRIDOR

practice is to take the best land of the Germans and the poorest land of the Poles. About 92 per cent. of all land expropriated under the Agrarian Reform Act in the province of Pomorze has been taken from Germans.

Another agrarian law applies to those properties only that are owned by Germans who did not or could not acquire Polish citizenship. These properties may be liquidated without leaving the owner the minimum landholding to which he is entitled if his property is expropriated. The Germans complain that the liquidation of alien property is a favourite device of the Polish officials to force Germans out of the Corridor, even if they have the permission to reside there.

Another way of depriving the Corridor Germans of their economic basis and forcing them to leave home was by applying Article 256 of the Versailles Treaty too rigorously. This article empowers the Allied and Associated Powers to take possession of the landed properties of the German princes, the German States and the Reich. It gave rise to the so-called annulment-proceedings, in the course of which Polish authorities gave notice to thousands of German settlers of government and princely estates to vacate their homes at short notice. Dr. Rauschnig calculates that German private individuals have lost about 500,000 hectares and the princes and the German States an additional 200,000 hectares, without counting the State forests. The result of this

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

agrarian policy can be clearly seen in the diminishing number of Germans in the Corridor.

“This policy of expropriations, liquidations and annulations,” the Congress of the Polish Socialist Party declared, “transforms the country into an arena of nationality bull-fights.” Incidentally, it has given the Corridor a strongly Polish character.

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“Our cultural treasures are being methodically destroyed,” I was told by a German spokesman who asked not to be named. It is not easy to find minority leaders in Poland willing to be quoted. “We want to be loyal to the Polish State, but we are not allowed to be. They tell us that we are Huns and Boches and that we are an inferior race.”

We attended a rally of the National Democrats in Town Hall Square. There were jeers and boos when the straw dummy of Hitler was dragged to the gallows and was hanged with much solemnity. The crowd insisted that it should also be burned, and this request was promptly met. Shouts arose: “Exterminate the Germans!” The speaker told of his discovery of a conspiracy between the Reich and Russia to dismember Poland for the fourth time. This was a rally of Roman Dmowski’s stalwarts, and their principal article of faith is: “Out with the non-conformists! All Germans are traitors!”

A second speaker ascended the platform and he

## IN THE CORRIDOR

was received more coldly. He was an adherent of the dictator, Marshal Pilsudski, who is not popular among the jingoes of the Corridor because he is suspected of seeking an understanding with the Germans. But a dictator cannot afford to be outshouted by others and so the Marshal's follower too was vociferating against the Reich.

There was a crash of shattered window-panes. A stone had crashed through the display-window of a German merchant. There were more jeers for Hitler and more cheers for Dmowski.

The the crowd began to sing the Rota :

“ The German will not spit at us,  
He will not Germanise our children ;  
We will rise in arms,  
And the spirit of yore will march with us.”

Schoolchildren formed a semicircle and they sang :

“ On the Vistula and on the Wartha,  
The trumpet is sounded, the earth is shaking ;  
The German tortures Polish children.  
Let him torture them,  
God will have pity on us.”

Before the meeting broke up there was a march of the anti-German Society of the Western Counties. They were joined by representatives of the “ Opoz Wielkopolski,” the Camp of Great Poland. General Haller's “ Blue Army ” was also

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

represented and so were the "strzelcy," the boy scouts of Marshal Pilsudski.

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Article 110 of the Polish Constitution provides that Polish citizens of the national, religious and linguistic minorities have equal rights with other citizens to establish, control and operate at their own expense charitable, religious and social institutions, schools and other educational establishments, to employ their own language and to hold divine services in it.

The Germans charge that the Polish authorities flout these provisions of the law. They are refused permission to hold concerts and lectures even on non-political subjects unless the performers are on the spot at the time of the application, which can very seldom be the case. German artists and lecturers are frequently refused Polish visas. The Turnvereine of the Corridor Germans are refused the use of public gymnasiums. Goethe's *Faust* was confiscated from members of a German youth organisation. Among many other German societies the harmless German Women's League was dissolved and the German Deutschtumsbund was hounded out of existence. The case of the Bund deserves special notice.

"The German League for the Protection of Minority Rights" (Deutschtumsbund zur Wahrung der Minderheitsrechte) was heir to the "Deutsche Vereinigung," the German Associa-



## IN THE CORRIDOR

tion, with headquarters in Bromberg. In the year 1920 many of the leaders of the League were interned. Three years later the governor of Pomerellen dissolved the League "because its activities were inimical to the State and violated the espionage and sabotage laws." At a later date the dissolution was also effected in the Netze District and in Posen. The government took seven years to bring the leaders of the League to trial. They were charged with very serious offences which might have brought capital punishment on their heads. Ten leaders of the League, nine men and one woman, stood trial in April 1930. The Corridor Germans watched the proceedings with breathless interest. The judgment was pronounced and the defendants were sentenced to terms of one to six months in jail. The espionage charge had been dropped. The accused were found guilty of advising German citizens that they could not be drafted for service in the Polish army. Meanwhile, however, the League had been dissolved.

At the same time Bromberg saw the trial of the German boy scouts who took part on a Whit-Sunday jamboree near Potsdam. They were found guilty of membership in a secret society. Their leader, Dr. Ernst Borchardt, a young scientist, received an additional term in jail for collecting secret material. His offence consisted in gathering data for a scientific work about the Germans of Congress Poland. The sentence was pronounced

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

after scholars of established reputation had testified on his behalf.

The fate that overtook the German organisations did not spare their newspapers. A force of "sitting editors" was organised, consisting mostly of cub reporters, whose names appear as "responsible editors" and who sit in jail a considerable part of the year for various press offences.

The Corridor papers of German language must be extremely careful about what they print. The *Deutsche Rundschau* of Bromberg published an open letter to the German voters in which it said: "The nomination list of your candidates was annulled by the Election Commission in Thorn because of an alleged error of form." For this sentence the District Court of Thorn fined and jailed the publisher of the paper. The court held that the word "alleged" was a slur on the Election Commission.

The *Natio*, a joint publication of the German, Jewish, Ukranian and White Russian deputies of the Warsaw Congress, the Sejm, fared even worse because of its critical attitude toward the government. The State Attorney waited until the issues of the magazine were printed and then had them confiscated before they reached the street and the subscribers. This was bad business for the publishers and the magazine had to stop publication.

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The fight for the souls of children is extremely

## IN THE CORRIDOR

bitter in the Polish Corridor. To the Germans the school means a battle half won and to the Poles it means national prestige. The Minorities Protection Treaty between Poland the Allies gives the nationalities the right to educate their children, but the Germans say that the Poles are sabotaging the Treaty. Kurt Graebe, a leader of the Corridor Germans, was sentenced to six months in jail because he sought to prevent the discontinuance of German classes. A Polish ministerial decree says that such classes must be kept open in school districts where they have an attendance of forty school children. Herr Graebe was guilty of sending children into districts where the attendance had fallen below forty.

In his petition to the Council of the League of Nations to remedy the arbitrary acts of the Polish authorities in regard to German schools Herr Graebe quotes the following document :

“ District Headquarters of the State Police. Tczew (Dirschau), November 30th, 1927. No. 5679/27. Confidential. To School Inspector M. Bienek, Tczew. I wish to bring the fact to your notice that the teacher of the Neustadt school, Bartsch, a resident of Tczew, keeps a German house and speaks in German to his wife and children. I have learned from reliable source that German songs are sung in his home, such as : ‘ Ich hatt’ einen Kameraden.’ Moreover, his children are in touch with children

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

from the German school. District Headquarters of the State Police. (Signed) Stajka.”

In the municipality of Mrcza, district of Wyrzysek, the authorities declined to grant permission to open a German private school on the ground that the original petition had been lost. A Polish school council declined to grant permission to open a German school on the ground that the schoolroom was inadequate, although a Polish class had used the same room. In another case a refusal was given on the ground that since the applicant had been taken over into State service, the authorities assumed that he wanted his application withdrawn.

Many teachers of German extraction, the German minority complains, have been withdrawn from active service and placed on the retired list, although able to work, or have been transferred to Congress Poland because they took their tasks as German teachers too seriously.

In the province of Pomerellen 62·7 per cent. of the German children were not taught their native tongue in 1928 and the next year the figure increased to 66·6 per cent. During the same time the number of German minority schools decreased from 70 to 58. In the province of Posen 31·2 per cent. of the German children received no instruction in their native tongue in 1928, and the following year the figure increased to 34·4 per

## IN THE CORRIDOR

cent., while the number of German minority schools decreased from 229 to 209.

The Polonisation of the younger generation is a serious problem of the Corridor Germans. Besides the shortage of schools they have to face another difficulty: there are too many young German women and not enough young German men of marriageable age. When the Poles fought the Russians in 1920 these young men had the alternative of joining the Polish army or leaving Poland. Many of them had seen long service in the war and had no desire to start it all over for a country which many of them considered the oppressor of their own nationality. These young men were trekking to the German frontier and the German girls who remained behind married young Polish men. In the mixed families the woman loses her nationality and the children grow up full-fledged Poles.

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When two nations claim the same territory a third nation may be the object of the attention of both of them. The inhabitants of the northernmost part of the Corridor are now in that enviable situation. A German author called them an unknown nation shortly before the war. They live along the Baltic coast between Danzig and Lake Gardn and their number is estimated at 130,000. If it could be proved that the Kashubes are not Poles or that they do not want to belong to

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

Poland, the case of the Corridor Germans would be stronger. But the Kashubes are a cautious peasant tribe who do not like to commit themselves. They whisper to the German that they like him and tell the Pole that they could not live without him. But the primitive fishermen among them hardly notice that the Landrat has now been replaced by the starosta, because they have to pay taxes now, as they had before, and must send their sons into the army when the time for service comes.

The Kashubes are Catholics and they had been an unknown nation until Bismarck made them discover their nationality by launching his Kulturkampf, to claim for Cæsar what he thought was Cæsar's. They did not resent Berlin's order introducing German into their schools, as few of them felt the need of sitting at the feet of masters, but they did resent the order which made them pray in German—an alien tongue. Wilhelmstrasse paved the way for Polish agitation in Kashubia.

In recent years the controversy has been particularly bitter around the question whether the Kashubes speak a Polish dialect or have a separate tongue. Stephan Ramult, a Polish professor at the University of Cracow, who devoted many years to this problem, had a dictionary of the Kashubian and Pomeranian languages published toward the end of the last century in which he expressed the view that the Kashubes spoke an independent language.

## IN THE CORRIDOR

“The language of the Kashubes is not a Polish dialect,” wrote René Martel, of the University of Paris; “it is linked to the ancient Prussian language, the ancient Pomeranian of the East. We ourselves, when on the spot, embarked on the study of this vernacular. It has nothing in common with Polish, and Polish officials admit they can understand nothing of it. The Kashubes had for a short time hoped that their small fatherland would be made autonomous within the framework of the Polish State. . . . The discontent of the people provoked in 1919 a harsh attack from the *Kurjer Warszawski*: ‘The Kashubes are ingrates and imbeciles, they regret the German domination and their peasants go so far as to say: “Even the rain was better in the days of the Germans.” This trait gives the measure of their intelligence.’”

During the World War the Kashubes distinguished themselves on the side of the Germans and during the Russo-Polish war they excelled on the side of the Poles. Their real sentiment toward Germany, to which they belonged before the new deal, and toward Poland, to which they now belong, could be ascertained only through a plebiscite.

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It is the tragedy of the Polish Corridor that it has two sets of histories, one Polish and one German. The best one can do with them is to

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

reconcile their inconsistencies and thus create a third set of history.

Dr. F. W. Bitter and Dr. A. Zelle, authors of *Die Krankheit Europas*, maintain that before the "Voelkerwanderung" the territory of the present-day Corridor was inhabited by Germans and it was occupied by the Slavs around A.D. 600." This statement is just as difficult to verify as the assertions of the large number of German museums along the Polish Corridor that the skeletons they have on display belong to prehistoric German aborigines.

It is not even known whence the Poles came. A popular supposition is that they are descendants of the Lechici who took refuge in the wilderness of eastern Europe from the onslaughts of the Romans who had driven them away from the banks of the Danube. It is certain that when the curtain rose for the drama of the Corridor it was the scene of the struggles of petty Slavonic princes. Christianity penetrated its forests not so much as the promise of a new spiritual cleansing, but as a weapon to disarm the opposition of fanatic enemies. The Church in those days was the greatest coloniser and the price of its help was the soul of the natives. When the Christian millennium dawned on Europe, these territories saw the powerful King Boleslaus I enthroned as their spiritual and secular master. He was the first Polish king and also the last for many years to come.

The promise of the year 1000 turned out to be a



## IN THE CORRIDOR

will-o'-the-wisp and for centuries this territory fell a prey to anarchy; petty princes massacred one another for the benefit of their opponents' souls. They would have exterminated one another if Batu Khan, the Mongol chief, grandson of Jenghiz Khan, had not accomplished the same purpose without their help.

Into the wasteland of a dead world the Knights of the Sword and of the Teutonic Order were invited to introduce the amenities of western life at the point of their swords. Due to their efforts it seemed, as late as the fourteenth century, as if Poland were to lose her identity as an independent State. Casimir the Great, however, saved Poland from decay and gave her a new lease of life which endured for about four hundred years.

Between 1308 and 1454 the largest part of the Corridor was under the sovereign jurisdiction of the Teutonic Knights of the Cross. Before that time it was the happy hunting-ground of small princes and after that time it belonged to the Polish crown for more than three hundred years.

In June 1770 Frederick the Great, king of Prussia, had an army surround a part of Poland to keep the cattle plague out of his realm, and two years later that part of Poland—West Prussia and northern Posen—was his. "Whoever has the River Vistula and Danzig," said Frederick wisely (and his words were turned against him a hundred and fifty years later), "is more master of Poland than her ruling king."

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

For a hundred years the Prussians respected the customs, language and national characteristics of the Slav population. But then came Bismarck with his Kulturkampf, which was mainly the product of his resentment against the aggressive policy of the Catholic Poles, and he deprived the Polish clergy of its influence on education, Germanised the Polish schools, and denied recognition to the Polish language in the courts and in the administration. The Polish population of West Prussia rose, according to the German census, from 31 to 35 per cent. between 1858 and 1890, and the Polish population of Posen rose from 56 to 60 per cent. The Poles had now their own representatives in the Reichsrat. Polish co-operative societies sprang into life. "The land must not be given into German hands," the word was passed among the Poles, "and Polish traditions must be preserved."

"Poland's independence," Bismarck declared, "would be tantamount to a French army on the Vistula. . . . We cannot hold the Rhine if we have the Poles in our back . . ." and his words, too, were turned against him some fifty years later.

Germany's policy was: "We are the natural adversaries of the Polish kingdom." When a revolution broke out in the 'sixties in Russian Poland, the Prussian king offered his co-operation to the Tsar.

Bismarck declared that the eastern provinces were more essential to Germany than Alsace-

#### IN THE CORRIDOR

Lorraine. "Hakatism," named after Messrs. Hansemann, Kennemann and Tiedemann, founders of the Ostmarkenverein, League of the Eastern counties, became the official policy of the opposition to the Polish national aspirations. The Reichsrat passed a law authorising the expropriation of certain types of Polish landed property. A howl of dismay went up from the Poles, but in reality they were delighted. The expropriation law was applied only a couple of times and even then full indemnity was paid to the owners. But it gave the Polish nationalists the propaganda material they needed.

The Poles began to boycott the German and Jewish merchants. The revolutionary P.P.S., the Polish Socialist Party, began its work in earnest. Its wild man was a Joseph Pilsudski, a revolutionary of many aliases, for whom people predicted either the gallows or Siberia.

Across the frontier, in Russian Poland, another revolutionary, Roman Dmowski, was active in the "Liga Polska," which was to disappear and re-emerge as the "Liga Narodowa," and still later as the much discussed "N D," or the National Democratic Party.

"Just as the Indian hears the approaching wild beast or the deadly enemy where the white man hears nothing," a Polish patriot said, "so we notice the approach of a revolution when others see nothing."

The Poles saw the approach of a world revolu-

### THE CAULDRON BOILS

tion in the wake of the World War. They were handicapped, however, because they were working at cross purposes. Pilsudski led his legion against the Russian, while Dmowski fired his followers against the German. Professor Jaworski, leader of the Galician Conservative Party wanted Russian Poland united with Austria-Hungary. Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany, and Kaiser Karl of Austria-Hungary, proclaimed Poland's independence but there were no bonfires in the Polish villages. The event inclined the patriots to take a pessimistic view of the future. Professor Jaworski, who had become president of the Polish Supreme National Council, demanded that the new Poland conclude an alliance with the Central Powers and declare war on Russia. "By abandoning the futile hope of Allied assistance, Poland's cause would make rapid progress."

The United States was the birthplace of modern Poland. President Wilson created the Research Committee, which was to be the godfather of the synthetic children that were to be conceived in the throes of war. Professor Robert Howard Lord, of Harvard, assisted by two American Poles, was commissioned to act as surgeon-in-chief at the delivery.

On January 8th, 1918, President Wilson told the joint session of Congress: "An independent Polish State should be erected which should include the territories inhabited by indisputably

## IN THE CORRIDOR

Polish populations, which should be assured a free and secure access to the sea, and whose political and economic independence and territorial integrity should be guaranteed by international covenant."

This was the thirteenth of the Fourteen Points. The previous points dealt with France, Belgium, Russia, Austria-Hungary, Rumania, Serbia, Montenegro, Turkey. Did this mean that at the beginning of 1918 Poland did not play the important role in the president's plans she came to assume later? At any rate, those who profess familiarity with the president's thoughts maintain that in those days he did not even think of detaching the Corridor from Germany, and that what he meant by the "free and secure access to the sea" was the internationalisation of the Vistula and the establishment of a Polish free port in Danzig.

"The Polish question is the most complex of all," Professor Lord reported to the president. The official American commentary of the Fourteen Points was not sure whether the Poles should receive any territory west of the Vistula River. The American Poles were working feverishly on their ambitious plans. Their fathers had been right in speaking about the Poles of the United States as the citizens of the Fourth Poland, in addition to the three older portions of their State.

Ignace Paderewski had appeared on the stage and lent his distinction as a great pianist to the

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

Polish cause. Roman Dmowski, leader of the Polish National Democrats since 1893, former member of the Russian Duma and president of the Polish Club, president of the Polish National Committee and delegate to the Paris peace conference, added his vigour to Paderewski's suavity.

The Central Powers were drawing on their last resources and the Polish deputies in the Berlin Reichsrat declared that they were citizens of a free and reunited Poland. On Armistice Day the Polish republic was born officially and on that day Marshal Pilsudski's first dictatorship began.

"It would be difficult to say what would have happened if Pilsudski had not come upon the scene in the very nick of time," writes Robert Machray in his history of post-war Poland. In Pilsudski there was an excess of self-confidence and just enough insanity to make him appear a genius.

The son of a princely Lithuanian family, he spent his early childhood in fear of the bloody judge, the Russian Muravieff, called the Hangman. But his fear did not keep him from conspiracies and so the moment came when he was to be hanged in the citadel of Warsaw. He was in the Tenth Pavilion, from which he had an excellent view of the gallows on which he was to hang in the early dawn. That celebrated pavilion was just as safe a place as a coffin and those who were kept prisoners there did not need to worry about their future.

## IN THE CORRIDOR

Yet Pilsudski managed to escape the gallows by feigning insanity. From the Petrograd lunatic asylum to the Belvedere of Warsaw the way was beset with dangers. The gallows were always just around the corner, but the stake was high and his courage great.

Dmowski, Paderewski and Pilsudski formed an invincible triumvirate, even though they disliked one another. They were the pets of the French premier, Georges Clemenceau, for whom the extravagant claims of the Poles were heavenly music. Through the humble Pole the unspeakable German shall be punished. "A sturdy, free and independent Poland" was the aim of Quai d'Orsay.

Lloyd George had celebrated the victory of the Holy Alliance too long and he awoke to the reality with a headache. Was France not getting too much in the East? Even the unexpected magnitude of the Allied victory was no reason for abandoning the policy of balance of power which had kept the world in such nice order until 1914. The English prime minister delivered a strong speech to the Polish representatives: "Only yesterday Poland was divided into three parts. . . ."

Berlin sent mercurial Hellmuth von Gerlach to solve the eastern problem. The Poles promised to be courteous to him if he did not make too much noise. At the end of 1918 Ignace Paderewski made his triumphal entry into Posen, and his coming was the signal of an insurrection.

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

Meanwhile Paris had found the formula of giving Poland access to the sea, which formula seemed best because it did not satisfy either antagonist. Germany was to be cut into two parts, so that the Poles should have an access to the Baltic, and East Prussia should be detached from the Reich. The Germans rubbed their eyes incredulously. Was it possible to amputate the living body of a nation that stood at the head of human civilisation?

The Polish patriots were also disappointed. They had expected to have East Prussia as well. How could they protect the Corridor if they were not the masters of the Baltic Sea? But presently their thoughts turned to consoling the Reich. This was not the only Corridor in the world. The United States, for example, was separated from Alaska by a Canadian Corridor. When the train leaves the Buffalo station for Detroit it passes through another Canadian Corridor. Along the River Scheldt, connecting two cities in Holland, the Dutch train must traverse a Belgian Corridor. The Germans did not like this consolation. They knew that it made all the difference in the world whether you cut a country into two parts or whether you pass a railway line through a foreign country to eliminate a detour.

“East Prussia is,” a Polish author wrote in connection with the peace settlement, “what she has always been in reference to the bulk of the German territory, an island and a colony, in



## IN THE CORRIDOR

exactly the same way as are the German districts of Transylvania.”

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“ This will be the cause of the next war,” Marshal Foch told Raymond Recouly, the French author, shortly before his death, indicating the map of the Corridor. No wonder then that the number of suggested solutions of the Corridor problem is so large and their practicality so small.

The French General Bourguin wants to give the Germans an elevated highway for rail and motor traffic across the Corridor. This highway would be placed under their unconditional sovereignty. Count Coudenhove-Kalergi, apostle of Pan-Europa, who speaks of the Corridor as the pacemaker of war and of Bolshevism, wants to return Danzig to the Reich, and to build a subterranean passage for trans-Corridor traffic until the United States of Europe could be made a reality. Brigadier-General E. L. Spears suggests the compromise of a complicated system of tunnels and bridges.

The plan has been suggested to extend the Free City of Danzig to include the entire northern part of the Corridor, enabling the Reich to communicate with East Prussia through a friendly State. Still another suggestion is to have Lithuania and Poland meet on a common ground, reviving their historical union, so that the united republic would have an access to the sea through the port of Memel and Germany would have her Corridor.

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

The fact that Germany has never accepted her eastern frontiers was pungently expressed by the late Dr. Gustave Stresemann, foreign minister of the Reich, and father of Locarno, in a letter to the former Crown Prince.

“In my view,” Stresemann wrote on September 5th, 1925, “Germany’s foreign policy in the near future must pursue consecutively three objects : first, a solution of the Rhine problem, so that Germany can live in peace and reconstitute her forces ; second, protection for the 10,000,000 to 12,000,000 Germans living under foreign oppression, and third, rectification of our eastern frontier, the reconquest of Danzig and the Polish Corridor, and modification of the frontier of Upper Silesia. . . .”

The disgust with which the French and Polish nationalist press received these “revelations” shows that they were deluding themselves about the situation. For this programme Stresemann still has the backing of the majority of the Germans.

Moderate Germans trust to the efficacy of peaceful means. They say that a permanent solution of the eastern problem cannot be effected on the basis of the existing political system. The east of Europe is so broken up ethnologically, that the national interests of all its component parts cannot be gratified. While the most constructive opinion in Central Europe hopes for the confederation of the States that have mutual interests, it is obvious

## IN THE CORRIDOR

that international jealousies and lack of courageous statesmanship stand in the way of reason.

There was a time when the Germans of the Corridor would have been satisfied with autonomy, but that was a long time ago—before 1931. Meanwhile Germany has parted company with the past. The Treaty of Versailles is no longer considered inviolable. The most radical opinion holds that it is not binding, as it was signed under duress while the other party to the contract aimed his revolver at Michael Spiessbuerger. Such an attitude is incomprehensible to the French and their allies, who had hoped to stay the sun in its course forever. Where is the sanctity of treaties if the Reich can sweep past the powerful edifices reared with so much pain in Paris and dedicated to eternity in the Hall of Mirrors in Versailles? Where is the foundation of the new world order if the work of Georges Clemenceau is allowed to pass into oblivion? How can new Europe survive such an attempt on its life?

In spite of her conviction that the Treaty of Versailles was vitiated by the worst coercion modern history has witnessed, Germany has tried the policy of fulfilment but it has not yielded the secret of peace and prosperity. Liberal opinion abroad approves of the Reich's new stand. "I have no hesitancy in declaring," Senator William E. Borah wrote in an article for the North American Newspaper Alliance, "that Germany's demand for equality is natural; not only natural,

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

but essentially and fundamentally just. . . . The plea for the sanctity of treaties is sound, but it should and must include all parties."

The German minority is right in maintaining that the Poles have not tried to establish friendly relations with the Corridor Germans. Warsaw contends that it is not treating the Germans worse than the Germans treated the Poles before the war. But Warsaw seems to forget that there is a vast difference between the two situations. The Germans brought culture into the Corridor, so that even to-day the population of the rest of Poland looks to Posen and Thorn as the standard bearers of a higher civilisation. But what have the Poles brought into the Corridor?

When the Prussian hand lay heavily on the Poles there was a Kaiser in the Berlin Schloss. Meanwhile Europe has seen the writing on the wall and to-day—paradoxical as it may sound—even her tyrannies are democratic, and despotic dictators seek to further the happiness of the masses. A post-war edition of the royal Prussian regulations for the treatment of the minorities would be entirely out of place even in republican Prussia.

It is an undeniable fact that the majority of the Corridor's population is Polish, after hundreds of thousands of Germans have been forced to leave their homes. A new deal would have to take into consideration the changed condition created by the new "Voelkerwanderung." It is quite pos-

## IN THE CORRIDOR

sible that the old Corridor population would have voted for Germany in a plebiscite. The examples of the two Prussian regencies of Marienwerder and Allenstein, of which more will be said in a later chapter, are strong points in favour of a plebiscite.

How the present population of the Corridor would vote is highly doubtful. The native Poles of the Corridor can get along very well with their German neighbours and it is only the carpet-baggers who cause the trouble. The Corridor Pole does not like the "naked Anthonys," the Polish officials from Congress Poland, who are the products of a lower civilisation and yet have the audacity to order him about. When the Corridor Pole opens his heart to his German neighbour he tells him that what the country needs is "pozun-dek," order, to which he was accustomed under the German régime.

Germany and Poland need each other, but friendly co-operation between the two countries cannot be expected as long as the Corridor controversy is in the way. The best German solution of the problem, suggested by Dr. Guido Bertrand, calls for the internationalisation of the Vistula and of the ports of Danzig and Dirschau. The Polish Corridor, in the restricted sense as used before, would be returned to the Reich, while the province of Posen would be retained by Poland, so that the larger part of the former German territories adjudged to Poland by the Allies would remain

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

• under the sovereignty of the Slav republic. Danzig would lose its status as a Free City and would be re-united with the Reich. The Poles would acquire sovereign rights over the railway lines of Bromberg-Gdynia, Bromberg-Danzig and Warsaw-Mlawa-Danzig. A demilitarised zone would be established along the Vistula from the Netze District to the Baltic Sea. The port and city of Gdynia, along with a belt of land around it, would be turned over to Poland. The execution of this agreement would be placed under the control of the League of Nations, which would have the right to appoint a High Commissioner to assure its observance.

The port of Fiume assured Hungary's access to the Adriatic before the war in a somewhat similar manner, although the intervening Croatia was under a régime different from that which Bertrand suggests for the Corridor.

Poland's mission to "bring Christianity to life in world history," was the ideal of which Adam Mickiewicz, the great Polish poet, dreamt. Republican Poland, too, started on her career with a strong belief in her Messianic mission. But the Germans also have their national faith. In the Corridor not only two nations but also two Messianic beliefs clash. The words of Foch are remembered: here the great decision for Europe's future will be made. War can yet be averted but nobody knows for how long.

## CHAPTER TWO

### A 'CORRIDOR' CAREER

WITH an effortless spurt, the Corridor train starts on the last lap of the trip. The white eagle on the locomotive indicates that it is Polish, but the cars bear the inscription, "German State Railway." The conversation in the cars is in German, but the conductor asks for the tickets in lisping Polish: "If you please, sir"—"proshe pane."

Field Marshal von Hindenburg is one of the passengers. He makes the trip between his private residence in Neudeck and his official residence in Berlin many times a year. Between his two residences, however, there is the Polish Corridor and so the president of the German Reich, on his way from one part of his country to the other, has to pass through foreign soil.

In each Corridor car an official notice informs the passenger that he must not get out of the train, open the window, hand anything out of the car or receive anything. The German soldier has to give his sabre or firearms into the safekeeping of the Polish conductor.

President von Hindenburg keeps his seat, does

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

not open the window, hands out nothing and receives nothing ; he does not wear his sabre and travels in mufti while passing through the Corridor. If, perchance, the restaurant car is attached to that part of the train which is reserved for non-Corridor passengers, he must be content with the lunch his orderly has brought with him, as the passage to the dining-car is locked and sealed.

The train reaches the Vistula and for a few minutes speeds through the sovereign territory of the Free City of Danzig. Then the passenger catches a glimpse of the monumental Madonna on the towering walls of Marienburg, once the strongholds of the Teutonic Knights and now a memento of glories departed. Several gentlemen in solemn cutaways greet the president of the Reich. Once more he is on German soil.

If the president took it into his head to make the trip across the Corridor in an automobile he would find the regulations even more stringent. The Polish frontier authorities would attach to the rear of his car a large sign with the letter "T," meaning that it is a non-stop Corridor transit car, which must not use any highway except those marked with "T," for transit. The exact hour of his entry would be marked and his car would have to make the trip as fast as it could, and sometimes even faster, unless some special privilege were granted to the head of the German Reich. If a tyre were punctured on the way through the Corridor, he would have to make a report to the



### A CORRIDOR CAREER

nearest police authority, which would certify the length of the unavoidable delay—otherwise he would face difficulties on the other side of the Corridor.

Nor would it be possible for President von Hindenburg, when crossing Polish territory, to utilise the train's stop at Posen station to leave his car and pay a hurried visit to the house in which he was born eighty-five years ago. Posen, a German city until the end of the war, has assumed the new name of Poznan and to-day is one of the principal cities of Poland.

On the days when Germany celebrates the birthday of her president, Posen remains indifferent. No flag flies from the house of Bergstrasse 7, where on October 2nd, 1847, the eldest son of Lieutenant and Adjutant Robert von Beneckendorff und von Hindenburg was born. As a matter of fact, no flag announced this even on that memorable day. It would have passed unnoticed except by the members of the family if the father had not announced it in the *Posener Zeitung* with the old-fashioned formality of those days: "I wish respectfully to announce the successful confinement of my beloved wife, *née* Schwickart, this afternoon at 3 o'clock of a lively and healthy little son."

The road from Posen to the presidential palace led through a countryside packed with history. His eighty-sixth year sees President Hindenburg facing the greatest battle of his life. Will it bring

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

him the glory of Tannenberg or the tragedy of the Marne? This time the enemy is invisible and treacherous, it is everywhere and it is nowhere. It is lurking in the economic crisis which makes mankind fear the worst. It is hiding in the parliamentary crisis which has set parliamentarism against autocracy in a struggle for life and death. It is concealed behind the social crisis which may result in upheavals that a few years ago would have seemed phantasmagorias to the most uncritical believer of the new day.

What shall Germany do with the 6,000,000 unemployed whom society cannot supply with work? The dole has been cut down to the bare minimum and another reduction may break the patience of millions. Shall the president lend an ear to those who advocate inflation of the currency? Shall he endorse the plans of those who want the Reich to draw into itself? Germany can hope for so little from the world that the temptation is great to follow the counsel of despair and to cut adrift from the economic community of the world.

Then there is Hitler. How far is his movement an expression of helpless despair, and how far is it the product of a hysterical temperament? How much Hitlerism can the Reich endure without provoking civil war? What measures can be taken to re-introduce the age of political sanity?

And there is the problem of the Treaty of Ver-

## A CORRIDOR CAREER

sailles, which in Germany is what prohibition is in America—the cause of all evils, real and imaginary. It is a tremendous problem, because it is an obsession. All Germany, including the Communists, condemns the treaty and maintains that as long as the world treats her as an outlaw she cannot live a life of old-fashioned respectability. What will happen with the disarmament question? What will happen with the Polish Corridor? Alsace-Lorraine is almost forgotten, but Danzig is a living wound.

Germany sees only one man who can prevent the worst happening to the Reich: President von Hindenburg. His life and health should be insured not for millions or billions of marks, but for all the national wealth of the Reich, the maintenance of which is dependent upon comparative tranquillity and the hope of better times.

If despair has not forced Germany to commit an act of madness it is because she sees this superb old man, a veritable Methuselah, keeping steadily at work. He is a man from another planet, from a world in which personal ambition is non-existent and the idea of service rules supreme. In this man there is no lust for power nor for fame. He can look at this globe with the detachment of a man who has become immortal in his life. He is not surprised at anything, not even the ingenuity with which man places obstacles in his way.

In search of Hindenburgiana in the Corridor and in East Prussia, I visited the house in which

### THE CAULDRON BOILS

Hindenburg was born. It is a low and narrow structure, as unimpressive as its neighbours, in a street which derived its German name, Bergstrasse, from the elevation nearby, on which Posen's old market-place was built. The visitor's attention is attracted by a memorial slab under the windows through which Paul first saw the light of day. The slab is not, however, in honour of the famous German, but of a certain Karol Marcinkowski, who happened to live in the house for some years and who—the slab proclaims—has deserved well of his Polish neighbours. He was the founder of a Polish co-operative society.

A dark wooden stairway leads to the unpretentious flat in which a Polish book-keeper now lives. This is the birthplace of Marshal von Hindenburg. The house is to be torn down shortly, if the plans of the city fathers materialise, to give place to a more modern structure, unburdened by history.

If legend current among the German population of Posen is to be trusted, Paul liked to coast down the sloping Bergstrasse in his early childhood. But legend is not to be trusted in this case. Not if one bears in mind that Lieutenant and Adjutant Robert von Beneckendorff und von Hindenburg was a Prussian officer and a nobleman of ancient vintage. Although he was a good man, of reticent nature and contemplative habits, he was too much the product of his environment to close an eye to such a violation of his caste's

## A CORRIDOR CAREER

etiquette as the consorting of his eldest with boys of the street.

There was discipline in the family. Even Paul's nurse had been connected with the army. "Silence in the company," she used to boom on the rare occasions when Paul forgot that he was the son of a nobleman. The Marshal's brother writes in his reminiscences that as a child Paul developed such a dislike for noise that he often complained about the boisterous mood of his younger brother.

Then one day there was a street fight in Posen and hundreds sang: "Poland is not lost. . . ." The air of 1848 had brought the revolution, and Polish insurgents occupied the city. Their leader ordered all the inhabitants to illuminate their windows. Frau von Hindenburg, a loyal Prussian, consoled herself with the thought that this was the birthday of His Majesty the King of Prussia, anyhow. The song died away and the candles were extinguished in a hurry when the Prussian re-occupied the town.

From one garrison to the other the Hindenburgs moved, leading a veritable gipsy life. Many Prussian army officers had no permanent home, but Paul's father was an exception. His home was Neudeck, and there the family always returned. In Neudeck his son is at home. Some seventy years after these events, Marshal von Hindenburg wrote in his autobiography:

"For me Neudeck is home and for my own

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

people it is the firm rock to which we cling with all our strength."

"People are not familiar with the important role of Neudeck in contemporary German history," my chaperon, Dr. Carl Budding, a noted figure at international gatherings and president of this district, told me as we were approaching the president's house in Neudeck. "The Field Marshal's neighbours are of the opinion that his long sojourns at his home have a highly salutary effect on his life and work. In Neudeck he breathes the air of the German countryside and not the dust of Berlin's bureaucracy. The vistas of the Teutonic country in Germany's 'Far East' show him the way to solutions which perhaps could not be seen in Wilhelmstrasse. By listening to the song of the wheat fields in his leisure hours the president has humanised the administration."

Chickens fled from the road with indignant protest as we entered the village. Women sitting on the stairs of their houses and sifting flour into sacks looked at our car with curious peasant eyes. In the vicinity of Neudeck there are no multitudes, and only a few high State officials make the journey. The stranger here means the wide world.

Even from a distance President von Hindenburg looked enormous as he came into view at the turn of the road. He was standing on the porch and there was just the trace of a smile in the centre of a perfect quadrangle of a face. He had come out to see his grandchildren clamber on the buggy

## A CORRIDOR CAREER

in which they were to take their afternoon ride.

The family flag of blue and white overtops the Neudeck house, and above the entrance one sees clearly the coat of arms—a bull's head, said to be symbolic of the sacrificial rites of pagan times. The large linden tree, under which Paul used to play as a child, is still standing in front of the main entrance. On a hillock nearby the Hindenburgs of the past are buried. Twenty-three of them have died in battle since the day the family's name was first recorded.

With a stolidity remindful of their grandfather, the children sat in the buggy. For a minute or two the president looked after them; then he disappeared in the house, leaning on the arm of an old servant. There was something of the machine in his movements, something automatic and quite unreal.

The house is built in the simple style of the German pioneers of what a few centuries ago was the Far East of Europe. Well-to-do squires in the neighbourhood live in such houses. It is a one-story structure with a low roof.

The interior, too, is far from lavish, and often it strikes one as Spartan. If it were not for the numerous antlers of deer on the walls—a hunter's trophies—the large living-room would be entirely bare of ornament. A portrait of Count Moltke by Lenbach is a treasured possession of the house, as the great general of the Franco-Prussian War is

### THE CAULDRON BOILS

still Hindenburg's idol. From another wall, his other idol, Frederick the Great, looks at the world with eyes of amused sophistication. A bust of Wilhelm II in white marble reminds the visitor that even as the president of the German republic, Paul von Hindenburg has remained loyal to his erstwhile chief.

"Loyalty is the marrow of honour," the inscription above the large mantelpiece of the hall announces, and another inscription exhorts the house: "Ora et Labora!" Pray and work is, indeed, the Hindenburg motto. The collection of Madonna paintings make certain parts of the house look like an art gallery, and the portraits of the ancestors bring to mind a proud family history. An old helmet of young Hindenburg, pierced by a bullet at the battle of Koeniggraetz, is here to remind of thrills experienced nearly threescore and ten years ago. Another relic, a painting of the proclamation of the German Empire in the Mirror Hall of Versailles Castle, makes one think of the time when young Hindenburg witnessed the rise of united Germany. He was present, too, at the burial of the empire.

Although Neudeck has been a family possession more than a century and a half, the house was in the hands of a collateral line when the Steel Helmets bought it, after a national subscription, and presented it to the president on his eightieth birthday. At the same time he was given the deed of an area of some 1,600 acres, comprising all the



## A CORRIDOR CAREER

lands which have ever belonged to the Hindenburg family.

"He has an exceptional memory," a neighbour and frequent guest in the Hindenburg house told me. "People think that he is one-sided and too old to develop serious interests. This is an erroneous idea. The interest of the president in men and institutions is intensive. He likes to say that as a soldier he rarely reads books except those dealing with military problems. However, since he has become the chief executive of the Reich, he takes a profound interest in questions with which he has to deal, and the number of these questions is large indeed."

A niece of the president called on him after her recent return from the United States, and began to tell him about the phantomlike vision of the skyscrapers in the dusk, when millions of tiny lights burst into life against the background of greying blue. The president listened to her with bored politeness. Then he asked how America is trying to deal with its unemployment problem—and suddenly became animated and full of concentrated attention as he listened to her reply.

To many people President von Hindenburg is a friend of war. It is taken for granted that he must be a protagonist of armed conflicts, as he gathered his laurels in the course of the greatest human blood-bath, and as he is the descendant of a family of many noted soldiers.

"One day, while having a *tête-à-tête* chat with

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

the president in his Neudeck house," Dr. Budding told me in the course of this trip, "he gave me his opinion about war. 'I don't see why some people should think I am such a great friend of war,' he said. 'I have done my duty in the World War to the best of my ability, but that does not mean that I like wars. If I were an ambitious man perhaps I should long for the day when the soldier's ideas can best be realised. But personal aggrandisement has never been my ideal. I abhor war far more than I can tell. I have seen too much of it. . . . I am satiated with it. . . . I don't want to see any more of it. . . .' I authorise you," Dr. Budding turned to me with a smile, "to quote these words of our president."

I had many conversations about the president with the country-folk in the neighbourhood of Neudeck, particularly in the tap-room of the Schwarzer Adler, in the nearby town of Freystadt, the bells of whose church can be clearly heard at Neudeck.

Many of these peasants of East Prussia do not seem to know how great is the fame of their idol in foreign lands. One of them asked me whether Hindenburg's name was well known in America. To most of them he is a personal possession, not so much the Field Marshal and president as the good neighbour and the hero who saved their East Prussian fatherland at Tannenberg.

Some time ago Freystadt celebrated the seven hundredth anniversary of its birth and there was

### A CORRIDOR CAREER

much rejoicing in the Black Eagle and on the square. Like a good neighbour, President Hindenburg attended the celebration. He was neither condescending nor aloof, and the town took it as a matter of course that the head of the Hindenburg family—for centuries distinguished noblemen in these parts—should participate in the public festivals.

“As long as he is with us,” one of the townsmen said, “we have nothing to fear.” He looked quizzically in the direction of the frontier. The Polish-German boundary line is only some six miles away and that summer all East Prussia was flustered by the rumours of a Polish invasion.

To the president of the German Reich, Neudeck means something that it cannot mean to anyone else. It means the long trips in his childhood, when there were no railways, on roads that were none too good. It means a ride on his pony to uncle’s house, for lessons from the family teacher.

Here he saw the family gardener, on whom even his grandfather looked with respect. The old gardener had been a drummer in the army of Frederick the Great, and through him Marshal von Hindenburg links two epochs of mankind more than a hundred and fifty years apart. “The last rays of the sun of the great Frederick,” the Marshal wrote many years later, “fell upon me as a child.”

He remembers the delightfully true stories his

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

grandfather told the children. Many years before those enchanting Neudeck days under the linden tree, grandfather was charged to call on no less a person than Napoleon the Great, whose headquarters were in the nearby castle of Finckenstein. Otto Ludwig von Hindenburg was to induce the Corsican hero not to collect the levy imposed upon the district. But Napoleon cut grandfather short and sent him on his way before he could utter many words.

In Neudeck thoughts sweep back far into ages in which historic records were scarce. As early as the thirteenth century the family of the Beneckendorffs and Hindenburgs played a part in these regions. They fought in the armies of the Teutonic Knights, missionaries of the heathen Prussians and colonisers of the savage East. The last von Hindenburg died in 1772—when Poland was cut into pieces—and his name was inherited by the allied family of von Beneckendorffs. It was the last Hindenburg who received the royal grant of Neudeck in exchange for a leg lost in the service of Frederick the Great.

Field Marshal von Hindenburg has seen the rise and fall of many worlds. When he was born France was still a kingdom. He fought the Austrians at Koeniggraetz and he helped drive away Napoleon III from the throne of France. He was already an old man when he retired to Hanover, the necropolis of decrepit generals, three years before the war. He was content to

## A CORRIDOR CAREER

spend the rest of his life in the company of his memories, a distinguished soldier at home, but unknown to the rest of the world.

Then one night he was awakened at 3 o'clock. The World War was in full progress and the messenger handed him a telegram from the Kaiser: "You are needed." Hindenburg was an old man, but he got up as soon as the message was received. We next see him as the hero of Tannenberg.

During the war the old general gave Germany's aims a coherence and purpose which enabled her to soar toward the sun. He was now the leader of armies the colossal size of which would have made Cæsar pale and shake an incredulous head. After the collapse, brought about by causes beyond human force, Hindenburg retired once more, a legendary figure.

Then there was another knock at his door in the dead of the night—when he was elected president at the age of eighty.

"Let me sleep for two more hours," he said. And when he got up early in the morning Germany already knew that she was being served by a man who did not like the republic and yet would be faithful to it to the end, because above all his likes and dislikes there was the idea of service, and a complete lack of interest in power and fame.

The Hindenburg myth is still alive and probably will not die for a long time to come. Even the political enemies of the president, while

### THE CAULDRON BOILS

questioning the superhuman qualities with which uncritical admirers have endowed him, are willing to endorse the view of his English biographers : “ His gifts are not imaginative or intellectual at all. His talents are of character ; he has almost a genius for sincerity and loyalty.”

But the best characterisation of Germany’s idol was written by Hindenburg himself in these lines : “ The decisive factor in my life and success was that I had no desire for applause from the world. It was rather my own convictions, a sense of duty and my own conscience which have guided me throughout life.”

## CHAPTER THREE

### ON THE BALTIC SEA

"WE don't want to be free," said Johannes Spiessbuerger, and he made a gesture as if he were breaking his chains. Then he dug his spoon into the ice-cream with a theatrical flourish—Brutus plunging his dagger into Cæsar's heart.

"Here Koenigs-Wusterhausen," the man in the radio announced, "you are going to hear now Wagner's 'Entrance of the Valkyries into the Valhalla.'" There was a momentary pause. Most of the tables on the terrace of the Konditorei were occupied by young people.

"Hoer' mal, Franz, morgen fahren wir nach Zoppot. . . ."

"Aber nein, die Polen werden es nie tun . . . ." came from a corner of the terrace.

"Polen . . . Polen . . . Polen . . . ." They were talking about Poland at almost every table. Marie and Franz were planning a trip to Zoppot. Out of the darkness, Marienkirche emerged like a monster of the Apocalypse.

Tratatara . . . the trumpets announced the Valkyries.

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

The night threw a veil on the renaissance curves of the Zeughaus across the street, and the conversation became more animated.

“Poland . . . Reich . . . Poland . . . Reich.” The trumpets blared forth the triumph of the gods and their doom.

“We are Germans,” Herr Spiessbuerger said, “and we want to remain Germans.” The music had gone to his head, and he looked defiant.

“Listen to all these people. What language do they speak? German . . . Hochdeutsch. They don't want to belong to an operetta republic. Our place is in the Reich.”

Koenigs-Wusterhausen approved the suggestion with a tremendous crescendo.

“The Poles had thought our economic interests would force us to give up our Germanism. They told us: ‘You were a third-rate harbour in the Reich. You are going to be a first-rate harbour. Just think of it for a minute: you are going to be the port of Poland, and we, Poland, are going to be a first-rate power, the greatest nation of the East. Just think of it.’”

“We thought of it . . . but not very long. We didn't like the change, even though we were told to be our own masters and to pay no attention to Berlin.”

Johannes Spiessbuerger looked at the shadow of Marienkirche, which seemed to come closer as the night deepened and was now in front of the



## ON THE BALTIC SEA

Konditorei, offering its portals to the doomed gods of Valhalla.

“Ask our government how *they* like this arrangement. You would think they were in favour of it now that they are rulers of a sovereign State. They don't like it at all. And yet our little Free State of Danzig—less than 800 square miles and with a population of some 400,000 people—has a Senate and a Volkstag of its own. We have our Supreme Court and our postal, telegraph and telephone services. We have our own currency and State treasury. We have a miniature government machine of, say, France or Germany. We must have it as long as we are an independent State. If we did not have it the Poles would want to run our government. The livelihood of thousands of our citizens is dependent on our national independence. If we were reduced to the status of a German city we should have a burgomaster and a council . . . und fertig. Now we have ‘regierungsraete’ by the score. What would they be if we lost our independence? Ask them what they want? They want Danzig to be re-united with the Reich. We are Germans and we belong to Germany.”

\* \* \* \*

A midnight stroll in the city of Danzig brings intimacy with its gabled roofs. The northern rigidity of the houses is familiar to modern eyes. Those squares and cubes were the work of men

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

in a hurry who wanted to have artistic pleasure without spending too much time on its creation. This is the home of the Nordic renaissance with a dash of Holland in it. Langemarkt looks quizzically at the last midnight tram. The breeze from the Mottlau forces the houses of the square to huddle closely together. Artushof, behind the fountain, has a resentful air. Where are the mirth and good comradeship of St. George's Shooting Lodge? Where are Danzig's patri- cians who drank and danced in the star chamber of Artushof until the sun rose above the Krantor and giggling apprentices reminded their masters that their good sailing vessels had put into port.

Lange Gasse invites the visitor to inspect its quaint terraces near the entrance door. It reminds him that when Danzig was a city in the marshes, with meandering streets none too good, it was of advantage to step on firm stone from the carriage door. "Handkerchiefs" these houses were called in days gone by, because they were so closely packed. The peasant from Tiegenhof looked at them with awe. The fame of Danzig's trading oligarchy was great, and the splendour of its homes found its way into fairy tales.

Marienkirche attracts the visitors with uncanny magnetism. It is a fighting church with walls as massive as if they belonged to sturdy forts. Its solid towers pointed the way to frightened peasants when the smoke on the horizon sent a warning message that the Russian was on his

## ON THE BALTIC SEA

ruthless way of pillage and destruction. There was a reason for making this church larger than Paris's celebrated Notre Dame, for giving it a seating capacity of 25,000.

Marienkirche speaks of the Teutonic Order which inspired its powerful pillars. It whispers confidences about the gallant knights who prayed four times in twenty-four hours and fought during the rest of the day, crusading upon paganism and building St. Mary's realm on earth. They had brought the civilisation of the West to the marshes and virgin forests of the East, building harbours and towns, ships and castles, forts and churches, extending their power with relentless tenacity and stamping their German origin on all their handiwork.

"The population of the Free City is composed of Germanised Poles," a Polish spokesman told the Peace Conference of Paris. The Dukes of Pomerania, who founded Danzig, were Slavs, says a Russian author writing under the pen name of "Augur." After the extinction of their dynasty these regions were annexed to the dominions of the princes of Poland. But the ogres of the fable descended from storm-laden clouds, and the Teutonic Knights, pledged to poverty and living in splendour, were enthroned in the magnificent castle of Marienburg.

When the knights became thoroughly corrupt, the Polish version of the story runs, Danzig, their ward, applied for the protection of the

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

Polish crown. The city retained a large part of its independence under the new masters. When Poland was placed on the operating-table in 1772, Danzig was amputated from her. When the second operation took place twenty-one years later, Danzig was attached to the Prussian crown. Two years later, when Poland was wiped out of existence, Danzig was already on the way to becoming thoroughly Prussianised. Napoleon declared it a Free Town at Tilsit and placed it under the protection of France, Prussia and Saxony. When the Congress of Vienna tried to solve the enigma of Napoleonic Europe, Danzig was sent back to Prussia, where it remained until 1920. In that year the League of Nations proclaimed it a Free City.

Different is the German version of Danzig's early days. These conflicting histories deserve attention because they form the basis of the controversy centring on Danzig. At the dawn of history, the Germans say, the region round the mouth of the River Vistula was the home of Slavic fishermen. Civilisation in these parts meant the eastward march of Christianity, the first signs of the "Drang nach Osten" of twentieth-century fame. Luebeck, a pioneer harbour in Mecklenburg's peninsular wilderness, used Danzig as a stop-over place for hardy adventurers into the Baltic Sea. Dutch immigrants first taught the natives how to build a dyke. Their work proved to be so enduring that

## ON THE BALTIC SEA

a few years ago, we are told, experts from the United States came to study their secrets for the solution of problems in America.

Danzig in those days had a hinterland of uncharted wealth. It was at the most strategic point of the only highway of the vast lands of eastern central Europe, the Vistula River. Behind the city there were marshes and malaria, forests and packs of wolves, unkempt peasants who lived the life of their room-mates, the pigs, digging the richest soil in the then known world, and producing immense wealth for their barons, history's early racketeers. The river was the great artery of travel.

As a member of the Hanseatic League, an association of about fourscore cities, Danzig enjoyed the privilege of the staple right, well known to mediæval merchants. This right entitled Danzig to have all merchandise in transit displayed for sale during three days. If the merchandise was not sold, it could be forwarded to its destination, except when it was stopped by another Hansa town. The guest right was the other privilege Danzig enjoyed as member of the League. This right meant that the foreigners within city walls were under obligation to consummate their business deals through the intermediary of Danzig's burghers. Thus the citizens of the city had a commission on all transactions passing through foreign hands.

Then the Teutonic Knights were crowded off

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

the stage by the Prussian League, composed of the Prussian gentry and townsmen, and by bitter Czech Hussites who were finding vicarious pleasure in the defeat of the crusaders of the Catholic East. "The League naturally sympathised with Poland," says an English historian, "not only because Poland was the enemy of the knights, but also because under Poland it hoped to enjoy the practical liberty which Polish anarchy already seemed to offer." Thus Poland secured a seaboard when Casimir IV was king, in the second half of the fifteenth century, and Danzig became her harbour.

Yet the parchments in the archives of the Free City of Danzig tell of a strong spirit of independence even under Polish rule. It was in her native German that Danzig corresponded with the Polish kings, nominally her suzerains. The Hanseatic sister towns, Asian potentates, English and French kings informed the city directly about their important events. Louis XVI wrote to Danzig even after her re-incorporation into Prussia that he had granted a Constitution to his realm.

After Danzig had been detached from Poland, it had become a pioneer of German nationalism. It was made the capital of West Prussia, an important Baltic centre. Then came the Poles and laid claim to the city.

"The stumbling-block was the outlet to the sea," Colonel House, President Wilson's confi-

## ON THE BALTIC SEA

dential adviser, wrote in his diary. "There can be no other excepting Danzig. . . . This would leave an Alsace and a Lorraine to rankle and fester for future trouble."

And so it was decided to create a new Alsace-Lorraine. In the commentary on the fourteen points Danzig was already mentioned as a prospective Free City, although there was no question as yet of the Corridor. The Vistula, according to the commentary, was to be internationalised.

The Polish delegate to the Peace Conference, Roman Dmowski, whose patriotic ardour had been stirred by the unexpected help he received in circles close to the White House, found strong words to tell Americans that the Poles have always been the standard-bearers and the Germans the enemies of civilisation.

"Germany is three hundred years behind the balance of civilised Europe in thought," the fiery Pole said, and demanded that Danzig be incorporated into Poland.

President Wilson lent Dmowski his sympathetic attention.

"So strong was the feeling for him as the 'liberator of Poland'," Ray Stannard Baker notes, "that when university men met each other—one of them told me this—they struck hands and cried out 'Wilson' as a greeting."

In a speech of February 20th, 1919, Ignace Paderewski, then prime minister of Poland, declared:

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

“The great results obtained in America ought to be attributed to my sincere friend, the friend of all Poles . . . Colonel Edward House.”

President Wilson was vacillating, the victim of an emotional crisis. At the beginning of the controversy, he was fairly sure that Danzig was a German city and that it should not be detached from the Reich, but under the influence of the Polish spokesmen he veered around to the opposite view. Later he revised his views once more and reached the conclusion that back of the fight for Danzig, the Quai d’Orsay was pulling the wires.

Lloyd George was bitterly opposed to turning Danzig over to the Poles, first, because he knew that it was a purely German city and, second, because it would have made the French too powerful in the north-east of the Continent. He worked himself into a sacred fury, mounted the tribune, and arraigned the French delegation for turning the inter-allied conference into a vaudeville for the acrobatic performances of French diplomats.

“The proposal of the Polish Commission,” Lloyd George wrote in his memorandum, “that we should place 2,100,000 Germans under the control of a people which is of a different religion and which has never proved its capacity for stable self-government throughout its history, must, in my judgment, lead sooner or later to a new war in the East of Europe.”



## ON THE BALTIC SEA

Baron Sonnino, the Italian delegate, pointed out, according to the secret minutes, that in order to attach a few kilometres desired by Poland, about 100,000 Germans had been made Polish subjects. And so it was decided to turn the former Hanseatic town of Danzig, with its population of about 230,000, together with its large rural hinterland, inhabited by about 170,000 persons, into the Free City of Danzig, a sovereign State under the protection of the League of Nations.

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A State cannot be sent to jail if it does wrong. The Free City of Danzig was to be an experiment in bringing a country to book if it strayed from the straight road prescribed by international etiquette. It was placed under the control and protection of world opinion and was given a judge in the person of the High Commissioner of the League of Nations.

The Constitution of Danzig was drawn up with the approval of the League. Her foreign affairs are conducted through Poland and she was made to enter a customs union with the Polish republic. Poland is in charge of Danzig's normal-gauge railways. The port of Danzig is placed under the jurisdiction of a mixed commission of Danzig and Polish citizens. The Free City railways in the harbour district are under a separate administration. While Danzig has her

### THE CAULDRON BOILS

postal sovereignty, Poland has special postal rights in the harbour district. Danzig must have no army and fortifications, but it has its own citizenship, passport, its own government and legislature, its currency and treasury, its own courts and police. Danzig is the headquarters of the High Commissioner of the League of Nations and of the Commissioner of the Polish Republic.

This whittling away of sovereign rights indicates a bold departure from established forms. The important question to be asked is whether it has worked for the advantage of all parties and whether these limitations may serve as examples to the sovereign powers of the world at large.

“Danzig is not a sovereign State or even a State at all,” says a Polish author, Casimir Smorzewski, who in his expositions of these problems strictly adheres to the Polish side. “Constituted as a Free City in accordance with a treaty to which it was foreign, depending on the League of Nations for its domestic affairs, and on Poland for its foreign affairs, Danzig—following the shrewd expression of Viscount Ishii, the Japanese delegate and the first reporter concerning the Free City—is nothing but a ‘community.’”

This is the extreme Polish view, shared by many of those who deny even that the Free City has a right to its present name. To them

## ON THE BALTIC SEA

its real name is Gdansk, a Polish seaport stolen from the Slavs.

"I see no reason why Danzig should not be recognised as a State," the High Commissioner of the League of Nations declared in the autumn of 1924. "I know of no other word than State to describe the status of the Free City."

A serious controversy has arisen about Danzig's standing in foreign relations. The Poles maintain that it is a part of their republic, so far as foreign policy is concerned. If this view is accepted, Danzig automatically becomes a belligerent on the Polish side of the front if war breaks out between Poland and a third power. If the third power is the Reich, the Free City is compelled to fight the Germans.

Danzig holds the opposite view. Poland's part in the foreign policy of the Free City—government house says—is subordinate, and it has merely to execute the orders passed on to it by the Danzig Senate. The treaty, according to this interpretation, entrusts the "conduct" of Danzig's foreign relations to Warsaw. Not since the Council of Constance has there been so much discussion about the meaning of one word. The Poles assert that the word "conduct" implies full charge of Danzig's foreign relations, while Danzig maintains that it makes the Warsaw Foreign Office merely the relay station for the transmission of diplomatic messages to and from the Free City. In other words, Poland cannot

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

decline to transmit such communications except where they would jeopardise her own vital interests. Danzig would have no right, for example, to instruct Warsaw to arrange the Free City's return to the Reich.

"The Polish Foreign Office has been trying to sabotage its duties," a high government official of Danzig told me in the summer of 1932. "A few years ago the government of the United States invited us to adhere to the Pact of Paris. The invitation was sent through the regular diplomatic channels, but Warsaw refused to transmit it to us on the ground that we had no right to sign the Pact. We submitted the case to the League of Nations, which decided in our favour, and to-day we are signatories of the peace pact outlawing war.

"It is our standing complaint that Poland does not look after our interests in the diplomatic field. Our commercial interests are closely connected with those of Lithuania. Since, however, Poland and Lithuania are virtually in a state of war, we are not allowed to have a Lithuanian consul in Danzig and the Lithuanians cannot have our consul in Kovno.

"Our interests demand that we have our own commercial attachés at the principal Polish consulates, but Warsaw cannot see our point of view and our interests are neglected.

"The population of Danzig has been much incensed by the recent navy incident. In the early

## ON THE BALTIC SEA

spring of 1932 the Reich's government notified Warsaw that several units of the German navy would visit Danzig at the end of June to celebrate the five hundredth anniversary of our famous St. Anne Hospital. Warsaw did not send us the notification. It denied having received it, then admitted it, declaring at the same time that the moment was inopportune for the visit, as it would widen the gap between Germany and Poland. We insisted and the incident was settled to our satisfaction."

Next to foreign relations, the fate of the port of Danzig is a sore subject, much discussed in the shadow of Marienkirche. The Port and Waterways Board is a pair of political Siamese twins, who are frequently at cross purposes. The five Polish commissioners see its problems in a different light than the five Danzig commissioners. The chairman of the Board is of Swiss nationality probably, Danzig says ironically, because the Swiss have a great reputation as seafarers. The technical director of the Board is a Danzig citizen and the business director a Pole, two men of two minds, and the position of the arbitrating chairman is not a bed of roses.

The Danzig mail has long been a headliner on the international stage. On the morning of January 5th, 1925, many inhabitants of the Free City blamed the Goldwasser they had drunk the night before for seeing red where they ought to have seen green. During the night a crop of red

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

letter boxes had sprouted in the port district of the city. They remembered distinctly that the day before the boxes were painted green and bore German inscriptions, whereas the red boxes had a Polish text. This was the "letter-box putsch," carried out by Poland on a January night when the good citizens of Danzig were in their beds listening to the howling wind which swooped down on their city on its way from the Arctic Circle.

The incident was responsible for some strong words in the Danzig Senate. Henry Strasburger, the Polish Commissioner in the Free City, stood on his instructions and refused to remove the offensive boxes. The League of Nations was alarmed and the elder statesmen were hastily assembled to decide the momentous question whether the letter-boxes of Danzig should be red or green. In reality, the question was infinitely more serious. The sovereign rights of Danzig were at stake, and the question was to be tested whether the orders of the League of Nations and the words of covenants could be violated because a State has no army to enforce its will. The Council of the League of Nations decided on a compromise which put off matters and solved nothing.

Friction is constant between the two postal authorities. The Danzig Post Office handles the mail of the Free City and the mail between Poland and those parts of Danzig that are not

## ON THE BALTIC SEA

in the port area. The Polish Post Office handles the transit mail between Poland and foreign countries, and also the mail between Poland and the port of Danzig. The Polish post, the Free City complains, likes to invade the territory of the Danzig post by delivering letters outside of its reservations. The Danzig post, not to be outdone, imitates its example. Polish business houses frequently refuse to accept the mail sent to them through the Danzig Post Office.

“Storm in a teacup,” the supercilious visitor says, forgetting that such incidents are symptomatic of deep-seated evils. Both for Poland and for Danzig the matter of the letter-boxes is a question of prestige, for the sake of which Danzig loses about 1,500,000 gulden a year and Poland loses even more.

Then there is the question of the divided railway administration. Danzig complains that Poland tries to smuggle Polish propaganda into the Free City through the railway. For what other reason did the Poles bring to Danzig the railway administration not only of the Free City but also of the Corridor? Poland's Minister of Interior admitted in the Warsaw Sejm that it expected the Danzig railway headquarters to be of assistance in the process of Polonisation. He did not explain, however, how Warsaw hoped to denationalise a city, the population of which is 95 per cent German.

The scheme, as Danzig sees it, works this way.

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

The railway administration has to employ thousands of persons, most of whom are Poles. These employees form the cells of Polish propaganda, and in case of a sudden conflict with Danzig they are expected to be the first line of defence and attack. They are members of a semi-military organisation which has its regular target practices in the territory of a State.

But the railway administration serves another purpose. Those of its employees who are Danzig citizens are given to understand that their jobs would be more secure if their children were going to the Polish schools. If they refuse to take the hint they are told how very sorry the railway chiefs are to dispense with their services.

Danzig protested against the large railway staff and its Polonising propaganda. The League of Nations said that the Free City was right and that it should not be made the home office of a large railway division lying beyond the city jurisdiction. The railway administration must be disbanded but the work is slow and the discrimination against the Free City's native sons is said to continue. A Polish medical committee examines the men and finds Danzigers unfit for duty even though they are men between thirty and forty and in perfect health.

"Time has sanctioned the Polish custom never to consult Danzig's representative," said Staatsrat Buettner, railway expert of the Free City government. In addition to many other complications,



## ON THE BALTIC SEA

Danzig has a railway delegation consisting of three representatives of the port and of one representative of the Free City. The Danzig representative takes part at the meetings of the delegation and makes notices of the decisions but he is "a letter-box in an uninhabited house."

On the list of recriminations the question of the "Westerplatte" occupies a prominent place. Lying at the entrance of the harbour, facing the Baltic Sea on one side and the Dead Vistula on the other, this piece of land was once a favourite outing place of Danzig's pleasure-seeking youth. When the Paris Peace Conference brought the Free City into life it wanted to be sure that Poland's shipments of ammunition could be safely imported through this German port. The problem was solved by making Westerplatte into a Polish ammunition depot, pending the completion of a new Polish port. Although Poland has now a port of her own, Westerplatte is not yet evacuated. Warsaw has applied to Geneva for the recognition of Poland's extra-territorial rights at the entrance to the harbour in order to perpetuate her rights at that strategic position. If Poland's request is granted, a French observer says, she will be able definitely and legally to maintain her fleet near the most vulnerable point of the Free City. In that event the Westerplatte would become a naval and military base.

Such incidents as the appearance of Polish sentinels on the Westerplatte every time a foreign

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

man-of-war steams into Danzig harbour is galling to the citizens of the town, because they create the false impression that the Free City is under alien military occupation. These pin-pricks, Danzig says, have a way of disturbing international relations entirely out of proportion to the importance attached to them by the uninitiated.

"We are having many quarrels with Poland because of her hostile attitude towards us," the head of the Free City, Dr. Ernst Ziehm, president of the Danzig Senate, told me in the course of an interview. Neither side has any illusions about the real nature of their relationship.

"Poland is dissatisfied with our status as a Free City," President Ziehm continued. "She had hoped that our territory would be incorporated into the Polish republic. From the beginning Warsaw has been anxious to correct what it considered a fatal blunder of the great powers. Poland is trying to force us on our knees by boycotting us, as her goal is to have us Polonised. Yet our city will not be intimidated."

Dr. Kaisimir Papee, Poland's Commissioner General to Danzig, made this statement:

"Polish-Danzig matters are clouded in a haze of quarrels, complaints and lawsuits which blur the real view of their relations."

Count Manfredo Gravina, High Commissioner of the League of Nations at Danzig, was just as outspoken in his condemnation of Polish-Danzig relations as President Ziehm, when he gave

## ON THE BALTIC SEA

me a statement in July 1932, shortly before his death:

“That these relations have not always been ideal is a fact that needs no further elaboration. Beyond the least shadow of a doubt, Danzig wants to return to Germany.”

The League's High Commissioner is one of the major planets on Danzig's political firmament. He represents Geneva, which is the source of the Free City's sovereign authority. His is the task of exercising the League's constitutional control.

Count Gravina's work was all the more difficult because he took over his office from Dr. van Hamel, a Dutch jurist, for whom Danzig had no affection. A Sicilian nobleman of Norman-Viking ancestry, the Count brought to his office the broad-mindedness of the best diplomatic school.

“Danzig's status as a Free City,” Count Gravina pointed out in the course of our interview, “represents a new departure in the international field. Danzig has limited sovereignty—a fact of which its inhabitants are in the habit of losing sight. An additional reason for the misunderstandings is due to the fact that the treaties governing Polish-Danzig relations are open to controversial interpretation. No doubt the Poles are trying to bring Danzig under their influence to an extent unwarranted by international agreements.

“Pride in a colourful history has disposed

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

Danzig to adopt a disdainful attitude toward the non-Germanic nations. The Free City is frankly sceptical about the ability of the Poles to run a State. Danzig could never believe that Poland would be able to build a port of her own. But the Polish port of Gdynia is almost ready for business and Danzig's scepticism has been turned into dismay.

"The task of the League's High Commissioner is to hold the balance even. His office is like that of an international court of arbitration and, simultaneously, he is an executive organ of the Council of the League by which he is appointed. Since the continuity of the Council's policy is maintained primarily through its five permanent members, the High Commissioner must pay special attention to the desires of these five powers: France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy and Japan. Thus the High Commissioner must take cognisance, among others, of the Reich's special interest in the Free City. He is greatly handicapped in his work by the intolerant attitude of certain newspapers. Some Polish organs, for instance, cannot print my name without the adjective 'the German agent,' or 'the disloyal servant of the League.'

"The High Commissioner is often inclined to despair of the futility of his work. No sooner has he decided a question to the best of his knowledge than it is re-submitted to him in another form.

## ON THE BALTIC SEA

“It is a comfort for me that in six cases out of seven my decisions have been upheld by the League of Nations. The final decision about the seventh case is pending.

“The power of the High Commissioner is extensive. He has the right to call in Polish troops to prevent serious disorders, without having to await instructions from the League.”

Count Gravina showed me the list of controversial subjects awaiting his final decision, which corroborated his statement that Danzig's problems die hard. In the summer of 1932 the question of the Polish postal service in Danzig, known as the “green line controversy,” was still an unfinished business.

Another standing complaint on Danzig's part is the coercion exercised on Danzig railway employees of German speech to send their children to the Polish school. The presence and mysterious doings of Polish sentinels on the Westerplatte are another cause of Danzig's grief. The problem of the distribution of the customs revenue collected on the Danzig frontier has long kept the High Commissioner and the League busy with claims and counter-claims.

The Poles, on the other hand, complain about the alleged sabotage of Danzig in housing their railway employees. Another perennial grievance of Warsaw is the discrimination between Danzig against Polish labour looking for work.

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## THE CAULDRON BOILS

“Nec temere, nec timide,” reads the inscription on the backs of richly carved chairs built by master hands for patricians who ventured into the Far East to look fate in the face. The ships of those merchant princes plied the seven seas and their caravans knew the way to India. “Not recklessly nor timidly,” Danzig’s gates informed the visitor. The city of merchants coveted no territory but did not want to be subservient to alien will.

Stern men in black garments look down from solid walls—erstwhile city rulers who live in portraits and memories. Dr. Ernst Ziehm, president of the Danzig Senate, has not a stern look and he wears the uninteresting dress of the twentieth century. No diadem adorns his brow and no livery collar pricks his neck, such as his predecessors in office were wont to wear. The head of the Danzig Senate has a kind look in his eyes. On his chair, too, the inscription reads: “Nec temere, nec timide.” President Ziehm did not mince his words:

“We have been detached from the Reich against our will, although we are Germans by blood and our economic interests attract us to the Reich. Before we were set up as a Free City our hinterland was East Prussia, from which we were cut away. The Allied Powers forced us to conclude a customs union with Poland and we are the losers in the bargain. Poland’s disregard of our economic interests has caused bad blood

## ON THE BALTIC SEA

among our population and has made our business people particularly bitter."

Relations' between Poland and Danzig were strained when this interview was given in July 1932. The incident with the German warships, mentioned before, was over and both sides imagined they were worsted. There was a war scare a short time before. A Polish general, at the end of a copious meal, hinted at aggressive measures against Danzig. Hitler's Brown Shirts retaliated by drumming up public interest in their work. Polish newspapers printed alarming stories about an impending Nazi *coup d'état*. The master of Munich's Brown House, Adolf Hitler, was said to plan the removal of his headquarters to the Free City. A short time before, he made a stop there in the course of an airplane tour and was the object of hearty demonstration. The Free City was under the rule of a conservative government. A few visiting English journalists were sending frantic despatches to their papers about the impending invasion of the Free City by Polish troops. A few months before, there were rumours in Danzig that Warsaw had applied to the League of Nations to authorize the occupation of the Free City.

"In spite of the fact," President Ziehm continued, "that we have a customs union with Poland, she has been erecting trade barriers against our merchandise. The Poles seize our goods entering their territory on the pretext that

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

they are smuggled wares. Polish business men are discouraged to deal with us and they are gradually turning to other sources of supply.

“Although Poland is bound by the decisions of the League and the High Commissioners to make full use of Danzig harbour, she has built another port in the immediate vicinity of our city, so as to stifle our sea-borne commerce and make us yield to her wish. The Poles are building a direct line between their Upper Silesian industrial territory and the new port, and they are feeding this line with their exports and imports to the detriment of our interests. Two League commissions are in Danzig at the present moment, in order to study the question of Poland’s economic boycott against us and our complaints against the new Polish port.”

“The Poles are driving us into despair and the world into a new war,” another high government official of Danzig told me. “Once more Germany will be forced to broach the question of her eastern front and such discussions are charged with high voltage. Neither Germany nor we can or want to do anything by force, but if the occasion arises we will defend ourselves to the last ditch. We have our own police force, about a thousand men, and a Self-defence Corps, with a membership of some three thousand. In the hour of danger there will be no difference between men and women in protecting our country from invasion.”



## ON THE BALTIC SEA

Meanwhile Danzig signed an economic accord with Poland to run for three years, which has eased the situation somewhat. But the fundamental difficulties remain, because they are rooted in the union into which the Free City was forced.

The name of the "Free City" is somewhat misleading, as only a small part of its territory is occupied by the town itself. Most of Danzig consists of farmland and hilly woods. In the west of the Free City the land is undulating and in the east it is flat and fertile. There are more than 16,000 farms in the Free City. The train from Marienburg, on the Danzig-German frontier, to Danzig City takes more than two hours, and on both sides of the tracks the visitor is delighted by the sight of cultivated countryside.

Before the peace settlement Danzig belonged to a country—the Reich—in which her rural products fetched satisfactory prices. She is now connected with a country—as a result of the Polish-Danzig customs union—which has an agricultural surplus and the Free City has no way of competing with Poland in selling its farm produce in the international markets. Danzig, to begin with, pays sometimes three times the wages Poland pays. Taxes, too, are higher in Danzig than in Poland, since a population of slightly more than 400,000 has to carry the burden of a complete government machine. Danzig has retained the more liberal German system of social

### THE CAULDRON BOILS

legislation, which calls for larger disbursements to community welfare than Poland's laws.

It is in the industrial field, however—as Danzig sees the problem—that the antagonism is more acute. The basis of the economic relations of the two countries is the Warsaw Agreement of 1921, which provides for reciprocal obligations. The thesis announced by the Free City is that Warsaw wants to crush Berlin's little brother, Danzig, in the economic field. It is worth while to touch here briefly on this aspect of the controversy.

In the summer of 1932 Danzig was appalled by what it considered the efforts of Poland to place it under an economic quarantine. Black-edged posters announced the names of those Poles who visited Zoppot, Danzig's popular seaside resort. "The following persons are dead for Poland," the posters announced. They were nailed on the doors of the victims and they were on the walls of public buildings. In the trains of the Danzig line a questionnaire was distributed: "Why do you go to Danzig?" "Is it patriotic to visit the Free City?" "Is it not your duty to patronize Polish firms?"

Polish public opinion was threatening. Warsaw business men were seen buying their tickets to Gdynia, the new Polish port, and sneaking from there into Danzig. They were afraid of social ostracism by giving away the secret that they were bound for Danzig.

## ON THE BALTIC SEA

Poland summoned her Slavic ingenuity to enforce the economic boycott. Veterinary measures were employed to keep the sweet-water fish of Danzig's rivers out of Poland. Poland increased the tax on sugar from Danzig to such an extent that it was almost as high as the selling price of Polish sugar.

Fish and sugar were the smaller casualties in the campaign. Poland was after bigger game. She began to seize the so-called contingent goods which had been admitted to the Free City duty-free, in accordance with an international agreement, to cover the special needs of its industries with raw materials and semi-finished products originating in the Reich. This privilege had been accorded Danzig with a view to saving its industries from collapse. The old channels of trade were to be kept partly open until new means of communication could be constructed.

Poland announced that this privilege was misused to smuggle merchandise into the Free City and from there into Poland. Revenue agents visited the shops of Polish merchants known to be in business relations with Danzig wholesalers. The raids were made during business hours, so as to embarrass the shopkeepers even more. The agents asked for proof that the merchandise did not contain Danzig contingent goods. The merchants could not supply the proof, there was a row and the purchasers disappeared.

The system of import licenses helped to serve

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

the same purpose. Polish importers received customs reimbursements, while Danzig's commerce was throttled. The Polish Ministry of Finance openly admitted that its object was to concentrate commerce in Polish hands. The State was gradually collecting the threads of industry and commerce. Warsaw's object was a disguised form of State socialism.

"If we take into consideration," Danzig remarked in a proposal to change the existing economic régime, "that there is scarcely a branch of import or export to-day not controlled, regimented, standardised or pooled in syndicates, or not supported by the Polish State, one can have no idea of the danger to which Danzig's commerce is exposed."

The offensive went on with relentless energy. Poland organised her wheat exporting activities in such a way as to deprive the Free City of its leading position as a distributing centre. Previously it had handled more than a half of the Polish wheat trade. The sugar export business was turned over to a Polish bank in Posen, although it had been a profitable sideline for Danzig.

How should the customs receipts be distributed between the Free City and the Polish republic? The arrangement is that Danzig is to retain one-third of the customs duties it collects on its frontiers. The Danzig Senate has informed the League of Nations that this revenue is hardly

## ON THE BALTIC SEA

sufficient to pay for the expenses of Danzig's customs force. The Free City is not willing to succumb without a struggle.

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"The death-knell of Danzig's position is sounded," a newspaper of the Free City announced. The High Commissioner of the League received urgent messages from the Senate. International experts were consulted and Geneva was called upon to say the decisive word. The name of the danger was Gdynia—Gdingen the Germans call it—the new port built by Poland.

"It is an economic necessity," the Poles informed the world.

"It is a device to crush us," Danzig declared.

When the Russian army was marching on Warsaw in the summer of 1920, Danzig stevedores refused to unload arms and ammunition coming from France and destined for Poland. The labourers of the Free City did not want to help "the minions of capitalism," as the labour paper said, "to drown in blood the awakening proletariat of the East."

It was then that Warsaw decided to build a Polish port on the site of a fishing village, about fifteen miles from Danzig. The Free City was incredulous. It had felt perfectly safe in its position as the only port of Poland. Did it not have traditions of many centuries to support its claim to the title of the Queen of the Baltic?

### THE CAULDRON BOILS

The Polish journalist who showed us around in Gdynia did not want to betray his pride of this achievement, but he looked at us from the corner of his eye to see our reaction to the new oil mill. Then he looked at us to see what we thought of the new crane. A cold storage of some 10,000 square metres is an extremely prosaic thing to an indifferent visitor but it is a marvellous structure to a patriotic Pole who wants to show the world that "Poland is not lost yet . . ." The floating dock for boats of less than 5,000 tons is small in comparison to the leviathans of the Mersey and the Elbe, but its completion is an event of national importance to an eastern European country less than two decades old.

The French priest in the party hastily concluded a Franco-Polish alliance with our guide. He inquired about the navy of the republic and was pleased to be shown the fleet anchored in Gdynia : a few U boats and destroyers, and an ex-cruiser of French origin, unable to move under its own steam, used as a school-ship.

The Polish journalist and the French priest decided that Poland must be made more navy-minded. A German pocket battleship, the Frenchman had read somewhere, could reduce Gdynia to ashes in a few hours. What is more, it could lend effective support to the enveloping movement of the Reichswehr advancing southwards from the West and from East Prussia.

"The Germans have about first-class ports

## ON THE BALTIC SEA

for a population of 63,000,000," the Polish journalist said, "but they cannot see why we, a nation of 32,000,000 inhabitants, should have the use of two ports."

The Frenchman thought that the Germans were extremely unfair and that something ought to be done about them. His eyes brightened, however, when he was told that in spite of German machinations the white eagle of the Polish republic now spans the four corners of the earth.

New York now sees the Polish flag on steamers bought from the East Asiatic Company. In the spring of 1932 the new line of Gdynia-Gulf of Mexico was opened. Almost at the same time Warsaw reached an agreement with the Finska Aangfartyks A. B. to start a weekly service between Gdynia and Finnish harbours. The Polish port is connected with Scandinavian cities and with the ports of England and France, while the sailing schedule from the Free City is shrinking.

"The port of Gdynia," a writer in *Le Temps* of Paris wrote, "is undoubtedly one of the most remarkable manifestations of Poland's creative forces. In a few years a city has been created with impressive buildings remindful of the grandiose structures of New York and Chicago and with an energy worthy of America's pioneers

Part of the port was carved out of land,

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

channels were dredged and a large breakwater was built. An extensive railway station, a metropolitan post office, spacious administrative buildings for the port authorities, the most modern storehouses and refrigeration plants<sup>4</sup> were built to make Gdynia attractive to foreign shipping. Obviously, this was Poland's bid to be the heir of American pioneers. The world was to be shown of what efforts a new nation is capable, seeking a place in the sun. The contemptuous smile of the Germans must disappear and they must feel the driving power of an inspiring nationalism. Danzig, too, was to be punished for its obstructive tactics and was to be shown its place. If the Free City was not satisfied with its fate, Poland would show it what a privilege it was to be a port of the great Slav power.

Danzig is not yet convinced whether Gdynia is not going to join the shades of the colossal ideas that cannot survive the touch of reality. Its engineers say that on Gdynia's sandy shore considerable littoral drift occurs and that its site is exposed to silting up and that the heavy expenses of its upkeep will make it unprofitable. In about every ten years, German experts say, Gdynia is subject to be swept by tidal waters which have been known to recur regularly in these regions. The port is open to the winds, others say, and it does not afford shelter to boats at all times.

German writers question Gdynia's success also on economic grounds. They see in it a fly-by-



## ON THE BALTIC SEA

night venture, which has some use as long as Lithuania and Poland are at loggerheads but will disappear as soon as the end of the state of war between the two countries opens the River Niemen to timber floating. They foresee the doom of the port as soon as economic necessity connects Polish Upper Silesia with the German port of Stettin through the waterways of the Oder.

Meanwhile Gdynia's trade is growing by leaps and bounds. It was less than two million tons in 1928 and three years later it was more than five million. During the same period Danzig's trade decreased. In the year 1930 just about a half of Poland's export trade was shipped through Gdynia and the first six months of the following year it was already 64 per cent. Gdynia appears even in better light if the value of the merchandise through the two ports is compared.

Danzig became alarmed. Whatever the ultimate fate of Gdynia will be, it is a dangerous competitor. The Free City gave official utterance to apprehensions that Polish policy has doomed Danzig to gradual decline. Gdynia is a spite port, Danzig merchants said. To American tourists they explained the situation like this: "Imagine Peekskill, just a few miles from Manhattan, building a port in competition with New York. This would be inconceivable. But imagine a country in which the government has dictatorial powers in economic matters and which would have the means of diverting New York's traffic to Peek-

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

skill through freight rebates and special railway lines. Imagine, furthermore, that the government was making it the patriotic duty of the citizens to ship their merchandise through Peekskill and would brand as unpatriotic those who continued to patronise New York."

And so the battle began between Danzig and Gdynia which turned out to be a drama in tons. Its heroes and villains are exporters and importers and its outcome is awaited in all central and eastern Europe with bated breath.

Danzig's argument is that the Free City was created to give Poland a port. Now that she has Gdynia what is the use of the Free City? As long as the present arrangement exists, however—Danzig claims—its port is entitled to the Polish trade to the full extent of its capacity. Danzig comes first and Gdynia comes second.

Poland does not admit, of course, that her aim is to shunt Danzig aside. Such an admission would give substance to the Free City's request to be returned to the Reich. She argues that the new republic needs two ports or even more. She finds therefore no violation of international agreements on her part.

"Danzig is to-day what it was as early as the sixteenth century," a Polish Minister said, "an eye with which Poland looks at the world. But one cannot see well with one eye—one has to have two of them."

"Danzig has lost nothing because of Gdynia,"

## ON THE BALTIC SEA

say the Poles. "Its trade in 1931 was 8,300,000 tons against 2,112,000 tons in 1913. Danzig's participation in Poland's foreign trade was five times more in 1930 than in 1922."

The president of the Polish railways in Danzig states that Danzig's trade increased 1.43 per cent in the slump year of 1930, as compared with a decrease of 23 per cent in the trade of Stettin, the nearest German port of importance. Danzig's traffic during the twelve years of customs union with Poland, according to the same authority, was 11,887,636 tons larger than during thirty-four years of customs union with Germany before the war. He explains this rise by pointing out that before the war Danzig was separated from what to the Poles seems to be its natural market—the Vistula basin. Under the old regime, Warsaw says, Danzig was adversely affected by the customs policy of the Russian imperial government, which was seeking to promote the interests of the native ports.

Tracing Danzig's role in eastern Europe's trade for half a century, a Polish author points out that the city was the queen of the Baltic Sea only until the advent of the railway in the seventies. Russia began to discriminate against the German ports so as to give her trade to her own Baltic ports, Libau, Mitau and Riga, which she connected with her central provinces and with the Black Sea. The Russo-German commercial treaties toward the turn of the century

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

—abolishing Russian discrimination against German ports—came too late to undo the damage.

Danzig answers that the increase of its trade in recent years is purely fictitious. Under the new régime it is handling mostly coal in transit, which yields little to the city beyond coal dust. Before the war Danzig traded in valuable materials which gave excellent business opportunities to its tradesmen. The tonnage of valuable export and import material was larger before the war.

Contradicting the Polish statement that Danzig is now re-united with its natural hinterland, spokesmen for the Free City assert that their port achieved its importance before the war because it was the harbour of East and West Prussia, besides being a principal outlet for Polish corn. But East and West Prussia are now closed to Danzig.

What is the sense, one is inclined to ask, of spending millions to build a new port when Danzig can take care of more than Poland's sea-borne trade? Danzig's capacity is more than 14 million tons, whereas in 1931 the total turnover of goods in Danzig and Gdynia was less than 14 million tons. If outside capital were available, Danzig's capacity could be further increased. Out of a frontier line of 2,600 miles Poland has a sea-shore of about 70 miles, and it is unnatural, the Germans say, to try to push the entire trade of the country through this narrow bottle-neck.

## ON THE BALTIC SEA

Danzig's contention is that since the two ports cannot be operated profitably, one of them must disappear and that the Free City is to be the victim. To achieve this end, Danzig charges, Poland has exempted Gdynia's industrial and trading houses from various taxes and has extended to them government building credits. Polish firms have, furthermore, obtained State lands along the water-front at a nominal rental. Foreign importers are said to have been notified that no customs rebates will be granted on goods shipped through the "foreign port" of Danzig. The emigrant traffic, previously routed via Danzig, is being diverted to the new Polish port, and the former Baltic-America Line has been made to transfer its headquarters to Gdynia.

Poland is accused of further trying to wreck Danzig's financial standing by introducing a system of preferential freight tariffs in favour of the Free City's rival. Although Danzig is about fifteen miles nearer Poland's industrial regions than Gdynia, freight rates, established by special administrative acts, are the same to both ports. This deprives the Free City of its natural advantages.

A major battle of the economic warfare is bitterly fought along the proposed railway line connecting Eastern Upper Silesia with the Polish seaport.

"Wasted money," Danzig says and Germany concurs in its view. "Poland does not need the

### THE CAULDRON BOILS

new line and she should not have staked so much money on a hazardous plan."

"The new line is an absolute necessity," the Poles answer. "We have to be the masters of our house."

The new Silesia-Gdynia line will give Poland access to the sea without passing through the territory of the Danzig Free City. The construction of this line is a sign of Poland's desire to emancipate herself from Danzig and to turn to economic autarchy—self-sufficiency. The new line, when completed, will run from Herby in Upper Silesia through Zdunska Wala, Inowrac-taw (Hohensalza) and Bydgoszcz (Bromberg) to the coast. It is Poland's bid for a place on the seven seas, a spark from the flame which lighted pre-war Germany's way to the East.

"The line will have the advantage," said the director of the maritime department of the Polish Ministry of Commerce and Industry, "of enabling our Czech neighbours to avoid Germany and to send at least a part of their overseas exports through the Polish port."

The line was thus to become also the messenger of the new Pan-Slav idea, the economic expression of the tendency of the "hands across the Carpathians."

Gdynia and its railway have brought a new factor into Franco-Polish relations. They have reinforced the economic alliance of the two countries with an economic partnership. Gdynia

## ON THE BALTIC SEA

was built with the aid of a Franco-Polish consortium, representing the Société de Construction de Batignolles, Schneider & Cie., the Société Anonyme Hersant and the Polski Bank Przemislowy of Lemberg. The Société Franco-Polonaise des Chemins de Fer undertook to complete the new railway line and to build a branch into the Dombrowa coal region. The ubiquitous Schneider-Creusot concern, together with the Banque des Pays du Nord, underwrote the eight-fifteenths share of the capital, and the Polish treasury subscribed the rest. The new line will reduce the distance between Upper Silesia and Gdynia about fifteen per cent. In the summer of 1932, however, plans for finishing the railway struck a snag, so that the day of its opening had to be postponed.

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“If there had not been a coal strike in England,” a German observer said, “Poland would be to-day either out of business or in Danzig.”

In the year 1924 Poland exported 41,000 tons of coal via Danzig, and in the following year she exported 618,000 tons. When the general council of the Trades Union Congress of the United Kingdom proclaimed the general strike on May 1st, 1926, Poland had good cause to congratulate herself. The harvest might last only a few weeks or it might sway the future of the republic, but it saved Poland from an economic calamity.

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

The Scandinavian countries needed coal and they could not get it from England. The Polish coal was on its way in Danzig bottoms. Both the Free City and Poland invested millions in Danzig's port. Danzig handled 3,400,000 tons of coal in that year alone. French and Italian steamers came begging for Polish coal. Danzig strained every ounce of its energy and met the demand. Silesian coal brought purchasers of Polish lumber and Danzig harbour was busy as it had never been before.

For years the high-pressure work kept on. Returning freight cars were loaded with scrap iron to keep Silesia's blast furnaces busy, and Danzig prospered. At Weichselmuende a new basin was built for bulk cargoes. Super-cranes were built and railway yards were extended; new piers were added and new channels were dredged. Danzig's capacity was increased to 14,000,000 tons. The Free City was ready for the race with Hamburg and Bremen.

Gdynia and the economic crises dispelled the dreams. Danzig had a fit of nerves. How does a rural lout dare to enter into competition with the queen of the Baltic Seas? Have Uhpagenhaus and Artushof lost their fascination, does Marienkirche not proclaim a glorious past?

Danzig decided on a radical step. It took its Gdynia controversy to the League of Nations in effort to make Geneva decide that Poland was under obligation to make full use of Danzig's



## ON THE BALTIC SEA

facilities. The Free City went even further and asked for a decision to compel Warsaw to ship export and import merchandise through Danzig and to stop favouring the competitive port.

A committee of experts advised the High Commissioner of the League that Poland was under obligation to make full use of Danzig, but that she was under no obligation to grant Danzig a trade monopoly. The High Commissioner decided that Warsaw had no right, under the international law, to extend preferential treatment to other ports. While the Polish government could not be forced to divert private trade to Danzig, the High Commissioner held that it was bound by covenants to give the Free City a fair share of the business transactions to which it was a party. Danzig won an important litigation but did it win also the economic battle?

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At a round table conference there were three Polish representatives, Messrs. Bartel, Kuehn and Strasburger, and three Danzig representatives, Messrs. Arczynsky, Jewelowsky and Wirczynsky. It is significant that the three Poles had German names and the three Danzig representatives had Polish names. These names help to explain Danzig's perplexities.

In the hour of Poland's triumph the affections of patriots went out to brothers unredeemed. The success of the Polish republic would cause

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

a change of heart in the Germanised population of Danzig. The nationalist idea did, indeed, grow in the Free City but it did not favour Poland. Danzig takes pride in being one of the most German cities of the Continent.

“Is Danzig not a living commentary on the absurdity of the peace treaty?” an official of the Free City asked me. “We are called the most Prussian city in Europe and yet we must not belong to the Reich.”

In her relations with Poland, Danzig has behaved like the young lady of sentimental plays married to an undesirable suitor. She has locked her door against her husband and has surrounded herself with the portraits of the beloved cavalier. All attempts at reconciliation have failed. The only way out would be a divorce, but that cannot be regarded at present as a practical step. The pride of a humiliated husband and the sacredness of the written word are at stake.

Danzig has made her political separation from Poland complete. Its major political parties are identical with those of the Reich and it has followed Berlin's example in initiating social legislation. The Danzig tribunals judge according to German laws. The Free City reads the same books and listens to the same lectures as the Reich. Economic interests have not led Danzig into the arms of Poland.

It is often said that even though Danzig is opposed to Poland it would not want to be re-

#### ON THE BALTIC SEA

united with the Reich. I could find no evidence to corroborate this belief. Government officials, merchants and proletarians are one in condemnation of the present régime. Danzig does not want to fight—could not fight even if it wanted to—but it is convinced that the present settlement is only temporary and that once more peace will reign on the Baltic shores and that Europe will be rid of the Danzig problem.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### IN TEUTONIC LAND

THE road to Bischofswerder was flanked by trees and it wound up and down like a scenic railway. Slow-moving glaciers had ground the angularities of the country into pleasing contours and left their tools in the form of moraines. This was East Prussia, Germany's Far East, the country of many lakes and many battles.

Castle Schoenberg came into view and reminded the visitor that no part of the earth's surface has been more fought over than East Prussia, the eastern outpost of Germanism, and the great question mark. The turreted walls and heavy bastions revived memories of armoured knights, with the gospel in one hand and with the lance in the other. Here feudal masters have been mounting guard for centuries, the rulers of man and beast, lake and wood.

Tannenberg, further to the East, overlooking waving wheat-fields, turns to Poland the monumental façade of its war memorial. Here five hundred years ago the Teutonic Knights were routed and here their spiritual heirs sealed the

## IN TEUTONIC LAND

doom of the Russian empire in the first year of the World War. The shot that ended the life of the Russian General Samsonov dispelled the myth of the invincible steam-roller. East Prussia was freed from the nightmare, and victory was to have its reward.

Victory brought its reward in the form of a mutilated country and an aggressive neighbour, who has replaced the lethargic Russian. Poland is within sight of Tannenberg and East Prussia is apprehensive.

Further to the East are the Masurian Lakes which proved the undoing of the Russian Rennen-kampf. "During the 28 days' invasion of East Prussia," the chronicler says, "the Russians had lost some 310,000 men from the flower of their army, and 650 guns." The lakes took the side of the West against the invasion of the East. After this gigantic feat of arms, it was hoped, the Germans would crash the gates of Valhalla.

The car sped on, stirring up silver clouds and frightening absent-minded geese out of their wits. Although it was passing through several villages its occupants saw no other automobiles for miles. Then cobbled road became uneven, overgrown with dusty green. Then there was road no more, merely a maze of weeds and a wooden barrier painted red and white. We had arrived at the frontier and the road was closed. Since Poland became East Prussia's neighbour some 150 roads had to be closed to through traffic.

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

The frontier is open only seven hours on weekdays and five hours on Sundays for local traffic. If a doctor is needed on the other side of the boundary outside of the frontier hours the complications arise. Towns are separated from their cemeteries, churches from their parishioners, highways and bridges from their communities, and rivers from their hinterlands.

Before the war the entire countryside was German, but now it is partly Polish. The farmer lives in the Reich, but his parcel of land is under the protection of the Polish eagle. He goes to his Landrat and asks for a *Wirtschaftsausweis*, which entitles him to pass from his house to his cornfield. The Landrat informs the Polish starosta and if he does not object, all is well with the farmer. But sometimes he objects and then the farmer is ruined. And sometimes the starosta insists that the farmer must not go from his house, which is in Germany, to his garden, which is in Poland, outside of frontier hours, which deprives the farmer of the best part of the day.

On the wall of a house I was shown a streak of white paint. The international frontier runs right through the house, so that when the farmer's wife goes into her kitchen she enters another country. A crime committed in one room may make the accused liable to a death sentence, while the same crime, if committed in the other room, may be dealt with more leniently. A practical joker had painted an eagle on the Polish side of

## IN TEUTONIC LAND

the house and the swastika, the emblem of the German National Socialists, on the side of the Reich.

We entered a garden, shaded by linden trees, which were planted when Napoleon was emperor of the French. A young farmer, sitting on a rough bench, was biting his nails in an effort to write a letter. He motioned to us to proceed,—obviously he was accustomed to visitors.

Our escort stayed behind and we, relying on the promise to see something unusual, were rambling in the garden when we were halted by a sharp "Stop!" It was the voice of our escort, who pointed gleefully to a small white stone marked "P," Poland. By stepping beyond the stone, we were told, we could have managed to spend the hot summer in a nice, cool cell for crossing into Poland without authorisation.

Herr Bürgermeister was waiting for us on the steps of the Town Hall, dressed in solemn cutaway and slightly nervous. Will he make a good impression on the foreign visitor? Every East Prussian is a propagandist of his nation's cause, especially the Herren Bürgermeister. The land of Kant has gone into high-pressure salesmanship, trying to sell the idea that if the world does not awake to remove the source of danger, the flames of another international powder box might light the midnight sky.

We entered the council room, arranged for the lecture. A multi-coloured map was dangling on

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

the blackboard and Herr Bürgermeister was telling us the story of East Prussia's misery. He quoted figures and produced maps in profusion. Although he must have told the same story many times, there was a wistful intensity in his voice.

"This used to be a busy place," Herr Bürgermeister said after we had adjourned to the public square, and he looked reproachfully at the weeds crowding the chinks of cobblestones. There used to be a weekly fair in town to which the farmers came from the entire district. Now the town has joined the mournful cavalcade of the *citta morta*, which fringe the Polish frontier.

The "Hostelry of the White Horse" was deserted and the public taverns have left the town. The grocer sat on a barrel of apples and counted his pennies. Business is not good to-day and will not be better to-morrow. The town is cut off from the world, stranded on a lonely island, and round about there are menacing waves—nothing but waves and sharks. The grocer became eloquent—his dream had always been to sit in the town council.

Under the summer sun the town looked like the accursed castle in the fairy tale in which everyone is asleep. Even the flies seemed to have gone to rest and the air was heavy with drowsiness. The charm was broken by the whistle of a train. "Where there are trains," the East says, "there is hope." But for this town there is no hope. The railway line runs on the other side of



## IN TEUTONIC LAND

the frontier, but it might as well be hundreds of miles away. There has been a tariff war between Germany and Poland for many years and the row of small white stones which indicate the frontier form a bar as impenetrable as if they were the stones of an unscalable wall.

How large is the number of the unemployed in Herr Bürgermeister's town? Half of the population has no work and the rest has so little to do that it can barely keep body and soul together. About one-third of the jobless population is "ausgesteuert"—it is no longer entitled to government relief, but has to fall back on municipal charity and—here the lips of Herr Bürgermeister curled into a bitter smile—the municipality itself needs support.

The Prussian Regency of Marienwerder has compiled a long list of frontier incidents to show that the frontier in these regions is a law unto itself. Herr Martens of Rudnerweide, for example, fared ill because no device has yet been found to keep the frontier permit in a bathing suit. He was bathing in the Vistula, which is in Poland, in front of his house, which is in Germany, when two Polish frontier policemen emerged from the bushes on the river bank and asked for his frontier permit. Yet the policemen could not follow Herr Martens to his house, which was outside of Poland, and they thought they could not let him go there, because then he would have eluded their authority. And so the complications arose which

### THE CAULDRON BOILS

had their sequel in midnight examinations in Polish prisons, in a trial, and in jail sentences for Herr Martens' two sons—incidents that 'would not deserve to be mentioned if they were not so symptomatic of the troubles of East Prussia and of the Polish Corridor.

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To the casual visitor the road from Marienburg to Marienwerder is not different from any other road in the province of East Prussia, but for those who are sensitive to the discomfort of a sultry air the landmarks of the highway assume a profound significance. Across the River Nogat the rural quiet of the "Marienburger Werder"—a part of the Free City of Danzig—belies the fear that speaks of war. But the Gothic magnificence of Marienburg Schloss speaks of centuries in which religion was barricaded behind fortress walls and Teutonic valour was the Occident's stake against the paganism of the Orient. The huge Madonna on the walls of the Schloss was then a challenge and a target of attacks. The "Hochmeister" of the Order, whose residence this was since the thirteenth century, symbolised German aggressiveness and the urge to colonise.

The road follows the River Nogat to the "Three Countries Corner," where Germany, Poland and Danzig meet. "Traité de Versailles," a boundary stone announces, and if one was not sure that it had been set up by the Frontier Com-

## IN TEUTONIC LAND

mission, one would think it was the work of a practical joker. A cross looks down from the hilltop, the symbol of the plebiscite victory which placed the right bank of the Nogat into German hands. A "Jugendherberg" enables German boys to see the work of the Peace Conference at a crucial spot. Here, the pessimist says, the powder-box will explode if another accident sets the fuse aflame.

The road winds its way to Stuhm and Stuhmsdorf, to Rehhof and Rachelshof, following the dyke which protects this region from the flood damages of the Nogat and the Vistula. To the East there are the lowlands, the "Niederungen," a stretch of land some fifteen miles wide, lying lower than the river.

Where a river separates two countries, the frontier usually runs in the middle of the stream. The fathers of the Peace of Versailles ignored this axiom of international law. They cut off East Prussia from the Vistula and gave the river to Poland, so that the boundary line runs parallel with the dyke. The dyke is under the authority of a joint commission of the representatives of the two countries.

Why should the peace conference have made this exception and why should it not have given half of the stream to the Reich? Why this unusual procedure and the humiliation of the Germans? It is not difficult to give the answers to these questions. Even detached Polish opinion

### THE CAULDRON BOILS

admits that the frontier here was drawn for strategical reasons. Poland has a great advantage over the Reich while she is in possession of the river and the dyke. She had access to the German side, while Germany has no access to her side of the river. Moreover, she has an unobstructed view of many miles of East Prussian territory and, above all, by cutting the dyke in case of war she could retard the arrival of the enemy forces.

At Kurzebrack, East Prussia has her main access to the Vistula. The river harbour at this place is under Polish sovereignty and there is too much red tape connected with reaching the stream. The Vistula, the Germans complain, has become a dead river, which is being silted up and deserted by river craft. They point out that one may sit on the river bank for hours without seeing a boat and they remind the visitor of the animation which characterised the Vistula under German rule. They point out that the Vistula was turned over to Poland in order to assure her a free and secured access to the sea and that Poland has neglected to make use of this precious gift. They say that the Allies would have had no justification for detaching Danzig from the Reich if they had known that the river to which it owed much of its prosperity would not be utilised by its new masters.

The Poles admit that they do not keep the Vistula in fit condition and plead their lack of capital to make the best use of its possibilities.

## IN TEUTONIC LAND

We follow the dyke to the four East Prussian villages which had been given to Poland for reasons too obscure to explore. To the Germans they are a constant source of humiliation and irritation. They say that these four villages are the most eloquent propagandists for German irredenta.

And so we come to the Muensterwalder bridge, which for years has been the object of Polish suspicions and German accusations, an international irritant. It was constructed a few years before the war at a cost of nearly three million dollars—one of the largest bridges in eastern Europe, and the only bridge between Graudenz and Dirschau. When the Vistula was given to the Poles, they came into possession of the Muensterwalder bridge and they tore it down.

Warsaw says that the Germans needed the bridge for their military plans and that it served no useful purpose for Poland.

“Only 528 persons used the bridge in one year,” a Polish spokesman of the Warsaw Foreign Office told me, “for crossing from Poland to East Prussia, and 412 used it in the opposite direction. About twenty cars and thirty horse-drawn vehicles used the bridge in that year. We found that under such circumstances each person crossing the bridge cost us seventy-five dollars a year.

“The bridge was not demolished but removed to Thorun (Thorn), further up the river. In the course of our work we found a pair of normal-

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

gauge railway tracks on the bridge hidden under a wooden pavement."

This discovery strengthened the belief of the Poles that East Prussia was secretly arming. This has been a favourite hobby-horse of Polish nationalists. The supposition was that East Prussia was taking advantage of the Allies' permission to retain the defence system of the Koenigsberg fortifications to build up a chain of military strongholds. The discovery of the tracks on the Muensterwalder bridge seemed to substantiate Polish fears.

The Germans flatly contradicted the Polish contentions.

"It is not true," they said, "that the bridge was transferred, although the Poles did use some of its material for the construction of a street bridge at Thorn. This bridge, however, is much shorter than was the Muensterwalder bridge and it is only for the use of pedestrians, while the other bridge was also for vehicles and trains.

"No one wants to deny that the bridge was used for military trains during the war, but there was nothing unusual in that. The Muensterwalder bridge was not the only one to be used for that purpose. Nor was anything unusual in our covering up the tracks after the war. If we had wanted to conceal them we should have probably used stronger material than wooden planks.

"Incidentally, the new bridge at Thorn will come under the Poles in good stead to strengthen

## IN TEUTONIC LAND

their military position in that section, as it will enable them to transform the other bridge of the city into a railway bridge of considerable strategic importance."

By cutting off East Prussia from the rest of the Reich and from her important lines of communication, the inhabitants of the province fear general pauperisation.

"We have been driven to the verge of despair," the German inhabitants of the Vistula valley said in an appeal to the sympathies of the outside world. In our profound distress we are crying for help. . . . The Poles either use ridiculous pretexts to refuse the issuance of frontier passes or they employ unfair methods of boundary control. They arrest us and carry us into Polish prisons. . . ."

As a result of what Germans like to describe as the "economic strangulation" of the province, East Prussia is further removed from western Germany, as the president of the Board of Agriculture of East Prussia has pointed out, than the United States, so far as agricultural products are concerned. The province has lost some of its best markets and the Reich had to save it from bankruptcy.

Berlin ordered a moratorium in the East. Short-term credits with high interest rates were converted into long-term credits with low interest rates. Both industrialists and farmers were given cheap government loans. The Reich speeded up its colonisation

### THE CAULDRON BOILS

programme, which is to bring new blood and new consuming capacity into the province. In the year 1931 the number of settlements rose from 223 to 2,385. East Prussia was too sparsely settled with its 2,200,000 population on 15,000 square miles.

Russia was to be drawn into the East Prussian commercial orbit and Koenigsberg inaugurated its Eastern Fair, which was to serve as a connecting link between the business people of the Orient and the Occident. Koenigsberg extended its harbour and waited for the result, which turned out to be very meagre. One can judge East Prussia's financial plight by learning that her relative taxable income is about one-half of Germany's average. Berlin's efforts to increase the population of the province are neutralised by large-scale emigration to other parts of the Reich, which are suffering less from the "Abschnuerung," the economic strangulation.

"The plight of East Prussia is a handiwork of the French," said Dr. Carl Budding, president of the Prussian Regency of Marienwerder. "The new frontiers were made to deprive this province of its natural markets and its livelihood. The Poles would not have dared to ask for so much if they had not been encouraged by the French. Pilsudski had wanted to keep on good terms with the Germans but he was outpatrioted by leather-throated jingoes. He knows that the best hope of the peaceful development of the two countries is friendly co-operation. Our frontiers have not



## IN TEUTONIC LAND

been drawn by the Allies but by a few officers of the French general staff who were thinking not only of the needs of Poland, but of strategic positions and of our humiliation. Their object was to make the operation painful. They wanted to have us suffer.

“Our frontier is an excellent illustration of the government by catastrophes. Statesmen who cannot solve the problems confronting them precipitate a catastrophe which diverts attention from their inefficiency. The Allies ought to have supplied our frontiers with a huge sign: ‘Here is the victim of our handiwork.’”

Our trip along the Vistula was at an end when the silhouette of Marienwerder’s monumental cathedral loomed into view, looking unreal in its splendour and yet a palpable sign of the past. The city of Marienwerder itself looked disappointing in its twentieth-century homeliness, as one would have liked to see its public square crowded with the Teutonic Knights of yore. Against such a background the outlines of East Prussia’s new problems could be better discerned.

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From the Rhineland and Thuringia, from Bavaria and Swabia, men dedicated to adventure and religion flocked to the crusading army, Jerusalem-bound. The Teutonic Order was founded at the beginning of the twelfth century and began its historic role only after the debacle

### THE CAULDRON BOILS

of the Crusaders in the Holy Land. Venice was ready to use the Oriental experience of the knights in the interest of its trade imperialism but its comparative security was no inducement to men in search of foes.

New adventure called the knights to the east of Europe, the land of the opaque haze brooding over forests and swamps. The savageness of the Prussys interfered with the life of the peaceful Slavs and so Prince Konrad of Masovia invited the Teutonic Knights to settle in the Culm country, which to-day forms part of the Polish Corridor. In the year 1231 the Order was formed in East Prussia.

From Culmerland the Order spread out to Pomerelia, founding cities and monasteries of fighting monks, uncomfortable neighbours for the Slavs. The ports of Danzig, Elbing, Koenigsberg, and the city of Thorn bear the hall-mark of the Teutonic Knights even to-day.

The knights combined with the Livonian Order and invaded Estonia. Their territory was now 11,000 square miles; the Prussys were crushed but their unruly allies and enemies, the Lithuanians, were hostile and aggressive. The Order's missionary work was now combined with inroads into the commercial field. The knights had their trade representatives as far west as Bruegge, and they carried on negotiations with the kings of England, the popes of Rome and of Avignon, the kings of France and the princes of

## IN TEUTONIC LAND

Burgundy. They helped exterminate the pirates of the Baltic Sea. They were the allies of Frederick II and of Charles IV, holy Roman emperors. They went into politics and interfered with their neighbours' business. They wanted to extend the realm of God into the confines of the civilised world, but the work they wanted to perform overtaxed even their robust energies. Their trading power, too, became a menace to the merchants of the Hansa towns. The burghers were rebellious against the rule of the iron fist and the Polish kings saw the dawn of a new day.

Marienburg was evacuated and the knights transferred their headquarters to Koenigsberg, which could be better protected. Even this move was an empty gesture and the Order was on its way to defeat. After Albrecht, Markgraf von Brandenburg, and Hochmeister of the Order, had embraced Protestantism, the knights lost their spiritual background and their organisation continued to exist only in name. The Polish kings gave them permission to form a secular order. The Teutonic Knighthood was moribund but not before having made East Prussia a German land, "an island in the Slavic sea," a bulwark of Germanism. The modern Prussia of Frederick the Great was in many ways the legal successor of the Teutonic Knights.

"Germany's occupation of East Prussia," Roman Dmowski, the Polish representative, wrote to Lord Balfour in April 1917, "creates a

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

pathological situation." East Prussia must become a part of resurrected Poland.

Dmowski wanted to have all, but if he could not have it, he was willing to take nearly all. He would have accepted the compromise of making the East Prussian city of Koenigsberg and its hinterland an autonomous republic, a commercial and military ally of Poland. The rest of East Prussia would have been given to the Polish republic. Even Clemenceau found his claims exaggerated and that was seldom the case when German territory was in dispute. Wilson did not want to go as far as the French and he wrote to Ray Stannard Baker, his confidant, "France's only interest is to weaken Germany."

But the Polish demands had a tenacious life. If the Allies refused to please Warsaw by turning East Prussia over to her the Poles had a claim on the East Prussian regencies of Marienwerder and Allenstein which were inhabited by their countrymen. Dmowski pointed to the Masurians, a sturdy race of farmers and fishermen, whose language is a Polish dialect, and who would surely want to hitch their future to the rising Polish star.

After much wrangling the Allies consented to a plebiscite in the two regencies.

"If you rise against our decisions," Lloyd George reminded the Polish representatives, "we shall know that we have been mistaken about you. . . . We have given liberty to Poland, to Bohemia and to Yugoslavia, and these are the

## IN TEUTONIC LAND

countries which rebel against the plebiscite. They are much more imperialistic than the great nations themselves."

"Do you think," Clemenceau asked the other Polish representative, Ignace Paderewski, "that the vote will be free and favourable for Poland?"

"Doubtless it will be in the eastern plebiscite area," Paderewski replied, "but so far as the western part is concerned the influence of the landowners, officials and clergy makes the result a doubtful one."

The plebiscite in Marienwerder was placed under the control of a commission headed by the Italian general, Angelo Pavia, and in Allenstein under the English minister, E. R. Rennie. In February the inter-allied commissions arrived. East Prussia anticipated disorders and formed Home Defence Detachments which it took the inter-allied commissions a considerable time to disarm. Order in the plebiscitary area was maintained by Allied soldiers and by the Reich's regular frontier guards.

The plebiscite took place on July 11th, 1920. In the Marienwerder district 92·8 and in the Allenstein district 97·5 per cent. of the votes were cast in favour of Germany.

"The plebiscite was grotesque," wrote the Polish press. "In a territory as large as half of Belgium the two inter-allied commissions had only 1,600 soldiers. It tolerated the German Sicherheitswehr which terrorised the population."

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

Warsaw declared that the result was inconclusive, as the voting took place at a time when Poland was engaged in a life and death struggle against the Russians and the outcome of it was uncertain.

“If there had been no Mr. Lloyd George,” Dmowski wrote in his political recollections, “our western frontiers would look different. Only a man under obligation to the German and the Jew, worried about the protection of German interests, could display so much concern and could perform so many breakneck stunts on behalf of the German cause.”

“This land remains German,” reads the inscription on the monument of the Teutonic Knight in Marienburg, erected in commemoration of the plebiscite. The knight is in heavy armour and he looks toward Poland with a defiant air.

The Germans called attention to various facts in connection with the plebiscite. Their own census of 1910 conceded that about one-half of the plebiscitary area was inhabited by Slavs and yet almost a hundred per cent. of the population voted in favour of Germany. Did this mean that if the Allies had consented to a plebiscite in the Corridor the result might have been the same? Did this not prove that the German vote did not necessarily mean German descent and that an opportunity should have been given the Reich to prove this point in the provinces of West Prussia and Posen, the largest part of which

## IN TEUTONIC LAND

had been taken away from Germany without consulting the will of the population?

The heads of the two plebiscite commissions noted in their reports that, apart from unimportant band movements, the voting took place without disorders and that the population remained calm.

“Just the same, East Prussia must belong to Poland,” the Polish Western Counties Association, an intransigent patriotic organisation, declared. “We want the Baltic coast from Stettin to Riga!”

“The present Corridor is insufficient,” wrote the former Polish consul-general in Königsberg. “It is imperative that East Prussia should be annexed by us at the earliest possible moment. The object is worthy of every sacrifice. . . . East Prussia is at present ruled by Barbarians who make her stagnate at a low level of civilisation.”

“Monstrous East Prussia must disappear from the map,” wrote “Consulibus,” supposedly a confidant of Count Zaleski, former Polish foreign minister.

According to the *Kurjer Poznański*, an influential Polish newspaper, all territories that at any time belonged to Poland must be considered stolen property that must be returned to the republic. East Prussia is ancient Polish-Lithuanian land, which has become the bulwark of German reaction. Its annexation to Poland would be a cultural achievement, entailing the modern-

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

isation of the Reich's political life. "East Prussia is a wall of our jail. She can join the Polish State, she can have autonomy or she can become an independent republic in customs union with Poland."

It has been suggested on the Polish side to divide East Prussia between Poland and Lithuania, but only if Lithuania renewed her union with Poland.

"Poland must fulfil her duty towards East Prussia," said Wladislaw Grabski, former Polish minister and vice-premier, "in the same manner as Italy fulfilled hers toward Austrian Trentino."

"A glance at the map convinces the observer," wrote Dr. Stanislas Slawki, "that East Prussia is a barrier that keeps Poland from the sea. . . . By reason of her geographical position and means of communication East Prussia is Poland's way to the sea."

But how is East Prussia to be forced into Poland's arms? The suggestion has been often made to hamper the trans-Corridor traffic in such a manner as to make the life of the province unendurable. According to the advocates of this idea, the economic collapse of East Prussia would entail its de-Germanisation.

The same purpose could be accomplished by awakening the Masurians, the inhabitants of the southern part of East Prussia, from their lethargy and by making them see that they are Poles. Warsaw would help the awakening by supplying agitators, patriotic books and periodicals.



## IN TEUTONIC LAND

East Prussia is apprehensive of a Polish aggression. Her representatives and the ministers of the Reich have declared repeatedly: "We are ready to defend ourselves. East Prussia must remain German."

On both sides of the frontier, nerves are in a deplorable condition. The East Prussians are probably mistaken in imputing motives of aggression to Poland in her present economic plight. Yet the situation calls for caution. The Poles are dissatisfied with what they have and the Germans say that this state of affairs is intolerable. As an enclave in a Slavic land East Prussia can vegetate but cannot live. The Reich cannot be expected to carry the burden of the province by financing its debts. The nuisance frontiers of East Prussia have poisoned the relations between the two countries. It is obvious to the neutral observer that the Poles are mistaken in the hope that one day this part of the Reich will be ripe for annexation. No country in Europe is as intransigent in its national faith as East Prussia. Her traditions are too old to give way to a new allegiance. The real danger lies in events for which neither government could be made responsible. A Polish general might lose his temper and might try to cut the Gordian knot. The annexation of Vilna is not forgotten in East Prussia. The sources of trouble are endless and whatever little tranquillity this part of the world enjoys rests on a weak foundation.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### VISITING THE FRONT

THE old taxi was not used to such rough handling. It puffed and snorted, following the cow-path up the hillock and down to the lake. Two wheels of the car were in water and the other two were on land. The trees shook their crowns at the strange apparition and whispered their indignation to one another. The horses on the near-by farm reared on their hind legs and tore themselves from their posts. Peasants bowed reverently and made the sign of the cross. We were close to the Lithuanian front.

We asked the peasants about No Man's Land and some of them answered in Lithuanian, others in Russian or in Polish, in White Russian or in a strange Tartaric tongue. The eyes of the peasant in the bluff *rhubashka* had an Oriental cut and his skin was like parchment. He was a descendant of Tartar prisoners of war and in the corner of his eyes there lurked the fear of the slave when seeing his master. The man in the patch of beet-roots had flowing whiskers, and he, too, looked

## VISITING THE FRONT

at the approaching apparition with anxiety. He was the great-great-grandson of Orthodox refugees from the reforming zeal of Peter the Great, tsar of all the Russias. His fathers had lived here for centuries, but he had not forgotten that he is only a guest. In a parcel of corn a couple of tall farmers were toiling; their broad faces were indicative of Asia and their noses of the Jewish ghetto. They were Karaims, Jews by religion and Tartars by origin, imported to these regions in the Middle Ages when the Teutonic Knights were lords of the jungles of eastern Europe.

“In some of these families,” my chaperon explained, “grandfather speaks Lithuanian, father White Russian and the son speaks Polish. In certain households each member professes to belong to a different nationality.”

The brakes shrieked at a sharp curve and we were in the ditch. Our chauffeur, a Karaim himself, decided that only a sturdy rope could help. The mujiks put their heads together and announced their decision that the rope could not be had. The Creator had a certain purpose in giving man the horse to ride on, and His will was not to be flouted in this land.

Finally we reached the front, in spite of no rope and the religious peasants. One needed perseverance to reach the Polish-Lithuanian battlefield in the summer of 1932. First of all, the head of the Police Department in Vilna had to be

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

convinced that we were neither spies nor Communists. Then we were turned over to the *starosta* of the district for a personal interview, so that he could judge for himself that his petitioners were worthy of his trust. He tried his hardest to keep us back, telling us that there were no trains to the frontier. After this examination had been passed, all went smoothly, except the antiquated car. A few miles before No Man's Land we had to present our credentials at the headquarters of the front guard, and near the frontier we had to show them to the sergeant of the patrol.

"You seldom see the Lithuanians," the Polish sergeant said, "they are afraid to show themselves."

On the Lithuanian-Polish frontier, at which a state of war still exists, it was useless to look for the familiar boundary signs. To the Lithuanians this is not a frontier but a line of demarcation. Long poles from which bunches of hay are dangling indicate the international line. A few hundred feet away, on Lithuanian soil, a few peasants were looking at us. Evidently, they did not like the strangers. Perhaps they remembered the shooting affray a few years before, which coincided with the arrival of a few gentlemen from Warsaw.

"The end of the world . . ." our mentor, the Polish sergeant, indicated with a dramatic flourish of his hands. He was pleased with the impression No Man's Land had made.

## VISITING THE FRONT

For ten years no train has crossed the boundary ; the tracks are torn up and the bridges are demolished. The highways are overgrown with weeds, and the telegraph and telephone wires are down. One is reminded of the statement of Anatole France : " There are as yet no padded cells for the exclusive use of statesmen."

Diplomatic relations between the two countries are severed. The social secretaries of foreign embassies need all their resourcefulness to keep the Polish and Lithuanian envoys separate at diplomatic functions.

Lithuania is the only country in the world the capital of which is outside its sovereignty. Her constitution designates Vilna as the capital—a city which is, as most school children know, situated in Poland.

When the international train on the Riga-Insterburg line enters Lithuanian territory, the conductor makes haste to remove the map of Europe from the corridor. The map shows Vilna as part of Poland, an undeniable fact everywhere except in Lithuania, where it is denied and every allusion to it is strongly resented.

A letter sent from Vilna to Lithuania is not delivered at its destination. It has to be sent to a " neutral " country from which it can be re-forwarded to the addressee. It sometimes takes a full week for such a letter to complete the vicious circle.

Although Kaunas, better known as Kovno,

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

the provisional capital of Lithuania, is only some fifty miles from Vilna, the trip between the two cities takes twenty-four hours. The traveller has to make a detour to Koenigsberg in East Prussia, whence he can proceed to his final destination, or he can go via Riga in Latvia and continue his journey from there.

Relatives may be living not more than a mile away on both sides of the frontier and they have no way of seeing one another unless they want to run the risk of being shot down by the guards if they cross the line at the dead of night. A sick mother, just across the frontier, wants to see her son, but there are insurmountable obstacles. Lithuanian passports read: "Good for all countries, except Poland." In December 1931 even the temporary permission for Christmas visits across the frontier was withdrawn.

The Kovna radio station is broadcasting programmes to keep the irredenta spirit alive. They are called the Vilna hours. The Vilna station is broadcasting Polish propaganda during the Kovno hours. The name of the bad highways on the Polish side, is "Lithuanian road" and on the Lithuanian side it is "Polish road." The Lithuanian government finances an official publication, entitled *Our Vilna*, and Lithuanian newspaper despatches about Vilna are published under the heading, "Stolen Lithuania."

In Vilna one is looking for the outward signs of the Vilna question. Experienced travellers

#### VISITING THE FRONT

first look at shop signs, then at tombstones, at news stands and at the display windows of bookshops. This done, they will interrogate the natives.

The shop signs are deceptive in Vilna and they make the visitor believe that he is in the ghetto of a large American city. The names of American automobiles, motor oils and agricultural machines dominate the scene of the main thoroughfares. The large number of Jewish signs does not dispel the illusion. But no, this is the East! Where else can one see so large a number of churches? Where else is the pavement of the streets so delightfully uneven? The main square brings back memories of Russia and the light carriages with their enormous tyres would not be out of place in Siberia.

Then the visitor strays into a by-street and he is in the midst of another world. The scene represents a mediæval town at the time when Thomas Torquemada was inquisitor general of the Holy Inquisition. Jews with hollow cheeks, gesticulating furiously, throw themselves into the battle of life to earn a farthing. They wear long kaftans and the edges of their prayer shawls protrude from behind stained vests. Their frightened eyes speak of ages of persecution. Young girls, from whom poverty has stolen youth and femininity, cower in dingy shops, and old women, who never had anything to which to look forward, bend over a penny's worth of merchandise.

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

The old synagogue still stands, a landmark in Israel, in which the wailing never ceases. For centuries Jews have taken refuge in it from persecution and realities. The vast iron gate is constructed so as to prevent the invader from breaking into the temple without warning. In the Strashun Library, Juda's sacred books are preserved. In the *jeshiva* next door, the learned delve into parchments and argue about the will of God.

The dead do not lie, except in South Tyrol, where they were made to assume Italian names at the bidding of the dictator. In Vilna they speak of an urban conglomeration in which the Jews predominate. Thousands visit the shrine of Elyah the Gaon, because his dead body has the power of healing. His grave is littered with slips of paper, the wishes of the devout. One asks for health, another for wealth and a third one for happiness. A lame girl asks for a husband and a young boy asks for fame.

The legendary Count Valentine Potocki lies here, known as the "Ger Zedek," the righteous proselyte, who paid with his blood for his boldness in embracing Judaism. Although the weeds flourish in the Jewish cemetery of Vilna, it is the living symbol of a town which in sanctity is second only to Jerusalem.

The majority of bookshops in Vilna are Jewish and the local papers are Jewish and Polish. Where are the Lithuanians? Where can one find the Vilna question?



## VISITING THE FRONT

On the surface Lithuania has nothing to do with Vilna. Then why the bitter feeling of the Lithuanians against the Poles and why the traffic obstacle of a dead frontier near the centre of Europe? But one must not be misled by surface phenomena. To-day the cities of the Corridor, as we saw before, appear Polish, while yesterday, under German denomination, they were the bulwarks of Germanism. Vilna, too, looked more Lithuanian under Lithuanian occupation. The search has to go on for the core of the Vilna problem. Is the city really Lithuanian at heart, as Kovno asserts, or is it a combination of Jewish and Polish? Is there some justification for the state of war existing on the Polish Lithuanian frontier? Have the Lithuanians a moral or historical right to the city which they claim as their own? What are the prospects of this perplexing problem being solved in the near future to the satisfaction of all?

In Geneva and elsewhere the conviction is growing that national sovereignty is going too far when it employs alleged grievances to set up obstacles not only in the way of the parties to the argument, but of all nations. The Polish-Lithuanian frontier is such an obstacle. It is detrimental to the interests of other nations, apart from the catastrophic influence it has on Lithuania and on a large part of Poland. The Vilna problem affects all countries.

“Only two per cent. of Vilna’s population is

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

Lithuanian," official Poland asserts. If this statement is true, then Lithuania's title to Vilna cannot be defended.

"The Polish census lies," Lithuania replies with characteristic frankness. "Vilna has a Lithuanian majority."

The Lithuanians accuse the Poles of watering the national characteristics of the population. They charge that Vilna has been flooded with Polish government officials and soldiers.

Their second contention is that Vilna has been Polonised by force. A considerable part of the population, dismayed by the exactions of the *szlachta*, the Polish aristocracy, has taken refuge in a superficial Polish nationality. "Scratch the Pole and you will find the Lithuanian." Lithuania claims, furthermore, that the Jews of Vilna would declare themselves in favour of Lithuania if they were not terrorised into submission by their Polish taskmasters.

Some light may be obtained by referring to figures of the Russian census of 1897, which was taken before the awakening of Lithuanian national radicalism. Although the Russian figures are full of errors and inaccuracies, they were not knowingly falsified, as Petersburg had no interest in doctoring the result. Those figures show the Jews leading Vilna's population with 40·30 per cent., the Poles following with 30·9, and the Lithuanians bringing up the rear with about 2 per cent. The rest of the population was

### VISITING THE FRONT

composed of Russians, White Russians, Tartars and Karaims.

The situation was different in the country district of Vilna in which the Russian census gave the Poles merely 8·18 per cent., the Lithuanians 17·59 and the Jews 12·72 per cent. The majority of the population was White Russian—56·05 per cent. Hence, if the Allies had been seriously concerned with the self-determination of nations, they ought to have turned over the city of Vilna to the Jews and its country district to the White Russians.

Both Geneva and Paris were interested in finding out the real strength of the contending factions in Vilna and they appointed fact-finding commissions.

“The people of Vilna don’t even understand Lithuanian,” the commission was told by the Poles.

“How could they,” the Lithuanians answered, “since most of them have been Polonised and the rest intimidated?”

The members of the commission, French, English, Japanese and Brazilian, consulted their encyclopædias and found that there was a vast difference between the two languages: Lithuanian is a branch of ancient Sanscrit which has nothing to do with the Slavic speech of the Poles.

Vilna presented more complications than the investigating diplomats had anticipated. They

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

were told that Marshal Joseph Pilsudski, Polish dictator and super-patriot, traces his ancestry to the Lithuanian princely family of the Ginets and that he was born in the Vilna district. In the same breath they were told that Professor Augustinas Woldemaras, one time dictator and super-patriot of Lithuania, is of Polish ancestry and that he was born in Poland. They were told that Adam Mickiewicz, the great Polish poet, called himself a Lithuanian.

"The Lithuanians are Poles," Polish jingoes informed them.

"Many Poles are renegade Lithuanians," Lithuanian jingoes countered. The commission went to the Jews and asked them what they thought of the situation.

"There is no Lithuanian question in Vilna," the Jews informed the commission. "The Jews, at any rate, are not Lithuanians and have no desire to belong to Lithuania."

The Lithuanians told the Jews that they were ungrateful. Had not Lithuania given her Jews local autonomy? they asked, without mentioning the fact that the autonomy was subsequently withdrawn. They reminded the Jews that Lithuania was supporting the Jewish schools out of government funds. They reminded them that in the summer of 1920—when the Lithuanians occupied Vilna—they appointed a Jew as Minister of Jewish Affairs.

"We can get on fairly well with our Polish

#### VISITING THE FRONT

neighbours," a Jewish spokesman told me. "If only they would let us make a living," he added with a wistful look in his eyes. He forgot the Jew beatings in the autumn of 1931 when students of the University of Vilna had started a rumpus. The Jews of eastern Europe are so accustomed to pogroms that they cannot long remember such incidents.

The Jews of Vilna, who, Polish assertions to the contrary notwithstanding, form the largest group of the city's population, will not give Lithuania a helping hand to wrest it from Poland.

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"The Lithuanians are wrong," a Polish spokesman told me, as we looked down upon Vilna from the ruins of the castle of the Jagiellos. A procession was moving toward the sacred Ostra Brama to lay its homage at the feet of the Miraculous Virgin. A plaintive chant spoke of the sufferings of a thousand years in the midst of unhealthy marshes and unfriendly forests.

"The Lithuanians think we are their countrymen because we call ourselves Lithuanians," the Polish spokesman said. "They are mistaken. Our great Mickiewicz began one of his most famous poems: 'Lithuania, my fatherland!' He was a great Polish patriot and he would have smiled at the suggestion that he was a Lithuanian. In this section of Poland, the word Lithuanian is a geographic designation."

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

Vilna rested quietly at our feet, but there was something unnatural about its restfulness. A few miles away was the dead Lithuanian frontier and on the other side, toward the sun which rose out of the mist, was the dead Russian frontier.

This part of Europe has clung to its primitive habits. There are few roads in this section and even fewer railways. God created man to sit near his samovar, the Russian rulers said during Vilna's thralldom, and not to run around in circles.

"Our region is the appendix of the world," the quiet Pole at my side continued, "the dead frontiers have robbed us of our work. We have immense forests, and don't know what to do with them. Although this north-western territory is equal to about one-fifth of Poland, our exports are four per cent. of the total Polish exports."

To the Poles Lithuanian national sentiment is something artificial and of recent origin. Half a century ago it was not yet in existence. The real Lithuanians are the peasants who have retained their Sanscrit tongue while the city intellectuals, who are furiously agitating against the Poles, had to learn the language in continuation schools.

"The Lithuanians base their claim to Poland's eastern borderland on history," the Polish spokesman said. "Why don't they demand that the Russians give them Odessa, which once belonged to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Why don't

## VISITING THE FRONT

they claim the rest of the enormous country which centuries ago was theirs ?

“ The Lithuanians blame us for having assimilated them which, they say, was a great wrong. If it was wrong, the Lithuanians have themselves to blame. We could not force them to remain Lithuanians. It was a foreign historian who said of them that their expansive force in the past was immense but that their power of resistance was almost nil.

“ Aggressive Lithuanian nationalism, we suspect, was artificially fostered by the tsarist regime which was anxious to accentuate the differences of the subject nationalities. When our fathers rose against the Russians in the early sixties, some of the best Polish troops were composed of so-called Lithuanians. The Lithuanian movement, which originated in Vilna, was not meant to be antagonistic to the Poles at its inception.”

The Lithuanian spokesman was just as emphatic in his statements :

“ For the last five hundred years Poland has been trying to absorb us and she has failed. Our capital has been Vilna since the fourteenth century. Polish statistics are falsified when they do not show a Lithuanian majority in the Grodno, Trocki and Vilna districts. In spite of the hordes of Polish officials and military colonists we are still a majority. Before the war, when ethnographic conditions in this section were more nearly normal, the Polish population in the three

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

districts mentioned was only ten per cent. of the total.

“By invading our territory the Poles violated an international agreement, even though the invasion was committed by a Polish general whose act his government nominally repudiated. The same government hastened to take advantage of the *fait accompli*, but we will never recognise the situation thus created.

“We don't want to play the role of the aggrieved minority and therefore we have no diplomatic relations with Poland. We consider Vilna our capital city and as long as it is in the hands of the Warsaw government we cannot have any dealings with it. We have patience and we shall wait. What Poland has failed to accomplish during the last five centuries, she will not be able to achieve in the next five hundred years.”

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The Lithuanians were the most savage tribe of eastern Europe. At the sight of them the Russians fled “like hares before hunters.” “The Livs and Letts,” the chronicler says, “were as much the prey of the Lithuanians as sheep are the prey of wolves. The Germans described them as the most terrible of all barbarians.” The Lithuanians were aroused by the danger of their allies and enemies, the savage Prussians, against whom the Teutonic Knights turned their crusading fury. The Lithuanian king, Mendovg,



#### VISITING THE FRONT

annexed Black Russia and was the master of a huge country which extended southwards from Courland, and which separated Poland from Russia.

The trouble started when Jadwiga, queen of Poland, already betrothed to William of Austria, was made to marry, against her will, Jagiello, grand duke of Lithuania. Fear of the Teutonic Knights was responsible for this union. Long after the king and queen were dead their marital problems remained an acute problem. Which of the two partners, Lithuania or Poland, should have the whip-hand? Lithuania was larger, and more homogeneous, but Poland had greater statesmen and better luck. It was only a question of time how long the anarchical system of government inaugurated by half-pagan Lithuanian feudal lords could survive. In the steppes of sunrise land a few savage rulers created a new loyalty. The Muscovite realm was formed and it crystallised nomadic tribes into a fighting nation. The beating which Ivan III, the first Muscovite tsar, administered to the Lithuanians, convinced them that the proximity of the unfriendly neighbour made a union with Poland inevitable. The personal union between the two countries came to an end in 1569, when the union of Lublin sealed the fate of Lithuania. Poland was now the master of the Slavic land west of the Muscovite world.

For over three centuries Lithuania shared the

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

fate of Poland. After the partition of Poland even the name of Lithuania was forgotten, so far as the outside world was concerned. The language of the Lithuanians was outlawed, their schools were closed and their newspapers were forbidden.

The Russian revolution of 1905 woke up the tsar's subjects. For them it was the nearest approach to the French revolution, even though the Slavic political renaissance was suppressed by blood. For the first time in history the oppressed nations of Russia had taken stock of their strength. Even though they were defeated, they had caught a glimpse of the idol's feet of clay.

Two thousand Lithuanians attended the political revival service at which they ascertained that Lithuania was not dead. Enthusiastic patriots hailed Vilna as their capital; the neo-nationalism of the Lithuanians was publicly announced. The decision of the two thousand patriots in 1905 to fight for national independence is Lithuania's hallowed memory.

The World War brought the promise of a new day, although the German plan failed to include Lithuania in resurrected Poland. In those days the "Oberost"—German military headquarters in the east—was supporting Lithuania's claim against Poland. The Lithuanians were to be free—within reason. Their country would be made into a buffer state. The Reich's army of occu-

## VISITING THE FRONT

pation encouraged the formation of the local national council, the "Taryba." Lithuania was to become an independent State and a military ally of Germany. The Catholic Centre Party of the Reich began to take an interest in the plans and it encouraged the Taryba to offer Lithuania's crown to the German prince, Wilhelm von Urach, a member of the reigning dynasty of Wuerttemberg. Herr von Hertling, the German chancellor, gave his blessing to Lithuania's independence and Vilna was selected as the capital of the new kingdom. The Poles were clenching their fists, while Comrade Trotzky left Lithuania to its capitalistic doom. The Prince von Urach accepted the invitation and assumed the name of King Mendovg II. Was the name an omen or a revenge? Was not the original Mendovg the native prince who fought the Teutonic Order?

The midsummer night's dream was over before it had begun. The German jingoes said that the comedy had gone too far. If Germany won the war—and they had no doubt she would—why should she block her way to the east with a litter of puppet kings?

The debacle of the King Mendovg project was complete and a group of Lithuanians, forming the Pan-Polish Party, demanded the union with Poland, but the majority of the city people were not in accord with this idea.

What one needed in these turbulent days was a strong piece of cardboard and a sturdy red

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

pencil. "Prime Minister of Paplagonia," read the inscription on the cardboard which the office-seeker attached to his door. Then he went into the street looking for followers, and if his voice was strong and his self-assurance impressive he usually found what he wanted. He could then proclaim republics, form governments, issue proclamations, declare war and conclude peace. Small nations were bursting with Napoleonic ambitions, and "Grab as grab can" became a sacred motto. Lithuania was among the first nations to apply for independence.

Orators in the market-places spoke of the glory that was Lithuania's in the Middle Ages. The Allies were rallying their forces for a holy war against the Russian Communists. Their expeditionary detachments were supporting the counter-revolutionary armies of Russian generals. Why could not Professor Augustinas Wolde-maras succeed where Napoleon the Great had failed? Did he not speak a dozen languages? Wrapped in its Olympian majesty, the Supreme Council of Paris forged its thunders against the Germans and the Russians. Lithuania was free to re-occupy the immense territory which was hers in the fourteenth century.

The Poles intervened and stopped the Lithuanians before they became too bold. In the beginning of 1919 the Poles and Russians were at one another's throats. The Lithuanian government evacuated Vilna, which was occupied by

## VISITING THE FRONT

the Bolsheviks. A few months later it was the Russians who withdrew from Vilna, and their place was taken by the Poles.

The movements of the armies on the Russo-Polish front turned out to be a weird game of hide-and-seek. Marshal Pilsudski, the Polish generalissimo, was pursuing a bold dream. From the Germans he had learned the "Drang nach Osten." It was not in vain that he had been a prisoner in the fortress of Magdeburg. Great Poland may one day link up the Baltic with the Black Sea. Why should Kiev, and perhaps even Odessa, not belong to Poland? The white eagle was soaring aloft and thought it could fly into the heart of the sun. Poland was to inaugurate a new era of democracy and kindness among the Slavs. There would be no tyrant and no oppressor in their midst.

Meanwhile the medicine men of the west had assembled, and the central countries were brought in and placed on the operating-table. They amputated Germany's arms, cut off Austria's legs and arms and ordered her to live. After the operation the world would be purged of greed—peace and good will would prevail. A man was needed in the east to put an end to chaos. Why could Pilsudski not be the man? Why could he not duplicate the heroic deeds of a John Sobieski? Instead of the Turkish menace, he would have to exterminate Russian bolshevism.

The Bolsheviks did not seem to care about the

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

plans of the Allies and the ambitions of the Polish marshal. They re-entered Vilna and forced Pilsudski to flee. The front was nowhere, so far as the Polish army was concerned, and so the Bolsheviks kept marching on with truly Oriental stolidity—surprised at their own courage. They reached the Vistula and counted the days when they would be on the opposite end of Poland. They admired the spires and domes of old Warsaw through the morning haze. Riding at the head of his Cossack detachments, General Tuchatchewski led the hosts of the infidels.

The Poles proclaimed the holy war against the Russians, and the nations of Europe were to swing into action. Lithuania was to deliver an attack on the Russian flank. The war which had been initiated by Poland was to have a tragic end for the republic. General Maxime Weygand, fresh from his victories as the Chief of the French General Staff under Marshal Foch, was studying in Paris the time-tables of the Warsaw trains. The hoofs of the Cossack horses beat against the cobblestones of Praga, a suburb of Warsaw. This looked like an exciting film. Who would reach the fair heroine in the very last moment, the hero or the villain? To-morrow might see the Russians march down Warsaw's celebrated Ujazdowska Alle, and then all would be over.

Pilsudski, undaunted, made preparations to launch an attack at the head of his legendary P. O. W., Polska Organizacja Woykowska.

## VISITING THE FRONT

General Sosnowski, Poland's Minister of War, had created an army of 600,000 men almost overnight. Colonel Slavek, an anarchist and assassin under the tsars and a patriot later, kept close to the heels of Pilsudski. Lithuania withdrew from the Russo-Polish conflict.

General Weygand frowned when he looked at the Polish dispositions. His first thought was to withdraw behind the Vistula, but Pilsudski, smoking countless cigarettes, told him he would never commit hara-kiri.

Then, of a sudden, the tide turned and the Russians were in flight. Who was responsible for the "miracle of the Vistula"? Was it General Weygand, who saw the situation clearly and kept his temper? Or was it more than courtesy when he said: "The heroic Polish nation won the victory." Was the Polish triumph due to the Russians, who had scored their first successes with the aid of the unimaginative campaign of the enemy? Or was Great Britain's ambassador, Lord d'Abernon, right in saying: "By Pilsudski the miracle was achieved." This happened in August 1920.

The Bolsheviks left Vilna in the hands of the Lithuanians, but Warsaw protested and claimed the city for Poland. Vilna appealed to the world against Polish aggression. A French army officer, Colonel Chardigny, headed a commission of the League of Nations to investigate the Vilna question. The commission found that the best way

### THE CAULDRON BOILS

of solving the problem was to leave everything as it was.

The Russians were no longer interested in the Vilna problem. On October 7th, 1920, the Polish Foreign Minister, Prince Sapieha, solemnly affixed his seal to the Suwalki Agreement which provided that Vilna was to remain with Lithuania. Two days after this ceremony, General Zeligovski captured Vilna at the head of a Polish division and forced the Lithuanians to evacuate their capital. Once more the Lithuanians sent S O S calls to Geneva. Although Warsaw disavowed the deed of its general, it gave him no instructions to leave Vilna.

"The raid had been planned by Marshal Pilsudski, the president of Poland," wrote Sir Robert Donald, an English observer. An inter-allied military commission was sent to Vilna, and it decided that justice was best served by leaving everything as it was. General Zeligovski rubbed his hands and the Lithuanians protested.

The language of the Lithuanians became so menacing that the inter-allied commission thought it best to draw a neutral zone between Vilna and Lithuania. Geneva proposed a referendum, which both parties accepted at first and rejected later. The Council of the League of Nations then recommended direct negotiations between the two governments. This seemed to the Lithuanians like asking the lion to listen to the arguments of the sheep which it was holding in its



## VISITING THE FRONT

mouth. Warsaw consented to hear Kovno's protests. Paul Hymans, a minister in many Belgian cabinets and a noted figure at international parleys, was called upon to solve the Vilna problem. He produced a plan, the great advantage of which was that it could be rejected promptly. He then suggested that Vilna be turned over to Lithuania in order to be made an autonomous province and that she conclude an economic and military alliance with Poland. In other words, this plan called for the sheep's devouring the lion and then marrying the lioness.

Meanwhile Zeligovski continued to exercise his outlaw authority with Warsaw's active help. A semblance of legality for his act was obtained by the elections of 1922, at which the Lithuanians refrained from voting. Warsaw now openly recognized the Vilna regime. Lithuania issued another SOS call, this time to the Council of Ambassadors, which solved the Vilna problem by leaving everything unsolved. By its decision of March 15th, 1923, Vilna and the district around it was given to Poland, which decision Lithuania countered by maintaining a state of war.

In their anger the Lithuanians seized Memel, formerly a port of East Prussia, which the French were holding *in escrow* until its fate could be settled definitely. This move made the Allies extremely angry and they had the Council of the

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

League of Nations appoint a commission of inquiry, which—inspired by the Vilna problem—solved this problem, too, by leaving everything unsolved.

A few years later, in December 1927, a dramatic meeting took place between Marshal Pilsudski and Professor Waldemaras, the dictators of Poland and Lithuania, in the council room of the League of Nations. The council feared the worst when the Polish man of iron went straight to the Lithuanian strong man and confronted him squarely. Was the august body to see physical violence, or even bloodshed? For a fraction of a second which, however, seemed long under the circumstances, the lion of the Warsaw Belvedere looked at the professor. Then he offered his hand to him with the question :

“ Is it to be peace or war, Mr. Waldemaras ? ”

“ Peace,” was the monosyllabic reply.

“ Then I shall telegraph to Warsaw to have the bells rung and the Te Deum sung in the churches.”

As a result of this dramatic conversation Poland pledged herself unequivocally to recognise Lithuania's sovereignty and Lithuania obligated herself to keep the peace. Returning to Warsaw, Marshal Pilsudski was received with great jubilation. This was considered a triumph for Polish diplomacy. Trade and industry were suffering on account of unsettled international

## VISITING THE FRONT

conditions, but foreign capitalists were reserved, and the population was war-weary.

In order not to disturb the harmony of the conversation, Vilna's name had not even been mentioned. The two prime ministers merely agreed to appoint two commissions, meeting on neutral territory, to discuss the questions involved.

The commissions met in Koenigsberg, East Prussia, but the beginning of their work was not auspicious. Representatives of the great powers were working incessantly to stimulate a more friendly sentiment between the opposing parties. Jonkheer Beelarts van Blokland, rapporteur of the Polish-Lithuanian conflict at the Council of the League, was in constant touch with the two deliberating commissions. The League, anxious to add new achievements to its record, regarded the settlement of the dispute as the test of its strength.

Unfortunately the pressure of the Great Powers and the moderating influence of the League were of no avail. The deliberations were conducted in an atmosphere surcharged with recriminations. Responsibilities were dodged and shifted. Most of the time was spent in the expression of withering criticism of the policy of the other country. The official communiqué of the Lithuanian Foreign Office deserves to be quoted :

“The Polish delegation submitted three proposals concerning the resumption of the local

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

railway, postal and telegraph services. It proposed furthermore to settle the problem of the River Memel according to the convention ratified by the commission headed by Norman H. Davis.

“ The Lithuanian delegation proposed that the question of indemnity and security resulting from the *coup d'état* of Vilna should be included in the agenda. The Polish delegation expressed its willingness to accept this proposal and to negotiate a treaty of security with Lithuania.

“ Lithuania had to reject the other Polish proposals inasmuch as their acceptance would have implied the recognition of the occupation of the Vilna territory.

“ Concerning the passage of persons and goods between Kovno and Warsaw, the Polish delegation recommended the establishment of a so-called ‘neighbourly regime’ which would dispense with visas and frontier passes. The Lithuanian delegation was not in a position to accept this proposal, which would have been equivalent to its renouncing all control over Lithuania’s commerce with the occupied territory.

“ In connection with the proposed Treaty of Security the Lithuanian commission suggested the demilitarisation of the occupied territory or of a wide belt along the line of demarcation.”

The conference ended in failure and Vilna talked of a march on Kovno, provisional capital of Lithuania. In a speech to his legionaries, Pilsudski was to give the signal. The dictator stood

## VISITING THE FRONT

on the platform, his eyes shaded by bushy brows, looking fixedly at his soldiers. His words meant peace or war. There was deadly silence in the hall.

Pilsudski spoke about the past and he finished his speech: "Have a good time, comrades!" The danger of war was banished for the moment.

"Right you are, commander," the legionaries answered, and on that night there was much rejoicing in Vilna, and even more in Kovno.

Periodically the question of Vilna is submitted to the League of Nations. It was so submitted to Geneva in the summer of 1931. From time to time a frontier guard is shot down or an officer is executed for selling military secrets to the enemy.

The Lithuanian Christian Democratic Party wants an understanding with Poland, but the rest of the country's intellectuals are as suspicious of Warsaw as ever. The Russo-Polish non-aggression pact, signed in the summer of 1932, was interpreted as a landmark in Polish-Lithuanian relations. As long as the Russian danger was present, Poland's efforts were directed toward maintaining the *status quo* in Vilna. With the Russian menace presumably out of the way, the Poles may turn their attention to Lithuania. Political strategists see East Prussia as the real objective of the campaign, which could be dealt with more expeditiously if Poland were in possession of Lithuania.

### THE CAULDRON BOILS

In Lithuania's attitude toward Poland a natural resentment against the Vilna incident is judiciously compounded with cold calculation. It seems to be written in the stars that Poland must absorb Lithuania as soon as the two nations can get together on a peaceful basis. Kovno's aim seems to be to delay the day of reckoning. History has not yet said the last word about the Vilna incident.

## CHAPTER SIX

### WHITE RUSSIAN INTERMEZZO

PILGRIMS come from many lands to the miraculous chapel of Ostra Brama. Some of them come on crutches but go away without them. Although the bodies of others are covered with rashes when they come, they are as clean as freshly fallen snow when they leave the holy shrine. The pilgrim kisses the mantle of the Holy Virgin, and lo and behold, his limbs are sturdy and his rashes disappear. Crutches hang by the score on the iron gate, giving evidence of the miraculous power of the sacred image.

Among the pilgrims there are Orthodox Greek and Roman Catholic; they speak Kashubian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Mazovian, Polish, Ruthenian and White Russian. Some years ago the invocation on the pedestal on the sacred statue was written in Russian. It was replaced by a Lithuanian text when the revolution came. It yielded its place to White Russian prayer and now it is written in the Polish language. The Virgin of Ostra Brama was once hailed as the queen of Lithuania, then she was adored as the patroness

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

of White Russia ; to-day she is venerated as the queen of the Polish crown.

About Lithuania we have spoken already and here we have to speak about a nation which the world has forgotten, or has never known—the White Russian.

“ Apparently they received the name ‘ White Russian,’ ” writes an authority, “ because of their costume, white smock, bast shoes with white leggings and a white homespun coat.”

They are called Ruthenians, Polesians, Pinchuks or, simply, Russians. If you ask their primitive peasant folk where they come from, they will say : “ We are from here.” If you ask them about their native tongue, they will answer : “ It is the simple tongue.”

The scientist says that they are the purest of the three great Slav divisions : Great Russians, Little Russians and White Russians. Their language is related to the Great Russian—a dialect, say some ; a separate language, say others. They are tall, brown of hair and of eye. They greet the gentlemen from the towns with a deep bow. Those of them who can read are held in great esteem.

They are at home in the forests of Polesie and on the sand of the province of Bialystok. In certain districts of the Vilna province they form the majority. Their huts look eastward, facing the land in which bolshevism is at home. The fir here mingles with the birch and the roots of



#### WHITE RUSSIAN INTERMEZZO

the pine keep company with the frogs of the swamp. Their villages are frequently built on islands of clay and sand, and when spring comes they look like toy boats in an endless sea.

The boundary between Poland and Russia runs through White Russian territory. Most of the White Russians live under the soviet star, but many of them live in the land of the Polish eagle.

"About 2,500,000 of us live in Poland," the White Russian leaders say.

"We have about a million of them," Polish officials affirm.

Their number in Poland is probably between 1,500,000 and 2,000,000. They occupy a strategic position where capitalism and communism meet.

"Poland is the defender of western civilization," the Poles say.

"Poland brings bolshevism into Europe," the White Russians announce.

"It seems that the White Russians living under the soviets," Polish papers write, "prefer our country, as they come over to us in droves."

"Capitalist oppression forces the White Russians of Poland to take refuge with us," writes the Communist press.

Although Russia and Poland signed a non-aggression pact in the summer of 1932, both the Russian and the Polish sides of the frontier are bristling with bayonets. The Poles want to scare

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

away communism and the Communists want to keep away capitalism.

"We are a nation with national ideals," Ivan Luckiewicz, president of the short-lived White Russian republic told me in the library of the Pravoslav Church of Vilna. He represented his country at the Peace Conference, and from there he went into exile. For years he has been trying to convince the world that White Russia is waiting for justice. He sat among mountains of dusty volumes as we confronted him with the indiscreet question, Who are the White Russians and what do they hope to accomplish?

"We are a nation and every day our nationhood grows stronger. Those of our people who live in Poland have their home in the four eastern provinces: Bialystok, Novogrodek, Polesie and Vilna. The Poles consider us an inferior people and they govern us with their own officials who come to us from Central Poland. They promised our peasants an equitable land distribution when the Russians invaded this country in 1920. With the passing of the Bolshevik menace the promise was withdrawn. To make things worse, Warsaw sent to us Polish colonists who live on the produce of our land. It is they who have been given most of the estates formerly owned by the Russian State, the church and the convents. About twenty-two per cent. of our population have no land whatever, and they are living in the most dire poverty."

#### WHITE RUSSIAN INTERMEZZO

The old librarian, who sat next to the ex-president, preparing a catalogue of the dusty volumes, nodded in approval. Much more could be said, he muttered, but a wise man knew when to stop.

The interviewer closed his eye and listened to the soft voice of the White Russian leader. He had come now to the school grievances and he repeated complaints that were the same in the Corridor, in eastern Upper Silesia, in Lodz, Warsaw and Lemberg. The Polish State has struck at the roots of the minority problem by eradicating non-Polish nationalism through their schools. Will it succeed where the Germans and Austrians, operators of efficient melting-pots, have failed?

In the school year of 1929-30 the White Russians had only twenty-two schools in which their native tongue was the language of instruction, and forty-four schools in which both White Russian and Polish were taught. Even under the German occupation during the World War, the White Russians were allowed to have more than two hundred elementary schools.

“On what do the White Russians base their claim for independence?”

“Our race was known already in the fifth century. Five centuries later we had our own grand duchies. We were known to the Germans as the ‘Weize Reizen.’ In the fourteenth century our country made common cause with the Lithu-

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

anians, who fell under our influence and used our language. We were induced to join the new combination when Lithuania and Poland united, and since then we have shared Poland's vicissitudes."

This unattractive country of marshes and impenetrable forests has been hotly contested for centuries. Here Napoleon's armies passed on their way to defeat and returned after the great disaster. All of White Russia passed under the rule of the tsars after the second partition of Poland.

White Russia has a literature of her own, which, however, is neither rich nor ancient. Michael Bogdanovich, her great poet, began to spread his wings a few years before the war.

Of trouble there has been plenty since White Russia was forced into an unhappy marriage with Poland. The invasion of Polish colonists angered the native peasants and several newcomers were killed and their houses burned. The native population was on the verge of starvation and Warsaw sent to it strong military contingents. The Polish papers began to write about the "Kresy"—as these outlying parts of Poland are called—in tones of irritation. The Party of White Russian Peasants and Labourers was formed, the Hromada. The Poles say it had derived its inspiration from the soviets. A mass trial was held in 1928 against the party leaders and six hundred witnesses were heard. Thirty-

### WHITE RUSSIAN INTERMEZZO

seven defendants were sent to prison, victims—their party friends say—of a Polish agent provocateur, a deputy of the Warsaw Sejm, who professed to be a friend and turned out to be a traitor.

White Russia has been on Warsaw's black-list ever since the trial, and it is designated as enemy territory. Suspicious peasants—and many of them are suspicious—are under police observation, and yet the village is restless and it likes to demonstrate its uneasiness. Many peasants have been killed in the course of such demonstrations.

Across the frontier the peasants look at the Soviet Socialist Republic of the White Russians and they are wondering whether their countrymen are not better off under the soviet star. They, at least, can speak their native language and can educate their children in White Russian schools. In Minsk there is a White Russian university, and the local government is composed of native sons. The large estates of the land magnates have been socialised and distributed among the landless, and Minsk is continuing its policy of satisfying the land hunger of the peasants. Its aim is to make 5,400,000 acres of Soviet White Russia available for peasant cultivation under the second Five Year Plan.

Moscow has used the White Russian republic as a bait to stir up trouble in Poland. Minsk found itself the object of Moscow's affectionate attentions, but in 1931 Stalin inaugurated a new

### THE CAULDRON BOILS

policy. Communism was to be what its name meant, or perhaps the response of White Russia had not been up to expectations. The collectivisation of the farms was to be carried on wholesale, and the socialised sector was expanding. The State and collective farms took over the leadership from the small farmer. Some of the White Russian leaders on the soviet side, who tried to resist the movement, were banished to Siberia or were sent to prison.

The White Russians on the Polish side have heard about the Russian State farms and they do not like them. But they like the Polish rule even less, and so many of them are converts to communism. It is difficult to say how widespread bolshevism is among the White Russians, the movement is underground. To many White Russian peasants the creed of Moscow means an escape from the Polish tax-collector and from the frontier guard. It means a revolt against the colonisation of outlanders in White Russian land. To the intellectuals it is a defiance and a revenge. They are humiliated because control has so completely been wrested from them. They were not prepared in 1918 and they are not much better prepared now, but at least they have an aim and they are being given spiritual support by a population in despair.

"We take no chances with White Russian Communists," a high police official told me in the government building of Vilna. "The western

#### WHITE RUSSIAN INTERMEZZO

nations would do well to take their cue from us. They don't seem to realize the gravity of the danger. They should see how well our frontier is protected. Every square metre of our border territory is under strict surveillance. There is no fraternisation between the soviets and our population. The frontier toward Russia is closed except for a few international trains. Even the small frontier traffic is stopped. In previous centuries Poland protected Europe against the Turkish invasion. Now we are here to protect it from Communism."

This statement was made before the signing of the Russo-Polish non-aggression pact. The new international document has a bearing on the White Russian problem. It has clarified the eastern situation by exposing the weak points of the Russian and Polish lines. It is an admission of Moscow that it no longer contemplates a westward march, which was a long-standing ambition. At the same time, it is an admission on Poland's part that the hope of a holy war against the Russian Communists is buried. Russia wants time and peace in order to work for her own salvation under the Plan. Poland needs time and peace on the eastern front to turn her undivided attention to the west, where she feels the danger lies. The battle lines are drawn, temporarily at least, in another sector of the front.

The non-aggression pact deprives Warsaw of a pretext to maintain strong armed forces in the

### THE CAULDRON BOILS

eastern zone. White Russia will no longer play the role of a buffer State. Poland has abandoned her title to be called the Defender of the West and the Protector of the Capitalist Faith. And yet the White Russians of Poland seem to be uneasy. Riots occur sporadically and blood is shed. The White Russians have learned from past experience that pacts are signed and pacts are repudiated, but their adversities remain.



## CHAPTER SEVEN

### THE CHAMBER OF HORRORS

WHEN they heard of the arrival of the Man of the New World they flocked to the City of Light. The wise men of the East came in crowds and the black kings of the Desert in carloads. "Forty kings and eight horses," the men of the P. L. M. said when they helped Their Majesties into their compartments at Marseilles.

The black beard and quadrangular headgear of Emir Feisal were the rage of all Paris. Soon after him came the king of Oman, looking very angry at the kings of Trucial Oman and of Qatar, his competitors. The Kachins of the Patkai Hills were particularly well dressed and so were the Buthans and the natives of Burma. This was the Eldorado of costume makers.

Word has spread across the globe that royal crowns were being given away in Paris. The apostle of the self-determination of nations had left his celestial residence across the great waters. For months he had been thundering his messages to the world. From the Sinai of Potomac Heights

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

had come the Fourteen Commandments and torrid African winds carried the prophet's name to Lake Tanganyika and to Ubangi Sari.

The lobby of the Hotel Crillon was full of petitioners, applying for countries and crowns. From the East of Europe had come the representatives of Courland, Livonia, Latgale, Zemgale Viljandi, Tartu, Harju, Voru, Viru.

He was called upon to avenge the wrongs of centuries. Belgium had sent him an urgent request to have a Rubens picture returned to her. The Swedes pressed upon his attention the rape of the Aaland Islands. The Koreans appealed to him to take up their cause against voracious Japan. The keeper of Austria's State coins and metals sent him an SOS to save Vienna's treasures.

He received a letter from hopeful Ukrainians, writes Ray Stannard Baker, appealing to him for their right to govern themselves. "They are desirous of having introduced and established in their motherland, the Ukraine, American ideals of government and the American system of education, in order to perpetuate sound democratic principles among their people."

The Ukrainian delegation was waiting in the lobby.

"We have come to the president of the United States to submit to him the cause of forty million people."

"I am sorry," a secretary said. "It is His

### THE CHAMBER OF HORRORS

Majesty's turn," and he looked at a dark-skinned potentate.

The Ukrainians were sent to the president's personal representative, Colonel Edward House. The colonel's apartment in the Rue de l'Université was a pleasant place and the delegates did not mind long hours of heel-cooling. They liked the chairs, which were Louis XV, and the curtains, which were Empire. The lights on the wall were imitation Versailles and the carpets were genuine Kir-Sher. The delegates had ample time to make these observations in the spacious anteroom, and their persistence was rewarded. They saw the colonel and they were admitted to the president.

"We have come on behalf of forty million Ukrainians . . ."

The president glanced at the representatives. How strange! Instead of depleting Europe's population, the World War seemed to have increased it. He had heard delegates representing more than five hundred million Europeans and he knew that the population of the Continent was far from that much. He tried hard to concentrate on the subject, but his attention strayed to the case of Fiume, for he had been stirred by the story of the South Slav delegates and he could not be indignant about two injustices at the same time. He listened with mild interest to the Ukrainians, who condensed into ten minutes the bitterness of a hundred years.

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

“ Why should nationalities of barely more than a million persons be accorded,” they asked, “ the benefits of national self-determination, while a people of forty millions received no sympathy ? ” They pointed to the Estonians, Latvians, Lithuanians, small people, comfortably established in their own homes.

The president could not answer their question. He—the apostle of peace—could not tell the delegates that he was powerless to give them independence and that they ought to have taken it by force of arms.

Only a few more minutes were left to conclude the Ukrainian argument. The Poles were occupying the western part of their country, East Galicia, which until the end of the war belonged to the House of Austria. The Poles should be ordered to end their illegal occupation, so that the right of self-determination of all Ukrainians might be upheld.

The president looked at them with disapproval, or so at least the Ukrainian delegates thought. What was wrong with the Poles? Roman Dmowski, the Polish representative, was an able man, and so was Ignace Paderewski, the other representative, a real genius. What could he do against Mr. Paderewski? Colonel House, too, was fond of the celebrated pianist who often played to a brilliant gathering in his house. The photographs of the colonel and the artist were published in myriads of papers, it seemed, the

## THE CHAMBER OF HORRORS

American looking very detached and the Pole extremely lofty, and yet they were excellent friends. No, Mr. Paderewski must not be disappointed. He surely would not like taking away eastern Galicia from the Poles and giving it to the Ukrainians. In November 1918 the Peace Conference gave eastern Galicia to Poland for twenty-five years, with provision for local autonomy, and five years later the ambassadors' conference repealed the previous provisions for the future of East Galicia and Poland became its master.

\* \* \* \*

Nearly fourteen years after the visit of the Ukrainian delegation to the Hotel Crillon, Sanok, a town in East Galicia, was making preparations for a festive day. Even nature was in a mood to celebrate. On the horizon, the foothills of the Carpathians were discarding their transparent veils from their rounded forms. Voluptuously, the River Sanok abandoned itself to the caresses of the sun. Nature whispered love's secrets into the ears of men and there was thrilled animation in the courtroom of the Sanok.

This was a great day in the life of the town. The night before, the papers of the nearest large city, Lemberg, announced in block types: "Pat Mackiewicz is in Sanok." Pat, the hangman, had brought with him a set of gallows for four young men. He was accompanied by a priest, for the

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

State could not take it upon its conscience to allow poor sinners to depart from life without the consolation of religion.

Sanok's élite was well represented on the hard benches of the courtroom. Expectation was written on the faces of all. The sun emerging from behind the hills flooded the room with colourful radiance and painted a charming glow on the cheeks of girls. The hum of spirited conversation, rent by peals of laughter, gave the occasion the air of the dress rehearsal of a promising comedy.

The noise was hushed when the accused were brought into the room, shackled two by two. The four young men, who were to be sentenced to-day, appeared to be pleased with the attention they received. The State attorney, dressed in scarlet for the occasion, asked the court that they be hanged. His voice was soft and his eyes rested on the defendants with caressing solicitude. The four young men, standing in the shadow of the gallows, listened to him with interest. Never before had people spoken so much about them and attributed such importance to their words. What the gentleman in the scarlet robe told the court was beautiful, even though it was untrue. They were being tried for rebellion under the martial law, they were Ukrainians, and Pat Mackiewicz was in Sanok with a priest and with a set of rough-hewn gallows.

## THE CHAMBER OF HORRORS

A few weeks before the Sanok trial, the Ukrainian peasant population in the foothills of the Carpathians rose against the Polish authorities. Word had spread in the mountains that the Poles were planning the re-introduction of compulsory labour. Was this not the revival of the hated serfdom? The peasants met at the crosses, carved by their fathers to commemorate their liberation from feudal thralldom. From mouth to mouth the intelligence passed that the city men, Poles, of course, had given orders to have the crosses removed.

The police intervened and there was some wild shooting on both sides. Officials spoke of half a dozen dead but the countryside knew that the number of victims was much higher. Deep in the forest the dead were buried and under thatched roofs the wounded were nursed. The hatred of the Ukrainian population of eastern Galicia against the Polish masters had found this outlet. The local autonomy which they had expected from Paris had remained a promise. Several young peasant boys were rounded up and placed on trial for life or death. An example was to be shown the restless countryside, as Ukrainian uprisings had been too numerous of late. The young men were doomed before being heard, although they had learned from legend and fairy tales that they were heroes, the defenders of the true religion and of the sacred cross.

They listened with obvious satisfaction to their

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

lawyers describing them as living monuments of rectitude and civic virtue. The presiding judge made an effort to stifle his yawns, and the State attorney smiled inwardly at efforts so futile.

During the mid-day recess word spread in the corridors that the court had ordered luncheon and a bottle of Bordeaux wine, and so the audience knew in advance that the young men were doomed to die.

The sentence was announced: three of the young men were to hang and the fourth was sentenced to penal servitude for life. The bells of the nearby church were ringing and the muffled clamour of the street gave the orchestration of the trial a sombre undertone. Ladies of the local society shed a few tears into perfumed handkerchiefs. Refreshed by the emotion, they were then ready to enjoy a belated mid-day meal. Only the unnatural glow on the cheeks of the young men betrayed the dawn of the idea that at sunrise to-morrow their dead bodies would be dangling from the gallows.

The trial was, however, to end in an anticlimax. Word came from Warsaw that the lives of the three young men would be saved from the hangman and that they would have to spend the rest of their days in jail.

\* \* \* \*

“The Ukrainian problem is a tragic one,”  
Archbishop Count Andreas Szepticky, the most



## THE CHAMBER OF HORRORS

highly respected representative of the Ukrainian cause, told me in his country residence of Podluti. The dark majesty of the Carpathian mountain was the background.

A map was spread out on the table. The Ukrainian territory was shaded with heavy green. It covered the eastern Galician provinces of Tarnopol, Stanislawow and Lwow, as far west as the River Sanok and the city of Prezmysl of World War fame. There were red rashes on the map, mostly around the cities, and these were Polish settlements. Farther north, the province of Volhynia was shaded green. Before the war it belonged to holy Russia and it has remained as backward as any Russian province could be.

Beyond the Polish frontier a vast patch of green on the map of Russia attracted attention to the Ukrainian Soviet Republic. But that problem belongs to another page.

While the Archbishop spoke, one had to think of the lobby of the Hotel Crillon and of the four young men of Sanok. These memories illustrated his words.

“Our problem is so tragic,” the Archbishop continued, “because our country is dismembered. Some 25,000,000 Ukrainians live in the so-called Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, the capital of which is Kharkov. In reality that republic is entirely dependent on Moscow. Millions of Ukrainians live in East Galicia, Volhynia, Rumania, and Czechoslovakia. The

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

Soviet solution of an autonomous republic would appear the most liberal on the surface. The Russians like to boast that they have turned over to the Ukrainian republic about 75 per cent. of the coal in their country and nearly 70 per cent. of their iron ores. They like to dwell on the fact that the world's largest hydroelectric plant is in the Ukrainian Soviet Republic.

“Nevertheless, such a solution of the Ukrainian problem is unacceptable to our people. These autonomous republics are the satellites of the Kremlin. The Ukrainians of Galicia would not endorse such a scheme—apart from numerous other reasons—because of the anti-religious character of the soviets. Our people are deeply religious. Besides, our agricultural population is opposed to the Russian kholkoses and sovkhoses, their much advertised co-operative ventures, from the success of which Moscow hopes the disappearance of the economic afflictions of this part of the world.

“The Ukrainians are convinced that they have a right to take charge of their own destinies. This, naturally, cannot be done under the existing Polish system, either. Our problem can be solved only in conjunction with the problem of the Ukrainians under the soviets, and as long as the present regime in Russia prevails, I don't see how *Ukrainia* can be made happy and prosperous.”

The Ukrainians claim a population almost as large as that of France. In addition to their

## THE CHAMBER OF HORRORS

25,000,000 countrymen in the autonomous Ukrainian Soviet Republic they say that another 8,000,000 live in other parts of Soviet Russia. They estimate the number of Ukrainians in Poland at about 6,000,000, most of them in eastern Galicia and the rest in Volhynia. They calculate the number of Ukrainians in Rumania, particularly in Bukovina—the easternmost outposts of the Habsburgs empire until the great catastrophe—as about 1,000,000, and to this number they add some 500,000 Ukrainians in the autonomous Carpatho-Ruthenian part of Czechoslovakia. Before 1918 these Ruthenians were subjects of the kingdom of Hungary.

The Ukrainians—who sometimes call themselves Ruthenians—are thus divided among four nations. Although they claim a larger population than the Poles, their problems are less well known than those of their masters, as they are less versed in the art of dramatising their misfortunes. Thus the world does not realise that among the powder boxes scattered all over Poland's peripheries the Ukrainians' is the one which, in the view of some observers, has to be handled with the greatest care.

In this case again we encounter the familiar controversy about the language. The Poles say that the Ukrainians speak a Polish dialect, and the Russians say that they speak a Russian dialect. The Ukrainians themselves like to quote the opinion of the Russian Academy of Sciences, which declared several years before the war that

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

Ukrainian is an independent language, in spite of its numerous contacts with Polish and Russian.

The cities of the Polish Ukraine are Polish and Jewish islands. The largest city of the region, Lwow, known as Lemberg in Austria's days, is a Polish metropolis. In some cities 70 per cent. of the population are Jews, and the ruling class of eastern Galicia has always been Polish, the owners of the large estates which are being cultivated by Ukrainian peasants. The Ukrainians form about 65 per cent. of the entire population in the Polish districts to which they lay claim, but they contend that under the protection of their flag this percentage would be higher, as a large part of the Polish and Jewish population would embrace Ukrainian nationality. Warsaw says that there are 3,900,000 Ukrainians in Poland, but Warsaw's figures, the Ukrainians say, are unreliable, because they include the Roman Catholic Ukrainians as denationalised Poles and, therefore, as members of the Polish flock.

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In the Ukraine, too, the struggle goes mostly for the younger generation. When the Poles occupied this territory, the number of Ukrainian schools, founded by the Habsburgs, was nearly 3,000, while the schools formerly under tsarist jurisdiction amounted to about five hundred. After ten years of Polish rule there were only some 400 Ukrainian schools in eastern Galicia.

## THE CHAMBER OF HORRORS

Out of the 1,150 elementary schools in Volhynia only four give instruction in the Ukrainian language. Under Austrian rule the Ukrainians had eight chairs at the University of Lemberg, all of which have been abolished by the Poles.

Three years after the war, Ukrainian youth founded a university of its own, which was supported mainly by the elder generation. This university was needed to relieve the shortage of intellectuals among the Ukrainians of Poland. During four years this school worked secretly, and its faculty and student body were dodging the police. But the secret was brought to light and the professors and students were tried for treason.

"Ridna Schkola," a militant educational organisation of the Ukrainians—the Home School—is doing its best to correct the deficiencies of the official system. It has established a network of schools which is constantly growing. The "Prosvita," whose main function is to combat illiteracy, has founded over 3,000 educational circles with a membership close to 176,000; it has nearly 2,000 libraries, about 1,400 little theatre companies and nearly 500 choral societies. The Ukrainians are trying to educate their illiterates but Warsaw looks askance at their work. Until recently the Ukrainian organisations were not permitted to open classes for illiterates and many of their schools were closed by the authorities for insufficient reasons. Conditions are better in the regions that formerly belonged to Austria than in

### THE CAULDRON BOILS

those where the tsar was the master, because the influence of Austria's more liberal traditions has partly neutralised Warsaw's efforts to destroy completely the native culture.

In the hierarchy of its school system, Polish Ukraina's "Chevchenko" occupies a place of distinction. It is an academy of belles lettres, working partly underground, which keeps in touch with the leading academies of the world. It has been the target of many acts of Polish terrorism.

These efforts at spiritual self-sufficiency are complemented by a strong movement aiming at economic autarchy. Warsaw is determined to keep the Ukrainians out of positions of political and economic importance. Ukraine's sons are appointed to such positions only if they are renegades to their national cause. An Ukrainian cannot have a commission in the Polish army, and it is not easy for him to become even a non-commissioned officer. Polish banks do not like to extend credits to Ukrainians. The Galician Land Bank, founded by Austria half a century ago for the benefit of the peasant population, has placed its operations on a political basis and refuses accommodation to those suspected of Ukrainian sympathies. Ukrainian intellectuals are thus forced to join the apostles of self-sufficiency and to adopt the motto: "Ukrainians must help themselves, as nobody else does."

One way of coping with the situation was to

## THE CHAMBER OF HORRORS

create work for the intellectuals. The Polish challenge was met with the creation of the Ukrainian co-operative movement, which has turned out to be the most efficient fighting organisation of a minority nation in the Polish republic.

The co-operatives took the fight into the camp of the enemy, and they countered the Polish boycott of the Ukrainians with the Ukrainian boycott of the Poles. When an Ukrainian leader speaks of butter and milk—the chief products of their co-operative organisations—he means more than these two commodities; he means autonomy and independence. Nor should it surprise the uninitiated to hear Ukrainian carbonari speak about peas and beans. What they really mean is a new deal for their nation. Success is expected to come to the Ukrainian movement through the village grocery store.

The Polish Ukraine is dotted with the shops of these co-operative societies. Some of them are being run on a strictly business basis, others on a semi-terroristic foundation. If the peasant wants to keep out of trouble he has to make his purchases through the co-operative stores. The Ukrainians have copied the methods of the Poles in West Prussia and Posen before the war.

“Centrosojus,” a central organisation of the Ukrainian co-operative movement, deals mostly in milk, and “Maslosojus,” deals mostly in butter. They have declared war on the Jewish

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

middleman, who was the most familiar figure in these parts. It is estimated that out of about 90,000 Jewish shopkeepers in the Polish Ukraine nearly 90 per cent. have been put out of business by the Ukrainian co-operatives. Through their co-operative work, the Ukrainians are kept informed about their political strength. The Polish government has no means of keeping a policeman in every Ukrainian grocery store. From these stores, painted a conspicuous blue and white, the fighting message goes all over the countryside.

Special mention is due to the U.N.D.O., the party of the Ukrainian National Democrats, which has gone into business on a large scale. It operates about 300 co-operative stores and has nearly 12,000 employees. It also has a chain of credit societies, which loaned 2,000,000 zlotys in 1931 to Ukrainian clients, a small amount in itself but large enough in a country suffering from credit starvation. At the end of 1929 there were nearly 3,500 Ukrainian co-operatives of all types—for production, consumption and credit—with a membership list of about 3,820,000. This was three times the number of the Ukrainian co-operatives four years before. Many of these societies were destroyed during the dragonnades of 1930, but they are being gradually rebuilt.

A visit to the Polish Ukraine fails to disclose the eruptive qualities of the soil on the surface. Nature has woven a new tissue over the scars of war. This was the entrance gate to hell for six



## THE CHAMBER OF HORRORS

years, as eastern Galicia and Volhynia were in the very centre of the military operations during the World War and for some time after. About four million people, Austrians, Hungarians, Germans and Russians, died here in those years. During that period over 1,500,000 houses were destroyed in this region. When the World War was over, new battles were fought among Ukrainians, Poles and Russians.

In the small town through which we drove, Jews in long kaftans and greasy hats of frayed velvet were discussing some momentous question. They formed small groups and looked extremely excited, which they had every reason to be. A stranger in a Galician town is not a good omen, he may be the new tax-collector or a new spy. The Jews of eastern Galicia have little to hope from life.

Alongside the road an old woman was dusting the grass for the emaciated ox she had in tow. She was dusting the grass when we left the town early in the morning and she was still dusting it when we returned in the twilight hours. The ox was lean and the heavy coat of white dust on the withered weed was not appetising.

We drove into the open country and our car stirred the dust into a silvery cloud, the only romantic phenomenon in a commonplace landscape. We passed a group of peasants trudging along the road, with their scythes on their shoulders, soldier-fashion. They jumped across

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

the ditch at the sound of the horn with an instinctive movement, which looked almost animal-like, and they looked after the car with respectful eyes. The appearance of an automobile in eastern Galicia causes notice and animates speculation.

Although nearly all the houses we saw were built after the war they looked prematurely old, but it was little wonder, since they had to satisfy the needs of both man and beast. The human inhabitants occupy one side of the house and the pigs occupy the other. Sometimes the pigs have bad dreams and they make a noise, but it is less disturbing than the piercing cries of children, scattered all over the living-room.

We also saw farms in which the pigs had sties of their own. These houses were cleaner, their roofs were slated and their human inhabitants were less numerous. They are targets of dark glances of the native population because in them the "foreigners," the Polish colonists, live.

"Janissaries," the Ukrainian intelligentsia calls these colonists. They are the creations of a military system and their duty is, in time of peace, to prevent Ukrainian conspiracies, and in time of civil war—which is never remote in this land—to fight for the existing régime. For those who can look beyond the surface, the east Galician countryside appears always in a rebellious mood. Warsaw has hit upon the device of parcelling up the land of the Austrian crown among Poland's faithful sons.

## THE CHAMBER OF HORRORS

As a rule, the colonist settlements follow the strategic highways and the railway lines. Most of the colonists were legionaries of Marshal Pilsudski and of General Haller. The government gave them the land and loans to build their houses. In the year 1930 the colonists received about 245,000 hectares of land from the State. Their settlements form the basis of a future military occupation.

Meanwhile, the Ukrainian peasants are sent out of their native pastures to do their military service in the Corridor or in other distant parts of the country. Poland has learned from Austria the golden rule of the *divide et impera*. It is a good policy, Warsaw thinks, to stir up the Germans of the Corridor against the Ukrainians and vice versa, so that the nationalities shall not have the idea of combining their forces in the interest of a common cause. The minorities are pawns in the game, played with more or less skill in the government offices of Warsaw.

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For over a century eastern Galicia was under Habsburg rule, governed as a crown land, with broad autonomy. The provincial Diet was controlled by the wealthy Polish nobility but the municipal councils were mostly in Ukrainian hands. Even though the Habsburgs were stern taskmasters, Polish Ukrainians think of them as the rulers of the golden age. Although Galicia

### THE CAULDRON BOILS

was the "Piedmont" of the Polish national movement, and Cracow became the "Torino" of a political renaissance, Vienna managed to give some protection to the Ukrainian peasants who were hopeful of a future that bore the promise of food and peace.

Then came the World War and when it was over East Galicia was under Ukrainian rule. But the Poles ejected the native government and engaged in hectic fighting with the local movement. Hetman Petliura, a former member of the Ukrainian council of Kiev, the rada, made common cause with the secret West Ukrainian republic set up at Lwow by the Galician Ruthenes. When cornered by the Bolsheviks, Petliura joined forces with the Poles against Russia, and so the West Ukrainian republic passed out of existence. In June 1919, the Supreme Council gave the Poles the mandate to occupy the territory provisionally and under certain conditions "in order to safeguard the life and property of the peaceful population of East Galicia against the raids of Bolshevik bands." This was the death sentence of the western Ukraine.

For three years the occupation of the western Ukraine—better known as eastern Galicia—lacked the final approval of the victorious powers of the west. As late as February 1921, the Council of the League of Nations declared: "The dispositions of the Peace Treaty regarding the national minorities in Poland cannot be

## THE CHAMBER OF HORRORS

applied to Galicia, which is outside of the Polish frontiers. Galicia is under the *de facto* military occupation of Poland and under the sovereignty of the Allied Powers.”

In the Russo-Polish Treaty of Riga of March 18th, 1921, Poland promised the Ukrainians and White Russians the free development of their national life and the free use of their language. The Polish Sejm passed a law in September 1922, granting limited autonomy to the three provinces of eastern Galicia. The autonomy was to be anchored in the provincial Diets which were to have two chambers: one for the Ukrainians and one for the other nationalities. The chambers were to have legislative authority in educational, religious and agricultural matters, with the exception, however, of the agrarian reform. An Ukrainian university was to be founded within two years.

On March 15th, 1932, the ambassadors' conference approved of the plan to give to Poland full sovereignty over East Galicia with the proviso, however, that “Poland recognizes that ethnographic conditions in eastern Galicia necessitate an autonomous regime.”

Eastern Galicia was powerless. Most of her intellectuals were under lock and key in Polish internment camps. The Ukrainians say that the ambassadors had been tricked into their decision by the autonomy law of the Polish Sejm, which has remained an empty promise. Eastern Galician

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

self-government, an authority on the subject said, has been put into effect only in the municipalities, where it is under the control of the district council, the chairman of which is the provincial governor who appoints its other members. Eastern Galicia is still waiting for her autonomy.

With the aid of the pulpit, the press and the jail Warsaw began the Polonisation of the Ukrainians. Where these methods proved ineffective, recourse was taken to the gallows. Ukrainian patriots were indicted as Russian spies and summarily hanged. Nevertheless, the native population resisted Polonisation and Warsaw became irritated.

Warsaw's anger was directed mostly against the mysterious U.W.O., an Ukrainian terrorist organisation, with headquarters supposed to be in Berlin. The Polish nationalist press saw Adolf Hitler consorting with Ukrainian terrorists. In the summer of 1930 many fires of unknown origin occurred in eastern Galicia and Ukrainian incendiaries were under suspicion, although the native press pointed out that fires in the vicinity of Warsaw had doubled and that the price of wheat was low and insurance premiums high.

The autumn elections to the Polish Sejm were approaching and word had come from the government that the representation of the minorities must be reduced. In Lemberg a stone shattered the window-panes of the Chevchenko, the organisation of Ukrainian intellectuals. Polish youth

## THE CHAMBER OF HORRORS

was becoming impatient with the procrastination of the government, and a punitive expedition of the Polish police was on its way to Galicia. It forded oceans of sand and mud. By night it was guided by flaming farmhouses and hayricks.

The major Ukrainian political parties issued a manifesto in which they took a strong stand against the incendiaries and dissociated themselves from their acts. The press of the Polish jingoes kept on stirring up sentiment against the Ukrainians, and the extraordinary force was approaching its goal.

Polish students of the Lemberg university attacked their Ukrainian colleagues, and an Ukrainian orphan asylum and seminary were raided by hostile bands. The head of an Ukrainian co-operative organisation was shot dead. The expeditionary force had reached its goal.

"Who started the fires?" the peasants of the village Gaje were asked. They did not know or did not want to know. They were thrown upon tables and beaten dead or unconscious. Women, bleeding from wounds which cudgels ripped wide open, were made to throw flowers at the feet of their tormentors.

"Eastern Galicia is being pacified," the government announced laconically.

"The chambers of horror of Gaje," wrote an Ukrainian paper, and it was confiscated before it reached the streets.

The peasants, just flogged, were made to sign

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

letters thanking the police for the "pacification." Ukrainain mayors were forced to sign petitions for the abolition of Ukrainian co-operatives and schools. Libraries were burned in solemn *auto da fés*. Entire villages fled into the woods upon the approach of the pacifiers. The expeditionary forces set fire to two hundred villages, according to an Ukrainian count. They were to visit four hundred more villages and towns before their work was done.

The red pencil of the censor was relentless, as the world was not to know of the pacification, which was said to be a domestic affair of Poland. If the severe father wanted to punish his disobedient son, it was the business of the father and of his offspring.

Peasants tramped twenty miles, exposing themselves to new violence, to tell of the acts of terrorism to a correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*, who was first on the spot.

"The Polish people are the most kind-hearted of the world," an English author wrote at that time. Adalbert Korfanty, the Upper Silesian political leader, left his prison in Brest-Litovsk, protesting against the outrage. Even some of the more sensible nationalist papers of Poland condemned the government for the pacification. A delgation of the English Labour Party was investigating Ukrainian conditions; it was well received but Warsaw showed no compunction.

Several leaders of the Ukrainian movement



### THE CHAMBER OF HORRORS

were awaiting their trial in the fortress prison of Brest-Litovsk.

"To the wall! Face about!" they heard someone shout in the next cell.

Then there was a crashing sound and the heavy thud of lifeless bodies. Soldiers stood in front of their cell and the iron door was opened. But they were not executed, nor were their neighbours. The sham execution helped their jailors to while away time. The hair of some of the prisoners turned grey and their hands were trembling, but they left their jails, after the elections were over and the representation of the nationalities was reduced, to tell of broken legs and of skulls pried open.

A year after the pacification Warsaw replaced an unpopular governor of eastern Galicia by a more popular official and expressed the hope that the Ukrainians would reform. It granted minor administrative concessions and freed a few prisoners. The Ukrainians sent their complaints to the League of Nations, which forwarded them to the Polish government. Warsaw denied the Ukrainian charges, and Geneva filed them in alphabetical order.

Terrorism did not die in eastern Galicia. An investigation by the League of Nations confirmed the earlier reports. "Instead of flogging the peasants to death," the correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* wrote in the autumn of 1931, "the Poles now prevent any freedom of assembly

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

or speech ; they are constantly fining Ukrainians for not keeping their premises clean, and they are closing more Ukrainian schools each year. Victims of the floggings of a year ago are still dying, because the Poles refuse to allow them to be visited by Ukrainian doctors, and more floggings are occasionally administered, although now the precaution is taken to carry out the punishment in some distant spot and to detain the man who has been beaten until he has partially recovered."

Tadeus Holowko, a vice-president of the Warsaw Sejm and a sincere friend of the Ukraine, was assassinated in the autumn of 1931. The Poles accused Ukrainian terrorists of the murder, which was motivated, they said, by fear that through the efforts of this liberal politician the Ukrainian problem would end in a compromise solution, thereby weakening the revolutionary force of the movement. The Ukrainians hinted at the work of *agents provocateurs* and sent a delegation to Holowko's funeral. The murderers were never found.

The leaders of the Ukrainian movement profess to condemn terrorism. They do not want their country to become the Macedonia of the North. They seek to achieve their purpose by pacific means. Although their political parties have adopted different methods of procedure, the goal of all of them is an independent Ukraine. The Social Radical Party, the oldest organisation,

### THE CHAMBER OF HORRORS

is less radical than its name implies. The U.N.D.O., to which reference has already been made, is a fighting party, about forty years old, which Warsaw's policy has made aggressive. Catholic Ukrainians have a political club of their own which seeks to keep them from the influence of the Polish clergy. The Socialist Party is as much committed to national renaissance as the conservative organisations. On the other hand, there is a political faction trying to establish good relations with the Polish government, and another faction the aim of which is to create a better feeling between the Ukraine and Russia.

The soviet policy of granting autonomy to nationalities has made a great impression on Galicia and Volhynia, and the impression would have been even greater but for Stalin's collective farming system, which has damped the Bolshevik ardour of West Ukraine's peasantry.

Communism is a popular charge against the Ukrainian inhabitants of Poland, and membership in the Communist Party is a felony. The Ukrainian Labourers' and Peasants' Party, the "Selrob," has been persecuted for its alleged communistic sympathies, even though its affiliation with the Third International has not been proved. Under the martial law which has been in effect in Poland since the autumn of 1931 the Ukrainians have had most to suffer. About sixty death sentences were pronounced against Ukrain-

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

ians in the first year of the law's operation, according to information gained in eastern Galicia.

Several Ukrainian leaders favour a policy of catastrophes, holding that the worse political conditions are, the better it is for the cause of national independence. They are hoping for an explosion to reveal the driving power of a united Ukraine. They are opposed to piecemeal reform and to Ukrainian representation in the Polish Sejm, holding that compromise may be interpreted as a tacit consent to Poland's policy.

A group of Ukrainians living in Canada have devised an adventurous plan for the liberation of their country. They founded a society, the aim of which is the formation of a Canadian-Ukrainian army of some 80,000 men under British command. This army would attempt to reconquer Ukraine's territory from Poland, Russia, Rumania and Czechoslovakia, which would be united in a British Dominion, owing allegiance to the king of England who would acquire the new dignity of a "King of the Ukraine, Grand-Duke of Galicia and Hetman of all the Ukrainians." This plan is symptomatic of the adventurous ingenuity displayed by some Ukrainian patriots.

Warsaw says that the Ukraine is part and parcel of the Polish republic and that it cannot form the object of bargain under any circumstances. This view differs from that of Marshal

## THE CHAMBER OF HORRORS

Pilsudski, who at one time had in mind a Greater Poland—with pre-partition boundaries—in the framework of which an enlarged Ukraine would be an autonomous part of the Polish republic.

Polish Socialists go farther than the other political factions of the Sejm in suggesting a liberal régime for the nationalities. They favour—although not too enthusiastically—an autonomous régime for the Ukraine and White Russia. They point out, however, that this solution would meet serious opposition among the Ukrainians themselves, some of whom think that it is not adequate and others that it is too revolutionary. They speak of Volhynian peasants, swayed by their priests, many of whom are Russians, opposed to the fulfilment of Ukraine's national aspirations.

From the testimony I have collected on the spot it appears that it is not yet too late for the Polish government to propose a new deal for the Ukraine. The peasants are yet in a receptive mood and may side with Warsaw if it takes the initiative in inaugurating a saner policy. Polish intransigence, on the other hand, breeds discontent and leaves the field open to Ukrainian agitators. The peasants in despair meet the advocates of violence more than half-way.

One of the best informed students of the problem, Stanislaus Mornik, takes a less optimistic view. He holds that the Poles have gone too far in antagonising their nationalities and that they

### THE CAULDRON BOILS

will be paid in kind for their misdeeds. A cataclysm seems to him inevitable, made the more certain by the inability of the Poles to see the writing on the wall and to mend their ways in the interest of harmonious co-operation with all the nationalities of their land.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### IN THE GHETTO

“THERE are about 3,500,000 Jews in Poland,” said Salomon Spitzer, as we stopped in front of a hovel in the Jewish section of Warsaw; “3,000,000 of them are paupers and 490,000 are destitute. The rest can barely make a living.”

Although Salomon liked to express his views in striking language, his information was reliable. The Warsaw ghetto was his speciality, and he took a tender interest in its misery.

“Have you heard the story of the Jewish grocer whose shop was sold at a tax auction-sale for the equivalent of fifty cents? It is a true story. Or have you heard about the village near Warsaw in which one Jew out of hundreds had an assured living, and this Jew was an old man who received a government pension of four dollars a month for the loss of his son in the World War.”

“Cross the Ocean in five days,” a poster in the window of a travel agency read. “Make your reservations now. The bargain of a lifetime.”

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

Salomon looked at the poster with wistful eyes.

“They could not build ships fast enough to take away all the Jews if they had the money and knew where to go.”

Mothers were calling their children so that the Sabbath might see their eyes in purple glory. Swarms of peddlers, with a harried look in their eyes, looked over the crowd before taking home their junk. One could buy a Schalom Asch story for one-fifth of a cent from the owner of a push-cart, which was littered high with grimy leaflets. A crowd was milling around the cart, wanting to touch the dirty pages and, perhaps, to read an eyeful.

“The Jews used to be the greatest Polish patriots,” Salomon continued his lecture. “They loved to read forbidden literature, the stories of Polish heroism, and were sent to Siberia by the Russians. How our people were hoping for Polish independence! Think of the thousands of Jews massacred in cold blood. All this is forgotten. . . .”

A torn notebook and a half-used pencil were also in the bundle which a tall man in a short kaftan, green and greasy, tried to tie into a knot. A few rusty nails kept company in the bundle with a bottle half filled with red ink. His forehead, which Michelangelo would have loved to carve into marble, was a wilderness of wrinkles in which drops of perspiration were trembling.



## IN THE GHETTO

An old man with the beard of a prophet was lugging a heavy can across the street, when the brakes of a car screeched, barely a yard from the patriarch. From the eyes of the old man flames of hatred leapt into the sultry air, and he muttered appalling curses into his dishevelled beard.

A young girl with a wooden leg was hopping around in ecstasy because she had sold a pair of socks. A month before she had two legs, but on a Saturday eve there had been a police raid on Jewish peddlers and a furious policeman had chased her in front of a trolley car which crushed a leg. From the "turma," the military prison across the street, there had come a savage peal of laughter. A prisoner laughed his happiness into the street, because another human being had been made more unfortunate than he.

At every step there was a peddler, shouting frantically, but making no sales, yet hoping at the last minute for the turn of better luck.

Then, of a sudden, there was a mad stampede. The man with the majestic forehead took his bundle under his arm and, pulling his short kaftan higher, made a dash for the nearest doorway, his legs looking enormously long. The torn notebook fell into the gutter, the rusty nails disappeared and the bottle with the red ink crashed to the pavement, looking like blood.

The girl with the wooden leg uttered short, staccato screams and threw her merchandise into a shabby suit-case. She was alone in the midst

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

of a vast emptiness, wild terror in her eyes. Had Archangel Michael blown the shofar of retribution? The bearded patriarch was rolling in the filth of the pavement, taking cover behind his can.

The stick of a policeman crashed on the shoulders of a young man who was not fast enough in moving away. The man was marched to the police station and a minute later the street was once more the scene of the usual pre-Sabbath activity. The girl with the wooden leg re-opened her suit-case for another five minutes before the tired sun would announce to all the Jews of Warsaw that Juda's queen was waiting on the threshold. The man in the green kaftan was running his hands over the pavement, looking for the missing nails. The bearded Jew with the patriarchal appearance heaved the can on his wagon and galloped away before the evening star announced Israel's betrothal to his enchanting Sabbath.

\* \* \* \*

“There should be a law,” Salomon Spitzer, “that the discontented Jews of western Europe must spend a week in the Warsaw ghetto.”

We turned into the Wolyuska and stopped in front of a “Perfumerja.” It was obvious that Wolyuska Street needed more perfume stores to neutralise the odour of the open canalisation. The hunchback in front of the ramshackle house was scolding naked children in a screeching voice.

## IN THE GHETTO

"I pay twenty zlotys per chodesh," a small woman with a large head wailed in the dark corridor. The rent of two dollars and a half per month was much indeed for the dingy cell. Some countries provide better accommodation for their prisoners. Two rows of rooms opened out of the corridor, swarming with humanity, children scattered all over, babies howling and haggard mothers trying to outshout them. At the end of the corridor a group of tenants were sitting, as it was a hot day, trying to catch a breath of air from the transom high above. They were too shabby to go out into the street. In one room Salomon, who was good at figures, counted sixteen persons. Back in the courtyard there was a barn, about two yards wide and sixteen yards long, inhabited by eight families. In front of the barn entrance there was a heap of coal, not more than ten tons, which was offered for sale to families with sufficient foresight and capital to lay in a stock of fuel for the winter.

We were looking for a man, whom we shall call Chajem Horowitz, as poor a beggar as any in the Warsaw ghetto. Every morning he was in the Dzika market and only the darkness saw him home. His stock-in-trade was five second-hand suits—they were probably fifth-hand—and two pairs of extra trousers. Chajem was a great favourite of misfortune. Of him it was written in the Script that even sweet honey would turn

### THE CAULDRON BOILS

sour in his mouth. Day after day he would go to the Dzika market and day after day he would bring the suits back. Every day they would become filthier, and Chajem would scrub them until they were as transparent as the skin of his cheeks.

“Death caused by starvation,” was the medical report handed to Chajem when he wanted to bury his son, aged three.

“Death caused by starvation,” read the medical report of his little daughter, aged five.

There were two more boys and one girl in the family, aged seven to ten, but looking like children of three to five. After the death of the two other children they were taken in charge by a Jewish charitable society, which provided the parents with potatoes and flour.

Chajem looked up to his neighbour, Nathan the tailor, with respect and awe. Nathan was a plutocrat, who made sometimes as much as thirty zlotys a month, the equivalent of nearly four dollars. Chajem would have been satisfied with a monthly income of two dollars. With the children in good care he and his woman, supplied with potatoes and flour, could have lived in ease. But such happiness was not given to him.

• He and his wife had been dispossessed from their cell in a gloomy tenement and they now lived in a shack. Kind neighbours had helped them to a few pieces of wood to have a roof over their heads. In this shack, eight feet

## IN THE GHETTO

by twelve, the seven of them had lived, until the children left them. They shared the shack with swarms of flies which seemed to be the real supporters of its roof.

Salomon took a modest pride in this misery. Chajem was, after all, a celebrity and a first-class illustration of contemporary Jewish history. From the shack to the Cyrk in Dzika Street the distance was short.

"In Russian days," Salomon explained as we arrived at the gate of the Cyrk, "these people were called 'byvsky cheloviek,' 'ex-men.' For less than a cent—six groschen in our money—they get night shelter and a cup of tea."

Although the inmates of Warsaw's famous night asylum are not Jews, they feel at home near so much misery. Under the cover of darkness they flock here from all parts of the city. They seldom talk unless they are very drunk. They want to be left alone and do not want to be pitied. They like the irresponsibility of their dull contentment and what they fear is death. Some of them are graduates of universities, and others of prisons. They are the refuse of humanity, the fallen angels of the ghetto.

Near the Cyrk are the aunts of the "melina," the ghetto's parasites. About half a dozen old women, mostly former prostitutes and ex-thieves, band themselves together in a melina, which is the Warsaw edition of an American gang. "Rebecca the Cow," celebrated in her younger

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

days as a successful thief, lends false beards and crutches to those who want to be disguised. Others lend little children, "aniolki," whose pity-appeal is greater. Through the Jewish town, members of the melina march, wailing and praying, blessing those who give and cursing those who do not give, collecting alms from the beggars.

Thus life moves on in Poland's five hundred ghettos. The Baluti section of Lodz looks very much like the Nalewki of Warsaw, the Poddebem of Lemberg like the Leather Street of Vilna. More than a half of Vilna's population, an investigator found, live on monthly incomes of less than three dollars. The suicide rate in the Polish ghetto, a speaker declared at the Jewish World Congress in the summer of 1932, has increased 25 per cent. in the last three years, and about 90 per cent. of the ghetto's inhabitants have tuberculosis.

The gates of the United States are closed and Palestine's are only half open. The Jews of Poland are no longer massacred, but they are put out of existence economically. Driven from gainful occupations, they are herded together as peddlers and then they are blamed for being unproductive. Only one-third of the Jewish population have work and more than half of them are small tradesmen. "Poland to the Poles," is the motto and the Jew pays the price of the experiment. Yet their tongues are tired

## IN THE GHETTO

of complaining and there is no modern Jeremiah to bewail their fate. American gold no longer comes into the country. Poverty and misfortune have made them quarrelsome, and they are divided into more than a score of different factions. They are trapped in the ghetto and nobody knows what is to become of them.

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“What is to become of the Polish Jews?” I asked their leaders.

“Nervous wrecks and human flotsam,” answered one whose name cannot be mentioned.

“The blood of murdered Christians sticks to the Jewish merchandise,” an anti-Semitic poster says. “We must not allow the Jew to deprive the Polish worker of his bread,” says another poster.

“Don’t patronise the Jew!”

“Buy from Polish shops!”

Then a hint of Hitlerism:

“Poland awake! Why do you take your money to the Jew, the enemy of your race and religion? . . . Whoever buys from a Jew is the enemy of his nation.”

Marshal Pilsudski cannot help this, and his government is trying to do something for the Jew. The average Pole cannot help this either, he can get along with the Jew very nicely. Whose fault is this tragedy? Probably it is the fault of the system which under the cloak of nationalism wants the destruction of the Jews.

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

Then there are the mistakes of the past, committed by Jews and Christians.

Poland, enemy of communism and protector of capitalism, has adopted semi-Bolshevik measures for the protection of the native producer. The Jew is the victim of this State socialism which is penetrating into all parts of the economic life. Tobacco and oil are being nationalised, and coal is coming under governmental influence. The Polish port of Gdynia is a semi-government venture. Factories are being drawn into the orbit of the State, and banks are becoming national institutions.

Nearly 95 per cent. of the tobacco workers of the great tobacco centres, Bialystok, Grodno, Vilna and Warsaw, were Jews under Russian rule. The Germans employed Poles and Jews without discrimination. To-day the tobacco factories are in the government's hands, and the Jews have been dismissed.

The government is omnipotent in the Polish republic. More than 3,500,000 Polish citizens are public officials. Less than 500 of them are Jewish officials, excepting the teachers and public servants taken over from the Austrian administration in Galicia. The five hundred is a compromise number—the government says it is too low and the Jewish leaders say it is too high.

When an anti-Semitic deputy complained in the Sejm that there were eight Jews in the



## IN THE GHETTO

Ministry of Education, the minister explained that they were minor officials, employed mostly in the filing department. When a Jewish deputy complained in the Sejm that Jews were excluded from the postal service, the minister replied that the charge was unfounded, since there was one Jewish postman in Galicia.

There is not one Jewish policeman in all Poland, although in many cities the Jews form a large majority of the population. There are Jews, however, in the secret service to spy upon their fellow Jews. Since the establishment of the Polish republic no Jew has been appointed to the bench.

“Poland’s present mood is not anti-Semitic but a-Semitic,” Dr. A. Insler, a Galician Jewish leader, told me in Lemberg. “It is worse than anti-Semitism, because a-Semitism ignores our existence and builds up the Polish State without our help. In an age of half-communism this tendency is particularly dangerous, since the State controls the lives of millions through its important economic functions. Many Jews were bank directors in former years—now they are out. Here in Galicia, many Jews held wine concessions—and they, too, are out.”

Although the law forbids discrimination, the Jewish jobless receive no unemployment relief, an informant told me. The Polish lawmakers knew what they were doing when they specified that only labourers employed in factories with

### THE CAULDRON BOILS

more than five workers are entitled to government assistance. As a rule, the Jews are working in smaller plants.

Jewish employers are afraid to hire Jewish help, as they know that the government does not look upon their plant with much favour if it opens its gates to the population of the ghetto, instead of giving employment to Gentile Poles. Taxation is a matter of personal likes and dislikes in Poland, and factory directors must be on good terms with the government. The Widzever Manufaktur in Lodz, Poland's great industrial centre, one of the largest textile mills of the country with a pay-roll of 6,000, employs Jews only for office work, although it is in Jewish hands. The same applies to the Eitingon factory, said to be in Jewish-American hands.

Jewish firms with long traditions and excellent standing are refused bank accommodation, while Polish firms of recent vintage are accorded credit facilities.

"Although the Jews constitute about 10 per cent. of the entire population," said Max. J. Kohler at a Williamstown round table conference in August 1932, "they pay over 31 per cent. of the taxes. . . ." This despite their impoverishment, and because they are almost entirely city people. "It has been estimated that more than 700,000 Jews had been deprived of the means of earning a livelihood by these devices before an economic depression set in."

## IN THE GHETTO

In rebuttal, a member of the Polish embassy at Washington pointed out that Poland's taxation system had been devised with the aid of one Englishman and two Americans. He failed to point out, however, that more important than the taxation system is its application.

The Polish government appointed a committee to study the economic problems of the Jews, with a view to opening up new fields of activities, such as gardening, vegetable growing, arts and handicrafts, fur industry, manufacture of lace and embroidery, new methods of standardisation, the development of the mercantile marine and the furtherance of transit trade.

A movement to go back to the farm is afoot among the younger generation of Jews in Poland but it has not yet assumed large proportions. A group of Jews cultivates tobacco around Vilna and the "Imker" Society encourages them to engage in bee-keeping. Two American organisations, the "Joint Distribution Committee" and the "Ort," are engaged in making the Jews more industry-minded by opening classes for prospective artisans. The same organisations have brought Jewish co-operative societies into being, specialising mostly in vegetable gardening and dairy farming.

Do the Jews of Poland know what they want?

"Oh, yes, they know," answered Isaac Gruen-

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

baum, one of the most prominent leaders of Poland's Jewry. "Above all, they want to be accepted as loyal citizens. Many of their fathers died fighting for Poland's independence, and it is unfortunate that their enthusiasm should be dampened."

What is the truth about the anti-Jewish discrimination? Does the law not apply to Pole and Jew alike?

"There is no discrimination, on the surface. You cannot judge, however, the real nature of a law unless you are familiar with its background. A governmental act may look perfectly harmless to the man who is innocent of the facts, and utterly vicious to the one who is in possession of them. The legislator passes a law to punish with death the theft of a loaf of bread. The law applies to the rich and poor alike. Is it an equitable law?

"Nobody has a right to quarrel with the Polish government for wanting to make life easier for the Pole. After the oppression of so many years he deserves all the good things he can get, but these good things should not be given to one class of citizens at the expense of others.

"Poland has a law about the protection of the crafts from inefficiency, which looks perfectly harmless. Who could object to the provision that only members of recognised trade guilds should have the right to keep apprentices, as

## IN THE GHETTO

long as Jews can become members of the guilds? In reality, the Jews are not members of the guilds, because the idea of joining such organisations never took root among them. They have to pass an examination before they are admitted as members, and many of them are too old for examinations and others don't know Polish well enough to answer the questions. Jewish artisans therefore cannot have apprentices."

This conversation took place on the terrace of the Café de l'Europe, Warsaw's social centre. In front of this café stood the Russian church which the indignant population literally tore to pieces after the Armistice. From the terrace one has a good view of the tomb of the unknown soldier. In what war did he die and what uniform did he wear? Did he die fighting the Allies or the Central Powers?

Next to the tomb is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in which dreams are woven into pattern and the country's foundations are laid.

In the café there were beautiful women and elegant officers, conscious of their beauty and of their elegance. The "council of the colonels" sits at one of the tables at which the visitor looks with awe. This is the meeting-place of the government—consisting mostly of colonels—which bears the responsibility of making Poland's great experiment a success. Do the colonels ever consider the earnestness of the Jewish problem? Do the officers and their beautiful women ever

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

visit the ghetto to study life's problems at the fountain-head of misery?

"If the Jew wants to buy a piece of land . . ." the spokesman of the Jews went on. "The Jew would like to get out of the city and to work on the land. Yes, but there are obstacles. He has to apply to the authorities for permission and it is frequently refused to him.

"Then there is the question of Sabbath. The Polish Minorities Treaty grants the Jews special protection to celebrate his holidays. On Saturdays there is no peddling in the ghetto. It was tacitly understood previously that the Jew could keep his Sabbath and would be allowed to work on Sunday, but now the laws are strict and the Sunday rest is rigorously enforced. When the day is short and the candles of Sabbath eve are lighted in the early afternoon the Jew cannot work two and a half days out of seven. What should the interpretation of the Minorities Treaty be in this case?"

All decrees and enactments not in harmony with the constitution, says Poland's fundamental law, must be submitted to the legislature, so that they may be repealed. In spite of this provision of the law, many anti-Jewish ordinances of the tsarist régime remained in effect until 1931. The volume about the nationalities of Europe, published under the editorship of Dr. Ewald Ammende, secretary of the Nationality Congress, contains a list of these ordinances and decrees.

## IN THE GHETTO

Article 16 of the Civil Code of the Kingdom of Poland, of 1825, provides: "The rights that Jews enjoy are those that have not been withheld from them by decree of the king or his governor."

Article 414 says: "A non-Christian may not be a guardian or a member of the family council of a Christian."

A decree of 1862, abolished only in 1931, provides that documents written in Hebrew or Yiddish have no legal force before the law.

Article 234 of the Statute relating to the Organisation of Governmental Administration provides that non-Christians may not be elected to the rural administrations.

Article 282 of the same statute provides that a Jew cannot be elected mayor of a rural community unless the entire population consists of Jews.

Article 612 of the State Liquor Statute provides that only Jewish stores may employ Jews.

The coal-mines of Russia were closed to Jewish financiers in 1902 and Poland opened them only in 1931. Another decree provides that when real estate is purchased the notary must produce an affidavit that the buyer is not a Jew.

"Poland's Jewish population is headed toward catastrophe," the Ammende publication concludes. "The Polish State finances its agriculture and industry to a large extent at the expense of the Jew."

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

The school policy of the Polish government aims at the very roots of Jewish life. Consider the case of Wysokie Litewskie.

The Jewish population of that town wanted to have a school of its own. Although the government was under obligation to finance the school, it refused to do so. As the Jews had no money, they decided to build the school without it. From five till eight in the morning they helped to build the school, before going off to their own work. When the school was ready, it had two stories, with eighteen rooms, and could accommodate four hundred children at the cost of only four hundred dollars.

All went well until one day in 1931 the police visited the school and closed the building. The starosta, the head of the district, was asked why he had the school closed and he answered:

“Because I wanted to have it closed.”

“Now I have a formal reason for closing the school,” he said a few days later. “It has no swimming pool.”

It was pointed out to him that in all Poland perhaps a dozen schools have swimming pools.

A few months elapsed when the school received official notification that several alterations must be made before it could be re-opened, such as moving one window here and the other one there. The Jewish population made the alterations, and the school was open for some time when another police raid was staged.



## IN THE GHETTO

"I don't think you need a school," the starosta declared. "Send the children to the Polish school."

The case of the Jewish Seminary in Vilna has received international attention. One of its girl students, Hanne Levin, was accused of communism, and on this ground the school was closed. The girl was tried and acquitted, and the State prosecutor declared he saw no reason why she should not be re-admitted to the Seminary. The school is closed even to-day.

In eight years the Polish government has closed about fifty-five schools of a Jewish organisation on such flimsy grounds. The Jews want to have their own schools, first of all because Poland cannot give instruction to about 400,000 children. The Jewish population supports about 800 primary schools with an attendance of 80,000 children, who receive their instruction in Polish, Hebrew and Yiddish. Poland finances only five secondary schools in which the language of instruction is Yiddish and about a dozen secondary schools in which it is Hebrew.

Polish universities admit only a certain percentage of Jews. Formally, the government is within its rights in keeping down Jewish attendance to 10-12 per cent. of the student body, corresponding to the percentage of the Jewish population. Since, however, the Jews are city people to whom nearly all careers except the

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

free professions are closed, the arrangement is, obviously, unfair.

Before the war, Jewish students were admitted to the University of Warsaw, which was a Russian institution, in smaller numbers than they are now. On the other hand, they were admitted without restrictions to the Universities of Cracow, Lemberg and Posen, which were then under Austrian and German rule. On the whole, the university situation was more favourable for the Jews when the Poles were not yet masters in their own house.

About eight thousand young Jews are studying at foreign universities at the present moment, because they could gain no admission to the schools of higher learning of their native land. They form the army of the disappointed intellectuals, cast out by Poland and not fully accepted by the other countries, the victims of a system which had brought self-determination to the world.

Such frustrations are bound to result in radicalism. Communism is spreading among the intellectuals. Since it is an underground movement, its strength is unknown. The number of the Communists, however, cannot be very large, because about a half of the Polish Jews still cling to religious orthodoxy, which is opposed to political radicalism, one-quarter belongs in the Zionist camp, and the rest is divided between the Communists, Socialists and assimilationists.

## IN THE GHETTO

It is the opinion of the Jewish leaders that if the Pole is left alone he is not anti-Semitic. The semi-dictatorship of Marshal Joseph Pilsudski has not been hostile to the Jew. Jews are no longer dragged by their beards, as they were before the Pilsudski régime, and open pogroms are rare.

The "sanacje," as Poland describes the Pilsudski régime, discriminates between the Jews. It considers some of them as politically desirable and others as undesirable. It has been extremely friendly to the orthodox Jewish organisations of the Aguda and Mizrachi, antiquities to the modern Jew but a living force to the older generation. The old men are greatly flattered by being invited to the ministers, who make them take seats on velvet chairs and give them fine cigars. The young men say that the political support of a large part of Polish Jewry for the Pilsudski régime has been bought for the price of a few cigars.

The fraternisation of the kaftan and the uniform is not popular among conservative Poles. The Polish aristocrat does not think much of Warsaw's association with the orthodox Jew. For him the inhabitant of the ghetto is "Moska," the little Jew, who comes to his court to perform a ridiculous bear-dance to the tune of the traditional "Ma Jofit."

The "bad" Jews are differently treated, as one can learn from the case of the Jewish

### THE CAULDRON BOILS

Socialists of Wloclavak and from the story of a pair of mandolines.

On the May Day of 1932 three Socialists were arrested in Wloclavak for illegal assembly and they were put through a third degree. Their hair was torn out and their fingers were mangled. The police station of Wloclavak is small and the cries of three tortured men could have been heard all over the market-place if the police had not taken the precaution of having two of its members play sentimental songs on mandolines. I was told the story by a non-Jewish witness.

The worst enemies of the Jews are the "Endekis," the National Democrats, composing the rabid fringe of the Sejm, the spiritual brethren of Adolf Hitler. The most important leader of the party is Roman Dmowski, whose role as a Polish negotiator in Washington and in Paris is well known. The philosophers of the Endekis are Professors Ribarski and Glombinski, experts in pure and tainted blood, champions of the Slavic superman. The Party's Big Four is complete with Stanislaw Stronski, the son of Jewish parents and an implacable Jew-hater. The National Democrats advocate the establishment of an aristocratic Poland in which the minorities are either crushed or assimilated, if found worthy of the honour.

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The Wandering Jew has spent a long time in

## IN THE GHETTO

Poland. Why did he go there and how has his progeny become so numerous under the protection and oppression of the Polish master? Did his trading instinct lead him to villagers who were innocent of the way of commerce or did he go upon invitation? The discovery of Jewish coins of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in a Great Polish village has lent support to the opinion that under Miecyslav III and some of his successors Jews were in charge of Poland's coinage. The evidence seems to be conclusive that in those days all coins of Great and Little Poland bore Jewish inscriptions. The fact that the Jews could keep Christian slaves warrants the belief that they enjoyed full civic rights. A popular ghetto legend tells the story of King Abraham Prochownik, a Jew, who was the ruler of the Poles for one day.

Popular opinion connects the arrival of the mass of Jews in Poland with the Europe-wide pogroms of the fifteenth century. When the hangmen of Spain had to work overtime to burn Jewish martyrs at the stake, Austria, Bohemia and Germany started raids on the lives and properties of their Jewish populations. However, critical history is disposed to accept the version that the first Jewish immigrants penetrated into Poland from the south along the Vistula waterway.

The Polish kings encouraged the coming of foreign city dwellers in the hope that they would

### THE CAULDRON BOILS

help exploit the natural resources of their lands and thereby would fill the royal treasury. They had been impressed by the prosperity of western Europe's cities and so they invited Germans and Jews, French artisans and Dutch shipwrights. The Germans responded to the call in large numbers but they demanded the protection of the Magdeburg Law for their cities. They lived under their own statutes and the cities of western Poland assumed distinctly German traits.

The German settlers did not like the Jewish competition and so the struggle for and against the civic disabilities of the Jews began. Periodically the Polish kings expelled their Jewish subjects and then they invited them to return. The kaftan of the Polish Jews is a Slavic garment and so is the round cap with the visor, worn by the burghers of Warsaw six centuries ago. The burghers discarded their clothing and adopted the more picturesque dresses of Versailles' baroque splendour, but the Jews have stuck to the ancient fashion.

The theory that the Jews stopped in Germany before migrating to Poland has found seeming corroboration in the Jewish language, which is a survival of mediæval Low German. It is possible, however, that the Jewish tradesmen adopted German because in the Middle Ages it was the *lingua franca* of the East, the language of commerce and of finance, high and low. When the policy of tolerance had given place to perse-

## IN THE GHETTO

cution in Poland and the Jews were shut up in their ghettos they stuck to their alien language out of defiance, as they stuck to their alien clothing, both of which had become part of the ritual of their lives.

Even though the Jews were separated from their Christian neighbours and were forced to wear the Jewish cap, they seem to have taken a patriotic interest in the country's welfare which was bent on humiliating them. Jewish ghetto stories tell of the ancestors' valour in the battles of the seventeenth century.

When Kosciusko rose against the Russians after Poland's second partition, he made a special appeal to the Jews, who responded to his call. Joselovich Berek, a private at the beginning of the insurrection and a colonel when he died on the battlefield, was in charge of a light cavalry brigade consisting only of Jews. The Jew Jankiel in Adam Mickiewicz's *Pan Tadeusz* is the life-size portrait of the Jewish hero. When Napoleon held out the hope of a resurrected Poland, the Jews laid their homage at his feet and besought His Imperial Majesty to see that "the most tragic nation on earth" received a juster treatment.

Complications arose about the admissibility of the Jews to the national guards in the revolution of 1830-31. The Polish revolutionary government refused to admit those of them whose beards were not shaved and who were not

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

members of well-to-do families. History records the fact that the number of the Jews who were thus qualified was very small. Thereupon the Jews with whiskers decided to form their own shock troops, but their plans fell through because of Polish opposition. While speeches were being made in favour of and against the Jewish beard, the uprising was suppressed.

No such controversy marred the spontaneity of the Polish struggle for independence in 1861. The Jews played an important part in the "underground cabinet" which took charge of the government. Their role did not endear them to the hearts of the Russian authorities, when Russian law and order were restored. Count Ignatiev, whom the ghetto called "the dog," had the statute books filled with anti-Semitic ukases. Jewish intellectuals were expelled from Russia by the thousands and the restrictions of the Pale were re-enforced. And then came that autumn day in 1918 which brought liberation and made the Jews rejoice.

The Jewish problem is no danger for the Polish State in the sense the Ukrainian and White Russian problems are. The Jews are scattered all over the country, they are divided among themselves, and in many of them the sentimental attachment to Poland is still alive. But their enthusiasm is waning, as the economic boycott to which they are subjected is wearing thin even the most sturdy patriotism.



## IN THE GHETTO

To the younger generation of Polish Jews Palestine is beckoning in the distance. In a few years 26,000 of them have been admitted to the land of promise; some of them are back again in the ghetto, but most of them have become pioneers. Only a thousand Polish Jews are now admitted annually as pioneers and there are heroic struggles for every quota number, and at least twenty applicants for each place. To these young men Palestine is not a small country of sand and stone, of orange groves and olive trees, but the freedom of the open air after living in dingy cells, spiritual life after spiritual death. They know that in Palestine their backs will be straightened and the furtive look will vanish from their eyes. In Palestine they hope to learn how to smile and to find pleasure in the art of living.

What would have happened to the Polish Jews without the assistance of their American friends? Polish Jews shudder to think of the answer. Since the war the Joint Distribution Committee has raised about 75,000,000 dollars, much of which has gone to Poland to keep people from starvation. Dollars to Poland from American relatives must run into hundreds of millions, and they have kept alive many Jewish families.

The Jewish question deserves emphasis in the discussion of Poland's minority problems. Misery among the Polish Jews is more widespread than

#### THE CAULDRON BOILS

among Polish Christians. The Jews of Poland feel that their tragedy is not an isolated incident in a universal calamity, but a symptom of religious intolerance and racial antagonism which have no place in the twentieth century.

## CHAPTER NINE

### THE BLAST FURNACE

ASIA is connected with Europe by a highway, some forty miles wide. Eastern barbarians tramped this highway, flanked by virgin forests, to conquer the West. The road leans against the Carpathians and at a gap in the mountains it is crossed by the Amber Road. Southern adventurers marched on this road in search of the gold of the northern waters, the amber of the Baltic Sea. Upper Silesia is situated at the crossing of the two roads.

At the cross-roads the loot of the marauders was rich in the early days of history. Here brigands, barbarians, adventurers and mercenaries had their relay stations. In this clearing of the eternal woods the first police station was established, which functioned under a different name but performed the same purpose as it would to-day.

Here German and Slav first set eyes on each other and invaded the neighbour's hunting-grounds. Here St. Adalbert of Prague preached the gospel to the sneering nomads of the tenth

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

century. Here the first blast furnace was built centuries later and eastern Europe's great industrial region came to life.

Here a plebiscite was held at the end of the World War to determine whether the German or Slav should be the master of the cross-roads, and here the Germans won the electoral battle and lost the prize. Every child in these parts can tell you that as a result of the plebiscite the Poles obtained more than ninety per cent. of Upper Silesia's coal deposits and more than sixty per cent. of her zinc and lead. Every country lout in the village store can inform you that Upper Silesia has almost as much coal as England, and that it has Europe's most important zinc ore deposits.

Kattowitz, eastern Europe's Pittsburg, is almost as thickly dotted with factory chimneys as the neighbourhood of America's Smoky City. Imagine an international frontier running through the most thickly settled industrial regions of western Pennsylvania. Fancy Homestead and McKeesport on one side of the line and Allegheny and Carnegie on the other. The boundary would cut across coal mines, separating pits from their ventilation, cokeries from their coals, rolling mills from their pig iron, ores from their foundries, water and electric lines from their plants, schools from their villages and factory houses from their factories. This is what has happened to Upper Silesia.

## THE BLAST FURNACE

The new boundaries cut across 30 railway lines and 45 highways. On a frontier of 60 miles there are 61 customs offices. In the year 1931 about 40,000,000 persons and 700,000 automobiles crossed the Upper Silesian boundary. The richest part of the industrial section, with its blast furnaces, iron foundries, rolling mills and cokeries, were taken from the Germans and given to the Poles. This decision was made on the basis of a plebiscite at which, out of 1,186,000 voters, 707,000 were in favour of Germany and 479,000 voted for Poland, 60 per cent. for the Reich and 40 per cent. for the Polish republic.

We started at Kattowitz, wondering how many tons of coal could be mined out of the lungs of its inhabitants. Here the sun is always in eclipse but if the moon is not bright enough the flame of the factory chimneys shows the way. Upper Silesia is so small that it can be traversed back and forth on a summer afternoon. From Kattowitz in the east to Ratibor in the west the distance is less than fifty miles. From Koenigshuette in the north and Pless in the south the road is not much longer. Smoke oozes out of every pore of the scarred earth. The town hall stares into the mouth of the mine and the church steeple measures its height on the factory chimney. Toy locomotives tug at toy trains with strenuous puffings. The grimy face of the earth is wrinkled with rails.

We leave the trains, cyclists and pedestrians

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

behind as we penetrate into long stretches of forests and meadows, waving fields of wheat and corn, which remind us that this part of Polish Upper Silesia was a citadel of German landed aristocracy. The roads are shaded by linden trees which perfume the air with the odour of aristocratic boudoirs.

You travel east, wondering where the former German-Russian frontier was, but you are not kept in suspense for long. You cross a rickety bridge and you are in a different world. A few miles away, the Bismarck Tower frowns in the Dreikaiserecke, the Corner of Three Emperors.

Two of the emperors are dead, and the third one is chopping wood in Holland. Cinderella has stepped into the princely heritage, Poland is master of the imperial household. Yet the dividing line between two worlds remains. The wooden bridge was once the boundary between Prussia and Russia, and we are now in Bendzin, three miles from the clamour of the West and yet on the threshold of the Orient.

As soon as you leave the town you may imagine yourself in the heart of Russia. Thatched houses are huddled together in the shade of protecting trees. While you cannot always see the pigs making themselves comfortable in the living-room, you can see that they cannot be blamed for mistaking it for their sty. From the rickety bridge you travel at your own risk because the

## THE BLAST FURNACE

roads here appear to the impatient traveller more as obstacles than means of communication.

You turn west and after diving into a bank of smoke you are out of Polish Upper Silesia. You are now in Germany, where miners descend into the pit greeting one another: "Glück Auf!"

Between two mines there is a patch of land overrun by hundreds of men, gleaning the ears of wheat the harvesters have left behind. The result of their work may be only a small loaf for the children, but the miner cannot sit all day long in the smoky sun and he needs the bread. Since the peace settlement this is one of Europe's sickest parts.

You are now on the outskirts of Beuthen, German Upper Silesia's leading industrial town. Children are jumping about, but they must be careful not to jump too far or else they may find themselves on the opposite side of the frontier and in trouble. A brook keeps company with the highway, and the brook is the boundary between Poland and Germany. It rambles through a densely settled industrial section, but at one place the frontier leaves the brook and does some meandering also. At first it runs parallel with a railway line, jumps across it and then follows a wooden fence. It keeps away the quarters of officials from their mines, and the cinemas from their public. Then, without apparent reason, the frontier makes a long detour. "The Poles wanted the miners' hospital

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

over there," the German guide explains, "and so they made this detour." In front of the hospital there is a miniature "Polish Corridor," a few hundred yards long. Through this Corridor, German trolley-cars had passed with locked doors. Those who had wanted to use the Corridor from one German town to another had to have a Polish pass. Meanwhile the Germans have built a new highway which follows the boundary on the German side. The hospital is unused and the Germans of Upper Silesia suggest that it should be transformed into a monumental memorial to the authors of the Treaty of Versailles.

You visit a mine and after tramping two miles you come across an iron gate with a seal and a warning: "It is a criminal offence to break the seal." You have now reached the German-Polish frontier. Before the peace settlement there was no gate in this passage and the coal was then removed on the other side. The pit-head was given to Poland but much of the coal remained on the German side. A new pit-head was built and the passage was closed, thus demonstrating once more than the sun does not need to shine on man's frontiers.

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"There is more trouble to every square mile of Polish Upper Silesia," an English observer remarked, "than to the square mile of any other



## THE BLAST FURNACE

part of Europe." The scars on the neck and head of Herr Franz are his proofs that he can speak for the Germans of Upper Silesia.

"I am a Catholic and a Conservative," Herr Franz said, "and I believe that Cæsar should be given what is Cæsar's. I believe, furthermore, that the present international situation imposes the obligation on the Germans of eastern Upper Silesia to be loyal to Poland. In the year 1927 I expressed these beliefs to a group of Catholic Germans. A group of Polish patriots did not like my address and they slashed my face and trampled me underfoot. They were outraged because I did not make a violent speech so that I could have been prosecuted for high treason."

August Neugebauer, another prominent German, died in the summer of 1932 as the consequences of a beating. They had used his stomach, which was large, as a springboard.

A large printed volume of similar occurrences was submitted to the Council of the League of Nations by the German "Volksbund" for Polish Upper Silesia on January 7th, 1931. The volume deals with acts of political terrorism committed in October and November 1930 by the Upper Silesian Insurgent League and its associates. Dr. Michael Grazinsky, governor of eastern Upper Silesia, is the honorary chairman of the organisation.

"Toward 21.40 o'clock," one of the cases reads, "there was a knock at the door of Karl

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

Jambor, farmer at Brzezie, house No. 104. Challenged by his wife, someone replied: 'This is the police.' When she opened the door about a hundred persons surged forward and one of them searched the beds. 'Where is your pig of a husband?' she was asked and she said he was in the stable. The intruders went to the stable, seized Jambor and dragged him into the kitchen. One of them shouted: 'To the fields with the pig! Let's club him to death!' He was beaten with whips and sticks, and so were his wife and his son, Gregor, aged nine. According to medical reports, the wounds of Frau Jambor were serious. When Karl Jambor tried to fight off his assailants, one of them flung a leather sling around his neck. He freed himself and knocked down his assailant, tore the window open and fled. They shot after him about three times. After a while he and his family took refuge behind the barricaded gate of the stable. . . ."

Jambor had some influence among his German neighbours and it was feared that he would use it against the Polish candidates at the coming parliamentary elections. The same concern for the outcome of the elections was responsible for 76 acts of terrorism in Kattowitz County, 38 beatings in Swietochlowice County, 38 in Tarnowskie Gory County, 38 in Pszcyna County and 68 in Rybnik County.

Whenever the Germans can prove the justification of their complaints, the Council of the

## THE BLAST FURNACE

League of Nations asks the Polish government to let it have the list of punishments meted out to the offenders. Warsaw sends to Geneva the judgments of the lowest courts, which are either set aside by the higher tribunals or the offenders receive executive clemency.

In recent years the violence of physical persecution has abated and its place has been taken by efforts at economic annihilation. German Upper Silesians are forced out of the country. Merchants are assessed sometimes more than ten times the taxes of their Polish neighbours. The Prince of Pless, a leader of the Germans, took his tax case to the League of Nations. He was required by the Polish treasury to pay more than three million dollars. German employees are suffering from discrimination except in specialised fields where they are indispensable. The object is the same as in the Polish Corridor: Upper Silesia must be de-Germanised. In the previous legislature there were forty-eight German members in the Upper Silesian Diet, but in the summer of 1932 their number was reduced to nine. The city of Kattowitz, a bulwark of Germanism, which previously had a German majority even according to Polish official figures has now a Polish majority.

In Upper Silesia too the usual complaints are heard about the beer and wine concessions which are being taken out of German hands and given to patriotic Poles, and government employ-

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

ment is, of course, out of the question for the Germans.

As to the usual school grievances, the trouble is that although the League of Nations can do many things it cannot make a Polish teacher smile at a German child. Nor can the World Court restrain a teacher from spanking little Germans. Frowns and smiles cannot be covenanted in international documents, but in Upper Silesia they have become strong weapons of the struggle between the two nations. In Upper Silesian public schools little Germans were withheld the food which should have been given to all, so that the president of the Mixed Commission, an arbitrator in fights between Germans and Poles, had to interfere on behalf of the German children.

The customary school grievances have an Upper Silesian variation. The rights of the parents were challenged to send their children to the German minority schools. Geneva was called upon to decide and The Hague had to give its views on the subject. The Germans won in theory but they lost in practice because, as was said before, the League of Nations has no authority to make Polish teachers smile. And so in two years the number of applicants to German elementary schools had dropped from 9,000 to 2,000.

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German economic grievances in Polish Upper

## THE BLAST FURNACE

Silesia deserve special notice because the new deal here meant the loss of the Reich's supremacy in the East. Thanks to Upper Silesia, Poland and Czechoslovakia, two Slav countries, have become the leading industrial nations of eastern Europe. Their way is now open to the Balkans which are the markets of Germany and Austria, two German countries, before the war. Does this mean that the age-old battle for hegemony between the Slavs and Germans has entered its final phase or will Germany regain her leading rôle?

The future is very much in doubt because the Poles have embarked on a ruinous policy. Upper Silesia reminds the student of the Australian bull-dog ant which, if cut in two, wages a battle of life and death between its head and tail. The head seizes the tail with its teeth, and the tail defends itself by stinging the head.

Upper Silesia produced 40 million tons of coal before the war. After the war Germans and Poles went against one another full speed, and the total output in the last few years has been 56 million tons, which would be a gratifying result if there were market for it. For many years Poland paid 50 to 60 million zlotys annually as her contribution to the dumping of Polish Upper Silesian coal on the world market.

"We have shown the Germans that we can administer such a difficult province as Upper Silesia," said Michael Grazynski, the governor of the province.

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

"They have shown us that they cannot administer the province," said Gustave Stresemann, the foreign minister of the Reich, in Lugano.

"Only 31 of the 172 directors and 415 of the 3,043 technical employees are Polish in our large Upper Silesian industrial establishments," wrote the *Polska Zachodnia*, the organ of Polish capitalists, about ten years after the war. These were the key positions where the Germans were indispensable.

The Germans had to turn over to the Poles nearly half a billion dollars in the shape of industrial plants. Koenigsgrube, the largest coal mine on the Continent, was among the victims of the war. This brings us to the question, "Who has won the war in Upper Silesia?"

"At present, after seven years of Polish rule in eastern Upper Silesia," writes H. Staehler, "some 20 per cent. of the German capital invested in Polish undertakings has been ousted; it has been replaced to the extent of about 88 per cent. by foreign and only about 12 per cent. by Polish capital."

Is it true, above all, that the Upper Silesian problem was created not so much by the Poles as by the French Comité des Forges and, especially, by its most influential firm, Schneider-Creusot. New light was thrown on this question by the publication of *The Secret International*, a pamphlet of the Union of Democratic Control in London.

## THE BLAST FURNACE

The Comité des Forges is the powerful industrial union that played a great part in the Ruhr occupation and had a considerable influence on the Poincaré cabinet. "Its influence was behind the propaganda for the Saar Basin and the demand at the Peace Conference for the left bank of the Rhine. The president of the Comité des Forges is M. François de Wendel, who is also a deputy in the French chamber and a director of the Bank of France. He has a controlling interest in the best-known nationalist French newspaper, the *Journal des Débats*, and recently he acquired a controlling number of shares in *Le Temps* with Mr. de Payerimhoff, who is the president of the Comité des Houillères.

Schneider-Creusot controls also the Skoda works, which have factories in Poland and Rumania. The company makes aeroplane engines in Warsaw, and it controls the Polskie Zakłady Skoda, formed in 1926 to take over interests acquired in Poland. The Skoda factories also manufacture poison gas, and their nitrogen works are at Marienberg and Asce, and their military chemical factories in Olomouc.

M. Eugene Schneider, the chairman of Schneider's, is the director of several banks, among which is the Banque de l'Union Parisienne, which happened to do some financing in Poland, and which finances the Banque Générale de Crédit Hongrois.

During the last few years, the author of the

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

*Secret International* says, the Schneider firm has delivered armaments to Mexico, Yugoslavia, Greece, Japan, Rumania, Turkey, Bulgaria, Montenegro, Russia, Argentina, Spain and Italy. It should be pointed out that these countries represent both capitalism and communism, allies and enemies, and that, presumably, the Montenegrin consignment was for use against Yugoslavia and the Yugoslavian consignment against Montenegro.

“Discussing the interrelatedness of French loans and armaments orders in the French Chamber on February 11th, 1932, Paul Fauré pointed out that just as French loans before the war enabled Turkey to arm itself with French arms that were shortly afterward used against France, so to-day French loans granted to Bulgaria, Mexico, Greece, Japan, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Rumania and Poland are being spent with French armament firms.”

We learn that the Skoda works' arsenal in Brno, which before the war was a small repair factory, has become an immense concern employing about 10,000 workmen, and that since the war Skoda has developed to enormous proportions in its manufacture of aeroplanes.

Among the Upper Silesian companies which have passed into foreign possession after the war, the Société Fermière des Mines d'État deserves first mention because it represents an attempt on French part to take a financial interest in Upper



## THE BLAST FURNACE

Silesia. This company is associated with the French Comité des Forges. Originally it belonged to the Prussian State, and now the French hold the majority shares while the minority shares are held by the Polish State.

The Silesia Zinc Company is under French management, and French-Belgian interests control about two-thirds of the shares. This company was controlled by Prince Henckel. The Hohenlohe Company, whose coal mines and iron works are between Kattowitz and Koenigshuette, is controlled by a Czechoslovak, Herr Petschek, who maintains close relations with the Comité des Forges. The Giesche A. G. is controlled by the American Harrimans, who have retained several German officials in responsible positions.

On the whole, the Comité des Forges has not gone very deeply into the Upper Silesian field. It may have been deterred from greater participation by the instability of conditions or it may have taken warning from the Poles themselves.

“Upper Silesian industry is moving toward disaster with giant’s strides,” wrote *Polonia*, the organ of the Polish leader, Adalbert Korfanty. “Day by day the inevitable catastrophe is drawing closer. It is not difficult to see that the so-called official circles are not guiltless in the collapse, since they lack the ability to run a complicated machinery, such as the Upper Silesian industry.”

What is ruining Polish Upper Silesia, in the

### THE CAULDRON BOILS

opinion of the Polish opposition, is the mad scramble for foreign markets which necessitates the investment of millions and a policy of economic imperialism. Upper Silesian coal made Poland build the Gdynia railway, which it has no money to finish. Upper Silesian coal stiffens the German-Polish trade war. Poland did not need Upper Silesia for her own needs, writes Lieutenant-Colonel Graham Seton Hutchison, who derives much of his knowledge from his official connection with Upper Silesia :

“ The Dombrowa and Cracow districts (which belonged formerly to Russia and Austria) already supplied in 1913 9 million tons of coal, covering nearly 90 per cent. of Poland's coal requirements. There was therefore no economic justification whatever for assigning to Poland the eastern district of Upper Silesia with a pre-war (1913) supply of 32·3 million tons of coal. . . . On the other hand, Germany was in great need of the Upper Silesian coal, and the eastern German market absorbed before the war approximately 75 per cent. of Upper Silesia's coal supply, so that only 25 per cent. of the coal had to find other markets. The fact therefore emerges that the Upper Silesian coal was taken away from Germany, although she required it, and given to Poland, although she had no use for it.”

Lieutenant-Colonel Hutchison does not think much of the transfer of eastern Upper Silesia to Poland as a sign of human progress. He points

## THE BLAST FURNACE

out that the standard of life of the Polish coal miner is the lowest in Europe. Against an average cash earning per shift of 9·3 shillings in Great Britain, and 8·7 in Germany, the miner in Polish Upper Silesia made only 3·11 in good times. At the time of my recent visit to Silesia the miner on the German side—both German and Polish—made between 1·50 and 2 dollars for an eight-hour shift, against 0·60-0·80 of the miner on the Polish side.

Quoting the Polish Foreign Minister's declaration to the League Council at Lugano that under Polish rule 1,500 workmen's dwellings had been built, H. Staehler points out that during the same time more than 30,000 workmen's dwellings had been built in German Upper Silesia. Before the war, the Upper Silesian miner was on a par with the miner in the rest of Germany. His standard was comparatively high and he was protected by social legislation which is far less advanced in Poland.

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Adalbert Korfanty is the man to see, if one wants to hear also the Polish side of the argument. In the Polish Upper Silesian insurrections of the 'twenties he was the most striking figure, and international headliner. He was hailed then as a modern Kosciuszko, the great champion of Polish rights.

Korfanty is a disappointment for one who

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

expects to see a man with iron fists. He looks like a German university professor, slightly stout and nervous and very sure of himself. "A typical Teuton," the Germans say, because his hair is fair and his eyes are blue.

His office at the *Polonia* was closed and when he opened the door a pair of suspicious eyes took the measure of the intruder. Korfanty was in a Polish prison two years before this visit, because he had expressed strong views about the dictatorship of Marshal Pilsudski. When asked about his views on the Upper Silesian German question he at first refused to comply, because he said if he told the truth he would be in jail the next day. After some hesitation, however, he consented to dictate the following statement :

"Upper Silesia's German minority is composed mainly of immigrants who have remained here after the adjudication of eastern Upper Silesia to Poland. The second category of the Germans consists of the descendants of Germanised Poles, who form the middle class of the cities. The majority of the Upper Silesians, both in the Reich and in Poland, speak Polish as their native language and are of Polish parentage. A large part of the German population, who were formerly State and municipal employees, have left our country after the war. From year to year the number of Germanised Poles is diminishing, as they return to us of their own accord and send their children to the Polish schools. Most of the

## THE BLAST FURNACE

Germanised Poles speak Polish, besides German. Their decreasing number, as attested by the census and school statistics, proves our contention that this problem is not dangerous. I do not deny that Polish fanatics have been guilty of hostile acts against the Germans, which I have condemned both in the legislature and in the press.

“The City of Kattowitz illustrates the point. When it sent me to the Reichstag in 1903 as the first Polish deputy of Silesia, I received only about 5 per cent. of the city vote, and to-day Kattowitz has a Polish majority. A similar process is going on in Posen and in Pomerania.

“Germany believes that her aggressive policy in favour of the minorities will help discredit the peace treaties, but we know that her espousal of the minority rights has another purpose. I have always taken the stand that the policy of compulsory denationalisation does not lead to success and that only fairness and justice make members of the minorities loyal citizens.”

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I made a visit to Upper Silesia's Government House, which is the most impressive building in Kattowitz. The house had to be seen and a few questions had to be asked. The building is meant to be a symbol and a warning. It occupies a dominating position on the top of an elevation, and it can be seen for miles. It is the headquarters

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

of the executive offices and of the local legislature, since Upper Silesia is vested with a certain amount of autonomy.

"How many Germans are employed by the provincial administration?" I asked Dr. Edward Kostka, head of the department of the minorities.

"Two Germans."

"And how large is the personnel of the administration?"

"I don't know the exact figure . . . several hundred people."

"And only two of them are Germans? The Polish census speaks of about 280,000 Germans living in the province, and the Germans claim nearly the double of that figure."

"You see, the Germans are not interested in our small salaries. They are used to making more money as merchants and heads of corporations. . . . My salary is only sixty dollars a month."

He seemed to be miles away on the other side of a large mahogany table. In the vast chamber the visitor looked like a dot.

Other officials came in for a round-table conference. They thought that everything was all right with Poland, except the nationalities. The Germans were constantly stirring up trouble and the mark was hard at work to set the world against Poland. Even Herr von Papen, as charming a gentleman as any of those who ever occupied Bismarck's chair, forgot his excellent manners and shook his fists at the eastern neigh-

## THE BLAST FURNACE

bour. When the name of General Schleicher was mentioned the conferees grew silent. He is the unspeakable Teuton. And what business had Marshal von Hindenburg to rattle his antique sabre? Was not eastern Upper Silesia doing her best to make the frontier invisible between the Reich and Poland? Had it not issued nearly a million frontier permits? It is distressing how the most noble motives are misunderstood in life.

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History plays a large part in the Upper Silesian controversy. Does the possession of a territory for six centuries confer title to undisturbed rights? Upper Silesia has been German for the last six hundred years. Brittany or Navarre have not been French that long.

When history began to take shape on the scrolls of learned monks, the transcontinental highway leading across Upper Silesia was thronged by bands of Goths and Gepidæ, pillage-bound, and followed by the Lombards and the Heruli. The Slavs were all around, numerous and wisely cautious. They kept in the background while the brigands were in sight and spread all over the countryside as soon as they had vanished. They cared little for pomp and power if the waters were well stocked with fish and the bees produced enough honey for the daily mead. The Thunderer Perun was an exacting god and he demanded rich sacrifice. The impenetrable Pre-

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

seka forest separated the Slavs from the Teutons, and the Zlenz Mountains, from which Silesia derived its name, protected them from southern foes.

When the Germans cut a way across the Preseka the dance began. At the turn of the first century Boleslaus the Great conquered Silesia for the Slavs. He invaded Germany and extended his dominions, first to the Elbe and later to the Elster and the Saale. "At his death in 1025," his chronicler says, "he left Poland one of the mightiest States of Europe, extending from the Bug to the Elbe, and from the Baltic to the Danube, and possessing besides the overlordship of Russia."

In a century his work was destroyed and Silesia was again a principality. In one more century Silesia consisted of eighteen principalities. The Germans came back, ready to fight and to work. They penetrated into the Slavic country, their camps grew into villages and their villages grew into towns. From their princes they demanded and obtained the privilege to live under the Magdeburg Law, which gave the communities the right to govern themselves. Charles IV, German king and Roman emperor, annexed Silesia to his realms and thus this territory became German.

If America had not been discovered Silesia would not have known so much misery. With the discovery of America the overland route had



## THE BLAST FURNACE

to yield in importance to the transatlantic route. This in itself would not have ruined the East, if the Turks had not been before the walls of Vienna and if the caravans carrying India's treasures had not taken to the sea. The religious wars broke out in Europe and the roads leading out of Silesia were thronged with immigrants. The Habsburgs were now her rulers and they needed money to fight the Turk and the Reformation. Silesia paid as much as she could and when no more food was left in the house, the peasant turned to the wall and died of starvation.

Then came Frederick the Great, and declared war on Queen Maria Theresa, of the House of Austria, for the possession of Silesia. He based his claim on a testament long before annulled. However, right was on the side of Frederick because might was on his side, and he conquered most of Silesia for Prussia, and with the aid of Herr Minister von Heinitz and Herr Berghauptmann Graf von Reden made it the Pennsylvania of Europe's East. Frederick's policy was summed up in three words: "Peuplieren, Melieren, Germanisieren." New blood was to be infused into the country by planned colonisation. Opposition to the Hohenzollern rule was to be stamped out with friendly means if possible and with the gauntlet if necessary, so that the country might be made German.

Before the war Upper Silesia was German in name but Upper Silesian in sentiment. The *élite*

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

spoke German but the miners and husbandmen spoke "Water Polish." The Poles say that Water Polish is a dialect of Polish, and the Germans say that it is a dialect of German. Scholars say that Water Polish is as far removed from Polish as Dutch is removed from Low German. It expresses the names of everyday objects in Polish and abstract ideas in German. One view is that the name of the language was derived from the Polish watermen, known as Water Poles, navigating log-rafts on the Vistula. Another view attributes its name to the "watering" of the original stock of Polish words by German additions.

A distinctive language and common traditions have created an Upper Silesian nationality, and many of her inhabitants began to consider themselves the Swiss of eastern Europe. To the Germans it seemed incredible that a new deal would involve the dismemberment of an economic unit. Yet, in November 1918 the Polish-language newspapers of the United States reported a conversation between the Polish spokesman, Roman Dmowski, and President Wilson, at which the Silesian question was discussed. The Polish representative went so far as to threaten the president: "If we don't receive Posen, Silesia and our Baltic shore with Danzig, your American Poles will not know why this is so."

The strategy was transparent, the Polish vote was the bait. Dmowski pressed his demands on

## THE BLAST FURNACE

America. He wanted all of Upper Silesia and three districts of Central Silesia. All this land belonged to Poland under Boleslaus the Great, a thousand years before. Dmowski was always ready to quote authorities on history, ethnography and geography, and although the authenticity of his quotations was not always unimpeachable the president was impressed. Dmowski's Silesia would have been more than twice the size of the Upper Silesian territory which was turned over to the Poles. "The infant republic has a voracious appetite," the German-language papers of the region wrote, and they did not take the agitation very seriously, but meanwhile Dmowski banged diplomatic tables with his fist and demanded Breslau.

The Peace Conference was not impressed by the Polish claims, but it wanted to see how far it could go in breaking up Germany and so it gave Upper Silesia to Poland.

"The peace conditions as handed in originally to the German delegation in Paris," says J. Weinstein in his excellent exposition of the Polish cause, "adjudicated without any restriction all Upper Silesia to Poland. It appears from German census figures that there were in the whole Oppeln Regency, or Upper Silesia, 2,028,602 people, of whom only 35 per cent. were German and 64.9 per cent. were Poles."

The German peace delegation stood aghast. Count Brockdorff-Rantzau, the chief delegate,

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

told the Allies that they were defeating their own ends. Lloyd George was impressed and he sounded the warning: "The Germans will not sign." Clemenceau stood out for the Polish claims but Wilson gave in and the plebiscite was decided.

General Lerond, a Frenchman, headed the plebiscite commission, and he was assisted by General de Marini, the representative of Italy, and Sir H. P. Percival, the representative of Great Britain. All Upper Silesia, but a few purely German districts, was to decide on her nationality under Article 88 of the Versailles Treaty.

Polish priests led long processions of Upper Silesian pilgrims to the Holy Virgin of Czestochau. Would it not be glorious to belong to a country in which the image of the virgin was painted by St. Luke himself? At the end of the service the pilgrims were given little booklets with the pictures of the saints done in gorgeous red and gold, exhorting them to save Upper Silesia for the Kingdom of Heaven.

The Germans were ordered to evacuate their military forces from the plebiscitary area on January 31st, 1920. Twenty-four hours later the Allied troops marched into the territory,—mostly French and a few detachments of Italians. In the City of Tarnowitz the trouble started when students began preparations for a torch parade on the fiftieth anniversary of the local gymnasium.

## THE BLAST FURNACE

The French forbade the parade and the students staged a protest demonstration. The German security police intervened and French troops moved against it. The clash was averted but the ugly mood of the population was revealed.

Paris ordered the plebiscite to take place not sooner than six months nor later than eighteen months after the inter-allied commission had taken over the reins. Why was the population to be on tenter-hooks so long? The Germans found only one explanation: the Poles were to be allowed to prepare the ground. Polish agitators descended upon the villages and the inns were full of their talk about the impending ruin of the Reich. Every peasant would have to give two-thirds of his land to the Prussian fisc, so that the reparation payments might be made.

"Is your cow dear to you?" the agitator asked the peasant.

"Yes, Mr. Agitator."

"Then, take care. If you keep the Germans in the country, they'll take your cow away."

Not all Poles approved of the Upper Silesian solution.

"You want Upper Silesia?" Marshal Pilsudski asked a delegation from the plebiscite area. "But it is absurd. Upper Silesia is an ancient German colony."

If Pilsudski could not be induced to champion the Upper Silesian cause, there were others to do it. Adalbert Korfanty, Polish plebiscite com-

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

missioner, politician and publicist, was a frequent guest at General Lerond's Oppeln headquarters. Stimulated by these talks, he visited the farm-houses, promising the miner short hours and long pay and the peasant a pair of cows in his stable at the price of a vote for Poland.

General Bonnet, another Frenchman, was placed in charge of the local police, and M. Anjoubault took over the civil administration. The Upper Silesian railway system was separated from the German Reichsbahn, and the commission issued its own postal stamps, a dove with an olive branch. General Lerond ordered the frontier closed on the German side but it was left open toward Poland.

Korfanty's followers defied the commission's instructions to deliver their arms. The French troops considered them their allies and the Italians spent pleasant weeks west of the River Oder, out of danger's range.

Korfanty's *Oberschlesische Grenzzeitung* took the offensive and it incited to violence. The German papers responded and they were ordered off the streets. Oppeln wanted to liberate a prisoner, charged with murder, and the State Attorney in Beuthen refused to comply, which led to a strike of the judges.

A group of German workers demonstrated, a hand grenade fell from nowhere and dead bodies were left in the streets. French troops shot at the crowd; sentries were assassinated; the head-

## THE BLAST FURNACE

quarters of the opposing parties were wrecked. Bells rang in the villages inviting the faithful to a struggle of life and death. Sleepy Upper Silesian towns bustled like ant-heaps, while the peace settlement was being carried into effect.

Young men from central Poland harangued crowds in the public squares. Sometimes they were hysterical or sarcastic, and they assured the peasant that the future of the world was in his hands. The peasant liked to be flattered and the young men liked to be applauded.

The commission gave orders that permits were necessary to go from one village to the other. The Polish agitators received the permits but the German agitators were refused. The British and Italian representatives were out of sympathy with Lerond's tactics but Downing Street and the Palazzo Chigi were not yet sufficiently interested in the conflict to take serious action.

The village of Anhalt in the district of Pless was burned down, and organised bands from Poland fell upon the Germans, beating and killing those who resisted. There was a Polish uprising at the end of August 1920,—the prelude to the drama. Polish insurgents attacked the Germans and the French troops kept out of sight. Hindenburg, once called Zabrze, Beuthen, Tarnowitz and parts of the Pless district were in the hands of the insurgents. Korfanty was everywhere, holding secret conferences, organising and animating his followers. The Hotel Lomnitz of Beuthen, where

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

he had his headquarters, was surrounded by barricades.

The Germans of Upper Silesia called to the Reich for help. Although the armistice had been concluded two years before, there was a private war in Silesia. Young men, who had just missed becoming heroes because they were born too late, saw a chance to acquire their share of romance and glory.

The Vikings and the Oberland and Rossbach detachments took up their stand on the frontier of Upper Silesia and the Reich. The Organisation of Loyal Upper Silesians worked hand in hand with the League for the Defence of Upper Silesia. The Silesian auxiliary of the Organisation of former Civilian and War Prisoners worked in harmony with the men of Captain Ehrhardt.

The Reichsbahn ran "plebiscite special" trains for those Upper Silesians who wanted to go home to vote. Korfanty waited for them at the frontier station, denouncing them as hooligans and foreigners. More than 150,000 Upper Silesians went home to register their votes. The Germans, thus strengthened, stormed the headquarters of the plebiscite sub-commissariat at Kattowitz and a state of siege was declared. Several villages displayed both the Polish and the German flags, to be on the safe side. The plebiscite was held on March 20th, 1921, with the result, already mentioned, that 65 per cent. of the votes were cast for Germany. It may be noticed



## THE BLAST FURNACE

in passing that 98 per cent. of the qualified voters went to the polls, a world record.

"We have won," the German newspapers announced, but Adalbert Korfanty was of a different mind. Most of the Germans did not know that the interpretation of the result would be the cause of a conflict more serious than the one that went before. The Allies had stipulated that each one should vote in the commune where he was domiciled or in the commune where he had been born if he had no domicile in the territory. The result of the vote was to be determined commune by commune, in accordance with the majority in each of them.

The Germans thought this meant that the voting had to be controlled in the usual manner, commune by commune, and that all Upper Silesia would be theirs. The Polish interpretation was that Upper Silesia must be divided. The members of the inter-allied commission were at loggerheads. The French member wanted to give Poland the entire southern and eastern part of Upper Silesia. The Italian member wanted to give the industrial section to Germany and the British member wanted to give all Upper Silesia to the Reich.

Upper Silesia was a hotbed of rumours. Korfanty spread the intelligence among his followers that the ambassadors' conference would give Poland only the districts of Pless and Rybnik. The Comité des Forges moved into the trenches.

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

In his account of the Upper Silesian events, Lieutenant-Colonel Hutchison says that the French industrialists as well as their financial and military backers had a vision of a new Germany, trimmed of a large part of her national resources and industries—of a new Germany bounded on the west by the Rhine and on the east by the Oder.

Premier Nitti of Italy recorded a conversation with Herr von Herft, the German envoy, in the course of which Herft submitted to him documentary evidence that the Polish insurgents were prepared to forestall the decision of the Allies. The plebiscite had settled nothing; the question was who would take the initiative.

At the beginning of May 1921 Korfanty had himself proclaimed dictator, and at the head of about sixty thousand insurgents occupied Upper Silesia nearly as far west as the Oder. General Gratier, in charge of the French troops, had about ten thousand men under his command. He hastily withdrew his forces west of the Korfanty Line and made them play at manœuvres in south-west Silesia. The Italians moved to stop the advance of the insurgents but they were forced to withdraw after thirty of their soldiers had been killed. The Germans placed their defensive forces under General Hofer. In the second week of May, German and Polish irregulars were face to face.

“The German was an outlaw,” writes August

## THE BLAST FURNACE

Scholtis, a Silesian peasant, in whom these events awakened a dormant genius. "His bones were broken with all the refinements of the higher arts. German teachers, officials and peasants were mutilated in the best manner of the Middle Ages, and their wounds were stuffed with straw."

A detachment of British soldiers, a belated sign of the interest of Downing Street, put an end to the reign of terror. Korfanty's dictatorship collapsed and his army dissolved itself into a pillaging horde. The Allies sent the Upper Silesian case to Geneva, and the Council of the League of Nations passed a Solomonic judgment: the plebiscitary area should be cut in two. Poland received the larger part of the industrial district, because she received a minority of the votes. A commission on which the representatives of Belgium, Brazil, China, Japan and Spain were sitting delimited the frontiers. In July 1922 the Allies transferred the eastern part of Upper Silesia to Poland.

"There is cause for shame to all honest men," writes Hutchison, "who participated directly or indirectly in the committal of the Silesian degradation, so infamous. . . . The unrighteousness and folly of the partition are the only things which distinguish it. In America, with just criticism, it might be said: 'So this is self-determination.'"

\* \* \* \*

One cannot leave the subject of Upper Silesia without adding a postscript about Upper Silesia's

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

special régime anchored in the Geneva Agreement of May 15th, 1922. It is the consensus of opinion of observers on the spot that if it had not been for the Agreement there would have been more trouble in Upper Silesia since the Korfanty insurrection.

In order to guarantee the continuity of the economic life of the region during a provisional period of readjustment, and to provide for the protection of the minorities, the League recommended that Germany and Poland should conclude a general convention. The result of this recommendation, the Geneva Agreement, is one of the most voluminous international documents, consisting of 606 articles.

Under the Convention an Upper Silesian Mixed Commission had been set up as an advisory body, composed of an equal number of Germans and Poles, with a neutral president, together with an arbitral tribunal for settling private disputes. The validity of the Convention is limited to fifteen years and it is in force in the Upper Silesian plebiscitary area. Dr. Felix Calonder, chairman of the Mixed Commission and former president of the Swiss Confederation, described the purpose of the Geneva Agreement as being "inspired and governed by the desire to bring about the pacification and consolidation of both parties of Upper Silesia."

In the period of June 1922 to June 1929, says Dr. P. Fischer, vice-president of the Prussian

## THE BLAST FURNACE

government in Oppeln, there were eighty-two adjudications pronounced by the chairman of the Mixed Commission. Of these only ten decisions concerned complaints put forward by the Polish minority in Germany, while the remaining seventy-two concerned the condition of the German minority in Poland.

The Mixed Commission has at its disposal Minority Offices both in the German and the Polish part of Upper Silesia, the purpose of which is "to bring about in each of the two parts of the plebiscitary area a unified and just treatment of the petitions of the minority . . ." Complaints must be addressed first to the Minority Office, which may then forward them to the Mixed Commission.

The Geneva Agreement regulates, among other things, operation of the Upper Silesian railways, electric power stations, customs service, mining, insurance and the protection of the minorities. The private and municipal railways retained their concessions and the State railways on both sides of the frontier were placed under a joint system of operation. Railway rates were made uniform and a central accounting bureau was set up for the whole system. Poland undertook to recognise the privileges of the Reichsbank for not more than fifteen years.

The following concise summary of the economic dispositions of the Geneva Agreement is from the *Encyclopædia Britannica* :

### THE CAULDRON BOILS

“For fifteen years, natural products originating or coming from one of the two zones of the plebiscite area and destined for industrial establishments in the other should cross the frontier free of duty. For six months raw, half-manufactured and unfinished products of industrial establishments in one zone, destined for industrial establishments in the other, should cross free of duty ; and this should continue for fifteen years when the products, as finished, were intended for free importation into the country of origin. Natural or manufactured products originating in the Polish zone should, on importation into the German customs territory, be exempt from duty for three years from the date of the frontier-delineation. As regards export, the two countries should facilitate for fifteen years the export of such products as were indispensable for industry in either zone.”

The great value of the Geneva Agreement is that it enables the minorities of Upper Silesia to take their complaints to the League of Nations. The German People's League for Polish Silesia (Deutscher Volksbund) is the representative organisation of the Germans of eastern Silesia. It was founded by Count Edwin Henckel von Dönnersmark to take over the role of the Deutschtumsbund which had been forced out of existence because of its alleged disloyalty to the Polish State. The soul and driving force of the Volksbund is Otto Ulitz, a dynamic person-

## THE BLAST FURNACE

ality, whose trial for high treason and conspiracy was a *cause célèbre* of Silesia. It was proved at the trial that the charges against Herr Ulitz were based on forged documents.

Polish interests in Germany are protected by the League of Poles, founded in August 1922, and with headquarters in Berlin. The Poles claim about 1,500,000 to 2,000,000 countrymen in Prussia alone, mostly in German Upper Silesia, and the Germans concede less than half of the smaller number.

In the first years of the German republic the Polish minority had two representatives in the Prussian Diet, but it has no representatives now. At the Reichstag elections of 1930 the Polish Catholic People's Party, the largest parliamentary faction of the Poles in Germany, polled 72,913 votes, whereas at the Reichstag elections of July 31st, 1932, all minorities in Germany polled 33,431 votes, which was about 0.1 per cent. of the electorate.

During the school year of 1930-31, says J. Weinstein, the German minority in Polish Upper Silesia had 82 primary schools, with an attendance of 16,509 pupils, "while the Polish minority in German Upper Silesia, which is much stronger, had in the same year 35 primary schools, 8 of which were private, attended by 384 Polish children."

What do these figures mean? Do they bear out the accusation of the *Polska Zachodnia*, a

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

Polish newspaper in Kattowitz, that the Polish minority is oppressed by the authorities of Germany? The League of Poles cited twenty-four cases of German terrorism committed against the minorities at the end of 1929.

“In none of these cases could it be proved,” said Ministerialrat Dr. Fritz Rathenau, head of the minorities department of the Prussian government, “that the police or the authorities of the province were guilty of oppressing or discriminating against the Poles.

“It is true that Germany’s Polish population has no representatives in the Reichstag and in the Diets. It is also true that the number of children going to Polish schools is not large. But we cannot force our Polish fellow-citizens to elect deputies of their own or to send their children to Polish schools. Polish parents seem to realize the advantage of having their children learn a language that is understood all over the world. When we say that Germany has no minority problem we simply state a fact that can be verified by anyone who takes the trouble of investigating the question of our minorities.”

Very little is heard these days about Poland’s ambition to extend her frontiers westward, so as to include all Upper Silesia within her boundaries. A few years ago “Consulibus” did not stand alone in urging the removal of the Upper Silesian battle-front to the German Reich. “Polish territories must not be left behind German frontiers.”



## THE BLAST FURNACE

The spokesman of the Upper Silesian Insurgents said: "We must always remember our brothers across the border and we must always cherish the idea of reconquering the other Silesian territories."

Official Poland realizes that the assimilation of eastern Upper Silesia would be a vast problem for any country. Germany's attitude toward Upper Silesia is entirely different. Public opinion in the Reich has never accepted the League award and even to-day it heartily endorses the opinion expressed by Lieutenant-Commander Kenworthy, a student of the subject: "I do not think the decision of October 1921 regarding the Upper Silesian partition should be regarded as permanent, and I consider that Germany should seek to reopen the question by application to the League of Nations."

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Did Marshal Foch see too black when he foresaw the next war in the Corridor? Lord Beaverbrook does not think so. Europe is assuming all the outward signs of militarism, he writes, and the Corridor is mainly to blame. There are prophets even among the Poles to warn of the danger. Their ideal is a smaller and more secure Poland, without the ballast of the Corridor, Upper Silesia and the Ukraine. The followers of Stanislaus Matkiewicz, the Polish monarchist, want an understanding with the Germans. The

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

Vilna newspaper *Słowo* uses its influence among the Polish-speaking population to create a better atmosphere among the nationalities. The Cracow *Czas* is working in the same direction. Marshal Pilsudski himself would like to place the relations of Poland and her neighbours on a different basis, but the bane of a dictator is that he cannot afford to be less noisy than his most boisterous opponent.

The prophecy of Marshal Foch needs some modification. First of all, we have to revise our ideas about the wars of the future. The League of Nations and the Pact of Paris have modified the methods of diplomatic warfare. The Chinese-Japanese conflict in Manchuria and in Shanghai was an augury for the future. It was not a war, merely a conflict, and therefore there was no declaration of war. No nation wants to be considered the aggressor and therefore no nation can take the risk of declaring war. War is old-fashioned, and conflict is *à la mode*. In a conflict everything will be different, except the dead, who will be just as dead as if they had been killed in a real war.

Thus, while war in eastern Europe is unlikely, there is always the possibility of an armed conflict. Poland has had some practice in this field. Although she is young, she has acquired millions of new citizens and thousands of square miles by anticipating the modern method of settling

## THE BLAST FURNACE

international differences. It was an outlaw Polish general who occupied Vilna and not the regular forces of the republic, and yet the Vilna district is part and parcel of Poland. Nor did Poland declare war on Germany when Korfanty's insurgents occupied eastern Upper Silesia, never to give it up again. Poland did not declare war on Russia or on the Ukraine when she occupied the eastern part of Galicia.

East Prussia, the Free City of Danzig and Lithuania are not afraid of Poland declaring war on them, but they are apprehensive about an informal military occupation, which would give the great powers another chance to sanction the breach of a sacred covenant.

But even if Poland leaves East Prussia and the Free City in peace the Corridor question will not be settled, because there is always the German side to the controversy. The Germans cannot accept this settlement. It is a makeshift arrangement—the result of the “hang the Kaiser” mentality—and it is the worst humiliation to which modern Germany has had to submit. It makes little difference that the Corridor trains are fast and that they carry the German passengers painlessly across Polish territory. What counts is that a country possessed of Germany's energy and ability will not submit to being torn to pieces. Three powerful empires have tried to do the same with Poland and yet she has survived all three of them. Does Poland seriously

think<sup>c</sup> that she can do to Germany what three emperors could not do to her?

The population of Poland is increasing much faster than that of Germany. In the year 1930 the excess of births over deaths was 416,000 in Germany and 525,000 in Poland, even though Germany's population was twice as large as Poland's. An over-populated country is an uncomfortable neighbour and the rapid rate of expansion gives the Polish jingoes the pretext to demand a more aggressive policy.

The great tragedy of post-war Poland is that she has learned nothing from her own experience and fails to realise even to-day that the world has changed since the days when Russian soldiers occupied the citadel of Warsaw. Poland is applying the Russian method to the treatment of her nationalities, which was worse than that of Germany and Austria because it took everything and gave nothing.

Poland does not want to admit the fact that she is a nationality State. She wants to play the role of a European melting-pot, with the difference that the pot is to produce first-, second- and third-class citizens. It is obvious that this policy has been a failure. Polish census figures of 1931 show that 30 per cent. of the population belongs to the minorities. What is highly significant about these figures is that they show an increase of only 17 per cent. of the Polish population and 20.4 per cent. of the non-Polish

### THE BLAST FURNACE

population in ten years since 1921. This does not mean that the rate of increase of Poland's non-Polish population is larger than of the Polish population. What it proves is that many of those who in the census of 1921 registered as Poles entered their name in 1931 as non-Polish. About 25 per cent. of the Jews declared in 1921 that their native tongue was Polish, while ten years later their number decreased to 7 per cent. For the same reason the number of the non-Polish population of the province of Lodz rose from 379,000 in 1921 to 524,000 ten years later.

Poland is the land of many problems. Wherever the observer turns he is confronted with a new problem. The Corfidör is the worst of them because there the enemy is stronger than anywhere else, and the sense of injustice more burning.

Eastern Galicia is on the way to becoming a Polish Macedonia. A permanent military occupation is expensive and there is little consolation for Warsaw in the fact that the Ukrainians can be kept down with bayonets. The traveller in Poland has the impression of being in pre-war Austria—it is a land of the uniforms. But pre-war Austria was a rich country, whereas post-war Poland is not.

There is some substance to the charge that Poland, instead of keeping back bolshevism, has facilitated its spreading to the West. The in-

## THE CAULDRON BOILS

habitants of Poland's eastern regions, the primitive peasant folk of the White Russians and Ukrainians, know nothing about the Communist Manifesto and the Five Year Plan, but they do know that their co-nationals across the Russian boundary are not thrown into jail for wanting to teach their children their native tongue. Nothing is farther from the mind of the White Russian peasant than to live on a collective farm. Yet, if the White Russian population were allowed to express its choice, it would probably prefer to belong to Russia. Poland's minority policy has helped bolshevism to cross the frontier.

The Poles have signed a Minorities Treaty, promising to all inhabitants of the republic full protection of life and liberty. While the letter of the treaty is sometimes observed, its spirit is almost always ignored. The nationalities feel that they have been cheated and they take their cases to the League of Nations. Geneva is swamped with such complaints but under the present statutes it has no power to force a sovereign State to yield to its will.

Who is to blame for this state of affairs? It is difficult to censure the affable Pole, whose hospitality reminds one of biblical times. One is inclined to hold Poland's tragic heritage responsible for a mentality which is rooted in an intolerant nationalism. It is as if the curse of the freedman were on Poland's rulers, who want to wreak their vengeance for past sufferings on the

## THE BLAST FURNACE

unfortunate wretches whom fate has made their servants. The patriotism of the Polish extremists reminds the observer of the French Jacobins of the Terror who were full of good-will for their fellow-men and therefore wanted to guillotine all those who did not share their views.

The New Jerusalem is still a promise and Poland has as yet failed to perform the miracles of pacific heroism which the world had expected. What new idea has Poland evolved and what inspiration has she given humanity? Her position at the cross-roads of Europe and in the heart of the minorities region have clearly marked her way. Her title to fame would be a new type of nationalism, based on the co-operation of all her races. Other nations have tried Poland's present nationality policy, and they have failed.

Europe's most constructive minds agree that the best solution of the Polish problem would be the formation of an eastern Switzerland, in the sense that her nationalities would have full autonomy in their cantons or provinces. It would not yet be too late to take this initiative and on this basis perhaps even the Corridor problem could be solved. Poland's mission, as conceived by her greatest sons, is not fulfilled, by dragonnades and flogging expeditions, but by building up a State in which all nationalities have equal rights and duties, in which there are no masters and subject races, a confederation of

### THE CAULDRON BOILS

equals under the inspiring influence of the best that Poland has produced.

Karl Marx said in one of his essays dealing with the Polish question: "There are necessary people, and among them are the Poles. Their national existence is more necessary for us than for any other nation." Germany and Poland need each other and there is no reason why they should not compose their differences in the interest of fruitful co-operation. Without such co-operation it is difficult to see how the explosion can be avoided.