

EAST
PRUSSIA

Menace to Poland and Peace

BY
ROBERT
MACHRAY

London

GEORGE ALLEN & UNWIN LTD

A powerful plea for the transfer of East Prussia to Poland. Little is known about the province by the British or American public. This book shows how many of the deep troubles that darken Europe and the world today find a most significant share of their origin in Germany's hold on that tract of land on the Southern Baltic. It was Germany's bastion thrust towards the East, but will lose that character when handed over to Poland.

Mr. Machray demonstrates the economic failure of German exploitation of East Prussia, and explains why greatly improved results are to be expected if it is peopled by Polish peasants in the future. The book also deals fully with the population problems involved in such a policy.

"Mr. Machray has done a useful work in presenting the problem of Poland to the British public in a cheap and readable form. The book is also illustrated by excellent maps."—*The Times Literary Supplement*.

"Helps to set the facts in proper perspective and his maps are clear and useful. When peace comes to be worked out, this book will demand careful consideration."—*Great Britain and the East*

**EAST
PRUSSIA**

Menace to Poland and Peace

By the same author

THE STRUGGLE
FOR THE DANUBE
and the Little Entente
1929-1938

THE LITTLE ENTENTE
(1920-1929)

POLAND
1914-1931

THE POLAND OF PILSUDSKI
1914-1936

THE EASTERN QUESTION REVIVED
1940

THE POLISH-GERMAN PROBLEM
1942

POLAND
AND
GERMANY
IN
EUROPE

■ Territory
of East Prussia



EAST PRUSSIA

Menace to Poland and Peace

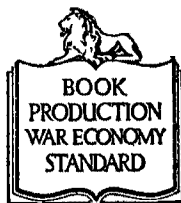
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Introductory—The Problem

EAST PRUSSIA presents a problem of the highest political importance not only for Germany, Poland, Lithuania and the Baltic, those most immediately concerned, but for all Europe and indeed for the whole world. East Prussia has quite a considerable area, for it covers 14,284 square miles; roughly it is rather more than twice the size of Yorkshire, and rather less than twice the size of the State of New Jersey. It is comparatively thinly populated. According to the official German census of 1933 it had 2,333,301 inhabitants,¹ so the density of population was only 160 to the square mile. Nor is East Prussia a naturally rich area. Yet in the past it has played a leading role in eastern European history.

In the Middle Ages a great German State governed by the Order of the Teutonic Knights, and extending from Polish Pomerania to the Gulf of Finland, arose in this part of Europe as the result of conquest. The union of this State with that of Brandenburg under the Hohenzollern dynasty led, by way of the Partitions of Poland, to the creation of the powerful Kingdom of Prussia, and then, because of Prussian might, to the development of the more powerful Second Reich and the still more powerful Third Reich. The formal excuse for the outbreak of war in 1939 was found in the German slogan of the annexation of Polish Pomerania, called by German propaganda the "Polish Corridor," and of thus obtaining territorial continuity between the Reich and East Prussia. This, of course, was only a pretext: Hitler saw the overthrow of Poland as the first stage in his achievement of *Weltherrschaft*, i.e. world hegemony. However, it was no accident that the beginning of the Second World War was bound up with this problem of East Prussia, for it entailed fundamental issues.

The foregoing simplification of three inter-related historical

¹ See Appendix I.

periods is sufficient to reveal the vast importance of the problem of East Prussia, and also its relevance to the present day. Historically East Prussia has been the source of continual international complications, and the centre of sanguinary German expansion at the expense of Germany's neighbours. It has been a great sallyport of Germanism. What then must be done to ensure that its future and the role it is to play in Europe will be different?

A detailed and all-round study of the question is bound to lead to the conclusion that the maintenance of the state of affairs which has existed hitherto could have only evil consequences, and is simply out of the question. For, by the very nature of things, the *status quo* would connote only a continuance of past experience. East Prussia would remain synonymous with the "German Mission in the East," the headquarters of the worship of aggression generally, and in particular one of the bases for Reich hegemony in the Baltic, a base for new German attempts to conquer Eastern Europe, an instrument whereby Poland and other adjacent countries would be condemned to military impotence. Yet at the same time it would still be a sick province both economically and from the population point of view. The only solution which suggests itself in this connection is the union of East Prussia with the Polish State.

No matter what Government Poland has, she is bound to put forward this solution at the Peace Conference. Polish public opinion demands this with striking unanimity. Words used by the German, Arndt, clearly explain the reasons: "Poland," he wrote, "failed to recognize that her duty as a nation was above all to defend her maritime frontiers and to chase the Teutonic Knights from those frontiers (i.e. from East Prussia). This negligence was the death of Poland. Without the sea . . . it was impossible for her ever to become anything; she must disappear sooner or later."¹

Therefore the reason for present-day Poland's determination

¹ E. M. Arndt, *Germanien und Europa*, pp. 328-29. Altona. 1803.

in regard to this question is obvious: she does not want to commit suicide a second time. It must be added, however, that the formula, the "union of East Prussia with Poland," is merely a convenient summarization. For it equally implies an adequate access to the Baltic for all countries lying between Germany and Russia. Moreover, it will be of great economic and strategic importance for the future confederation aimed at in this part of Europe and comprising the whole group of nations permanently threatened by ever recurring German aggression.

* * *

If East Prussia is transferred to Poland, the problem of the Free City of Danzig (Gdansk) will disappear. This city is situated at the mouth of the Vistula, Poland's main natural artery; and its historical traditions and economic links with its Polish hinterland are so beyond challenge that it would never have occurred to anyone at the Paris Peace Conference after the last war to propose the separation of Danzig as a Free City but for the contiguity of East Prussia. Bismarck himself told a German delegation from Pomerania on September 23, 1894, that "Danzig is the first of the cities of whose possession any Polish State must assure itself."¹

Even the question of the nationality of the inhabitants could not have been exploited to justify Danzig's separatist tendencies. For, by the decisions of the Versailles Conference a large German minority was left in Poland, while some 1,500,000 Poles were left in Germany; thus 300,000 more Germans, namely Danzigers, could well have been included in Poland for reasons of her security, without violating doctrinaire scruples. It was only the circumstance that a German population of nearly two millions was in direct territorial contiguity with Danzig which led to a change in the attitude

¹ *Questions relatives aux territoires polonais sous la domination prussienne* (Commission Polonaise des travaux préparatoires au Congrès de la Paix), p. 67. Paris. 1919.

of the Conference. The delegates and experts began to consider whether it was not necessary to leave the city in political association with East Prussia, and the result of the compromise between this idea and the proposal to incorporate the city in Poland was the creation of the Free City.

Thus the "Free City of Danzig" was the product of the fundamental decision which maintained the State association of East Prussia with the Reich. In relation to the problem of East Prussia it was a subsidiary problem, strictly dependent upon and subordinate to the main problem. If the decision is taken to link up the future of East Prussia with the Polish Republic by its incorporation in that Republic, all the mental reservations in favour of excluding Danzig from the Polish State fall to the ground.

Further, the integral incorporation of the Free City in Poland is dictated by the most recent historical experience: an objective view absolutely confirms the fact that the solution adopted in 1919 was a complete failure. From the sociological standpoint it was an attempt to achieve a harmonious and friendly co-existence between Danzig and Poland on the basis of the unfettered interplay of vital conditions assuring the Free City a splendid economic development and full national and administrative autonomy. It was thought that over a long period economic factors and the city's internal political liberty would provide an adequate counterweight to chauvinistic factors. It was thought that, given no cause for offence, the German patriotism of the people of Danzig would liberate itself from revisionist and annexationist tendencies. But this programme did not work out as expected, because the psychological factor necessary to its success was lacking. Not, however, from the Polish side: Poland displayed the greatest restraint and moderation. She loyally and effectively watched over Danzig's economic development, and did not interfere in the least with the Free City's internal affairs. On the other hand, the German Reich transformed the city into one of the chief centres of its lust for revenge, incitement to war, racial hatred,

and worship of aggression. The Free City swarmed with political agitators of the most extreme type, with military organizations and members of the "Fifth Column." In this miniature "State" militant clamour drowned all other voices. Many of its inhabitants allowed themselves to be attracted by propaganda, and others to be intimidated by moral and often physical terror. All conciliatory possibilities were thoroughly suppressed, and in consequence the very conception on which the Free City's existence depended was irrevocably destroyed.

* * *

To summarize briefly the following study of this great problem, the political union of East Prussia with Poland will:—

1. Assure Poland the possibility of effective defence against aggression, and thus provide not only that State, but also any future alliance of the Central and South-Eastern European States, with powers of resistance;

2. Be an important factor making for the freedom of the Baltic, and so for an effective alliance between Western Europe on the one hand and Central and Eastern Europe on the other in all the further course of history;

3. Put East Prussia's economy on a healthy basis by making full use of its maritime position and by the industrialization of the country, by exploiting its natural hinterland and the nearby labour markets, the markets for the purchase of raw materials and the disposal of commodities;

4. Supply East Prussia with a lasting equilibrium of population and satisfactory development by the influx from adjacent over-populated areas of a population fond of agricultural work and prepared to remain in agriculture;

5. Eliminate the German element in East Prussia in a very short time and with great ease, especially as in any case this element will largely and hurriedly move westward after Germany's defeat. The spiritual fusion of this province with the Polish State organism will of itself justify the political

association, by proving that it was in the very nature of things that this association should come about;

6. Overthrow the myth of East Prussia as an instance of the success of might over right and of the unpunished denationalization of other peoples, and open the possibility of living peacefully with other countries.

In the new Europe, which will politically be better founded and not subject periodically to mortal shocks, the place East Prussia will occupy and the part it will play is quite obvious. It must be reconstituted part of Poland, in the service of peace and of creative labour.

The arguments are each discussed in a separate chapter. Also there is discussed the fundamental German counter-argument to the proposal, namely, the *will* of the inhabitants of East Prussia. Its history is an indispensable key to an understanding of the amazing turns of fate which have assured it such an important place in European history, despite the fact that its material and moral resources justified in no way that position. These turns of fate are explained by the conquest of East Prussia by the Order of Teutonic Knights, and later by a fortuitous dynastic combination. But in both cases the native population played only a passive role: East Prussia was always subjected to the will of others, but in this case the others were always Germans. Germany succeeded in making it both an instrument and a symbol of absolutely unrestrained aggressive aims. And she succeeded by ruthlessly overcoming the province's strong and deliberate gravitation towards Poland.

* * *

In presenting the various arguments in succession a certain amount of repetition has been unavoidable—none is really irrelevant. To simplify the Polish spelling in the text the Polish accents have been omitted and the crossed Polish *ł* is replaced by the ordinary letter. As regards proper nouns, such as the names of cities, rivers, and so on, I have followed

Polish or German usage or both—Lithuanian, in a few cases—and also employed some standardized English forms, as seemed most appropriate in each instance. In the Index short expository and bibliographical notes are given on a number of words and books. And in this connection the maps, it may be added, are helpful, but they are valuable in themselves as they have been drawn with great care.

I beg to acknowledge most gratefully the assistance in the making of this book which I have received from Polish and other friends.

ROBERT MACHRAY

May, 1943

East Prussia in Past Ages

THE history of East Prussia falls into four periods: the age of the old Prussians (to 1231); the period in which the Knights of the Cross were predominant (to 1410); the period in which Poland was predominant (to 1696); and the period in which the Kingdom of Prussia was predominant.

THE ORIGINAL PRUSSIANS

(To 1231)

The original inhabitants of the area of East Prussia were the Prussians (Borussi), an unfortunate people whom the invading Knights of the Cross robbed not only of their liberty, land and very existence, but even of their name. These indigenous Prussians had nothing in common with the Germans. In the Indo-European family the Prussians were in the same group as the Latvians (Letts) and Lithuanians, and this group in turn had the Slavs as nearest kin. The language spoken by the old Prussians was most closely related to Lithuanian.

Driven westward before the Slavs the Prussians settled along the Baltic in the 8th century during the same period as the Lithuanians and Latvians.

The Prussians remained pagans, and did not develop a State organization; they were divided into several tribes with varying numbers and military strength. Their main profession was agriculture, and they were acquainted with the plough and the three-field-rotation system. Private ownership and a system of isolated settlements were the principal features of their economy. Their society consisted of only two classes: the common people, who bore quite large public burdens, but enjoyed personal freedom and by participation in meetings

possessed, at least theoretically political rights; and the knightly aristocracy. The latter class developed by a process of internal and not external differentiation. It possessed such a large measure of culture that when the Knights of the Cross had subjected the country for the first time in 1249, they did not hesitate to allow this class to become members of their own Order. The Prussian aristocracy gained its wealth from military conquest, for the Prussians were a warrior people. According to reliable estimates, in the 13th century all the Prussian tribes together aggregated some two hundred thousand people, and could raise 25,000 men by general levy. Before the arrival of the Knights of the Cross they also had an organization of military formations (*comitates*) which undertook foreign expeditions for booty. The development of this military organization undoubtedly marked the emergence of a general State organization, a process which, however, was not carried to its conclusion owing to the abrupt change which occurred in the Prussians' historical conditions.

Politically the situation of the Prussians was by no means favourable. The neighbouring peoples were all superior in civilization, as well as economically and militarily. There were no Germans on the Baltic in those days, but the Scandinavians, and especially the Danes, developed extensive freebooting and trading expeditions. Fortunately for the Prussians, these Scandinavian sea-rovers were not concerned with permanent conquest, but only with levying tribute. The Prussians were unable to extend southward because of the existence of the Poles, but the latter made no systematic attempt to conquer East Prussia, for at that time Poland was absorbed with the problem of Pomerania, in other words, with maintaining her position permanently at the mouths of the Vistula and the Oder.

None the less certain Polish kings, such as Boleslav the Wrymouthed (in 1108 and 1111), conducted larger campaigns against East Prussia. The chroniclers, Gallus and Adam of Bremen, exaggeratedly called the result of these campaigns

“the conquest of Prussia;” even so, by the Middle Ages the conviction was general that Poland had the right of overlordship over that country. Also, it was on the initiative of Boleslav the Brave and with his support that St. Wojciech (Adalbert) undertook his evangelizing mission to East Prussia, which the missionary paid for with his life, in 997. The King also supported St. Bruno’s missionary journey, in 1007. It is probable that from the time of Boleslav the Wrymouthed onward a broad zone of unpopulated territory extended between Poland and the Prussian settlements along the whole Prussian seaboard, for some 125 miles. Consequently Polish and Prussian military expeditions and local struggles went on only along the frontiers of East Prussia and Polish Pomerania, in the neighbourhood of Chelmno (Culm), and also far beyond to the east.

Polish-Prussian relations, however, did not consist by any means exclusively of armed conflicts; there are also indications of political co-operation between the two nations, for the purpose of resisting the Germans. Even more importance must be attached to Poland’s cultural and linguistic influence on the Prussians. This is shown by the Prussian terminology for metals, instruments, agriculture, vegetation, social institutions and church practices, all revealing strong Polish lingual elements. A further interesting testimony is the fact that at the Peace concluded in 1249 the Prussians demanded that the Knights of the Cross should maintain Polish law. Place names also indicate that numerous Polish settlements existed in Prussian territory from the early Middle Ages. The Prussian ceramic art derived the potter’s wheel and certain motifs in ornamentation from Poles, and the Prussian tribes imitated the Polish huts erected on piles and fortified settlements. From the dawn of their history the Prussians came under Polish cultural influence.

At the end of the 12th century there was an improvement in the Prussians’ political situation.

The struggles between Danes and Germans led to the

elimination of the Norsemen's pressure, and at the same time Poland split up into a number of duchies, a source of great weakness to her. The Prussians exploited the changed situation and made more frequent expeditions into Poland. They were not a threat to Polish independence, for the Prussians were too weak, but they were destructive, oppressive, and called for a permanent defensive organization. On the other hand, the general atmosphere created by the Crusades led to the development of Polish missionary plans. The Church encouraged the Polish dukes to wage war on the heathen Prussians, and as a result of this encouragement two expeditions were undertaken, namely, those of 1164-66 and 1193-96.

These two factors—the political threat and the religious attitude—had one definite effect. The Polish Duke Conrad, the ruler of Mazovia, which bordered on Prussia to the south, decided, probably on the advice of Henry, Prince of Silesia, to entrust the task of subduing and converting the Prussians to the German Order of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, later known as the Knights of the Cross. This step was entirely in the spirit of the age, for knightly orders had recently been called upon to engage in struggles with the infidels in Transylvania, Latvia (1212) and Spain. Conrad and the other Polish princes did not realize the danger in bringing over the Order, which, it must be added, was not at the time numerically large, into the area, for they were influenced by the apparently disinterested Christian mission of the Knights.

THE PREDOMINANCE OF THE KNIGHTS OF THE CROSS
(1231-1410)

I

The Order of the Knights of the Cross developed in Palestine in 1198 from the brotherhood of the German hospital at Acre, as a purely German association. Being organized very late,

during the last years of the Crusades when the Saracens were victorious, the Order soon lost the original reason for its existence, and was transferred to Venice. It was formed on the model of the knightly Orders of St. John and the Templars. The attempt to establish the Order in Transylvania to defend that province against the Kumans, a Tartar tribe, was also unsuccessful: when the Order betrayed its intention of insidiously setting up an independent state on the lands granted to it, the King of Hungary simply flung it out.

Yet the Order was headed by an unusually talented Grand Master, Hermann of Salza (1210-59). His name was connected with all the steps which during this century ensured extraordinary successes for the German *Drang nach Osten*, as that Push was later universally called. He acted as mediator in the peace concluded between the German dukes and the Danish king, the latter ceding to the Germans his possessions lying between the Elbe and the Oder (1223). He also laid the foundations of the Hanseatic League, and therefore of the supremacy of the German Baltic cities by persuading the German Emperor to grant Lubeck the privileges of a free city in 1226. And he carried on long, tortuous, and finally completely successful diplomatic action aimed at settling the Teutonic Knights in part of present-day Polish Pomerania, the "Chelmno Land," one of the provinces of Conrad of Mazovia.

So far as Poland herself was concerned, it seemed as though the Grand Master had not realized his plans. The negotiations with Duke Conrad of Mazovia on the legal status of the Order in Polish territories, which were to provide a basis for its "missionary" activities in Prussia, went on for some years. They were so difficult that the Polish Duke considered entrusting action in Prussia to the purely Polish Order of the Brothers of Dobrzyn, a monastic fraternity brought into being by the Church. Finally, however, in 1235 agreement was reached with Hermann von Salza; the Chelmno Land was attributed to the Teutonic Knights and the Order of the

Brothers of Dobrzyn was dissolved. But the territory was granted in the form customary at the time when bestowing land on monasteries or bishoprics. Therefore the deed of assignment gave the Teutonic Order no rights of sovereignty over the Chelmno Land, or over the Prussian lands. This was quite logical, for Conrad had called in the Knights for the purpose of spreading Christianity and to defend the integrity of his possessions. So he could and did not consider any voluntary ceding of territories, and there were no circumstances compelling him to make any painful concessions of this nature.

But Hermann von Salza had already gained two diplomatic victories so important that in his agreement with Poland he could, ostensibly, agree to a compromise. In 1226 he had obtained from the Emperor Frederick II a document in which the Emperor confirmed the Order in its possession of lands alleged to have been received from Duke Conrad in Poland, and in regard to East Prussia granted him the same rights as the German dukes possessed within the Empire. But the Grand Master gained an even greater success in Rome. For he presented to the Pope a document known as the *Kruszwica Act*,¹ which he declared Conrad of Mazovia had signed in 1230, ceding both the Chelmno Land and East Prussia. In this way he obtained a confirmation of his pretensions by the Apostolic See, acting in all good faith, in the Papal Bull of 1234.

The *Kruszwica* document, the contents of which were contrary to the course of the negotiations between Duke Conrad and the Order and to the final agreement of 1235, was drawn up in a form never used in Poland, and is preserved only in the transcription given in the Papal Bull. And although the Knights' archives were kept in exemplary order, the document was never produced in Poland during Duke Conrad's lifetime. Therefore, in the light of historical criticism it must be declared a forgery. However, it provided the Order with its main formally legal basis in all its disputes with and legal

¹ The name derives from the town of *Kruszwica* in *Poznania*.

claims on Poland, and was decked out in all the trappings of legality, thanks to a subtle and perfidious manoeuvre almost unexampled in history.

Within a year of the agreement with Duke Conrad, Hermann von Salza celebrated his last diplomatic triumph; in 1236 the Teutonic Knights united with a second German Order, the Knights of the Sword, which was centred in the Baltic countries. As a result both Latvia and Estonia were also laid open to the expansion of the Teutonic Knights.

2

Even while the diplomatic activities outlined above were carried on, the Order was working to achieve the aim it had deliberately set itself of creating a strong German State on the Baltic. For this purpose it had a number of valuable advantages.

i. As it had as its ostensible task the inculcation of Christianity, and was under the protection of the Pope and the German Emperor, the Order had harnessed to its political activities the two most important ideological factors which dominated the Christian world of Europe in the 13th century. No one perceived that the Knights were exploiting the principles of Christianity for their own secular ends, and distorting those principles because in reality they acted, as happened again and again in later German history, on the principle that "what is good for our secular interests is good generally."

ii. The Knights could count on a steady influx of people from the German Empire. The people were attracted away from Germany, where the peasants were in a progressively worsening situation, and the towns were suffering from internecine strife, to the lands in the east, where they could find under-populated areas. And because of the standards, derived from Roman and Arabian sources, which all the West of Europe had then newly adopted, these settlers also found personal liberty, could obtain large tracts of land, and hold

the soil in perpetuity, had their economic and financial burdens adjusted, and were assured of a long period of complete freedom from the payment of rent, while they could set up their own local autonomous administration with autonomous judiciary and professional institutions. The German historian Aubin¹ has described this flow of German colonists to the east as simply a rush for liberty. There they found better conditions than at home, not only in the countryside but in the towns. At that time the Hanseatic League exhibited a special and higher form of this tendency among the Germans. The Teutonic Knights gained enormous advantages from the League, and in turn gave it their support.

iii. The Knights had to deal with the much weaker Prussians, the Lithuanians, only then beginning to organize in a higher state form of existence, and with the Poles, who at this time were divided by dynastic disputes into numerous small duchies. In fact they were faced with no opponents who could put up any real resistance to them.

iv. The Order was composed of capable and energetic men. It displayed considerable prudence in all the details of its conduct. It accumulated resources according to a deliberate plan, and was shrewd and unscrupulous in its calculations in all things. It was able to put its decisions into force at lightning speed. But in all its operations it revealed an iron sameness of aim, a heart of stone and a complete lack of conscience. Its conquests were marked by a ghastly brutality and vindictiveness; it governed the vanquished by sheer terror. It opened its road by treachery, fraud and bribery; for it combined the principle "might before right" with that of "the end justifies the means."

From the beginning, too, it pursued a Germanizing policy. For it worked to create its own State, which was to have a purely German character. To this end it compelled the use of the German language in courts, offices and all correspon-

¹ H. Aubin. *Von Raum und Grenzen des deutschen Volkes* (The Territory and Frontiers of the German Nation). Breslau. 1938.

dence. It replaced local place names by German.¹ It banned the whole Polish knighthood from its ranks. It aimed to colonize the conquered lands with Germans.

Because of the Order's methods it was hated not only by the peoples of the adjacent countries but by those directly under its rule. For its methods of government were marked by lawlessness and injustice, brutality and pillage. And these were all the more intolerable because in its hypocrisy and perversity it cloaked its conduct under an alleged religious and civilizing mission.

From the very beginning the Order's Germanizing policy came up against one serious obstacle: the lack of an adequate number of German colonists for the conquered area. Consequently the Order was forced to tolerate the further influx of Polish settlers into East Prussia from the neighbouring duchy of Mazovia, and they cleared the forest and cultivated the southern districts of East Prussia, which had to a large extent remained unpopulated. Inevitably there was an increase in the influence of the Polish elements among the inhabitants of the country.

3

The Teutonic Knights had no easy task in conquering and subduing East Prussia, and it took them more than fifty years—from 1231 to 1287. Their first strategic line of attack aimed at reaching the Baltic coast from Chelmno with the object of cutting off the Prussians from Pomerania. After the crusade of 1231-33 this object was accomplished. Exploiting the natural waterways of the rivers Pregola and Niemen, the Knights then immediately advanced eastward (1238). However, their attempts to subdue the Duke of Pomerania, Swietopelk, led to the first rising of the Prussians, and caused a long interruption in the Order's succession of territorial conquests.

¹ Buga, K. *Die Vorgeschichte der aistischen (baltischen) Stämme im Lichte der Ortsnamenforschung* (The Early History of the Baltic Tribes as Revealed by the Study of Place-Names). Streitberg. 1924.

Not until the founding of Memel (Klaipeda) in 1253 and of Koenigsberg (Krolewicz) in 1255, were the Prussians completely cut off from the sea. The second and last rising of the Prussians, lasting from 1260 to 1275, was finally suppressed after great difficulties by a special crusade. Later only a few years sufficed to overcome the Prussians' resistance in the southern areas; and Latvia, which had hitherto also resisted the Teutonic Knights' domination, finally surrendered in 1290.

The Knights set to work without delay to organize the area, adopting the centralist model of Frederick II's State of Sicily. They devoted especial care to the towns, strongly fortifying them, but above all granting them far-reaching privileges. In order to retain some of the Crusaders, the Knights granted the conquered lands to Germans, while labour was provided by the local population, who were turned into slaves.

The new rulers of the country retained only the actual name of Prussia, derived from the name of the original inhabitants. By a strange irony of fate this name stolen from an unfortunate, subjugated people was later inherited by that most aggressive section of the German nation which in the course of history was to impose its predominance, ideology and psychology on all the German Reich.

4

The State created by the Teutonic Knights achieved its greatest prosperity in the 14th century, especially under the rule of Winrich von Kniprode (1351-82). Prussian towns like Torun (Thorn), Chelmno (Culm), Danzig (Gdansk), Elblag (Elbing) and Koenigsberg (Krolewicz) played an important role in the Hanseatic League. At this time a great stream of German peasants flowed into East Prussia. The Teutonic Order grew famous for its wealth; on its own account it carried on a maritime trade in timber, grain and amber. It was not the German Emperor, but the Order which was the real patron of the Hanseatic League, with which England

later had so much trouble over the Steelyard issue; on behalf of the Hansa it negotiated with Flanders, England and France. In exchange for assistance to the German cities the Order benefited from their sea power.

During this century the Order's annexationist activities were directed chiefly against Polish Pomerania and Zmudz (in Latin, Samogitia), the present-day ethnographic Lithuania. For the Order wanted to obtain direct territorial contact with the Reich on the one hand and on the other to unite East Prussia, Latvia and Estonia in a single entity. Taking advantage of Poland's territorial disintegration at the last moment before she became a reunited nation, in 1308 the Order occupied Danzig. The Knights were invited in by the Polish garrison as succour against the troops of Brandenburg; but, after saving the city from the invaders, they did not restore it to Poland; on the contrary, they perfidiously murdered the entire Polish population.¹ In the search for titles to retain this conquest, they bought the Margrave of Brandenburg's "rights" to Pomerania, in no way troubled by the absolute non-existence of these alleged rights. Poland was thus cut off from the sea, and from that time a life and death struggle was waged between her and the Order. The Knights continued to make further conquests: they occupied the Michalow area, and, for a time, Kujavia. The successive military campaigns led the ruler of united Poland, Casimir the Great (1333-70) to the conclusion that he could not cope with the Order's technical and economic superiority. So he temporarily abandoned his plans of reconquering Pomerania, and devoted all his efforts to strengthening Poland at home, building up her economic, political and military power.

For a whole century the Knights fought to conquer Zmudz, but all their efforts were of little effect. Their first serious success, the destruction of the Lithuanian forts along the river Niemen, was achieved only in 1370. Thereafter they

¹ *Lites ac res gestae inter Polonos Ordinemque Cruciferorum I. Posnaniae*. 1890, p. 423 and p. 428.

carried their destructive inroads as far as Wilno (Vilna) and Troki. Soon after they achieved a decisive diplomatic victory over the wrangling Lithuanian dukes; in 1382 Duke Witold surrendered Zmudz to the Order, and held the rest of the Lithuanian lands as vassal.

5

However, by the end of the 14th century serious symptoms of decline in the fortunes of the Teutonic Order's territorial State began to be manifest.

i. The first blow to the Order was the personal union of the Polish-Lithuanian monarchies in 1385, not only because it united the two countries' forces against the Order, but also because Lithuania, which had remained a heathen country, now accepted Christianity. By this act the Teutonic Knights lost the ground for their chief claim to existence as a missionary order, and therefore, so far as the West was concerned, lost the force of attraction which had been the main basis of their strength. The result was a decisive and irrevocable ideological defeat for the Order. Poland converted Lithuania to Christianity by a magnanimous political act, in other words she peacefully achieved something which the Knights had failed to achieve by force or guile.

A further unfavourable event for the Order was the union at Kolmar, in 1397, of the three Scandinavian States, Denmark, Sweden and Norway. Thenceforth both north and south the Order was confronted by political organizations strong materially and spiritually.

ii. At the end of the 14th century a period of definite stagnation began in the movement of German colonization in Eastern Europe. This was due to the extensive depopulation of Germany that in turn had been caused by a series of epidemics, by the development of the German towns, which absorbed the rural population on a wholesale scale and were capable of effecting political resistance to the pretensions of

the feudal knights, and finally by the demographic saturation of the actual areas the German colonists had been migrating to. In Germany all interest in the east died out, and in consequence the Teutonic Knights' State lost the automatic influx of new energy which had been so beneficial to it, and was forced all the more to seek colonists in neighbouring Poland.

iii. The fruitlessness of the struggle the Order waged against Lithuania revealed its final internal deterioration. Expeditions serving to attract western knights had been only a propaganda trick and an opportunity for magnificent knightly amusements, tourneys and celebrations. But all idealism was dead in the Knights; the Order grew more and more worldly and succumbed to egotism, profligacy, and the accumulation of wealth. Its brutal regime amounted to nothing more or less than a ruthless exploitation of its subjects. Among the various pronouncements by historians on this matter attention need only be drawn to the shattering criticism of the demoralization of the Order which Gustav Freytag made in his *Bilder aus der deutschen Vergangenheit* (Pictures from the German Past), published at Leipzig in 1918-20. The discontent and disillusionment of the population had not yet broken out into a full flame of revolt; they were still smothered under the prestige of the Order's former strength, which rendered it possible to apply compulsion with impunity. None the less the movement of revolt began to grow in strength.

THE PREDOMINANCE OF POLAND

(1410-1696)

I

A decisive fight between the Order and the associated States of Poland and Lithuania occurred at Grunwald in 1410.¹ In this Poland was equal in military technique to

¹ Czech units commanded by the famous Zizka also took part in the battle against the Knights.

the Knights, whose army represented the highest achievements of the art of war in the Middle Ages. The result of the struggle was decided by the spirit of the Poles, by the conscious will of a nation defending its independence—a nation whose very existence had been menaced for a hundred years. The battle of Grunwald, or Tannenberg, one of the greatest battles of mediaeval times, halted the German eastward advance for three and a half centuries; the Order's might and expansion were shattered. The Knights never recovered either militarily or financially from the defeat then suffered. Not only that; at once they found themselves faced by mortal internal difficulties. Chaos and depression came to reign in the Order; many of the Knights simply turned tail and fled to Germany.

Other effects of the defeat were even more permanent, though they were unexpectedly revealed almost on the field of battle. Representatives of the inhabitants of Torun (Thorn), Danzig (Gdansk) and Elblag (Elbing) asked an audience of the King of Poland and opened separate peace negotiations. Universal dislike of the Order was at once revealed, and in the long run such acts of violence as the execution of the burgomasters of these cities and the annulment of municipal autonomy only intensified the general disintegration and the antagonism between the rulers and the ruled in the Teutonic Knights' State.

The Knights' physical force, which had been shattered in a war with a foreign power, ceased to impress or arouse respect. Yet the Order lacked any other cohesive strength which might have held it together. The various parts of its State began to disclose tendencies to break up into its component nationalities, especially as the Chelmno area and Pomerania as well as Southern Prussia were ethnically Polish to an overwhelming extent. Both landowners and burghers evinced a strong urge to wrest their liberty from the Order, the neighbouring country of Poland being a great incentive and a shining example of tolerance and liberalism in regard to individuals, social groups, religious confessions and nation-

alities within its borders. Discontents of an economic nature also broke out, for the impoverished Order burdened its subjects with excessive taxation. Further, it carried its long adopted policy in regard to maritime tariffs, licenses and regulation to extremes, while freeing its own official commerce from all these restrictions.

The increasing conflict between the Order and the Prussian towns was also a conflict between the Order and the Hansa, as those towns were all members of the League. The Order's decline in international authority after the defeat of 1410 rendered it impossible for the Knights to act as the protectors of the League. Deprived of the Order's support, the Hansa swiftly lost its privileges in England, Flanders, Denmark, even in Novgorod. This in turn undermined the position of the Order, the Hanseatic League being the maritime complement of their continental power.

Further wars with Poland brought no decisive successes to either side. But Poland was conscious of and succeeded in exploiting the growing disintegration of the Teutonic Knights' State, and sought to attract its population to herself. The abyss which had arisen between the Order and its subjects finally led to its overthrow. In 1454 an embassy of the Prussian Estates sought an audience of the Polish King Casimir Jagiellon (Casimir IV), and voluntarily offered him the whole of the lands ruled by the Knights.¹ In the name of the Estates Jan Baysen declared:

"The Order permitted itself many acts of violence and injustice in the country. No one received any protection; tyranny was in the main ascendant. Among them crimes were universal. They dishonoured and violated our wives, children, and servants, our friends, both nobles and townspeople. They murdered without legal sentence, without trial, without any

¹ Ernst Wichert. *Die politischen Stände Preussens, ihre Bildung und Entwicklung bis zum Ausgange des sechszehnten Jahrhunderts* (Political Estates of Prussia, their Formation and Development till the end of 16th century). Koenigsberg. 1868.

cause. We have renounced our allegiance to them. We all prefer rather to taste of death than to continue so through all our lives in filthy slavery, violated and oppressed. These lands will return to Your Majesty as to their former rightful lord, from whom they were taken partly by fraud and partly by violence. They voluntarily hand themselves over to your Majesty. It is your Majesty's duty to take them equitably and justly."¹

This charge against the Order, so tragic in its implications, sheds glaring light on the "mission" and the "cultural" activities of the Knights in East Prussia. Yet even to this very day the Germans, characteristically enough, are proud of the Order's "mission" and "culture." This step of the Prussian Estates involved the complete collapse of the foundations on which the State of the Teutonic Order rested. Its ideological bases were gone, and with them its mission, its spiritual and intellectual contact with the contemporary world, its vital links with the German Empire, its power to develop culture and economic life, but above all its organizational foundations, with their strict discipline, physical domination and the negation of all individual or sectional rights. The German drive eastward of which the Knights had been the spearhead had ended in failure and provoked determined reaction in the form of revolution on the part of their subjects.

The Thirteen Years' War (1454-66), brought about by the submission of the Prussian Estates to Poland, was waged somewhat feebly by both sides, and was marked by numerous revolts on the part of the German mercenary troops. Yet it did reveal the readiness of the Prussian Estates, together with Danzig, to make the greatest of sacrifices to defeat the Order. In fact the final defeat of the Order was due to the Danzigers' naval victory in 1463 over the fleet specially collected by the Knights. The Peace of Torun (Thorn) in 1466 not only restored Pomerania to Poland, but also gave her the lands of Warmia,

¹ Waclaw Sobieski. *Der Kampf um die Ostsee* (The Struggle for the Baltic), pp. 81 and fol. Leipzig. 1933.

i.e. the central part of present-day East Prussia, Malbork (Marienburg) and Elblag (Elbing). The Order retained the remainder of East Prussia, but only as vassal of Poland. (See



EAST PRUSSIA IN 17TH CENTURY

map on this page.) Yet the peace was one of compromise so far as the Estates and Poland were concerned; but it must be remembered that it was difficult for Poland, as a Catholic State, to deprive the Order of all its territory.

2

For some thirty years the Grand Masters of the Order, ruling a land exhausted by war, were loyal to Poland. But when German reigning dynasties, first the Elector of Saxony, and later Albrecht of Hohenzollern, were called to the highest rank in the Order, they immediately struggled to obtain their independence, by refusing to do homage as vassals of the King of Poland. Albrecht set to work to organize a powerful anti-Polish coalition, including both the German Emperor and the Russian Tsar, and planned the partition of Poland. But in the war which broke out in 1519 he was left to fight alone. His siege of the fortresses of Warmia was ineffective, and, in fact, the Polish forces advanced as far as Koenigsberg (Krolewiec). The entire crisis was ended by the treaty of 1525; by it the Teutonic Order was dissolved, while East Prussia became formally a secular State and a vassal duchy of Poland, the first duke being Albrecht himself. The dominant religion of East Prussia became Lutheran.

This treaty is justly regarded by Polish historians as catastrophic in its effects, especially in certain consequences of a far-reaching nature which entailed on the State of Poland the confirmation of German rule in the Prussian area. Judged in the light of contemporary conditions, however, the treaty can be defended, though it revealed excessive optimism on the part of Poland, who was then in the full flood of development of her cultural and political influences, and was a centre of libertarian principles which had an absolutely overwhelming attraction for neighbouring States.

The solution which the treaty provided to the problem was largely facilitated by dynastic considerations, for Duke Albrecht was the nephew of the King of Poland. The secularization of the State of Prussia involved the abolition of the Teutonic Order and cut off the duchy of Prussia, which accepted Protestantism, from the German Empire and from the Pope, so that thenceforth it could continue to exist exclusively in

dependence upon the Polish State. In addition, the agreement laid down that in the event of Duke Albrecht's direct descendants and those of his three brothers dying out, East Prussia would fall to Poland. Thus prospects were opened up of an evolution which, in the given disposition of political forces, seemed to assure Poland peaceful domination of the duchy.

Poland's decision to accept such a treaty was the result of her age-old tradition of gradually uniting adjacent areas with herself by way of voluntary union, and only judged from this aspect can it be rightly appraised. Duke Albrecht's long reign after 1525 seemed to justify Polish hopes and to confirm the sagacity of the political path chosen. In general Duke Albrecht remained loyal to Poland. The Prussian Estates continued to regard the Polish Commonwealth as the guarantee of their own liberty, did everything to tighten the bonds with Poland, and certainly considered that this transient phase of history would end with East Prussia's incorporation in the Commonwealth.

Moreover, Polish expansion won more and more positions in the vassal duchy. Most important of all, Polish colonists from neighbouring Mazovia continued to extend their range of settlement in East Prussia, thus continuing the process which had arisen as the result of natural conditions much earlier, but especially during the 15th century. As the upshot of this ever-extending colonization, between the 16th and 17th centuries a compact mass of Polish settlers dominated sixteen counties, with an area of 7,000 square miles, i.e. about half of the duchy. The Germans were dominant in thirteen counties with an area of 5,000 square miles, while the Lithuanians dominated six counties with an area of some 2,000 square miles. It would be difficult to provide a better illustration of the truth that whenever conditions allowed throughout its history East Prussia has been elementally supplied in population and cultural regards from the Polish hinterland.

Apart from the compact southern area of colonization, Poles also swiftly advanced over all East Prussia. From the 16th century onward Poles were to be met with everywhere,

as town citizens, agricultural labourers, or servants in villages and towns, or as landed citizens, owners of considerable wealth. Despite the German rule, during the period under discussion East Prussia was more Polish than German, and this state of affairs found expression in the people's very strong tendency to achieve a permanent fusion of the country with Poland, based partly on bonds of kinship, and partly on a community of political and moral ideals.

For Poland achieved an extraordinarily strong spiritual and cultural penetration of East Prussia. Polish cultural life flourished exuberantly all through the province. Königsberg with its Protestant University, which was granted its foundation privileges by the Polish King Sigismund Augustus, was for centuries a centre of Polish thought and learning and particularly of Polish Protestantism. Many prominent Polish politicians of later days were educated there. The publication of books and all kinds of periodicals, especially of a religious nature, was also noteworthy during this period.

Among the Polish settlers of the 16th century an outstanding figure was Dean Jan Malecki (Maltius) of Cracow, the author of an exposition of the Gospels which is still read to-day by the Polish inhabitants of East Prussia. He was also the founder in 1536 of the first Polish printing works, and ten years later of the first Polish high school at Elk (Lyck). This school existed for several centuries and contributed in no small degree to strengthening the Polish character of the eastern part of Mazovia. Later a similar mission was performed in the west by the secondary school at Ostroda (Osterode).

The old churches of the southern part of East Prussia are filled with Polish memorials of this time, but this is even more noticeable in Warmia. Wherever the eye rests it sees even to-day innumerable signs of the Polish settlements in this area. The works of Polish artists, sculptors, painters and architects, often originating from this very province, testify to the considerable heritage of Polish civilization which is to be found in all spheres of life. The Polish memorials which,

despite continual German attempts to wipe them out, are preserved there, are not an importation and something having no link with the land. They are the natural expression of the essential historical experience in the cultural sphere at a time when life on both sides of the demarcation line separating Poland from East Prussia displayed no essential spiritual or intellectual differences—to such an extent had Polish thought and learning spread beyond the bounds of the strictly Polish State's territory.

A fundamental retrogression in relations between East Prussia and Poland was wrought only by the decision of King Sigismund Augustus, who in 1563 extended the right of succession to the duchy to the line of the Berlin Hohenzollerns. This fatal decision was brought about by the struggle which Poland was compelled to wage with both Russia and Sweden over the Baltic countries of Latvia and Estonia, which, like Lithuania, had linked themselves with Poland in a voluntary union. Yet the disposition of forces by no means called for a concession of such a nature, for the people of East Prussia were decidedly gravitating towards Poland. An interesting fact testified to this when in 1566, at the request of the Prussian Estates, who appealed to Poland against the excesses of the councillors of the weak-minded Duke Albrecht, the Polish King sent his plenipotentiary to Königsberg. The court which the plenipotentiary summoned sentenced the three chief German dignitaries to death. On the initiative of the Estates a prescription was also introduced declaring that without Poland's agreement the Duke could not conclude any alliance, and that all judicial processes could be decided in the last resort by summons before the Royal Court of Poland.¹

These facts reveal the extent to which Polish influence was

¹ The historian P. Stettiner states that the inhabitants of the duchy of Prussia were in all European countries at that time considered and treated as Polish citizens. *Verhandlungen über Kuratel und Suczession des Kurfürsten Johann Sigismund in Warschau 1609* (Negotiations on Curatorship and Succession of Kurfuerst Johann Sigismund in Warsaw 1609). Königsberg, 1891.

dominant in Koenigsberg, and how far that influence was due to the attachment felt by the Prussian people for the Polish Commonwealth and to the attraction exerted by a State based on principles of federalism, right and liberty. The Prussian Estates resolutely opposed the succession of the Brandenburg dynasty to the ducal throne, when this issue arose in 1618. The representative of East Prussia, Otto von Graben, protested in the Polish Senate against the possibility of "government by a foreigner," and declared:

"The Duchy of Prussia does not demand any treasures, any riches, it demands only the liberty which so splendidly adorns the whole body of the Commonwealth. The Duchy also is a component part of it. We believe in our common mother, the Polish Commonwealth, and we are ready to give our life and possessions for it."¹

Faced with this attitude among the people, the line of Brandenburg Hohenzollerns when they established themselves in East Prussia were forced to pursue an extremely cautious policy, in regard both to Poland and their own subjects. They had to postpone to a later date their plans for introducing absolute rule at home and rendering themselves independent of Poland.

Not until the unfortunate Polish-Swedish War in 1655 did Duke Frederick William, known as the "Great Elector," obtain a real opportunity to play his own hand. Acting traitorously against his overlord, the King of Poland, he allied himself with the Swedes at war with Poland. By an act dated April 25, 1655, and signed in Malbork (Marienburg), King Charles Gustavus of Sweden rewarded his new vassal by granting him titles to the greater part of Poland Major.² Frederick William was unable to retain this territorial conquest

¹ A. Verulani. *Polskie wpływy polityczne w Prusach Książęcych* (Polish Political Influences in Ducal Prussia). Gdynia. 1939.

² Poland Major or Great Poland (*Wielkopolska*) consisted of the provinces of Poznan, Gniezno and Kruszwica.

but by the Treaty of Welawa (Wehlau) in 1657 Poland renounced the overlordship of East Prussia in exchange for the return of the annexed provinces. However, it was laid down that if the male succession to the electoral line died out the province was to return to the Commonwealth. But Frederick William had realized part of his aim; he had rendered himself independent of Poland.

Historians usually date from this treaty the new chapter in Prussia's relations with Poland, characterized by the predominance of the first-named of the two States. Yet to a large extent this is anticipating the future course of events. Poland was still far and away superior in power to Prussia. Only after the long wars with Turkey, the rapid increase in Russia's strength, and above all the second period of wars with Sweden (1700-11) did the relations between Prussia and Poland change to the latter's disadvantage in consequence of the impoverishment and depopulation of the Commonwealth and of new political alignments. Apart from this the Elector of Brandenburg was confronted with the difficult yet necessary task of breaking down the traditional pro-Polish attitude of the inhabitants of East Prussia. Until he achieved this object by a daring and dangerous stroke, Poland always possessed considerable advantages within his duchy, and by exploiting the will of the people could change to her favour the decisions of the Treaty of Welaŵa, and even more radically than in 1525.

For the Prussian Estates had no desire to submit to the Elector and to allow themselves to be riven from Poland. They fully realized that if Polish overlordship were to be annulled they would lose all support and aid against Brandenburg absolutism, that henceforth they would be at the mercy of the Hohenzollerns and that, as an *enclave*, which had lost its association with its hinterland, they would sink into economic decline. Unwilling to recognize the Treaty of Welawa, they therefore united in opposition to the rule of the Elector, and Koenigsberg became the chief centre of Polonophilism.

The Elector of Brandenburg had no supporters whatever

in East Prussia. The Lutheran pastors were as much against him as were the Catholic, especially the Jesuits; the landed gentry, too, equally with the townsmen. At the head of the urban opposition was the tribune of the people, Hieronimus Roth, chief magistrate of Königsberg, a less fortunate Jan Baysen of the 17th century. At numerous people's meetings he organized it was resolved that the edict of King John Casimir concerning the abolition of Polish overlordship of East Prussia was null and void, because His Majesty, the King of Poland, had no right to free the Prussian people from their oath of allegiance to the Commonwealth. "He has no right," they cried, "to distribute the inhabitants of Prussia as though they were pears or apples." They exclaimed, "The Elector of Brandenburg has made beggars of us, and now he wants to make slaves of us!" A new alliance was formed, with the formula: "To devote blood and possessions to remainiŋg within the Commonwealth." Of particular note was the resolution passed by the Parliament (*Sejm*) of Königsberg in 1661, declaring that "Prussia with the Crown of Poland constitutes one body, since they are so strongly fused with each other that the bonds which have united them for centuries can never be dissolved."¹

While this movement of revolt was rapidly developing, in October, 1662, the Elector appeared outside Königsberg at the head of two thousand soldiers. With no prospect of assistance from any quarter, the city was forced to surrender. None the less the Estates held out for the condition that the homage to be paid to the Elector must be made in the presence of Polish commissaries. For the people had not yet lost all

¹ W. Sobieski. *Walka o programy i metody rządu w Prusach Książęcych* (The Struggle for Programmes and Methods of Government in Ducal Prussia). Poznan. 1932.

A. Strzelecki. *Opinia polska wobec sprawy przeniesienia kurateli Prus Książęcych na elektorów brandenburskich* (Polish Opinion towards the Transfer of Curatorship over Ducal Prussia to the Electors of Brandenburg), A Survey of the Vth General Congress of Polish Historians in Warsaw, 1930.

hope, and a new leader now came on the scene, one who this time was first and foremost a leader of the Prussian gentry: Colonel Christian Ludwig Kalkstein. But by order of the Elector he was carried off, imprisoned in Memel (Klaipėda), and executed in 1672, after long torture.¹ German methods have always been the same.

The final phase of the struggle and counter-struggle of Berlin and Warsaw for influence in East Prussia was associated with the last gleam of the glory of the Polish Commonwealth, in the days of King John Sobieski. When war broke out between Brandenburg and Sweden he concluded an alliance with France in 1675, which provided for Poland to undertake military action to regain East Prussia; but the Turks once more crossed the frontier of Poland, and so rendered impossible the fulfilment of the decisions of the treaty. But Sobieski returned to his former guiding conception in the agreement with Sweden signed in 1677. The Elector was saved only by humbling himself to France and swiftly concluding an unfavourable peace with Sweden, on France's mediation.

In their unwillingness to do homage to the Great Elector's successor, King Frederick I of Prussia, the Prussian Estates appealed once more to Poland with a request for aid. Engaged in a new war with the Turks, Sobieski had to refuse assistance.

After thirty years of disappointments the East Prussian people's powers of resistance were at last exhausted; only then, after the moral capitulation of the population, were the Hohenzollerns able to plough up East Prussia in accordance with their own wishes and to bring the psychological and political outlook of its people into accord with Brandenburg models.

THE PREDOMINANCE OF PRUSSIA

(1696-1918)

The history of East Prussia from the days of the Great Elector is a record of the systematic inculcation by the Hohen-

¹ Waclaw Sobieski. *Der Kampf um die Ostsee*, p. 165 and fol.

zollerns of the ideology and methods prevailing in the Mark of Brandenburg. In 1701 the Great Elector's successor, Duke Frederick, had himself crowned as King Frederick I. Legal considerations, however, led him to decide on being crowned not in Brandenburg, as King of Brandenburg but in Koenigsberg, and to adopt the title of "King in Prussia." For in those days regal rank could be based only on the possession of personal, sovereign territory, such as was East Prussia (independent since 1657), but not Brandenburg, of which the German Emperor was overlord. Because of this general view there has arisen the idea that East Prussia became the cradle of the Kingdom of Prussia, and also of the "Prussian Spirit." There is more than a grain of justification for this view, but the cradle of the Kingdom of Prussia was Brandenburg, and it was Brandenburg, jointly with the traditions of the Teutonic Knights, which created the collective psychology known as Prussianism, so menacing to the peace of Europe through the centuries!

Brandenburg had first attempted to impose her own ways of thought and forms of organization on East Prussia with the assistance of the Teutonic Knights, but the effort was a failure. Only when, as the result of dynastic combinations and Polish negligence, this province was harnessed politically to Brandenburg under the Hohenzollerns did it become possible for the reigning dynasty to renew the experiment of uniting East Prussia psychologically and spiritually with militant Germanism, the source and prime expression of which was Berlin, its native home on the river Spree.

This second offensive proved successful. After long resistance East Prussia allowed itself to be moulded into conformity with the cultural patterns imposed on it, and became a genuine mainstay of the Kingdom of Prussia. It provided that Kingdom with its most faithful administrators, soldiers and diplomats. The people of East Prussia became a symbol of German chauvinism, of the spirit of rapacious militarism, blind discipline, anti-liberal tendencies and contempt for other nations.

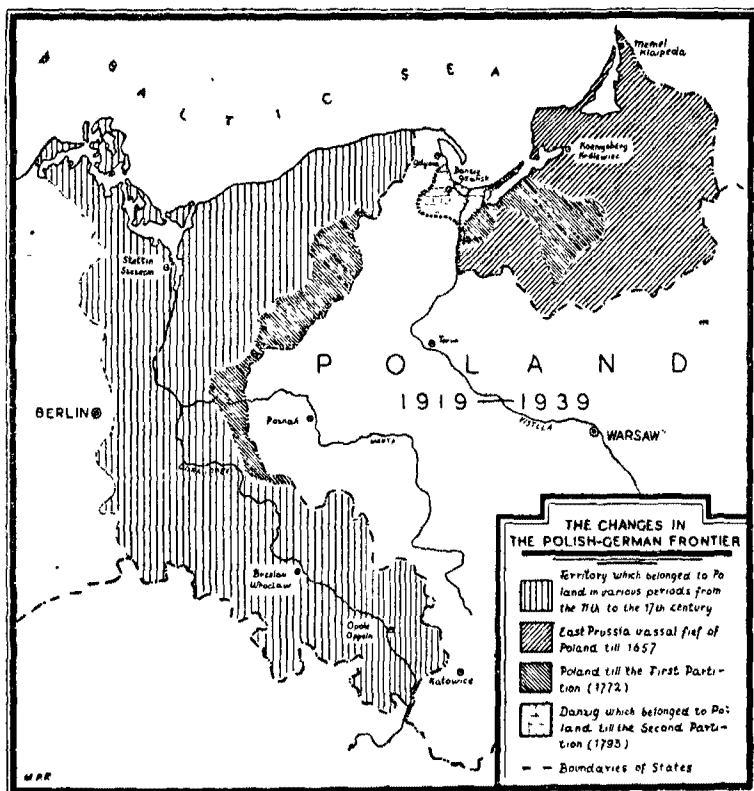
History shows few examples of such an integral accomplishment of educational aims as that which the Hohenzollern dynasty achieved in East Prussia.

The chief and original subject of Hohenzollern activities was one section of the inhabitants, namely, the Junkers. The economic and the general policies of the Prussian Government served the moral and material interests of this class almost exclusively, and imposed the characteristics of mediaeval feudalism on the whole province. The special conditions allowed this privileged caste to assemble and propagate all their peculiar characteristics: contempt for the world of democratic principles, unrestrained arrogance, hatred of all human beings and groups outside their own caste, and readiness to take any step to safeguard their own interests. The first victims to be sacrificed to the Junkers' Spirit were the nationally and economically persecuted common Polish people in East Prussia, and then all the ethical development of the local German community was poisoned and wrecked.

The geographical situation of East Prussia made it an area especially coveted by the Hohenzollern dynasty, and this after the political union of the province with Brandenburg led not only to the emergence of the Prussian State on the confines of Poland, but to that State's ruthless drive to achieve the territorial unification of the two lands of Brandenburg and East Prussia at the expense of Polish Pomerania. In the end this led to the First Partition of Poland (1772).

The First Partition was followed by a Second and a Third, though these could not be justified by geopolitics. Prussia gathered in further purely Polish areas, including even Warsaw. She ruled over all these areas for only a brief period, for, apart from the Province of Poznan, she held them for just ten years or so. Yet this temporary conquest marked a further extremely important stage in the development of Prussia's hegemony within the German Reich and of the domination of Germany by the Prussian Spirit. When, at the Congress of Vienna in 1815, Prussia surrendered the Polish lands she

had acquired in the Second and Third Partitions to Russia, retaining only the province of Poznania, she gained in exchange Saxony, the Rhineland provinces and Westphalia. And after 1871 these areas became the basis of Germany's industrial



THE CHANGES IN THE POLISH-GERMAN FRONTIER

strength, and played such a tremendous part in the life of the German nation that they assured permanent predominance to Prussia. Berlin's economic primacy was accompanied by political primacy, and this in turn was followed by predominance in the ideological and moral spheres.

East Prussia itself was subjected to deliberate and persistent Germanization throughout the 18th and 19th centuries. The German nature of the province had not been assured by the simple colonizing activities of the Teutonic Order, if only because later waves of Polish and Lithuanian colonization undermined the considerable results achieved. Therefore the first step taken by the Hohenzollerns was to bar off East Prussia from Poland and from the influx of Poles. The Great Elector had expelled a number of the Polish landowners, and Frederick II forbade on pain of death the administration to allow Poles to enter the area. Polish immigration became impossible; an invincible barrier arose between the two adjacent areas and remained for two centuries. The same applied to cultural and even economic relations.

Meantime the Kings of Prussia set to work to colonize East Prussia by drawing settlers from Germany proper. To increase the chances of success Frederick II issued a number of charters. During his reign the colonists were settled mainly on State domains, but the first steps were also taken to buy up the private property of the Polish gentry, compulsion being applied to them to sell their lands. Altogether, by the end of the 18th century 15,000 German colonists were settled in East Prussia.

The Germanization of the area was now carried on much more systematically and persistently than before and yielded undoubtedly much greater results. After the Napoleonic wars the Polish landowners were expropriated on the pretext that they were dilatory in paying interest, and thus the Polish section of the inhabitants was deprived of its intellectual classes. Then, in 1834, the authorities took steps to force the elimination of the Polish language from schools, churches and government offices. In his annual reports of his visits, Sartorius, the General Superintendent of Education, described the effects of these various steps, as follows:

“The children knew absolutely nothing; they repeated the unintelligible German sentences like parrots. When visiting the

schools in the areas of the Polish and Lithuanian minorities under my charge I was forced to receive numerous parents' delegations. They not merely asked me, but implored me in God's name to restore their native language in the schools and churches. On leaving school the children do not know the principles of religion, and do not know the Lord's Prayer in either German or Polish. The school separates them from their parents, and this kind of education leads to demoralization and heathenism. I felt sorry and also ashamed, the more so as apart from the commonplaces of comfort I could not help them."¹

This vigorous process of Germanization met with the resolute resistance of the local Polish inhabitants under outstanding Polish leaders, such as Mrongowiusz, and especially Father Gustaw Gizewiusz (1810-1848). Undoubtedly this opposition had the effect of somewhat slowing the speed of the denationalization process. Yet despite everything the artifices of Germanization, which were extended to more and more spheres of life and made use not only of the German administration but of the German people, achieved very considerable effects in the Polish and Lithuanian areas.

¹ Generalsuperintendent Dr. Sartorius. *Visitationsberichte 1834-1838* (Visitation Reports, 1834-38). Preussisches Geheimearchiv T.S.A. III. Berlin.

II

The Prerequisite of Poland's Defence

It is a historical fact that immediately after their conquest of East Prussia the Teutonic Knights wrested Danzig and Pomerania from Poland in order to establish direct contact between their territory and Germany. This was such a tremendous threat to Polish independence that it provoked wars which lasted 160 years (1306-1466). It is also a historical fact that the union of Brandenburg and East Prussia under the Hohenzollerns resulted in so powerful a drive to achieve the territorial unification of these two lands that it led at last to the Partitions of Poland. Finally, contemporary history shows that immediately after 1918 Germany focussed all her revisionist activities on recovering Polish Pomerania. Specious arguments ascribed the "misery" of East Prussia to the "Polish Corridor"; the arguments were false, because the economic deficiencies of that province were due to her remoteness from the Reich, and the "Polish Corridor," across which all kinds of commodities could and did pass freely, in no way increased that remoteness. On the other hand German propaganda asserted that the requirements of "German honour" could not be reconciled with the fact that East Prussia was not contiguous with the Reich.

In any case, the "problem" of Polish Pomerania became one of the chief means of maintaining German public opinion in a state of fever and "patriotic indignation." Of course, this problem was only a cloak for other very far-reaching intentions. Polish Pomerania was only the superficial pretext for armed conflict.

None the less the fact that this drive for Pomerania has happened three times in history is remarkably significant. For, from the course of events over seven centuries and the regular repetition of one essential pattern, the deduction is

obvious that the junction of East Prussia with the German Reich is a mortal danger for the peace of Europe, and for Poland in particular. In those conflicts Poland has always been on the defensive, but was fully conscious of fighting for her very existence. The Germans hit hard and desperately, for they feel and know that in East Prussia they are fighting to gain or retain the front line positions necessary for the achievement of further conquests in the east. On the result of the Polish-German conflicts primarily depends the possibility and the prospect of success in aggressive activities directed against Lithuania and other Baltic States, as also against Russia and the Ukraine.

While the political interests both of Poland and all adjacent countries on the east and south of her completely justify the demand that East Prussia should be separated from the Reich and incorporated in Poland, factors of a strictly strategic nature further strengthen this postulate, making it a *sine qua non*. It is plain that if Poland is exposed to attack from East Prussia she does not and cannot possess any adequate defensive strength; she is condemned in advance to being cut off from the sea and to military encirclement, thus paralysing the very centre and operational basis of all her counter-action.

As a bastion of German militarism thrust far into the east, East Prussia served the Imperial Reich as a focus of preparation for the main attack on Tsarist Russia in 1914. A German Baltic Corps operated against Soviet Russia after 1918. When under the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles the German Army was dissolved, numerous secret German military bodies, e.g. the *Freikorps* and *Schwarze Reichswehr*, were distributed over the large estates of this province, and disguised as labour battalions were concealed from the Allied Commission. Years before Hitler came to power strong fortifications were built in East Prussia, based on the so-called Licbark (Heilsberg) triangle.¹

¹ A strategic triangle formed by lakes with the town of Licbark (Heilsberg) as its main centre. See folder map of East Prussia, at end.

As soon as Hitler had torn up the military provisions of the Versailles Treaty his strongest army corps was formed in East Prussia (1 *Armee Korps*), under the command of General Brauchitsch, subsequently Field-Marshal. This corps was maintained on a permanent war footing, and work on fortifications proceeded at an intensified rate. In September 1939, the German hordes poured out of East Prussia to inflict a mortal blow on Poland.

To realize the point of the demand for East Prussia's separation from Germany the course of military operations during the Polish-German campaign of September 1939, has only to be recalled.¹ The Germans flung 38 large infantry units and 14 panzer units against Poland; at a later stage the figures were increased to 59 infantry units and 16 panzer divisions. Of these ten large infantry units and two panzer divisions, forming the Third Army under General Kuechler, attacked from East Prussia. This army worked in co-operation with the Fourth Army under General Kluge, deployed in German Pomerania, and the total force of the northern army groups amounted to 17 infantry divisions and five panzer divisions. The simultaneous attack of the Third Army from the east and the Fourth from the west swiftly led to the union of the two groups, Poland thus being cut off from the sea. Another section of the Third Army struck southward and reached the river Bug, threatening Warsaw, the capital of Poland, which lies barely 75 miles from the frontier with East Prussia. Even more important was the manœuvre, consisting of an advance across the Bug and Narev rivers eastward from Warsaw with the object of outflanking the main Polish armies. Finally, the Third Army attempted to cut off the Polish Army by a far-flung movement beyond the Bug, in order to render impossible the use of the reserves of manpower and material in the eastern provinces, which cover half of Poland.

¹ M. Norwid Neugebauer. *The Defence of Poland*. Kolin. London 1942.

The land operations were complemented by the Air Army No 1, on the northern front, with its base in East Prussia, and it thoroughly exploited the advantage of developing its activities on adjacent territory. This air army was largely responsible for so much destruction along the Vistula and Bug rivers that Polish military transports in this area almost disappeared.

The German plan got the full benefit of the geographical situation of East Prussia, which constituted an ideal terrain whence to drive into the heart of Poland. For, it flanks the eastern border of the narrow strip of Polish Pomerania; it overhangs Warsaw and makes possible the envelopment of the capital from the east; and finally it opens the way to a drive into Poland's eastern areas. And all this quite easily, with no great distances to cover in terms of modern transport and no considerable difficulties of terrain.

The drive from East Prussia was of prime importance in the German-Polish campaign. The frontal attacks from the west and the very dangerous interruption from Slovakia in the south could well possess a crushing momentum; yet strategically they did not achieve so great an effect as was gained by cutting off the Polish army in Pomerania and the severance of Poland's access to the sea, the direct thrust from the north down to Warsaw, and the appearance of enemy forces in the rear of this most important centre of Polish resistance. The other thrusts of the German invasion took on the characteristics of a *Blitzkrieg* and total victory only in association with and in consequence of the successes of the German Third Army. East Prussia's contribution to the offensive led to the Polish side being deprived from the very beginning of any possibility of rational planning and effective conduct of a strategically-conceived defence. In no case could Poland maintain her link with the sea, her vital centres for concentrating material and reserves, her lines of communication, or indeed any unified area whatever free from immediate threat. The very geographical position of East Prussia gave the Germans trumps

of the highest value, completely adequate for the stultification of Poland's armed defence.

Here it must be strongly emphasized that it is not merely a question of Poland's security, but of the very possibility of organizing her own defence. The concept of "security" is much broader than that of "defence" and has no precise definition. It can be used to cover numerous far-reaching claims; it can be used arbitrarily, for the purpose of drawing deductions corresponding more with State convenience than State necessity. The word "defence" is a watertight expression: it connotes a certain minimum content, a certain combination of elementary requirements, not one of which can be eliminated. And here we are concerned with this second concept; we must start from the assumption that any country's ability to defend itself is the measure of its ability to maintain its independence. So that to reject Poland's right to defence is out of the question.

Yet if that is the position, it is not possible to avoid a choice between the alternatives: either Poland is restored to a condition rendering her capable of defence, or East Prussia is left in German possession. All omissions or delusions of the days of the Versailles Conference are to-day in the light of historical events absolutely irrelevant: it is necessary to decide frankly which of these two possibilities is to be accepted.

Poland is a State of 35 million people. During the twenty years of her existence after the last war her role in Europe was an outstandingly valuable one. She did all she could to maintain correct relations with Germany. She rendered invaluable service to Russia, for over five years she rejected all the German proposals for a joint invasion of the U.S.S.R. Twice, in 1933 and 1936, she warned the West against the German danger, and indicated that the sole means of preventing that danger was by joint action. Fully conscious of the inequality of the forces involved, she preferred in 1939 the road of armed struggle to capitulation, and by her example rescued Europe from the prevailing nightmare

of moral insensibility and impotence which was leading to the abyss.

Poland entered the war with practically unmobilized forces, because she had acted on her Allies' advice and did not mobilize until the last moment. In technical and strategic respects the war was on quite new lines, so it was bound to include the element of complete surprise. It was an extremely costly war, a war of machines, and in no case could Poland have adequately prepared for it, since she had not the requisite financial resources. None the less the Polish army fought magnificently, and inflicted such serious losses on the enemy that it became impossible for Germany to attack the West in the autumn of 1939. Thus Poland gave France and Great Britain eight months in which to prepare for Hitler's offensive.

During all the years of German occupation the Polish nation has demonstrated its high moral values. Though infamously treated, Poland has not stained her honour in any way. She has not thrown up any quislings or other traitors, she has rejected all temptations to compromise. Oppressed, despoiled, tortured, she still finds reserves of inward strength in the solidarity which unites all the classes of her people, and in faith in her future.

At the same time Poland still continues the struggle without cessation. She created a new army in France so swiftly that Poles were able to take part in the campaign for Norway, in defence of that country's freedom. And when this second Polish army was shattered at the time of France's collapse, Poles had sufficient energy to set to work to create yet a third armed force, this time in Great Britain, and to take an honourable part in the defence of the British Isles as early as September, 1940. Polish forces have fought in Africa, and will also fight on other fronts. This state of things of itself provides the answer to the question already asked: whether to choose a Poland capable of defence, or to leave East Prussia within the Reich?

But the question has other and even wider aspects.

Undoubtedly Poland will have an important part to play in the building of post-war Europe. Her geographical position, her large population, and her moral stand all compel this conclusion. Poland will become one of the most important centres of federative policy. A wealth of historical traditions impels her in this direction, and the tendency is already finding expression in the actual steps taken by the Polish Government in London. The act foreshadowing the creation of a confederation with Czechoslovakia, the most important achievement yet announced of this nature, is being treated as the first link of an association to be extended to other countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe. Thus a community of nations is to arise based on national independence and a general solidarity of interests, a community of great significance for the democratic and peaceful future of the world as for the equilibrium of Europe.

Further, the Polish Government desires to remain in close and friendly co-operation with Poland's neighbour, Soviet Russia. The good will and the political maturity of that Government, which was the first to extend a hand to Moscow with a proposal for an understanding, have been most striking. While thus continuing Poland's policy of pre-war days when Warsaw rejected Berlin's suggestions of joint aggression against the U.S.S.R., the present Polish Government has widened the previous basis of policy and created the possibility of applying a broader concept, namely, the co-operation of Central and South-Eastern Europe in face of the German danger.

However, the possibility of developing this co-operation, as also of creating a federative association in Central and South-Eastern Europe generally, depends in no small measure on Poland's being guaranteed the conditions of elementary defence. Therefore not only the immediate interests of the Polish State but the wider interests of Europe generally demand the removal of the sword of Damocles which hangs continually over the head and heart of Poland in the form of a German East Prussia.

III

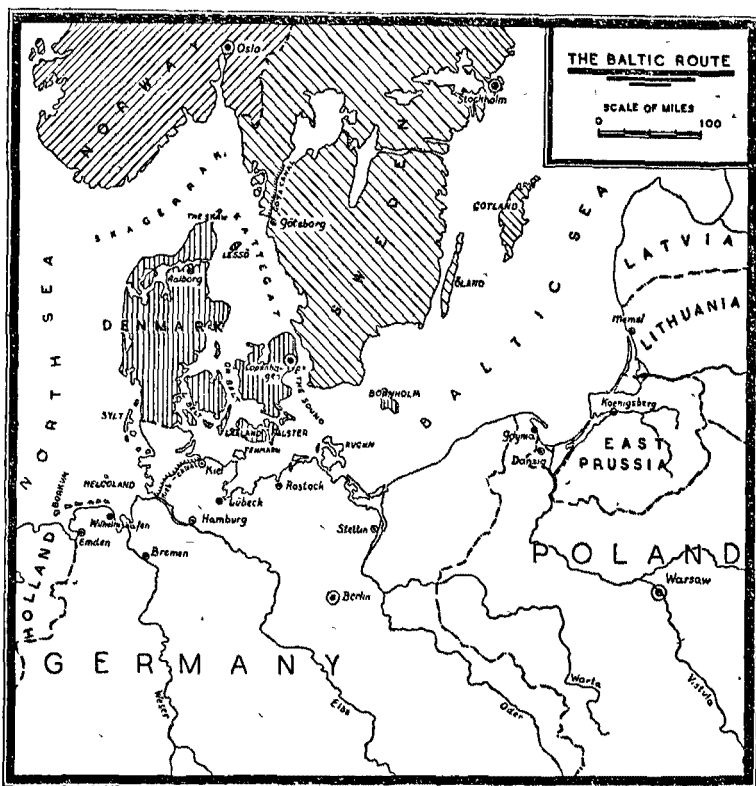
The Freedom of the Baltic

By 1939 Germany had established complete hegemony over the Baltic Sea. She owed it to her possession of the Kiel Canal, her predominant navy and air force, and the fact that she held the entire Baltic coast from Jutland to Lithuania and all the ports along this stretch of coast, with the sole exception of Gdynia. The West was easily reconciled to this domination, as is proved, *inter alia*, by the Anglo-German Naval Agreement of 1935. For in the given disposition of forces the Baltic was for the West certainly a valuable, yet a secondary commercial route; wrapped in the mists of neutrality, all its northern coasts seemed to be without any great political importance.

However, the present war has completely changed the political and strategic situation in the Baltic, and therewith its significance has also changed. It is more than likely that in any future European crisis Germany would lay her hands on Denmark and Norway. For she would need bases for sallying into the Atlantic and against Great Britain, she would need protection for her least-secured eastern provinces and Berlin, she would need the Swedish iron ore, and, most important of all, she would seek to snap the communication between the West on one side and Poland and Russia on the other. By cutting the direct line of communication between these two huge national camps she would be able to pursue her classic strategy of defeating predetermined masses of hostile forces one after another, and in any case would render it far more difficult for her opponents to co-operate.

So far as the West is concerned, the consequence of the new situation ought to be action aimed at getting rid of German predominance in the Baltic and assuring to this sea both

legal and genuine freedom of navigation. It need not be added that an achievement of this nature would completely alter the political orientation of the States with a Baltic seaboard



THE BALTIC ROUTE

which hitherto have been subjected to the continual pressure of Germany as the mistress of the waterways.

The steps to be taken to eliminate Germany's preponderance in the Baltic are her naval and air disarmament and her withdrawal from the Kiel Canal zone, together with the creation of an adequate network of Allied air, sea and land bases.

However, these steps will not be sufficient, and territorial modifications must be made in order to deprive Germany of the keys to the Baltic, and to place them in the hands of other States. In this respect the incorporation of East Prussia in Poland will be of decisive importance and cannot be avoided, if the equilibrium of the Baltic is to be accepted seriously with all its consequences.

This solution will be of vital importance to Poland. For it is necessary to realize that in 1919 Poland did not get genuine access to the sea, or rather, that she had been given such access only for times of peace. Of course even such access was of value to Poland, for because of her link with the sea she was able to win the long Customs War which Germany forced on her.¹ Also, she could in general maintain an independent attitude worthy of an independent nation. But in time of war Poland was not in a position to defend in any way the scrap of coastal territory assigned to her, her "Corridor," as the Germans contemptuously called it. Exposed to attack from three sides—from the sea, from the west and from East Prussia, the Polish seaboard, viewed strategically, was not capable of defence at all. The battles in Polish Pomerania could have only a moral significance: they served to certify Poland's attachment to this area and her will to act as an Ally.

For it is obvious that Poland's value as a protagonist in international relations depends on her sea communications with the West. Only if they are maintained will the Polish human and moral reserves be at the disposal of a common plan and joint striking power.

If East Prussia is given to Poland, the entire Baltic situation will be changed. Poland will obtain a genuine and broad access to the sea, extending parallel with her entire ethno-

¹ The so-called Customs War was provoked by Germany in 1925 in order to isolate Poland economically. This subject is dealt with by Jozef Halperin in *Deutschland und Polen (Sonderabdruck aus der Neuen Zuercher Zeitung, Februar-Juni, 1931)*, p. 70.

graphic extent. This area will be suitable for adequate defence, and render it possible for Poland to occupy a proportionate place in the system of Allied joint action. On the other hand, Germany will lose her monopoly of power over the southern seaboard of the Baltic.

IV

East Prussia Cannot Develop Without its Polish Hinterland

GERMAN publications have always painted the economic situation of East Prussia in the most sombre colours. "The Need of the East" (*Die Ostnot*), "The unbelievable Tragedy of Germanism in the East" (*die ungeheure Tragik des deutschen Volkstums im Osten*)—in such terms did the Germans regularly refer to the province. In these references the colours were to a great extent laid on too thickly. None the less it has to be said that the economic standards of East Prussia were always—before 1914 as well as after 1918—considerably lower than those of other German provinces.¹ Moreover, East Prussia always had a sick economy, which required continual injections in the form of special reliefs and extensive subsidies.²

This situation arose partly from natural conditions, and partly from political and economic causes. Both groups of factors reacted on each other and so intensified their own influence. Yet it is unquestionable that the political causes of the one-sided economic development of East Prussia and of her deep-running sores were overwhelming.

For in the political and economic situation in which she was placed, i.e. in association with Germany, East Prussia could not develop normally or find sound compensation for its rather

¹ See Appendix 2.

² Other eastern provinces of Germany revealed similar symptoms. They had the same running sores as East Prussia. Similarly German Upper Silesia could not have developed without special financial aid from the Reich. The eastern areas of German Pomerania demanded that Berlin should create the same hothouse atmosphere for their development as the Reich had endeavoured to create for the "province of Königsberg." The phrase "the sick German East" never dropped out of German propaganda and public reference.

slender bases of raw materials. The artificial connexion with the distant German Reich, together with the neglect of the province's first-rate geographical maritime position with an extensive Polish hinterland, were bound to have a constantly bad effect on East Prussia's well-being, and to condemn it to economic sterility. The people responsible for the development of East Prussia deliberately severed its natural association with the Polish areas adjoining it, and destroyed the natural functions which fell to it through contiguity. They treated the province's economy as a separate entity, and so it was left to operate entirely on its own resources. Later a palliative was sought in the forced linking of the results of East Prussia's economic activity with the mighty machine of German economy. But the very nature of the province's geographical situation was bound to produce negative results.

I

Undoubtedly a great deal was done in the actual exploitation of East Prussia's productive potentialities. Yet it was not possible to overcome their economic one-sidedness; the province remained agricultural. Here agriculture possesses a soil which is in no way inferior to that of other German eastern provinces. So it is not the soil which is the cause of the area's scattered population, for the land could provide food for a much larger population.¹ On the other hand, climatic conditions are worse than those in Germany and Poland; in East Prussia agriculture can work only on 150 days a year, whereas in the Reich the average is at least 200. This circumstance led to production costs being higher, especially as, owing to the continual drain of the local population into Germany, it was necessary to bring in workers from abroad—this meant Poland. In 1908 some 20,000 workers were thus imported, and 11,500 in 1927.

East Prussia possesses particularly favourable and increasingly

¹ See Appendix 3.

better exploited conditions for livestock-raising. The area has a high total number of farm animals, and the cows have a large milk yield.¹

On the other hand, the area is backward in its industrialization. For, apart from a low production of peat, brown coal and amber, it lacks all kinds of industrial minerals. Its shipyards, car and agricultural machinery works are few and comparatively small. After 1918 the timber industry suffered from a shortage of raw material, and declined considerably in importance. It is in this sphere that the fundamental difference between Germany as a whole and East Prussia is observable; in this province 69 per cent of the total population in 1928 were rural inhabitants, and only 11 per cent lived in large towns, e.g. Königsberg. In Germany two-thirds of the population live in towns. Thus the usual urban relationship is exactly reversed, and this is precisely reflected in the professions, namely, in the proportions of agriculture against those of industry and crafts, in Germany and in East Prussia respectively.²

That East Prussia's economic structure is one-sidedly bound up with agriculture determines the poverty of the province by comparison with Germany as a whole.

2

Yet the main cause of the unprofitable economics of East Prussia was and is of such a nature that it could not and cannot be removed by no matter how wise a policy; that cause is its intractably uneconomic distance from markets. For decades, both before 1914 and after 1918, German economic policy studied the problem of *Marktferne*—the far-awayness (to coin a word) of East Prussia's markets.³ Yet all was and is

¹ See Appendix 4.

² See Appendix 5.

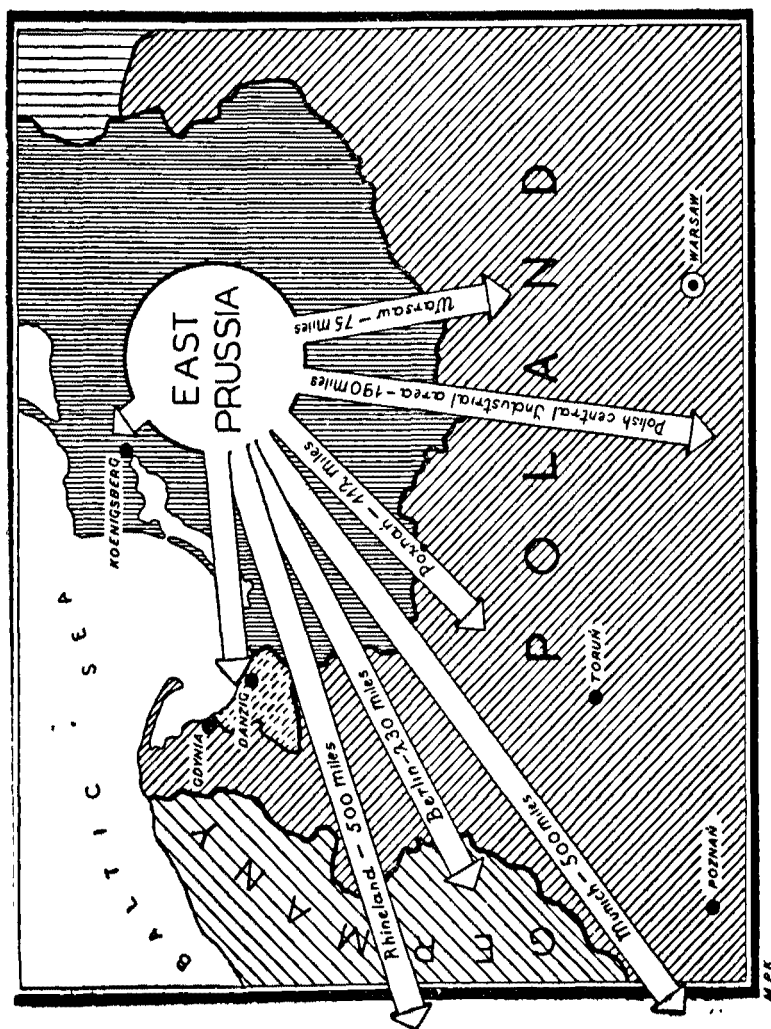
³ Wilhelm Zoch in *Neuordnung im Osten* (Berlin, 1940), p. 40, writes: "The German Eastern provinces always suffered from the distance of markets (*Marktferne*). Industry could not develop here because it was either bound to the actual mining sites, or because

useless, for nothing can alter the fact that while within the bounds of the German Reich East Prussia remains in an extremely disadvantageous situation. It cannot cope with the difficulty created by the localization of German industry in the Rhineland on the west and in Saxony in the south-central area of Germany. These districts have also the greatest density of population, and *ipso facto* present the best market for food products. Even East Prussia's long coast line is not of much value to it, for land transport is more serviceable. The German provinces closer to East Prussia—those east of the Elbe—are themselves preponderantly agricultural and, apart from the Berlin area, which is some 250 miles from Königsberg, are more in the nature of competitors with East Prussia's agriculture than markets for it.

Owing to its peripheral situation East Prussia does not enjoy those benefits which normally accrue to agricultural areas included in highly industrialized States. Neither tariff rebates nor other kinds of assistance, such as subsidies, credits, etc., can compensate for this unfavourable position. Its distance from the main home markets is the most important and indeed is a permanent difficulty for its farmers. The same fact renders impossible any healthy industry arising in the province. So long as it remains in the Reich it is incapable of developing a modern economic structure of a higher type. For what advantages over the western areas of Germany can East Prussia offer any industrialist who might decide to set up an establishment there in rivalry with those in the west? Coal, iron, and other raw materials have to be transported a considerable distance, and this necessitates an excessive burden on production, even if exceptionally low rates are allowed. There are few skilled workers in the area, the local market is

the less-bound branches of industry also preferred the economically more prosperous and more accessible districts of the Reich. The position of agriculture was deplorable, not only owing to its great distance from city and industrial markets, but especially owing to the senseless trade policy of the governments."

small, and large markets are far off. The denial of access to East Prussia for Polish coal has meant that the province has to pay very heavy freight charges for German coal, and industry is thus deprived of its margin of profit.



DISTANCES FROM THE FRONTIER OF EAST PRUSSIA

3

Far-awayness also condemns East Prussia's maritime trade and its ports to stagnation, and this must continue so long as its national affiliation and economic policy violate its natural geographical situation and bend the life of the province to the different and distant rhythm of German economy. For it is obvious that East Prussian ports cannot in any way compete with German western ports, as these are close to the centres of heavy industry. Indeed, the province's ports cannot serve the vital centres of German economic life.

In order to maintain the fiction that East Prussia can develop its maritime trade, German economists built up a theory that the province was to play the part of a bridge between the west and the east—the role of guard over the commercial routes. They persistently opposed this theory to the Polish thesis that East Prussia has all the conditions necessary for developing its overseas trade because of its position along an extensive section of the Baltic coast, and advantage be taken of its great hinterland of the Vistula and Niemen basins. Further, this hinterland slopes towards the sea along lines running from south to north, i.e. through East Prussia.

On this subject German doctrine appealed to testimony drawn from the recent past. It is true that in 1896 a commercial treaty was signed between Germany and Russia, in which St. Petersburg granted German ports the same exceptional railway rates as applied to the Russian ports. This marked the beginning of an unusual period of development for Königsberg; the turnover of this port rapidly increased threefold—from 500,000 to 1,500,000 tons. Through the port considerable quantities of herring, coal, overseas produce, artificial fertilizers, etc., passed into Russia. Of even more significance was the Russian export of grain and vegetables, timber, flax, hemp, etc., to East Prussia and Germany. The high export surplus in the Russian turnovers through the province was approximately balanced by a corresponding surplus of imports in the turn-

overs of the province itself. Thus vessels sailed with cargoes in both directions.

Yet this state of affairs definitely arose out of a conjunction of circumstances, due in fact to an aggregation of various factors which cannot be replaced. The German-Russian commercial treaty, already mentioned, assured Koenigsberg primarily exports and imports from and to the Polish areas which then were included in the Russian State. To link Koenigsberg with Russia proper would be rather unnatural and uneconomic. Moreover, the entire economic structure of Russia has undergone a complete transformation under the Soviets, their products and articles for export being different from those of Tsarist Russia. For this reason Russia's share in the turnover of the port of Koenigsberg fell after the last war to 10 per cent of the former total.¹ Russia sent her exports mainly through the ports of Latvia, Estonia and by the northern sea routes. So there is nothing to indicate that present-day Russia has any intention of placing foreign ports in a privileged position and making them competitors with her own ports, e.g. the White Sea ports.

The Prussian complaints that Poland did not grant transports for Koenigsberg the tariff reductions allowed to Danzig sounded strange, since Reich commercial policy was governed expressly by the desire to isolate Poland economically, though she was East Prussia's most important economic associate. Owing to this policy, instead of East Prussia being a link in Polish maritime trade, it became a bar to Poland's access to the sea, and forced her to exploit to the utmost her own small scrap of coast with the port of Gdynia and Danzig nearby.

This Reich policy obviously entailed highly unfavourable results for the prosperity of East Prussia. The previously-mentioned factors in its one-sided or sickly development of economy, such as its lack of industrial minerals, poor climate and peripheral situation, were increased by a new and very weighty factor, namely, its isolation from the Polish areas.

¹ See Appendix 6.

The policy involved the renunciation of the most important economic attribute which the province possessed, the maritime trade serving the lands which economically gravitated towards

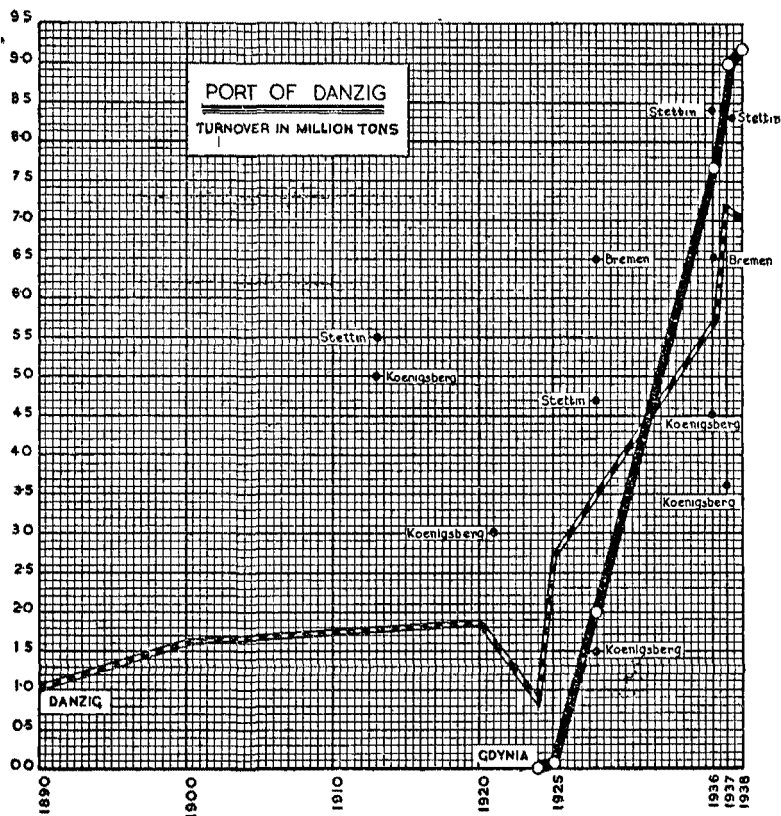


DIAGRAM SHOWING THE GROWTH OF DANZIG'S TURNOVER DURING ITS ECONOMIC ASSOCIATION WITH POLAND

it and of the processing of many articles before re-exporting them. How much Königsberg's turnovers after the last war could have developed in association with Poland can be deduced from the great augmentation in Danzig's turnover; down to 1918 that port never rose above the level of a pro-

vincial port chiefly concerned with timber transport; but during its economic association with Poland it increased its turnover many times. Despite the development of Danzig the requirements of the Polish hinterland led to the development of a further port—Gdynia.¹

4

Therefore, because of its distance from Germany proper East Prussia is condemned to a perpetual economic crisis. Such a crisis permanently existed in the province, and always for the same reason. As long ago as 1822 Schoen, the Governor of East Prussia, wrote to Hardenberg, the Prussian Chancellor: "The Landowners have no money. But what Government could have enough money to restore a natural order of things—Heavens!"² In modern times this crisis has found glaring expression in the migration of the population, the indebtedness of landed property, and the systematic subsidizing of East Prussia by the German State and industry.

Migration from East Prussia, which is discussed in more detail in the next chapter, was due to several causes. But in any case its very dimensions show that the province was unable, within the bounds of the German Reich, either to build up a profitable agriculture or to create any extensive industry. Therefore it could not provide adequate employment for the natural increase of its population, and so assure con-

¹ The view that Poland is the potential source of wealth for East Prussia was strikingly confirmed by the Germans themselves, when after the invasion of Poland in 1939 they incorporated the whole northern part of Mazovia (the Ciechanow district) in this province. Consequently East Prussia's new "frontiers" extend almost to the environs of Warsaw (see map on page 92). In the endeavour to create a natural hinterland for the province its area has been increased 44 per cent, and its population 34 per cent—to 3,400,000. Into the newly-incorporated district Germans have been shifted from Lithuania, as well as other countries.

² M. Kempner. *Bank-Archiv*, March 13, 1931.

ditions of normal existence. Statistics for as early as 1902 disclosed that agriculturists in East Prussia had an average indebtedness of 46.8 per cent of the value of their land, as compared with 26.4 in all Prussia. After the last war and the inflation period in Germany mortgage burdens fell to one-third of the land value, but this improvement turned out to be purely transient so far as East Prussia was concerned. Investigations made by the Reich Parliamentary Agricultural and Budget Commission showed that in 1928 indebtedness had again risen, being on the average from 55 to 69 per cent of the value of the farm lands.¹ That, of course, reacted fatally on the power of this type of production to yield a revenue: out of 281 farms investigated 88.6 per cent had to pay interest amounting to over half their net income.² So it was not surprising that in 1928 more than half of the farms sold up by auction in the State of Prussia were in East Prussia, there being sold altogether 304 farms with an aggregate area of 13,993 hectares, or about 35,000 acres (1 hectare = 2.471 acres).

None the less the East Prussian agriculturists, especially the Junker landowners, managed somehow to keep afloat, with of course certain exceptions. This³ is explained by the policy of keeping the price of agricultural products as high as possible and by the continual extensive financial aid provided by the Reich, which permitted the standard of existence in the province to be maintained at a higher level than was justified by its natural resources and economic potentialities. Exact figures cannot be given respecting the extent of this financial assistance, which took chiefly the form of relief to agriculture. German writings on the subject provide no

¹ On July 1, 1926, out of 329 farms investigated 11 per cent were burdened with debt amounting from zero to 60 per cent of the value, 27 from 60 to 100 and 42 with over 100 per cent.

² Max Sering. *Die deutsche Landwirtschaft* (Berichte über Landwirtschaft), Neue Folge, 50 Sonderheft. Berlin. 1932.

³ See Appendix 7.

compilation of the sums which passed to East Prussia from various Governmental and private funds, but the sums involved were enormous, running into thousands of millions of marks. In the years 1922-31 the Weimar Republic provided some 2,000 million gold marks just for openly-announced special programmes for the eastern provinces, namely, the *Ostpreussenprogramm* in 1922, the *Sofortprogramm* in 1926, the *Ostpreussenhilfegesetz* in 1929, and the *Sofortprogramm* again in 1931.

Since Hitler came to power these programmes have been enlarged beyond all measure. And in addition to the open programmes of *Osthilfe* and to the funds which flowed secretly into East Prussia in various ways, the Reich paid out vast sums for the province's benefit in the form of a highly developed system of special transport rates, taxation reductions, and not least of priorities granted to the small number of East Prussian factories in regard to Government supplies, despite the fact that the prices they quoted were higher than those of industrial establishments in other parts of Germany.

In principle the "East Programmes" promoted three types of assistance: the conversion of agricultural indebtedness, sums for colonization purposes, and credits for public works. The expediency of debt reduction was again and again questioned in Germany; in any case this form of assistance was nothing more or less than a subsidy mainly for behoof of the Prussian Junkers. And the Nazi regime itself, instead of undertaking a direct conversion of debts, introduced a system of parcelling out large landed estates as a means of reducing indebtedness. Anyhow, the measures of conversion opened a wide field for excesses, as was proved by the Hippel scandal, at a time when Hippel was the director of the Königsberg Mortgage Bank. Even so, they brought only temporary relief to the debtors.

Colonization activities achieved certain results, but these were incommensurably small in relation to the plans drawn up, and had no real influence on the situation of East Prussia as a whole. And thus in the Third Reich far-reaching revisions

of these plans were made, and the slogan was raised of a radical agrarian reform for the advantage not so much of the rural as of the worker elements. It was intended that the entire area of East Prussia was to be industrialized, and every worker was to receive a small allotment of land to tie him permanently to the province. This programme took no account of Germany's industrial sufficiency, and it sacrificed the interests of the manufacturing works already existing in healthy economic conditions in Germany in order to create other but unprofitable establishments. Yet it was planned under this programme to settle some 1,500,000 Germans in East Prussia!

This plan was essentially a flash in the pan. East Prussia was not industrialized and the agrarian reform was only very partially realized. The Nazi revolutionary plans were shattered because they came up against two obstacles: the resistance of the large landowners, and the reluctance of Germans in the centre and west of the Reich to settle in the east, or the reluctance of those born in the east to remain there.

On the other hand, public works were carried out in East Prussia on a tremendous scale, the object being to raise the material level of the province, thus bringing psychological influence to bear on the population, and to prevent it from shifting wholesale to an area which was better organized and provided a higher standard of comfort. According to the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* of December 4, 1929, these works led to a regular annual deficit of 200 million gold marks in East Prussia. The youth employed on them *en masse* were driven every year to forced labour in accordance with the terms of the compulsory labour service.

There was no lack in pre-Hitler Germany of economists and publicists who proved that the entire system of subsidies in East Prussia led only to corruption, and tended to disorganize economic life without yielding any positive good results. Evidence of this kind of thing is given in a characteristic speech by Bruening, a former Chancellor, at Tilsit (Tylza) in January 1931. "We cannot work," he said, "solely with

the aid of the subsidy policy. We must work over the ground with a hard, systematic reform, so that the money which has flowed so plentifully to the East of recent years will not again be poured into a bottomless barrel."

It is noteworthy that in 1931 the representatives of German industry reserved to themselves the right to share in the application and control of the *Osthilfe*, which they undertook to finance through the banks. From this it is clear that both the Government and the industrialists had reached the conclusion that agriculture in East Prussia had been highly demoralized by the various forms of aid and credit reliefs, and that detailed control was necessary.

It is obvious that the Reich decided on such enormous financial contributions only because it regarded East Prussia as the farthest outpost of Germanism in the East, with a political and military mission of the very first importance in the near future. The continually increasing financial sacrifices—which in view of the Nazi programme for the industrialization of the entire province were almost immeasurable—were economically quite unproductive. Nor did they yield results proportionate to the design, even from the aspect of confirming Germanism in the East. So far as the economy of East Prussia itself was concerned, these methods of continual artificial feeding of an anaemic organism were bound to have a relaxing effect, and none of its weaknesses was cured by these means.

5

East Prussia never achieved and could never achieve organic unity with the German Reich, and, despite all the thousands of millions spent on its development, was unable to progress economically, achieve solvency, or even retain its population within its area. Yet separated from Germany the province could obtain conditions assuring considerable development, and all its economic relations could be placed on a healthy basis.

Though contrary perhaps to a first impression, state association with Poland, a predominantly agricultural country, would not have an unfavourable effect on East Prussian agriculture. With Poland rapidly becoming industrialized, and so achieving a considerable increase in consumption, the province's agricultural production will be easily absorbed by the home market. The fact that this market, especially its chief centres, are close to the territory will also be important. The chronic weakness of the area—its distance from markets—will no longer exist. Berlin is some 250 miles from East Prussia, but Warsaw is only some 75 miles, while Poland's industrial areas are just half as far away as the Westphalia-Rhineland area. Yet even more important results in agriculture will be achieved by the reciprocal play of economic forces between the maritime province and its hinterland; to prove this mention need only be made of the extraordinary economic development in Polish Pomerania from 1920 to 1939.¹

The provision industry will have great opportunities for development because of the possibilities of export. This includes the fruit, vegetable and meat-canning and bottling industries, abattoirs and bacon factories, dairy and cheese factories, and so on. Naturally the agriculture of the nearest maritime areas will benefit directly from the development of these branches of industry, as suppliers of the raw materials. The quickening of general economic life which will follow in many branches of production and exchange will create permanent bases for agricultural prosperity in this maritime zone.

The counties situated along both sides of the present frontier, which are distinguished by a lower than average density of population and a greater than average economic backwardness, would also undoubtedly develop considerably if the present frontier was abolished. For the Polish counties situated on the direct route to the sea have hitherto been cut off from it, while the southern Prussian counties situated close to Poland's

¹ Casimir Smogorzewski. *Poland's Access to the Sea*. George Allen and Unwin, London. 1934.

great economic centres were absolutely walled off and this, too, in the most distant corner of Germany.

A genuinely sincere and logical reform of the existing agrarian structure of the province would also react positively in its agricultural well-being. For an increase in the number of medium-sized and small farms would lead to the creation of a type of farm particularly desirable in East Prussia, as being most suitable for livestock-raising, including horses, cattle, sheep, pigs and poultry. Considerable achievements had already been reached, but agrarian reform would provide a further stimulus.

In association with Poland, a country in the course of extending the bases of its industry, East Prussia will gain the possibility of an equal start with other areas of Poland in regard to industrialization. It will then be placed in a situation entirely different from that which existed hitherto. Various branches of industry could be started, and their development would be assured either because of their favourable situation or as the result of other natural conditions. This development will not be hampered by the superior powers of competition of industry concentrated in other areas, as was the case with the Reich and its regionally-centralized industry. After inclusion in Poland East Prussia will also be able to draw supplies of coal unhindered from Polish Upper Silesia, which is its nearest coal field. Consequently the price of coal will be greatly reduced by comparison with the present position, and this will effect a considerable reduction in industrial costs.

Discussing particular branches of industry, in addition to the development of the provision industry, a revival may be foreseen of the timber industry, which has hitherto suffered severely from shortage of raw materials. East Prussia is not particularly rich in forests, but the proximity of large forested areas in Bialystok, Wilno and other Polish eastern areas will provide a large and valuable reserve of raw material for its timber industry, covering all stages of manufacture, including

furniture-making. It is also worth while emphasizing the value to Koenigsberg as a port of direct contact with Polish timber production, unhampered by tariff walls and prohibitions.

In the proximity of large ports numerous branches of industry requiring overseas raw materials always develop. They include various forms of the chemical industry, artificial fertilizers, soaps, fats and so on. In East Prussia these industries will go hand in hand with the development of the port turnover. And, moreover, it may be expected that the capacious market in East Prussia's hinterland will facilitate the growth of a widely-ramified manufacturing industry.

Although in the future Danzig and Gdynia will probably constitute a single haven and become one of the largest in Europe, it is certain that the ports of Koenigsberg and Pilawa (Pillau) will find ample employment, and their turnover will greatly exceed the level reached under German rule. Such will be the result of the general quickening of the economic life of East Prussia itself and of the hinterland close to it, and of the abolition of the province's economic isolation and the development of transit trade with both Eastern and Central Europe.

For the chief structural defect which weighed upon East Prussia's economic life, i.e. its disadvantageous situation—severance from the geographical and economic area of which it really forms a part—will altogether disappear as soon as it is linked with Poland. Within the boundaries of the Polish State the area will recover its health and be able to set free all its natural vital forces.

Nor is there any doubt that East Prussia will cease to be an almost exclusively agricultural area, to which role it was restricted during its association with Germany. And as a link between Poland and the sea it will play an important part in the maritime trade of a State of 35,000,000 inhabitants, one moreover closely joined with Czechoslovakia and probably with other States of Central Europe. And all this will of course

greatly increase the commercial importance of East Prussia, as of the entire Baltic coast of Poland generally.

Therefore the advantages to East Prussia of becoming part of the Polish State are beyond question, and are, in fact, decisive.

The Westward Flight of East Prussia's Population

A STUDY of the conditions of the population of East Prussia leads to the same result as the analysis of its economic life. In considering its economic situation a single advantageous factor is to be noted: its agricultural productivity. All other elements of economic prosperity are lacking. The one positive factor is the considerable natural increase, but its influence is largely cancelled out by other processes, the result being that the position of the population of the province is decidedly unhealthy. First and foremost East Prussia is under-populated.

According to the census of June 16, 1933, the province had 2,333,301 inhabitants. This worked out at 163 inhabitants to the square mile, whereas the figure for the whole of Germany was 365. East Prussia is one of the most thinly-populated provinces of Germany, its density not being even half of that of Germany as a whole.

Low density of population in the eastern provinces of Germany has always been a source of anxiety to her politicians and economists; the most sincere among them saw in the case of East Prussia the cause in the distance of the province from its markets, and so in the impossibility of developing industry there, and also in the defective agrarian structure, large landed properties being placed in a privileged position.

The direct cause of the low density of population in East Prussia and its relative demographic stagnation is the steady efflux of migrants from it—to an extent which balances the natural increase of the population. As already said, this increase is very considerable. In 1937, which was the best year in regard to fertility since the last war, the increase for the whole of Germany amounted to an average of 7·1 per cent, whereas in East Prussia it was 11·82.

Migration on an enormous scale went on from East Prussia.¹ From 1843 to 1910, 739,300 people migrated from the province; in the years 1910 to 1933, 206,400 more migrated. Thus over a period of ninety years, 1843-1933, about a million people left East Prussia.

Prussia trebled its population between 1816 and 1910. In East Prussia the population only increased 133 per cent in the same period. In Prussia between 1871 and 1910 the density of population rose from 71 to 115 per hundred hectares, i.e. 62 per cent. In East Prussia it only rose in the same period from 49.3 to 55.79, i.e. 13.2 per cent. What is the explanation of this singular phenomenon? It can with certainty be said that the small total increase in the population of East Prussia has been chiefly caused by emigration.

During the period from 1871 to 1910 the loss of population through migration from East Prussia averaged 17,510 per annum. The efflux during 1923-33 worked out almost exactly at the same annual average. And so, as the British writer Ian Morrow, says: "The fact that the movement had been in existence for more than seventy years prior to the World War suffices to demonstrate that it cannot be looked upon as a consequence of the resuscitation of the Polish State and the creation of the so-called Polish Corridor."²

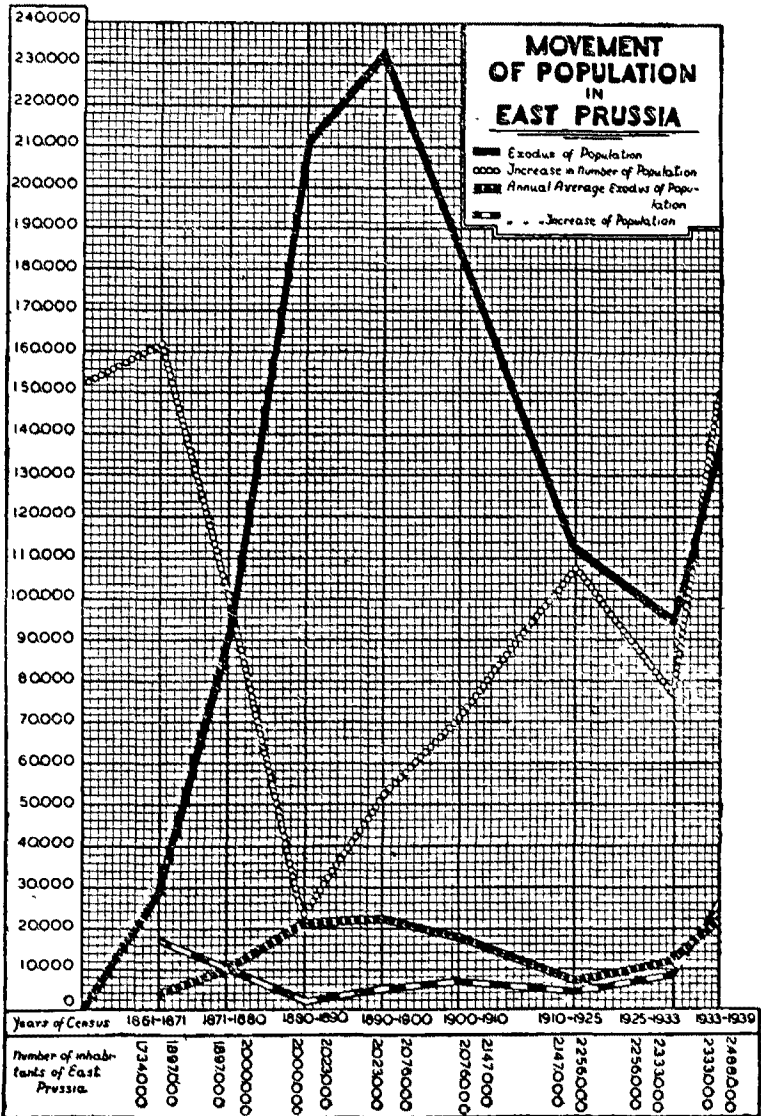
In 18 out of 37 rural counties of East Prussia the efflux from communities with less than 10,000 inhabitants was so great that in these cases there was an absolute fall in the number of inhabitants. The resulting shortage of labour was made up by an influx of seasonal workers from Poland.³

A particularly unfavourable factor is the decline in the agricultural population. In 1882, 1,241,606 people gained

¹ Heinz Rogmann. *Die Bevölkerungsentwicklung im preussischen Osten in den letzten hundert Jahren* (The Development of Population in the Prussian East during the Last Hundred Years). Berlin. 1937.

² Ian F. D. Morrow. *The Peace Settlement in the German-Polish Borderlands*. Oxford-London. 1936.

³ *Statistik des Deutschen Reichs*, Band 451, 1. Berlin. 1935.



MOVEMENT OF POPULATION IN EAST PRUSSIA

their living from agriculture; in 1907 the figure was 1,092,587, while in 1925 it was 1,036,800. At first the decline affected only regions where large estates predominated, but later it extended to the small-farm areas. What profit is there in the population maintaining its level numerically or even growing, if the increase affects only classes which do not participate in production, i.e. Government officials and troops? Even in 1907 the superstructure which agriculture and industry had to carry amounted to 26.4 per cent of the population, a very considerable proportion for an agricultural country. By 1925 the superstructure had risen to 35 per cent, or, in other words, to a figure perhaps met with in highly industrialized countries, but one completely unhealthy for an agricultural province.

What were the chief reasons for the flight of the population from East Prussia? The fact that in less than a century almost a million people, i.e. nearly half of its present population, left the province, primarily testifies, as eloquently as the permanent economic insolvency of the area, to the weakness of the structure of the province. The causes are to be found above all in the unnatural connection between East Prussia and Germany, and especially in the impossibility of developing a more profitable agriculture or industrialization because cut off by a frontier from its Polish hinterland, and because of its distance from the German markets. In addition the province is participating in a process which is common to all the provinces of Germany lying east of the river Oder, namely, the *Drang nach Westen*. The population flies from the provinces with a lower economic rate of development to industrialized areas—to the large towns, which provide higher earnings and more vital interests and attractions.¹ It is a flight from areas

¹ The flight from the countryside to the towns is a well-known process also in other highly industrialized countries. The efflux of population from Germany's eastern territories, however, cannot be considered as a simple flight from the countryside. It should be remembered that the same population-movement westward can be observed in German Silesia, though it has a great industry. In Opole Silesia between 1871 and 1933 the decline of population caused by

which were only attractive to the German nation when, owing to Polish tolerance, German colonists found personal liberty and freedom to gain a living in them, and which, after their incorporation first in Prussia and later in Germany, during the last hundred years have not only had no power to attract the inhabitants of Germany's western districts, but have not even been able to retain or attract those born in eastern Germany.¹

Migration from East Prussia was also the result of the unfortunate situation in regard to landed property. In this province large landed estates, with an area of over 250 acres, covered 39·3 per cent of the total area.² As the result the social structure of the province consisted, at the top of a caste of large landowners, next a comparatively small stratum of independent peasants of little economic and political importance, and finally, a large agricultural proletariat. This almost feudal system of class relations was not consonant with the healthy growth of the population.

Leading men in the Reich never contented themselves with laments over the subject of the "Threat to Germanism in the East," but initiated a number of remedial measures. Chief among these was a great scheme for the parcellation of landed estates and land settlement. It was begun in 1905, and a "strong wall of German peasants in the East" was to arise. In fact from 1905 to 1915 new settlements covering an area of 121,832 acres were established in East Prussia, this being an average of some 170 settlements a year. Some 17,000 people were settled on the land, but during the same period no fewer than 211,430 inhabitants migrated to other parts of Germany. Undoubtedly of later years the rate of settlement increased migration amounted to 311,696 people. Out of 44 districts of Lower Silesia there were 11 in which the number of inhabitants declined during the years 1925-33. Cf. Rogmann. *Bevölkerungsentwicklung im Preussischen Osten*. Berlin. 1937.

¹ *German Withdrawal in the East*. Polish Research Centre. London. 1942.

² See Appendix 8.

somewhat. The Colonization Association, *Ostpreussische Siedlungs-Gesellschaft*, alone purchased 62,500 acres of land for parcellation in 1931, mainly in the southern part of the province largely inhabited by Poles. During 1919-37 some 63,000 were settled again. Did this achieve any really important positive result? It would seem not. The census of 1933 revealed a further loss of population, especially agricultural. Nor was much gained by the compulsory settlement of some 2,000 members of the Reichswehr along the frontier zone in 1931.

Evidently the work of land parcellation was not conducted on any great scale in East Prussia, since close on 2,500,000 acres remained in the hands of the large landed proprietors. Moreover, in carrying through the agrarian reform nationalist considerations were taken into account above all others: the new settlements sprang up almost exclusively in the Polish areas, such as Ostroda (Osterode), Nibork (Neidenburg), Prostki (Prostken), or, in other words, where there was the least land available for parcellation (some 25 per cent). But they were not started in the German counties in the regencies of Königsberg and Gubin (Gumbinnen), where as much as 70 per cent of the arable land was in the hands of large landowners. This is particularly true of the counties of Rastenburg (Rastenburg), Bartoszyce (Bartenstein), Darkiejmy (Angerapp), Rybaki (Fischhausen), and Gerdawy (Gerdauen).

These poor results of the parcellation policy raise the question whether the Germans are at all capable of colonizing East Prussia, or even of stemming its depopulation. To cope with such a task settlers are required who will adapt themselves to worse agricultural conditions and a lower standard of life than those of the West: such a settler would need to love agricultural labour. Germany does not possess such settlers, and there are no clients for the new settlements, as is shown very clearly by the slow progress of land settlement, both in East Prussia and in Germany proper. Everywhere throughout Germany there is an invincible drive of the agricultural population into the towns and industry. It is a notable fact

that the caste of Prussian Junkers, who are interested in retaining at all costs their *latifundia*, and likewise their political influence, and who *de facto* prevent the land parcellation scheme from functioning by all sorts of devices, and talk often and loudly about colonization—they know the difficulties involved, but by calling for it they create an artificial stimulus to the price of land, and that is their chief concern.

A characteristic feature of Germany's colonization is that it is necessarily always bound up with a complicated series of measures aimed at keeping Germans in the eastern provinces and preventing their flight westward. Among these unending schemes of financial inducement were the raising of agricultural wages, which, compared with earnings in industry, are always regarded by the labourers as too low; better housing conditions; credit facilities and debt conversion; taxation reliefs; and ordinary, open subsidy. All these methods were to be found in the German programmes of "Aid for the East." They cannot be regarded as altogether ineffective. If, for instance, subsidies had been dropped, the results would have been absolutely catastrophic: not 20,000, but 100,000 Germans would have left East Prussia every year. Germany's forced and prodigally expensive policy had the effect of achieving a seeming stabilization of relations over several decades, in the sense that on the whole the German population in the province did not decline. But this did not avert the depopulation of the countryside and the stagnation of the smaller towns; Königsberg alone had an assured growth in population. As a rule, subsidies and so forth did not succeed in preventing the German peasants' elemental urge westward or their tendency to leave the land. So during later years the programmes were changed fundamentally: the industrialization of East Prussia came to be recognized as the basis for maintaining Germanism in the province. However, the objective conditions for realizing plans of this kind were absent.

Generally speaking, colonization has chances of success only when the settlers shift out of areas economically over-

populated, in which they find existence difficult or impossible, and when they find attractive economic conditions in the new settlements. None of these conditions applies in comparing central and western Germany with East Prussia. So this province, like Germany's eastern provinces generally, cannot count on an influx of people from the heart of Germany, and historical reminiscences of the 13th century are of no help whatever. On the contrary, the natural processes of migration draw the human element out of the eastern provinces and direct it towards the centre of Germany, where it finds both work and a higher standard of life.

That is why the plans for the German colonization of the East always remained merely wishful thinking, for the German *Lebensraum* in that area is simply an empty phrase. Dr. Werner Horn writes as follows of the situation in East Prussia:

"The heart of East Prussia, a large area with a fertile soil, is so sparsely populated that there would appear to be some justification for those Poles who point to the under-population of Prussia as a result of the failure of German colonization and who represent our eastern provinces as the coveted object of Polish land-hunger. . . . For decades to come we shall not be able to count upon any increase of the rural population worth talking about."¹

In the long run Germany's difficulties respecting population in the East will obviously be intensified to an enormous extent by the decline in the natural increase of population in Germany itself.² And these two factors in combination, namely, the exodus to the West of the Reich and the decline in the nation's biological vitality generally, justify a decidedly gloomy view of the future of the German nation in the East and one so completely out of harmony with the vociferous Nazi slogans of *Lebensraum!*

¹ Werner Horn. *Die Bevölkerungsverteilung in Ostpreussen und ihre Veränderungen* (Distribution of Population in East Prussia and Changes Therein), pp. 139-40. Königsberg. 1931.

² See Appendix 9.

Only viewed against this background can there be understood the German campaign against the danger of the Slavonic pressure of population (*der slavische Bevölkerungsdruck*), and the German fears as to the ease with which East Prussia in particular will be deprived of its German character if the large estates are expropriated and Polish colonists settled on them.¹ In fact everywhere along the Polish-German frontier the disproportionate density of population is striking; in the Olsztyn (Allenstein) regency of East Prussia, for instance, there are 124 inhabitants to the square mile, whereas in the adjacent Warsaw province of Poland there are 223. Poland produced a mighty reserve of inadequately exploited labour-power, constituting first-rate colonizing material. The Polish peasants possess a fanatical attachment to the soil, ability to work hard in difficult climatic conditions, and a temperament which knows how to be satisfied with little. The low density of population and the large proportion of land held in big estates—in East Prussia about 2,500,000 acres—indicate that in this province there is a perfectly natural outlet for over-populated Poland, especially as over-population in Poland is found in those very areas which have the same kind of agricultural production as East Prussia.

Practically speaking, this area has been closed to Polish colonization as the result of restrictive regulations on the part of the German authorities ever since 1700. Only Polish seasonal workers were able to find temporary work in the province and were tolerated, because, owing to the efflux of Germans, the Reich could neither cultivate the fields nor harvest the crops without Polish help. But if the artificial barriers were to disappear it would be possible to create some 100,000 new settlements and place over half a million people in this area in a very short time. The land settlements thus created would be economically healthy; the area would be linked economically with its natural hinterland; the Polish peasants would need no

¹ E. R. B. Hansen. *Polens Drang nach dem Westen* (The Westward Push of the Poles). Leipzig. 1937.

everlasting financial assistance or abandon the land once they had acquired it. Such a parcellation would change the existing feudal character of East Prussia beyond recognition, and eliminate unhealthy conditions in the countryside. The entire province would be changed from the headquarters of Prussian Junkers continually involving Europe in war into being a peaceable agricultural democracy.

Thus solely in close association with Poland will it be possible for East Prussia to gain not only economic but also social stability, and at the same time solve its population problem. Poland can easily supply the province with people first for agriculture, but just as well for industry and maritime commerce. The population will increase considerably. The differences between the producing classes and other trades and professions will disappear. But above all the threatening prospect which has always blotted out any hope of East Prussia's economic development will also vanish. The mass efflux of elements most capable of labour, who in the past easily and unregretfully left the province, will come to an end.

VI

Features which will Swiftly Change

I

EAST PRUSSIA does not possess a nationally homogeneous population. Germans predominate in the regencies of Koenigsberg, Gabin (Gumbinnen) and Kwidzyn (Marienwerder). Poles predominate in the regency of Olsztyn (Allenstein)¹ and Lithuanians in the eastern part of the regency of Gabin.

It is very difficult to determine the exact number of Poles and Lithuanians in East Prussia, as in this respect none of the official German censuses can be regarded as trustworthy. In every instance large numbers of Poles and Lithuanians were only too easily and unscrupulously entered as being of German nationality.

From 1890 the Germans added a separate so-called nationality to the categories in the census, namely, the "Mazovians." The majority of the Poles inhabiting the southern part of East Prussia were thenceforth entered as of this "nationality." It hardly needs to be explained that to make such a separate category was absolutely absurd: as already said, the Poles in East Prussia are the descendants of Polish settlers of the early Middle Ages, who came particularly from the Mazovian province of Poland. The Mazovians are just as much Poles as the Bavarians and the Saxons are Germans. For that matter, all the official German censuses before 1890 took the same view.

But from the end of the 19th century the German authorities started to adopt yet other methods; for instance, the census registers began to include a "bilingual" category, intended to cover all alleged to have two native languages, Polish (Mazovian) and German, or Lithuanian and German. All these alleged

¹ See Appendix 10.

“bilinguals” were Poles or Lithuanians who, owing to their economic or other dependence upon Germans, declared that the German language was their “second native language,” or who were simply entered in this category without even being asked if they wished it.¹

Even so the censuses of population carried out by the authorities of Imperial Germany provided a certain though inexact picture of ethnical relations in East Prussia. But official censuses and estimates made after the last war are so full of crude falsehoods that they provide no basis whatever for calculating the number of Poles and Lithuanians in the province.

It is necessary then to make use, with certain reservations, of the results of the last census before the First World War, i.e. in 1910. Its errors to the disadvantage of the Polish population can be corrected to some extent by comparing the figures with the data of the official Prussian statistics for school-children, which were compiled in 1911, and were more reliable.

Operating with these two sets of figures, Polish statisticians have fixed the number of Poles in the regency of Olsztyn (Allenstein) before the last war at 340,000, and in the other regencies at about 100,000. In the Olsztyn regency the Polish population constituted 76·3 per cent of the total rural population, and 25·1 of the urban.²

The above-mentioned number of 340,000 Poles in the Olsztyn regency and approximately 100,000 in other regencies covers only persons who, before the last war, used Polish in their homes—a fact which must be clearly underlined.

The area in which the Polish language dominates in East Prussia comprises some 5,480 square miles, or more than one-third of the area of the province. It is less than it was in the 18th and the first half of the 19th centuries, the reason being the intense Germanizing activities, already described. This veneer of Germanization is, however, of comparatively very recent date, and if East Prussia were to be incorporated

¹ See Appendix 11.

² See Appendix 12.

in Poland a large number of the inhabitants at present using the German language would undoubtedly swiftly return to the speech of their ancestors.¹

As already said, Lithuanians have maintained their hold on the north-eastern part of East Prussia. They are strongest proportionately in the counties of Stolupiany (Ebenrode), Memel (Klaipeda) and Tilsit (Tylza), in which, according to the 1900 census, 59, 49 and 49 per cent respectively of the total population spoke Lithuanian. The census of 1910 showed a great decline of Lithuanians in these areas. According to its figures there were some 58,000 Lithuanians or 9 per cent of the total population in the Gabin (Gumbinnen) regency, and some 32,000 or 3·5 per cent in the Koenigsberg regency. It goes without saying that the Germans also applied their well-known statistical "methods" to the Lithuanian population in order artificially to reduce its number.

It is particularly worthy of note that the first census made by the Weimar Republic—in 1925—showed even more tendentious results than the statistics of the Hohenzollern period. This 1925 census gave the number of Poles in East Prussia as 147,745, which would have meant a fall of some 50 per cent in fifteen years, obviously a complete misrepresentation of the truth.

The Reich Statistical Department (*Statistisches Reichsamt*) did not publish the results of the next census, taken in 1933, so far as national categories were concerned. Therefore we have to confine ourselves to estimates derived from the extensively developed and organized activities of the Polish minority, in spite of persecution, in East Prussia before the present war. This estimate gives the number of Poles living there then as about 300,000. This is a moderate figure, as can be seen when the number of Poles, i.e. persons speaking Polish in East Prussia in 1910 and their great biological resilience are borne in mind. Yet it witnesses to a further decline in the consciously Polish section of the province's

¹ See Appendix 13.

population owing both to migration westward and to the violent, ruthless attempts at Germanization. The German efforts to denationalize the Poles in East Prussia were made on such a large scale that they were bound to have a destructive influence on the Polish rural and working-class elements, who were economically dependent on the large German landowners, and who were also completely cut off from Polish social contacts and cultural influences.

In this period the Germans went far beyond the Germanizing methods previously applied: they were not content merely to prohibit the use of the Polish language in schools, public life, and even churches, both Protestant and Catholic. Nor did they stop at settling colonists drawn from Germany proper, populating the towns with the many, large families of German officials and maintaining great military garrisons permanently in the province. The totalitarian National-Socialist State and the fanaticized German community went much farther, bringing an incredible degree of social and economic pressure to bear on the Poles every day and in the most varied forms. The whole system was based on placing the "foreigners" not only in a subsidiary and humiliating position, but absolutely threatening their very existence through leaving them uncertain of an income or depriving them completely of one. The various methods of terrorizing the Polish population which were employed, from social boycott and isolation to reduction to a state of indigence, while promising all kinds of advantages and privileges if they would accept membership of the ruling nation, were bound to have an effect on the weaker elements, especially such as were responsible for families.

In such conditions there was sure to be a great deal of renunciation of nationality. It is another question whether this kind of spiritual conquest can be regarded as final and lasting; a new turn of history can easily sweep out of existence the results of this moral violence and glaring wrong.

Although it must be admitted that definite breaches were made in the Polish areas in East Prussia, it is just as true that

the large majority of its Polish population retained their national distinctiveness.

The plebiscite which was held in parts of the Olsztyn (Allenstein) regency and the Kwidzyn (Marienwerder) regency in 1920 was held in the very worst of circumstances for Poland. The young Polish State was at war with Soviet Russia, whose armies were moving down on Warsaw, and the plebiscite area was subjected to a raging terror by German armed bands. Of course, in such conditions the voting was fatal to Poland. But no objective person can take voting in such circumstances as a serious reflection of the actual relations of the nationalities in the area.

2

The fact that a compact mass of Polish population exists in the southern area of the province will contribute considerably to a stabilization of relations at the moment of East Prussia's incorporation in Poland. It will be one of the main factors working to bring about an immediate and radical change in the existing ethnographical relations.

When East Prussia is incorporated in Poland a large part of the German population, which numbers some 1,900,000 persons, will undoubtedly quite voluntarily and very hurriedly quit the province. Of course it is impossible to determine in advance the size of this voluntary migration. But it is worth recalling that in regard to the provinces which returned to Poland after the First World War several hundred thousand Germans voluntarily migrated to the interior of the Reich. After the present war with all its outrages the urge of Germans to get back into Germany will undoubtedly be very strong. In this connection account must be taken of the large proportion of the inhabitants of East Prussia who do not fall into productive categories, such as all the troops, the officials, judges, teachers, lawyers, journalists, etc. To these will certainly be added German craftsmen, merchants, business men, and a section of the colonists themselves, all of whom get

their living from the non-producing categories already mentioned. And the urge to migrate will be all the greater, since the deep-rooted traditional German impulse towards the *Drang nach Westen* will also come into play.

Simultaneously there will be an extremely rapid increase in the numbers of the Polish and Lithuanian inhabitants. Considerable sections of these groups, who have only recently been treated as Germans for census purposes, will return to the language and nationality of their ancestors. The influx of population from Poland will also be enormous, especially when agrarian reform is introduced into East Prussia.

Thus the fundamental change in the ethnic features of East Prussia will doubtless be achieved very quickly.

The historic truth of age-long processes was emphasized and a highly probable picture of future relations was put forward in a remarkable speech by a Conservative deputy, Count Westarp, on March 25, 1931, during a discussion on the *Osthilfe* law in the German Parliament. He said:

“To-day in place of the onward-driving German wave has come a flood of Polonism. The Polish flood is not halting at the frontiers of the State; undermined from within, the Germanism of East Prussia will yield before the Polish pressure, so that in the end East Prussia will fall to the Poles like ripe fruit.”

The German historian Aubin spoke in terms similar to those of Westarp, in a work already cited.¹ He wrote:

“The phrase, ‘the crumbling East’, has already become a byword with our highest Governmental authorities. . . . This is in itself a great danger in all that concerns the relations of the German nation with the German East. Our people have turned their backs on the East. They have left it derelict, leaving along our frontier areas low in population and in culture at a moment when across those frontiers there is an ever-increasing menace of a foreign nation with an expanding population. Who could imagine a paper frontier, a frontier of boundary posts, resisting any pressure from nations of high fertility?”

¹ *Von Raum und Grenzen des Deutschen Volkes*, pp. 106-7.

The Will of the German Population

To all the numerous and varied arguments in favour of East Prussia being closely bound legally and politically to the Polish Republic the Germans can oppose only one: the will of the German population living in the province. But this argument is more than counterbalanced over and over again by demographic, political, and moral considerations. Here attention need be directed only to the following points:

1. The German Reich was in fact falling back from the East. This is an undeniable and fundamental truth. It is the price paid for the high-living standard of the western Germans, for their economic development, for their power of attraction to other Germans, and for the creation of a new psychological type: the townsmen. Under the pressure of these combined causes the Germans were withdrawn not only from Pomerania and East Prussia, but from Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Russia, the Bukovina, the Dobruja, and Bessarabia. Hitler himself had sanctioned this process of liquidation by ordering the mass transmigration of Germans from these lands and their settlement, for political reasons,¹ in western Poland. Evidently it is a dominating fact; it is difficult to be more German than the Fuehrer, and to refuse to take into consideration this factor of the ebbing of the German tide from the East. The settlements of Germanism maintaining themselves in a very unstable equilibrium in this part of Europe are deprived by this of any quality of economically and socially justified stability. It has to be accepted that the Germans were voluntarily withdrawing from the eastern colonies, and that this applies also to their typical colony for aggression, East Prussia.

2. If for political reasons the Reich has organized the

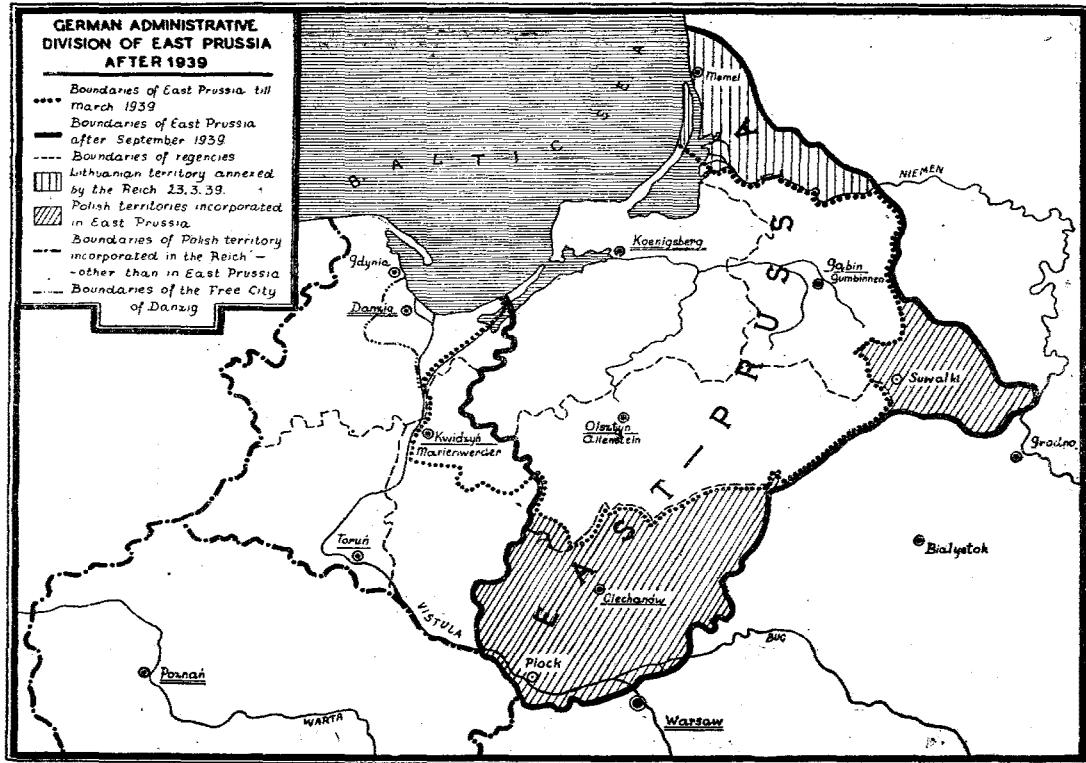
¹ *German Failure in Poland*. Polish Research Centre. London. 1942.

compulsory exodus of its nationals from the East, it is difficult for the sake of ostensible humanitarian reasons to deny Germany's opponents the right to follow their example with a view to achieving no less weighty political results. But in any case the Germans have lost all moral right to object. The Third Reich has for that matter compulsorily removed German nationals not only from the East, but also from the Italian Tyrol. Therefore they treat this action as the application of a general system, completely legal, and therefore available for application by as well as to other nations.

3. So far as East Prussia is concerned, there is no doubt that a large majority of its German population will hurriedly abandon the province on Germany's military defeat; apart from this the migration will to a certain extent be carried through in the form of an exchange of population. Here we have in mind the Poles in western Germany, Berlin, and other parts of the Reich.

4. Nor must the fact be overlooked that the transference of the German population to the Reich must not in the least be regarded as persecution of that population. These people, especially such as are connected with agriculture, will find employment and a livelihood, for instance, in the thinly populated eastern areas of Germany proper and in the depopulated German countryside generally. As a consequence the Reich will not find it necessary to import millions of labourers from abroad for agriculture or industry as hitherto.

5. For several centuries Germany called for direct territorial continuity between the Reich and East Prussia, and realized this claim by continually provoking wars, completely ignoring the desires of the people living in the purely Polish area of Polish Pomerania. Yet she did not achieve her aim of Germanizing that region. The State of the Teutonic Knights arose as the result of the conquest of ethnically foreign lands lying at a considerable geographical distance from the specifically German areas. Despite all the efforts put into the later German colonization and denationalization policy, they failed to build



GERMAN ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION OF EAST PRUSSIA AFTER 1939

a bridge between the compact German area in the west and the German enclave in East Prussia; these two areas were and still are divided by a broad zone of Polish inhabitants. The German side decisively lost the historic struggle for ethnographic continuity between the Reich and East Prussia. Therefore, since the Germans rejected the settlement of 1918 (just as they had previously rejected the settlement of 1466) as impossible, since, consequently, they reject any decision based on ethnographic considerations, there remain only the alternatives: to be concerned primarily with the fate of the two million Germans in East Prussia, or with the most vital interests of over 35,000,000 people living in Poland, who demand that the German colony of East Prussia shall be abolished and the Polish State have a full and broad frontage on the Baltic.

6. However, the Germans have completely lost all moral right to appeal to the principle of the self-determination of nations. From the ethical point of view this is the most important result of all their conduct since the beginning of the Second World War. It is one of the ways in which they must be made to realize the responsibility they have incurred as violators of the human conscience and international morality. Who else but the Germans incorporated 36,117 square miles of the Polish Republic, with 10,750,000 inhabitants, in Germany, against the will of those inhabitants? Who condemned these people not only to immediate, enforced migration from their homes and native districts, but also to the loss of all their possessions and their very means of existence? The nation which has done such things has forfeited all right to the benefits derived from the principle of the self-determination of nations. This issue must be raised definitely as a postulate of historical justice.

Yet apart from these considerations, there are also practical arguments which are decisive in their nature. The simple incorporation of East Prussia in Poland will suffice to achieve a complete modification in the relations of the population of

this province. This is indicated by the direction of the development of these relations; on the one hand, the pressure of the Polish population, on the other the withdrawal of the Germans. The effects of these changes will be revealed within a few years, and meanwhile East Prussia will flourish economically under new conditions.

Observers in East Prussia will then be amazed to see how quickly the results of the seven centuries of national conquest will disappear, just because that conquest is contrary to the nature of things. The gift of prophecy is not needed to declare that the Germans will very quickly lose the very possibility of appealing to the wishes of the local population, if only because the wishes will be openly hostile to them and their return.

VIII

A Myth which must be Destroyed

THE problem of East Prussia against the background of the general development of German mentality, and the political fruits that mentality has produced, may now be considered.

The discussion which is going on among the Allied peoples on the question of "good" and "bad" Germans does not of course mean the denial of the existence of good qualities in individual Germans. The discussion essentially turns on what may be called the collective psychology of the German nation and on its results in international relations. No one who thinks realistically can to-day deny that certain features and instincts of the German nation, its traditions, institutions and ideas, diffused for many decades by its leading thinkers and writers, have created a German organism which is morally degenerate, and mortally dangerous for other members of the international community. The aggregation of these qualities, defined as the "Prussian Spirit," because it reached its fullest development and manifestation in Prussia, must be thoroughly rooted out and destroyed for the good of humanity and of the Germans themselves. Unless this is done there can never be any peace, nor even any continuance of our common civilization.

Certain accepted maxims of the Prussian Spirit may seem almost absurdly simple-minded, yet they possess a great driving force, because they correspond with certain impulses which are dominant in the German soul, and because, above all, they have too often been crowned with success.

In the realm of German internal relations they take the form of the complete subordination of the individual to the State and of the State to the autocracy, together with revulsion from liberalism and free institutions, the militarization of the intellect, and the predominance of military thought in public life.

For the personal restrictions and even humiliations which arise from this type of internal organization the Germans find their recompense in their international policy. In the forefront of the benefits which they thus gain comes the doctrine of the *Herrenvolk*—"chosen race" or its "higher mission." According to the Prussian conception the German is strictly the only existing nation: all others are pariahs. Thence follows the logical conclusion that what is good for the Germans is also good from the ethical aspect. The Germans cannot stand and do not require to suffer any restrictions of their activities. In other words Germany is deified as of the highest value, and thus is justified that complete Germanization of Christianity, which was so revolting in the conduct of the Knights of the Cross. That same apotheosis of Germany is to be heard outstandingly in the cry of Baldur von Schirach: "He who serves our Fuehrer, serves Germany, and he who serves Germany serves God."¹

Less logical, though always associated with the Prussian mentality, is the German attitude not merely of contempt for but of absolute hatred of other nations. For a nation may regard itself as the flower of humanity, and yet not hate other nations. But the Germans, from the Margraves of Brandenburg down to the Nazis, take another view; with the passing of time their hatred has been extended to more and more nations, until now, in the 20th century, it covers the whole world.

This fundamental attitude to life prescribes the manner in which the Germans must behave in regard to other countries, in peace as in war. At the bottom of it all is always the conviction that the "highest race" is ordained to serve God—by war and conquest.

Therefore in international life there is neither right nor justice. There are no important and binding obligations. Thus in international relations it is necessary to adopt a profoundly hypocritical attitude, to pretend to be peaceable—

¹ Baldur von Schirach, Speech to the Hitler Youth, July 25, 1936. Rolf Tell. *Sound and Fuehrer*, p. 171. Methuen, London.

never to betray one's objects, indeed to disown them if need be, and to exploit every opportunity of achieving them, especially of surprising one's neighbour by a sudden attack.

In the German belief war is the normal state of affairs. It is necessary always to be preparing for war, to be thinking of war. For material force and physical violence are higher than right and confer right, because war, even when it is not justified by the opponent's attitude, is finally the main means of realizing the aim of German hegemony over the world, hegemony being understood to mean the deliberate exploitation of other nations, even their annihilation.

That is the modern confession of faith of the Germans taken as a whole. Certainly it does not express the mind of each German taken separately, but it is their collective and organized mind; it is what other nations who make contact with the Germans come up against; it is determined by their conduct. As Goering has said: "The dualism of Reich and Prussia has at last and for ever and in everything disappeared. Prussia now became the corner stone of the Reich."¹ And again: "In the higher sense that is rooted in the ethical, I know no more genuine Prussian than the Fuehrer."²

The Prussian Spirit with which the whole world has come into conflict from time to time is the product of historical evolution. To a large extent it originated in Brandenburg, after the victorious crushing of the Slavs, but it came to power in East Prussia. That province was not a decisive factor in its creation; Berlin dictated its inspiration first to the Teutonic Knights, then to the Hohenzollerns. Yet East Prussia became for Germany the touchstone of the effectiveness of such methods of external activity, methods applied on a broader scale in this province than in Brandenburg itself.

¹ Speech delivered at the meeting of the Prussian Landtag, May 18, 1933. (*Dokumente der Deutschen Politik*. Juncker und Dünnhaupt. Berlin. 1936.)

² Speech before the Prussian States Council, June 18, 1934. (Op. cit. pp. 114-15.)

Both periods in which East Prussia was united with Brandenburg under German rule—the period of the Teutonic Knights and the era of the Hohenzollerns—were marked by unrestrained aggression. After the conquest of Pomerania the Knights pressed on into Lithuania and the more distant lands of Poland. After the First Partition Berlin gathered in Poznan and Mazovia. The pretensions of the Knights grew in proportion with their successes; success became the sole criterion of action and gave birth to the German doctrine. Aggression passed through successive phases, each of which reinforced what followed. Thus was developed the perfectly distinctive and final spiritual and mental attitude to life in all spheres which we call Prussianism. It spread to all the lands under the Government of the Kingdom of Prussia, and among its effects were the attack on Denmark in 1864, the Austro-Prussian War of 1866, and the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71. In the spiritual sphere Bismarck's empire constituted the conquest of Germany by this same Prussian Spirit. The question of Pomerania then became transformed into the question of Alsace and Lorraine; and this in turn into the attack on Belgium, the conception of *Mittleuropa* and the Berlin-Baghdad line during the First World War. These partial plans were all finally engulfed in the sea of the Nazi doctrine of *Lebensraum* and *Eurasia* which aim at hegemony over the world—*Weltraum* and *Weltherrschaft* (world domination).

In all this sombre process of development East Prussia played the leading role. It supplied the continual proof that they were "on the right road." It summarily demonstrated it was necessary to behave as they had behaved in East Prussia, and that falsehood, the breaking of obligations, aggression, the physical and spiritual extermination of other nations also were sound and profitable methods. This is not an arbitrary deduction: East Prussia did in very deed become a symbol for the modern Germans; a symbol chiefly of domination in the East, but also no less a symbol of the German mission in the treatment of other nations.

All this is proved by hundreds of statements by German public men. For them East Prussia is "the pillar of the German position" (*ein Eckpfeiler der deutschen Position*), "a symbol of German will to power"¹ (*ein Symbol für deutschen Geltungswillen*).¹ It emphasized the intrinsic connection between the question of East Prussia and other European problems, and with German policy as a whole. The Germans admit—and this admission is worth the closest attention—that in the event of their losing this bastion all the dynamism of the Third Reich may be lost. "If the attempt to wrest away East Prussia were successful, it would connote the perpetuation of the present day, i.e. the post-Versailles, frontiers" (*Gelingt es Ostpreussen wegzusprenge, so heisst es die heutigen Grenzen verewigen*).²

The point of view summarized above has unusually strong psychological foundations. This is emphasized by the reasoning expressed in Hitler's own calculations. In *Mein Kampf* he declares, not without a certain melancholy, that when investigating the political changes during the past thousand years and the innumerable wars of that period he sees that this ocean of blood has given the Germans only three lasting fruits: the colonization of the *Ostmark* (Austria), the conquest of the lands to the East of the Elbe (therefore, especially Brandenburg), and the organization of the State unit of Brandenburg and East Prussia, "the work of the Hohenzollerns," the nexus of the new Reich. This argumentation is historically sound, but it is artificially enriched by the first point: in the flood of history the colonization of Austria is only a detail, and the later triumphs of the Austrian Monarchy do not fall within the scope of activities of the Berlin type, because they were achieved by diplomatic skill, especially by way of marriage ("Tu, *felix Austria, nube*"). Nor, for that matter, were they lasting. For Germanism the chief fruit of the bloodshed throughout the centuries is in reality

¹ *Volk und Reich*, p. 312, Vols. 4-5. 1930.

² Op. cit. p. 312.

the overrunning of the Slavonic lands of the Elbe and the unification of East Prussia with Brandenburg, thus leading to the eventual unification of all Germany.

Hitler's calculations must not be forgotten. It must be remembered that the services of the Germans from East Prussia, and especially of the Junkers, were simply enormous in the development of the Kingdom of Prussia and in the territorial and moral annexations which Berlin carried through step by step in the various provinces of the German Reich. It must also be recalled that the services which the very land of East Prussia rendered in course of filling all Germany with the spirit of the one and only Prussian outlook on the world were even greater and indeed absolutely fundamental.

Full account must be taken of the psychological truth that this land has not only become the standard of the March on the East, the first phase in the German campaign for world conquest. It is also the symbol of the Prussian Spirit. For this land is to all Germans the living test of an ideal; striking evidence that the conquest of foreign lands, the overthrow of previously existing political organizations, the physical conquest of a territorial area, the achievement of a revolution in the special structure of the population by murdering or demoralizing its higher classes, the inundation of these areas with German population, the destruction of the inborn traditions and cultural institutions—in a word, utter and complete Germanization are successful and profitable.

East Prussia is a living monument and justification of the mission and the accomplished fact of which Berlin is so boastful. So long as East Prussia remains a part of Germany there can be no possibility of a complete revolution in German policy and its emancipation from the dominant ideology. Contrariwise, separate East Prussia from Germany and the entire edifice built up by the Prussian Spirit will collapse and tumble down. And so the separation of East Prussia from Germany will be the most effective and expedient means of restoring the German nation to moral and political sanity.

Appendices

APPENDIX I (p. 9)

Before the outbreak of war in 1939 East Prussia was divided into four administrative units: *Regierungsbezirke* or regencies. The following table shows the area, population and density of population of these districts:

Regency	Square miles	Population	Density per square mile
Koenigsberg (Królewiec)	5,076	957,363	188·6 (excluding the city of Koenigsberg 126)
Gabin (Gumbinnen)	3,628	546,057	150·4
Olsztyn (Allenstein)	4,447	552,541	124·2
West Prussia (Westpreussen)	1,130	277,340	245·4
Total	14,281	2,333,301	163·3 (Average)

APPENDIX 2 (p. 57)

In *Die Wohlstandsverhältnisse in Ostpreussen* (1917), H. Goedel declared: "Taking the Kingdom of Prussia as a whole, in 1914 the number of persons with an income less than 900 marks per annum constituted 44·58, and in East Prussia 72·15, per cent of the total population. In the Prussian State as a whole 48·51 per cent of its population had annual incomes ranging from 900 to 3,000 marks, but in East Prussia the corresponding figure was only 23·35 per cent. In the rural districts the relevant figures were 41·79, and 18·02, per cent respectively, so that the agricultural population of East Prussia was only half as prosperous as the whole. The average income for physical labour in the Kingdom of Prussia was 526 marks per head, but in East Prussia it was 319 marks. The Prussian

State had savings deposits which worked out at 311 marks per head, while East Prussia's figure was 113 marks. In 1928 the State figure worked out at 60 marks, but in the Koenigsberg (Krolewiec) regency it was 17 marks. The national capital of East Prussia is estimated at $5\frac{1}{2}$ million marks, which is only 2 per cent of the total national capital of the Reich."

APPENDIX 3 (p. 58)

Hansen, *Die Landwirtschaft in Ostpreussen* ("Agriculture in East Prussia"), 1916.

Meitzen, in *Der Boden und die landwirtschaftlichen Verhältnisse Ostpreussens* ("The Soil and Agricultural Relations in East Prussia"), distributes arable land in the area, as under:

16.1 per cent	..	..	..	..	clay and marl soil;
52 per cent	..	..	..	..	sandy clayey soil;
23 per cent	..	..	..	..	sandy;
5.1 per cent	..	..	..	..	peat;
3.8 per cent	..	..	..	..	water.

From this analysis the conclusion follows that the soil of East Prussia is mainly suitable for growing rye and potatoes.

In 1937 the area of East Prussia was distributed thus:

Arable land	..	..	1,741,227 ha (hectares)	47.06 per cent
Meadowland	..	..	300,935	} 20.04 per cent
Pasturage	..	..	440,728	
Forests	..	..	715,816	19.35 per cent
Others	..	..	..	12.58 per cent

Sixty per cent of the forests belonged to the State, twenty-five to local governments and large landed estates, and fifteen to small owners.

In the same year the area under various crops was as follows:

Wheat	..	..	44,994 ha, yield, 18.9 quintals [1 quintal (q) = 112 lb. per ha (in Germany, 21.9)]
Rye	..	..	354,740 ha, yield, 14 q per ha (in Germany, 17.1 q)

Barley	156,622 ha, yield, 18·2 q (Germany, 21·7 q)
Oats	171,176 ha, yield, 17·9 q (Germany, 20·6 q)
Potatoes	167,428 ha, yield,
Sugarbeet	6,970 ha, yield,
Vegetables	36,537 ha, yield,
Clover and Lucerne	271,861 ha, yield,

Thus the area under barley and oats is almost as large as that under wheat and rye; the total harvest of grain amounted on the average to some 13 million quintals, of potatoes to 22 million and of sugarbeet to the same. The total harvest of clover amounted to the huge quantity of some eight million quintals, and of meadow hay to 12 million. Timber felled amounted to 2,563 million cubic metres (1 cubic metre = 1·308 cubic yds.) in the State forests, and 827,000 cubic metres in other forests, so that the forests have a very large yield, per ha, 6·3 cubic metres in the state forests, and five in the private forests.

APPENDIX 4 (p. 59)

The following are the figures for farm animals in East Prussia in 1937: 470,000 horses; 1,337,000 cattle (milk-cows accounting for 653,000 of these); 1,655,000 pigs; 186,000 sheep. The total milk production was 1,900 million litres, or about 2,700 litres per cow (1 litre = about 1·75 pints; one gallon = 4·546 litres).

APPENDIX 5 (p. 59)

Statistics of employment by trades and professions in 1907 and 1933 respectively:

	East Prussia		Germany	
	1907	1933	1907	1933
Agriculture	Per cent 52·3	Per cent 42·2	Per cent 27·1	Per cent 21
Industry and crafts	20·4	21·6	40·7	42

APPENDIX 6 (p. 63)

The most important items of import were:

	1913	1928
Russian timber	573,000 tons	57,000 tons
Grain	444,000 tons	56,000 tons

Exports through Königsberg to Russia in 1913 amounted to 118,000 tons, in 1928 to 25,000 tons.

APPENDIX 7 (p. 66)

The policy of keeping the price of agricultural products as high as possible led to such an absurdity that in some periods it was three times higher in the Reich than on other world markets. On this subject Konrad Heiden in his interesting study, *Ein Mann gegen Europa* (One Man against Europe), pp. 124-25 (Zurich, 1937), writes as follows:

“It was Germany’s special misfortune that this kind of agriculture was predominant from the second half of the 19th century till the present day. The militarized ‘Junkertum’—a curious variety of ‘Preussentum’—not necessarily identical with it or the monarchy, gained a leading influence in the Prussian State and in turn in the rest of Germany by the revival of the Prussian army under Bismarck and the dexterous use of its position in the Prussian parliaments. The political preponderance of the east German large estate owners has more or less governed the rest of German agriculture, and thus dictated to the German nation as a whole the laws of sustenance and economy peculiar to the landed property of the eastern provinces. This law means the feeding of Germany from her own soil at high prices and with low quality, causing an unnecessarily low standard of life for the masses, increased cost of German industrial products and, thus, an unfavourable position of Germany in the world’s market. Germany has a population which is very intelligent and, above all, easily organized; its task in world economy was to manufacture high grade cultural goods from raw materials produced abroad. The raw materials themselves, as well as the food stuffs raised

without much labour from fertile soil, had to be obtained from places where they were cheap. In the same way as the search for the meagre ore supplies and oil in the home soil brought no economic benefits, neither did the production of low graded wheat for bread."

APPENDIX 8 (p. 78)

SIZE AND AREA OF FARMS

			Per cent
Farms to $\frac{1}{2}$ hectare	114,887;	area: 22,933 ha	1
Farms from $\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 ha	34,960;	area: 35,190 ha	1.5
Farms from 2 to 5 ha	31,665;	area: 106,413 ha	4.6
Farms from 5 to 20 ha	49,150;	area: 493,262 ha	21.2
Farms from 20 to 100 ha	19,449;	area: 753,850 ha	32.4
Farms over 100 ha	3,440;	area: 911,439 ha	39.3
Total	253,551;	area: 2,323,087 ha	100

APPENDIX 9 (p. 81)

The increase in population in Germany during the years 1898 to 1910 was at the rate of 14 per thousand per annum; in 1923 it was 7.1; in 1933 only 3.5. In 1933 the number of live births was 971,000 for a total of 65,000,000 people, whereas in Poland, with its 32,000,000 population at that time, i.e. half of that of Germany, the figure of live births was almost the same, i.e. 931,000.

Owing to the propaganda developed under the National Socialist regime, during the years 1934 to 1937 the increase in population in Germany rose to 7.1 per thousand, and in 1939 even to eight. But according to Dr. Friedrich Burgdörfer's estimates, in the *Völkischer Beobachter* on January 28 and 30, 1941, from June 1940 onward the destructive influence of the war has had its effect on the natural increase in the German population. In 1940 the increase fell to 7.3 per thousand, and it has to be added that according to the definite note of the Reich Statistical Department this figure does not take into account the losses at the front. Burgdörfer expected a further unfavourable development of population in the Reich

during the next few years, both because of the effects of war operations and, above all, of the unfavourable influence of the First World War which will begin to affect the natural population increase.

APPENDIX 10 (p. 84)

In this respect part of the county of Reszel (Rössel) forms an exception. In addition, the Polish population is strongly concentrated in part of the county of Rasciborz (Rastenburg) in the regency of Königsberg (Królewiec); the county of Olecko (Treuburg), and the southern part of the counties of Wegobork (Angerburg) and Goldap (Goldap) in the Gabin (Gumbinnen) regency; and, finally, the counties of Sztum (Stuhm), Malbork (Marienburg), Kwidzyn (Marienwerder), and Susz (Rosenberg) in the regency of West Prussia (Westpreussen). As early as June 23, 1912, a Prussian law and a royal decree included the counties of Olecko, Rasciborz, Wegobork and Goldap among areas which were "nationally menaced" (from the German standpoint).

APPENDIX 11 (p. 85)

Concerning these German "statistical methods" the Author of this study wrote as follows in his book *The Polish-German Problem* (George Allen and Unwin. London. 1942):

"The Prussian Government discovered two entirely new languages, pretending that they were completely different. . . 'Cashoub' and 'Mazur'. Further, still another classification appeared in the statistical questionnaires, namely, 'bilingual'. It covered those who considered their home language was both Polish and German, Cashoub and German, Mazur and German.

"The aim was to divide the Polish population . . . into three different nations, in spite of the fact that Cashoub and Mazur are merely local dialects of the Polish language, and are recognized as such by all Poles, by the local population, and by expert philologists . . . and in spite of the fact that the Cashoubs . . . and the Mazurs . . . use these dialects in their daily speech only. Their literary language, their grammars, prayers,

books, papers, and magazines, are printed in the same language as that used in Poznan, Warsaw and Cracow.

"Further, there is a contradiction between the newly invented category of the 'bilinguals' and the well-known fact that every human being has only one 'mother tongue'. But this column made it possible for the Government . . . to exercise a strong pressure on the population.

"The tendentious character of the statistics of the minorities in the census of 1910 can be proved by other official statistical data, namely, those relating to Prussian primary schools in 1911. . . . The census was much less favourable to the Poles.

"The explanation is that when the school statistics were made pressure was exercised on the children too, but this pressure was less severe than while taking the census, which provided the base for the planned programme of Germanization by the Prussian State."

APPENDIX 12 (p. 85)

After adjusting the official German statistics, as given in the population census of 1910, by the results of the official German census of school children in 1911, the following figures of Polish-speaking population in East Prussia are obtained:

County	Rural	Per cent	Urban	Per cent
OLSZTYN (ALLENSTEIN) REGENCY				
Szczytno (Ortelsburg) ..	55,200	92·7	6,380	61·4
Jansbork (Johannisburg)	39,200	91·6	1,670	18·8
Nibork (Neidenburg) ..	44,300	89·4	3,220	33·4
Elk (Lyck)	35,950	85·0	2,480	20·8
Zadzork (Sensburg) ..	32,360	78·2	3,420	44·1
Lec (Lötzen)	24,500	76·0	1,900	21·0
Ostroda (Osterode) ..	38,000	71·0	4,090	21·0
Olsztyn (Allenstein) ..	34,530	64·2	2,158	47·1
Olsztyn—town			5,240	18·0
Reszel (Rössel)	8,490	24·6	1,160	7·4

County	Rural	Per cent	Urban	Per cent
WEST PRUSSIA (WESTPREUSSEN) REGENCY				
Sztum (Stuhm) ..	15,330	50·3	1,350	22·7
Kwidzyn (Marienwerder)	25,100	49·6	3,730	22·3
Susz (Rosenberg) ..	6,460	20·7	1,840	9·0
GABIN (GUMBINNEN) REGENCY				
Olecko (Treuburg) ..	22,900	66·3	430	8·5

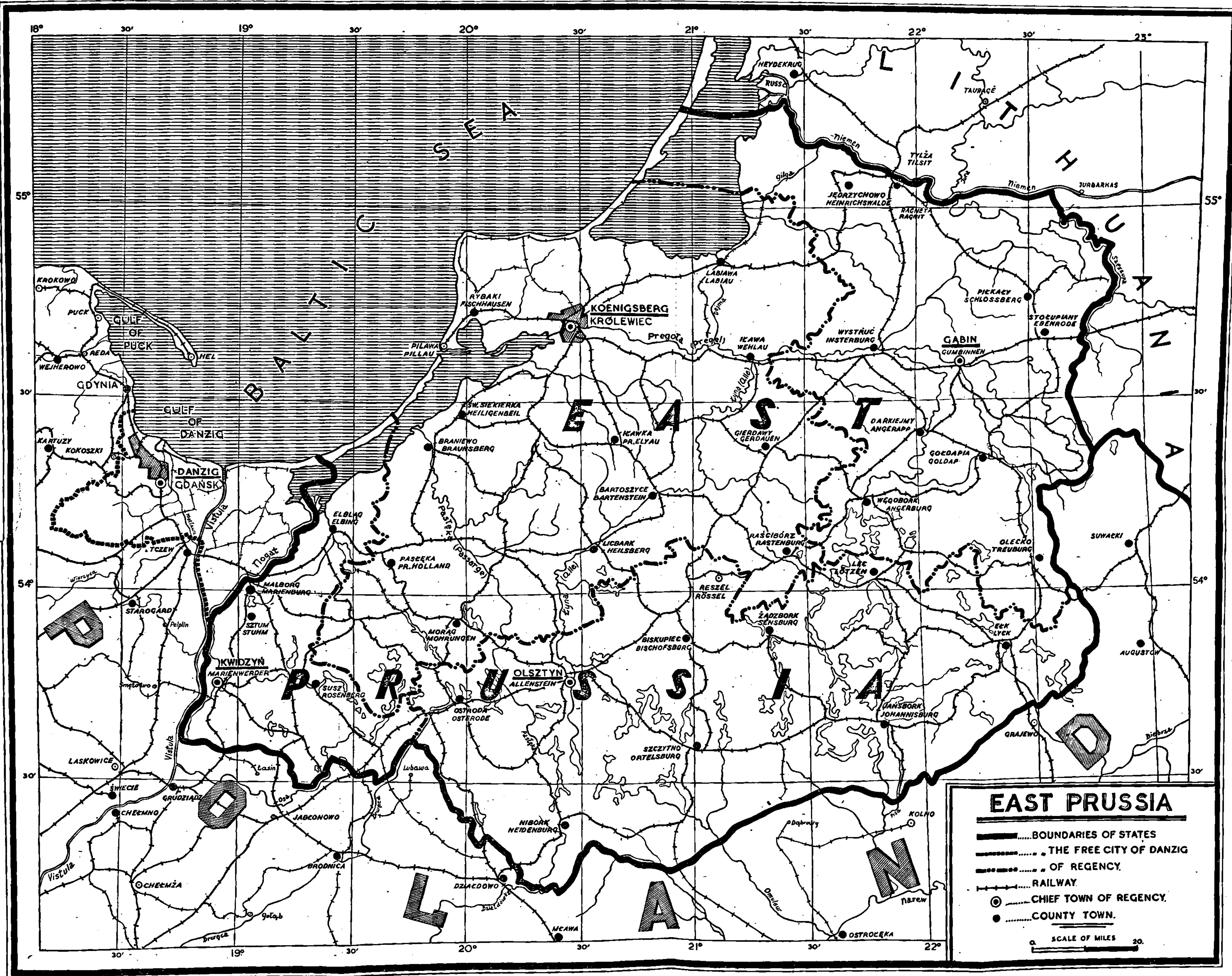
The German official census of 1910 shows that the Polish population is in an absolute majority in six counties of the Olsztyn regency (Szczytno, Jansbork, Nibork, Elk, Zadzork and Olsztyn) and has more than 35 per cent of the total inhabitants in two other counties. In the Gabin regency there are over 40 per cent of Poles in Olecko county. In the West Prussia regency they constitute about 40 per cent of the total population in Sztum and Kwidzyn counties.

APPENDIX 13 (p. 86)

German scientists themselves admit that among a large proportion of the population entered in the category of German nationality the German veneer is of extremely recent date. For instance, in his book *Die Sprachen und Nationalitätenverhältnisse an der deutschen Grenze* ("Languages and National Relations on the German Frontier," published in 1934), Professor Geisler estimated that in 1831 the number of persons in various counties who used the German language was in the following ratio to the total population:

Szczytno (Ortelsburg)	7 in every 100
Jansbork (Johannisburg)	8 in every 100
Nibork (Neidenburg)	8 in every 100
Elk (Lyck)	12 in every 100
Zadzork (Sensburg)	10 in every 100
Ostroda (Osterode)	36 in every 100
Lec (Loetzen)	14 in every 100

In all these cases the remainder of the population was Polish. This estimate is the best of testimonies to the purely Polish ethnical basis of the entire southern part of East Prussia.



M.P.K.
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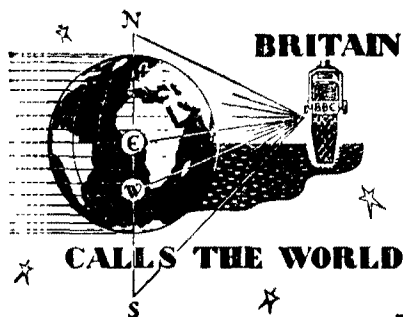
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