

GDANSK.

(DANZIG OR DANTZICK)

INTRODUCTION

See Conclusions p. 37-39

GERMAN CLAIM

The Germans claim Gdańsk (Dantzick) as a German town, and they find even amongst their enemies some supporters who believe that the principle of self-determination forbids the return of that German town to a National Poland. There are districts germanized through conquest or colonisation, wedged into other countries, as in Transylvania or on the Wolga; several millions of Germans inhabit also Bohemia, but this will not be a pretext for depriving Bohemia of her natural frontiers. Thus the supposed German character of Gdańsk cannot be entirely decisive if we prove that Gdańsk belongs naturally and historically to Poland, like the German districts of Bohemia to Bohemia.

THEIR ONLY ARGUMENT

And this supposed German character of a city situated in Poland, surrounded by a Polish population, is the only argument in favour of Germany. The Germans do not pretend that Gdańsk is indispensable to their commerce, as they have other ports of far greater importance. They cannot put forward historical arguments, because Gdańsk has only twice belonged to the Germans, and on each occasion for a much shorter period than either Bordeaux or Calais have belonged to England. (In both cases moreover it came into German hands by violence and treachery.)

GDAŃSK AND THE PARTITIONS OF POLAND

It has belonged to Poland since the dawn of history. At all events it existed as a Slav settlement in the tenth century, and remained Polish up to 1308. Then it became Polish again by the free decision of its inhabitants in 1454, and remained one of the most important Polish cities up to 1793. Thus during seven centuries Gdańsk was a Polish town, against one hundred and forty-six years' domination of the Teutonic Order, which led to the extinction of that Order four centuries ago, and one hundred and twenty-six years of Prussian rule, which led to the world-war. The chief motive of the partitions of Poland was the craving of Prussian kings for the annexation of Gdańsk with the territory of West Prussia surrounding it, and without the partitions of Poland Prussia could never have become such a paramount military power as to defy the whole world. If the partitions of Poland are considered as a Prussian crime of the same kind as the conquest of Alsace-Lorraine or of Slesvig, then no reparation of that crime will have more far-reaching consequences than a final decision as to the eternal right of Poland to its only harbour, twice wrested from the Poles for over a century by German violence, in utter disregard for treaties and common equity.

GENERAL ASPECT OF THE CASE

The struggle between Slavs and Germans for Gdańsk is the dominant note of the whole secular rivalry between the democratic and liberal Polish Republic and the military Teutonic Order, later transformed into the despotic Prussian State. The temporary triumph of Prussia in the 18th century destroyed all liberty in Central Europe, and started that armed competition between the great powers which made a universal war inevitable. The restitution of Gdańsk to Poland is the indispensable condition of the self-determination of nations in Central and Eastern Europe, and as long as Gdańsk remains in German hands, neither Poland nor Lithuania, nor even Bohemia, can attain real political and economical independence of Germany.

POLISH PUBLIC OPINION

This is perfectly clear to all educated Poles, and ~~public~~ opinion in Poland has always been unanimous in that respect as on few other points. In order to understand the Polish claim, we must go into many geographical, historical, and economical details, which require a very close attention to be fully appreciated and understood.

I. GEOGRAPHICAL AND ECONOMICAL CONSIDERATIONS

THE BASIN OF THE VISTULA

Poland has been known since immemorial times as the land of the Vistula. The river Vistula covers with its many affluents a much wider area than any German river, not excepting even the Rhine. The basin of the Vistula extends from the Carpathian mountains to the Baltic sea over an area of 198,510 square kilometres, while the basin of the Rhine covers only 160,023 square kilometres, that of the Elbe 134,968 square kilometres, that of the Oder 115,000 square kilometres, and that of the Niemen 97,492 square kilometres. The large area of the basin of the Vistula is exceptionally well irrigated, because the Vistula changes the direction of her course more often than any other of the great rivers mentioned above, and because the Vistula receives a great number of tributaries. The length of the Vistula is 1,125 km., and the distance from its source in the district of Cieszyn to its mouth at Gdańsk is only 530 km., the Vistula flowing first north, then east, north-east, north, north-west, west, north-west, north-east and north. These windings in the river's course and the great number of its affluents, (one of which, the Narew, having a basin of 73,470 square kilometres, together with her chief tributary the Bug), make of the basin of the Vistula one of the best irrigated areas in Europe. The Vistula receives on its left side the rivers Przemsza, Nida, Opatówka, Kamienna, Iłża, Radomka, Pilica, Bzura, Kamionka, Czarnowoda; on the right side the

Dunajec, Wisłoka, San, Wieprz, Świder, Narew, Wkra, Moltawa, Ossa, Liwna, without counting smaller streams. Besides these rivers, the basin of the Vistula has important artificial waterways, connecting the Vistula with the Oder, the Niemen and the Dnieper. Many other canals can be easily built, because there are no very great differences of level to overcome, and the basin of the Vistula is in close connexion with the basins of the Oder, the Niemen, the Dniester and the Dnieper.

ECONOMIC NECESSITY OF POLITICAL UNITY

The total length of navigable waterways in the basin of the Vistula exceeds 4,120 km., and out of this 842 km. can be made to carry ships up to 600 tons. But the development of this splendid net of communications depends absolutely on the political unity of the whole country which is so exceptionally blessed with waterways. The basin of the Vistula forms one natural whole, and cannot be divided between different states without imperilling the whole system. During the last century one State owned the mouth and lower course of the Vistula, another the middle course, and yet another the upper course. The result was that each of these States completely disregarded the commercial interests of the Polish nation, subordinating them to the interests of such distant commercial centres as Hamburg, Bremen, Vienna or Moscow.

ECONOMIC ANOMALIES

Thus for instance since 1906 the Poles of Galicia have spent out of their taxes £12,000,000 on Alpine railways in Austria, from which they cannot draw the slightest advantage, while the very important Galician canal between the Vistula and the Dniester, which would draw a part of the Black Sea commerce to Galicia, awaits its execution since 1901, when its construction was decided. The basin of the Vistula owns an enormous wealth of coal, and more than one fifth of that wealth is situated around Cracow, where no coal mines are worked, though the deposits of coal around Cracow are four times larger than all the other coal mines of Austria-Hungary taken

together. On the other hand, Austria-Hungary, neglecting the Cracovian coal from fear of an economical dependence on Galicia, paid a yearly tribute of £12,000,000 to Prussian coal mines. Galicia owns very rich oil wells, but the Poles of the province of Warsaw had to buy 160,000 tons of oil every year from the Caucasus at an expense of £880,000. If Poland owned the whole basin of the Vistula she could export through Gdańsk 320,000 tons of oil yearly, and sell it abroad at a much cheaper price than the Poles had to pay for Caucasian petroleum in Warsaw before the war.

EMIGRATION FROM POLAND

Poland has sent for the last generation a large number of emigrants to the United States, to South America, and other distant countries. Almost the whole of this emigration went by way of Bremen or Hamburg, and the Polish working men had to pay expensive railway fares, instead of embarking at Gdańsk, as they will do when Poland is united and independent.

UNITY OF GDAŃSK WITH POLAND

Such economic anomalies, resulting from an unnatural division of a natural geographical whole, could be enumerated by the thousand, but these few examples are sufficient to show how the population of the basin of the Vistula suffered in many ways because during the last 125 years it was not united under one government in one State.

And not only the Poles suffered, but also the German merchants of Gdańsk, who saw the flourishing harbour ruined by the partitions of Poland. In 1764-72 Gdańsk exported annually an average of 117,500 tons of wheat alone, in 1773-85 only 57,500 tons. There are only two alternatives open if the great natural wealth of the basin of the Vistula is to be fully utilised for the benefit of the world's trade— either the Poles must own Gdańsk, or a German Gdańsk will dominate the whole of Poland. The latter alternative was the object of the partitions of Poland. As it has failed, the natural conclusion is that Gdańsk must be returned to Poland.

GDAŃSK AND GERMAN PORTS

How much Gdańsk has lost by its political severance from the basin of the Vistula, can be seen if we compare the growth of the German ports commanding the basins of their rivers, with the decay of Gdańsk severed from the basin of the Vistula.

The population of Stettin, at the mouth of the Oder, has increased in the last hundred years by 900 ‰, that of Hamburg at the mouth of the Elbe by 800 ‰, that of Bremen at the mouth of the Weser by 600 ‰, while the population of Gdańsk has increased only 230 ‰, which is much less than the growth of any other important Polish city. Between 1860 and 1910 the increase of population has been in Warsaw 350 ‰, in Wilno 300 ‰, in Mińsk 320 ‰, in Witebsk 317 ‰, in Kieff 870 ‰, in Cracow 267 ‰, and in Gdańsk only 94 ‰.

The imports into Hamburg were in 1874 34 ‰ of the total imports into Germany, in 1910 they were 41 ‰. Gdańsk, which imported in 1874 6 ‰ of all German imports, had only 3 ‰ in 1910. Between 1875 and 1910 the trade on the Rhine has risen from 882 million tons to 8,869 million tons, which means an increase of 900 ‰, on the Elbe in the same time the trade increased by 800 ‰, on the Oder by 1.300 ‰, on the Weser by 850 ‰, and on the Vistula within Prussia only by 6 ‰. Gdańsk has scarcely had any share in the considerable development of the German trade which has taken place since the formation of the German Empire in 1871. Gdańsk had in 1913 imports of 937.590 tons, with exports of about the same amount, while Hamburg imported and exported more than fourteen million tons.

GDAŃSK NEEDS THE VISTULA

As long as Gdańsk has not the trade of the whole Vistula basin, it can only remain a third rate German harbour. In a free Poland it will rapidly rise to the first rank, and beat all records, not only of its own past, but of other ports on the Baltic sea, and perhaps even of Hamburg, if all the projected canals between the Vistula and the Niemen, the Oder, the Dniester, and the Dnieper, are constructed, and the

existing canals are brought into better form. A great part of the commerce of the Black Sea will then be drawn through the Vistula to Gdańsk, and Gdańsk will naturally become one of the great centres of trade between Asia and Europe. The Polish economists estimate the probable exports of Gdańsk (as soon as the whole basin of the Vistula is in Polish hands), at from 3 to 6 million tons, with similar imports, rapidly increasing.

NO USE FOR NEUTRALITY

This cannot be effectuated by any internationalisation or neutralisation of Gdańsk, because the Germans have always found means to evade all contracts. The whole basin of the Vistula from her source in the district of Cieszyn, to her mouth at Gdańsk must belong to one and the same State. Only such a State could regulate and improve the navigation on the Vistula, now utterly neglected, repair the existing canals and construct new ones, whereby the whole basin of the Polish river would become a living whole again, instead of being, as for the last century, a decaying body eaten up by parasites.

POLAND IN CONTRAST WITH WESTERN COUNTRIES

The western nations of Europe have each a well defined territory within certain natural limits, as Spain, Italy and France. There is no such well defined frontier between Poland and Germany or Russia, but at least the basin of the Vistula forms one geographic whole, which ought not to be divided. Parts of the basins of the Oder, the Dniester and the Dnieper are in very close connection with the system of the Vistula, and we may still have before us many struggles to establish the eastern or western frontier of the Polish State. But there can be no doubt that Gdańsk, whether inhabited by Poles or Germans, must belong to the Polish State for its own sake, and also for the sake of the world's trade, which needs to utilize the great wealth accumulated in the basin of the Vistula.

GDAŃSK MORE INDISPENSABLE THAN POSEN

This wealth has been concealed since the partitions of Poland, and could not be wisely used by three States hav-

ing conflicting interests. Such an unique river system as is formed by the Vistula is a natural organism and the head of that organism is the port of Gdańsk. To deprive the body of the nation of its only riverhead amounts almost to a decapitation. Bismarck understood it well, and he said in his speech of September 23rd., 1894, to a deputation from West Prussia, that, for an independent Poland, Gdańsk would be more indispensable than even Posen, and that in the case of a German defeat the Poles were sure to claim their harbour. In November 1918 the anti-Polish 'Ostmarken Verein' complained that West Prussia must return to Poland, if President Wilson's points were accepted. And since the armistice the prices of the houses in Gdańsk are rising because the owners foresee a great development of the city after its return to Poland.

NATIONS LIVING IN THE BASIN OF THE VISTULA

If several different nations were living in the basin of the Vistula, they would be obliged to come to a mutual understanding in order to form a single State. Happily this area is inhabited by more than twenty millions of one nation, and only a few hundred thousands of another. The Germans in the valley of the Vistula are not autochthonous, they settled among the Poles a few centuries ago, and they have always been treated with the greatest tolerance by the Poles who respected their religion, their language, their laws and customs. Other cities in Poland, and among them some of the most important, had in past centuries a predominant German population, for instance Posen and Cracow. They needed skilled workmen who came from Germany. But the descendants of those immigrants became Poles, and no German can now claim Posen or Cracow as German towns, though numerous Poles in these cities bear German names, showing their origin. Gdańsk was half Polish in 1793, and would have become entirely Polish, but for the artificial laws which prevented Poles from settling in their natural port, and gave exceptional privileges to settlers from the Rhine and other parts of Germany. The Polish population of the villages around Gdańsk emigrated to Germany or America, while Germans were attracted to Gdańsk.

HOW THE GERMANS ACTED TOWARDS POLAND

The Germans in Poland, being an insignificant minority, formed in 1657 an independent State within Poland, surrounded by Polish territory. This State, born of the treason of a vassal against his King, undertook the conquest of Poland, and succeeded almost completely in this incredible task, but failed at last. The perturbation brought into the economic conditions of a fertile and rich country by the boundless ambition and greed of a few foreign settlers, shows the necessity for a complete reconstitution of the unity of Poland, instead of sacrificing thirty million Poles to a few hundred thousand Germans at the mouth of the Vistula.

II. HISTORICAL FACTS

STRANGE TALE

It is not generally known how that very strange anomaly of an apparently German town in a Polish country, at the mouth of a Polish river, on the Polish sea shore, has become possible. The case is so unique in the history of nations, that it seems incredible to foreigners, almost as if it were a cleverly concocted tale invented by the Poles in order to obtain by false pretences a German town. It is therefore necessary to go into some details, if we wish to understand how all this happened.

KINGDOM OF THE THREE BOLESŁAWS

The Polish sea shore extended once from the Vistula to the Oder and farther west. At the beginning of the eleventh century, Gdańsk, and the whole shore of the Baltic sea as far as the isle of Rügen belonged to the kingdom of Bolesław I of Poland. In the twelfth century all Pomerania still belonged to the direct descendant of Bolesław I, Bolesław III. After the death of this great king in 1138, Poland was divided among his sons into several principalities. Gdańsk remained still a Polish town and the centre of an important commerce.

CONRAD OF MASOVIA

A grandson of Bolesław III, Conrad of Masovia, had great difficulties with the pagan tribe of Prussians, a race akin to the Lithuanians, dwelling east of Gdańsk. They made wild raids into Masovia, destroying property and life. The Prussians had in the tenth century killed St. Adalbert, who made the first attempt to convert them to the Christian faith. The same fate befell St. Bruno in 1009. In later times Cistercian missions had better success and in 1215 the Cistercian monk Christian became the first bishop of Prussia. He was richly endowed by Polish princes. But Conrad of Masovia was young, and rash, and in a fit of anger he killed his wisest adviser Krystyn in 1217. The Prussians once came as far as Płock on the Vistula, the capital of Masovia, and they destroyed 250 churches on their way. Conrad then followed the unlucky advice of his cousin's wife, St. Hedvige, a German princess from Meran in Tyrol.

THE TEUTONIC ORDER

She thought much of the Teutonic Order, which, founded in Palestine, was at that time looking for a new home, after a short trial in Transylvania, whence the Knights were expelled by the King of Hungary. Conrad invited them to Poland, and they settled in 1228 far from the sea, on the Vistula between the rivers Drwęca and Ossa. Very soon they extended their rule northwards to the sea, and east beyond the Pregel and Niemen within fifty years of their coming to Poland.

GDAŃSK POLISH IN THE XIVth C.

But Gdańsk remained Polish until the fourteenth century and had a flourishing trade, carrying a great part of the trade from Poland, Lithuania, Hungary and even Asia before the discovery of the sea way to East India. It is the only port in that part of the world which is free from ice in the winter.

When, by the will of Prince Mestwin of Pomerania, Gdańsk, with Pomerania, accrued to King Przemysław of Posen in 1295, the Teutonic Order feared a deserved punishment for its encroachments and prepared for war.

GERMAN VIOLENCE

Przemysław was murdered by the Germans very soon after he had assumed the title of King. But his successor Władysław Łokietek was a more dangerous adversary. The Teutonic Order could not then endure the flourishing trade of Gdańsk so near to its dominions, any longer. They suddenly raided the Polish city on the 4th of August 1308, when the population was celebrating the feast of St. Dominic, and they murdered more than 10,000 men, women and children; and that was nearly the whole population of the city. Many took refuge in the church and monastery of St. Dominic but they were burnt to death in the sacred buildings. The Teutonic Order then imported settlers from Germany and thus Gdańsk became a German city, but never completely. The great Master of the Teutonic order, Siegfried von Feuchtwangen, who until then had resided in Venice, settled then in Marienburg, close to Gdańsk, and a long struggle began between Poland and the Teutonic Order for the possession of the Polish sea shore.

VAIN APPEALS TO THE POPE

The Polish king appealed to the Pope. As early as 1312 Clemens V condemned the iniquity of the Teutonic Order. John XXII in 1320 nominated a commission to investigate the claims of the Poles. In 1321 the verdict was given, condemning the Order to return Pomerania, and pay large damages, under the threat of excommunication. As the Teutonic Order did not obey, the Polish King Władysław Łokietek went to war and obtained a great victory at Płowce over the German Knights, but could not recover the lower course of the Vistula. The Germans had besides occupied the mouth of the Niemen and also Riga on the Duna.

NEW APPEALS AND COMPROMISE

The successor of Władysław Łokietek appealed again to the Pope. In 1339 a new trial was conducted at Warsaw, and 126 witnesses were heard by the legates of the Pope. Again the Teutonic Order was condemned to the full restitution of Gdańsk and Pomerania, but they disregarded

Papal justice and the threat of excommunication. King Casimir the Great entered then into a compromise and by the peace of Kalisz in 1343 he obtained from the Teutonic Order the districts of Dobrzyń and Kujawy, leaving the rest in the hands of his enemies.

NEW WARS

The population was dissatisfied and already in 1397 the secret Lizard Union was formed among the people in order to prepare the emancipation of Gdańsk from the Germans. Later in 1440 we see in Gdańsk the Prussian Union for the same purpose. In a great war at the beginning of the fourteenth century, after the union of Poland with Lithuania, the Teutonic Order was beaten (in 1410) at Grünwald, but the treaty of Thorn in 1411 left them still in possession of Gdańsk. They ruined the trade of the city by their extravagant exactions. In 1414 the war broke out again and the Teutonic Order asked the German Emperor Sigismund to act as umpire in 1420, but his verdict was so manifestly unjust that King Jagiello appealed again to the Pope and in 1422 he renewed the war without definite results.

REVOLT OF PRUSSIA

After 146 years of oppression the German inhabitants of Gdańsk revolted, and, in 1454, fifty-six Prussian cities sent their delegates, elected by the nobility and the municipalities, to Cracow, asking King Casimir and the Polish Diet for the incorporation of Prussia into Poland, reminding the King that the whole country was a lawful possession of Poland and had been torn away by violence and treachery. The spokesman of that memorable delegation, Jan Baysen, narrated before the Diet the long tale of German atrocities suffered by the peaceful population. He complained not only of many cruelties, but above all of the faithlessness of the German knights and of their contempt for law, justice and treaties.

PACIFIST BISHOPS

Several bishops were opposed to a new war for the sake of Gdańsk, which was, according to them, in the hands

of a Christian Order of Knighthood, at peace with Poland at that time.

WAR OF LIBERATION

But after weeks of deliberations the appeal of the Prussian cities prevailed, and a new war began which was called later the thirteen years war, as it lasted nearly thirteen years. (1454-1466.) The Prussian cities, and especially Gdańsk, Toruń (Thorn), and Elbląg, spent their wealth and their manhood in this war of liberation, thus showing clearly their Polish feelings and their wish to be reunited with the Polish republic.

FINAL DEFEAT OF THE TEUTONIC ORDER

The war ended by the final defeat of the Teutonic Order, and Gdańsk, together with the whole basin of the Vistula, returned to Poland, according to the stipulations of the treaty of Toruń (Thorn) in 1466, which established a permanent settlement, leaving however 13 Polish districts in East Prussia under Prussian rule. It was a great mistake that the Teutonic Order at that time was left in possession of East Prussia with Königsberg. But the great Master of the Order undertook the solemn obligation that he and his successors would for ever remain vassals of the King of Poland.

The trade of Gdańsk increased, chiefly the exports of wheat. Towards the end of the fifteenth century Gdańsk exported 21,250 tons of wheat and rye, and in the middle of the sixteenth century twice as much. In the seventeenth century the exports of wheat and rye alone rose to over three hundred thousand tons in 1618.

PROSPERITY OF GDAŃSK

The prosperity of Gdańsk lasted only as long as the prosperity of Poland. When Poland was ruined by the Swedes in the seventeenth century, the exports of wheat and rye fell about 1675 to 77,500 tons. The prosperous reign of Sobieski brought it up to 100,000 tons. The misrule of two German kings in Poland in the eighteenth century brought the wheat export down to 60,000 tons. In 1638 a ton of wheat was sold by the producer for three Polish

florins and paid by foreign merchants 5 1/2 Polish florins. This example shows how great were the profits made by the merchants of Gdańsk in the times of Poland's independence. They had the exclusive right to buy and sell whatever came into their harbour. In the fifteenth century ships were coming to Gdańsk from Venice and Genoa, in the seventeenth century from America. They brought wine, olive-oil, southern fruits, rice, fish, (especially herrings), furs, wool, linen, cloth, salt, and took away wheat, flax, hemp, wood, ashes, furs. Gdańsk had in the fourteenth century only 10,000 inhabitants, in the fifteenth century 20,000, in the beginning of the seventeenth century 50,000, which during the Swedish wars fell to 25,000.

GDAŃSK AND ENGLAND

There were friendly relations between Gdańsk and England. Already in 1404 there was a Prussian Company in England trading with Gdańsk. Later, when there was an economic war between England and the Hansa, Gdańsk was excepted from the proscription against the Hanseatic merchants. The great Polish statesman Olbracht Łaski came to the court of Queen Elizabeth in order to obtain for Gdańsk a part of the English trade which then was directed to the White sea.

POLISH FEELINGS IN GDAŃSK

The Polish feelings of the merchants of Gdańsk were shown on many occasions. Already in 1411 the Teutonic Order, after its defeat, beheaded three mayors of Gdańsk for their friendliness to Poland. In the thirteen years war (1454-1466) Gdańsk alone spent a million florins and lost 2,000 of its citizens. On both occasions when the Polish king Leszczyński was elected to the throne of Poland, Gdańsk supported him against his German adversaries, Augustus of Saxony and his son. In 1734 Gdańsk was the last place in which Leszczyński with his French and Polish supporters fought against the Germans. The centenaries of 1454 and 1466 were celebrated in Gdańsk with great solemnity, and in 1766 a great number of German publications appeared in Gdańsk in com-

memoration of its union with Poland, all praising Polish liberty as contrasted with German oppression. In 1767 and 1772 Gdańsk resisted Prussian aggression, and even the shameless Friedrich II did not dare to take Gdańsk at the first partition, though the conquest of Gdańsk was the chief object of the whole scheme of the partitions of Poland.

LAST STRUGGLE FOR LIBERTY

When at last, after twenty-one years of Prussian misrule all around Gdańsk, including Neufahrwasser, the Prussian General von Raumer asked the town council to surrender in March 1793, the population rose against the Prussians and fought for one week (28th March to the 4th of April 1793) against overwhelming forces. The arsenal was taken by the people and many Prussians were killed despite the prohibitions of the town council who saw the hopelessness of the struggle. This popular protest made by Gdańsk against Prussian occupation occurred at a time when in the rest of Poland the second partition was effectuated without any immediate resistance. Many old settlers of Gdańsk then left the city, and among them the father of the philosopher Schopenhauer, who said that the Prussian conquest put an end to all liberty. The Prussian king complained in 1793, in a public proclamation, of the hostility of Gdańsk towards Prussia, and accused the inhabitants of complicity with the French Revolution.

TWO SIEGES

In 1807, when Gdańsk was besieged by the French, four thousand of its defenders crossed the lines and submitted to the enemy, so that the town was taken after four months, because it preferred to be Polish rather than German. But when in 1813 the Russians and Prussians invested Gdańsk, the city resisted for ten months and only capitulated a month after the defeat of Napoleon at Leipzig, Gdańsk being the last place in Poland where Poles and French fought against Prussia.

LAST WISH OF FREE CITIZENS

In 1813 the town council of Gdańsk elaborated a me-

morial for the coalition, proving that the best solution was the reunion of Gdańsk with Poland, and not its complete independence as a free town, nor its incorporation into Prussia.

POLISH SPIRIT IN GDAŃSK

Even as late as 1848, there was a popular rising against Prussian rule near Gdańsk, under Floryan Ceynowa. There are now, according to Polish estimates, about 20,000 Poles in Gdańsk, the official statistics being entirely unreliable. Polish names are met frequently in the inscriptions on the shops, Polish papers are published, Polish banks do business, and all kinds of Polish associations prosper despite the most severe persecution.

POLISH PAPERS

One of the oldest Polish newspapers was published in 1656 by Jacob Weiss at Gdańsk, and in 1919 the *Gazeta Gdańska* counts many subscribers.

POLISH CHURCHES AND SCHOOLS

In 1480 a Polish Church was founded in Gdańsk and some of the pastors of that Church, like Volkmar, Gurovius, and Mrongovius are known by their studies of the Polish language. In the schools of Gdańsk Polish was taught until 1850, and Polish sermons have been preached there even in the twentieth century. Polish historical monuments abound in the city, while the Prussian rule has left no vestiges worth mentioning. Statues of Polish kings, white eagles painted or carved in wood or stone, speak everywhere of the Polish past of this artificially germanised Polish city.

III. STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS

FUTURE WARS

It is a fact that the Germans, though defeated, still shew many signs of their warlike spirit, which has not been killed by the great defeats of the past, and will not be entirely extinguished by this last war. They will certainly

remain a standing peril to the peace of Europe. Without West Prussia, Poland would be cut off from its occidental Allies. If the port of Gdańsk remained in German hands, the allied armies could not easily come to Poland, nor could the Poles send their armies to help the Allies in a case of sudden aggression. And what is worse, if Poland remained in economic dependence on Germany, an economic blockade of Germany would be impossible for the Allies, as the Germans could draw food through Gdańsk from Poland and Russia.

USE FOR CONDEMNED WARSHIPS

But if the German warships, instead of being destroyed, are given to Poland and stationed at Gdańsk, then Poland becomes suddenly a great sea power on the Baltic. In the beginning the Polish navy would need help from the Allies, but within a generation a sufficient number of Polish sailors could be trained to man that fleet, which, built for aggression, would be best used for the defence of the basin of the Vistula against future German aggressions. The Kashoubs from the neighbourhood of Gdańsk furnished during the war the very best sailors to the German navy and admiral Böhncke was one of them.

If Gdańsk is not Polish, the Baltic sea becomes a German sea, for there is no other nation, except the Poles, able to resist the Germans on the Baltic. They have shown their power of resistance not only throughout their history, but even recently, when without any help from without they have liberated a great part of their territory. Finland, Esthonia, Courland, or the Scandinavian States, are not strong enough by themselves to hinder the rule of Germany on the Baltic, but they might form later an invincible alliance with a strong Poland, if Poland extends to the sea and owns a great port. Without such a Poland these smaller States will be obliged to reckon with Germany, and they will be inevitably drawn into an economic and political dependence on Germany.

POLISH NAVY NEEDED

Gdańsk is the only great port open to Poland, and is indispensable for the growth of a Polish navy and for the

defence of Poland in the case of future conflicts with Germany.

A nation without a navy can never become a great power and the interest of western civilisation requires that Poland should be a great power. The Germans, even if deprived of West and East Prussia, would still have a much more extensive sea shore than the Poles.

IV. THE ISOLATION OF EAST PRUSSIA FROM GERMANY

EAST PRUSSIA AS AN ALSATIA

The return of West Prussia to Poland has been objected to on the ground that the separation of East Prussia from Germany would be intolerable to German feelings and might lead to new interminable conflicts. This objection can easily be refuted. First of all, East Prussia would not really be sundered from Germany, because having access to the sea, the inhabitants of East Prussia would be able to maintain, if they wished, the closest relations with Germany, while if West Prussia did not return to Poland, the Polish sea shore would really be separated from Poland. East Prussia as a German country exists only since the thirteenth century, and in all this time it has remained for five centuries separated from Germany, while the territorial connexion exists only since 1772.

JUNKERS OF EAST PRUSSIA

East Prussia has been affected by its separation from Poland in a similar way to West Prussia, and it remains the poorest province of Germany, with a great emigration, few small land-holders and many big landlords, the typical Junkers, who are the makers of modern Prussia. If one of the aims of the war was the destruction of Prussian militarism, it must not be forgotten that East Prussia is the original home of that militarism. The Teutonic Order attracted the most greedy, the most self-willed, the most ambitious *Raubritter* from Germany and elsewhere. Their concentration in Prussia, where everything was

permitted against the despised pagans, their inbreeding, their very close organisation under an able dynasty, created such a special caste as has rarely appeared anywhere in the history of Europe. Their pride forbade them mixed marriages and they took the name of Prussians from the country which they had conquered, because they felt themselves different from the other Germans. They looked upon themselves as a race apart, destined to rule over Germany and the world. Their dynasty led the way and educated generations of Prussian generals, born of East Prussian families.

PRUSSIAN POISON

First the contagion spread over northern Germany, then the whole of Germany, Austria, Turkey and Bulgaria submitted to modern Prussia. But the Prussians are liked nowhere, and they remain hated foreigners not only in Bavaria, Baden, Württemberg, Saxony, Austria, but even in Hanover or Hesse.

NO NATIONAL FEELING FOR EAST PRUSSIA

No national feeling of patriotic emotion therefore exists in Germany with reference to East Prussia, such as exists in Poland towards Gdańsk, in France towards Alsace-Lorraine, in Denmark towards Slesvig. East Prussia is not, in Germany, the object of tender emotion, but it is rather an accursed land, from which came the mistaken leaders, who led Germany to shame and ruin. We need not fear a German crusade for the sake of East Prussia. Only a few Junkers in Mecklemburg or Pomerania will shed tears over the pretended isolation of East-Prussia, and they will have no wide influence in Germany, where Prussian Pan-Germanism is discredited for ever.

POLAND AND PRUSSIA

It was not a national aspiration of Germany which led to the partitions of Poland, to the annexation of West Prussia, and finally to the world-war, but only the ambition and greed of a single dynasty, shared by a narrow circle of soldiers and merchants. Germany's defeat in the great

war is the final refutation of that theory and practice which created the Prussian State at the expense of Poland. If East Prussia remains independent, the Junkers will very likely emigrate and the people, after a few generations, will ask for the union of East Prussia with Poland or Lithuania, as the West Prussian cities did in 1454, when they repudiated the German domination. The East Prussian sea shore needs political unity with the basin of the Niemen, just as West Prussia can live only in union with a State on the Vistula. The defeat of Germany, and the reconstitution of Poland, mean first of all the disintegration of Prussia. We cannot consider East Prussia as a national State, or part of a national State, as it has never been the home of a nation, but only the temporary home of a military organisation intended for conquest. Isolation would be a deserved and mild penalty for the offspring of such a race.

The number of Germans in West Prussia is greatly exaggerated by some partial writers and politicians. The whole population of this province being, according to Hübners Tabellen for 1918, only 1.703.474, there cannot be several million Germans in the territory claimed by Poland, as has been often said in the Press. In many districts there is still a Polish majority and when all German officials and all Germans dependent on the government are gone, this Polish majority in West Prussia will be considerably increased.

This report, written by W. Lutosławski, is a synthetic summary, made after careful indexing of the papers written for the Polish delegation by Fr. Bujak, A. Chołoniewski, R. Ingarden, J. Jabłoński, J. Kernbaum, St. Kętrzyński, Al. Kraushar, Łęgowski, Porębski, E. Romer, M. Rudnicki, Rummel, J. Rutkowski, W. Sobieski, A. Taraszkiewicz, Trąmpczyński, Wakar, Zwierkowski.

EAST PRUSSIA

See Conclusions p. 39-44

POLES IN EAST PRUSSIA

It is generally known that not the whole of East Prussia is German. The southern part, forming the new regency of Allenstein, created in 1904, and the district of Olecko, in the regency of Gumbinnen, is a compact Polish territory, containing about 400.000 Poles, mixed with only 150.000 Germans.

This Polish population is not wholly to be identified with the Polish Protestants, called Mazurs, for in the districts of Allenstein and Rößel there is a Catholic Polish population of about 70.000, to be distinguished from the Mazurs who surround it nearly on all sides. The name Mazur* is not limited to certain inhabitants of East Prussia, as it is simply the Polish name for the inhabitants of Masovia, the central Polish province, having for its chief town Warsaw, which has been for centuries and still remains the capital of Poland.

ORIGIN OF THE MAZURS

The Mazurs of East Prussia have been attracted into their present home from Masovia proper since the XIVth century by the Teutonic Order, in order to cultivate the soil of this devastated country after the almost total extermination of the original Prussians, who had dwelt there since prehistoric times. Since the beginning of this Polish colonisation the Mazurs came under the rule of German landlords, mostly military chiefs, who obtained large grants of land, and who supplied the Teutonic Order, and later the kingdom of Prussia, from generation to gener-

* *Mazur* is also the name of the Polish national dance, expressing in graceful movements the lively character of the Mazurs.

ation with soldiers. German immigration was invited on a large scale, and every free German, without regard to his ancestry*, could obtain a grant of land in East Prussia; such German families acquired in a few generations all the privileges of nobility and became a powerful instrument of germanisation.

LARGE ESTATES FORESTS AND PASTORS

This peculiarity of East Prussia, the possession of large properties by military families, has remained a standing feature of this province up to the present day. One fourth of the total area belongs to landlords owning over a hundred hectares. Only half of the total area is cultivated, because lakes, marshes and woods occupy large tracts of land; in particular the forests cover more than one fifth of the whole area, and the German administration of these forests helps the big landlords in the work of germanisation, as the peasants need timber and depend on the German officials for their fuel. No less than 12 % of the population are German officials of all kinds, who hold the agricultural class, forming 80 % of the population, in complete submission.

In the XVIth century, when the Teutonic Order was abolished and Prussia became a military State under the Hohenzollern dynasty, helped by the aggressive descendants of the Teutonic Knights, a new denationalising influence was introduced by the conversion of the Mazurs to Protestantism. When the Prussian government began to use the Church as an instrument of political influence, German pastors became agents of germanisation, and cultivated among the people hatred and suspicion of the Poles who were represented as papists and enemies of Protestantism.

RESISTANCE TO GERMANISATION

The Mazurs were entirely separated from Poland in 1660, by the treaty of Oliva, which recognized the

* See Gustave Aubin, *Zur Geschichte des gutsherrlich bäuerlichen Verhältnisses in Ost-Preussen*, Leipzig, 1911.

sovereignty of the Hohenzollerns in East Prussia, but they preserved in their simple agricultural life their purely Polish dialect with small alterations, also the Polish customs of marriage and the special customs referring to the harvest of grain and other products of the soil. Though they are Protestants, some of them go to Catholic churches on certain great feasts of the Virgin, and particularly in order to obtain the solemn blessing of herbs on Aug. 15th. These herbs, consecrated in churches by the Catholic priests, are considered by the Protestant Mazurs as very efficacious to ensure the thriving of their cattle. Belief in Prussian power, fear of punishment, the necessity of very hard work in order to draw their livelihood from a very poor soil, made of the Mazurs on the whole good subjects of the Prussian king, but strangely enough they did not give up their language; despite these powerful germanising influences, they use Polish prayer books and they read their Polish papers, published not in the Masurian dialect, but in literary Polish. Even the Prussian Government was obliged to publish in Polish the papers by means of which it endeavoured to turn the Mazurs away from Poland, when they began to show some signs of national awakening in the XIXth century. Despite the most shameless falsification of statistics, even such a partial investigator as Waldemar Mitscherlich* admits that in the very centre of germanisation, the city of Allenstein, the proportion of Poles increased by two and a half per cent between 1905 and 1910.

EMIGRATION OF THE MAZURS

The Mazurs leave the country in large numbers in search of higher wages than they can get in East Prussia. Between 1885 and 1900 no less than 133.000 Masurs emigrated and they were insufficiently replaced by 117.000 children born in the same time on the same area. There came also temporary immigrants from Poland, who had been forbidden since 1885 by the government to settle in the country. In 1900, in the district of Allenstein alone,

* W. Mitscherlich, *Die Ausbreitung der Polen in Preussen*, Leipzig, 1913.

1.606 men emigrated, and only 824 immigrated temporarily from Poland*. Those immigrants are obliged to leave in the winter, because if they settled, the whole of East Prussia would soon become Polish, but without them the big landlords of East Prussia could not gather their crops, nor secure their incomes. Prussian Masuria has only 41 inhabitants to 1 squ. km. It is the poorest country in Germany and has been devastated many times in history.

PERSECUTION OF POLES

The Poles have been limited since 1724 in their right to settle in Masuria, and after the wars of Napoleon, the larger Polish landlords were sold out, under the pretext that they had not paid the interests on their debts, so that the peasant has been left entirely helpless under the overwhelming pressure of germanisation, operating through the school, the church, and the bureaucracy.

And in spite of all this, he remains a foreign body in the Prussian State, and in order to defend that State against polonisation, in 1904 the regency of Allenstein was formed, which contains nearly all the Polish districts of East Prussia, brought under a special German administration. In 1912 the exceptional laws, made in order to hinder the acquisition of German property by Poles in Posnania and in West Prussia, were extended also to Masuria, to the whole regency of Allenstein, and to the districts of Olecko, Goldap, Angerburg, and Rastenburg. By this law the Prussian government has involuntarily defined the frontiers which a Polish State has the right to revindicate.

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE

The Polish State needs Masuria not only because it is a Polish country, but also because it is a territory of the greatest strategic importance, indispensable for the defence of the Polish capital against German aggression, as long as Germans rule in Königsberg and East Prussia. Warsaw is at a distance of only 100 km. from Masuria, and would be seriously threatened if the Masurian lakes

* F. Pohl, *Die Lohn und Wirthschaftsverhältnisse der Landarbeiter in Masuren*, Magdeburg, 1908.

were in German hands. Masuria with its ~~lakes, its hills,~~ its forests, and its marshes, is a splendid natural defensive ground for Poland, whilst for Germany it could only be a hiding place for preparing aggression. Germany has never suffered aggression from the Poles, whilst she has attacked the Poles for centuries. Two of the great battles of history were fought among the Masurian lakes. In 1410 the Teutonic Order was crushed between Grünwald and Tannenberg by the Polish king Jagiello, and in 1914 Hindenburg defeated the Russians not far from the same place. This shows the great strategical importance of that country.

MASURIAN CANAL

Masuria forms the last line of hills between Poland and the sea, the different heights reaching 111-309 metres above the sea level, and containing several small basins of streams flowing inward to the Masurian lakes without outlet to the sea. This region so isolated, is now crossed by the canal from the Vistula to the Pregel, which is of great importance for Polish trade, but of still greater importance for the Mazurs. To leave this canal partly under foreign rule would mean to deprive not only the Polish State, but also Masuria, of all the great advantages gained by such an increase of useful communications with the outside world, for a country which had been hitherto isolated by its natural conditions, as well as by the artificial influences of its political rulers.

Means of transport in Masuria are rendered exceptionally difficult by marshes and lakes, so that in certain cases, in order to reach a neighbouring place, a long journey must be made. For instance, between Miluki and Pasym, a road of 8 km. is needed to cover a distance of two and a half km., and Dąbrowa, at a distance from Sasek of only 3 km., must be reached over a long road of 14 km. It is easy to understand how important a long waterway may become in such a country, and how useless would be a canal belonging to different States. This canal, crossing a Polish country, must be in Polish hands,

in order to enable Masuria to communicate by a convenient waterway with the sea, and with the system of the Vistula. The poor soil of Masuria needs artificial fertilizers, manufactured in Polish Silesia, which will easily reach Masuria by water, if Masuria returns to Poland. On the other hand the forests of Masuria will furnish fuel and timber to Warsaw, and transport to the capital of Poland by water will be cheaper than to Königsberg by rail.

ADVANTAGES OF UNION WITH POLAND

Masuria, as a province of a German State, would always remain, as it has been under Prussian rule, a territory of very secondary importance, in economical and political dependence upon German centres. But Masuria with open roads to Masovia, close to the capital of Poland, would soon increase its scanty population, and its agricultural production, which cannot thrive without labour from Poland. The fact of this large immigration of agricultural workers from Poland proves better than anything else the close connexion of Masuria with Masovia. If these immigrants are allowed to settle, the marshes and large tracts of sand in Masuria will be easily brought under regular cultivation, which will keep the Mazurs at home and stop their emigration to Germany.

They go to Germany, because many of them do not know that they are Poles, and because they have not the facilities for improving their own land, being constantly suspected by their political rulers. Under a Polish government this long neglected country could manifest quite unexpected possibilities.

INTEREST OF POLISH PROTESTANTISM

There is also quite another aspect of the case, deserving our attention. The Mazurs are Polish Protestants, and Polish protestants in general need to be united under the Polish government, which has never used political pressure on religious preachers, whilst in Prussia, and especially in Masuria, pastors have

become instruments of political influence. There are in Masuria, besides the official Lutheran church, independent Baptists and other sectarians, and these, in their striving for religious emancipation from the State Church, are also manifesting their national aspirations towards a union with Poland. One of them, Labusz, a Polish candidate for the Reichstag, opposed the German candidate in one of the recent elections.

Earnest Christians, who are disgusted with the official religion, gather in private homes for prayer meetings, and are led in their devotions by laymen. They are called " gromadkarze ", or " members of groups ", and form as many small congregations as there are religious leaders. This shows that not only the Baptists, but even the Lutherans are anxious to escape from the official religious influence, which is at the same time a germanising influence.

THE MAZURS AND THE CONFERENCE OF PEACE

On the 21st of March 1919 the interallied Mission in Warsaw received a Masurian delegation, asking in the name of religious liberty for the reunion of their country with Poland.

That delegation proceeded to Paris, in order to put before President Wilson and the heads of the other allied governments, the claim of the Mazurs to belong to Poland. These delegates from Prussian Masuria declare that in January 1919 the German pastors and officials circulated declarations to be signed by the population. Such declarations specify that the undersigned wish to remain under Prussian rule and protest against having their country incorporated into Poland. The pastors and officials forced the people to sign the blanks. The Scheidemann socialist government gave instructions to the officials (Amtsvorsteher) to pay no attention to the will of the people, but, on the contrary, to force them to express their loyalty to the Prussian government. The signatures were forced out of the people in different ways. In some cases several printed forms were shown to the people, who often

were not able to read German, and did not know what they were signing.

In other cases, blank forms were submitted, signed by the mayor of the village, who, being always dependent on the government, signed what he was ordered to sign. The others, trusting in their mayor, simply signed the blanks after him. Those not willing to sign the declaration, which expressed their wish to remain under Prussian rule, were told that their church was in danger of being socialised, and were asked to sign a protest against the socialisation of the church; but in this way they were frequently deceived, signing in reality a declaration stating their wish to belong to Prussia. In many cases meetings were called at which the police appeared and forced the people to sign; in case of refusal they threatened them with the loss of their right to use the roads across the domains and State forests or to use the pastures. The police laws have been abused in every way.

These facts have been openly discussed in the local papers. In January arrests took place. Labusz, the leader of the Masurian popular party, disguised himself as a woman in order to escape, and died in consequence of exposure. His daughter escaped to Warsaw. The delegates to Paris were also obliged to leave their country secretly.

If the Mazurs were such sure friends of Prussia, as has often been affirmed by the Germans, such methods, which throw a light on the value of plebiscites among uneducated peasants, could not be used.

NECESSITIES OF POLISH NATIONAL LIFE

The sturdy independence of mind of these Polish Protestants, if they are given opportunities for higher education, may lead to their participation in Polish public life on a greater scale than has ever been possible up to the present time. Mazurs are a very peculiar kind of Poles, and all kinds of Poles are needed in the great revival of liberty, which must follow the reconstitution of the Polish Republic. The Mazurs from the North, as well as

the Tatra mountaineers from the South, will bring into Polish life something of their own, which ought not to be missed in this national life.

The Mazurs have an extraordinary fecundity, and 6-8 children are frequently found in a family. On the average there are 42-48 births to 1.000 inhabitants among the Mazurs, and only 25 among the Germans. Illegitimate births on the contrary are twice as frequent amongst the Germans as amongst the Poles, and this according to German sources*. The mortality is only 23-26 per thousand inhabitants, and the excess of births over deaths (17-22 per 1.000 inhabitants), is due chiefly to the great Mazurian fecundity. This fecundity of the Poles, everywhere greatly exceeding the German fecundity, will thoroughly change the proportion between Germans and Poles in East Prussia, as soon as some exceptional laws are abolished. These laws now keep the people in such an intolerable dependence on a foreign government, that great numbers of Mazurs emigrate, seeking elsewhere better conditions than they can find in their poor country.

The love of liberty, peculiar to the Poles, is not at all foreign to the Mazurs, despite their long submission to the Germans. Silesia was germanised several centuries before Masuria, and awoke to Polish national life in the XIXth century, electing Poles to the German parliament, to the greatest surprise and indignation of the Germans.

A similar awakening is announced by many signs in Masuria. Nothing can stop it, and the mere existence of a free Poland in the near neighbourhood of the Masurian lakes, would give an enormous impulse to this national awakening among the Mazurs, even if they remained Prussian subjects. But after so many centuries of obedience to a foreign government, they cannot be expected to express freely their deepest feelings. For them the Prussian king has been for such a long time the symbol of power, that they may not dare to suddenly renounce Prussian allegiance.

* *Curt Kob, West Masuren, Berlin 1908.*

PRUSSIA AND PLEBISCITES

In the XIXth century plebiscites were used only to confirm an existing state of things. Such was the plebiscite which established Napoleon III as Emperor of France; also the plebiscites in Nizza and Savoie in 1860, in the Ionian islands in 1865, in the isle of Saint-Barthélémy in 1877, as well as others, were voted after a decision taken on other grounds than the popular will. Bismarck promised in 1866 a plebiscite to Slesvig, but in 1878 he carried a law to avoid the fulfilment of this promise. The Prussians did not ask for a plebiscite after the partitions of Poland, nor after the conquest of Alsace-Lorraine, and there is no reason to enact a plebiscite in their favour in a province which they have illtreated for centuries without being able to germanise it. Such a proceeding is so much the less justifiable, as they did not keep their word in Slesvig, the only case in which they had themselves promised a plebiscite.

FAIR CONDITIONS

If however the Great Powers insist on a plebiscite in the regency of Allenstein and the district of Olecko, it must be preceded by the elimination of German officials, pastors and soldiers. The province must be occupied by allied troops for several years, with every opportunity for the free expression of public opinion for or against its reunion with Poland. Under such conditions the Poles would not fear the results of a plebiscite, although they look upon this proposal as unfair to them, and singularly favourable to the Prussian government. This government ought not to be rewarded for its persistence and its endeavours to germanise the Polish immigrants from Masovia. It would be very unfair to Poland to single out such a really Polish province as Masuria for a plebiscite, unless the Mazurs are completely emancipated from every German influence, and this can only be effected by their reunion with Poland.

POLES OF WARMJA

Besides the Mazurs there are also other Poles in East

Prussia, namely about 70.000 Roman Catholics in the districts of Allenstein and Røessel. These two Polish districts also belong to the new regency of Allenstein and they (as well as the Lutheran district of Osterode) were colonized by western Poles, who must be distinguished from the Masurs. These two districts never belonged to the Princes of Prussia, but were a part of the Polish province of Warmja (Ermeland), and as such formed an integral part of the Polish Republic. This historical fact explains why these two districts have a Catholic population and the national Polish consciousness to a very high degree. In this respect they are entirely similar to Posnania or West Prussia. There can therefore be not the slightest doubt as to their belonging nationally to Poland. Their inhabitants have mostly voted for Polish deputies, and it would be utterly unfair to exclude them from Poland, only on the ground that they are separated from the chief Polish territory by the Protestants of Osterode, who are also Poles, though not so much awakened to national life.

This would mean the sacrifice of a thoroughly and ardently Polish population of 70.000, in order to secure for Prussia a smaller number of Poles, who are not quite aware of their own nationality, though linguistically and ethnographically they belong to Poland. Such a sacrifice of Polish national feelings for the sake of an utterly illegitimate aggrandizement of Germany, can never be justified on any grounds, and least of all by a very unreliable plebiscite amongst people not used to a free expression of their feelings.

GERMAN EAST PRUSSIA

The Poles do not claim the German parts of East Prussia, the regencies of Königsberg and Gumbinnen, (with the exception of the Polish district of Olecko), though legally, if solemn political pacts were not scraps of paper for the Germans, East Prussia should belong to the Polish State. It was given in 1618 by the Polish king to the Hohenzollern dynasty, not to the German people, with the express reservation that this province would return to Poland, if the Hohenzollerns died out or

ceased to rule over it. After each change of reign in Prussia, the representatives of the population swore an "eventual" oath of allegiance to the Polish crown, which meant that the link was not entirely broken and that this country, unlawfully conquered by a greedy ruler, might still return to Poland.

But the Poles love freedom not only for themselves, and they do not want to hold the present German population of this province fully responsible for the sins of those who introduced German immigration amongst the old heathen Prussians, in order to exterminate them. However, these Germans could enjoy their liberty without any danger to Europe only if this real Prussia is totally separated from the artificial Prussia, built up between the Rhine and the Oder.

The East Prussian or simply the Prussian Republic with Königsberg as its capital, ought to be a really neutral country, as Belgium was before the war. Another such independent neutral German Republic is likely to be created on the Rhine. This Rhenan Republic and Prussia will be German States emancipated from pseudo-Prussian Germany and free to follow the ways of political liberty shown to them by their neighbours France and Poland.

DEPENDENT GERMANS

It is not an extravagant hope that these neutral States will find themselves in close relations with their more liberal neighbours. Prussia, or the Republic of Königsberg, will have most of its trade with Poland and the Poles must obtain full liberty of settling in this formerly Polish province. This right will be a sufficient safeguard against the renaissance of Prussian militarism. The only thing which the Poles claim in East Prussia, or in Prussia proper, is the right to remain there when invited to work for German landlords. And the big Prussian landlords, unless they wish to entirely lose their incomes, will be obliged in the future, as they have been in the past, to invite Polish workmen to help them.

When all the officials and soldiers sent to East Prussia by the central Prussian government of Berlin have gone,

the ethnographic character of the population will undergo a radical change. There are in Masuria and Warmia 60.000 so called dependent Germans, that means civil or military servants of the State, who do not really earn their living by any kind of productive work, but have as their task merely the artificial germanisation of the country.

A neutral small State cannot afford such a luxury. It must require productive work from its citizens and cannot feed parasites. When all these parasites have gone, and the Poles have full liberty to settle in Prussia, the mixed character of the population will be more accentuated, and East Prussia will cease to be a centre of artificial germanisation such as it has been for the last six centuries.

UNEXPECTED RESULTS OF A POLISH MISTAKE

There is no need to hasten that political development which is the only probable final atonement for that great fault of Conrad of Masovia, who, by inviting the Teutonic Order to Poland in 1228, involuntarily created the Prussian State. This was not an unmixed evil in the history of mankind, because it finally led to a decisive conflict between occidental civilisation and eastern despotism. This was necessary in order to firmly establish the principles of our western civilisation and to draw the United States of America into the struggle for European liberty.

THE LIMITATIONS OF SELF-DETERMINATION

The principle of national self-determination can have a legitimate application only to real nations, and not to every territory conquered anywhere by violence and treachery. The existence of germanized districts, in foreign countries, is best explained by the greedy character and the wandering propensities of that half nomadic race, which once extended its conquests over the whole of Western Europe, but which throughout history was unable to form one really national State such as are France, England, Italy or Poland, because the political life of the Germans has been for centuries entirely subordinated to the ambitions of their rulers and

to their expansion among non-German peoples (Drang nach Osten).

East Prussia, together with Brandenburg, were the homes of that singular undertaking, the Prussian State, which led to the world war. Königsberg was the first capital of the Prussian princes, and even in the XIXth century, after the battle of Iena, it was from this place that the movement, which overthrew Napoleon, started. General York concentrated his forces in East Prussia, the first Tugendbund was founded in Königsberg, and the Junkers of East Prussia have been throughout the war conspicuous by their hatred of England and their contempt for France.

JUSTICE FOR PRUSSIA

To increase East Prussia now at the expense of Poland, through fear of bringing a few Germans under Polish rule, or for the sake of the principle of self-determination, a principle born of Western Civilisation, applicable only to Western national States and constantly despised and violated by the German Prussians, would lead us to the repetition of the same tragic mistake, which the Poles committed in 1410 and 1466 and Napoleon in 1807, when successful wars were not carried to their natural conclusion. There are more important reasons now for a serious weakening of Prussia in the interest of European liberty and civilisation, than ever Cato had for his insistence on the destruction of Carthage. Cato understood the incompatibility of Rome and Carthage, and he succeeded in convincing his countrymen. Another Cato might be needed now to warn all responsible statesmen, that if Prussia remains strong on the Baltic, no lasting peace for Europe is to be expected.

NO DANGER OF PARTIALITY

If the Western nations leave to Prussia any really Polish district, they will increase the strength of their enemy and weaken the one reliable ally, who preserved Europe from oriental invasions during a thousand years, and has often kept in the East a part of Germany's military forces bent upon the conquest of the West. Partiality for

the Poles in the final settlement of the frontiers of Prussia, if anybody calls partiality the acceptance of perfectly legitimate Polish claims, would be nothing more than very belated justice to a victim of nameless wrongs.

This report was written by W. Lutosławski, as a synthetic summary of the papers, written for the Polish Commission of work preparatory to the Conference of Peace, by Prof. Konopczyński and Prof. Sobieski of the University of Cracow, Prof. Nitsch of the University of Lemberg, and Prof. Buzek of the University of Warsaw.

CONCLUSIONS

A) The harbour of Gdańsk (Dantzic) must belong to Poland for the following reasons :

I. The whole basin of the Vistula can only be fully utilised for the trade of the world if it **belongs to one State**. It has an area of 198510 sq. km., and more than 4120 km. of navigable waterways, all leading to a river of a length of 1125 km., the distance from source to mouth being only 530 km. There is no similar area so well irrigated in Western or Central Europe. It has been utterly neglected since the partition of this country between three States, and can flourish again only under a single government. If **several nations** inhabited this area, they would be led to form **one State**. But there are in the basin of the Vistula over 20 million autochthonous Poles, with a few hundred thousand Germanized Slavs, and very few real Germans, and it would not be fair to sacrifice a whole nation to the greed and ambition of a few foreign settlers.

II. Gdańsk is indispensable to Poland :

1) Because it is the **only important harbour** which

Poland can possess in order to secure free communication with her Western Allies.

2) If it belonged to the Germans, the whole of Poland would fall into **economical dependence** on Germany, and this would lead to **political dependence**.

3) If it were **neutral** or **international**, the Germans, as the most powerful nation interested in it, would soon dominate the whole trade of Poland.

4) The unanimity of **public opinion** in Poland as to the national need of Gdańsk is such, that **no lasting peace** would be **possible**, so long as Gdańsk remained in foreign hands.

III. Gdańsk needs union with Poland.

1) It has been twice **separated** from Poland by violence and **treachery**, in 1308 and in 1793. In neither case did the inhabitants voluntarily accept the foreign rule.

2) The **prosperity** of Gdańsk was lost under German rule. Under Polish rule it was **parallel** to the prosperity of **Poland**. Poland never used nor will use **violence** against the Germans in Gdańsk, while the Germans have always used violence against the Poles.

3) On many **solemn occasions** the inhabitants have manifested their wish for their union with Poland, and their fidelity to Poland : in 1397, in 1410, in 1454-1466, in 1626-29, in 1655-60, in 1734, in 1772, in 1793, and in 1813.

4) In Poland Gdańsk would become a **first rate port**, whilst in Germany it has always been subordinate to Hamburg and Bremen.

IV. The Germans do not need Gdańsk :

1) They have **other more important ports**.

2) They have **greatly neglected this Polish port**, to the advantage of their own ports.

3) The germanisation of Gdańsk is superficial, and as soon as the surrounding Polish population is allowed to settle in the city, Gdańsk **will become Polish**, as Cracov and other towns in Poland have become Polish, though they had once a predominant German population.

V. Without a Polish navy, and a Polish port on the Baltic, the **Baltic** will remain a **German sea**. No other State on the borders of the Baltic is strong enough to **resist Germany** without a free and powerful Poland. But if Poland obtains a real access to the sea, all the other Baltic States will naturally find in Poland a **counterpoise to Germany**.

VI. The territorial **isolation** of **East Prussia**, the home of Prussian militarism, is necessary for a **lasting peace**, and must inevitably lead to the progressive and voluntary **degermanisation** of that **strategically important territory**, whence the Prussian Dynasty set out for the conquest of the world. There is no such national feeling for East Prussia in Germany, as there is for Gdańsk in Poland.

VII. The **partitions of Poland** have been recognized by such English and American writers, as Lord Eversley and Mr. Howard Lord, as a **crime** without precedent in history. The **full restitution** of what the Germans have taken, including Gdańsk, will prevent similar crimes in the future, because it will become evident that they do not pay, and also because Poland as a great Power, will never allow any small nation to be wronged, even if such a wrong done to a neighbour did not seem to threaten her own security.

. **B. All the Polish districts of East Prussia**, namely

the whole regency of Allenstein, together with the district of Olecko, **MUST BELONG TO POLAND** for the following reasons :

1) The **Roman Catholic** population of the districts of Allenstein and Rössel is just as **consciously Polish** as that of Posnania and West Prussia.

2) The Protestant Mazurs **speak Polish**, read Polish prayer books and papers, and keep up Polish **traditions and customs**; during five centuries they have resisted germanisation, though they are less aware of their national identity with the Poles, than are the Catholic Poles of Warmja.

3) The **national awakening** of the Mazurs, however delayed by the germanising influences of the large estates, state-forests, German preachers, schoolmasters, numerous officials and exceptional laws, **has already begun**, as is testified by the Mazur delegation to the Conference of Peace at Paris, and will progress rapidly when the Poles obtain the right of settlement in Masuria, and when the Mazurs are no longer hampered in their intercourse with the capital of Masovia and of Poland, which is only 100 km. distant from the Masurian lakes.

4) Masuria is indispensable for the **strategic defence** of Poland. Its lakes, marshes, hills and forests form a first rate **defensive bulwark** for the Poles; these could be for the Germans only a **hiding place**, whence they would threaten the capital of Poland.

5) Poland has defended **European liberty** for centuries, while Prussia has always **threatened** it. It is unfair to sacrifice the national aspirations of Poland to a misinterpretation of that principle of self-determination, which has always been **trampled upon by Prussia**.

6) East Prussia has always been the home of **Prussian militarism**, and if it is left independent, it must be **weakened by the restitution to Poland**, not only of all Polish districts, but also of such small german-

ized districts as are necessary in order to give the Poles a safe frontier.

7) The **Masurian canal** between the Vistula and the Pregel can be fully utilized only if the whole of it belongs to one State. This canal is very important for the economic development of the Mazurs, and will act as a link with Poland.

8) The higher interests of **Polish Protestantism**, which differs very much from Prussian Protestantism, require the union of all Polish protestants within one national State, where they would not be threatened by persecution, as are the Polish sectarians now in East Prussia. Polish Nonconformists may find in Polish political life as prominent a place as the English Nonconformists have taken in English public life.

9) In a German State, Masuria and Southern Warmja would always remain **subordinated to distant German centres**, while in Poland, their proximity to Warsaw would greatly increase their material prosperity and quicken their intellectual life.

C. A plebiscite among the Mazurs is NOT DESIRABLE, nor can it be considered fair by the Poles, for the following reasons :

1) There is **no possibility of a sincere and genuine expression** of public opinion in a province which has been artificially germanised with the utmost efforts for so many centuries.

2) Plebiscites have **usually been carried out after a political change**, not as a test preliminary to a political change.

3) Prussia **promised a plebiscite for Slesvig in 1866, but did not keep that promise**. Therefore the Prussians do not deserve the benefit of a plebiscite in their favour, which might not correspond to the deeper feelings of the population.

4) A plebiscite in Masuria puts Germans and Poles on **equal terms**, and this is highly **unfair to the**

Poles, who are Allies, while the Germans have not ceased to be enemies of mankind.

5) A plebiscite would require the **military occupation** by the Allies of the disputed territory for a long period of time, and the Allied forces will have, for years to come, more important tasks in Germany and Russia.

D. If the great Powers insist on a plebiscite among the Mazurs, in the regency of Allenstein and the district of Olecko, the Poles would claim the **FOLLOWING CONDITIONS FOR A FAIR DECISION :**

1) All the German officials, pastors and soldiers, and especially the whole German administration of forests, should leave the disputed territory, and their tasks should be entrusted to individuals selected from among the Allies, or the local population.

2) The whole administration of the disputed territory should to be entrusted to a **commission appointed by the peace conference**, for a term of at least **fifteen years**, to the total exclusion of all German interference.

3) Perfect freedom of **speech, of association, and of the press** should be given to the Poles.

4) The Poles should have the right to **buy land, build houses and settle** in the disputed territory.

5) There ought to be **no economic frontier** of any kind between Masuria and Masovia, and perfect freedom of transit, without passports or customs, between Warsaw, Gdańsk, Posen, and every part of Masuria, should be guaranteed.

E. A plebiscite carried out after fifteen years of such allied administration might be considered as a fair indication of the **real feelings of the population at that time**. It would prove however much more, if it were favourable to Poland, than if it were favourable to

Prussia. If, as is highly probable, fifteen years of impartial administration could destroy the effect of an intense germanisation continued for six centuries, the really Polish character of the population would become evident.

F. The German part of East Prussia must **NOT BE ALLOWED AGAIN TO FORM ONE STATE WITH BRANDENBURG AS IN 1618.** This led to the worst consequences. East Prussia, as a German Republic of Königsberg, can only be a perfectly neutral State, under the protection and close control of the League of Nations, or of a mandatory. **This mandatory ought to be the Polish Republic,** which has a historical right to East Prussia, and has never done any wrong to its inhabitants.

G. There is **NOT THE SLIGHTEST REASON** to **ADD ELBING TO EAST PRUSSIA,** and this arbitrary decision would inflict a great wrong on Poland, without conferring any corresponding advantage on the Germans of East Prussia :

1) Elbing being situated on the most Eastern mouth of the Vistula, belongs to the **basin of that river,** and the Polish nation has a right to claim the basin of its national river as one indivisible whole.

2) Elbing has **never belonged** to East Prussia. In 1454 the city asked for its annexation to Poland and remained Polish until 1772. Whenever it belonged to another State than Dantzic, as from 1236 to 1308, or from 1772 to 1793, the competition between the two ports was the cause of great prejudice to both.

3) The canal between **Elbing and Dantzic** (Weichselhaff-canal) can only be fully utilized if both ports are in the same hands. This canal makes it possible to avoid circumnavigation over Pilau, and Elbing, deprived of the canal, would be brought at all events into close dependence on Poland, without enjoying the full advantages it has always enjoyed when belonging to Poland.

4) The canal between Elbing and the Vistula at Thorn (Elbing oberländischer Canal) crosses Polish territory on nearly its whole length. It would lose a great deal of its importance; if a part of it were torn away from Poland.

5) The German character of Elbing is due to the exceptional laws which forbid Polish immigration, and keep at the expense of the German State an enormous number of dependent Germans, who produce nothing and devote their lives only to the purposes of germanisation. As soon as the dependent Germans have gone, the exceptional laws are abolished, and the Poles allowed to settle in historically Polish territory, Elbing will cease to be a German city, just as Cracow, which was once a German city, has now become thoroughly Polish.

6) Elbing has large docks for the construction of ships, which are indispensable to the commerce of Poland, as nowhere else such docks can be improvised. These docks (Schichau-Werfte) belong to a company which also owns wharves in Dantzig.

7) The Germans of East Prussia do not need Elbing, because for all their commercial needs the port of Königsberg is quite sufficient. To give two large ports to such a small neutral country, while leaving only the port of Dantzig to a large State like Poland, would be a great injustice.

8) Elbing and Königsberg being in German hands, the possession of Dantzig by Poland would become very uncertain, while if Elbing and Dantzig are in Polish hands, no danger threatens Königsberg. The alternative is : — either to restore to Poland two cities, which voluntarily joined the Polish Republic in 1454, and remained Polish until they were torn away from Poland under protest by the crime of the partitions — or to reward the Prussians for their treachery and violence, by giving them a Polish port, useless to them, but indispensable to Poland.

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