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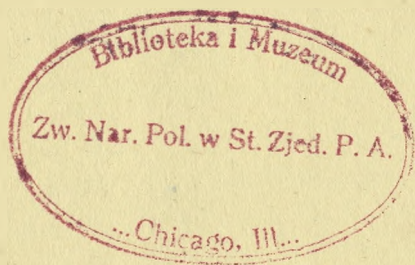
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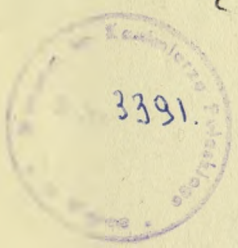


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# OUTLINE OF POLISH HISTORY PAST AND PRESENT

BY  
OLGIERD GÓRKA

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## FOREWORD

HARDLY another European nation can boast of such a dramatic history as can the Poles. Polish history is filled with magnificent achievements, with climbs to the height of State power, to be followed immediately by the sombre shadows of disaster and State decline. In the tenth century the Poles built up a strong State in Eastern Europe, and that State withstood the entire pressure of German imperialism. Thenceforth, whenever the Germans were possessed by the urge to conquer the world they always came up against the resolute resistance of the Poles, who were their most dangerous opponent in that part of Europe. For long ages the strong and powerful Polish State not only held its ground against the German hordes, but again and again forced them to submit to its authority. Yet Poland fell suddenly at the end of the eighteenth century, when forces on her East and her West were allied against her, and her disappearance as a State was followed by the gloomy period of Polish enslavement which lasted throughout the nineteenth century. That was the most mournful and yet the most heroic period in all Polish history, yet the Poles finally emerged victorious, only again to succumb temporarily to an alliance of imperialisms in 1939.

The historical sketch by Professor Olgierd Górka, of Lwow University, which we now present to British readers, deals with all the most important events in Polish history. But besides the indispensable historical material on Poland the reader will also find in this book a survey of all the great historical processes which have occurred in Europe during the past 1000 or more years, in so far as they concerned Poland. The author has dealt with these processes objectively, scientifically, without cumbering his work with the heavy ballast of dates and argumentation. He has provided a handbook which will be invaluable to all who wish to understand the Polish viewpoint on European affairs, and it will be

found indispensable not only to politicians, and to historians, but also to Poland's innumerable British friends. It makes no claim to deal with its subject exhaustively, but it seeks to inform the reader on Polish history, and on Poland's political importance in Europe as a necessary factor for equilibrium and peace in her part of the Continent. It follows logically from Professor Górk'a's argument that whenever Poland has been strong in the past, there has been no room for any predatory and dangerous imperialism in Central-Eastern Europe; and that, when the Polish State ceased to exist, her disappearance connoted the decline and enslavement not only of Poland, but also of her Baltic and southern neighbours.

History is only the foundation. So the author has complemented his "sketch of the Polish Past" with the main facts concerning Poland's present, in regard to economics, organization, education and the army, basing his material on the most recent statistical data. Finally, a short section on Poles in emigration completes the picture he has presented of the Polish nation.

The author of this book is among those historians who endeavour to draw the utmost practical benefit from history. Far from idealising Polish history and social phenomena in Polish national life, before the war he published a number of works which aroused considerable controversy, for he raised highly topical and fundamental problems, such as Poland's relations with her neighbours, the causes of the Partitions of Poland in the eighteenth century, the development of Ukrainian nationalism, and the influence of Polish historical literature on Polish thought. Professor Górk'a always advanced his theses boldly, unequivocally, and frankly, even when they were unpopular. Hence, although again and again there were many in Poland who did not agree with his views, he always had the respect of his opponents, and in the years preceding the war he had won a place among leading Polish historians. And for these reasons there is none more qualified than he to write this short sketch of Polish history.

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## OUTLINE OF POLISH HISTORY

### I. *The Piast Period*

THE first definite historical references to the lands which have been inhabited since immemorial times by the Polish nation were made relatively late, although it is known that Slav tribes lived there since the beginning of the Christian era. Such clearly Slavonic, or Polish, names as Wisła, Vistula, or Kalisz occur in the second-century writings of Pliny and Ptolemy, but it is not until the sixth century that definite historical records stating that those lands were inhabited by Slavs are to be found.

The region of eastern, or rather central, Europe traversed by the rivers Elbe, Oder, Vistula, Dniestr and Dnieper was inhabited by peoples who called themselves Slowianie (Slavs), from the word "Slowo," meaning "word"—that is, articulate men. They called the Germanic tribes, whose language they could not understand, Niemcy—that is, mute men.

The country of the western Slavs, especially the lands of the Oder, the Warta, and the Vistula, was by no means wild forest. On the contrary, cultivated fields appeared there at a very early date, and the very name of the great tribe of Polans, derived from the word "pole"—field—indicated the presence of agriculture on a large scale. It was this tribe which became the nucleus of the Polish nation. Recent archæological research, notably the finds of Biskupin near Poznan, has proved beyond doubt that the country was inhabited by a Slavonic agricultural population. They possessed a high level of culture several centuries before the actual emergence of the historical Polish state. The invading Germanic tribes passed through that part of Europe during the period of migrations, but the established agricultural Slav population never left its ancient strongholds and fertile fields.

The Slavs in general and the Poles in particular were not noted for their peaceful character. Byzantine chroniclers describe them as brave and fierce warriors. They seemed however to lack any tendency to form large states, except where a dynasty overruled the particularism of the princes. For instance, the house of Piast, ruling the tribe of Polans on the River Warta, achieved the unity of several other closely allied tribes who used practically the same language. These were the Pomeranians, the Masovians, the Kuiavians, the Slezians, and the Vislans, who formed the nucleus of the Polish nation. A number of old legends seem to show that the region of Gniezno and Poznan was the true birthplace of the new nation, while there was another crystallising centre in Cracow. Before the Piasts, the Polans were ruled by the house of Popiel, and it is probable that the first Piast succeeded to the throne from the office of chamberlain to his Popiel predecessor, just as the Carolingians supplanted the Merovingians.

The first dated historical record concerning Poland mentions the attack of the Germans launched from Margrave Gero's lands against the lands of Mieszko I, in A.D. 963. Contemporary Arabian sources report that Mieszko's country was "the largest Slav state of the time." It extended not only over all the lands of the above-mentioned tribes, but also over most of the province which was to be known in later times as Galicia, *i.e.* south-eastern Poland, with Przemyśl, which Mieszko I temporarily lost in 981 to the Ruthenian prince, Vladimir of Kiev.

Mieszko, anxious to deprive the Germans of the excuse of fighting for Christianity, one which they used in their raids against the Slavs, accepted (966) with his subjects the Christian faith, through the intermediary of his Czech wife, Princess Dobrawa of the house of Przemyśl. The Poles, like the Czechs and certain other Slavs, accepted the Roman Catholic rite, while Ruthenia and most of the Balkan Slavs embraced the Greek rite and became members of the schismatic church. Thus a certain religious division was effected in the tenth

century between different sections of the race. This division, carrying with it a differentiation of culture, alphabet, and customs, was one of the most important historical facts which shaped the life of eastern Europe.

Mieszko I quickly formed his state, repulsed the attacks of the neighbouring Germans, and was a gifted ruler, but he recognised the suzerainty of the German emperors over some of his provinces.

His son Boleslaw Chrobry (the Brave), known as the Great, A.D. 992–1025, was a monarch of genius, who established Poland as the strongest Power in central and eastern Europe. In A.D. 1000, Boleslaw entertained in his capital of Gniezno the Emperor Otto III, who came to Poland to pay homage to the martyr saint Adalbert, murdered while he was converting Prussia and Pomerania. On the occasion of his visit Poland received an autonomous ecclesiastical hierarchy, with the archbishopric of Gniezno. Later, Boleslaw broke off relations with Germany and fought a sixteen-years war against the Emperor Henry II. In the course of this war the Polish armies advanced as far as Bavaria. The frontiers of Poland, including Slovakia, reached the Danube in the south, the rivers Elster and Elbe (where now stand Leipzig and Dresden) in the west, and the Baltic in the north. Pomerania, with the diocese of Kolberg—Polish, Kolobrzeg—was a part of Poland since its very inception. Boleslaw achieved considerable success in his war against Henry II, and in 1003 he even for a short time seized Bohemia and Prague. Then he conquered the Grand Duchy of Ruthenia and entered Kiev in 1018, reclaiming the lands lost by his father in 981. Polish influence made itself felt even beyond these widespread frontiers. A daughter of Mieszko I became the wife of Sven, King of Denmark, and the mother of Canute, King of Denmark and of England. Boleslaw was crowned in A.D. 1024 as the first King of Poland, thus confirming the position which he had won for himself in successful wars.

The free population of his kingdom was composed not only of courtiers and knights, but also of yeomen and small gentry

(władyk). The peasants, burdened with taxes, took part in the fighting, especially during invasions. The fortified castles were the centres of resistance, and the population took shelter behind their walls when the enemy drew near. The prince, or king, was the owner of all uninhabited land, and an absolute ruler. From the days of Mieszko I he had his own permanent army, known as "drużyna," and garrisoned in the castles throughout the land. The army of Boleslaw was a well-organised fighting force, capable of dealing successfully with the power of the German Empire.

Soon after the death of Boleslaw Chrobry the Polish kingdom—under the rule of his son King Mieszko II—suffered a series of reverses, due to German attacks and intrigues, as well as a simultaneous Ruthenian offensive. There was even a temporary pagan reaction, and the Czechs ravaged Gniezno. This setback was, however, shortlived, for the grandson of Boleslaw, Casimir I, The Restorer, built up the Polish state again (1038), and his successor, Boleslaw II, The Bold, brought it back to the rank of a first-rate Power. Boleslaw became the principal champion in the East of the Pope, Gregory VII, in his struggle against the Emperor Henry IV, and he was crowned in 1076, when the Emperor suffered the humiliation of Canossa. Boleslaw fought victorious wars against Ruthenia, and recovered the eastern provinces, but he had a conflict with the Bishop of Cracow, Stanislaw. The bishop perished, and the Germans seized the opportunity to instigate revolt against the king. Boleslaw had to leave Poland in 1079, and was succeeded by his brother, Wladyslaw Herman, a weaker personality, susceptible to German influence.

But the next monarch of the house of Piast, Boleslaw III, "Wrymouth," proved to be a capable leader. He devoted his energy to extending Polish possessions on the Baltic coast. In 1121 the coastline under the Crown of Poland reached as far as the present Mecklenburg, including the island of Rugen. Boleslaw fought a successful war against the Emperor Henry V in 1109, inflicting considerable losses in Silesia on the Germans, for the River Oder was the main line of defence of the Piast



kings. Realising the dangers which might be brought about by the Piast rule of succession, according to which every member of the Piast dynasty was given one province, Boleslaw III established in his testament in 1138 the rule of seniority. The eldest member of the dynasty was to receive the province of Cracow and several of the principal towns and castles, together with the right of precedence over all other Piasts. Apart from this principle all of his sons, including the eldest, received a hereditary province. This wise provision was not given effect owing to a revolt of the junior princes, who refused to recognise the authority of their brother. Eventually the country was broken up into several practically independent principalities, all ruled by members of the house of Piast, all belonging to the same ecclesiastical organisation and speaking the same language, but unable to play the part of a Power such as the Poland of Chrobry. In 1157, the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa profited from this dispersal in order to impose on the suzerainty of the Empire. This was in effect theoretical, especially when the Empire itself began to decline.

A much more dangerous development was the ruthless destruction by the Germans of the nearest western neighbours of Poland—the Slavs of the region of Elbe—which took place in the twelfth century. Henry, Lion of Saxony, seized the Lower Elbe, and the Margrave of Brandenburg, Albrecht the Bear, in 1150 established himself in the Slav province of Branibor, the name of which was later turned to Brandenburg. Poland lost western Pomerania beyond the River Oder, and the German frontier, which was originally the River Elbe, in the present region between Berlin and Leipzig, came nearer to the Oder and to the heart of Poland.

There were many endeavours to form a larger unity of Polish principalities in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Most of these were made by the Piast princes of Silesia—Henry the Bearded and his son, Henry the Pious—in spite of the fact that their province was the object of considerable German pressure. But a new menace had in the meantime appeared on the eastern European horizon—the Tartars.

Poland had to withstand their assaults, following the overpowering of the Ruthenian princes in 1224. The armies of Temudjin, from the empire of Djinghiz Khan, which stretched as far as China in the east, attacked Poland. Henry the Pious opposed them in 1241 at Lignica, and fell in battle, together with many Polish knights, but their resistance diverted the Tartars southwards. Ruthenia was conquered by the Tartars, and Poland was then placed in the position of Christendom's first Eastern line of defence.

About this time an apparently trivial incident, which was destined to have far-reaching consequences, took place near the Baltic coast. East of the Polish Pomeranians, between the lower courses of the rivers Vistula and Niemen, there lived the heathen tribe of the Prussians, which frequently organised raids on Polish territory. The Polish prince of Masovia, Conrad II, gave in 1226 a charter to the German order of the Knights of the Cross, whom he encouraged to assist in the defence of his lands against the heathen tribe. In the course of time, the Knights of the Cross tampered with the charter, extending their possessions beyond the original concession and forming a small duchy of their own. They attacked the Prussians with extreme cruelty, hardly making any attempt to convert them to Christianity by peaceful methods. East of the Vistula they now formed the new province of East Prussia. Thus they began building a barrier between Poland and the Baltic Sea.

The attempts of the princes to achieve once again unity among the Polish states were continued, and in 1295 Przemyslaw II, Prince of Wielkopolska, Gt. Poland (that is, the province of Poznan, Gniezno and Kruszwica), was crowned King of Poland. But the Czech monarchs of the house of Przemyśl had their own designs on Poland, and Venceslas II, who married Przemyslaw's daughter, was also crowned King of Poland in 1300. The Piast pretenders resented this intrusion, and when in 1306, after the death of Waclaw III, the Przemyśl dynasty became extinct, Wladyslaw Lokietek (1306-1333) started an active struggle

for the unity of the country under his rule. He was opposed both by the new King of Bohemia, John of Luxemburg, and by the Knights of the Cross. The order, summoned to help against the Margrave of Brandenburg, treacherously seized Danzig, in 1308, and killed a part of the Polish garrison, as well as many innocent inhabitants.

The order ruthlessly extended its domination on the Lower Vistula, acting in complete disrespect of the charter by which it was first admitted into the country. The headquarters of the order were established in Malborg, and Poland was thus temporarily cut off from the sea by her rebellious vassal.

In spite of such serious obstacles, Wladyslaw Lokietek achieved the internal consolidation of the country and in 1320 was crowned King of all Poland. The whole reign of Lokietek was full of wars against the Luxemburgs and the Knights of the Cross, who suffered their first defeat in 1331. Lokietek was assisted by the Anjou dynasty of Hungary.

The country, however, was exhausted by this succession of wars, and Lokietek's son, Casimir the Great (1333-1370), thought it prudent to adopt a peaceful policy. Casimir, a wise and able monarch, established a close contact with the Anjou dynasty, and designated Louis of Anjou as his successor, for he had himself no issue. Before that he had concluded in 1335 an agreement with John, King of Bohemia, who relinquished all claims to Poland, in exchange for suzerainty over Silesia. After long negotiations a peace was also concluded with the Knights of the Cross, who kept Pomerania conditionally, but surrendered other lands.

Those losses were compensated for by Casimir when he advanced eastwards, and after a series of wars against Lithuania and the Tartars (1340-1366) he established the rule of Poland over the provinces of Przemyśl, Halicz, Lwów, Kolomyja, and others, which remained Polish ever afterwards. Thus Poland had a common frontier with Rumania—that is, with the then recently formed (1359) duchy of Moldavia.

The greatness of Casimir was, however, apparent mainly in the way in which he consolidated the prosperity of the country,

even though it lost for a time Pomerania and Silesia, while Masovia was still ruled by its own Piast princes, vassals of the king. Poland was a hereditary monarchy, and the king wielded absolute power, although the nobility had considerable influence on the government of the country. The royal lieutenants, *starosta*, carried out administrative functions, while there was also a form of local government. The Statutes of Wislicz of 1347 enacted the law of the country. The peasants, who formed the majority of the population, were the object of Casimir's special care, and he was known as "The Peasants' King." Nevertheless, the nobility retained its dominating position, although Poland was not a feudal country in the strict medieval sense of the word. Casimir devoted great care to the development of towns, and he greatly assisted building activity. Many cities received charters which permitted them to use German law—known as the Magdeburg law—but the German settlers never exerted any political influence. Later, the German burghers, who enjoyed complete freedom of self-government and language, became gradually polonised through intermarriage with the Polish population. Many rural boroughs were also placed under the so-called Magdeburg law in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, but it did not denote progress in German penetration.

The Jews, persecuted in other countries, found an asylum in Poland, where they came in large numbers, mainly from Germany. They were granted privileges as early as in 1254, receiving the right to the jurisdiction and protection of the Prince himself. Casimir the Great, traditionally considered their protector, extended this privilege in 1334 to all the lands of the Polish Crown. The Jews were engaged mainly in money transactions, for the trade in commodities was in principle reserved for Christian merchants, though there were various exceptions to this rule.

Poland now became a well-organised and prosperous country with a high civilisation, which was reflected, for instance, in the founding of the Cracow university in 1364.

In 1365 a Supreme Court of Appeal was established in Cracow. One of the outward manifestations of the power of Poland was the royal reception in Cracow in 1362, when Casimir entertained as guests the Emperor Charles IV and five kings.

Towards the end of his life, Casimir adopted the Pomeranian prince of Szczecin (Stettin), Casimir, in the hope of securing the future access of Poland to the Baltic. At his death, however, the throne passed, in accordance with dynastic agreements, to Louis I—Anjou, King of Hungary.

The short reign of Louis I (1370-1382) was not particularly favourable for the country, but in 1374 the Polish nobility obtained wide privileges, exemption from taxation and other legislation. The succession through female issue was also established for the first time. It meant that the throne was to become practically elective, though still only within the ruling dynasty.

## II. *The Great Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth*

After Casimir's death, Jadwiga, the daughter of Louis, succeeded to the throne, and was duly crowned queen in 1384 in Cracow. The problem of the day was the choice of a husband for the young queen. The Polish magnates selected the great duke of Lithuania, Jagiello, although Jadwiga had been betrothed to a Habsburg prince.

The Lithuanians, a nation of Baltic origin, had formed by conquest a large country situated north-east of Poland, and in 1253 made it a kingdom. But as the Lithuanians refused to accept Christianity their kingdom soon collapsed, and the new duke, Gedymin, began to extend his rule in Ruthenia—then divided into many small principalities. During the joint rule of the brothers Olgierd and Kiejstut (1345-1377), Lithuania attained considerable importance. Kiejstut fought the Knights of the Cross, who wanted to destroy Lithuania, after having disposed of Prussia, while Olgierd took care of the east and conquered Ukraine, taking also Smolensk, Twer, and the region of Moscow. In the south he nearly reached the Black

Sea. Jagiello, son of Olgierd, who quarrelled with his uncle, Kiejstut, sought the assistance of Poland against the Knights of the Cross. Although the area of Lithuania was larger than that of Poland, thanks to the conquest of Ruthenia, it was a country with a population, a treasury, and an army which were probably less than half that of Poland—a Christian kingdom and a Power of considerable importance.

Finally an act of union was concluded in 1385 in Krewo. Jagiello married Jadwiga, accepted Christianity, together with all his subjects, and Poland became united with Lithuania. The royal wedding was celebrated in 1386, and in the same year Jagiello was crowned King of Poland, under the name of Wladyslaw III, which he had received at baptism. He thus founded the Jagiellonian dynasty, and through the Polish-Lithuanian union the greatest Power in Eastern Europe.

One of the foremost aims of the union was common defence against the Knights of the Cross, and German pressure in general. It is notable that the Lithuanians, accepting Christianity through the intermediary of Poland, became members of the Church of Rome, unlike many of their Ruthenian subjects who belonged to the Orthodox Eastern Church. Poland recovered not only Red Ruthenia, which had been temporarily in Hungarian hands, but also the duchy of Moldavia, which recognised the suzerainty of the Polish Crown. Thus vast provinces of eastern Europe, from the Baltic to the Black Sea and the mouth of the Danube, from Silesia to the environs of Moscow, were united within the Polish Commonwealth. Poland became the political and cultural centre of a large section of the Continent, while Cracow university, endowed by Jagiello in 1400, achieved international fame.

After some dispute, Jagiello appointed Witold, a son of Kiejstut, the great duke of Lithuania, as his lieutenant and substitute in that country. Witold became involved in a war with the Tartars of Tamerlan, who even defeated him in 1399; but this reverse was without serious consequences, and Lithuania remained intact, while the bonds between the two

countries grew closer as a result of numerous agreements. The time of the great reckoning with the Germans, postponed by various smaller wars, was approaching. On 15th July 1410 one of the greatest battles of the Middle Ages was fought at Grunwald, between about 60,000 Poles and Lithuanians and approximately the same number of Germans, collected by the Knights of the Cross from the whole Empire. Jagiello himself commanded and he secured a complete victory. Of the 700 fully fledged Knights of the Cross only 15 survived the battle, and the Grand Master himself was killed. All the German flags and standards fell into the hands of the Poles and Lithuanians, while the German army was annihilated. The power of the order was broken for ever, and German pressure towards the east was stopped for several centuries. It is true that the ineffective siege of Malborg robbed Poland of the immediate fruits of victory, and Lithuania recovered only Samogitia—that is, what is known to-day as Lithuania proper. The order continued to exist in what territory it still controlled, but it never again became a serious menace. In the meantime, the fusion between Poland and Lithuania was cementing. What was at first a personal union became practically a merging of two nations, for the Polish nobility in 1413 admitted the Lithuanian nobles to all its privileges, and shared with them the old Polish coats of arms. The Polish-Lithuanian union was not achieved by conquest, but by a gradual and slow process of mutual penetration.

A great opportunity was wasted when the kingdom of Bohemia, ruled by the Hussites, disciples of Wyclif and Huss, wished to join the Polish Commonwealth. This was never effected, owing to religious differences, which were also responsible for some friction in Lithuania, when after the death of Grand Duke Witold, in 1430, the duchy fell to Swidrygiello, who plotted with Orthodox princes against Poland.

When Jagiello died, in 1434, the country was governed for some time by a regency council under Bishop Olesnicki, since

Jagiello's son, Wladyslaw (1434-1444), was not yet of age. The union with Lithuania was maintained, and the rebel Swidrygiello, who summoned the help of the Knights of the Sword, a German military order similar to that of the Knights of the Cross, which was established in present-day Latvia, was defeated in 1435. The new Grand Duke, Zygmunt, favoured close collaboration with Poland. Later on Jagiello's younger son, Casimir, became Grand Duke of Lithuania and substitute.

Chancellor Olesnicki devised a plan for a joint Polish-Hungarian attack against the Turks in defence of Christendom. In 1340 Wladyslaw was crowned King of Hungary, but quarrels with the widow of his predecessor—Elisabeth Habsburg—postponed his entry into the country. Eventually an agreement was reached, and Wladyslaw led a Polish-Hungarian expedition against the Turks. He was assisted by the famous commander Hunyady and won numerous victories. An armistice was concluded on terms favourable to Hungary, but it was broken off, and in 1444 Wladyslaw suffered defeat at Varna. The kings of the house of Jagiello were the only ones to dare to attack the whole Turkish army of those days, with the sultan at its head. Wladyslaw fell in the battle of Varna, and he is known to history as Wladyslaw of Varna.

In view of certain rumours about the alleged survival of Wladyslaw, who was believed to be in the hands of the Turks, Casimir Jagiellon, hitherto Grand Duke of Lithuania, acceded to the throne in 1447. He ruled Poland until 1492, and was the most powerful monarch of eastern Europe. His countries were prosperous and law-abiding, while the freedom and numerous charters granted to towns and nobles of the Polish Commonwealth provided a striking contrast with the cruel absolutism of Moscow and Turkey. Casimir Jagiellon endeavoured to limit the influence of the magnates, and extended the rights of the small and middle gentry, thus paving the way for the future parliamentary system. Unfortunately the Polish nobility underrated the importance of trade and industry. In 1454 delegates of East Prussia paid voluntary



homage to Casimir, for their country was suffering a severe oppression under the Knights of the Cross. A new war between Poland and the order broke out in 1454 and lasted until 1466. At first the Knights, who were receiving financial and military assistance from Germany, scored some successes, but the Polish armies advanced steadily and in 1457 took the capital of the order, Malborg. Poland was helped in that war by the wealthy merchants of Danzig, who remained loyal to the Polish Crown throughout the conflict. In 1466 a peace treaty was concluded in Torun. The order returned Pomorze to Poland—that is, the lands west of the Vistula, and a part of Prussia including Malborg and Warmia, which was known afterwards as Royal Prussia. It retained only a part of the present East Prussia, but under the suzerainty of the Polish Crown. Thus Poland recovered her access to the sea, the mouth of the Vistula, and Danzig. This Polish-German frontier was one of the most permanent in the world, for it remained practically unaltered for 306 years. The experience of history proves that only frontiers providing Poland with an access to the sea have been permanent. All other arrangements resulted invariably in war, and there never was a “Danzig corridor,” either in the past or in the twentieth century, which could satisfy Poland’s need for a secure access to the sea.

Casimir decided to secure for his sons the thrones of Bohemia and Hungary, to which he claimed the right of succession, as his wife was a Habsburg. In the meantime both those countries had national elective kings—George of Podiebrad in Bohemia and Matthew Corvin, son of Hunyady, in Hungary. But in 1471 the Czechs called to the throne, with the consent of Podiebrady, Casimir’s eldest son, Wladyslaw. Later, after the death of Matthew, the same Wladyslaw Jagiellon became in 1490 King of Hungary. Thus the house of Jagiello ruled lands stretching from the northern Baltic as far as Austria, the Adriatic, and the Black Sea. A new menace, however, was appearing in the north-east, where after centuries of Tartar rule a large duchy of Moscow was gradually emerging.

The Ruthenian republics of Pskov and Nowogrod passed from Lithuanian to Muscovite domination, and Moscow began its centuries-long struggle for Ruthenian lands. At the same time Turkey menaced the Polish trade on the Black Sea, by seizing, in 1484, the Moldavian port of Kilia, at the mouth of the Danube, and Akerman on the Black Sea. The Polish Commonwealth, the only champion of western law and freedom in eastern Europe, was forced to resist the increasing pressure of two Powers founded on ruthless tyranny, Muscovy and Turkey.

As the eldest of the brothers, Wladyslaw, was already King of Bohemia and Hungary, the throne of Poland was taken by Jan Olbracht (1492-1501), while his younger brother, Alexander, became Grand Duke of Lithuania, which continued to be in the closest association with Poland. The misfortune of Olbracht's reign was the abortive expedition against the Turks, in 1497, designed to recover the Black Sea ports. Unfortunately the Turks secured the assistance of the able Moldavian prince, Stefan, and defeated the Polish army at Kozmin. Moscow profited from this reverse and organised raids on Lithuania. After the reign of Olbracht there came the still briefer reign of his brother Alexander (1501-1506), who sealed the complete and perpetual union of Poland with Lithuania. He also granted new privileges under the statute of "Nihil Novi" of 1505, which marked the beginning of parliamentary government in Poland. This enacted that the king could not take important decisions without the consent of a senate composed of dignitaries and magnates and a Parliament (Sejm) composed of deputies elected by the nobility. Each deputy was in turn dependent on his constituents, who assembled in provincial sessions. For instance, the proposal of an alliance with England, made in 1502 by Henry VII, had to be submitted by King Alexander to the Parliament for discussion and approval.

### III. *Poland's Golden Age*

The reigns of the last two Jagellons were described both by contemporaries and by historians as the Golden Age of Poland. Although some tempting opportunities for easy conquest may have been missed, the Polish Commonwealth, a parliamentary kingdom, enjoyed a long period of prosperity, enhanced by civic rights and a liberal form of government. This prosperity was shared by the nobility and the towns, which attained in that period the climax of their development. The country was ruled equitably by the king, the senate, and the sejm.

Sigismund I, "The Old," reigned from 1506 to 1548, and he was largely assisted in extending the power of his dynasty by the queen, an Italian princess of the Sforza family. Sigismund waged long wars against Muscovy, which he finally defeated at Orsza in 1514, though without recovering the important city of Smolensk. The old feud with the Habsburgs, who were the rivals of the Jagellons in Bohemia and Hungary, was ended at a meeting held in Vienna in 1515, and by the marriage of the children of Wladyslaw and the grandchildren of the Emperor Maximilian I. In the meantime the Reformation, spreading rapidly through Germany, reached the Knights of the Cross. Sigismund failed to make use of this opportunity of expelling the order, but he agreed to the secularisation of East Prussia in 1525. The Grand Master, Albrecht Hohenzollern, became Duke of Prussia, but as a vassal of Poland, and he had to pay homage to the king, kneeling before him in the great square of Cracow.

Turkey was again menacing Poland. Another Jagellon, Louis II, King of Hungary, attacked the Turkish forces in 1526 at Mohacz and fought heroically, but fell in battle. His death profited the Habsburgs, who took by marriage the throne of Bohemia and most of Hungary. The rest of Hungary remained in the hands of the national leader, Jan Zapolya, and later of his son, who collaborated closely with the Jagellons of Poland.

The Polish armies kept a constant watch in the east, where they repulsed Muscovite and Moldavian raids. A small but well-organised regular army assured the security of the south-east against the Tartars.

The son of Sigismund I, Sigismund August II, reigned between 1548 and 1572. He was a progressive monarch, a cultured man with a wide education, and a patron of arts. At first he had a romantic conflict with Parliament, on account of his clandestine marriage with the beautiful Princess Barbara Radziwill, which was held to be a violation of the constitution. The king, however, enforced his will, and Barbara was crowned queen; but she soon died.

Sigismund's foreign policy was concerned largely with the Baltic, particularly with the Inflanty—that is, the present Latvia. The province of Inflanty sought the protection of Poland voluntarily, as Prussia had done before. But a long war (1562–1571) was waged for that province, which was contested by Russia, Sweden, and Denmark. The order of the Knights of the Sword was liquidated, and its Grand Master, Kettler, became a vassal of Poland, while a large part of Inflanty was annexed.

The home policy of both the Sigismunds was characterised by tolerance, rare in Europe in the period of ferocious religious struggles which divided most other countries. Foreign exiles who had to leave their countries on account of their faith always found a friendly asylum in Poland. Thus Protestants from many countries, notably from Scotland, found new homes in Catholic Poland—known as “*Asilium Hereticorum*.” Sigismund August stated in 1569 that it was not his intention to become the guardian of anyone's conscience, for “It is not my task to supervise religion.” There were some tendencies favouring a National Church in Poland, but the Catholic Church actively opposed them. It did not use any form of compulsion, but its preachers exerted a strong influence on public opinion, and the vast majority of Poles remained Roman Catholics, while they tolerated freely among them those who joined the Reformed churches.

Important internal reforms were also carried out. Some royal estates, which through long tenancy were considered by the magnates as their own, were returned to the Crown, and the revenue which they brought to the treasury was used for keeping a well-trained regular army, known as Kwarta, because a quarter of the revenue was spent on its upkeep. But the problem of succession was growing extremely serious, for Sigismund had no issue, and the dynasty was becoming extinct. In order to prevent dynastic developments from dividing Poland from Lithuania, Sigismund in 1569 arranged the Lublin Union between Poland and Lithuania, which made of them one nation. The Grand Duchy still had its own administration, treasury, and army, but there was one king and one parliament. Naturally there was only one foreign policy for the two countries, which were in fact united. Besides this, the centuries of common life had already effected such an intimate fusion that the Polish language was generally used in Lithuania, and the nobility of Polish and Lithuanian origin were bound together by countless family ties.

Royal Prussia was an integral part of Poland, while Danzig was a Free City under the Crown. Warsaw was gradually becoming the centre of political life, while Cracow still remained the official capital. When Sigismund August, deeply mourned by all his subjects, died at a relatively early age, the question of succession was not yet settled.

#### IV. *The Elected Kings*

The extinction of the illustrious house of Jagello accelerated a political evolution which had begun before. Poland, which had called itself a republic even under the hereditary kings, became one in fact when the throne became elective. In spite of the parliamentary form of government, the king retained a considerable influence on public affairs, especially as he could dispense high office, and the profitable tenancy of his estates.

The form of election was still to be settled. Finally Jan

Zamoyski, known as "The Tribune of the People," carried through the principle of election *viritim*—that is, by all the nobles assembled at an election meeting. In practice, however, the choice of a candidate was usually decided by the senators, each of whom had a following among the smaller gentry. Such a form of election had the serious disadvantage of giving a kind of political predominance to the nobility from the environs of Warsaw, who were always present in force, while only a few squires from the distant corners of the commonwealth managed to attend every election. Moreover, the selection of a candidate was always influenced by the fear of *absolutum dominium*, the perpetual bugbear of the nobles. In consequence no Habsburg was ever elected King of Poland, although they were always among the candidates, for their dynasty was considered to favour tyranny and the suppression of liberties.

The French candidate, Henri de Valois, was the first king to be elected, although the story of St Bartholomew's night in Paris was much to his detriment in the eyes of Polish opinion. Henri, like every elected king of Poland, had to swear to keep the "Pacta Conventa"—that is, to pledge himself to maintain all the liberties of the republic. One of these was the absolute freedom of religious observance for all Protestants, guaranteed by the Warsaw Confederation of 1573.

Henri's reign was very brief (1573-1574), for he soon sneaked out of Poland and went to France, where he became hereditary monarch as Henri III. When he failed to return to Poland a new election was held, and the Prince of Transylvania, a capable leader and soldier, Stefan Batory, ascended the throne (1576-1586). The election of Stefan Batory was largely prompted by the fact that he was married to a Jagellonian princess, a descendant of the house which made Poland a power in eastern Europe. He devoted his attention to the Baltic, and broke down a Danzig revolt, though maintaining the status of the Free City. Then, between 1577 and 1582, he fought three successful campaigns against Russia, which was becoming dangerously strong under Ivan the Terrible, who

menaced the north of Poland. King Stefan conscripted the peasants from the royal estates and made them into excellent infantry. In the expeditions of 1579, 1580, and 1581 the king conquered all the vital fortified towns—Polock, Wielkie Luki, and Pskov. Ivan the Terrible, defeated, concluded a peace by which Poland obtained the whole of Inflanty and a part of the present Estonia, as well as Polock and other provinces. Only the intervention of the Pope, who was misled by Ivan's hints at a possible return to the Church of Rome, helped Muscovy to escape complete disaster. Batory, assisted by the political and military talent of Chancellor Jan Zamoyski, ruled the country efficiently, and controlled the excessive ambitions of the magnates. One of them, Samuel Zborowski, whose lawless behaviour was setting a dangerous example to the country, was beheaded—a very rare case of a rich magnate meeting with the full force of the law.

After the death of Stefan Batory the throne of Poland was occupied by the Swedish dynasty of Waza, which, although foreign, was anxious to maintain the position of Poland as a Great Power. Sigismund III Waza was elected because his mother was a daughter of Jagellons. A dissident party elected a Habsburg, but Zamoyski defeated and captured him in Silesia.

The long reign of Sigismund III (1587–1632) was a period of prosperity, although there was some deterioration in home affairs, for the king disregarded to some extent the Polish tradition of tolerance, and was largely influenced by the Jesuits, especially towards the end of his reign. This fact had probably much to do with the reception accorded in 1597 at the Court of Queen Elizabeth to the Polish ambassador Działyński. Moreover, the king did not always agree with the great statesman Zamoyski. The foreign policy of Poland, however, continued to be very successful, for not only Moldavia, but Vallachia as well, became once again vassals of the Polish Crown, while the victorious Polish armies reached the Danube.

In the meantime bands of Cossacks appeared in the Ukraine, and while they fought the Turks and Tartars, they also some-

times organised raids and robbing expeditions in Poland, and had to be subdued by the royal army. In 1595 the Union of Brzesc brought about the return to the Church of Rome of a large proportion of the Ruthenian Orthodox Polish subjects, who became Catholics of the Greek Rite, known also as Uniates. The religious Union remains in force to this day, and a considerable proportion of the Ukrainians are still members of the Greek Catholic Rite.

The loss by Sigismund III of the throne of Sweden, which was taken by his uncle, entangled Poland in an unfortunate war with Sweden (1601-1611). Although the Polish forces were in the main successful, and won the famous battle of Kircholm, in which 4000 Polish Hussars under Hetman Chodkiewicz smashed 14,000 Swedes, it was a war which was not justified by the vital interests of the country.

Poland now had an opportunity for the incorporation of the whole of Russia. Some Polish magnates, assisted by a couple of adventurers and Cossacks, established on the throne of Moscow the false pretender Dymitr, whom they later married to a Polish wife. In the meantime there was a rebellion among the nobility, who revolted against the royal rule after the death of Zamoyski. This was the Zebrzydowski Rebellion (1606-1608), which was subdued by the famous commanders (hetmans) Chodkiewicz and Żółkiewski, men faithful to the king, who nevertheless made some concessions and agreed on a compromise with the nobles.

The Russian problem was taken up again in the war of 1609-1618. As the new tsar, Wasyl Szuyski, was challenged by new pretenders, the boyars of Moscow favoured the candidature of Wladyslaw, the son of Sigismund, to the throne of Moscow. Żółkiewski marched on Moscow with his small but highly trained army, and in 1610, with only 6000 men, he completely defeated at Kluszyn several times greater Russian and Swedish forces. He took Moscow, and the tsar with his family was led as a prisoner through the streets of Warsaw, while the victorious Polish army took on its return the important fortress of Smolensk. The political



errors of the king, who was adamant on points of religion, frustrated this military success, and a revolt against Poland broke out in Moscow. The Polish garrison there was besieged, and the new dynasty of the Romanovs was called to the throne in 1613.

The war dragged on, but finally the Crown Prince himself reached Moscow at the head of his army. Poland received under the peace of 1618 vast eastern provinces, including Smolensk, Nowogrod, Czernichow, and many other towns. The total area of the Polish Commonwealth in 1618 was 1,017,000 square kilometres, while in 1770 it was 733,500 square kilometres, and 389,720 square kilometres in 1939.

In the meantime Poland was still carrying on the war against Sweden and its new king, Gustav Adolf. The war was waged on land and on sea, for Poland had a navy, organised with the assistance of a Scot named Murray. The Swedes were successful at first, but in 1629 Poland won a major victory. At that moment France and England interfered, anxious to draw off the Swedish armies and use them against the Habsburgs in the Thirty Years' War. It thus came about that Poland was induced to conclude an unsatisfactory peace at Altmark, and Gustav Adolf afterwards became the principal hero of the Thirty Years' War.

At the same time Poland had to withstand the full force of an attack by Turkey, then one of the World Powers. In 1620 the aged hetman Żółkiewski went to the assistance of Moldavia, but suffered defeat at Cecora, losing his own life in the battle. Turkey decided to take advantage of that victory and conquer Europe. The Sultan himself led westwards the largest army which had ever attacked the Christians from the East. Poland was the first object of assault and she was preparing a defence worthy of the enemy's strength. Ossolinski was sent on a mission to London, where the learning of the Polish ambassador impressed the Court. He obtained permission to enlist 5000 Englishmen, some of whom took part in the subsequent Polish campaigns. In Poland an army of 65,000 men was formed of the regular royal troops and of

Cossacks. It was led by the old commander Chodkiewicz and by the Crown Prince Wladyslaw, who stemmed the Turkish tide after long and heavy fighting near Chocim. It was the first serious setback suffered by the Turks in Europe. At the same time other Polish armies in the East were keeping in check the Tartars.

There was always a tendency in Poland to elect a member of the same dynasty. That is why Wladyslaw, the son of Sigismund III, was elected in half an hour, and reigned as Wladyslaw IV between 1632 and 1648. He fought another successful war with Russia, and concluded a peace in 1634, obtaining from the tsar a complete renunciation of all his claims to the Baltic provinces, the present Latvia and Estonia. The king kept a close watch on the unruly Cossacks and suppressed their riots. He also planned, on the advice of his able chancellor, Ossolinski, and with the financial assistance of his French wife, Marie Louise, a great expedition against Turkey. This did not materialise, for the nobility was anxious not to let the king remain permanently in command of a large army, for they feared that it might induce him to pursue a dictatorial policy at home. The Cossacks, who were to be used in the war against the Turks, revolted against the magnates rather than against the king, under the leadership of a rebel Polish nobleman, Bohdan Chmielnicki. He scored some unexpected successes and at Korsun he even managed to capture some of the royal commanders. The king died suddenly in that very difficult moment, and this made things easier for the rebellious Cossacks, who won another victory at Pilawce. The forts of Lwów and Zamosc, however, resisted their advance and, after some squabbles among the brothers, the second son of Sigismund III, John Casimir, was elected to the throne (1648-1668). The Cossacks withdrew, but then attacked again, and were stopped by the heroic resistance of Zbaraż and by the battle of Zborow (1649). An agreement was concluded by Ossolinski, and the Cossacks were recognised as royal soldiers (40,000) and received a measure of autonomy. Very soon, however (1651), a new Cossack war broke out, and

King John Casimir defeated the Cossacks and the Tartars, leagued together, at Beresteczko.

Chmielnicki, who had become a Cossack leader, submitted to the Tsar of Moscow in 1654, hoping thus to strengthen his position against Poland. In consequence a new war with Russia broke out, which resulted in Polish losses and the Russian occupation of Wilno. Worse danger was to come when the King of Sweden, Carol Gustav, profited by the difficulties of Poland and attacked her from the north (1655-1660). It was a period known in Polish history as "The Deluge," for enemies overran at times most of Polish territory; but they were later shaken off, and the country was soon restored to its former frontiers.

At first, owing to the betrayal of some magnates, the Swedes reached Cracow, and the king had to seek refuge in Silesia. But after early moments of complacency there came a powerful reaction, and the king returned at the head of a rapidly growing army. The heroic resistance at the famous shrine of Jasna Gora, with its miraculous Madonna, made a tremendous impression on the whole country. The Swedes were supported by the strength of the Hohenzollerns of Brandenburg, and they won several victories. To make matters worse, the Transylvanian prince Rakoczy, allied to the Swedes, also invaded Poland at their instigation (1657), while the Cossacks were doing their best to take advantage of the situation in the south-east. But Poland was at the time a much larger and wealthier country than any of its adversaries, while a succession of wars had trained generations of soldiers. The able commander Czarnecki drove out one enemy after another, and even went on an expedition to Denmark, to fight the Swedes on their own ground. When a peace was concluded at Oliva, near Danzig (1666), Poland recovered all her lands, with the exception of a part of the Baltic provinces, Inflanty.

The situation in the East was also improved. The Cossacks soon found out that the Russians menaced their freedom far more than the Poles, and that the union with Russia was to the advantage of Moscow alone. The new Cossack hetman,

Wyhowski, returned under the protection of Poland, and in 1658 a successful agreement was concluded in Hadziacz, whereby Ukraine, beyond the Dnieper, was to become a third autonomous partner in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, with its own army and officers under the Crown. This agreement was on the whole successful, but the Cossacks frequently quarrelled among themselves, while one of them, Doroszenko, sought the protection of Turkey and thus brought the country into new conflicts.

The reign of John Casimir, a well-meaning and brave monarch, was unhappily filled with a succession of wars. Moreover, there were internal difficulties as well. They were due mainly to the working of the principle according to which the parliamentary minority could suspend the vote of laws by its protest. This rule eventually degenerated to the point when the opposition of a single member was sufficient to prevent a law being enacted. This right of free opposition was known as "Liberum Veto" and it had a harmful influence on the parliamentary life of Poland, as well as on the fate of the country in general.

King John Casimir, who had no issue, was anxious to avoid the dangers of a free election, and tried to carry through the nomination of a French candidate during his own lifetime. This attempt caused the rebellion of one of the influential magnates, Lubomirski (1664-1666), who defeated the royal army at Małtwy. A compromise was reached, but the idea of regulating the matter of succession to the throne and carrying out political reforms was doomed. The authority of the king suffered a setback, and John Casimir, discouraged by so much misfortune, abdicated (1668) and left the country for France.

*National Kings.*—As the smaller nobility was always suspicious of the intrigues of the magnates with various foreign candidates, it decided to elect a Polish king, and appointed quite unexpectedly a young and weak man, Michael Wisniowiecki, the son of a magnate who had won fame in the Cossack wars. The rule of Wisniowiecki was unfortunate. The Sultan attacked Poland again, helped by the Cossacks, and in 1672

took Kamieniec Podolski, a powerful fortress which guarded the south-east borders of the country.

The Turks then forced the unfavourable armistice of Buczacz, which was not ratified by the Polish Parliament. When the internal dissensions were calmed down, Poland began a counter-offensive. In 1673, when the young king was dying, a new military leader of talent, John Sobieski, defeated the Turks decisively at Chocim.

His victory assured him such a widespread popularity that he was elected to the throne as John III (1674-1696). In 1674, immediately after his election, the new king had to fight heavy battles against the Turks and Tartars. In 1676 Sobieski was surrounded by superior Turkish forces at Żórawno, but defended it so well that a favourable treaty was concluded with Turkey. Poland kept two-thirds of the Ukraine and Turkey took one-third—the Black Sea provinces. After Żórawno, Polish foreign policy was concerned with the plans of Louis XV, who wanted to fight the Elector of Brandenburg and recover East Prussia from him. There was, however, a strong tendency in favour of fighting the Infidel, and in consequence of various manœuvres Poland in 1683 joined the Holy League, that is an alliance with the Austrian Emperor Leopold, directed against Turkey.

A huge Turkish army under the Vizir Kara Mustafa besieged Vienna, which had been abandoned by the Emperor. The Austrian forces, which received some reinforcements from Germany, though not from Brandenburg, hesitated to attack the Turks, who disposed of a force of 136,000 men. Then King Sobieski arrived with 25,000 Polish cavalry. On 12th September the Christian army, under the supreme command of Sobieski, attacked the Turkish positions. The main charge was made by the Polish heavy hussars, who broke through the Turkish lines and took the Vizir's camp. Christendom was saved from a powerful enemy by Sobieski and his Polish soldiers, but it was Austria and not Poland that derived the greatest profit from the victory.

After the battle of Vienna, Sobieski scored another success at

Parkany, thus allowing the Austrians to recover Hungary and to start removing the Turks from Europe. The Polish armies under Sobieski made a number of expeditions to Moldavia (1685, 1686, and 1691), but although they reached the Danube they could achieve little in a country ravaged by war, where no supplies were obtainable.

The home policy of Sobieski was less successful. He had a capricious French wife, Marie Casimire, who was unpopular in the country and even went so far as to oppose the candidature to the throne of her own son, James. The interregnum of 1696-97 did not bring the crown to either the Polish or the French candidates. It was August II, of Saxony, of the Wettin family, who obtained the throne through bribery and threats. His reign, as well as that of his son, was disastrous for Poland. He was the first Polish monarch of German origin.

*The Decline of Poland under the House of Saxony.*—August II, called “The Strong” on account of his physical force, reigned between 1697 and 1733. He was not without talent, but he recognised no moral standards in politics. At first he carried on the policy of Sobieski and concluded the Treaty of Karlowice (1699), by which Poland recovered from the Turks Ukraine and Podole, with the fortress of Kamieniec. The area of Poland was at that time 733,500 square kilometres, and it remained practically unchanged until the Partitions. The country was twice the size of the Poland of the twentieth century. It was still a powerful state, but the misgovernment of the Saxon kings and the degeneration of the parliamentary system undermined its strength. The bad condition of the treasury led to a reduction of the standing army, while the absolute supremacy of the nobles over all other classes caused a decline of the prosperity of the towns and of the authority of the Crown. Culture and learning, which had reached a high level in Poland during the Golden Age, also declined, while superfluous luxury was the dominant note of the Saxon reign.

August II entangled Poland in the long Northern War (1700-1721), in which she had no stake, but which ravaged

parts of the country, August II, in alliance with Peter the Great of Russia, attacked the King of Sweden, Charles XII, who proved, however, to be a military leader of exceptional talent. He defeated the Danes and smashed the Russians at Narwa, invaded Poland and achieved the temporary abdication of August II, whose place was taken by Stanislaw Leszczynski, elected in 1704. August II, followed by Charles XII into Saxony itself, lost the war, and all the Powers, including Britain, recognised Leszczynski as King of Poland. New developments then again changed the situation. Another rebellious Cossack leader, Mazepa, called for the assistance of Charles XII against Russia, but the Cossack and Swedish armies were beaten at Poltava in 1709. August II seized the opportunity to return to Poland, which Leszczynski was forced to leave. Indignant at the looting of the Saxon troops, the Polish nobles rose against the king, but unfortunately Peter the Great was called to arbitrate, and his verdict was unfavourable to Poland in general, for he suggested the reduction of the standing army to a mere 24,000. Ever since that agreement of 1717 the Russian influence on successive Polish governments grew.

August II secretly planned the abandonment of certain provinces of Poland, as a price for the position of an absolute monarch. There was also a growth of religious intolerance, unknown to Poland before. August II, who became a Catholic himself only in order to qualify for the Polish crown, disgraced himself by acts of violence against Protestants. The news of his conduct reached even England, where it made a bad impression, and gave rise to the view that Poland was an intolerant country. Such an opinion was incorrect, for the responsible person was a king of German origin, and a recent convert from Protestantism, while the Catholic Poles remained as tolerant as ever towards other denominations and creeds.

After the death of August II there was the usual scramble for the throne. France supported the candidature of Leszczynski, whose daughter became Queen of France as the wife of

Louis XV. At the last moment, however, Austria entered a compact with Russia and August III, son of the dead king, was proclaimed king in 1733, under the pressure of Russian troops, in spite of the fact that Leszczyński was formally and unanimously elected. A war known to history as the War of Polish Succession broke out (1733-1738), but it had little influence on the course of events in Poland itself. August III kept the throne and Leszczyński, still nominally king, received the duchy of Lorraine, which then passed to France. He reigned there until 1766, and won popularity by his kindness and justice. He stressed the need for a reform of Poland, and educated Polish youth in its spirit.

The reign of August III (1735-1763) was most harmful for the country. The king was indolent and left the government in the hands of his minister, Count Brühl. While during the reign of August II only five sessions of Parliament out of eighteen were not broken as a result of the *Liberum Veto*, things became so abnormal under August III that only one Sejm was not dissolved. Any steady political, administrative, or financial work became impossible, while the strength of the army suffered in consequence. Foreign policy was practically non-existent. Many people held the naïve view that if Poland remained a pacifist country, without an army, she would not be considered a menace by anyone and would therefore not be the object of anyone's attack. It was believed that the very weakness of Poland and her obviously peaceful disposition would save her from the danger of aggression. Two principal parties opposed each other—that of the Potocki clan and that of the powerful Czartoryski family, which favoured extensive reform in collaboration with Russia. But the degeneration of parliamentary government, coupled with the complacency of public opinion, with noblemen living in comfort and indifferent to politics, made alarming conditions. When August III died, the Czartoryskis carried through the election to the throne (1764) of their relative, Stanislaw Poniatowski, who was also supported by the Empress Catherine of Russia, his former mistress.



### V. *The Belated Renascence and the Downfall of Poland*

The long reign of the last king of Poland, Stanislaw August Poniatowski (1764-1795), was a period marked by an internal revival of the nation, which came too late to prevent the fatal Partitions.

The election of Poniatowski brought to the fore the Czartoryski party, which immediately carried through some reforms strengthening the executive, and protecting the towns against the excesses of the nobility. There was a plan to abolish the *Liberum Veto*, but Prussia and Russia protested vehemently against it, and used all their influence to maintain that disastrous feature of Polish political life. Stanislaw August was an intelligent man with a wide culture and education, but he had a weak character, and the support which he had received from Russia made him unpopular in the country. Catherine of Russia fomented trouble in Poland, under the excuse of protecting the Protestants and Orthodox Christians against alleged oppression. She used secret agents and bribery to organise the Radom Confederation of 1767, which was used as a weapon against the reforms of the Czartoryskis and the king.

There was, however, a strong feeling of dissatisfaction growing in the country, and one group of nobles formed the Confederation of Bar, which fought the Russians for four years (1768-1772). Unfortunately it was not sufficiently well prepared, and it failed to achieve its purpose of emancipating Poland. The Confederation of Bar was started by Pułaski, whose sons, notably Casimir, distinguished themselves by their courage. The political direction of the movement was in the hands of Bishop Adam Krasiński. In order to counteract the Confederation of Bar, Russia instigated peasant riots in the Ukraine. The king, anxious not to offend Russia, had to treat them as rebels. The Bar Confederates fought the Russians actively, with some help from Austria and the assistance of a few French officers, but their movement lost some of its popularity when they attempted to kidnap the king in order to win him over to their side.

In the meantime Russia was terminating a successful war against Turkey, and a conflict with Austria was impending as the sharing out of the spoils was considered. It was then that the King of Prussia, Frederick II, suggested, at first indirectly and then openly, that the three Powers—Russia, Prussia, and Austria—might get over their dissensions if they each took some Polish provinces in compensation.

For Catherine II it meant to some extent the renunciation of a plan to subdue the whole of Poland by penetration, but she agreed to the deal, as did the Empress of Austria, Maria Theresa, persuaded by her son, the future Joseph II. On 5th January 1772 an agreement was signed whereby Russia took the north-eastern part of the province of Inflanty, and Ruthenian provinces as far the River Dzwina; Prussia took Pomorze—that is, Royal Prussia, but without Danzig and Torun; while Austria annexed so-called Galicia—that is, southern Poland, but without Cracow, as far as the River Zbrucz. The loss of Pomorze to Prussia was the most painful, for it left to Poland only Danzig as a doorway to the sea. The loss of the southern provinces was also important, for they were already then among the most densely populated in the whole country. Thus Austria paid to Poland her debt of gratitude for saving her existence at Vienna.

Poland was not in a position to fight. Europe failed to realise the implications of the Act of Partition. Even George III replied from London to the appeals of Stanislaw August that he had better not hope for any intervention, save that of God Himself. The Confederation of Bar, exhausted by years of fighting, could not offer resistance, and the protests of the king went unheeded. The Sejm, under foreign threats, had to accept the situation, but the first Partition broke the spell of complacency and started a national revival on a great scale. Many of the leaders emigrated, among them Casimir Puławski, whose death on the field of battle in the American War of Independence is still commemorated on "Puławski Day" in the United States.

The reform was thorough, and it went to the root of the evil.

The great estates of the recently dissolved Jesuit Order were granted to the Commission for Education, the first official Board of Education in Europe, which started immediately an immense work aiming at spreading knowledge and good citizenship. Hundreds of new schools were founded, and the teaching in them was based on principles many years ahead of the times. The effects of this step were rapid and very satisfactory. The first Partition coincided also with an attempt at strengthening the executive, by forming the Permanent Council, which was in fact a government composed of several heads of departments. But the most important reaction was the moral revival of the whole nation. The nobility realised that the unlimited freedom which it had been enjoying for centuries, the "Golden Freedom," carried with it serious dangers as well as advantages. This revival, which embraced all spheres of life, found its expression at the Four Year Parliament (1788-1792), which was free from foreign interference owing to the fact that Russia was entangled in another war against Turkey. Many valuable reforms were carried through, but one fallacy still persisted: it was hoped that Prussia would side with Poland in the event of a conflict with Russia. The King of Prussia cunningly encouraged this belief, only to betray Poland in the decisive moment.

There was a reactionary party, which opposed the reform, but even its members voted for the military and municipal innovations. The standing army was increased to 100,000, but this decision was unfortunately not fully carried out, owing to the condition of the treasury. The Parliament, which at the beginning of the session had voluntarily agreed to disregard the *Liberum Veto*, demanded the election of additional deputies in order to sanction important new legislation. The townspeople were granted the privilege of "*Neminem Captivabimus*," equivalent to the *Habeas Corpus*, enjoyed by the Polish nobility for several centuries, the right to buy landed property and to take part in parliamentary debates. The aristocratic members of the reform party inscribed their names on the rolls of burghers, to demonstrate

their desire for equality between classes. Then a revolutionary and immensely important Act was carried through: it was the Constitution of the 3rd of May 1791. It introduced hereditary monarchy, and named the house of Saxony as the ruling dynasty. It confirmed the rights of the towns and considerably improved the position of the peasants, generally putting an end to the period of semi-anarchy. It was a Constitution which, coming almost simultaneously with the French Revolution, seemed moderate, but it was at least as democratic as the French constitutions, and it was voted without a bloody revolution. Well worked out by legal experts, the new Constitution met with the approval of world opinion, but it was obviously a challenge thrown to the Russian hegemony.

Russia had just finished the Turkish War and waited for an opportunity to interfere again. It was provided by three reactionary magnates, Potocki, Branicki, and Rzewuski, who formed under Russian protection the Confederation of Targowica, and summoned Russian troops to their help. In 1792 superior Russian forces invaded the country. They were opposed by the new Polish army, then in process of formation, under the command of the king's nephew, Prince Joseph Poniatowski. Prussia had concluded an alliance with Poland in 1790, but it failed to give the help which it had promised. A Polish army corps, under General Kościuszko, who had previously distinguished himself in the American War of Independence, won the battles of Zielence and Dubienka, but had to retreat before the superior numbers of the enemy. The king, who had been the initiator of the new Constitution, broke down and signed his accession to the Targowica Confederation, thus robbing the patriots of his support. Thus the Confederation of Targowica dominated the country, and the leaders of the supporters of the Constitution, including Kościuszko, emigrated. In the meantime Prussia, maintaining the appearances of friendship, concluded a secret agreement with Russia and carried out on 23rd January 1793 the second Partition, from which Austria was excluded.

That partition meant the downfall of the Polish state. Russia took the rest of Ruthenia, Ukraine, Podole, and some of Polesie and Wolyn, while Prussia grabbed the province of Poznań, a part of central Poland (Kujawy) with Masovia, as well as Toruń and Danzig. The citizens of Danzig fought gallantly against the Prussian troops, and surrendered only after inflicting heavy losses on the invaders. The remaining Polish territory, although it was still fairly large (254,000 square kilometres), could hardly be described as an independent country, since a Russian garrison was placed in Warsaw itself.

The national revival made such rapid progress that already in 1794 the first insurrection under Thaddeus Kościuszko was started, opening the long series of Polish revolts of the nineteenth century. The Kościuszko rising, supported by wide masses of the population, including the peasants, was successful at first, and won the battle of Raclawice. The inhabitants of the towns also revolted against the foreign occupants. In 1794 the Polish forces and citizens of Warsaw, led by the shoemaker Kilinski, defeated the Russian garrison, and drove the invaders out of the capital. The citizens of Wilno imitated the example of Warsaw. But the Prussians arrived to assist the Russians in subduing the insurgents. They besieged Warsaw, but the heroic people of that city forced the King of Prussia to withdraw his troops. Kościuszko met the Russian army at Maciejowice, but he was defeated in a hard battle and, wounded, fell into the hands of the enemy. The terrible Suworow advanced towards Warsaw, massacred the population of the suburb of Praga, and finally took the city itself, in November 1794.

It was then that the third, final, Partition of Poland took place, sanctioned by the treaties of 3rd January and 24th October 1795. Prussia took the country west of the rivers Pilica, Vistula, and Bug, including Warsaw itself; Austria took the triangle between the rivers Bug, Vistula, and Pilica; while Russia annexed everything east of Bug. The king was deported and forced to abdicate in 1795. He died in 1798, in St Petersburg.

Poland was overpowered by the superior forces of the three partitioning states, but their success also marked the beginning of the struggle for independence. It was carried on at first under the auspices of revolutionary France, and of the military genius of Bonaparte, which was just rising in Lombardy, soon to attain the height of glory.

### VI. *Poland's Struggle for Independence*

Immediately after the downfall of the republic a number of Poles assembled in revolutionary France for the purpose of forming the nucleus of a new Polish army. Such was the origin of the Polish Legion of General Henryk Dąbrowski, which from 1797 fought on the French side. The Legion was formed with the assent of Napoleon Bonaparte, made when he was winning his first victories in northern Italy. There were at first 6000, then 15,000, and finally 20,000 selected Polish volunteers in Napoleon's army. They fought in all his campaigns and won immortal fame in many battles until 1801. The names of the Polish commanders can be seen to this day on the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, side by side with those of Napoleon's marshals, one of whom was Joseph Poniatoski. Napoleon, however, used the heroic Legion to the full without rewarding it by any assistance to Poland. He concluded a number of peace treaties without so much as mentioning Poland and finally, in 1803, he sent the remnant of the Legion to fight against negroes in San Domingo.

Many Poles, discouraged by such treatment, favoured an understanding with Russia, especially as Prince Adam Czartoryski was at the time a personal friend and the foreign minister of the Emperor Alexander I. But when Napoleon in 1806 attacked Prussia he took with him the majority of the Poles. The Legion entered Poznań and Warsaw as the spearhead of Napoleon's attack. A new Polish army was formed under Prince Poniatoski, but the Peace of Tilsit (1807) made Poland only a small state—the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, with the King of Saxony as Duke.

In the new duchy of Warsaw the Poles accomplished a great deal in a short time, although Napoleon's demands exhausted the country financially. An efficient administration and a strong army were set up at once. The small duchy, however, had to assist Napoleon even in Spain, where the Polish cavalry made the famous charge of *Samoşierra*, and infantry distinguished itself in taking *Saragossa*.

When a new war broke out in 1809 between Napoleon and Austria, the Polish army under *Poniatowski* fought the battle of *Radzyn*, near Warsaw, and it then entered southern Poland ("Galicia"), where the people welcomed its arrival, and created a diversion dangerous for the Austrians. At the Peace of Vienna the duchy of Warsaw received western Galicia with *Cracow*, some 50,000 square kilometres.

The fondest hopes of the Poles were revived during Napoleon's war against Russia in 1812. The small duchy of Warsaw made a great effort and enrolled an army of 80,000 men, but Napoleon distributed Polish regiments among the French armies, and there was only one entirely Polish army corps, that of *Poniatowski*. The Poles fought in the forefront at *Smolensk* and *Borodino*. They helped the French considerably by their knowledge of the country and of the language, while in the course of the tragic retreat from *Moscow* they fought gallant rearguard actions to protect the ruins of the Grand Army. Napoleon himself recognised their valour and physical resistance, which was greater than that of the French.

Poland now arrived at a turning-point. Alexander I endeavoured to win the Poles over to his side, but *Joseph Poniatowski* replied that "Honour knows no compromise"—meaning that the Polish soldiers would stand by Napoleon in his hour of adversity, true to their oath. While the Westphalians, Wurtembergers, Bavarians, and Saxons betrayed the Emperor in the course of the hard campaign of 1813, the Polish army, still 40,000 strong, carried out the most perilous tasks. On the battlefield of *Leipzig*, *Poniatowski* was made Marshal of France. Soon afterwards he died the death of a

hero, fighting to the end. Even when the Polish veterans of the Napoleonic campaigns were offered a free return to their country, they refused to abandon their commander at a time when he needed them most. They fought all their battles to the last, and it was not until the abdication at Fontainebleau that the Polish soldiers returned to their country, carrying with them the body of Poniatowski their leader. The bravery of these Poles, their high sense of honour and duty, won the appreciation even of Napoleon's enemies, who granted to the legionaries under the Treaty of Paris (1814) honourable return to Poland, with their emblems and trophies, "in recognition of their distinguished service."

The Napoleonic eposée brought to the Poles the renown of being the finest soldiers in the world. The Congress of Vienna (1815) did not restore Poland, owing to various secret intrigues, but it did form a very much reduced Kingdom of Poland, with its own government, administration, and army, under the auspices of Russia. It was a kind of personal union, for Alexander I and his successors were separately crowned kings of Poland. The new "Congress Kingdom" embraced four-fifths of the former duchy of Warsaw, but the province of Poznań, Pomorze, with Torun and Danzig, were annexed by Prussia. Cracow became a Free City, with a small territory of her own.

It was then that the period of foreign occupation of Poland really began. The Austrian rule was at first the harshest and most reactionary, while the Prussian administration was not initially so severe, although germanising attempts were afterwards started. In the Kingdom of Poland, which had a large degree of autonomy and its own constitution, there was considerable friction with the tsars, who represented absolutism and tyranny even for their own people. The Poles resented the fact that the eastern Polish provinces, with Wilno, were not included in the autonomous kingdom, but were simply annexed by Russia. Alexander I was represented in Warsaw by a substitute, his brother, the Grand Duke Constantine. Although he had a Polish wife, and showed



some sympathy for the Poles, his violent character and brutal behaviour offended the army—of which he was the commander—and the whole population.

Nevertheless, the country was now making rapid progress in all spheres of life. The extremely capable finance minister, Lubecki, created a strong treasury, an efficient banking system, and promoted the growth of new industries. A university was founded in Warsaw, and the general level of civilisation and education of the masses was greatly improved. The 30,000 army of the small kingdom was probably the best trained in Europe. In spite of a degree of prosperity under the autonomous Polish Government, the desire for complete independence had not abated. Various secret patriotic societies, some of them similar to Masonic lodges, were formed for the purpose of organising an insurrection. Especially after the death of Alexander I, when the Russian and therefore the Polish throne also were occupied by Nicolas I—the most reactionary monarch of Europe—it became impossible to continue any longer the Polish-Russian union.

On 29th November 1830 the young cadets of the Warsaw Military College started a revolution. They were soon joined by the rest of the army. The Russian garrisons were easily driven out and the Grand Duke Constantine was put to flight. A national government was formed under the presidency of Prince Adam Czartoryski. The high command was taken over by General Chłopicki, who later became dictator of the insurrection. He did not, however, make full use of the initial success, for until the deposition of Nicolas by the Polish Parliament convoked for that purpose (25th January 1831) he had hoped for peaceful concessions from Russia.

Hopes placed in foreign assistance were disappointed. Britain and France sympathised with the insurgents, but the help expected from France was not forthcoming. In the Polish-Russian War, which had now started, the Poles could oppose to 160,000 Russians only 60,000 troops, which were, however, superior in discipline and training, especially as

they were officered largely by veterans of the Napoleonic campaigns. The Russians were defeated at Stoczek, at Wawer, and in other encounters, while the very severe battle of Grochów, near Warsaw, was inconclusive, though the Russians were forced to retreat. The war lasted until the spring of 1831, and was marked by the Polish victories of Wawer, Dąb, and Iganie. At Ostrołęka the errors of the Polish High Command compromised the situation in spite of the soldiers' bravery. The Polish forces sent to the assistance of the insurgents who were rising against the Russians in Lithuania and Wołyń were too small, and suffered defeat.

The Russians, knowing how inadequate were the resources of the Warsaw Government, strove for a long war. After some reverses, the more radical elements in Warsaw caused the dismissal of General Skrzynecki, who had become Commander-in-Chief. General Krukowiecki was the last head of the government. When the Russians attacked Warsaw it resisted them stubbornly, and the death of General Sowiński in command of his fort inspired enthusiasm, but the forces of the enemy were vastly superior, and the city had finally to surrender. The fighting was not yet over, for it was not until 5th October 1831 that the remains of the Polish army crossed the Prussian frontier, together with the Government, and were disarmed.

Thus Poland lost the last particle of freedom which she had possessed and the whole country was subjected to the rule of cruel reaction. The former Kingdom of Poland, now annexed to Russia, was governed by the brutal winner of the campaign, Paskiewicz, who abolished all civic rights and liberties. The prosperity achieved by the fifteen years of national government was ruined by confiscations and arrests, while a part of the population was deported to the eastern provinces. The police rule of Austria in southern Poland was also severe, although not as inhuman as that of the Tsar, while in Prussia the germanising system was continued by Governor Flotwell, who endeavoured to ruin the Polish nobility.

The military and intellectual *élite* of Poland fled abroad.

It was known as the Great Emigration. Its spiritual chief, Prince Adam Czartoryski, at first took up residence in London, but later moved to Paris, which became the centre of Polish patriotic movements. There was also the more moderate party of Czartoryski, and the revolutionary party of the Democratic Society. Czartoryski, who maintained at the Hôtel Lambert in Paris what was almost a Polish Foreign Office, with agents in all the European capitals, believed in diplomacy and in collaboration with the French and British governments, while the extreme left planned a new revolution, and organised several unsuccessful attempts at armed revolt against the oppressors of Poland. Poles participated in all the revolutionary movements of Europe, faithful to the motto: "For your freedom and ours."

The Polish aspirations to freedom were sympathised with throughout Europe. Many British writers, such as Dudley Stuart, David Urquhart, Cuttler, Fergusson, and others took the side of the oppressed country.

A revolutionary period was now approaching. Already in 1846 there was a rising against Austria in that part of Poland controlled by Vienna, notably in the semi-autonomous republic of Cracow. The Austrians repressed it with brutality, resorting to the despicable method of encouraging murders of the nobility by peasants. This rising was the forerunner of the famous "Spring of Nations" of 1848. A revolution broke out in Prussia and the king, Frederick Wilhelm IV, had to honour in public, in the Unter den Linden, the Polish patriots released from the gaol in which he had imprisoned them. The Germans, however, soon returned to reactionary methods, and turned against the Poles of Poznań, who had in the meantime organised their own army. The Germans at first deluded the Polish leaders with promises, and then suddenly attacked them. The leader of the insurrection, Mierosławski, won the battles of Książę and Miłosław, but he had to surrender at Września when faced by vastly superior forces.

At the same time there was considerable unrest in Austrian Poland, in association with the revolution which had broken

out in Vienna. The Austrian troops shelled Cracow and Lwów, forcing these towns into submission. The Poles then supported the revolution of the Hungarians against the Austrians, and General Dembinski became commander of the Hungarian forces, while General Bem won many victories for the Hungarians. The chief exponent of reaction in the Europe of that time, Nicolas I of Russia, assisted Vienna in breaking down the revolt of Hungary. Central Poland, exhausted by the insurrection of 1830, did not rise at this time, and the country was soon plunged, together with the rest of eastern and central Europe, into a particularly brutal tyranny. The Polish hopes were revived by the Crimean War of 1854, and much was expected of Britain and France. Some efforts were made to form a Polish army, the nucleus of which was provided by the force organised by Czajkowski in Turkey. Czartoryski persuaded the British Government to form a Polish division for use against the Russians in the Crimea, but the war was over too soon for carrying out that plan. Although Palmerston did demand in 1855 the re-establishment of the Kingdom of Poland of 1815, the Peace of 1856, concluding the Crimean War, did not improve the position of Poland in any way.

In the meantime Polish patriots were busy preparing another rising against Russia, expecting that it would serve Britain and France as a pretext for claiming the restoration of the Kingdom of Poland, if not of the whole country in its pre-Partition frontiers. The Russian oppression was slightly eased under Alexander II, thanks to the activity of Wielopolski, a man of considerable ability but of bad temper. He became in 1862 head of the civil administration, and obtained the reopening of Warsaw university, but he was unable to give satisfaction to the "Reds"—representing the more active revolutionary element. When Wielopolski and the Russians, trying to subdue this movement, started the forcible recruitment of Polish youth for the Russian army, revolt broke out on 22nd January 1863.

The insurrection was hardly prepared at all, and its forces,

only 10,000 strong at first, were badly armed. Nevertheless, they managed to hold in check a Russian army of 90,000 men and to achieve various minor successes. The secret National Government was at first run by the "Reds" alone, but they were later joined by the "Whites," encouraged by the hope of a diplomatic intervention of the Western Powers. Britain, France, and Austria did intervene, but without sufficient vigour. Britain recalled Russia to her obligations of 1815, and then sent a fairly strong note, but it remained without effect. Russia concluded an anti-Polish agreement with Prussia, under the auspices of Bismarck, and rejected all foreign intervention. The war against Russia went on for over a year, fanned by hopes of Western assistance. It was not until August 1864 that the Russians captured the last leader of the insurrection, Traugott, and condemned him to death by hanging, together with the other members of the National Government.

In the course of the insurrection, the Polish forces fought hundreds of encounters with the Russians, frequently defeating them, especially when Langiewicz was commander. In many cases, however, they were powerless against the superior Russian numbers and artillery. This relentless struggle went on not only in Central Poland, but also in Lithuania, White Ruthenia, Polesie, Wolyn, Podole, and Inflanty—*i.e.* in all the eastern provinces of Poland occupied by Russia. The repression was cruel in the extreme, and large numbers of revolutionaries were executed, or sent to Siberia for life. The horrible massacres of 1863 had some influence on the policy of the Polish independence movement.

After 1863 the Poles abandoned for some time attempts at winning back independence by force, and decided to increase their economic strength as a preliminary measure. This movement was known as "organic work," and it aimed at obtaining for the Poles under the three oppressors the best possible conditions of life. In the part of Poland held by Russia all such endeavours were doomed to failure by the ruthless policy of the tsars. The Russian terror raged at its

worst in Wilno and the eastern provinces, governed by Muraviev, "The Hangman." The "Kingdom of Poland," with Warsaw, was deprived of the last remains of autonomy, and subjected to terrible tyranny. They closed the universities, and prohibited the use of the Polish language. After twenty or thirty years of such treatment the number of illiterates in the country rose to 82 per cent.—that is, far more than it was in the beginning of the nineteenth century, when the work of the Polish Ministry of Education was still yielding results. A country which had kept pace with western Europe for a long time was forced by the Russians to their own level of civilisation. But the spirit of Poland remained unbroken. Society women organised clandestine elementary schools; writers continued to publish their books abroad, and artists devoted their work to expressing the patriotic feelings of the country. The development of industry created a new working class, exploited by the Russians, but already beginning to think of a Free Poland.

There was a slight respite at the beginning of the reign of Nicolas II, and the Russian-Japanese War of 1904 gave new hope to Polish patriots.

In Prussia, however, the germanising pressure had grown steadily stronger ever since the victory of 1870. Bismarck launched in 1872 the watchword "Ausrotten," aiming at the total extermination of the Poles. This internal struggle, which embraced all fields of mutual relations, was intensified by Bismarck's so-called Kultur-Kampf in his war against the Catholic Church. A special organisation destined to combat everything Polish was created under the name of "H.K.T." Hundreds of millions of marks were squandered in the colonisation of Poznań and Pomerania; the fact that the German colonisation policy only gave very meagre results was the cause of the enactment before the World War of a law sanctioning the expropriation of Polish landed property. The Prussian Government persecuted the Poles of Poznań in every conceivable way, and the sympathy of the world was aroused by the notorious case of Września, where Polish children were

beaten in 1901 for refusing to pray in German instead of Polish. The cruel tyranny of the Germans only hardened the resolve of the Poles, and trained them in work under the most adverse conditions, especially in business activity. Thanks to the high birth-rate among the Poles and their national tenacity the percentage of the Polish population steadily increased. Even the Poles of Silesia, who had not been free for several centuries, were becoming increasingly conscious of their national character, largely owing to the efforts of the leader of the coal miners, Korfanty.

After 1860, conditions in Austria were different. The disaster of 1866 the Austrian Government became more tractable and compromising. In consequence, Galicia obtained its own parliament, a Polish local administration, using Polish as the official language, and various other privileges. The university of Cracow again became Polish in 1870, and that of Lwów was restored in 1873; while an Academy of Science was founded in 1872 in Cracow. Poles participated in the government of Austria, and even took part in the administration of the whole Austrian Empire as members of the Cabinet. They were mostly Conservatives, such as Gołuchowski, Dunajewski, Badeni, Bilinski, etc.

During the same period several million Poles emigrated to America and settled in the United States, Canada, and Brazil. There were before 1914 over 3,000,000 Poles in U.S.A., and Chicago is even now the second largest Polish city in the world. The Poles living in America, more prosperous than their brothers in the old country, continued to take a strong interest in the problem of independence.

### VII. *The Reconstruction of the State*

While "organic work" achieved some results, there were still active revolutionary tendencies. Actually all the Polish parties aimed at independence, and they differed only in their views as to the best means by which to attain it. Between 1870 and 1910 the number of workmen employed in industry in

Central Poland alone increased from 64,000 to 400,000. The Polish Socialist Party was supported by the working masses, such as Limanowski and Joseph Piłsudski, who edited and published the secret newspaper *Robotnik* (*Workman*). While the socialist movement was spreading among the working classes, the nationalist movement, founded in 1886 by Jeż Miłkowski, was supported by the professional and middle classes. Led by Popławski and Roman Dmowski, this movement created in 1897 the National Democratic Party. Somewhat later there appeared a peasant patriotic party, which had for leader Wincenty Witos.

While the Polish Socialist Party continued the policy of the "Reds" of 1863, Roman Dmowski founded the so-called "Pan Polish" movement, and laid down the principle that Germany, and not Russia, was the worst enemy of Poland. But the action carried on by the Polish Socialists during the Revolution of 1905 and the political campaign of the adherents of the Pan Polish movement did not for the moment give any palpable results. The revolutionary movement was stifled, and the Tsar, rejecting all proposals of an understanding, embarked on a course with regard to the Poles which was even more intransigent than it had been hitherto.

Piłsudski, who was anticipating the outbreak of a major war, started the military training of Polish youth in Galicia, founding the "Riflemen's Association." He was assisted by men such as Władysław Sikorski, Casimir Sosnkowski, Walery Sławek, Marian Kukiel, and many others. The movement of military training embraced also other organisations, including the "Sokół," in which Joseph Haller was active.

The world war brought about the event which the Poles had wished for during an entire century—a conflict between Germany and Russia. There were two schools of thought among the Poles, although they all desired independence. The Galician conservatives, the socialists, and the peasant party wanted to attack Russia first, while the conservatives of the Kingdom of Poland, the national-democrats, and the people of Poznań believed that Germany should be the principal enemy.



On 6th August 1914 Piłsudski entered Central Poland (The Kingdom) at the head of a handful of legionaries, fighting the Russians. The hope of a new anti-Russian insurrection was disappointed, but the Legion, consisting of three brigades, won fame in many battles. The other, anti-German tendency, could not find expression at first, for while Britain and France were sympathetic, they were bound by their alliance with Russia, which country refused to consider the Polish problem. When the Germans occupied the whole territory of Poland, the Central Powers promised, in November 1916, the creation of a Polish Kingdom. They did so in order to secure the manpower of Poland, but the behaviour of the Germans in the occupied country, their continued policy of oppression in Poznań, and the breaking of previous promises frustrated the plans for a Polish army fighting on the German side. Piłsudski refused to undertake its formation, and devoted his energy to the organising of secret military societies.

On 2nd January 1917 President Wilson, influenced by Paderewski, announced his intention of creating an independent Poland. The outbreak of revolution in Russia untied the hands of Britain and France with regard to the Polish problem, especially as the provisory Russian government itself recognised the right of Poland to independence (30th March 1917).

In June 1917 the nucleus of a Polish army was formed in France, while on 15th July 1917 the Polish National Committee, directed by Dmowski and Paderewski, was officially recognised by France, Britain, and the other Allies as representative of the Polish nation. In the meantime, the situation in Poland itself was growing more tense. The legionaries refused to take an oath of allegiance to Germany, and they were in consequence disarmed and interned, while Piłsudski, who was responsible for that attitude, was arrested, together with Colonel Sosnkowski, and imprisoned in the fortress of Magdeburg (22nd July 1917). A Polish Military Committee was formed in Russia under Władysław Raczkiewicz (President of Poland since 1939), while General Dowbor-Musnicki

organised a Polish army in Russia, which later was likewise disarmed by the Germans.

The Central Powers now became more conciliatory towards Poland, and established a Regency Council, which was to carry out the functions of the future king of Poland. They also allowed the Poles to have their own schools and judiciary system. As Austria had behaved with moderation, many Poles favoured the candidature of a Habsburg as a possible king. But when Austria concluded, in February 1918, the Treaty of Brzesc-Litewski with Russia, and surrendered to the Ukrainians a part of Poland, including Chełm, the idea of Polish-Austrian collaboration was completely abandoned. On 16th February 1918 the remaining legionaries, under Brigadier Joseph Haller, revolted against Austria, broke the front, and passed to the Ukraine for the purpose of joining other Polish units formed there. They were, however, surrounded and defeated by the Germans.

In the meantime the Polish National Committee, with Dmowski in Paris and Paderewski in Washington, achieved considerable results. President Wilson, in January 1918, proposed the creation of a free Polish State, embracing all the territories inhabited by Poles, with a free access to the sea, among his Fourteen Points. On 3rd June 1918 Britain, France, and Italy declared the creation of a free Poland with an access to the sea to be one of their war aims. In October 1918, the Polish National Committee assumed authority over the Polish army in France, while General Haller, who now arrived in France, was placed at its head.

The war was drawing to its close. When Austria at last began to break down, Poles seized Cracow, on 31st October 1918, and on 7th November they formed a provisional government in Lublin. The Germans released Piłsudski and Sosnkowski, who were welcomed in Warsaw on 10th November. On 11th November the legionaries, the members of secret military organisations, and the public began to disarm the German troops in Warsaw and in the whole of Poland, although the eastern German army was still undefeated. The

Germans, overwhelmed by the development of events, surrendered arms, and Warsaw enjoyed complete freedom for the first time since 1831. The Germans themselves have branded the compromising defeat they suffered in Warsaw as "the most shameful episode" in their history.

Thus an independent Polish State was created on the very day on which an armistice was signed in the West. Independent Poland found itself involved in wars almost before it was born. The Ukrainians, supported by the Austrians, occupied (1st November) Lwów and Eastern Galicia, but the Polish population of Lwów offered a stubborn resistance, and finally won the day. The Bolsheviks were still divided from Poland by the German armies of the east. The Regency Council resigned its powers on 14th November 1918 in favour of Piłsudski, who authorised the socialist Moraczewski to form a Cabinet, and ordered a general election on the basis of universal suffrage, with a very liberal franchise. Paderewski undertook the task of conciliating the two Polish independence movements: that of Paris and that of Warsaw. He arrived at Poznań on 27th December, and on the same day the population of that town began the expulsion of the Germans. On 16th January 1919 Paderewski formed in Warsaw a government of national unity, which was duly recognised by the National Committee of Paris. The newly elected Parliament, assembled in Warsaw, proclaimed itself the supreme national authority, and entrusted Piłsudski with the functions of Head of the State. The Polish nation proved in that historical moment that it was capable not only of heroism and sacrifice, but also of political unity and foresight.

### VIII. *The History of Re-born Poland*

The new Poland found itself in a state of war with the Ukrainians and the Bolsheviks, who were occupying the territories evacuated by the Germans. Lwów was relieved on 22nd November 1918, and by May 1919 the whole of southern Poland, with eastern Galicia, was free. The army of General

Haller then arrived from France. On 23rd January 1919 the Czechs unexpectedly attacked and occupied Cieszyn Silesia, whose population had already declared itself Polish and had instituted Polish authorities. A temporary agreement was concluded with the Czechs, for the Polish armies were busy recovering Wilno, part of White Ruthenia, Wolyn and Podole, with some parts of the Ukraine. The Ukrainians then changed their policy, and their leader, Ataman Petlura, concluded on 26th April 1920 an alliance with Poland. Pilsudski called upon the Poles to set the Ukraine free from Russia, and on 8th May the Polish armies entered Kiev.

In the west, the Treaty of Versailles gave to Poland the province of Poznań and Pomorze, with a very small stretch of the Baltic coast. A plebiscite was to be held in parts of East Prussia and Silesia in order to decide whether they should return to Poland or not. Danzig and its environs received the status of a Free City, but its constitution was entirely unpractical, and was certain to cause future trouble. Poland and the League of Nations had various political rights in Danzig, but the actual administration and executive was in the hands of the Germans. It was from the very beginning a hybrid, unfit to live.

The Bolsheviks next assembled considerable forces, and on 8th June 1920 they began a major offensive. The Poles were forced to leave Kiev and Vilna, to abandon their positions on the Bug river, so that the enemy was enabled to approach the very gates of Warsaw. The Bolsheviks thereupon strove to establish contact with the communist movement in Germany. The situation was extremely serious, and the very existence of Poland was menaced. No wonder that the Czechs obtained permission to keep Cieszyn Silesia in June 1920, and that the plebiscite in East Prussia turned to the disadvantage of Poland.

But Poland was fighting hard to keep her recently won freedom. A Council of National Defence was formed under the peasant leader Witos, assisted by the socialist Daszynski. France sent some war material and a military mission under

General Weygand. It was then that Piłsudski, the Commander-in-Chief, and his Chief of Staff, General Roswadowski, decided to attack the Russian flank on the line of the River Wieprz. General Sikorski, who was in command of the northern army, attacked successfully superior Soviet forces, while the main Polish army under Piłsudski carried out between 12th and 16th August a powerful offensive from the south, which became known as "The Battle of Warsaw." The Bolsheviki, completely defeated, retreated in disorder, and they also lost the battles of Niemen and Lida. The Soviet Government was forced to sign an armistice, followed by the preliminary Peace of Riga of October 1920, and the final Treaty of Riga signed on 18th March 1921.

Poland obtained at Riga an eastern frontier running from Latvia and the River Dzwina in the north, through Polesie and Wolyn to the River Zbrucz, which previously was the dividing line between Austria and Russia. The region of Wilno was taken by General Żeligowski, and the vote of January 1922 proved the desire of its population to return to Poland.

The Silesian plebiscite of 20th March 1921 resulted in a ballot for Germany in the West and for Poland in the East. The Silesian Poles revolted against the Germans, claiming that they had distorted the results of the vote. On 12th October 1921 the League of Nations recognised the right of Poland to a part of Silesia, with Katowice and many collieries, while Germany kept the rest. Thus the frontiers of Poland were at last clearly defined both in the east and in the west. The international position of Poland as an important barrier between Germany and Russia was stressed when she concluded in February 1921 an alliance with France, and in March of the same year an alliance with Rumania.

Many internal problems, however, still had to be solved. The first Constitution, of 17th March 1921, granted very wide powers to the Parliament, and left the President little more than a figurehead. Piłsudski disapproved of the Constitution, and he refused to stand as a candidate for

President. Professor Gabriel Narutowicz was elected by the votes of the Left and of the national minorities, Jews, Ukrainians, etc., but he was soon to become the victim of a ruthless murderer. General Sikorski became Prime Minister, and maintained order in the country, while Stanisław Wojciechowski was elected President. Sikorski and his foreign minister, Skrzynski, obtained the recognition of the eastern frontier of Poland by the Western Powers. The next Prime Minister, Grabski, carried through financial reform, and established the zloty as a stabilised currency. Frequent parliamentary conflicts caused a rapid succession of cabinets. The zloty again fell, there were differences of opinion as to the organisation of the army, and there was no longer a parliamentary majority, since the socialists withdrew their support of the Government coalition.

Piłsudski, who had withdrawn from political life and had spent some years writing books and articles, decided in the spring of 1926 to make a *coup d'état*, supported by socialists. On 12th May 1926 he entered Warsaw at the head of faithful regiments, and after three days of fighting secured the resignation of President Wojciechowski and of Witos, who was Prime Minister. The Parliament elected Piłsudski President, but he declined the rôle. On 30th May Professor Ignacy Mościcki was elected.

Since the May *coup d'état* authority was effectively in the hands of Piłsudski, although he was nominally only Minister of War, and sometimes Premier. Parliament was not dissolved. The zloty was definitely stabilised, and the Prime Minister, Professor Bartel, favoured a conciliatory home policy, while some of his successors had more authoritarian tendencies. There was a strong controversy on the subject of the Constitution, which in the main remained unchanged. When the opposition became active, some of its leaders, including Witos, Korfanty, and Liberman, were arrested and held for a short time in the Brest fortress. They left the country soon afterwards. The Government party secured a parliamentary majority, and voted on 23rd April 1935 a new Constitution,

granting wide powers to the President, who received the right of dissolving parliament, and of entrusting the person of his choice with the task of forming a Cabinet, responsible in the first place to himself.

During this period the Foreign Office was directed by August Zaleski, who favoured the traditional policy of collaboration with the West and the League of Nations. He was succeeded by Colonel Beck, who followed a different path toward the solution of impending problems. Poland still needed to solve the problem of relations with Lithuania. She was also continuously menaced by Germany, which claimed Pomorze, calling it "The Danzig Corridor," while Danzig itself occasioned also considerable friction. Relations with Russia were satisfactory, and on 25th July 1932 a pact of non-aggression was concluded between Poland and the Soviet. After this Eastern guarantee Piłsudski proceeded to obtain some security in the West by concluding, on 26th January 1934, a pact of non-aggression with Germany. The Germany of that time was not a serious danger, as the Reichswehr, theoretically 110,000 strong, was in fact only about twice that size. On 12th May 1935 Marshal Joseph Piłsudski died of cancer, and the whole of Europe shared in Poland's mourning when he was buried in the royal crypt of Wawel cathedral, where the remains of Poniatowski and Kościuszko had long rested.

The tremendous internal progress achieved by Poland since the restoration of her independence was perhaps its dominating feature. In spite of the fluctuations of the zloty, of the severe economic crisis of 1930-1933, the country was not only brought back to its pre-War condition, but it achieved a large advance. The terrible destruction of the War was made good, and the construction of railways, roads, and public utilities was carried on by all governments. The general level of civilisation and prosperity was increased, especially in the eastern provinces, which Russia had kept backward for a century. The ancient university (Vilna) was reopened and some new (Poznań) ones were established, as well as thousands of schools of

all grades. Industry was modernised and expanded to such an extent that an entirely new industrial region was built in Central Poland. A new port was built by Poland in Gdynia, and in a few years it attained the rank of the largest port in the Baltic. The total achievement of twenty years of independence in economic and cultural domains was probably greater than that of the preceding hundred years of subjection, and all the successive governments have their share in this achievement.

The authoritative form of government established by Pilsudski seemed to have become permanent, especially since the re-election of President Mościcki in 1933 for another term of seven years. The electoral law of July 1935 distorted the Constitution, and caused the opposition parties to withdraw from participation in elections, thus leaving the entire field to the Government party (monoparty). The situation also became somewhat abnormal by reason of the special position of the army chief, Marshal Smigły-Rydz, who was at the same time the protector of the pro-Government National Unity party. General Skladkowski was Prime Minister, and Joseph Beck was still at the Foreign Office.

But the balance of power was now being menacingly disturbed. Hitler introduced conscription, occupied the Rhineland, and then Austria. Poland made military preparations, but she could not keep up the pace financially, and in addition Polish foreign policy was by no means far-sighted. In October 1938 Germany forced Czechoslovakia to cede certain territories. The Polish Government secured the return of two small districts of Cieszyn from the Czechs, but the majority of Polish opinion criticised this step, realising the presence of an immediate German danger.

The situation became serious when Hitler annexed Bohemia in the form of a "Protectorate" in March 1939, and dominated "independent" Slovakia. Thus the length of the Polish-German frontier was suddenly increased by 700 kilometres, and Poland was now threatened from the south also. The Polish Government, aware of the danger, sought security in an understanding



with Great Britain, which had been cynically betrayed by Hitler. Declarations of Mutual Assistance were made on 31st March and 6th April. Later they were confirmed by the formal alliance between Britain and Poland signed on 25th August 1939.

It grew more and more obvious that Germany was determined on war, her intentions finding expression—for the time being—in the claim to Danzig, and ex-territorial rights across Polish Pomerania. On 28th April Hitler illegally denounced his pact of non-aggression with Poland, as well as the naval treaty with Britain. The position of Poland was simple: she desired peace with Germany, but not at the price of territorial concessions, which would inevitably be followed by others, and would lead directly to loss of independence. Poland was willing to accept a compromise but not a gradual enslavement. Public opinion in the country was absolutely unanimous on that point. While Britain was making a supreme effort to save peace, Poland was assisting by postponing general mobilisation in spite of the approaching danger. Acting on the advice of her allies, Poland did not mobilise until 31st August, and even on that date many Poles hoped that peace could still be saved. On 1st September at dawn all the airfields and principal railway stations, as well as the civilian population of open cities—such as Warsaw—were suddenly bombed by German aircraft, while several large mechanised armies began to invade the country without any declaration of war.

### *IX. Poland in the Present War*

Giving way to diplomatic pressure which was brought to bear on the Polish Government, and also with the object of manifesting her peaceful intentions, Poland postponed the mobilisation of her forces to the last moment. The postponed mobilisation meant that Poland had in the ranks of her army only one-quarter of the considerable total man-power of the country. Moreover, the enemy had a

tremendous superiority in armoured units and aircraft. To the 75 German infantry divisions, 15 motorised divisions, and 5000 aeroplanes, Poland could oppose only 22 mobilised infantry divisions, 8 cavalry brigades, 2 tank brigades, and only 370 modern first-line aircraft. The situation was made worse by the fact that the Germans destroyed in their first surprise attack many airfields and railway lines, making the concentration of troops exceptionally difficult.

Nevertheless they encountered a stubborn resistance, which often compensated by heroism for the inadequate armament of the Polish army. When first Britain and then France declared war on 3rd September there were in all the Polish towns enthusiastic manifestations of friendship for those who had kept their pledged word, and did not regard their obligations as a scrap of paper. The small-scale actions on the western front, however, did not relieve the German pressure on Poland, and no attempt was made by the Allied air forces to divert at least a fraction of the Luftwaffe from Poland. The German armies, led by their powerful armoured divisions, invaded Poland simultaneously from the west, from the north through East Prussia, and from the south across Slovakia, the total length of front being over 1600 kilometres. The Polish infantrymen fought unflinchingly, and even won several hand-to-hand encounters, but they were powerless against the combined onslaught of tanks and dive bombers. The cavalry made many charges reminiscent of Samosierra, and some regiments preferred wholesale massacre to retreat or surrender.

In the crucial days before and after the 7th of September five gigantic German armies advanced into Poland in a concentric attack. In this terrific onslaught the Germans launched against Poland the greater part of their infantry and almost the whole of their tanks and Air Force. Though fighting under uncommon odds, the Poles put up an heroic resistance.

General Kutrzeba, encircled by the enemy in Central Poland, attacked on the 9th and 10th in the direction of Lodz, which he took from the Germans. Now Kutrzeba waged the most sanguinary battle of the war, and then managed to break

through the German ring towards Warsaw, as did General Thomme. General Bortnowski resisted the enemy for a long time in Pomorze, while General Sosnkowski, who took over the southern front at the most difficult moment, opened a counter-offensive on 14th September. General Rómmel organised the defence of Warsaw, assisted by its heroic citizens, led by the Mayor, Stefan Starzynski. The whole population, including national minorities such as the Ukrainians, Ruthenians, and Jews, assisted in the defence of the country against the Germans, without recoiling from any sacrifice. Only the German minority, organised as a Fifth Column, added to the danger by its treacherous action, and even, as for instance at Bydgoszcz, organised armed rebellions. A severe battle raged near Kutno on 17th September, and the Polish front began to be stabilised on the 16th as the Polish armies near Kutno, Modlin, and Warsaw began to hold up the enemy pressure. New defence forces for a counter-offensive were being organised in the south-east of Poland, not yet reached by the enemy. It was then that the most unexpected and most tragic event happened.

The pact of non-aggression with Russia had never been denounced, and the relations between the two countries were entirely correct. Already, after the conclusion of the Soviet-German pact of 23rd August 1939, the Soviet Government had officially reassured Poland and had stated that the new pact was in no way detrimental to the good Polish-Russian relations. In consequence, there were hardly any Polish troops along the 1400 kilometres of the Polish-Soviet border. The Bolshevik armies, concentrated in secrecy, suddenly attacked Poland on 17th September at dawn. They encountered little resistance, for the whole strength of the country was employed in the terrific struggle against Germany. No one expected the unexpected Soviet attack, contrary to all the obligations of the Soviet Government.

The Polish Government and the President, who were at the time in south-eastern Poland, were faced by the danger of capture by the Soviet troops. President Mościcki therefore

designated the former Speaker of the Senate, Władysław Raczkiewicz, as his successor, according to the Constitution, and he then crossed the Rumanian frontier, together with other members of the Government. The Commander-in-Chief, Marshal Smigły-Rydz, also went to Rumania. A few army reserve units also crossed the Rumanian frontier, while some first-line regiments managed to break through to Hungary or to Lithuania.

The Polish-German war was not yet over. Isolated armies carried on the fighting, for the sake of honour, and in order to inflict on the enemy the maximum losses. The battle of Kutno proceeded, and General Przedzimirski, retreating in accordance with his orders from north to south, fought another important battle as late as 23rd September. General Kleeberg, with a largely improvised army, fought several battles in Polesie and Wolyn between 4th and 5th October. Generals were killed at the head of their men, bayonet in hand, while even small units carried on guerrilla warfare when any other form of resistance was impossible.

The eyes of Europe were turned for many days on the last outposts of Poland: Hel, Modlin, and Warsaw. A handful of Polish soldiers, surrounded on the very first day of the war, defended Westerplatte, in Danzig, even when all hope was lost. The coastal batteries of Hel, commanded by Admiral Unrug, defied the attacks of the enemy from the sea, from the air, and by land. The fortress of Modlin resisted for a long time, and Warsaw itself provided the sublime example of sacrifice. A city with 1,300,000 inhabitants, without any fortifications, stood a terrific siege. It was continuously bombed from the air and shelled by heavy guns. Whole streets were annihilated and scores of thousands lost their lives. The survivors carried on the fight, in spite of the shortage of water and food. The German tanks were met in the suburbs by the citizens of Warsaw and thrown back again and again. On 26th September Hitler proposed capitulation, but the heroic Mayor of Warsaw, Starzynski, and the commanding officer of the garrison rejected the offer. It was then

that the worst bombardment started, and went on for forty-eight hours without break. The defenders of Warsaw still held the enemy at bay, and even made sorties and bayonet attacks. But when their stocks of ammunition ran out, when all the hospitals were destroyed and water was unobtainable, they had to surrender. The soldiers had not one round of ammunition when the capitulation was signed on 28th September, on honourable terms. It was not until 1st October that the Germans could enter the ruined city. Modlin fell about the same time, on 30th September.

The young Polish Navy stood the test well. Most of its units escaped through the net of enemy blockade and joined the British Navy, with which they have been serving since. The odyssey of the submarine *Orzeł*, which navigated for nearly a month across minefields before reaching Britain, is widely known.

The German and Soviet armies shared the territory of Poland. The Bolsheviks at first gave Wilno to Lithuania with its immediate neighbourhood, though it has 70 per cent of Polish inhabitants; but they soon took it back, with the rest of the country. The dividing line, different from the so-called "Curzon Line," follows the rivers Plisa, Narew, Bug, and San, leaving on the Russian side several provinces with a purely Polish population, and areas in which the Poles constitute the largest national element, mingled with strong elements of Ukrainians and White Ruthenians.

The Germans started a brutal persecution, which shocked the world. There were mass executions, deportations, systematic looting, and a general tendency to destroy Polish culture, and especially the educated class. For instance all the professors of Cracow university were sent to a concentration camp, in which many of them died.

Some provinces of Poland, including Pomorze, with Danzig and Gdynia, Poznań, Torun, Łódź, and Katowice, were annexed to Germany, while the remainder became the "General Gouvernement," also incorporated with the Reich, but as a separate unit. All those steps are, of course, entire

illegal. The population of Poland does not recognise them as permanent, and it looks forward to the day when the legal Polish Government will resume its functions on Polish territory.

President Raczkiewicz, constitutionally designated by his predecessor, arrived in Paris and accepted, on 30th September 1939, the resignation of the former Cabinet, entrusting General Sikorski with the formation of a new one. General Sikorski became Prime Minister, while Professor Stroński and afterwards General Sosnkowski became Vice-Premiers. August Zaleski is Minister of Foreign Affairs, E. Strassburger of Finance, Professor Kot Minister of Home Affairs, J. Stańczyk Minister for Labour and Social Welfare, Professor Stroński (Information), Marian Seyda (Justice), and General Haller (National Education). All the principal Polish parties, from Left to Right, are represented in the Cabinet, which is intended to express the spirit of national unity. There is also a National Council, with members representing all sections of opinion. It is presided over by Ignacy Paderewski, the great patriot honoured by every Pole. After the resignation of Marshal Smigły-Rydz, in October 1939, General Sikorski became Commander-in-Chief, and immediately started work on re-organising the Polish Army, for the purpose of continuing the war against Germany.

Poles from all countries of Europe hurried to France to join the new army. Many of them escaped from occupied Poland at great risk. Four divisions and one infantry brigade were soon organised in France. The mountain brigade distinguished itself in the capture of Narvik, and then took part in the French campaign. Two of the Polish divisions were stationed on the Maginot Line, and two others were thrown into battle before they were properly trained. They went on fighting even after the French were in full retreat, and then managed to break through to Switzerland, where they were interned. Other units reached French ports and, thanks to the assistance of the British Navy, were able to reach Britain, where they continue their work.

When France capitulated, on 17th June 1940, the President, the Government, and the National Council unanimously decided to carry on the fight, together with Poland's British ally. The government and as much of the army as could be evacuated found friendly asylum on British soil. The army was reorganised, and the Polish squadrons serving with the R.A.F. achieved very remarkable results in air battles over the Channel and over London.

In these present days events frequently outstrip their description. Thus the uncompromising attitude of the Polish nation, which had its origin in idealistic impulses, continued unswervingly until 22nd June 1941, when Germany's sudden and unannounced attack on the U.S.S.R. created new, broader bases for Poland's inflexible faith in her rebirth and the Polish confidence in the alliance with Great Britain.

At one blow the posts of the German-Soviet demarcation line were swept away, though, unfortunately, the same blow brought tormented Poland new waves of war and destruction. This changed political situation was fully understood by the Polish Government headed by General Sikorski, and after lengthy negotiations, on 30th July 1941 the Government concluded an agreement with the U.S.S.R., which was signed in London. The agreement cancelled the Soviet-German pact of 1939 and established conditions for Polish-Soviet co-operation in the sphere of diplomatic relations, the freeing of prisoners and all Polish citizens detained, as well as the creation of a Polish army in Russia. This Polish-Soviet agreement was complemented by a statement by Mr Eden, British Foreign Minister, in the name of the Government of the United Kingdom.

The Polish-Soviet agreement formed the starting-point for a new phase in the Polish State's uninterrupted struggle to regain its independence and its territory. For independently of the Polish forces on British soil, the forces included in the Army of the Near East, and the Canadian forces, which as a Polish army are separately benefiting under the American Lease-Lend Act, a Polish army is now being formed in Russia,

under the command of General Anders. In addition, M. Stanislaw Kot, previously Minister for Home Affairs, has presented his credentials as Polish Ambassador to the U.S.S.R., in Moscow. Differences over the question of the negotiations for the Polish-Soviet Agreement led to the resignations of the Minister for Justice, M. Seyda, the Minister without portfolio, General Sosnkowski, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Count Zaleski. M. Stanislaw Mikolajczyk succeeded M. Kot as Minister for Home Affairs, H. Lieberman became Minister for Justice, K. Popiel Minister without portfolio, and the Polish Ambassador to London, Count Eduard Raczynski, took charge of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

The extension of German occupation to the rest of the Polish territory was distinguished by the monstrous shooting of a former Polish Prime Minister, Professor Bartel, and the arrest of a number of professors of the Lwow University and Polytechnic, in other words by incidents analogous to those which had occurred during the preceding period of incessant sufferings of the Polish nation and lands.

Among those who did not live to see Poland's liberation was Ignacy Paderewski, who died on distant American soil, in the midst of his labours for Poland, to which he devoted his last strength. His death profoundly shook not only the Polish nation, but all world opinion.

Poland's invincible faith in her future, her independence, her rights and her alliances is slowly beginning to come into its hour of triumph. This almost mystical Polish faith in the future and the inflexible struggle, carried on in all spheres and during even the worst of times in the spirit of the principle enunciated by Prince Poniatowski, "a struggle which knows no compromise with honour," is already bringing its everyday positive results, even if only in the unbroken harvest of successes achieved by the Polish air force, and the unbroken resistance of the entire nation.

The words of the Polish hymn, declaring that Poland shall never perish and that Poles will defend and recover their freedom, are being realised day in and day out.



## THE GROWTH OF POLISH CULTURE

THE fact that Poland accepted Christianity through the Church of Rome exerted a dominant influence on the cultural and social life of the kingdom, as well as on that of neighbouring countries. It was through the intermediary of Poland that eastern Europe made the acquaintance of the western culture of the Latin world. This position of Poland as an ambassador of western values in the East remained unaffected by the political evolution of the Continent. Whether in the eleventh, the sixteenth, or the twentieth century, the frontiers of Poland formed in the East the boundary of the cultural sphere of influence of the West. Beyond them opened the Eastern, Byzantine, world of Russia and Asia. It was far more than a dividing line between two States and two Churches: it was a meeting-point of two different conceptions of life, represented by Rome and Byzantium respectively.

The early period of Polish culture and literature followed largely the pattern common to most freshly converted nations of the Middle Ages. The knowledge of science, of writing, and of architecture was concentrated in the hands of the monastic clergy. The Polish architecture of the tenth and eleventh centuries was Roman in character, and the literature of the period was almost exclusively religious. The first historian of Poland, Gallus, who began his chronicle in 1113, was a monk, probably of French origin. His successor, Kadlubek, was a Pole, and he wrote misleading accounts of current events, terminating his chronicle in 1223, the year of his death. While those early chronicles were written in Latin, the Polish language had already produced literature in the thirteenth century, namely, the famous battle-hymn, "Bogurodzica" ("The Holy Virgin"), traditionally ascribed to Saint Adalbert.

The ecclesiastic architecture, at first dominated by the Benedictines, afterwards passed into the hands of the

Cistercians, Dominicans, and Franciscans. Later on the Gothic style penetrated deep into Poland, and in 1226 work on St Mary's Church in Cracow was started. At the same time education and culture ceased to be entirely a monastic monopoly. The influence of German civilisation met very early with a national Polish reaction. Archbishop Jakub Swinka (1285) was a prominent champion of polonism, as opposed to German customs and manners. He also favoured the use of the Polish language in official relations, although Latin for a long time retained its predominance.

During the political division of Poland into many principalities there were scribes and poets at most courts, but it was not until the reign of Casimir the Great that Cracow became the focal point of Polish cultural activity. It was for Poland a period of rapid progress, which left many splendid architectural monuments, and some writings of value, such as the *History of Janko z Czarnkowa* (1370-1384). In 1364 King Casimir founded a university in Cracow, the second oldest in Central Europe, Prague dating from 1348. This contributed very largely to the increased renown of Polish scholarship, and to the spread of Polish culture throughout the whole of central and eastern Europe.

The fifteenth century was for the Polish Commonwealth, which already included Lithuania, a period in which the work of the previous centuries yielded fruit. Cracow university became a seat of learning known and respected throughout Europe. It had such eminent professors as the astronomer Brudzewski, and many jurists and theologians. The great Polish historian Jan Dlugosz (died 1480) wrote his vast *History of Poland*, covering the whole story of the Polish State from its very inception until the date of the author's death. While Cracow university remained faithful to the scholastic method, the influence of the Renaissance was already making itself felt. The Italian Philip Buonacorsi and the Pole Grigore of Sanok were its forerunners in Poland.

At the same time the use of the Polish language and literature was growing rapidly, and in the middle of the fifteenth century

many translations of juridical and religious works from other languages were made in Poland.

Among other publications of that period one might mention a treatise on Polish orthography (1455) and Polish poems about the English reformer Wyclif. Printing was introduced in 1474, and about 1477 Wit Stwosz, one of the greatest masters of medieval sculpture, started work on the main altar of St Mary's in Cracow. One of the fullest expressions of the high standard of political thought and of literary achievement to be found in that period is the major work of Jan Ostroróg (died 1501), in which he took up a very modern attitude towards the problem of authority and government.

"The Golden Age" of the Sigismunds coincided for Poland with the end of the Middle Ages. It is true that Cracow university continued for a long time to nurse its old principles, and refused to acknowledge the innovations of the Renaissance, but there sprang up a number of private academies directed by enthusiasts of the new movement. In architecture, the transition was marked by the appearance of the Renaissance style. Queen Bona Sforza, who brought in her suite many Italian artists, exerted a considerable influence on the cultural life of the country, and she had Wawel castle rebuilt according to the best Italian models. The finest gem of pure Renaissance is the "Sigismonds' Chapel" in Wawel cathedral. In science Poland took the lead, instead of imitating other countries. The great pupil of Brudzewski, Nicolas Copernicus (1473-1543), wrote a treatise, entitled *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium*, in which he explained for the first time the rotation of the earth, and completely revolutionised the astronomical science of the time. Dlugosz was succeeded by historians such as Miechowita, Decius, and Wapowski, while Krzycki, Dantyszek, and Klemens Janicki wrote excellent Latin verse in Renaissance vein.

But the real development of literature came only with the final victory of Polish over Latin as a medium of expression. Nicolas Rej of Nagłowice (died 1569) expressed the spirit of the average Polish squire, favouring to some extent the

Reformation. Jan Kochanowski (c. 1584) wrote poetry ("David's Psalms" and "Elegies") which established him as the greatest writer of pre-Partition Poland.

The historians Bielski and Kromer carried on the work of the fifteenth-century writers, while science also made considerable progress. The physician Strus discovered the theory of heart pulsation. But it was in the domain of political and juridical (Przyluski) writings that the sixteenth century was most remarkable. Orzechowski wrote valuable political works, and the writings of Frycz Modrzewski (c. 1572), including his famous *De emendanda Republica* (ed. 1551), were translated into various foreign languages. It was only natural that religious discussion played a prominent part in Poland, a country which opened its doors to all those forced to leave their homes on account of their convictions. Protestants from all countries of Europe found asylum in Poland and frequently continued there their controversies. It is significant that Poland remained Catholic in spite of toleration, and that the Polish Catholic clergy and the prominent Bishop Hosius opposed the Reformation not by inquisition and persecution, but by open debate and spiritual influence. During the long reign of Sigismund III the great Jesuit preacher and writer Piotr Skarga (c. 1612) played a prominent part in keeping the country faithful to the Church. On the other hand the dissenters were split in numerous sects, as Aryans, Bohemian Brothers, and many others. The fact that the first complete translation of the books of the Old and New Testaments was the work of another Jesuit, Father Wujek, was also an important element in maintaining Catholicism.

Among the leading writers of the period were Gornicki, and the historians Heidenstein and Strykowski, who included in their studies the history of Lithuania and Ruthenia, then members of the Polish Commonwealth of nations.

The Chancellor Jan Zamoyski founded an academy in Zamosc, and another, specially meant for Ruthenians, in Ostróg, but they declined after the death of their founder and protector. Towards the end of the seventeenth century the

political distress of Poland found a counterpart in a lowering of the literary and artistic standards, which had attained a remarkably high level during the two previous centuries. In the beginning of the seventeenth century there were still many good writers, such as Klonowicz, Szymonowicz, and Zimorowicz, authors who, unlike most of their predecessors, were not members of the nobility. There was the great Latin poet Sarbiewski (*c.* 1640), Piotr Kochanowski, and the historian Piasecki (*c.* 1649).

It was then that there came the period of continuous wars, of "The Deluge" and of the unending Turkish campaigns of Sobieski, which had a harmful influence on the cultural and intellectual life of the country, and on that spirit of tolerance which was the dominant feature of "The Golden Age." There were, however, even then several writers of talent, such as Twardowski, Morsztyn (*c.* 1693), the satirical poet Opaliński, and the historian Starowolski. There was also the able writer Maksymiljan Fredro (*c.* 1679), but he rather defended certain political failings then existing in Poland. Perhaps the finest contribution of that period to Polish literature were the numerous memoirs which appeared. Those of Jan Pasek (*c.* 1700) provide a very complete, interesting, and picturesque description of the life of Polish nobility in the seventeenth century. The reign of Sobieski coincided with the flourishing of the poet and historian Kochowski and of Waclaw Potocki, the author of epic poems of some merit.

The rule of the Saxon kings stifled the intellectual life of Poland, and there was very little of value in the literature of their reigns. Poems written in a curious mixture of Latin and Polish were the fashion of the day. The tradition of historical writing, however, was still maintained by men like Kasper Niesiecki. There were some good memoirs, but most of the literary work of the time was distorted by violent controversies between various parties, and political pamphlets provided the bulk of publications.

Nevertheless there was some promise of new light during that temporary obscurity. There were the writings of King

Stanisław Leszczyński, and those of the brothers Załuski, who founded the great library bearing their name. Stanisław Poniąkowski, the father of the future king, was also an author of political and literary books. Stanisław Konarski, a priest rivalling the Jesuits in learning, collected ancient laws (*Volumina Legum*) and wrote the memorable work *Of Good and Effective Counsels*, forecasting a far-reaching political reform (1760). The art and architecture of the period were dominated by the Baroque style, and the Saxon kings built some palaces on the Dresden model.

The reign of Stanisław August Poniąkowski saw a revival of culture, which largely contributed to a general national awakening. The work of the Commission of Education, established in 1773, achieved very remarkable results in a relatively short time. The handbooks specially written for the State schools were in some cases original works well ahead of the general state of knowledge of the time. A new type of citizen was moulded in the civil and military colleges, which were run on modern lines and included science as well as classics in their curricula. Bishop Ignacy Krasicki was a poet of great merit, especially as a satirist, while Trembecki, Bohomolec, Węsierski, Książnin, the sentimental Karpiński, and Niemcewicz formed a whole new school of literature, enjoying the personal support of the king. Adam Naruszewicz was a historiographer who prepared an extremely substantial chronicle of Poland, using all the documents which were available at the time. Hugo Kołłątaj was a political writer who understood the evils of the contemporary system, and offered remedies showing remarkable forethought. Stanisław Staszic was a writer who caused by his activity many reforms, and who was extremely modern in his thought. He continued the work of Konarski in the sphere of education, and had a valuable influence on the youth of Poland. Kitowicz (c. 1804) wrote memoirs which to-day supply the key to the understanding of his times, while Polish science owed its revival to the brothers Śniadecki and Poczobut.

The Polish national theatre made its appearance in 1765.

There had been Polish plays and theatres since the sixteenth century, but the performances, whether at the Royal Court, in the palaces of the magnates, or in Jesuit and Piarist colleges, were irregular, and did not attain a high standard. The actor-producer Bogusławski founded in the eighteenth century the modern Polish theatre, which soon became equal to any in Europe. There was a strong French influence in Polish art at that time, and the architecture of the Poniatowski period, exemplified by the elegant Łazienki palace, distinctly bore its traces. Stanisław August Poniatowski, himself an author and a connoisseur of art, encouraged the development of literature, and assembled writers and artists at his famous "Thursday Dinners." The last quarter of the eighteenth century is known in Poland as the "Stanisław Period" because of the part which the king played in the intellectual development of the country.

The downfall of the Republic had a powerful influence on the intellectual life of Poland. This actually became intensified, since literature and art remained the only outlets for national creative thought and emotion. The Polish literature of that period was strongly patriotic in character. Science too was steadily developing, and stressing its Polish origin.

The Napoleonic campaigns gave to Poland her national anthem "Jeszcze Polska nie zginęła" ("Poland is still alive"), which was the song of the legionaries of Dąbrowski, sometimes known as the "Dąbrowski Mazurek." Among the poets of that period were Brodzinski, Woronicz, and Malczewski, while scholarship was represented by Czacki, Bantke, and Linde—the author of the monumental dictionary of the Polish language. The university of Wilno, founded by Stefan Batory in the sixteenth century, had a relatively short period of glorious development in the early years of the nineteenth century, when it had among its professors some of the best Polish scholars of the century and among its undergraduates Adam Mickiewicz. The Lyceum of Krzemieniec was also an important cultural centre. Several Polish academies of science and other learned societies were founded about that time, including the Ossolineum of Lwów (1817). It was

characteristic that even in that period of political subjection Polish culture was dominant within an area far exceeding that of the strictly Polish territory in the ethnographical sense.

The tragic failure of the 1830-1831 insurrection gave birth to the "Great Emigration." Since every form of independent intellectual activity was prohibited in the part of Poland under Russian rule, notably in Warsaw and Wilno, most of the Polish writers and artists had to leave the country, and they assembled mainly in Paris. The greatest men in Polish letters, including Adam Mickiewicz, spent a large part of their creative life in France. Mickiewicz, the author of sonnets and romantic poems, the writer of the national epic *Pan Tadeusz*, achieved the rank of the spiritual leader of Poland in his *Forefathers* and "Pilgrims' Books." Julius Słowacki, influenced by Byron in his youth, wrote some of the most beautiful Polish poetry ("Beniowski"), including many tragedies and dramas. His influence also reached far beyond the field of literature alone. The third of the great trinity of contemporary writers of genius was Krasiński, a philosopher-poet, who wrote among other works the two great dramas *The Undivine Comedy* and *Iridion*, in which he foreshadowed the conflicts of modern times. Mickiewicz and Słowacki were buried in the Royal Crypt of the Wawel castle in Cracow, as the equals of kings.

Besides the great three, the Paris Emigration included many other poets of talent. There was Goszyczynski and later on Norwid. The whole of this poetry is usually included in the "romantic" school as opposed to the pseudo-classical literature of the time of King Stanisław August. The ideas expressed by the poets evolved in the course of time into a national philosophy, the so-called Messianism, which attributed to the Polish people the Messianic rôle of "Christ of Peoples" suffering martyrdom to redeem humanity and to bring about a future of justice and freedom.

While the Emigration writers attained the highest level of achievement, there was also a Polish literature in the country



itself. In the part of Poland held by Austria there were historians like Bielowski and Szajnocha, poets like Ujejski, Lenartowicz, and Pol, as well as a number of novelists. In the provinces occupied by Prussia there was also a strong intellectual activity, notably in the sphere of philosophy (Libelt), in which Poland had formerly produced a notable and original thinker, Hoene-Wronski. The interest in science was fostered by Poles working abroad, and also by the Warsaw Academy.

There came, however, a moment when the greatest minds departed (Mickiewicz, 1855, Słowacki, 1849, Krasiński, 1859) and the tragic outcome of the 1863 insurrection stifled the energy of the nation for some time. The older writers continued their work, and some new talent appeared—including Zaleski, the most eminent Polish playwright Fredro, and the lyrical poet Asnyk, but the general tendency inclined towards critical analysis rather than profound emotion. The work of the Cracow school of historians, probing into the causes of the downfall of Poland, was largely responsible for such a state of mind. Poetry was superseded by prose. The period produced excellent novelists, such as the prolific writer of historical fiction Kraszewski (1887), the highly gifted woman novelist Elisa Orzeszkowa, and the master of prose and profound thinker Boleslas Prus (1908). Foremost as to influence and fame ranked Sienkiewicz (1916), the Nobel laureate and celebrated author of historical novels, in which he depicted past ages of Polish (*Trilogy, Crusaders*) and general history (*Quo vadis*).

The Polish theatre of that time achieved a high level with the combined art of excellent dramatists (Zapolska, Perzynski, Rittner), producer (Pawlikowski), and many excellent artists, one of whom, Modrzejewska, attained world-wide fame.

In the domain of science, history held a distinguished place, thanks to fine scholars, such as Szujski (1883), Kalinka, Liske, and the leading and original historian Bobrzynski, author of a popular Polish history. In all other branches of science Poland maintained her fine tradition of scholarship.

Philosophical thought was represented by Cieszkowski. Polish youth studied at the great European centres of science and returned to work in the country. The contributions of Polish scientists (Rostafinski, Smoluchowski, Rozwadowski, Gumpłowicz, and many others) not only make Poland rank with other nations in the field of science, but in certain instances place her ahead, to name only Curie-Skłodowska. Towards the end of the nineteenth and in the beginning of the twentieth century new currents of thought appeared in Poland, as the forerunners of the movement which culminated in the return to independence. The great Cracow poet, playwright, and painter, Wyspianski, who wrote the famous symbolical play *Wesele* (*The Wedding*), was a representative of "Young Poland," and of the instinctive knowledge of approaching deliverance, Żeromski was a modern novelist of remarkable talent, while Reymont wrote a rural epic, *The Peasants*, and won the second Nobel Prize for Poland. Other leading writers included Strug, Przybyszewski, Sieroszewski, Berent Kasprovicz, Staff, Tetmajer, etc. The eminent jurist O. Balzer initiated the revival of historic investigation into the legislative structure of the Old Polish State, while Askenazy initiated new historical studies. In the period preceding the Great War, Warsaw was a centre of the so-called positivism, represented by Świętochowski, while Cracow was the focal point at which all Polish intellectuals met in relative freedom, thanks to the university, and to the learned societies existing there.

Among the historians there were Finkel, Dembiński, Kutrzeba, St Zakrzewski, Halecki, Konopczyński, Kolanowski, Skałkowski, the historian of culture Kot, the military historian Kukiel, St Tarnowski, Brueckner, Chrzanowski, Kleiner, the Polish literary historians, etc. Polish mathematicians, Sierpiński in the first place gained distinction in the world of science. Very prominent among professors of other specialities were: Abraham, Włtkowski, Zieliński Thaddeus (hon. a.a. Dr, Oxford), Czekanowski, Białobrzęski a physicist, Estreicher a jurist, Dyboski, social and historian specialising in English culture and literature, and many others. Poland

was well represented at all the congresses of the world by scholars at Cracow, Lwów, and Warsaw.

In spite of the exhausting effect of the war, independent Poland carried on that work and achieved some notable results, especially in the sphere of dramatic art. Besides the older writers of pre-war days there were new talents, like the novelists Kaden-Bandrowski, Kossak-Szczucka, Goetel, Nowakowski, Nałkowska, Dąbrowska, Kuncewiczowa, Parandowski and others, the excellent translator of French literature Boy-Żeleński, the play-writers Rostworowski and Nowaczynski, the poets Lechoń, Tuwim, Pawlikowska, Wierzyński, Iwaszkiewicz, and many others who are still active to-day and may yet prove their worth. Poland's tragic reverses in the present war have inspired Słonimski and Baliński to some of their best poems, written in London.

#### *A Few Words about Polish Music and Painting*

While Polish architecture and plastic art were frequently influenced by foreign examples, as was the literature of certain periods, the music of Poland was always based on its own original elements. The Polish folk-songs, very fully collected by Kolberg, have their origin in the ancient Slavonic tradition. The first Polish composer whose name remained associated with his work was Nicolas Gomułka in the sixteenth century. In the eighteenth century there was a strong revival of Court music, and the Polish opera was founded in 1778. But the international renown of Polish music is due mainly to Frederic Chopin (1810-1849). Although his father was of French origin, Chopin was an ardent Polish patriot, and his music acquainted the world with the Polonaise and the Mazurek. He was followed by Stanisław Moniuszko (1872), the father of Polish opera, also by Wieniawski, Karłowicz, and Karol Szymanowski.

Famous singers such as Mme Sembricz-Kochańska, De Reszke, Jan Kiepura, helped to spread the fame of Polish music in the world. The greatest of the Polish musicians is

certainly Ignacy Paderewski, who was also a composer of merit, and a man who has played a prominent part outside the world of music. Among other outstanding musicians known all over the world we must mention Huberman, Hofman, Rubinstein. The artists of the younger generation, such as the pianist Witold Małcużynski, have made their mark.

Early Polish painting was largely an imitation of foreign schools of art, but there were many good miniature painters, mural artists, and portrait painters. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Italian influence was predominant, and many Italian artists, such as Baciarelli, were employed by the kings of Poland, not only to adorn their palaces, but also to train young Polish pupils. It is from the reign of Stanisław Poniąkowski, in the second part of the eighteenth century, that Poland has had an entirely original style of painting represented by Norblin, Smuglewicz, Orłowski and Michałowski. Later on there came Rodakowski, Grottger (the artist of the 1863 insurrection), Juliusz Kossak, and Siemiradzki (1902). But there is one painter who holds a special position in Poland—similar to that of Sienkiewicz in literature—Matejko, the author of magnificent canvases representing the high-lights of Polish history (died 1893). Among other great Polish painters there were Brandt, the Gierymski brothers, Pochwalski, Aksentowicz, Ajdukiewicz, Fałat, Chelmoński, Malczewski, Weiss, Sichulski, Wyczółkowski, Lenz, Boznańska, Mehoffer, the designer of stained glass. The great poet Wyspiański was also a painter of the first rank.

In independent Poland the Cracow and Warsaw Academies of Art were centres encouraging a large number of gifted painters. The best artists of that period were Wojciech Kossak, Norblin jun., Pruszkowski, Skoczylas, Stryjeńska, Witkiewicz, etc. Sculpture was well represented by Dunikowski, Szymanowski, Kuna, Wittig, Ostrowski, Zamoyski and others. The present war naturally interrupted their work and cut short the very active development of the arts in Poland.

## THE TERRITORY AND POPULATION OF POLAND

THIS story of Poland's history and culture must be closed by the presentation of up-to-date statistics as to her situation in 1939. We give the bare figures, merely taking into consideration certain comparative factors, so that the reader can build up his own picture of the positive and negative aspects of Poland's geopolitical structure.

Obviously we must base these figures on the final, or rather the only reliable, statistics for the year 1939, as these are the only data which can indicate the modifications effected during the present war, which are in the nature of temporary annexations and occupations.

In 1939, the territory of the Polish State, taking into account the two counties and strips of territory recovered from Czechoslovakia, was 389,720 square kilometres, of which the gains in 1938 were 1086 square kilometres.

This territory of contemporary Poland—*i.e.* Poland as she was constituted during the years 1918 to 1920—comprised barely a third of the greatest geographical dimensions of the former Polish-Lithuanian State. In the time of Kazimierz Jagiellonczyk in 1492 this amounted to 1,115,000 square kilometres (excluding feudal lands comprising 148,000 square kilometres). In 1618 Poland comprised 1,017,000 square kilometres (exclusive of feudal lands). But before the Partitions Poland still possessed 732,500 square kilometres, so that twentieth-century Poland occupied barely 53.1 per cent of eighteenth-century Poland.

In this twentieth-century Poland hardly 11 per cent of the area consisted of land regained from Prussia, or from the German State, the majority of the area, 68 per cent, being land regained from Russia. Whereas before the Partitions, in the eighteenth century, Poland was smaller only than Russia in area among the European States, twentieth-century Poland ranks sixth in area of the European States, the order

being—Soviet Russia, Germany (583,000 square kilometres with Austria and Sudetenland, but excluding Czechoslovakia), France, Spain, and Sweden. However the territorial factor is not the decisive one. Finland, for instance, has 383,000 square kilometres, and Great Britain occupies only 245,000 square kilometres of Europe.

The true picture of Poland's territorial situation is gained from a realisation of the enormous extent of her frontier line, which altogether amounts to 5548 kilometres. It has to be pointed out as characteristic of these frontiers that among the larger states (excluding Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Switzerland) Poland alone has a minimum sea frontier of 140 kilometres, while her land frontiers (*i.e.* without the Bay of Puck) constitute 97.5 per cent of her total length of boundary. Before Germany's occupation of Czechoslovakia Poland's frontier with Germany amounted to exactly 1912 kilometres, or 34.5 per cent of the total Polish frontier. There was a radical change in this situation when in 1938 the "secure frontier" with Czechoslovakia, which previously amounted to 984 kilometres, was abolished. After the changes of 1938 and 1939 some 200 kilometres of this sector consisted of frontier with Hungary, and a little short of 800 kilometres, along both the Czech Protectorate and also the state of Slovakia, went to increase the actual and militarily important Polish-German frontier. If to this be added the 121 kilometres of Poland's frontier with the Free City of Danzig, we reach the total of 2800 kilometres of frontier from which the Germans opened their offensive against Poland. Of this total 607 kilometres consisted of Poland's frontier with Eastern Prussia. In any case over 50 per cent of Poland's frontiers were open to a direct land attack from Germany.

Next to Poland's length of frontier with Germany comes her frontier with the Soviet Union, or Russia, which amounts to 1412 kilometres, or 25.5 per cent of Poland's total length of frontier. The rest consists of 507 kilometres of frontier with Lithuania, 347 kilometres bordering on Rumania, and 106 kilometres bordering on Latvia. Statistical publications

issued by German propaganda organs in 1937, during the existence of Czechoslovakia as a State, defined three-quarters of Poland's frontiers as "bad." In 1939 it transpired that in reality Poland's "secure" frontiers did not amount to more than some 12-15 per cent.

In Poland's case the data which decisively indicate the strength of a State—namely, the population statistics—provide an incomparably more satisfactory picture than the territorial figures. Before the Partitions in the eighteenth century Poland was second only to Russia in the extent of her territory, but in size of population she was surpassed by Russia, France, Austria, and Great Britain. Territorially the Poland of those days was second in Europe, but in population she was fifth. On the other hand, twentieth-century Poland occupied sixth place both territorially and in size of population.

For earlier Poland there exist hypothetical estimates of population which give the figure of approximately 1,000,000 inhabitants in the time of Casimir the Great. For the times of Stefan Batory the population of the Crown—*i.e.* of Poland—is estimated at 3,800,000 inhabitants, a further 1,500,000 being estimated for Lithuania. In the times of the earlier Wazas the population of the Polish-Lithuanian State grew very considerably, but owing to wars, the devastation of the country and epidemics, in the second half of the seventeenth century there was a temporary decline in the population. Not until the times immediately preceding the Partitions—*i.e.* the year 1772—do we possess estimates more or less exact, these being arrived at both on the basis of Polish data and on later censuses of the Partitioning States in the annexed provinces. To-day the population in 1772 can be fixed with certainty at the round figure of twelve million souls. The distinguishing feature of the composition of the Polish population in those days was the, for Europe, disproportionately high percentage of nobility, consisting not only of magnates and richer landowners, but quite poor and petty nobility, economically undistinguishable from peasants, but possessing all the highest privileges of the nobility. Towards the end of the Republic's separate existence

the nobility can be estimated as at least 800,000, and in all probability 1,000,000. In the areas inhabited by Poles the nobility considerably exceeded 10 per cent of the population. This phenomenon explains very many of the features of Poland's history. A second characteristic of the composition of population in former Poland, one which with slight modification has lasted down to the present time, is the fact that it includes the highest percentage of Jews to the total population in the world. This section is concentrated almost entirely in the cities and smaller towns, and supports itself almost entirely by trade and middlemen activities, and to a small extent on artisanic crafts and industry.

We turn to the present distribution of the population of the Polish State. According to exact data for the end of 1938 the total population amounted to 34,780,000, and according to estimates made for 1939 it was then 35,100,000, while towards the end of 1939 it reached 35,500,000. In this regard also Poland occupies sixth place in Europe, and eleventh place among the states of the world. According to data for the end of 1936, in size of population Poland followed Soviet Russia, Germany, the United Kingdom (47,300,000), Italy, and France (41,900,000), and far surpassed Spain (25,000,000) and Rumania (19,400,000), not to mention smaller states. This splendid demographic position of Poland also reveals one of the most important advances in population in all Europe.

For in 1921, after the creation of the new State, the population of Poland hardly amounted to 27,400,000, but ten years later, according to the 1931 census, it was already 32,348,000, and in 1939 exceeded 35,100,000. For purposes of comparison one need only point out that the growth of population in England, Wales, and Scotland in the decade 1920-1930 (a period of satisfactory increase) was only 2,022,000, while during the same period the increase in Germany was only 5,103,000, and in France 2,625,000, where during the period 1930 to 1938 it declined to an aggregate total of barely 115,000. The explanation of this phenomenon is to be found in the extraordinarily strong natural increase in Poland, which is



at an average of some 400,000 per annum, although this increase is inequitably distributed between the Eastern provinces (higher) and the Western provinces (lower), and also during the period 1922 to 1936 it undoubtedly showed a tendency to decline. For this increase, which in 1930 was still 15.5 per thousand inhabitants, fell in 1932 to 13.8 per thousand, in 1933 to 12.3 per thousand, in 1934 to 12.2, in 1935 to 12.1 per thousand, in 1936 to 12.1 per thousand, in 1937 to 10.9 per thousand, and in 1938 to 10.7 per thousand. One need only point out that the average increase for all Europe is 7 per thousand. The comparative figures for England and Wales during the same years, 1930 to 1938, are as follow: 1926-1930 4.4 per thousand, then annually from 1932 they are 3.3, 2.1, 3.0, 3.0, 2.7, 2.5, 3.5 per thousand. In the case of France there was an increase of 1.1 per thousand in 1934, but from 1935 onward the figures show a decrease in population which in 1938 amounted to 0.8 per thousand. In all Europe only Soviet Russia, where for that matter statistics are far from reliable, shows a general greater increase than Poland, though of recent years Holland also comes into this category.

It is characteristic that although the increase in the numbers of Greek Orthodox in Poland is slightly higher than the increase of Catholics, the increase in Catholic population is in general normally high. For instance, in the years 1931-1935 the increase among Roman Catholics in Poland was 13.1 per thousand, of Greek-Catholics 12.5 per thousand, and of Jews—*i.e.* those confessing Jewish faith—only 9.5 per thousand. So that although, owing to the comparative state of prosperity and development of medical care among them, the professing Jewish population in Poland has the lowest mortality of all the religious groups in Poland, none the less the comparative increase is diminished, not only as the result of emigration, but also primarily as the result of a lower birth-rate. Among confessing Jews in Poland this is barely 19.2 per thousand per annum, whereas the Roman Catholic—*i.e.* Polish—population has a birth-rate of 27.6 per thousand.

We turn to data concerning the composition of the popula-

tion in nationality and religious regards. To enable the reader to obtain an objective view, we give not only the exact statistics under the heading declaration of nationality in the population census—*i.e.* the nationality statistics—but also statistics on the declaration of religion. Obviously these two sets of statistics must differ, for it can happen that many citizens declaring themselves Greek Catholic or Jewish by religion regard themselves as Polish and give Polish as their mother tongue, just as among the Evangelical group there is a very strong percentage of true and patriotic Poles. The statement erroneously or deliberately made by foreign sources to the effect that the figure for 100 per cent Poles in the Polish State was identical with the figure of declared adherents of the Roman Catholic Church is quite false.

According to the declarations of the 1931 census, 21,993,400 citizens declared Polish to be their mother tongue, and therefore Polish as their nationality, this being 68.9 per cent of the population. But 3,222,000 declared Ukrainian to be their mother tongue, and 1,219,600 Ruthenian. In so far as ethnography is concerned these two figures must be considered in conjunction, since the difference is more a matter of degree of national consciousness than of language. Because of this, to use the political language of to-day, the Ukrainian population for 1931 should be given as 4,441,600, or 13.9 per cent. White Russians or Ruthenians comprised 989,000, or 3.1 per cent. There were 741,000 declarations of German as the mother tongue, or 2.3 per cent. Russians numbered 138,700, and other languages 878,600, or 2.8 per cent, this figure including Lithuanians, who in Poland numbered some 93,000, and Czechs (colonists in Volhynia), some 30,000. Among the Jewish population 2,732,600 gave Jewish (Yiddish or Hebrew) as their national language.

Now to turn to religious statistics, also according to the last census figures, in 1931. At that time 20,670,100 people, or 64.8 per cent of the population, declared themselves Roman Catholics, and there were 3,336,200 Greek Catholics, or 10.4

per cent, so that in 1931 Poland had an aggregate of 75.2 per cent Catholics. There were 3,762,500 Greek Orthodox, or 11.8 per cent, 835,200 Evangelicals, or 2.6 per cent, and 3,113,900 people confessed the Jewish faith, this being 9.8 per cent of the total population of Poland. Numerous other faiths account for quite small figures and aggregated barely 0.6 per cent of the population.

To complete the picture we also give the absolute and percentage figures for nationalities as they appeared according to scientific estimates in 1939. In that year there were estimated to be 24,388,000 Poles in Poland, or 69 per cent, which figures deviate only very slightly from those of 1931. Ukrainians, including those speaking Ruthenian, aggregated 4,890,000, or 13.8 per cent; Jews declaring Hebrew or Yiddish, 2,916,000, or 8.2 per cent; White Russians (Ruthenians), 1,127,000, or 3.2 per cent; in addition to which we must take note of the existence of 803,000 "locals"—*i.e.* people living in the province of Polesie, speaking partly White Russian, partly Ukrainian, yet not regarding themselves as belonging to either of these two nationalities, but describing themselves as "belonging to here"—*i.e.* Polesie. According to the same estimates, before the War barely 803,000 people declared themselves of German tongue, and therefore German nationality, in Poland. This figure comprised 2.3 per cent of the total population. But this small proportion was a minority so widely distributed over the western provinces of Poland that in not one county of Poland did the Germans exceed 7-9 per cent of the total population for that administrative area. It need only be said that because of this extremely low percentage, even in face of the very friendly attitude of the Polish authorities at this period, the Germans in Poland were unable to elect a single deputy or senator to Parliament (unlike other minorities such as the Ukrainians or Jews), and so the President of the Republic twice nominated two Germans as senators (one-fourth of the later Polish Senate was created by nomination), so as artificially to assure the Germans the political representation which they

could not assure themselves owing to their small numbers and extensive distribution.

Poland never possessed areas with any high percentage of German population, just as she never possessed, and still does not possess, territories containing a Russian population. One has only to glance at any map, even those published by Soviet Russia, to realise that the Polish State is not contiguous with, nor do any national Polish settlements border with, the settlements of the Russian population, but that Polish settlements do mingle with Ukrainian and White Russian populations. Furthermore, in 1939 the frontiers of the Polish State were contiguous only with the Ukrainian and White Russian Republics of the Soviet Union, and nowhere does Poland possess a frontier with the Russian Federation of Soviet Republics. This is an irrefutable truth, yet it is the least known and understood in Europe to-day.

Just as there is no Russian minority problem in Poland, so there is no Lithuanian problem, despite all that world propaganda has written concerning Wilno and the Wilno district. One need only adduce two figures: in the province of Wilno, inclusive of the city, 761,700 citizens declared themselves of Polish nationality, whereas only 65,300 persons declared themselves of Lithuanian nationality; in the Bialystok province there were 845,700 Poles, and only 13,100 persons declared themselves to be Lithuanians. From the aspect of national composition there was no Lithuanian problem in Poland. On the other hand a Jewish problem does exist in Poland, for, as we have said, Poland has the largest percentage of Jews to the total population in the world, namely 9.8 per cent, according to the religious statistics, whereas only Lithuania has as much as 7 per cent of Jews; while in other countries with a large Jewish population, such as Rumania, Hungary, and Latvia, the percentage varies between 5 and 6 per cent. To round off this picture of the national and religious problem it has to be emphasised that all the national minorities in the state of Poland fulfilled their obligations from the first day of the outbreak of war, 1st September 1939, with the exception

of the German minority. The last-named not only failed to fulfil its obligations, but often even undertook subversive activity, especially on a large scale at Bydgoszcz.

The whole of the above-mentioned area and population was administered centrally through the Council of Ministers, the Ministry for Home Affairs, responsible to the President of the Republic, and the legislative bodies, the Sejm and Senate. Only the province of Silesia has its own provincial Sejm. The State was divided into sixteen provinces (*województwo*), and the city of Warsaw, which ranked as a province. The provinces were administratively divided into 264 counties (*powiaty*). The counties were divided into 611 towns (including Warsaw), 3195 rural boroughs (groups of villages in a district), which internally (except for Silesia) were composed of village communes (*gromady*) (40,533). The towns and rural boroughs had their locally autonomous governing bodies in the form of urban or rural councils, with locally elected urban or rural authorities.

To complete this part of our description of the Polish State we must note the administrative facts created by the German and Soviet occupation in September 1939. The first line of demarcation between German and Soviet occupied areas was established on 22nd September 1939, being modified on the 28th. A glance at the map shows that this line has nothing in common, nor is it identical, with the "Curzon Line." It runs from the Augustov Canal and the locality of Raczki along the frontier between Poland and Eastern Prussia to the River Pissa. From this river it runs towards the Narvii, then along the Narvii to the locality of Ostroleka along the bank of the Nurec, and then along the Bug; it turns off from the Bug to the locality of Krystynopol, and then to Sieniawa through Belzec and Cieszanow; from Sieniawa it runs along the River San as far as the Polish-Hungarian frontier (see Map 2).

By this demarcation line 188,705 square kilometres (72,866 square miles) of territory fell to German occupation, of which 752 square kilometres fell to the fictitious Slovak occupation.

In this territory the total population, according to the 1931 census and calculations made by L. Grodzicki, was 20,336,000, and, according to the same writer's calculations, on 31st August 1939 it possessed 22,140,000 inhabitants. Of the above-mentioned occupied territory the provinces of Pomorze, Poznania, part of the provinces of Warsaw, Lodz, Kielce, Cracow, and Silesia, in all 192,490 square kilometres (35,714 square miles), were proclaimed to be "incorporated with the German Reich." In this "incorporated" territory there was a population of 10,568,000. In the province of Poznania Poles constituted 92 per cent of the total population, in Pomorze 91 per cent, and in Silesia 93 per cent. The rest of the German-occupied territory, consisting of 95,463 square kilometres and a population of some 11,542,000, was administratively taken over by the so-called General Government of Occupied Territories, to-day called briefly the General Government, with the seat of its central authorities not at Warsaw but in Cracow.

The Soviet occupation embraced 201,015 square kilometres, or about 77,620 square miles. 8336 square kilometres, with 537,000 inhabitants, including the city of Wilno, were temporarily ceded by the Soviets to Lithuania, despite the fact that the Lithuanians in these areas do not exceed 8 per cent of the total population, whereas Poles in the "Wilno area returned to Lithuania" constitute 69.2 per cent. Needless to say, these territories were later annexed to Soviet rule, together with all the rest of Lithuania. For the territory of former Soviet-occupied Poland the 1931 census gave a population of some 13,199,000. Of these areas, which the Soviet authorities unjustifiably declared to be non-Polish, the part taken from Warsaw province showed a population 90 per cent of which was pure Polish, while other provinces, such as Wilno, had 59.7 per cent, Nowogrodek 52.4 per cent, Tarnopol 49.5 per cent, and Lwów, as a province, 57.7 per cent.

By way of comparison it is sufficient to note that, while in the German-occupied areas the Polish population constitutes on

the average 86.3 per cent of the total, in the Soviet-occupied areas it averaged 40 per cent, and that with this percentage the Poles constituted the largest single national element in the areas. For the Ukrainians have a bare 34 per cent, the White Ruthenians and Jews 8 per cent each, and other nationalities only an insignificant percentage of the total population.

The outbreak of the Soviet-German war on 22nd June 1941 led immediately to the elimination of the demarcation line, which the Germans had previously sought to represent to the world as a final partition of Poland between her two neighbours. In consequence of operations down to the date of writing, the entire territory of the Polish State is now temporarily under the administration of German occupant authorities. So far the German authorities have incorporated the three southern provinces of the former Soviet-occupied area, *i.e.* Tarnopol, Stanislawow, and the rest of Lwów province, with the Government General centred at Cracow for administrative purposes, thus once more for practical purposes confirming the inseparability of these territories economically and administratively from the rest of Poland.

The rest of the territory formerly under Soviet occupation is still under German military administration, though proposals have been put forward for its inclusion either with the Government General or with the Ostland province which the Germans are planning. We note these changes simply to record them, while, of course, fully realising how provisional they are. The demarcation of 1939 has gone; undoubtedly these further attempts at administrative demarcation will also disappear.

## POLAND'S ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL POSITION

To convey a true idea of Poland's economic strength we do not give hypothetical estimates of the national capital, but precisely determined valuation of her share in the world's agricultural, mining, and industrial production as these were calculated in the year 1929. According to these calculations the value of Polish production, Poland being an agricultural rather than an industrial country, amounted to 19 milliard zlotys, whereas the comparative production of the United Kingdom was 82 milliards, of Germany 115 milliards, of France 76 milliards, and of Italy 35 milliards. After Poland came Spain with 17 milliards, Rumania with 11 milliards, and Hungary with 7 milliards. But while this figure places Poland in a high position among European countries, her production appears in a less favourable light when reckoned per head of population. For in that case the Polish figure is barely 0.61, whereas in Germany the comparative figure was 1.76, in the United Kingdom 1.77, in France 1.83, in the United States 3.71, and in Canada even 3.87. In this regard Poland is also surpassed by Italy, Hungary, and Spain, and only Rumania, Portugal, and other Balkan countries show a lower *per capita* production.

### *Agriculture*

This state of affairs derives from the agricultural character of the Polish State, the Western and Central areas of which have a certain level of industrialisation, while the Eastern areas in their entirety, and the rest preponderantly, are agricultural. The agricultural character of Poland is best exemplified by comparative statistics. In Poland, according to the 1931 census, 60.9 per cent of the population was engaged in or lived by agriculture, whereas in Germany the figure was barely 20.9 per cent, and in Switzerland 22.7 per cent. In Bulgaria and Soviet Russia, on the other hand, according to



1926 estimates, 74.6 per cent and even 77.6 per cent of the population lived by agriculture.

Taking other professions, 19.4 per cent of the active and passive population was professionally employed in industry and mining, 6.1 per cent in trade, 3.6 per cent in communications and transport, 2.2 per cent in public services (including religious ministrations) 1.4 per cent in domestic service, 1.1 per cent in education, 0.9 per cent in medical and social welfare work, and 3.3 per cent in other professions or trades.

This picture of Poland's agricultural character is complemented by the rural character of the population of the state. For according to the 1931 census only 27.2 per cent of the total population was urban, and barely 10.6 per cent of these were in towns of over 100,000 inhabitants. So the process of urbanisation has not gone very far in Poland. On the other hand, the Polish rural areas are if anything overpopulated.

According to calculations relating to the end of 1939 there were 90.7 inhabitants per square kilometre in Poland; in other words she was among countries with an average density of population lower than that of Germany, where there are 139 inhabitants to a square kilometre, and obviously lower than that of the United Kingdom, where there are 193 persons to the square kilometre, not to speak of Belgium or Holland. But Poland is more densely populated than France, which has barely 76 persons to the square kilometre. Jugoslavia has 61, Rumania 66, and Spain barely 50 inhabitants to the square kilometre. Therefore, taking into account the various figures for social income, the number of the agricultural population, and the density of population, we realise the fact which even Nazi science (in *Polen und seine Wirtschaft*: Königsberg, 1937) has emphasised, that, together with certain Japanese districts, Poland belongs to countries overpopulated in respect of labour power, this being well known as a cause of Polish emigration. In face of this fact, the German drive to colonise Poland and to transplant population

from a country with a shortage of labour power to a country saturated in this regard appears even more extraordinary.

In view of this situation one of Poland's most important problems is that of the distribution of agricultural land and provision for the landless peasants. Although, according to 1921 estimates, small peasant farms (smaller than twenty hectares) constituted 96.7 per cent of the total number of holdings, barely 62.5 per cent of the total agricultural land fell to these small holdings. Large landed properties (over 50 hectares) accounted for 36.5 per cent of the total agricultural area. In order to level up and distribute land among the smallholder peasants, during the years 1919 to 1938, 2,654,800 hectares of land previously held in large landed properties passed into the hands of 734,100 smallholders. This process was in course of energetic development down to the last moment by means of the agricultural reform, and also through voluntary parcellation. To give a fair idea of the Polish effort in this direction one need only say that before the 1914-1918 war, in the very similar agricultural country of Hungary 1,280,000 families occupied barely 6 per cent of the land, while 32 per cent of the land belonged to 4000 families. This condition of affairs has not since changed much for the better. There are still many weaknesses in the agricultural distribution of Poland, but the attempts to correct these are not to be denied. From 1929 to 1938 the area sown in Poland increased from 16,480,000 hectares to 17,629,000 hectares, and there was also an increase in the amount of crops sown: wheat from 1,792,000 tons to 2,171,900 tons, rye from 7,009,800 tons to 7,253,400 tons, and potatoes from 31,749,800 tons to 34,558,200 tons.

## INDUSTRY AND MINING

IN Polish industry the first place is occupied by textiles, the city of Lodz, with its 1,700,000 spindles and 46,200 looms, occupying the fourteenth place among European towns devoted to this industry. The woollen and jute industries are also highly developed. The second place is occupied by the metal and machinery industry, which is concentrated close to the Polish coalfield, but which had recently developed also in the Sandomierz district, in the Central Industrial Region, where standard and rate of development have impressed even the Germans. In the timber industry, the sawmill output in 1935 was 946,000 cubic metres of beams and 2,364,000 cubic metres of boards. In Poland's foreign export, timber and wooden manufactures amounted to 1,731,000 tons, and comprised 12.1 per cent of all Polish exports. A large proportion of this timber export was sent to England.

The chemical industry had developed on a large scale in Poland, especially in the sphere of nitrogenous combinations (at Chorzów and Mościce). There is also an important paper-making industry, and the printing trades industry covers all Poland's needs. The clothing industry, formerly greatly developed for exports to Russia, has not yet reached the pre-1914 level of production, but it has improved considerably; and a large industry in machine-made footwear has also been established.

Naturally the provisions industry is highly developed, having regard to the agricultural nature of the country. The 1914-1918 war largely destroyed Poland's sugar industry, but by 1923 it had been restored to the extent of seventy sugar refineries. Production increased by 50 per cent over that of pre-1914 days, and in 1937 amounted to 506,000 tons in terms of white crystals. In regard to beet-sugar production Poland occupies the sixth place in Europe and the seventh in the world, and she accounts for 1.5 per cent of world production. Half

the output of Polish sugar is exported. The next place in the provisions industry is held by spirit distillation, which, however, is not so well developed as in pre-1914 days. On the other hand a bacon-curing industry has been developed, primarily for export to Britain. In 1929 there were twelve bacon-curing factories in Poland, and in 1935 there were thirty.

The electro-technical industry is not yet highly developed, but it is progressing rapidly. In 1928 it employed 8000 workers, and 11,886 in 1935; in 1928 there were 1645 electrical power stations, and 2650 in 1936.

Other smaller branches of industry were all developing prior to the war, often as the result of intensive State aid.

This picture of Poland's industrial possibilities would not be complete without an indication of her mineral wealth and of its associated industries.

The leading place is held by the coal industry, which is concentrated mainly in the Polish coalfield stretching across three provinces—*i.e.* Silesia (the Silesian coalfield) Kielce (the Dombrova coalfield), and Cracow (the Cracow coalfield). In respect of Europe's coal resources Poland is next to Britain and Germany. But in respect of output, in 1936 Poland occupied fifth place in Europe and seventh in the world, accounting for 2.8 per cent of world production. In 1929 this output exceeded 46 million tons, but in 1937 it amounted to only 36 million tons, as compared with the 245 million tons mined in Britain and 185 million tons mined in Germany. The chief markets for Polish coal are the Scandinavian countries, though it is also exported to several others.

Poland's second mineral production is oil, which, unfortunately, has shown a strong tendency to fall off in output. At the beginning of this century the oil output in Polish areas amounted to 3.8 per cent of world production, but to-day, unfortunately, it is only 0.3 per cent of world production. In 1936 it was 511,000 tons, and the same in 1937. Foreign capital, mainly French, comprises 83 per cent of the total. The oil is refined in the country. In addition there is a considerable production of natural gas.

Rock salt is one of the minerals which have been exploited in Poland since the thirteenth century. In 1937 the output was 590,000 tons, or about 1.5 per cent of world output. But the Polish production of potassium salts amounts to 3.2 per cent of world output.

The output of iron ore is too low, and in 1937 was barely 770,000 tons. The Polish foundries must import 60-65 per cent of their ore from abroad. In 1937 the output of lead was 18,000 tons, or 1 per cent of world output, but the zinc produced in 1937, amounting to 107,000 tons, put Poland in the fifth place in the world, with 6.4 per cent of the total world production.

Other smaller mineral resources may be ignored.

## COMMERCE

OF recent years, Poland's trade turnover with other countries has shown a number of violent fluctuations, arising from changes in the world conjuncture and periods of crisis. In 1925 Polish foreign trade showed a debit balance of 657 million zlotys, whereas in 1931 it showed a credit balance of 411 million zlotys. This credit balance fell, until in 1937 there was again a debit balance of 59 million zlotys, and in 1938 the debit balance rose to 115 millions. In this regard Poland finds herself in a difficult economic situation, as in 1938 the total Polish imports were valued at 1300 million zlotys as compared with 22,100 millions for British imports, while in the same year Polish exports amounted to some 1200 million zlotys as compared with the 12,100 millions of British exports. Moreover, as is well known, there is a vast difference between Britain's trade balance and her foreign payments balance.

Of recent years, Poland's trade relations with abroad had one characteristic feature, namely a decline in trade relationships with Germany, parallel with a strengthening of trade relationships with Britain. By way of example, in 1928 Poland's imports from Germany, including Austria, were valued at 1124 million zlotys, and exports 1170 million zlotys; but in 1935 the figures had fallen to 165 million zlotys for imports and 199 millions for exports; in 1938 the imports, at some 300 millions roughly, balanced exports at 286 million zlotys. Imports from Britain took a different course, although of course they depended on the market conjuncture and Polish possibilities. In 1928 they amounted to 313 million zlotys, in 1937 only 149 millions, and to 148 millions in 1938. None the less, in the year 1926, for instance, imports from Britain were on a level with those from Germany and comprised over 14 per cent of Polish imports, whereas France accounted for only 4.3 per cent of Polish imports. But in general Polish

exports to Britain were maintained within the limits of 200 to 300 million zlotys per annum, and in 1936, at 220 million zlotys, exports to Britain occupied the leading place in Polish export, being 21.6 per cent of the total exports. In 1938 exports to Britain amounted to 210 million zlotys, and Germany was able to rival this figure only through the inclusion of Austria.

In 1927 Polish foreign trade was still mainly carried on overland—*i.e.* to the extent of 67 per cent in terms of tonnage, only 33 per cent of the tonnage being carried by sea routes. This applied to both export and import. But of recent years there has been a big change-over to sea-borne tonnage, for in 1936 hardly 23 per cent of Poland's foreign trade was carried overland, and 77 per cent went via sea routes. At first this sea-borne trade largely passed through Gdansk, and a minimum proportion, in 1927 only 3 per cent, passed through Gdynia. But in 1936, 46 per cent of Polish foreign trade passed through Gdynia. The development of Gdynia as a town and a port is a phenomenon comparable only to the development of certain American centres.

Some 2,000,000 people are occupied in Poland's home trade, this figure constituting, as we have said, 6.1 per cent of the population. This home trade has considerable burdens to carry in the form of primitive methods, and of unnecessary middlemen, connected with the age-old dependence of Polish trade on the Jewish population, which is occupied mainly in petty trading. Of recent years these conditions have grown far more normal, owing to the development of co-operative activities.

It would be a mistake to give any picture of trading conditions without reference to road transport conditions. The state of the roads left by the former Partitioning Powers was not worth mentioning, and in the former Russian area of Poland it was simply scandalous. Despite the great exertions put forth in this sphere Polish roads leave much to be desired, and for every hundred square kilometres there are only 16.2 kilometres of metalled roads, whereas in England there are

125 kilometres. In face of such conditions it is natural that Poland has lagged badly behind in regard to the development of motorisation. In 1938 Poland had 41,948 mechanically-driven vehicles, as compared with Britain's 2,909,000, and Germany and Austria's 3,300,000. Poland has endeavoured to improve matters in this sphere, but undoubtedly conditions were very bad, though they largely arose from currency exigencies and the complete absence of financial support to Poland by the rest of Europe.

The Polish railroads are not equally developed throughout the country. They are good in the Western and Southern areas, but poor in the Eastern areas. 198,000 persons were employed on the railways, and the length of normal-gauge track amounted to 20,303 kilometres, this being more than in Sweden and Italy. But the Polish railways average only 5.2 kilometres of track for every 100 square kilometres, whereas there are 9.8 kilometres of track to 100 square kilometres in Britain.

Air communications and wireless were developing swiftly in Poland. One need only mention that whereas in 1925 there were only 200 wireless receivers in Poland, in 1927 there were 48,000, and at the beginning of 1939 over 1,016,500.

The task of creating a Polish merchant fleet has been in progress only during the past ten years. In addition to her large river fleet of 2794 vessels, in 1930 Poland had only 25 sea-going ships of 41,000 tons gross, whereas in 1939 she possessed 71 commercial ships with 102,000 tons gross capacity. Of course these figures do not include the river craft and sea-going vessels sailing under the Gdansk flag. Among the ships touching the Polish port of Gdynia vessels sailing under the British flag occupied fourth place, after Swedish, Polish, and Danish vessels, and in tonnage surpassing the German vessels.



## THE TREASURY AND FINANCES

STATISTICS and information on Poland's State finances and currency circulation follow naturally on the foregoing picture of Poland's economic life.

The assets of the Polish State were calculated at 16,500 million zlotys in 1927, this of course ignoring historical treasures and so on. They have grown enormously since that date.

In 1928 the Polish State budget, which is reckoned from 1st April to 31st March, was: expenditure, 2841 million zlotys; income, 3008 million zlotys. (One zloty was worth about one-twenty-fourth of £1.) This year, with its budget surplus of 160 millions, was a particularly happy one, but it was succeeded by a continual decline, arising from the general European crisis. The 1933-1934 budget fell to such a low level that expenditure was only 2231 million zlotys, and receipts 1860 million zlotys, resulting in a debit balance of 371 million zlotys. From then on there was a rise in both income and expenditure, although there was a constant debit balance. Only in 1936/37 was it possible to achieve a budget surplus of 6 millions, while in 1938/1939 expenditure was 2458 million zlotys and income 2474 millions; showing both general budget increase and surplus of 16 millions. In addition to public taxation, State monopolies, especially of tobacco and spirit, contribute extensively to the State income.

Besides the budget a second factor, which perhaps even more clearly characterises the course of Polish finances of recent years, is the question of the National Debt, which displays a phenomenon peculiar to Poland. In 1928 Poland's internal National Debt amounted to barely 442 million zlotys, but in 1936 it had risen to 1475 millions, and in 1938 to 2458 millions. Quite a different picture is presented by the problem of Poland's national indebtedness abroad. In 1932 it amounted to 3862 million zlotys, but by 1936 it had fallen to 3282 millions, and in 1938 even to 2575 millions. These figures

constitute perhaps the strongest of all justifications for Poland's claim to a fair position in Europe generally. During the decade which ended in 1938 both Europe and America not only gave Poland no financial support, such as was given to countries which afterwards brought them a ruinous war, but even withdrew finance from Poland to an extent which rendered it impossible to organise the defence of the State. Thus Poland was condemned to an absolutely overwhelming drain on her internal resources.

The currency of Poland is the zloty, which was first stabilised at parity with the Swiss franc, and was later established in a relation of 5.17 zlotys to one United States dollar. The state currency consisted of notes and small metal coinage, with a total circulation of about 1600 millions in the years 1928-1930. It had to be reduced to 1325 millions in 1932, but it rose again in 1937 to 1497 millions, and in 1938 to 1866 millions. The backing for the currency was the gold reserve in the Bank of Poland, which in 1929 was valued at 700,500,000 zlotys. By 1936 the gold reserve had fallen to 392,900,000 zlotys, but in 1937 it rose to 435 millions, and in 1938 to 445 millions. For purposes of comparison it may be mentioned that in 1938 the gold reserve in the United Kingdom amounted to a value of 14,165 million zlotys, in France to 12,792 millions, and in Germany to only 152 millions, or one-third of Poland's gold reserve. To close this section on Polish finances it may be mentioned that deposits in banks, which amounted to 2686 millions in 1928, rose to 3243 millions in 1936, while savings in the savings banks amounted to 447 millions in 1928, 1304 millions in 1936, and 1537 millions in 1938.

## PUBLIC INSTRUCTION AND EDUCATION

THE re-born Poland concentrated one of her greatest and most effective efforts upon raising the standard of education, and the result is revealed in one characteristic figure. The percentage of illiterates to the entire population was 33·1 per cent in 1921, but by 1931 it had fallen to 23·1 per cent, and the situation had since improved much further, as the census due to be taken in 1941 would certainly have revealed. It is true that 5,543,700 people in Poland in 1931 could neither read nor write, while 1,001,400 could only read. None the less the new Poland, by her own efforts to make up for the neglect of the former Partitioning Powers, was immediately below Latvia (19·6 per cent) in regard to illiterates, but in the sphere of elementary education surpassed Italy, which had 27 per cent of illiterates, not to speak of Spain, with her 47·5 per cent. But the best testimony to Poland's work in this field is the fact that the Polish Government improved the state of education in provinces which had been under the German Partition. Thus between 1921 and 1931 the percentage of illiterates in Silesia fell from 2·6 per cent to 1·5 per cent, in Poznania province from 3·8 per cent to 2·8 per cent, and in Pomorze from 5·2 per cent to 4·3 per cent. Everywhere the Polish Government achieved better results in regard to education than the world-advertised German activities in this sphere.

In the educational year 1938-1939 Poland possessed 28 higher schools, including universities at Cracow, Wilno, Lwów, Warsaw, and Poznań, a Catholic university at Lublin, peoples' universities at Warsaw and Lodz, two Poletchnics, at Lwów and Warsaw, four Schools of Commerce, two Academies of Fine Arts, at Warsaw and Cracow, a mining Academy at Cracow, and a number of other specialised higher schools. In 1939, in these schools 2460 professors and other teaching staff were employed. The number of professors of

all categories was 824. The number of students at such schools showed a rapid increase. In the year 1926/7 there were 40,700 students, in 1936/7 there were 48,262, and in 1938/9 over 50,000 students in higher schools. Secondary schools of a general educational character, both State and private, numbered 760 in 1936/7, with 200,400 students, and the number was growing from year to year. In addition there were trade schools and teachers' training colleges, as well as numerous educational courses, some 1500 in all, and some 180,000 students and participants in courses. Elementary schools rose from 25,600 in 1920/21 to 28,300 in 1936/7, while the number of pupils during the same period almost doubled. For in 1920/21 the number was 2,971,600, and in 1936/7 it was 4,743,000. In 1938/9 it had risen still further, to 4,953,000 attending 28,881 schools. The development in this sphere occurred more in regard to the number of classes than in the establishment of new schools.

The small German minority had 203 elementary schools using both Polish and German, with 36,500 students, and 394 schools using exclusively German, with 36,300 pupils. The figures relating to nationality and religion in the higher schools are also worthy of note, especially as problems arising in this sphere have found echoes in world opinion. In 1921/22 Jewish youth comprised 24.6 per cent of the total number of students at higher schools, and in 1930/31 they were still 18.5 per cent, whereas the percentage of Jews to the entire population of the State was barely 10.5 per cent, and in the latter year 9.8 per cent. The decline in the percentage of Jews was caused by the increase in the Roman Catholic students at higher schools during this period, the figure rising from 22,946 to 34,303. None the less the percentage of Jewish youth studying at Polish universities was still over double the percentage of Jews to the total Polish population. Later, however, it declined to a more normal relationship. This situation gave rise to certain trends, admittedly very undesirable, towards rendering it difficult for the Jewish youth to study in Poland.

Poland's cultural and educational heritage was further increased by the public museums, numbering 175, and numerous scientific and educational libraries, numbering 9342 permanent libraries. These included the very valuable libraries of the Jagiellon University at Cracow, of the University at Warsaw, and of the University of Lwów, as well as the very rich National Library at Warsaw, which was a creation of the new Poland. In addition there were 26,000 school libraries and 4197 mobile libraries. In 1936, 7971 books were published, and 103 theatres existed in Poland.

## THE ARMY

FROM the moment of emergence of the new-born Poland the nation threw much of its effort into organising as fine and strong an army as possible. Unfortunately the state of the budget did not allow of the development of these forces on a basis commensurate with the needs of a State so threatened on all sides. One may only point out that the army expenditure in the normal budget of 1928/29 was 851 million zlotys, but in 1932/3 it was only 761 million zlotys, and in 1936 only 760 million zlotys. Then, owing to the efforts of the entire nation, it rose in 1937/38 to 965 million zlotys. But a better measure of the Polish effort is the proportion of army expenditure to the other State expenditures. In 1927/28 army expenditure was 39.5 per cent of the total State outgoings, and in 1931/32 it was as much as 44.6 per cent of the State expenditure, while in 1937/38 it fell to 41.9 per cent. Obviously, in addition to expenditure provided for by the normal budget there was also an enormous effort represented by the internal loans for this purpose, as well as gifts made by the public.

Organisationally Poland is divided into ten army corps regions, and in 1931 she had 29 infantry divisions, 2 cavalry divisions, 49 artillery regiments, 6 anti-aircraft divisions, 4 armoured battalions, and 4 pioneer brigades. In addition there was a separate corps of frontier defence numbering some 1078 officers and 27,000 non-commissioned officers and men. The military frontier guard numbered some 6000 men. Of course during the last eight years the Polish army was greatly developed, both in regard to infantry divisions, and also cavalry brigades and armoured units. But the details were never published. In 1935/6 the permanent Polish army consisted of 18,000 professional officers, 37,000 professional non-commissioned officers, and 211,100 soldiers called up on eighteen months' service. These figures all exclude the corps for frontier defence and the frontier guards, as well as

the police (some 40,000 men). But the number of the permanent army was altered from time to time and was not always published. On 1st April 1938, for instance, troops in barracks numbered 318,000.

Within the army framework the position of the Polish air force, divided into six air regiments and a fleet air arm detachment, was not very satisfactory. In 1931 Poland had 39 squadrons and 436 aeroplanes. This figure steadily rose, but none the less, in face of the German surprise attack and the destruction caused before—or, to be more exact, without—the declaration of war, the air force, as we have already said, numerically was too weak in the present war, despite the excellent human material.

The navy in 1935/36 consisted of 945 officers, 1910 non-commissioned officers, and 1960 other ratings. At that time there were four destroyers, but later there were six, as well as five torpedo boats, five submarines, and a number of small units, not including training vessels and the armed river fleet. This young navy passed its tests with flying colours.

## POLAND ABROAD

So far we have given information only concerning the State of Poland and the territory lying within the frontiers of that State. But there is a second Poland closely bound by many ties with the Polish nation, yet not to be included in statistics of the Polish State. We refer to the Poles abroad, which in 1938 numbered 8,190,000 persons. After Poland itself, the United States contain the largest number of Poles concentrated in any one country—altogether some 4,000,000. In Chicago alone there are over 300,000, and in respect of the number of Polish inhabitants this city can be regarded as the third in the world, after Lodz and Warsaw. New York has 160,000 Poles. Canada has 145,000 Poles, but in the southern half of the American continent the largest number of Poles is in Brazil, where there are 265,000, chiefly concentrated in the state of Parana. There are a further 60,000 in the Argentine. In other non-European countries there are fewer Poles, but in Germany, despite recent repressive measures and the falsification of statistics, there are 1,300,000 Poles, 600,000 of whom are in Silesia, the rest being on the Western borders, in Eastern Prussia, and Westphalia. Before the outbreak of war the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics had about 900,000 Poles in its European and Asiatic possessions, while in France there are some 600,000. During the years 1922 to 1927 there was an annual influx into France of some 50,000 Polish workers, who settled chiefly in the Pas de Calais Department, where they formed 12 per cent of the population. In addition Lithuania had some 200,000, and Rumania 100,000. The figures for other countries are much smaller. Of course all these figures vacillate, owing to emigration and remigration. For instance, during the years 1919 to 1935, 398,000 Poles emigrated to Germany to work, and 370,000 remigrated to Poland. But Polish emigrants to France during the years 1926 to 1938



numbered 404,000, while remigrants from France to Poland numbered only 198,000.

To sum up all our figures on Poles in Poland and abroad, we can fairly estimate that in 1939 there were in round figures 32,500,000 Poles throughout the world, 24,300,000 living on the territory of the Polish Republic, and 8,200,000 abroad.

## CONCLUSION

WE have endeavoured by means of a narrative of events, dates, and dry statistics to give a picture of Poland in the past and present. Time after time, world opinion is liberally provided by Poland's enemy with grossly false information and completely invented "facts." We may let our own facts and figures, authentically established, and given with entire objectivity, speak for themselves. They will be all the more convincing, since the tragic course which the years 1939 and 1940 took is in itself the best confirmation of all our statements on Poland's position in Europe, and particularly in eastern and central Europe.

During all her thousand years of existence Poland has always been a fundamental pillar of freedom in eastern Europe, a pillar on which was based the existence of a number of weaker State or semi-State organisms and nations. After the Partitions, Poles took for their device the motto, "For our freedom and yours," for they knew that in fighting for their own freedom they would also win freedom for other nations of Europe.

In the post-Versailles system which was established in the east of Europe during the years 1918 to 1920, Poland, which saved the world from the flood of Russian Bolshevism in 1920, became the basis of existence and of the freedom of the nations in eastern Europe; not only that of those with whom she was allied, but even that of those who fought her politically. The entire existence of the Baltic States depended on the existence of a powerful Polish State, and these States immediately lost the status of independent States when the strength and shield of the Polish army was broken. But it is highly indicative that Lithuania, which for twenty years fought in the eyes of all Europe to obtain Polish Wilno and a common frontier with Soviet Russia, disappeared from the ranks of independent States as soon as she temporarily realised these

ambitions and won that common frontier. Politicians who for twenty years had continually made charges against Poland to Europe found themselves in prison and concentration camps as soon as the State of Poland was temporarily broken in a military sense. And those prisons and concentration camps were not Polish, but those of their ostensible friends. On the opposite frontier of the powerful Polish Republic a great State of Rumania developed with the support of Poland, but as soon as Poland's military power was broken that State also was compelled to yield Bessarabia and Bukovina to Soviet Russia, and part of Transylvania to Hungary, finally having to surrender her State independence altogether for the benefit of the German occupant troops. At the moment when Poland's guns and rifles ceased fire all eastern Europe capitulated to the Russian and German colossi, but finally Russia's own liberty and laws were directly attacked by Germany. The course of events revealed tragically and terribly that all this freedom of nations was based on Polish bayonets, although perhaps not only Europe as a whole, but even its eastern countries, had failed to realise this fact.

To-day Great Britain with invincible heroism and a remarkable display of character is fighting for the freedom of the whole world, and first and foremost for the liberation of Europe from the domination of violence and brute force. So it is logical that in this titanic struggle Britain has fighting inflexibly at her side the State of Poland, represented by her legal President, Government, and Army. For every Pole is conscious of the fact that in fighting for his rights he is fighting for the rights of others. Within the limits of her utmost possibilities, and to the very end, Poland will fulfil all her obligations, and history will tell that when Britain fought and gained the freedom of the world, and of humanity, Poland seconded her to the last drop of blood as the champion of the freedom of eastern and central Europe.



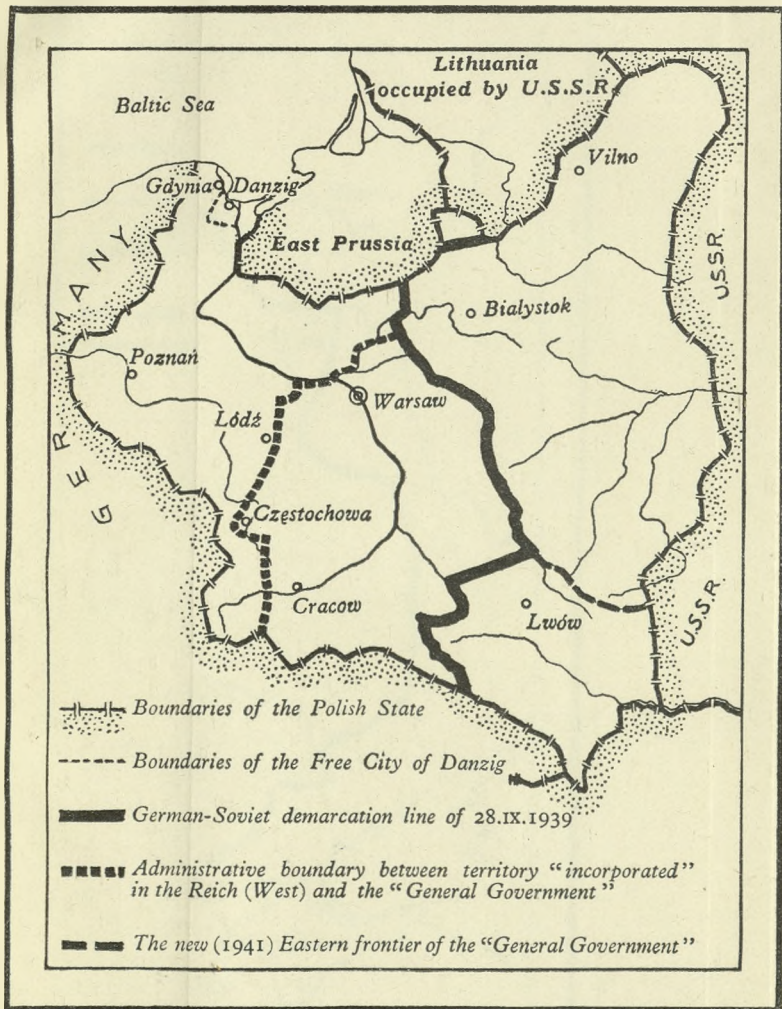
*Das do Biblioteki Z.N.P.*

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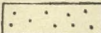
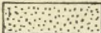
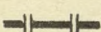
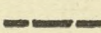
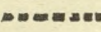
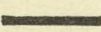


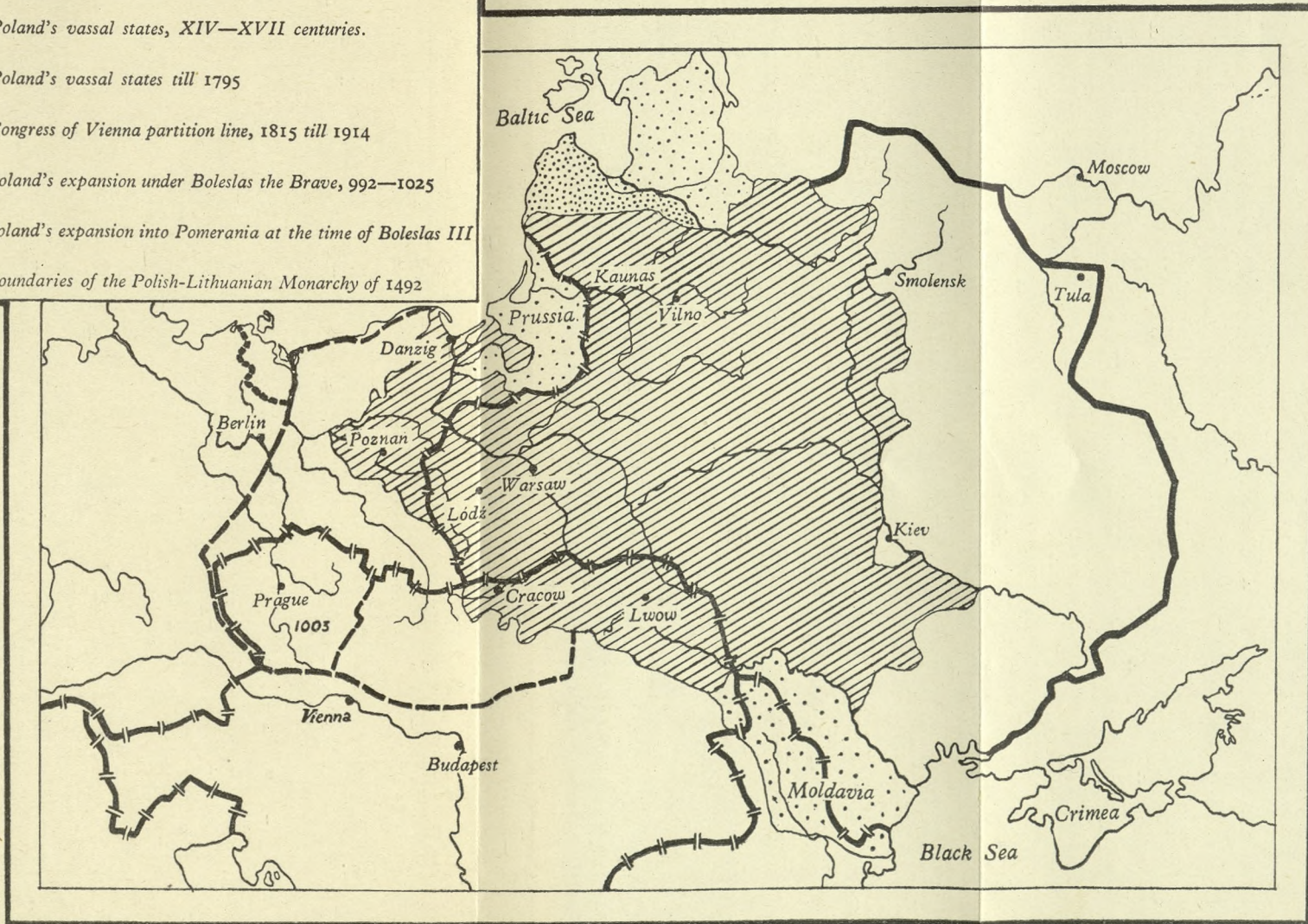
# POLAND IN 1939





# HISTORICAL MAP OF POLAND

-  Polish-Lithuanian Monarchy till 1772
-  Poland's vassal states, XIV—XVII centuries.
-  Poland's vassal states till 1795
-  Congress of Vienna partition line, 1815 till 1914
-  Poland's expansion under Boleslas the Brave, 992—1025
-  Poland's expansion into Pomerania at the time of Boleslas III
-  Boundaries of the Polish-Lithuanian Monarchy of 1492



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