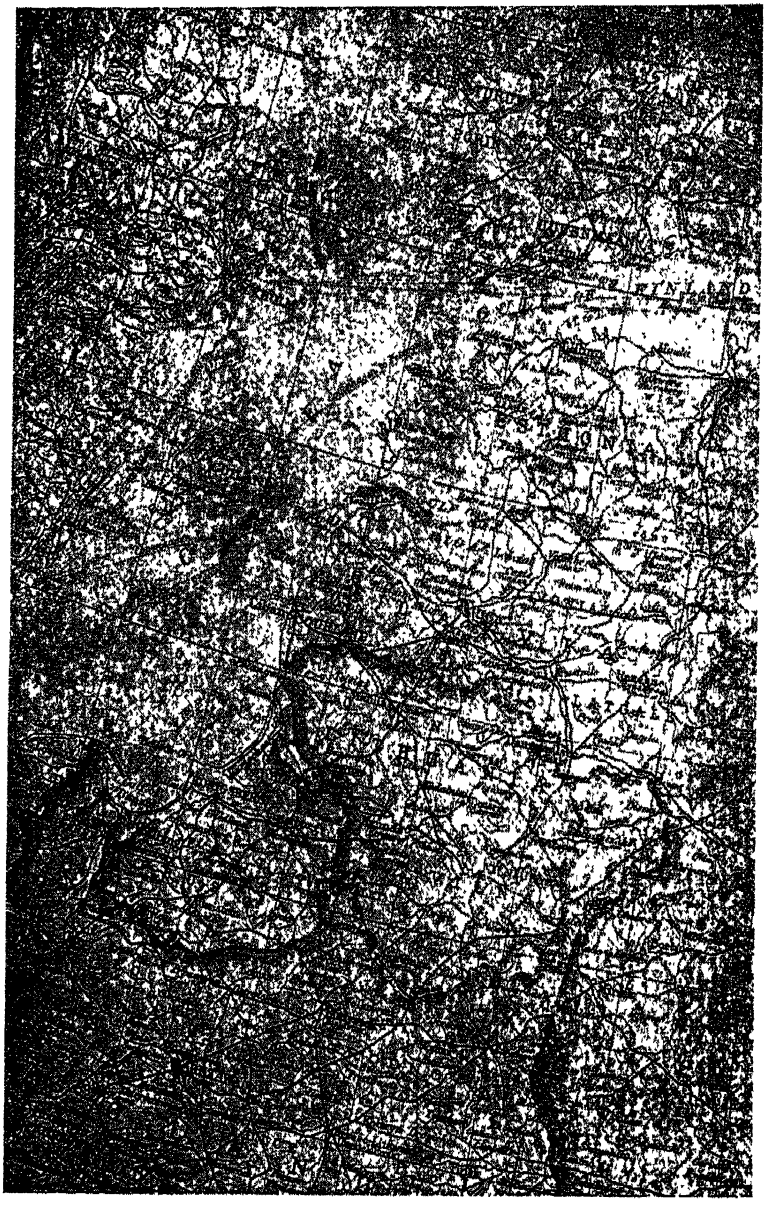
THE FORGOTTEN REPUBLICS



The Baltic Republics in 1919.

The Forgotten Republics

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THE BALTIC REPUBLICS

IT IS NO EXAGGERATION to say that the Baltic Sea and its surrounding countries have been in modern times the forgotten part of Europe. The Baltic area has for nearly two centuries played a minor role in the great movements that have swept over Europe. Ever since Sweden ceased to play an active part in the power politics of Europe, public attention has been diverted for good or ill.

There has been an appreciation of the fact that St. Petersburg or Petrograd or Leningrad has been located upon the Baltic Sea and this fact has given rise to the conception that it was only a Russian lake. It was only after the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the independence of Finland that any consciousness of the Baltic area as a reality began to seep slowly into the minds of Europe and America. Even travellers to the old Russia or to the modern Soviet Union passed without notice such cities as Tallinn or Reval and Riga, despite the importance that they held in the commercial life of eastern Europe. As for places like Kaunas and Vilnius, they existed merely as unknown provincial cities, scarcely worth a thought or a page in a guidebook.

Yet the Baltic area has long had a personality of its own. It has been a distinct region with its own population, its own modes of thinking, its own natural characteristics, and its own history. It has reflected the pressures upon it, but it has never been overwhelmed despite

the tragedies of centuries which have culminated in the present reabsorption by the Soviet Union as a decisive step in its onward march to gain the dominating position in Europe and the world. The exciting events of the last decade have left the world small leisure to think in detail of the Baltic as a separate and distinct part of the great struggle and all too often the fate of the three Baltic Republics, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, has been passed over in silence.

What is the area which they include? On the map it may seem insignificant. It is the stretch of land along the southeastern side of the Baltic Sea from the Gulf of Finland on the north just outside Leningrad to the valley of the River Nemunas on the south and from the Baltic Sea on the west to the rough line of marshes and of lakes on the east, beyond which for centuries the Russians were never able to advance in their westward drive. It is a region as distinct from the great European plains that stretch from central Germany to the Urals as is any section of Europe.

We may speak of these three states as small and so they are in population but each of the three is larger than Holland, Belgium or Denmark and the three combined cover an area of over 60,000 square miles or somewhat larger than New England or Wisconsin. Yet their population was approximately before the disturbances that heralded in World War II that of New York City, somewhere over seven millions of thrifty and industrious people, who wanted merely to live their lives without interference from their eastern or western neighbors, the Russians or the Germans.

What part could these states play in the world? They are lacking in many or most of those raw materials that

are of immediate value in war industry. Their metal and mineral reserves are slight except for the abundant oil shales of Estonia which were being developed during the thirties and were already achieving international prominence.

The sea coast with the beaches that stretch for hundreds of miles is one of the great sources of amber and this was known even to the ancient Romans and the Arabs of the period before 1000 A.D. Almost every storm in the Baltic area cast up on the shore new supplies of this valuable article which has always had a ready market and which more than once during the years of depression brought in enough hard cash to help and save the budgets of the Baltic republics.

There are also the great forest resources of the states. These were reduced during the period before World War I until they were scarcely half of what they were in the middle of the nineteenth century. Nevertheless the improved care which the governments gave to this lucrative wood-working industry was reviving the forests which had been neglected for decades, as the imperialistic neighbors quarreled over the products of the land.

Agriculture lay at the basis of the national economy in all the countries. The fields have been brought to a high degree of fertility and while the lands are too far north for the extensive grain fields of Russia to be duplicated, potatoes and similar more specialized crops as flax have been extensively planned. At the same time the dairy industry has been developed as it has been in Denmark and during the last years before 1939, the market abroad for the products of these countries was steadily growing.

The economy of the three republics was severely

hurt by the great depression but the worst difficulties of this were quickly overcome with the restoration of the agricultural markets and the establishment of new branches of light industry which were rapidly developing to the point where they were able to supply the essential needs of the population.

Another important factor in the economic life of these countries was their position on the seacoast and the possibilities which they possessed for handling goods that were being imported or exported from Russia. Such harbors as Riga and Tallinn were old centres of shipping and the picturesque character of their mediaeval architecture combined with the more modern buildings gave each of the important places its own special physiognomy and charm.

The countries are predominantly level and since the independence of the lands have become dotted with small farms in the American sense of the word, for it is only in some parts of Lithuania that the peasants following the continental tradition preferred to live in villages. Almost as a rule throughout Latvia and Estonia, the peasants lived on their own land and worked the area around their own homes.

The more hilly areas, especially around Vilnius, in Kurland and to the east of Riga were rolling country, snowbound in winter but in summer smiling and green as in all countries of the temperate zone. In a word the general effect of the landscape would be that of almost any region in New England with the houses and outbuildings of wood.

The three republics were lands where there were few rich or few poor. They were countries, as we shall see, which had passed through a hard school of history

and seemed to be working their way toward a state of moderate well being where without excessive ambition or self-depreciation they could play their part in the peaceful organization of the world. They were pleasant lands to visit and to travel in, a region that breathed the peace of the countryside far removed from the alarms and the distractions of the great world outside. Substantially homogeneous in population, with their national boundaries drawn in general in accordance with the desires of the population, it could easily seem that they could hope to develop in peace, receiving and doing no harm, as free and independent members of the family of nations.

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Chapter One

THE EARLY INHABITANTS OF THE COUNTRY

As in so many other sections of northern and eastern Europe, the dawn of history occurred in this area at a relatively late date, for it is not until the period of Christianization that we begin to have definite data about the people and their mode of living. Yet we know that there had been already centuries and millennia of human occupation of these lands which were so far removed from the ancient classical world.

Vague accounts of these lands filtered down to the shores of the Black Sea in very early times but these were such a mixture of the fantastic and the impossible that the few references to the north in the writings of Herodotus and his contemporaries can give us little real assistance in picturing the early population of these lands. Apparently now and then Phoenician traders made the hazardous journey by sea in search of amber. Other merchants came from the east by land but all of these were content to repeat legends of monsters and of dangers either to fascinate their hearers or to deter others from breaking into the amber trade.

At the close of the first century A.D., the Roman historian Tacitus in the *Germania* discusses at consider-

able length a race of people living on the Baltic Sea, the Aestii, and he tells of their trade in amber. He also states that they were far better in their methods of agriculture than were the Germans. A little further on, he locates another tribe, the Sitones, about which he merely states that they were ruled by women. All of these references are tantalizingly vague and many of the details which he gives, such as his statement that the language of the Aestii was very similar to that of the Britons, are almost certainly false. Yet every word of his statements has given rise to unlimited disputes.

Archaeology has revealed a little more of the life and culture of these peoples who largely made their living from agriculture or from the sea. There is evidence that they were in the early iron age but they were dependent for this metal on imports and on foreign traders and we have not too much definite knowledge about the relationships of the various tribes until in later centuries we begin to hear of them from Swedish and other sources.

As a result when we begin to have a clear picture of the country, we find a series of tribes passing from the Gulf of Finland to the lower course of the Vistula River and these very definitely were the ancestors of the present Baltic peoples. They fall however into two clear groups, distinguished perhaps more by language than by any other criterion. To the north there were Finnic tribes to whom in the narrower sense the name of Estonian can be applied. To the south and west of these along the shore of the Baltic below the mouth of the Daugava river lived the Livs, another definitely Finnic race which spread over into the islands along the shore. There seems little doubt that the Livs were at an early period one of the predominating groups and they later gave their

name to the province of Livonia which included in its population both Estonians and Latvians.

To the other group were the people who spoke the so-called Baltic languages, Lithuanian, Latvian, and the extinct Old Prussian. This group of languages definitely belongs to the Indo-European family and has Slavic as its closest relative. The more northern of these tribes were the ancestors of the modern Latvians; the more southern groups later coalesced into the Lithuanian people, while the most southwestern of these, the Old Prussians, were later completely absorbed and have left few traces in history and culture. Along the coast we find also the Kurs, another powerful confederation which gave its name to the mediaeval province of Kurland.

It is hard for us to-day to visualize life in this area about the middle of the first milennium of our era. Small groups or clans of related peoples under their own leaders wandered through the forests or along the shores, stopping here and there to erect temporary settlements, to clear with fire and their crude tools some land for agriculture and then a few years later under pressure of attack by foes or of discord within, they would move on, split or join with other peoples for a joint enterprise, for mutual defence or attack or to satisfy the ambition of some leader. Even centuries later, when we begin to have more detailed information about the population, we are confronted with a bewildering mass of tribes, many of which are still mere names to us.

At the same time we must also beware of underestimating the actual culture of the people. Excavation of buried sites from the area shows that the population was already far removed from that type of primitive living that it was fashionable in previous centuries to

assume. More and more their settlements began to assume permanent forms, located in situations favorable for defence and related tribes began to create rude unions either by consultation of their chieftains or through a more or less permanent hegemony of a family or a clan.

The line of demarcation between the Finnic and the Baltic or Aestian tribes of the Indo-European family was more marked in the religion and the mythology of the peoples than in their actual command of the processes of civilization. The Baltic tribes with an Indo-European heritage shared the paganism of their kindred peoples, while the Estonians and the Livs approached in their beliefs and practices those of the other Finnic peoples who were living in what is now Finland and extending considerably further to the east.

The early historians of the Goths who broke into the Roman Empire at the end of the fourth century allude to conquests of Hermanaric in the Baltic area. This is perhaps the first event that can be dated with more or less accuracy but even this is so vague that we need scarcely mention it and the extent of Gothic influence is as much of a disputed question as any of the earlier happenings.

With the definite organization of the Viking bands in Sweden and the island of Gotland, we get the first indefinite but real picture of the situation as it then was and all the facts presented seem to indicate that life on the two sides of the Baltic Sea proceeded in a somewhat similar fashion with the Kurs and the Livs repaying the Vikings in their own coin. In small ships, the sea raiders traversed the Baltic in their search for plunder. The Vikings were apparently the better armed, thanks to the iron mines under their control, and they may have estab-

lished some sort of settlements but they were more interested in passing up the Daugava river to the interior to make their way to the Dnieper and the Black Sea than they were in maintaining control of the region.

These bands, composed as much of merchants as of soldiers, ravaged the whole of Europe for a couple of centuries but strange to say they left a deeper imprint upon the more distant lands than they did upon the Baltic peoples. Bishop Rimbert, the biographer of St. Ansgarius, writing of the events in the ninth century, talks as if the Kurs were already the possessors of a well organized state with their own definite rulers and several cities, two of which he mentions—Apuloe located in the south in what was later Lithuania and Seeburg which has been located in the neighborhood of Liepaja. The Swedes were able to seize and destroy the latter town which was only half of the size of Apuloe, which must have been the capital and political centre of the Kurs. After stubborn battles, the latter were compelled to surrender but the population was released, the city was not destroyed and no effort was made to increase the previously existing tribute. This of itself implies that the Swedish and also the Danish penetration into the area was of a somewhat spasmodic character. Christianity had not yet won a firm control in any of the organized neighboring states and there could scarcely have been any of the organized forms of government that were to come later.

This story and likewise the scattered notices that we find for the next two centuries give us a picture of peoples who were slowly working toward the establishment of a government of their own. They had made some progress for Bishop Rimbert called the Kurs a most

cruel people with much gold and the finest horses, while a few years earlier we were told that the Aestians were a simple, hardworking, agricultural and peace-loving people. Yet so vague is our knowledge and so contradictory are our authorities that it is almost useless to try to solve the contradictions or to set too narrow a construction on the significance of the various peoples whose names appear in the accounts of the times.

This was the period when almost yearly bands of Vikings moved over the Varangian road, the Volkhov and the Daugava to the Dnieper and the Black Sea. They too were struggling to secure an organized regime and under the circumstances, governments and tribes changed with a monotonous regularity, leaving behind them merely a record of rulers and of campaigns, while the tribes of the area indulged to the full their own internal feuds and had not come to see the advantages of a steady and permanent union on any basis.

Such a condition could not continue indefinitely, for on all sides along with the advent of the new Christian religion, the nations of central and northern Europe were beginning to profit by the scientific and orderly concepts of government emanating from Rome and Constantinople. There was beginning a desperate struggle of the two cities to rally to their political and religious sides as many peoples as possible and they were not unwilling to use force to win their goal.

This presented new dangers for the peoples of the Baltic area.

German merchants from the cities on the North Sea began to appear in armed bands to interfere and to win a share of the possible trading profits. Whether they came to settle or to trade, their methods were the same.

They set up armed and fortified trading posts and even if they returned home with the approach of winter, it soon became a certainty that their foundations would acquire greater strength and permanence.

By the end of the tenth century the new Polish state had appeared in the valley of the Oder and the Vistula and had begun its struggle to push its boundaries to the north and east. This led to an attack on the Baltic tribes from the southwest. It exerted pressure upon that part of the population which was later to be classed as Old Prussian. The Dukes of Mazovia led this movement and however they revolted against the kings of the Piast dynasty, they still all too often preferred to establish temporary truces with their Polish rivals than any permanent reconciliation with the pagans.

At almost the same time came the Christianization of Kiev on the middle Dnieper. Kiev with its abundant facilities for trade in all directions and with the liberal attitude of the Kievan princes toward all Christian powers tried to advance to the northward to secure the control of the rivers leading to the Baltic, the northern half of the Varangian road. This involved their cementing their control over the various Slavic tribes who were located to the east of the Baltic area and once this was nominally achieved the way was open for them to move against the pagans between themselves and the sea.

As the result there came a new series of attacks upon the Baltic area. Thus Yaroslav the Wise moved northward in 1030 and he established a fort on the site of the present Tartu in Estonia and called it Yuryev, the name which the city still has on Russian maps. Yet this hold was not longlasting for the Estonian communities rallied and expelled the invaders when the main body of the

army returned to Kiev. The work of pressing the Slavic advance fell rather upon the princes of Polotsk and for over a century the desultory warfare continued. Each time the forces of Kiev and Polotsk appeared in full force, they were usually able to achieve a desired objective but peace did not result. Hostilities were resumed at the earliest favorable moment and the counter-movement carried the peoples of the Baltic up to the very walls of Polotsk and of Pskov.

Quite regularly baptism was imposed as a term of victory on the defeated pagans but the armed demand for baptism produced relatively few sincere converts and on the withdrawal of the invaders the Baltic peoples seem to have ceremonially washed it off in the rivers or the sea and returned to their own faith. Their stubborn attachment to their own pagan religion made them the last accessible people in Europe to become Christian but we know so little of the details of their cult and ritual that we cannot say whether their growing tendencies toward political union were accompanied or not by an increasing systematization of their own creed.

There was thus for nearly two centuries the application of spasmodic political religious pressure from all sides, from Kiev and Polotsk, which set forth the ideals of the faith and order of Constantinople, from the Germans in the name of the Western Roman Empire, from the Poles and from the Swedes who represented in definite ways Western influences but without the full tradition of the Empire, for they were busied with the task of forming their own states and of advancing in all directions, especially into non-Christian territory.

In a sense the peoples of the Baltic coast were protected by this constant struggle, for all of their rivals and

enemies were mutually hostile and the way was clear for the Baltic peoples to put their own house in order and to present a united front. They seem to have profited materially for trade and commerce steadily increased in importance as the cities along the Baltic rose to power and to wealth. Yet it was easy to predict that the Baltic groups could not long hold their position unless they took some steps to fit themselves into the new order.

Yet at no time did apparently any of the communities think of this. They remained devoted to their faith and hence it came about that they began to attract against themselves coalitions, especially from the west. Such men at St. Adalbert, the apostle of Poland, was martyred in 997 for daring to enter a grove sacred to the pagan gods in the Prussian area and the tales of these events were carried and spread throughout Europe without losing anything in the telling.

The religious feuds between the Christian nations grew ever sharper but still the Baltic peoples continued their own system or lack of one without securing more than temporary or incomplete alliances. The pressure from the west continued to gain strength, for the feuds between the Grand Princes of Kiev and Suzdal-Moscow and Polotsk continued and weakened very decidedly the eastern influences, although we can never be sure that Christian traditions especially from the east had not penetrated more deeply than appeared on the surface, for it is remarkable that despite all the events of history, the Christian terminology of these peoples at a later date showed more eastern Orthodox influences than we would have reason to expect.

Then towards the end of the twelfth century, the situation changed radically and a new and formidable

rival developed almost in their own territory which completely checked all the positive tendencies of the past. This was the appearance of German missionaries backed by military orders of chivalry, who came prepared to fight and settle as well as to convert and retire.

Chapter Two

THE COMING OF THE GERMANS

In the latter part of the twelfth century a new spirit was abroad in Europe, a new and far more militant Christianity which had been fanned into flame by the Mohammedan interference with pilgrimages to Jerusalem and the Holy Land. This had developed in the Crusades, when Christian knights flocked to the Near East and for a short time even secured possession of the Holy Places. Sovereign after sovereign assumed the cross and sallied forth to do battle for the cause of the Faith.

The Crusades were thus a mixed movement. They were animated by the highest of motives and they attracted the finest idealists of the times. They also appealed equally to the adventurous and the greedy. There was not only eternal salvation to be won for the believers but there were the wealth and dominions of the east to be acquired by the more worldly minded and the merchants. There were new realms to be carved out for those who were thirsty for power and in their rage against the infidels, there were excuses for cruelty and violence for those who made that their pleasure.

More than that, the appearance of large bodies of undisciplined warriors in the lands of the Byzantine Empire created a popular antagonism between the Christians

of the Western and the Eastern Churches. A living feeling of mutual hate and distrust gave an added sting to the previously theological and ideological controversies between the Pope and the Eastern Patriarchs and changed a scholarly controversy into a political hostility.

It was obvious that the leadership was passing to the West that was on the offensive not only against Islam but against Constantinople and it was also clear that in the Western conflict between the Pope and the German Emperor, the latter was steadily losing ground, while such a Pope as Innocent III could with assurance act as if he were the supreme ruler of the Christian world.

Yet if the central power of the Western emperor was diminishing, the merchant groups of the German cities of the North Sea and the Baltic that were later to form the trading union of the Hansa were gaining in wealth and power. Cities like Bremen with their merchant groups were becoming aware of their own significance and exerting their influence far beyond their own dominions. Thus in 1190 a group of merchants from Bremen and Lübeck established at their own cost in the Holy Land a hospital on a ship at Acre for the Crusaders. This became attached to the German Church of St. Mary in Jerusalem and by 1198 the brethren of the German Hospital of St. Mary became a society of knights and the nucleus of what was to be known later as the Teutonic Order.

These same trading groups with their farflung connections were not only aware of the difficulties of the Byzantine Empire but also of those of the Kievan state. Any observer in Novgorod where there was a foreign trading centre could not fail to know of the plundering of Kiev in 1169 by the Prince of Suzdal and the growing

independence of all of the Slav princes to the east of the Baltic and their consequent loss of influence. The Prince of Polotsk, who held some nominal suzerainty over part of the Baltic area, was one of those who were most affected and this created a new situation for the merchants who each year visited the settlement of Uxküll at the mouth of the Daugava River.

It was under such conditions that in 1184 an Augustinian monk from Segeberg in Holstein, Meinhard, commenced missionary work in Uxküll. He travelled with a party of German merchants from Lübeck and he also took pains to secure permission from Prince Vladimir of Polotsk, who apparently was willing to give him some help. This was not unusual for the princes of Kiev had a long tradition of friendship with the European rulers, despite the religious controversies.

Meinhard was apparently more interested in the religious side of his work than in the political. He began to preach to the Livs in Uxküll and soon made a few converts. He accordingly stayed after the party of merchants with whom he had come returned home. That same winter a band of Letts attacked the town. Meinhard and the Livs took refuge in the forest. They returned to find the place in ruins. As a result the monk offered to secure masons and to build a stone castle. In return the Livs promised to accept Christianity. The next year he secured masons from Gotland and kept his word but on one excuse or another most of the Livs remained pagan. The next year he built another castle on the island of Holm in the Daugava River.

In the next years he extended his work more or less along the entire coast with another centre on the river Aa at Turajda and into Estonia. The priests were fre-

quently in danger of martyrdom at the hands of the pagans but during the time of Meinhard, relations remained fundamentally peaceful. So well satisfied was Archbishop Hartwig of Bremen that he consecrated Meinhard bishop in 1186.

Meinhard was much bothered by the tendency of the Livs to return to their pagan practices and to try to wipe out their baptism by bathing with pagan charms in the Daugava and he finally decided to abandon the mission. To his surprise the Livs begged him to stay, for they shrewdly suspected that if the bishop left, some of the merchants would secure armed forces for further action against them. A little later he again became convinced of his failure and endeavored to reach a party of Gotland merchants who were wintering in the north. Some of his converts warned him that he would be killed if he tried to leave Uxküll and so he stayed, although he found means of communicating without too much success with Rome. His representative, Theodoric, a Cistercian and apparently of sterner stuff apparently secured permission from Pope Celestine III for a crusade against the pagans. With the aid of Jarl Birger of Sweden and forces from Germany and Gotland, an attack was planned against the Kurs but a storm drove the fleet northward and the army ravaged the coast of Estonia. Then Jarl Birger, when arrangements were under way for the baptism of the Estonians of the neighborhood of Vironia compromised for a payment of tribute and the expedition withdrew.

Meinhard remained in Uxküll in a strange position. He was the spiritual leader of the few Christian Livs but he was also the prisoner and the hostage of the pagans and he died, apparently broken-hearted at his failure, in

1196. Yet before his death he had gathered the leaders of the Livs together and they had expressed to him their desire to have a successor appointed. With his death the type of missionary changed greatly for the worse.

Hartwig of Bremen chose as his successor Berthold, Abbot of Luccum and a Cistercian. Berthold was a very different type. As soon as he had convinced himself that he was facing a group of convinced pagans, he travelled through Saxony with the permission of Pope Innocent III, preaching a crusade against the pagans. Then with a strong army he embarked for his see in 1198. The Livs remembering Meinhard, asked why he needed an army. The answer was a defiant note from the bishop who set out forthwith to conquer the country. In his first battle, his horse carried him into the ranks of the fleeing enemy and despite his military prowess, he was struck down. His followers enraged by the loss of their leader ranged around the coast, carrying fire and sword into every village within reach and then returned to Germany. In the following pagan reaction it seemed as if all Christianity and Western influence had been wiped out.

The next bishop, Albert, was a man of a different type. The nephew of the Archbishop of Bremen, he had been brought up by his uncle and had gained a good knowledge of the ecclesiastical and political diplomacy of the day. He had neither the piety of Meinhard nor the abruptness of Berthold but he was equally determined to have his own way. However he was not a man to underestimate the enemies against whom he was fighting. As a result before he went to his diocese, he made a round of state visits. Thus he saw Bishop Absalom of Lund, the foremost bishop of Denmark, and he also visited King Canute of Denmark and Duke Waldemar of

Schleswig, one of the most powerful vassals of the King. He cemented his position with Pope Innocent III and secured the necessary permission for the preaching of a crusade. Finally to round out his actions, he visited King Philip, the claimant to the post of German Emperor. During this journey, he never failed to appeal for knights to accompany him and in this way he not only strengthened himself politically but also militarily.

When he was finally ready, he set sail for the mouth of the Daugava in 1200 with a fleet of 23 ships and over a thousand armed knights and attendants. With this force he was able to relieve Uxküll but was soon after besieged in Holm and was saved only by the arrival of another ship which ravaged the country far and wide, burning the crops and villages, and thus forcing a lightening of the pressure on the castle.

This experience was enough to show Albert that he had to adopt a different policy. He invited a large number of the chieftains to a dinner and arrested them. Then he released them in exchange for some thirty of their children whom he sent back as hostages to Germany. At the same time he made plans for the building of a new city, Riga, almost at the mouth of the Daugava, which would be accessible for the seagoing ships of the day. To strengthen this even more, he issued orders that there should be no trade with the Zemgallians, one of the Latvian tribes, except through his new port. For a while, this proved satisfactory to the German merchants and the first persons to disobey were promptly executed.

This first visit of Albert was almost entirely spent in forming political plans and on his return to Germany,

he actively set to work to increase the number of his armed forces through the addition of crusaders called by the polite name of *pilgrims*. These men assumed the sign of the cross and bound themselves for a year to fight against the infidels. Their numbers continually varied and they formed an uncertain and unstable reinforcement of Albert's own military retainers.

To secure the needed troops, he established with the permission of the Pope another military order, the Fratres Militiae Christi, the Brothers of the Soldiery of Christ, commonly called the Knights of the Sword, because on their mantles they wore a red cross and a sword. Unlike the older orders which were under the Papacy, this was to be directly under the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Riga and was intended only for the conversion of the natives in Livonia, that is, the Baltic area. It was almost entirely composed of Germans and recruited from men who cared more for the acquisition of wealth and power than for any Christian virtues. Far more than even some of the other orders, the members reflected the violence and lawlessness of the times and in their greed for power and estates, they paid little attention to the laws of God or the decrees of the Archbishop of Riga.

Albert was equally ambitious. He was not satisfied to be merely the religious head of the Baltic area at a time when there was considerable question as to the existence of a secular government. He appealed to the German Emperor and in 1207 was recognized as a Prince of the Holy Roman Empire and the secular head of a new state which he named the Land of St. Mary and which was to be governed by him and his successors in the bishopric. This of course denied all rights to the

native population whether Christian or pagan and definitely transferred the political power into the hands of the German settlers.

It had its counter-effect upon the Order and after the murder of the first Grand Master, his successor Bolquin made the formal demand that one third of all the territory should be turned over to the Order as its own possession. Albert as Archbishop and Prince opposed this and both sides appealed to the Pope. Innocent saw his chance to curb the growing power of the Archbishop of Bremen in northern Europe and in 1210 made a decision whereby the Order was to receive one third of the lands of the Livs and Latvians but with only religious obedience to the Bishop of Riga, and outside of this area in other territories that they might conquer, they would have no obligation to him but to the duly appointed bishops in those other lands.

This was a decisive check on the hopes of Albert to establish a strong state in the Baltic and it took away the last hopes of any protection of the native population, for it meant that the Knights were responsible only to themselves and their Order and it was easy for them to justify any action as part of their duty to suppress paganism. Henceforth they had no other interest but to enslave the native population for their own profit.

Albert was apparently somewhat less greedy in this connection. He made formal treaties with many of the native leaders, recognizing them and their rights to their lands, even though he regularly added to them provisions that in case any of them died without an heir, their lands would revert to him. As the result of the decision as to the powers of the Order, these native princes were compelled to allow the erection of castles of the

Knights wherever they wished. It almost invariably happened that on one excuse or another the Knights destroyed the dwellings of the natives which were usually less militarily strong and seized their lands.

The actions of the Order were so violent and so disrespectful both to human decency and the rights of the Bishop, that Albert again and again excommunicated the Order as a whole and all of its members. His fulminations remained without effect for the Order made liberal donations to Rome and so colored its reports that the Pope regularly condemned the bishop and exonerated them and thus left them free to continue their career of violence, which they extended outside of the definite Lettish and Livish territory into the territory of the Estonians and the other tribes.

The third factor in this race for power was the city of Riga, which increased rapidly in population and wealth. The German merchants who settled here came especially from the north German cities and were given by Albert the same rights of self-government as were accorded under the laws of Visby on the island of Gotland, which set the pattern for all the Baltic cities. This did give the possibility to some of the natives to secure training, especially as artisans, and a few were able to secure admission to the Little Guild but the membership in the Great Guild which was dedicated to St. Maurice was exclusively confined to the German burghers who held in their own hands the complete control of the affairs of the city.

Albert owed his position very largely to his knowledge of the methods of diplomacy and his skill in exploiting the feuds among the various tribes under his influence. He knew how to intensify the rivalry between

the Livs and the Latvians, between both and the Estonians. He found some helpers among the young men whom he had sent to Germany for an education and by playing cleverly upon their ambitions, he used them to weaken their own position and to destroy their last remaining liberties. He encouraged the elimination of the pagans and in the Chronicle of Henry de Lettis, we read with monotonous regularity of the many raids on the pagan villages, in which the villages were burned, the men were all killed and the women and children carried away as booty. Such treatment called for equal retaliation and the first quarter of the thirteenth century was marked by an orgy of violence which appealed to the Knights who received remission of all their sins for their fighting on behalf of the Christian cause.

As the Crusaders advanced northward away from their base at Riga and multiplied their bishoprics, the resistance of the natives, especially the Estonians, became more bitter. At this moment Albert made a change in his policy. He apparently had no desire to see the Knights advance into the territory that was not to be under his own supervision. To forestall this possibility he paid a visit to Denmark and he encouraged the Danish king Valdemar and the Archbishop of Lund to occupy Estonia in the name of the Christian faith.

The king landed with a large Danish army and small detachments of the Knights and seized an Estonian settlement Lindanis in June, 1219. The victory was easily won but a few days later a sudden attack of the Estonians surprised the Danes. The following struggle long hung in the balance but King Valdemar unfurled the Danish flag and finally triumphed. The banner had been apparently sent him by the Pope for the expedition but according to the

tradition, it was suddenly sent down from heaven to the Danish King and has since been the Danish flag.

On the site of Lindanis, he built a new fortress and gave it the name of Tallinn (the Danish castle) and this marked the actual foundation of the present city. He occupied the islands of Saaremaa and Hiiumaa and soon the whole of northwestern Estonia was in his hands, while in the southern region of Estonia the Knights of the Sword acknowledged Valdemar as their sovereign, so long as they could maintain their own domination of the land.

The result of this oppression of the native population was the outburst of a great Estonian revolt in 1222. It began on the island of Saaremaa, the most militant part of the area, for the natives there had long been among the most daring searovers of the Baltic and they were the least willing to submit to the new feudal slavery in the name of Christianity. The revolt spread to the mainland. In January, 1223, the Knights were crushingly defeated at Vilyandi and soon the whole of Estonia with the single exception of the fortress of Tallinn was in the hands of the rebels. They received help from Novgorod and Pskov but the next year the tide began to turn and the Knights recovered their old position, as the aid from the east slackened when the Mongols defeated the forces of Kiev on the river Kalka and pursued the fleeing Slavs to the Dnieper.

Bishop Albert died in peace January 17, 1229. By a combination of diplomacy and force, he had placed the Germans in control of much of the eastern Baltic but his hopes of establishing a single state unified religiously and politically had failed. He, the Knights, and the city of Riga were in constant struggle and while at the moment of his death, the power of Denmark was in abeyance,

the control of Estonia was still in doubt. To the south of the Daugava, the spread of German rule had made still less progress. Here lived another group of tribes akin to the Latvians and known by the names of Lithuanians, Samogitians and Prussians. They occupied the valley of the Nemunas and from there to the lower Vistula. They formed an essential part of the complex of the Baltic tribes and again and again they moved northward to the aid of the Latvians and the Latgallians, for they felt themselves menaced by the German expansion from Riga.

In 1215 a Cistercian monk Christian of Oliva working in the extreme west, was able to convert two of the Prussian princes to Christianity and to take them to Rome. As a result of his accomplishments, he was consecrated bishop but he was unable to accomplish much in the work of converting the population. Like Bishop Meinhard in the north, Christian apparently endeavored to succeed by conviction and it was only as the result of repeated failure that he began to yield to the temptation of an appeal to arms.

As a result of the constant warfare between the Poles and the Lithuanians, the former endeavored to create their own monastic order of militant monks, the Dobrzynsky Order, but this was unable to do more than maintain its position. Then in 1230 Prince Konrad of Mazovia, discouraged at the failure of his hopes, requested the aid of the Teutonic Order and endowed it with lands at the mouth of the Vistula which was then the frontier between the Poles and the Baltic Prussians (not to be confused with the modern Germanic Prussians).

The Teutonic Knights accepted and that part of their number which was assigned to the Christianization

of the Baltic was recruited out of the same types that had joined the Knights of the Sword. The Pope offered full remission of sins to all persons who would accept the black cross of the Order and proceed to battle. The methods of the Teutonic Order for converting the pagans were the same as those of the Knights of the Sword, massacres, kidnapping, and crimes of every kind, so that step by step as they moved slowly eastward, they wiped out the population rather than converted them and replaced the population with Germans.

In 1236 the Lithuanians who were more successful than the Prussians turned northward and in an alliance with the Latgallians trapped the Knights of the Sword in a great battle at Saule near Bauska. The Grand Master Bolquin and most of his Knights were killed and this defeat seriously threatened the entire German position in the area.

To counterbalance this Pope Gregory IX arranged for the union of the two orders in 1237, so as to facilitate the work of conversion. This settlement made at Viterbo significantly increased the power of the Knights. The Teutonic Order in its Prussian domains was recognized as the secular sovereign of the conquered lands but in Livonia as distinct from Kurland it was compelled to recognize the spiritual authority of the Bishop of Riga and in Estland (Estonia) the King of Denmark received back all the territory which he had claimed and the Order in its Livonian branch was obliged to acknowledge him as its sovereign for that area.

The victory at Saule was however something more than the mere chance alliance of some powerful chieftains. It brought into the forefront the control of the Lithuanian tribes in the narrower sense by Mindaugas,

the first ruler of a united Lithuania. He had quietly but more or less unobtrusively risen to the supreme control between 1219 and 1236 and he had laid permanent foundations for a state which was to endure for centuries.

Thus by 1250 the Germans, operating through the Bishop of Riga, the Teutonic Knights and the Knights of the Sword had been able to occupy and to reduce to feudal submission almost the entire population of the east Baltic with the exception of the valley of the Nemunas. The organization of Lithuania as a solid pagan state had come too late to allow it to extend to the north among the Latvians who spoke a cognate language, much less to do more than to give temporary help to the Livs and the Estonians and to allow the tribes to develop their civilization in their own way.

Chapter Three

THE FLOWERING OF THE ORDER

The absorption of the Knights of the Sword by the Teutonic Order greatly strengthened the position of the Knights in the Baltic area. The Teutonic Order was far richer and more powerful and it had won great fame by its operations in the Holy Land. It was able to carry this over into its crusades against the natives of the Baltic and with its close connections with Rome it was far easier for it to enforce its will upon the helpless population. The Grand Master continued to reside in Acre and this left the Master in Prussia and the Master in Livonia free to their own devices. After the fall of Acre in 1291, the Grand Master moved to Marienburg on the Vistula and the Order devoted its entire time to its interests as a powerful eastern spreader of Germanism, as it understood it.

The Livonian branch was by now supreme among the majority of the Latvian and Estonian tribes, even though in parts of Estland it was compelled to do homage to the King of Denmark. He was far away and despite frequent efforts to assert his authority, his word was of no avail as compared with that of the Knights secure in their fortified castles and enriched by the labor of the

enslaved natives, whether they were Christian or not, for the Knights were in many cases only too willing to allow paganism to continue as an excuse for their crusading and violent desires.

On their eastern borders the Knights were favored by the collapse of the Kievan princes. This was the period when most of these had been compelled to accept the overlordship of the Mongols and the Tartars, thanks to the conquests of Genghis Khan and of Batu Khan. The eyes of the various Rus principalities were turned to the east for political guidance and while Novgorod and Pskov continued their trade with the Baltic and with Europe, their political interests were directed elsewhere.

However this was not always conducive to good relations and the Knights made some attempt to penetrate to the eastward. Still the disastrous defeat which they received at the hands of Prince Alexander Nevsky on the ice of Lake Peipus in 1241 taught them caution. Instead of engaging in wild adventures which might bring them into conflict with the forces of Asia, they preferred to turn their attention to the strengthening of their position along the coast.

Their prime object was to link together in the south the holdings of the Order in Prussia and those in Livonia but this proved a difficult task, thanks to the growing power of Lithuania, for the natives in the south under King Mindaugas and his successors were offering more and more obstinate resistance. However in 1252 at the time of his conversion to Christianity, Mindaugas gave the Order some territory in Samogitia and here in 1252, the Knights erected the castle of Memelburg near the Lithuanian village of Klaipeda. It was again the same tactics that had proven so successful against the Latvians

and Estonians and the other tribes during the bishopric of Albert.

This time it led to a great revolt of all the Baltic peoples. Mindaugas saw himself constrained to head it and he broke off relations with the Order. In the decisive battle by the Lake of Durbe on August 13, 1260, the Kurs, Livs and Latgals serving in the army of the Knights as auxiliary troops changed sides. The Order was defeated. The head of the Livonian chapter, many of the officials and over 150 of the Knights were killed and the way was open for the expulsion of the Order. This was not to be. The Order received new recruits from all over Europe by the proclamation of a new crusade and the Lithuanian military skill was not yet sufficiently advanced to render it possible for them to seize the fortified castles. Mindaugas made a grand alliance, even including Novgorod, and he marched as far north as Cesis (Wenden), one of the main sites of the Livonian Order, but he was unable to win a sweeping victory in his siege operations.

The Knights rallied and then in rapid succession they definitely mastered the Kurs in 1267 and the Zemgals in 1290, so that by the end of the century they could feel secure in their possession of all the land north of the Nemunas valley. This did not mean that there was full peace in the land. The wretched natives rose again in desperate revolts; now and then they were able to surprise one or more castles and to destroy their garrisons but most of these uprisings were sporadic and the Latvian and Estonian tribes were unable to unite under sufficiently trained leaders to make any impression on their haughty and cruel masters.

In theory the native princes and elders were allowed to maintain their positions, provided they acknowledged

themselves vassals of one of the three competing authorities and so could the free peasants. Yet they had to pay one tenth of their total income to the Church and one tenth to their lord. Prisoners were treated as slaves and debtors very rapidly became first dependents and then slaves of those from whom they had borrowed. However there were no satisfactory courts to which they could appeal and the violence and turbulence of the rulers were not limited in any way. Year by year all agreements were violated by the rule of the sword and there were few even among the richer and more influential natives who were in a position to make good their rights.

Yet even so all was not peaceful. During the war according to the report of one of the Masters of the Livonian Order, it had lost 6 Masters, 28 princes, 49 barons, 11,000 knights, 4,000 armed burghers, and 23,000 soldiers. When we reflect that these losses were caused by untrained peasants fighting against well-armed and well-trained soldiers, we can appreciate the fury with which the natives seized every opportunity to rise in their own behalf.

At the same time the Order steadily followed its one goal of becoming the political authority in the land. The Knights of the Sword had been organized as a tool of the Bishop of Riga. They secured from Pope Innocent III practical emancipation from his authority politically. The Prussian branch of the Order in 1234 secured independence from all political rule and became directly dependent upon the Pope. The situation in Livonia developed more slowly. The bishops of Riga were rigid in their efforts to maintain spiritual authority but even they were steadily forced to yield. In 1274, Emperor Rudolph of Hapsburg recognized the lands of the Order

as an independent unit of the Empire and at about the same time he did his best to have the bishops and archbishops of Riga placed under the authority of the Master of the Order. Step by step the process continued and early in the fourteenth century the Order became in theory as it had been in fact the suzerain of the entire Baltic area now included in Latvia and Estonia.

The Masters of the Order knew how to draw profit from both their victories and defeats. In 1343 another revolt broke out among the oppressed Estonians of Saaremaa. Once again the revolt spread to the mainland and soon the Danish authority and the Order were almost confined to the walls of Tallinn. The Estonians appealed everywhere for support but such were the conditions that no help arrived and the peasants were finally suppressed. The Knights marched back and literally annihilated the entire population of Harju. Then with their power reestablished, they were able to put pressure upon the Danish King to give up his nominal control of the northern sections and the Order for all intents and purposes bought out the Danish interests in Estonia. It strengthened its power and it applied still more rigid restrictions to the helpless peasants.

It was the same in regard to the cities. Riga, Tallinn, Narva and Tartu, the important commercial centres, had early commenced to organize themselves as city corporations with their guilds and it was in this century that we first find the arrival of Jewish groups organized for trading purposes in the larger centres. The Order had no intention of allowing these to develop without paying their due share of the toll. It fostered all elements of disunion and discontent among the members of the Hansa; it played upon the ambitions and the egotism

of the city burghers and long before the end of the fourteenth century, it had turned the once independent cities into autonomous units under the control of the all-powerful Order. It had early given up any spiritual ideals which its founders might have had, ideals which were strangely inconsistent with the Papal Bull which granted a full pardon for any criminal who joined the Order. It became very definitely a series of civilian officials and great landowners, a new aristocracy lording it at will over the countryside and thinking of itself as a secular state, fostering its own commercial and political interests in the eastern Europe of the day.

Chapter Four

THE RISE OF LITHUANIA

The Order was successful in bringing under its control all the lands to the north and east of its original settlement in Riga. It was able to dominate the Kurs and the Livs of the southwest in the Kurland peninsula. It was able from its position on the Vistula to dominate Prussia and to subjugate the Prussians. It failed to close the gap between the two provinces of the Order, for Lithuania grew in strength even more rapidly and this was to have two hundred years later disastrous consequences for the entire system sponsored by the Order.

It would be too simple to attribute the success of the Lithuanians in maintaining their liberty to their own superior bravery or to any innate superiority over the other Baltic tribes. There were many other causes and not least the fact that the rise of Lithuania and its appearance as an organized state came a few years after the successful push of the Knights to the north.

It was only natural that they should have turned north rather than south. Their prime object from the early days was to control the trade-routes to Novgorod and Pskov. These were the two commercial centres of northeastern Europe and trade with them brought rich profits. The roads to these places as well as to Polotsk

passed to the north of the great marshes of the Pripet River. The Slavs whom the Lithuanians met in peace or war were apt to be those to the south in Volhynia, nearer to Kiev and the centre of the commercial life of the Dnieper valley. This section had undergone the same process of political disintegration as the north during the twelfth century and in the thirteenth it was to feel the main effects of the onrush of the Mongols and Tartars.

The Lithuanians formed, as it were, the core, the nucleus of the entire Baltic area and though they were early involved in the warfare against the Knights, it was only rarely that these were able to penetrate the forests of Lithuania and then only for short periods. It was obvious from geography that the Lithuanians would be the last to bow.

This gave them a short breathing space, a few years in which they could take account of the situation and make their plans. Men like Kaupo among the Latvians had been the head of some tribal confederations, the nuclei of various Baltic attempts at confederation. Some of them had remained pagan; others had adopted Christianity by conviction or by force. The fate of all had been identical. Treaties made by the Bishop of Riga or by the Knights of the Sword had been broken with impunity and the people suppressed. The few years that the Lithuanians had were enough to convince them that neither paganism nor Christianity as faiths could work out to their advantage, if they did not prepare themselves to face the future storm militarily.

It is hard to know how Mindaugas secured his control of the Lithuanian tribes. In 1217 he was one of a group of chieftains who signed a treaty with the princes of Volhynia. By 1240 he was the recognized authority. His

government was still crudely primitive. He apparently had no fixed capital but administered his state, if so we may call it, from wherever he happened to be at the time. Yet that he did have some form of organization is shown by the fact that one of his commanders was able to defeat one of the hordes of Batu Khan which penetrated into Lithuanian territory during the Mongol drive to the west.

Mindaugas was clever enough to see the situation in which his people were. He realized that as events were, the Order could draw upon the resources of Europe for his discomfiture, as well as rouse against him jealous Baltic tribes. To guard himself against this, he approached the Master of the Livonian Order in 1250 and Andreas von Stirland came to Lithuania. The conversion of Mindaugas and his baptism and that of his higher lords by Bishop Christian of Prussia was not of course to the liking of the Order but as a religious organization devoted to the spreading of the Faith, it could not object.

Then with a new stroke of inspiration Mindaugas sent his own representatives to Rome to announce his conversion and did not rely solely upon the reports of the Order. Pope Innocent IV received the news with joy. He ordered Bishop Henry of Kulm to crown Mindaugas King of Lithuania and then in accordance with the papal policy of preventing an undue concentration of power in the hands of any distant bishop, he arranged for Bishop Christian of Lithuania to be directly dependent upon the Holy See and not under the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Riga.

The Archbishop of Riga like the Order was profoundly disappointed. He tried to assert his authority over the new see but he failed and there was a bewilder-

ing succession of bishops as the various parties sought to secure the religious ascendency. In a sense it must have puzzled Mindaugas and his Lithuanians but for nearly a decade Mindaugas remained on good relations with the Order, giving them land in Samogitia, which the pagans refused to hand over. Then he threw off the mask, renounced Christianity and took the leadership of the Baltic revolt in 1260.

At this point Mindaugas made a decision which was to be of extraordinary significance for Lithuania and the whole of eastern Europe. He had risen to prominence by his contests with the princes of Volhynia. These princes, unlike those in the north including Alexander Nevsky of Novgorod, were continuing the struggle against the Tartars and Mongols. Mindaugas had already received the homage of some of these princes and had secured from the Pope the recognition of his sovereignty over them. He now continued this policy and did not confine his attention to rescuing the Baltic peoples from the Teutonic Order. In pursuit of his policy two of his sons became Catholic and one Orthodox and was for a while in a monastery in Greece.

The immediate result was a split among his relatives and one, his nephew, Treniota, finally murdered him in 1263 and endeavored to pursue a purely Baltic policy. A new period of chaos and of internecine strife began. None of the successors of the Mindaugas family was able to organize a broad campaign against the Knights and step by step they succeeded in cementing their hold upon Prussia and the north. Yet in the midst of the turmoil that lasted until the accession of King Vytenis in 1295, there still remained the intact nucleus and this

nucleus included the Rus provinces to the east which saw in the Lithuanians the only hope of protection against the ravaging Mongols and Tartars.

This produced cultural consequences that were far reaching. During these years Lithuania passed through a revival of paganism and the Order used it with telling effect to secure recruits in Western Europe and to justify its efforts to suppress the young and disordered state, which was henceforth separated from the Latvians on the north and the Prussians on the southwest, both of whom were suppressed. Yet we must not assume that Catholic Christians were exterminated or even persecuted to any considerable degree in so far as they were Lithuanians and not Germans or members of the Order. On the other hand, the Rus provinces brought to the Lithuanians a knowledge of Church Slavic and of the cultural traditions of Kiev which had been largely and even predominantly derived from Constantinople. It gave the new state an educated class which had not passed under the influence of the Order and its sympathizers and the pagan rulers could find competent people for handling governmental affairs as they began to take shape.

Vytenis, while a pagan, recognized the need of establishing connections with Europe and of finding a means of controverting the propaganda of the Order. He found a very unusual chance for doing it. The Order at the end of the century was in bitter conflict with the Archbishop of Riga and the city burghers, with the Archbishop over the fact that it refused to place under his control two thirds of the domain of Livonia as provided by Innocent III and with the burghers over its interference with the trade of the city. Under these circumstances both the

Archbishop and the city welcomed the presence of a pagan Lithuanian garrison in the city as a means of warding off any sudden treacherous attack by the Order which was constantly seeking by fair means or foul to disable and master its enemies. This appeal of the Catholic Church to a pagan army against the Christian crusaders was only one of the surprising developments of the time. It gave Vytenis the opportunity to present his side of the story in the commercial cities of northern Europe and until 1313 he had a free port through which he could communicate with the outside world and could import the arms which his country so badly needed.

Vytenis died in 1316 and he was succeeded by his still more able brother Gediminas who ruled until 1341. The actual organizer of the Lithuanian state, Gediminas was more of a diplomat than a soldier and he left military affairs and the handling of the war against the Order to his able general, Prince Daujotas, apparently a member of the family of Mindaugas, until the latter's death in 1326.

The general policy of Gediminas was to extend his power to the east over the various princes of Rus and to protect them against the Tartars, while he used their forces for his wars against the Order. This policy left him consistently in a very delicate and exposed situation. The overwhelming majority of the Rus princes were Orthodox in religion. The mainstay of his Lithuanian troops in the west were the Samogitians and they were the most determined pagans of all his subjects. His hope for securing allies against the Knights from Western Europe and in reducing their influence abroad was to secure Catholic support. In an age of religious passion and bigotry, it required diplomatic talent of no low

order to be able to govern together in one state representatives of three hostile and even warring religions but Gediminas solved the problem as well as possible and to the end of his life, he continued to dangle before the eyes of the Pope the possibility that he would become Catholic, if the danger from the Order were definitely removed.

It would take too long to recount all of the manoeuvres. In 1322, he appealed to Pope John XXII and in his letters he stressed the fact that Mindaugas and Lithuania would have remained Catholic except for the attacks of the Order, which had forced them in self-defence to turn away from the Catholic Faith.

Gediminas succeeded in undermining the power of the Knights in Europe and his letters and his treatment of the Pope's legates were such that he won the support of the legates and the Archbishop of Riga who even placed the Order under an interdict in 1325. He succeeded for a while in making a peace with the Livonian Order contrary to the wishes of the Grand Master at Marienburg and when in obedience to the latter's orders, the Livonian Order attacked him, Gediminas was able to secure enough influence to have the Livonian Order called to account and the Grand Master compelled to recognize the peace treaty.

There could come no definite settlement of all these questions. Gediminas was not free to spurn the support of any of the elements which he had laboriously brought together under a loose federation. At the same time it is difficult to know his real feelings, for along with his Orthodox wife and his patronage of the Orthodox, he frequently kept near him various Catholic priests and he relied upon them in many of his undertakings. He

was apparently a man of really tolerant views in an age when intolerance was the great virtue and on the whole Lithuania profited by it.

It may well be asked as to whether the country would not have gained more, had he definitely taken sides with the Pope in the struggle. The probable answer is that at this period, the subjugation of the Baltic peoples had already gone so far that it was hopeless for him to seek to rest the cause of his own people on the liberation of the oppressed Latvians and Estonians. He could see that Catholic Poland with which he was often embroiled over the domination of Volhynia was on no better terms with the Order than was pagan Lithuania, for the Order was a law unto itself and it could win papal backing in its opposition to the Emperor and imperial backing in its opposition to the Pope.

At the same time Gediminas also wrote to the Hansa and invited merchants, tradespeople and artisans to settle in the Lithuanian cities. He offered them liberal perquisites, freedom from taxes for a period of ten years, etc., all with the intention of building up those urban classes who were playing such an important role in Riga, Tallinn and similar cities. Naturally this seemed a new insult to the Order which tried in every way to prevent all the correspondence between Gediminas and the West. In addition to slanders and lies, the Order did not hesitate to arrest and execute the agents of Gediminas on their way to the west and tried in every way to nullify his efforts.

At the same time the relations of Gediminas and Poland were also not too friendly. Gediminas had been able by one way or another to acquire control of a large part of the disintegrating Kievan state and the Poles were

hungering for the same territory at the very time when they likewise were seeking protection against the Order. In an effort to stop the feud, Gediminas arranged the marriage of his daughter Aldona to Kazimierz, the future King of Poland. The girl was baptized in the Catholic Church and carried a rich dowry in the form of Poles who were released from captivity but this did not put an end to the controversies which continued to flare up.

Nevertheless despite all the political troubles, Gediminas continued the work of regularizing and organizing his government. It is to him that the city of Vilnius (or Wilno) owed its rise as the capital of Lithuania. On a splendid site at the junction of the Neris and the Vilnele rivers, Gediminas chose the place for his capital and extended a small settlement that had existed previously, while he established not far away the stronghold of Trakiai on an island in a chain of lakes.

Thus by the time of his death Lithuania had assumed a more conventional form than at his accession. It was still not a unified state in the modern sense of the word but it had risen to power and might fairly be considered in some senses as the successor of Kiev.

When he died, perhaps killed by a shot at the defence of the city of Viluona, the question was raised as to the permanence of his work. It was secured by the fact that the two most promising of his sons were able to work together in relative harmony and with a rough division of their functions to correspond to the needs of the state. Algirdas, who had the nominal seniority turned his attention to the east and he continued the work of Gediminas among the Ukrainians and Byelorussians. Kiestutis, his brother, perhaps assuming the title of Duke of Trakiai, was more directly responsible for the protection of

the country against the Order, the Poles, and the West in general.

Their joint reigns were marked by a continuation of the old squabble. There was an endless series of raids made by the Order into Lithuanian territory from Prussia and Livonia. There were endless raids made by the Lithuanians against the possessions of the Order. There were intermittent wars with Poland and Hungary which was closely associated with Poland and likewise cast longing eyes across the Carpathian Mountains to the eastern Lithuanian holdings. There were continued hostilities against the Tartars to the east of Kiev and some of the Lithuanians even nourished the hope that it might be possible to move the Order to new lands in the east where they could satisfy their crusading zeal by carving out a realm from the Mongol Empire.

It was a vain hope for no one had any power to dislodge or to sway the Order which with perfect impunity defied the Pope, executed Livonian priests as traitors, fought with the Livonian cities, arrested Catholic bishops and somehow or other was able to defend itself at Rome and Avignon and before the Empire.

The net result was merely the ostensible strengthening of the paganism of Kiestutis and perhaps less noticeably of Algirdas, who intimated their willingness to accept Catholicism provided the Pope could compel the Order to hand over all of its conquests along the Nemunas and the Daugava and thus restore freedom to the natives. Such a proposal was of course not even treated with respect and throughout the greater part of the fourteenth century, the two brothers continued their work with varying fortunes.

Algirdas died in 1377 and his numerous sons im-

mediately commenced to intrigue against one another. In this situation the game of duplicity reached new heights or depths for Jogaila (Jagiello), the most active of them, made promises right and left. He offered the Order the Samogitian coast but under conditions whereby they could scarcely seize it. He played fast and loose in the east, while Vytautas, the son of Kiestutis, found it expedient to take refuge with the Order.

The five years which followed the death of Algirdas certainly presented a confused and unedifying picture, which was not made any better when Jogaila, again united with Vytautas, brought about a situation under which the aged Kiestutis was finally arrested. Five days later he committed suicide and was buried with due pagan rites. Few believed the story of suicide and there was much murmuring against the new rulers but there was no definite proof as to who the murderers were, if there really was a murder. Thus by 1382, it seemed as if the work of Gediminas and his sons was again on the road to destruction and the surrounding peoples were preparing to divide the spoils, when again the situation changed in favor of the Lithuanians.

Chapter Five

THE DEFEAT OF THE KNIGHTS

While Lithuania was thus being torn by discord between the various sons of Algirdas and Kiestutis, the Knights renewed their pressure upon Poland, for it seemed a good opportunity for them to extend their holdings along the Vistula. The mere fact that Poland had been a Catholic country for centuries counted with them no more than did the pagan character of the Lithuanian rulers.

It seemed a very favorable moment. After the death of King Kazimierz in 1370, the Polish crown had passed to Louis of Hungary, who tried to govern the two states from Buda. He died in 1382 in the same year as Kiestutis and he left as his sole heirs two daughters, Maria married to Prince Sigismund of Brandenburg and Jadwiga, a girl of 14, who had been formally betrothed to Prince Wilhelm of Hapsburg and was destined to be Queen of Hungary. When King Louis died, it soon became evident that the Poles would not accept Maria and a North German prince and so Jadwiga was substituted. She was madly in love with Wilhelm but by the time that she arrived in Poland, it was a scarcely hidden secret that she would never be allowed to marry him. Ziemowit of Mazovia, one of those princes who were directly threat-

ened by the Order, had many partisans but also many enemies and the majority of the Polish lords looked elsewhere for an eligible bachelor, who could be trusted to oppose the Order.

Their choice fell upon Jogaila despite the fact that he was still a pagan. Negotiations went on rapidly and an agreement was soon signed in 1385 at Kreva. Under this Jogaila was to accept the Catholic faith, to pay 200,000 guldens for the breaking of Jadwiga's engagement to Wilhelm, to join perpetually the two countries, to regain the territories lost by both states, and to liberate all Polish prisoners of war. The phrase used *terras, quas et Russie corone regni Polonie perpetuo applicare,* was perhaps somewhat ambiguous, but there seems little doubt that Jogaila and the members of his family as Vytautas who likewise signed the agreement thought of it as a personal union of the two states which was sealed not only by the marriage but by the formal election of Jogaila as King of Poland.

The proposed union of the two states in any form was enough to enrage the Order. It invaded Lithuania in the effort to keep the King at home. It presented Vytautas with tempting offers of personal sovereignty. It ranged as far east as Moscow in its efforts to stir up hostility but all of its attempts failed.

There were no less difficulties in Poland. Wilhelm arrived at Krakow in a futile effort to secure his bride. Jadwiga was inconsolable but her special agents reported to her that Jogaila was not the monster that he was represented by the Knights and she finally yielded.

On February 15, 1386, Jogaila arrived in Krakow and was formally baptized under the name of Wladyslaw Vytautas renewed his baptismal vows (he had been bap-

tized previously in both Catholic and Orthodox Churches) and three days later the wedding took place and in a couple of weeks Jogaila was crowned King of Poland.

The crown of Poland was not strictly hereditary nor was it entirely elective. It was fair to presume that the marriage would be productive of children and had Jadwiga born a son, much of the later difficulties and unpleasantness might have been avoided. It seems clear that Jogaila had no intention of uniting the two countries for more than his lifetime or the duration of his dynasty. The Lithuanians had not fought against all their enemies merely to hand their country over to a foreign state but such questions were scarcely considered during the early days. They became real only when efforts were made by the Polish lords to keep some of their King's suite almost as hostages in Krakow and when disagreement arose between the Lithuanians and the Poles during their joint campaigns to the east. They became real when Jogaila made his almost permanent home in Krakow and tried to govern Lithuania through other members of his family.

This aroused the suspicions of Vytautas, for Skirgaila, a brother of Jogaila, declined to hand over Trakiai to him as was the agreement earlier. He finally took refuge again with the Order, while he arranged for the marriage of his daughter Sophia Anastasia to Prince Vasily of Moscow. This period of renewed opposition between the cousins promised ill for the position of Jogaila in Lithuania. He reopened relations with Vytautas who was really in the hands of the Order and finally agreed to turn over to him the control of Lithuania during his lifetime. This restored the friendship between the cousins. Vytautas

became the ruler of Vilnius as Jogaila's deputy and by 1392, peace and harmony had been so far restored that Vytautas could apply himself to his own plans for Lithuania and continue his work of organization.

There was indeed much to be done. Up to this period the internal organization had largely rested upon the will of the sovereign and the position of the princes and the landowners had been vaguely indefinite. Vytautas had inherited from his cousin certain documents signed at the moment of the Christianization of the country. These had made provisions for the Catholic Church and they had given some rights to the Catholic nobles but they did not affect the status in the Rus principalities which were still governed under the old Kievan system. In general the nobles had never held in Lithuania that position which they had achieved in Poland but Vytautas used excuses of their displeasure to counter requests that were made by Jadwiga and that he did not approve.

As the years went by, the questions of succession changed their form and in some respects became more aggravated. Jadwiga did not bear any children. Vytautas too was childless. Both of these facts cast shadows on the relations between the two states.

From the moment when he felt free to act, Vytautas was busily concerned with the struggle against the Tartars and with the customary tolerance of the Gediminas family, he settled Tartar prisoners of war throughout the country in safe positions without passing any restrictions on the Mohammedan practices, much to the annoyance of the more rigid Polish Catholics. Then after the defeat by Tamerlane of Toktamysh, Vytautas took the latter under his protection and prepared with the blessing of

Pope Boniface IX a crusade against the conqueror. He brought for this purpose a large number of the Knights and crusaders from various parts of Europe.

The result was disastrous for on August 12, 1399, the Christian army under Vytautas was overwhelmingly defeated and almost destroyed by the forces of the Khan of the Crimea. Vytautas himself barely escaped.

In a real sense this defeat on the river Vorskla doomed the Lithuanian policy in the east. For nearly a century the Lithuanians had been pushing eastward and had assumed the burden of protecting the frontiers and strengthening the Kievan princes in their hour of defeat. This battle showed that it was still too early to push further eastward and the best that Vytautas could hope for was to build an advanced line of fortified towns down to the Black Sea. He could force for a while the homage of some of the lesser hordes but already the Ottoman Turks were invading the Balkans and sweeping everything before them.

To gain the support of the Order for this campaign, Vytautas had again to make important concessions in Samogitia. Again the Knights were unable to secure their position, for the nobles of Vytautas after the first shock of the eastern defeat was over, began to extend aid and shelter to the new victims of the Order's aggression.

At the same time the death of Jadwiga without children raised anew the question of the relation of Jogaila and Poland. He was of course the elected king and was more or less sure of the throne for his lifetime but he still had many enemies. So after a new conference in 1401, a new set of agreements was drawn up which established Vytautas as the independent ruler of Lithuania

during his lifetime and provided that after his death the rulers of Poland and Lithuania would be selected after mutual consultation. This in a sense restricted the power of Vytautas but it secured him a certain amount of Polish support, especially as the Order was equally encroaching upon the Polish prerogatives.

At the same time the union under Jogaila deprived the Order of its propaganda weapon, for its appeals to the Pope and to the Western powers for a crusade against the "pagan" Lithuanians now fell completely flat, when they had to attack Catholic Poland and on the other hand the protests of the Catholic King of Poland against the lawlessness of the Knights could not fail to bear some fruit.

In 1409 the Order prevented Jogaila from sending food to starving Samogitians on various pretexts and to intimidate the Poles, resorted to its usual tactics of invasion. By this time Vytautas had won over Jogaila to a definite move against the Knights. Both sides appealed to the public opinion of the Pope and of Europe with charges and countercharges. War became a certainty and both sides prepared.

The Knights from Marienburg rallied all their possible supporters but by clever diplomacy Vytautas secured the neutrality of the Livonian Order and so saved himself from an attack on the north. He gave his cousin money to hire mercenaries for already the Polish nobles were showing an unwillingness to train their men and take the field in person. Nevertheless while Vytautas was the brain and the heart of the expedition, Jogaila was the nominal head in his post as King of Poland, if only to improve the situation from a religious aspect, for

Vytautas had in his forces many Orthodox and even Mohammedans as well as a few pagans.

The Grand Master had visions of an advance against him by the Polish and Lithuanian forces from different directions. He therefore guarded the borders of the Order lands and waited. To his surprise and dismay, Vytautas had arranged for an earlier junction of the two forces and slipped them into a well prepared position near Tannenberg. Here the Lithuanian forces, largely light cavalry, with their Tartar allies held in two lines an exposed right flank, while the Poles on the left were drawn up in front of woods and marshes.

When the battle started with an attack upon the Lithuanians by the heavy cavalry of the Knights, the first line of the Lithuanians disentangled themselves and retired, drawing the Knights into the marshes. Then as the battle raged on the left and the Germans threw in their reserves, the Lithuanian second line appeared and some time after the first line reappeared in the rear of the Knights. This had been a favorite manoeuvre of the Tartars in all of their battles and Vytautas employed it skilfully from long experience in the east.

The Grand Master Ulrich von Jungingen was killed and nearly the entire force of the Knights. The victorious armies took possession of the camp of the Order which was supplied with food for a feast of victory and with fetters for the expected thousands of prisoners.

The first rush of the victors carried them to the walls of Marienburg but this was ably defended by Heinrich von Plauen who was soon elected the new Grand Master. The Order was faced with a revolt of many of the cities that it had taken over and its dominion was broken. Heinrich von Plauen worked to restore it and the Poles

and Lithuanians did not push their advantage but early the next year made a treaty at Torun under which the Knights paid 100,000 kapas for the expense of the allies and gave up some of their conquests in Poland. It also restored Samogitia and Sudavia to Lithuania during the lifetime of Jogaila and Vytautas. This last was a convenient way of putting it, for with the spreading of Christianity among the Samogitians, the chances that the Knights would ever return were slight indeed.

The Order still continued to make trouble but it was no more the formidable enemy that it had been, for now it was confronted by an uprising of the cities of Prussia. The burghers who had been cowed into silence found their voice and some twenty-five years later they began to appeal to the Kings of Poland for protection. They were accepted in 1440 and then it came the time for the Knights to yield. The Order was no longer a militant force and though it continued its lawless actions, these were as frequently directed against its own vassals.

Finally in 1466 at another gathering in Torun, the Grand Master made the decisive step and in the name of the Prussian branch he submitted to the King of Poland and did homage to him. The Order had ceased to be an independent state.

The Livonian Order still continued but it was deprived of its chief source of strength with the fall of the parent chapter. It continued, however, with its pretensions, until a new wave of disaster swept over the entire region, the troubles with Moscow.

Chapter Six

LITHUANIA AND POLAND

With the passing of the menace of the Knights after the battle of Tannenberg, both the Lithuanians and the Poles began to consider even more seriously the question of their mutual relationship. It was obvious that Jogaila and Vytautas would not live forever. At the time of the battle Vytautas was childless and Jogaila had only a young daughter of whom Vytautas was guardian and to whom the Poles had sworn allegiance as their future ruler.

At this point there appeared a decided difference in the mode of thinking of the two peoples, for the Poles had a completely different idea of the situation from their northern neighbors. That difference was never resolved and it has colored Polish-Lithuanian relations since that time.

The Poles, basing their method of reasoning on principles of Roman law and scholasticism, interpreted the marriage of Jogaila and Jadwiga as a formal union of the two states which was to continue regardless of the future ruler. In other words, if Jogaila did not leave a son or heir satisfactory to the Polish magnates and szlachta, the latter had the right to elect another king,

perhaps in joint voting with the Lithuanians, and he would be the legal successor to the rule of both countries or rather of a combined country. In addition to this the Polish nobles and their local and national diets maintained that they had extensive rights to control the actions of the King whom they had thus elected.

The Lithuanians argued that the marriage had not produced a united country, indissolvably connected, but had brought about a situation where Jogaila as the sovereign of Lithuania had been elected the King of Poland. His death would automatically dissolve the union and the two parties were then legally free to choose their own sovereigns who might be distinct and if so, all links between the two lands would be broken. Furthermore they had developed a strong feeling of attachment to the dynasty of Gediminas and they made it clear that they intended to continue the dynasty in that family. They had been accustomed also to the indefinite condominium of Algirdas and Kiestutis. This had led them to accept as normal the relations of Jogaila and Vytautas. The latter ruled as an independent sovereign in Lithuania and had for many years cooperated loyally with his cousin Jogaila who was perfectly willing to have either the Emperor or the Pope confer upon him a royal crown. On top of this all his official acts were the will of the Lithuanian sovereign and up to this period there existed only a personal aristocracy of the prominent citizens who had the confidence of the ruler.

It can be easily seen that this made the position of Jogaila far more difficult than the position of Vytautas, for as the senior of the officials of the two states he had to endeavor to represent both points of view which were in a way contradictory. He was subject to criticism, what-

ever action he took and everything that he said or did was subjected to a double interpretation.

It was largely for these reasons that he and Vytautas drew up new agreements at Horodle in 1413. These added little to the understandings of the acts of Kreva in 1385, except that they definitely provided that neither the Lithuanians nor the Poles could select a new ruler without mutual consultation. The chief new factor was that the Lithuanian bajores or boyars were formed into a vague group something like the Polish szlachta, so that they could sign as a corresponding body.

Lithuania sadly needed a more highly developed governmental system. It had greatly developed since the days when Mindaugas had carried the entire government in his tent or on his saddle but there was still a need for more local officials and Vytautas established these more or less on the Polish model, especially in so far as they had to deal with Catholic Lithuania and not the Rus provinces. Yet there was also danger that the newly constituted nobles, given the Polish pattern, would seek those privileges which so fettered the King in Poland and bound him to helplessness.

Following the Acts of Horodle, Polish coats of arms were bestowed on 47 Lithuanian lords and the Lithuanians began to assume family names on the Polish pattern. Various other measures were taken to assimilate the two systems.

Jogaila and Vytautas together made a trip to Samogitia to spread Christianity and once this had been done nominally, they sent representatives of the Catholic Samogitians to the Council of Constance. The trip was successful. Pope John XXIII revoked all the claims of

the Order to Samogitia and he went further and named the two rulers Vicars for Novgorod and Pskov and granted them one half of the income of the benefices for continuing their campaigns against the Tartars. All this meant that despite the protests of the Order, Lithuania in its alliance with Poland had been recognized as a Catholic country. As a result the boundary that was established by the Papal representatives remained thereafter unchanged, although Lithuania was unable to recover the delta of the Nemunas and Klaipeda-Memel.

For the Rus provinces Vytautas tried to secure from the Patriarch of Constantinople the establishment of a separate Metropolitan for Lithuania and all Rus but he was unable to secure this. Then for a while the Lithuanian Orthodox chose a Bulgarian bishop, Gregory Tsamblak, without reference to the Patriarch but after his death this was not repeated, as he died during a state of temporary friendship with Moscow.

The difficulties with Poland kept recurring, especially after the death of the third wife of Jogaila and his fourth marriage, this time to a young Lithuanian by whom he had two sons. The party of Malopolska, the area around Krakow, did everything possible to embarrass both the King and Vytautas and they even went so far as to offer Vytautas the crown as head of the two states. The Chancellor Zbigniew Olesnicki argued in season and out of season that any action satisfactory to the Lithuanians was a violation of the agreements, but when Jogaila threatened to return to Lithuania, the nobles of Wielkopolska in the north insisted on the continued union.

It is not clear what would eventually have happened but Vytautas died suddenly in 1430 and he was followed

by Jogaila in 1432. The Poles elected his oldest son, Wladyslaw, a boy of eight, as King. The situation in Lithuania was more confused for there arose an embryonic civil war between the descendants of Kiestutis and those of Algirdas. The former defended the ideas of Vytautas, the latter a more Polish point of view. These came to a head when Svitrigaila, a brother of Jogaila and a born troublemaker, attempted to secure the aid of the Livonian Order, of Tver and Moscow. It was the last time for centuries when Poles and Lithuanians clashed. Svitrigaila was defeated and in the battle the Livonian Order suffered a new Tannenberg. Its Master and most of its Knights were killed and the Livonian Order began to lose the influence which it had previously possessed.

To end these disputes, the Lithuanian nobles elected Kazimierz, the second son of Jogaila, Grand Duke of Lithuania in 1440. He was then only 13 years old and of course was under the influence of the men who had elected him. When his brother disappeared in the battle of Varna, in 1444, the last desperate crusade against the oncoming Turks, the question of succession to the Polish throne again became important and even critical. There was at first the feeling that the two states should have different rulers but this time, thanks to the dangers from Moscow, the Lithuanians wanted to perpetuate the alliance and finally allowed the Poles to elect Kazimierz who ruled the two states until his death in 1492.

Again there came a split and the King's oldest son, Jan Albrecht, was elected King and his second son, Alexander, Grand Duke, but on the death of Jan Albrecht, the two posts were again combined and until

the end of the dynasty, the Grand Duke received first his post as the sovereign of Lithuania and then he was elected King of Poland.

During the entire period Polish manners and ways of thinking continued to seep into Lithuania. The King spent most of his time in Poland and the superior culture and refinement of the Poles was not without its effect upon those Lithuanian noblemen who found it necessary to visit Krakow on business. There was in a very real sense a social pressure exerted by the Poles on ambitious Lithuanians to adopt the Polish language and to move away from the Church Slavic which was the practical written language of the Lithuanian government in Vilnius.

At the same time the freedom of the Polish nobles from all obligations to the state could not fail to have an effect upon the thinking of the Lithuanians. They constantly sought for the same exemptions and rights and while the process did not develop as far or as rapidly as it did in the southern sections, the Grand Duke found it more expedient to raise from the taxes a permanent professional military establishment than to try to secure from the nobles the old feudal obligations of service. It was this force hired with Lithuanian money that proved the mainstay of the combined regime during the sixteenth century and its victories were often won in spite of the active hostility or the indifference of the Polish magnates.

It was under the reign of Zigmantas the Elder in 1529 that there was published the First Lithuanian Statute, a collection of the laws and writs of the Grand Dukes in Church Slavic. It carefully and systematically outlined the laws under which the state was to be governed and

with its supplement, the general census of the country, it restored an order and established a system unequalled in eastern Europe.

This Statute was again revised and made applicable to all classes of Lithuanians in 1566 under the reign of the last of the kings of the dynasty, Zigmantas Augustus, and at the same time extensive reforms were made in the system of landholding, by which a large part of the peasantry were more or less bound to their places of abode or were at least hampered in their rights of movement.

Throughout the whole period the Poles never abandoned their desire to see the two states linked more closely and the Kings under Polish influence were inclined to work in that direction. Thus at Melnik in 1501 King Alexander drew up a plan for a single state with a single parliament, joint elections of the sovereign, a common army and a common coinage. This was never acted upon by the Lithuanians and it remained a dead letter.

A more serious situation arose in 1568 when it was already evident that the King would die childless and that the dynasty would be extinguished. Once more the King endeavored to arrange a joint government and waived his own hereditary rights in Lithuania for a common election. The Poles approved but they angered the Lithuanians by insisting upon the annexation of a large part of Ukraine to Poland against the desires of the Lithuanians. A diet was called in Lublin for the purpose of setting up a joint regime and it did succeed over Lithuanian objections in securing joint sessions of the diets of the country and in setting up some fields of common interests. Yet the practical results of the delibera-

tions came nearer to the Lithuanian than to the Polish wishes and the application of these clauses during the reign of Stefan Batory later in the century made it possible to recognize the Lithuanian institutions and state even under the joint system.

However, the practical significance was hidden by the steadily growing use of Polish in Lithuania and still more by the turning of many of the Lithuanian Orthodox lords to the Roman Catholic Church and the Polish language. Thus during the sixteenth century those changes came about whereby the country became definitely the minor partner in the Rzeczpospolita Polska, although it nominally preserved most of its rights. The dynasty which had governed the two countries for two centuries was at the moment of its extinguishment almost more Polish than Lithuanian and the bajores of Lithuania were becoming more Polonized and left the feeling of Lithuanian distinctiveness to the peasantry.

Chapter Seven

THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

For nearly three centuries the Baltic area had been torn by warfare and out of this there had come the definite enslavement of the entire native population with the single exception of the Lithuanians, who had been able to fight their way through to statehood. Elsewhere the power had passed into the hands of the Teutonic Order which had made its bid for statehood and was now in a state of turbulent decline. The combined forces of Poland and Lithuania had clipped its wings and the ending of the crusading movement had deprived it of those ever fresh supplies of men that had allowed it to extend its power.

Yet the secularization of the Order merely confirmed other changes that were taking place. The Knights and still more the landowning class which took their place, in rejecting the feudal privileges and rights, claimed and secured complete control of the peasants. These had no rights that their masters were now bound by law or tradition to respect and there were no courts to which they could appeal in any matter. The master claimed the right to as much or as little of the peasant crops as he desired; he could impose on them such labor as he would, restrict their lands as he pleased, limit their movements at his own discretion. The peasants were no longer feudal vassals but they were serfs bound to the soil and they

could be bought, sold, or moved at their master's will. The old laws which provided freedom under certain conditions, if they fled to the cities, were abrogated and the peasants were forbidden to leave their villages and land as much to keep them from combining in revolts as to hold them in ignorance and obedience.

At the end of the fifteenth century a new and more formidable menace made its appearance—Moscow, which now claimed control of all of the Eastern Slavs and of everything else. Its cold and ruthless rulers, imbued with a sense of their divine calling, set themselves to realize their aspirations for power and domination.

This was not the first time that the Eastern Slavs had appeared in the Baltic area. During the period of the decay of the Kievan state, various princes had laid claim to the territory; they had asserted a vague sovereignty and had made spasmodic raids. The Moscow invasion was different, for it moved along with the slow and sullen force of a lava stream, engulfing everything in its path.

Moscow had profited by its long subordination to the Mongols and Tartars. While other Slav princes had risked their lives and fortunes in a vain search for freedom, the princes of Moscow had acquiesced in their subordination and within the confines of the Tartar realm, they had absorbed step by step the various lesser states and had covered their self-aggrandizement with their obsequious flattery of the ruling Tartars. Moscow had no tradition of popular rights, no belief in the dignity of the individual and little recognition of the valor of a foe.

It was not until Ivan III was completely convinced of the weakness of the Golden Horde that he was willing to move against them but once the die had been cast and Moscow was free, the tsar set himself to expand his

territories. He married Sophia Paleolog, a member of the last imperial family of Constantinople, assumed the double-headed eagles of that city and announced himself as the Christian ruler par excellence and the obvious centre of civilization.

Pskov readily submitted. Novgorod was conquered in 1471 and its commercial wealth passed into the hands of the tsar. The trading settlements of the Order and of the Hansa received short shrift. The leaders were carried in chains to Moscow and their property was confiscated. Trading henceforth was to be solely on Muscovite terms. In the north Moscow began to exert pressure upon the Livonian Order and in the centre and the south on Lithuania.

Then began a series of wars which lasted with slight intermissions for more than a century. The Muscovites met many setbacks. The superior arms and the valor of the Knights and the Lithuanians inflicted upon them severe defeats. The conflicts always ended with the swearing of eternal peace and then in a few years Moscow was on the march again. Muscovite forces penetrated Livonia and Lithuania. They ravaged the country up to the walls of Riga, burning and massacring the population and carrying back the leaders to be tortured to death in Moscow, if they were not killed on the spot.

Here was a greater menace to Europe than had been the disconnected raids of the pagans of the Baltic of earlier centuries but it was not recognized. The Muscovites were skilful diplomats. The Popes dreamed of bringing them to the Catholic Church. The Emperors saw in them the possibility of checking the development of the Polish-Lithuanian state. The commercial classes

dreamed of an increased trade. One and all were disappointed and their efforts only seemed to augment the power and the claims of Moscow.

In 1494 Wolter von Plettenberg became the Master of the Livonian Order. He was one of its most capable leaders and for 45 years he guided its destinies, now conquering the Muscovite forces with vastly inferior numbers, now seeking through alliances with Poland and Lithuania, now with the Holy Roman Emperor to hold back the flood, now seeking by peace treaties with Moscow to work out some satisfactory solution. In the meanwhile he had the task of bringing together in a coherent force the various competing forces in Livonia, the Knights, the cities, the higher clergy, especially the Archbishop of Riga, and of welding them into a regional organization. It will of course be noted that none of these activities had any connection with the native population, for that existed only to provide slaves and workers for the dominant German elements of the population and there was never any serious question of recruiting among them armed forces which would fill up the decimated ranks of the Knights.

A still more serious commotion arose in the German community by the appearance of the Reformation at Riga in 1520 under the leadership of Andreas Knopken and Sylvester Tegetmeyer, the first of whom was a native of the city. Luther's arguments were taken up especially by the burghers of Riga and Tallinn and they fanned into flame the old disagreements between the burghers, the bishops and the Order. At first the disputes were largely verbal but in 1524 there broke out in the cities a definite movement for the destruction of Catholic in-

struments of worship. The Black Heads of the Great Guild in Riga stole or destroyed all the valuable religious objects in their own chapel in the Church of St. Peter and their example was followed in Tallinn and elsewhere.

The Master of the Order was asked by the burghers to take over all the administrative functions held by the Archbishop, while at the same time the teachings of Luther, spreading among the oppressed peasants, threatened as in Germany to produce another peasant revolt, something that was feared and repugnant to the German partisans of the old and the new faiths. Thus at the very moment when the aged Plettenberg needed to maintain unity against the Muscovite peril and other foreign enemies, the domestic situation became still more complicated and passions rose higher and higher.

It was not only religious ideas or the desire to seize church property that was at the basis of all this excitement. In 1525, Albrecht of Brandenburg, the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order in Prussia, had finally solved his difficulties by secularizing the Order and doing homage to the King of Poland as Duke of Prussia. The members of the Order, now Lutheran laymen, divided up the property of the Order and became the wealthy landlords of the area, on the advice of Luther himself. Insistent voices were accordingly raised in Livonia and some of the knights already saw themselves fabulously rich landlords with thousands of slaves at their beck and call.

Plettenberg as Master of the Livonian Order could have followed the same course in 1526 but refused. A devout, if not a fanatical, Catholic, he preferred to mediate among the factions on traditional lines and not to plunge the land into the disputes and discords of the

Reformation period. He was thus a brake on events rather than an inspirer.

Others were willing to do what he refused. Albrecht of Prussia was constantly trying to bring Livonia under his control and at the crucial moment the Archbishop of Riga decided that the best way to restore his shattered authority was to secure Albrecht's brother, Wilhelm, who was still a Catholic, as Bishop Coadjutor of Riga. It soon became evident that Wilhelm, a mediocre figure at best, was trying to follow his brother's course, even though he did not have the proper support to do it. He soon found another helper in a new coadjutor Christof von Mecklenburg.

At first their plans seemed to fail but Gotthard Kettler, the Vice Master of the Order, had his own ideas. In contradiction to the Master, Wilhelm von Furstenberg, who was openly anti-Polish, Kettler opened negotiations and by the treaty of Pozwol in 1557, arrangements were made for an alliance between Livonia and Lithuania but not between Livonia and Poland which would have been a violation of the last provisional settlement between Livonia and Moscow. As it was, Ivan the Terrible seized the pretext for war and invaded Livonia again.

There was now little more than the resistance of a small band of Knights. The Order had fallen into ruins and even the German people were more interested in saving themselves than in rescuing anything from the wreck of their ambitions. Some like Kettler turned to the Poles. Others, especially in the north, looked to the Scandinavians.

Thus Frederick II of Denmark bought control of the island of Saaremaa from the bishop and destined it as a

centre for his brother, Duke Magnus of Holstein, and for a while it seemed as if Tallinn might pass into Danish hands. Yet Magnus showed himself thoroughly incompetent; he fell into disfavor with his brother and finally he too sued for the favor of Ivan who gave him the title of King of Livonia and married him to a Muscovite princess. This friendship too was of short duration but Magnus finally escaped the vengeance of the tsar and escaped to Poland.

Finally in 1561 at the suggestion of Kettler the Order was completely secularized. Its members turned Lutheran, took an oath of allegiance to Poland and formally dissolved that state organization which had arisen some three hundred years before. In the same year as a means of holding off an attack by Ivan the population of Tallinn formally accepted the supremacy of King Erik XIV of Sweden and this brought under Swedish control the greater part of Estonia.

Negotiations continued and Riga endeavored for a while to maintain itself as a free city of the German Empire. It was a vain hope. The Empire torn between the Catholics and Protestants could do little or nothing to help the outposts. After prolonged negotiations and promises the city found no other way than to open its gates to the Polish sovereign Stefan Batory.

The war with Moscow had dragged on for nearly twenty years. Ivan had devastated the country and the secularized knights had seen themselves forced to a position where they either had to die fighting or be massacred. Thus in the old fortress of the Order at Cesis in 1577 three hundred of the nobility with their wives and children preferred to blow up the fortress and perish in the

ruins to being tortured by Ivan and his Muscovites who surpassed in their vengeance the tortures and punishments of the early Mongols.

Then the tide turned. The victories of the Swedes under Pontus de la Gardie and those of the Poles under King Stefan Batory drove back the Muscovites and the territories of the Estonians, the Latvians and the Lithuanians were once more freed and they remained outside of Russian hands for another century.

King Stefan was well aware of the chief problem that was offered by Livonia, i. e. the complete gap between the secularized German noblemen and the Baltic peasants who were deprived of all rights and who were not even allowed to bring their products into the cities for sale without paying a tax on them to the landowners and he made some attempts to help them. Of course every move was resisted by the nobles who were willing to resort to any measures to maintain their power.

Unfortunately for his efforts, he was entirely wrapped up in the efforts to foster the recovery of Roman Catholicism and he did not realize the hold that Lutheranism had already acquired in all classes of the country. He restored Roman Catholic bishoprics and tried to return some of the old churches but he was constantly under attack and when at the end of his reign, he tried to introduce the new Gregorian calendar, it led to armed outbursts in Riga and elsewhere by the infuriated Lutherans.

At the same time he did provide for the printing of Latvian translations of some Church books and the immediate answer to this was the similar appearance of translations of the Lutheran texts in the native tongues, the first time that books had appeared in the Baltic

languages. Thus started a period of national revival but in a very narrow sphere and all of his work was severely criticized by all factions.

Unfortunately Batory died before he had done more than indicate his plans for alleviating the condition of the peasants and at his death the political situation in Poland, in Lithuania, and in Livonia became even more confused and the conservative and illiberal elements were once more put in the saddle to destroy much of what he had undertaken.

Chapter Eight

THE SWEDISH DOMINATION

The aggressive policy of Moscow after the time of Ivan III and especially the ferocious attempts of Ivan the Terrible in the sixteenth century brought home to the people of the Baltic the real significance of Muscovite domination. The Teutonic Order had been vanquished and secularized but that had always been an aggressive German movement and a menace to all established governments around the Baltic. There were now two of these, Poland-Lithuania and Sweden with its dependency of Finland including Viborg (Viipuri). The obvious policy was to bring about an understanding between these two.

On paper it seemed easy and the marriage of Jogaila and Jadwiga seemed the appropriate model. On the whole that marriage had brought about positive results. It had given Poland and Lithuania the military and diplomatic strength to master the Teutonic Order and to throw back Moscow from the Baltic seacoast. Its weaknesses were on the domestic front, where the freedom of the Polish nobles and their inability or unwillingness to solve satisfactorily the problems of the Rus provinces had tended to create ill feeling between the two participants. Still the Polish refusal to face the problems and the ability of the Kings as Grand Dukes of Lithuania to produce a strong state blinded people to the real situation.

Now that dynasty was dying out, while in Sweden

the descendants of Gustavus Vasa were carrying through a national revival. The brilliant but insane King Erik XIV was childless and there was a generally accepted idea that he would be succeeded by his brother Johan. As a result Johan who was the Duke of Finland married Katerina, the sister of Zigmantas Augustus of Poland, and secured from his brother-in-law the control of some castles in Livonia. This infuriated Erik who sought peace with Ivan and even consented to turn his sister-in-law over to the Tsar. He imprisoned Johan in Finland but Johan and his brother Karl succeeded in freeing themselves and in deposing Erik. Then Johan succeeded to the throne and his wife became Queen in 1568.

It was only natural that their son Sigismund should be elected King of Poland in 1587 and there were high hopes that on his father's death in 1592 he would succeed also to the throne of Sweden. In that case there would be a powerful union to resist the claims of Moscow now represented by the weak and ineffective Feodor. Unfortunately the question of the Reformation tangled everything up. King Johan had been moderate in his support of the Lutheran influence in Sweden and had worked for a compromise between the old and the new. Sigismund was an ardent Catholic and quickly aroused against himself the majority of the Swedish people including his uncle, Duke Karl. They prevented him from securing the crown, although they were willing to have his son Wladyslaw accept Lutheranism and rule. Sigismund refused this compromise, insisted upon all or nothing and refused to give up his rights to the crown of Sweden.

Karl who was only crowned King in 1607 was sure that he could carry out the plans with the aid of the Lutherans in the Baltic area and so he pressed south from

Finland around the east end of the Gulf of Finland and from Estonia and the Swedes also made overtures to the Orthodox of the Rus provinces of Poland. There were thus created two diametrically opposite plans for meeting the advance of Moscow which could scarcely be reconciled.

The differences extended into the social sphere. While Sweden possessed a noble class, the peasants had never been reduced to serfdom and they were still allowed representation as peasants in the Riksdag. More than that, Finnish peasants were represented in the governing bodies of that dependency and through the Finnish language there was a way for Swedes trained in Finland to understand the wishes of the Estonian peasants who were among the most badly treated by the secularized German Knights. Thus it was easy to see that despite the community of religion between the German landowners and the Swedes, the former might be asked some embarrassing questions by the new rulers of the area.

There were also differences in the military training of the different rivals. The basis of the Swedish army from the time of Gustavus Vasa had been the infantry who were trained on the pattern that was coming into use in central and western Europe. The Polish gentry and also the Lithuanians long confronted with the task of fighting off the Tartar raids, were still predominantly cavalry and the peasantry who were almost in a state of serfdom were not allowed to serve.

The first stages of the struggle were inconclusive. Sigismund failed in an invasion of Sweden and in 1601 Karl descended from the north into Livonia. Here he was opposed by the Lithuanian forces under Jan Karl Chodkiewicz-Boreika, who was compelled to carry on the

struggle with little help from Poland. He won a decisive victory against Karl at the battle of Salaspils in 1605 and soon after Karl retired from Livonia.

The struggle was resumed under Karl's son, Gustavus Adolphus, one of the leading generals of the day and this time it culminated in the Swedish occupation of Riga and of almost the whole of Livonia. Then Gustavus Adolphus transferred his attention to the Polish seacoast and occupied many of the leading ports between Königsberg and Denmark. Sigismund still refused to give up his claims to the Swedish throne but a peace was finally made because France and the Protestant countries were desirous of involving the Swedish army in the Thirty Years War which was raging with unremitting fury in Germany. Gustavus Adolphus yielded to the religious appeal and was finally killed in the battle of Lutzen in 1632, the same year in which Sigismund died.

That same year Gustavus Adolphus had founded at Tartu a University, the Academia Gustaviana, and he had previously established in both Riga and Tallinn colleges which were open to the different classes of the population. At the same time he encouraged the printing of Lutheran books in Latvian and in Estonian. Johan Skytte, the Governor of Livonia, made clear the purpose of these institutions when he declared at the inaugural ceremonies of the University that they were intended to educate all classes "including the poor peasants who have so far been strictly forbidden to learn anything in order to enslave unjustly their minds in addition to their bodies". At the same time the curriculum included a course in Estonian.

It was very evident that it was the idea of Gustavus

Adolphus to work in Livonia and throughout the Swedish possessions toward the point where the native population would be set free and organized into a class of independent peasantry with their own governmental representation as in Sweden. This was of course more easily said than done, for it not only involved the destruction of the already existing social order but it meant the building up of a bureaucracy with a high morale and sense of obligation. This was extremely difficult in the financial situation of Sweden. The Poles during their occupation had found it more economical to confiscate the estates of their most bitter enemies and to present them to their own trusted people but almost invariably these new masters had absorbed the evil sides of their predecessors and despite the efforts of the Jesuit preachers, there was little appreciable change. With the need of money which Gustavus Adolphus felt, he was constrained to support his Swedish officials by the gift of land and this almost uniformly inspired in the new officials the same kind of greed.

With the death of the King and the accession of his daughter Christina, the situation became worse, for she was quite intolerant of advice and excessively liberal to her friends of the moment. Thus in 1650 she allowed the introduction of a practice whereby a nobleman in debt could let out his serfs to work it off. This involved even more forced labor than the owners would ask of their own serfs and it added still more hardships to the lot of the poor unfortunates.

At the same time the Swedish courts in Livonia, while they did allow an appeal to the higher tribunals, left the local administration of justice in the hands of the local

authorities and this again played into the interests of the local landowners who saw themselves able to nullify the well-meaning statutes of the higher authorities.

There were thus only apparent gains for the native population during these early years, although the change caused extensive losses for the landowning class and the burghers of the cities who could be more easily reached by the royal officers. They resented the new taxes that the Swedish authorities collected exactly as they resented the changes made so that the peasants would have a greater choice in the persons to whom they could sell such wares as they brought into the cities.

After the abdication of Christina, a new storm of war swept over the Baltic area. It commenced with the revolt of the Zaporozhian Kozaks under their Hetman Bohdan Khmelnytsky in 1648 which involved both Poland and Lithuania. Then when King Jan Kazimierz on his accession in 1649 renewed his claim to the crown of Sweden, King Charles X Gustavus on his accession took up the challenge and swept south and west from Tallinn and Riga. The first hardships of the war were borne by Lithuania which failed to receive the needed support from Poland. Quite the reverse; the Polish enemies of the King went over to Sweden and Poland and the adjacent area were then menaced by attacks from the Swedes in Lithuania and along the Baltic, by the Elector of Brandenburg who saw the moment propitious for throwing off his oath of submission to Poland and by Tsar Alexis of Moscow who regarded it as a proper time for invading along the entire eastern front, finding one excuse to attack Catholic Lithuania and still another to fall upon the Lutheran Swedes in Livonia. When we add to this the

efforts of Khmelnytsky to turn the support of the Kozaks from Moscow to Sweden in an effort to get rid of his recently assumed obligations to the tsar, we can see that the situation was utterly confused. As a matter of fact, Jan Kazimierz for a while abandoned his country and the Polish armies surrendered to the Swedes without a blow, while amid this turmoil Prince Janussius Radvila (Janusz Radziwill), a Protestant and the Grand Hetman of Lithuania, declared the Polish-Lithuanian alliance at an end with the flight of the King and made at Kedainiai a pact with Count Magnus Gabriel de la Gardie, the Swedish governor of Riga, to place Lithuania in an alliance with Sweden and to obligate the Swedes to come to the assistance of the Lithuanians, if they could not induce their allies, the Muscovites, to stop ravaging Lithuania. It was high time for the forces of Alexis had even captured Vilnius and were plundering it and massacring to their heart's content. It was very evident that Radvila was thinking of the same kind of a union with Sweden as Lithuania had had previously with Poland.

The chaos gradually came to an end with a popular uprising in Poland which allowed Jan Kazimierz to return. The Swedes were unable to maintain their position fully. They were unable to agree with the Catholic Lithuanians who also revolted against them. Khmelnytsky died and left the Kozaks disorganized, while his secretary, Hetman Vyhovsky, tried to arrange for the creation of a triple state of Poland, Lithuania and Rus at the Union of Hadyach in 1659.

Charles X Gustavus died in 1660. His death brought a settlement under which the Catholic part of Livonia (Latgale) and the Duchy of Kurland were restored to Poland, Jan Kazimierz gave up his claim to the Swedish

crown and the Elector of Brandenburg as the ruler of Prussia became the head of an independent state.

Then, deprived of Swedish support, Alexis and Jan Kazimierz signed a treaty at Andrusowo in 1667 under which Polotsk and Vitebsk were returned to Lithuania but not Smolensk and Ukraine was divided between Moscow and Poland along the line of the Dnieper River. A final article provided that the Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania would not oppress the Orthodox nor would Moscow bother the Catholics.

Jan Kazimierz soon resigned the throne and the Lithuanians and Poles resumed that bickering which only injured both countries until 1697 the two Diets elected Augustus II of Saxony as the joint King. It was a period of stagnation for both peoples, even though the Poles had rallied under King Jan Sobieski and had sent a force of cavalry to Vienna. This had defeated the Turks and saved the city. Less than 150 Lithuanians had joined the expedition which brought fame to Sobieski but no improvement in the political situation of either Poland or Lithuania, thanks to the disintegration and disorder of the Polish political life.

The situation was very different in Livonia and the Swedish lands. During the minority of Charles XI, conditions were allowed to drift as they would but in 1675 when the King achieved his majority, he commenced to apply himself vigorously to the reform of the finances of his country. He did this through the so-called reduction of the estates. This was a complicated process. What the King did was to assume for the crown the control of all estates, for which the occupants could not show a legal title. There were many of these in Sweden, cases where by the mere whim of a preceding monarch, without

proper certification an estate had passed into the hands of some favorite, or even where a nobleman in a time of confusion had seized property by force.

There were many cases of this in Livonia and the recovery of these from the Swedes brought in a great deal of money to the treasury. But Charles XI went further. There was almost no property held legally there by the German owners. It was not necessary to go back to the conquest. The title to the lands had been largely in the hands of the Order and when the Knights accepted Lutheranism, they had merely divided these at their own pleasure. Five sixths of the land of Livonia, two fifths of that of Estonia and three quarters of Saaremaa reverted to the crown. Thus without any legal interference with any legitimate right, Charles had it in his power to undertake far reaching reforms.

He ordered a complete survey made of all these lands and a description of each of the peasant holdings on them with a detailed list of the obligations imposed upon each peasant by tradition and their former masters. A copy of this document was filed with the government and another was given to the individual. It was a lengthy process and at its completion the government was in a position to correct inequalities and throughout the entire region introduce a system of payments that would be equitable to both the government and the peasants.

This very definitely meant the end of the rule of the ex-Knights. They had largely accepted Lutheranism merely as a device to justify legally their enslavement of the population and to give themselves the means for the indulging of their whims and desires and as the experience of the last years of the Order showed, their efforts to build a state had long been subordinated to their self-

ish wishes. It naturally aroused their hatred and Charles could be sure that they would leave no stone unturned to restore their old supremacy.

With the money thus accruing to the Crown, he had the means to continue his efforts at providing education. In 1684 he founded a training school for teachers at Tartu and he planned to use the graduates of this school which admitted peasants, as teachers placed in schools attached to each Lutheran parish, according to the system devised by an Estonian teacher, Bengt Gottfried Forselius.

In 1681 he definitely took steps to free the peasants from serfdom and the decree for this was passed by the Riksdag in Stockholm, since the Livonian Diet refused to take any action and relied upon the old agreements that had been made even before the secularization of the Order.

It can easily be seen why the peasants of both Latvia and Estonia looked back to this period of Swedish rule. Throughout the whole of the Lutheran Baltic, the period of Swedish domination was the only one that offered any considerable hope to the native populations. The Swedish government was conscientiously trying to bring about a better and fairer mode of living in the middle of a period of wars and alarms. Despite all the waves of devastation, the Kings kept on their enlightened policy, holding in check all those elements of the population who were essentially hostile to human rights and decency.

Chapter Nine

THE DUCHY OF KURLAND

As the last Master of the Livonian Order, Gotthard Kettler had hopes that his work of secularizing the Order would bring him the title of ruler of Livonia from King Sigismund. He was disappointed in this and had to content himself with the far smaller title of Duke of Kurland and Semigallia (Kurzeme and Zemgale) with his capital at Jelgava (Mitau), a town about 29 miles from Riga. To make his position more secure, he married Princess Anna von Mecklenburg, a sister of Johann Albrecht I and of Christofer who as Coadjutor Bishop of Riga had aided him in his plans.

Under the various documents which erected the Duchy the Duke of Kurland and Semigallia was placed on the same position as was the ruler of Prussia. The Evangelical position of the Duchy was recognized by statute and so were the privileges of the German landowners, of whom Kettler himself was by far the most important. The Duke attempted to maintain in his land all of the old obligations and feudal rights owed to the Order, even though he was himself in the same degree the vassal of the King of Poland. He was however for all intents and purposes an independent sovereign and the few occasions on which he was bound to consult the King

were easily avoided by a man who was capable, politically minded and familiar with the laws and customs of the day.

His greatest difficulties came with the other German landowners who were like himself ex-Knights and who resented his superiority to them in the new order. They constantly appealed to the King about his exactions and his haughtiness but almost every time Kettler produced enough evidence to win his point. He profited by the war between Stefan Batory and Ivan the Terrible for he remained neutral, despite the appeals of the King and on his death in 1586, he left to his two sons a well organized feudal state. Strangely enough, he had brought about better relations between the landowners and the Latvian peasants than anywhere in the territory of the Order and his successors took pains to preserve this.

When Duke Gotthard died, he was succeeded by his two sons, Friedrich as Duke of Semigallia, and Wilhelm as Duke of Kurland. The two men were strikingly dissimilar in character, for Friedrich was quiet and taciturn, while Wilhelm was active and excitable. The older brother had no children and Wilhelm one son, named James after his godfather, James I of England.

In 1615 the great landowners, never wearying in their attempts to weaken the power of the Dukes and giving no thought for the future of the country, created a storm in the Diet and Wilhelm dissolved it by force. The landlords sent three of their number to appeal to King Sigismund Vasa, who promised to grant their requests and sent them home with a special laisser-passer. Nothing daunted by this, Wilhelm had them seized and executed. As a result he had to go into exile the next year but he refused to abdicate his rights or those of his son. Instead

he appealed to all of the crowned heads of Europe for aid in recovering his throne by peaceful means but without success.

The disappearance of Wilhelm and his son seemed a stroke of good fortune to the King, for under the provisions issued when the Duchy was established, the title would revert to the King of Poland, in case the Kettler line died out. Sigismund, with his strong desires to push Catholicism in the Lutheran areas, felt that he had only to wait but the King died in 1632 and Duke Friedrich lived on until 1639.

On the accession of Charles I of England, young James Kettler made another appeal to him for assistance in regaining his throne. Charles who at the time was sending a special ambassador to Poland more or less without the knowledge of the young man urged his envoy to see what could really be done for him.

The man selected for this mission was Sir Thomas Roe, an ardent foe of Roman Catholicism and a distinguished expert in the affairs of eastern Europe. He had been for years the British ambassador at Constantinople where he had worked with the Dutch Calvinists to keep Cyril Loukaris on the patriarchal throne. When we remember that Loukaris as a young man had taught in an Orthodox school in Vilnius, had been the representative of the Patriarch at the Council of Brest in 1595 and had remained in close touch with the affairs of the Zaporozhian Kozaks in their struggle with Poland, we can understand that Sir Thomas was already as well informed about the complicated position in Poland as was perhaps the King himself. He was undoubtedly equally expert in the relations of the Swedes and the Orthodox. It was his unconfessed object to see that as much of the Baltic

coast as possible was in Protestant hands. At the moment Kurland was very important for England as a source of timber for ships. At the same time England was desirous of seeing Swedish aid sent to the Protestants in the Thirty Years War and that meant that Gustavus Adolphus should make peace with the Poles. Thus Sir Thomas Roe had several complicated missions to perform and he apparently succeeded in most of them for Sweden and Poland made a six year peace in 1629 and at the same time James quietly returned to Kurland and resumed his post as the heir to his uncle.

When he succeeded his uncle, he embarked upon elaborate plans for developing his country. During his exile, he had had abundant opportunities to acquaint himself with the most up-to-date methods of ship construction and with the latest ideas on economic theory. He was a confirmed and convinced mercantilist and he realized to the full the commercial possibilities of the Kurland ports.

He continued his father's interest in shipping and in a few years Kurland had a fleet of 44 armed men-of-war, 15 unarmed, 60 large merchantmen and a large number of smaller vessels. This made the fleet of this one small duchy larger than those of Denmark, Sweden or even France. Later he built 24 warships for France and during the English civil war he presented a fleet to Charles I.

Five centuries before the pagan Kurs from which the country received its name were known far and wide throughout the Baltic for their skill and daring as sailors. To curb them, the Knights punished with death any Kurs whom they caught at sea but it was very evident that the character of the people had not been changed

by the long years of confinement to the land for when the Kettlers gave them the opportunity, it was the native peasants who filled the navy and thereby sought relief from the hard conditions of living. It was frequently noticed that the ports of Kurland owned and built far more ships than did the large and important city of Riga, the harbor of which was continuously crowded with Dutch and other vessels, although few sailed under the flag of Riga itself.

To supply the fleet, Duke James created all those branches of industry that would be of value to it. He exported large quantities of agricultural products and timber and imported metal for his factories, salt and herrings. Through special treaties he secured the right to trade freely with England, France, Spain and all her colonies.

Not satisfied with this, he planned to establish colonies overseas. Thus he secured the control of the island of Tobago in the West Indies by some sort of an agreement with Sir Robert Rich, the Earl of Warwick, and he sent out several shiploads of colonists to it. He also secured the island of St. Andrew in the Gambia River in Africa and a short strip of the adjacent coast. At one time he even made a proposal to Pope Innocent X to form a joint colony with him somewhere in Africa. The Pope was to furnish three or four million thalers and he promised to contribute 40 ships of war and 24,000 men, but nothing came of this proposal which was an interesting example of religious cooperation.

The King of Sweden well summed up the ambiguous position of Duke James by saying that he was too rich to be a Duke and too poor to be a King. It was perfectly true. In a peaceful world Kurland could hope to flourish

but the seventeenth century was not a time of peace and the Duke could not protect his interests at home and abroad simultaneously. His interests finally led him to an agreement with the forces of Cromwell and after the restoration of the Stuarts, relations with England cooled and finally he had to resign to the British both of his colonies.

His efforts to remain neutral in the Baltic wars likewise miscarried. He had treaties of neutrality with Sweden but finally Charles X Gustavus, irritated by his neutrality, invaded Kurland, captured Jelgava and carried the Duke and his wife off as prisoners and they could not return until after the peace of Oliva in 1660. His was the fate of a man of peace and industry in those turbulent times.

On his death in 1682, he was succeeded by his son Friedrich Casimir who had been educated largely in Western Europe. The young Duke was far more interested in the arts than he was in commerce or government. He wasted large sums of money on his interests and soon was compelled to rent out Latvian soldiers for various other European armies. He was however fortunate in making a good impression on Peter I on his Western trip. Friedrich Casimir was as lavish in entertaining the tsar as the Swedes and Riga had been curt and with Peter's interest in the sea, he was able to secure much information that was later to be of use to him.

In return Peter promised to respect the neutrality of Kurland in any future wars and he promised to marry one of his nieces to the son of Friedrich Casimir, Friedrich Wilhelm. Strange to say Peter kept his word on both counts. During the Northern War between Peter, Poland and Denmark and Charles XII of Sweden, Kurland was

not touched, although the war naturally wrecked the economy of the country. After the battle of Poltava in 1709, he invited the young Duke to come to Moscow and there he celebrated the marriage of the last of the Kettlers to Anna Ioannovna, the daughter of his half-brother. The young prince died on his way back to Jelgava but Anna went there to live and stayed almost without leaving the city until she was chosen Empress of Russia in 1730.

These twenty years were a grotesque period. Anna was not attractive and she had no real claim to the ducal throne. Still as the half-niece of Tsar Peter, she was above criticism of the Poles and King Augustus was only too glad to allow her to enjoy her late husband's possessions. His illegitimate son, the Marshal de Saxe, Mareschal de France, the greatest general on the continent of Europe and physically almost as strong as his father, wooed her with the money paid to him by his mistress, the leading actress of Paris. Prince Menshikov, Peter's closest friend, now that Catherine I, a Latvian peasant, was dead, courted her at the head of his troops. The German landowners admitted that she would do anything for them. A merry time was had by all but the only person who profited was the grandson of a groom in the ducal stables, Ernst Johann Biren (Bühren) who succeeded in achieving a permanent position where all others failed. The German nobles refused to accept him but under his august protectress, it was easy for him to be adopted by the French noble family of Biron and to become a Count of the Holy Roman Empire.

When Anna became Empress of Russia, Biren dominated the scene and was elected by his old enemies Duke of Kurland. For three weeks after the death of Anna he

was the master of Russia. Then Count Münnich, a favorite of Empress Elizabeth, moved him on to Siberia.

Jelgava (Mitau) then became the centre of Polish patriotism, for Prince Karl, the son of Augustus III, held court there, while the young Casimir Pulaski paid adolescent homage to his morganatic wife. Then Biren (or Biron) returned, rebuilt the imperial palace and the Birens (or Birons) continued to rule under Polish sovereignty until 1795, when they asked for inclusion in the Russian Empire.

Chapter Ten

THE RUSSIAN CONQUEST

It was a foregone conclusion that the great German landowners were not going to sit quietly by and allow the liberation of the oppressed peasants whom they had bullied and hounded for nearly five centuries. Yet they knew that their one hope of regaining their influence was to tear the country away from Sweden and for that they needed a powerful coalition. Even then the prestige of the Swedish army was such that there were few countries willing to challenge it. The position of Charles XI was steadily growing stronger at home, as his reforms bore fruit and the Swedish dream of making the Baltic a Swedish lake could not be contemptuously tossed aside.

The situation seemed to improve in 1697 when Charles died and the throne passed to his son, Charles XII, a boy of fifteen years of age. It was to be expected that there would be a regency for some years and regencies rarely produced a strong national policy. To the surprise of every one, after a few months of dissatisfaction, Charles XII declared himself of age and proceeded to govern the country as he saw fit. He was looked upon as an able but daring young man and no one expected him to show any special ability. As a result all of Sweden's

enemies began to come together and to lay the groundwork for a coalition against the young ruler.

The moving spirit and the spokesman for the German landowners was one Johann Reinhold Patkul. Ten years before he had led a delegation to Stockholm to protest against the reduction of the estates of the nobles and his actions had been so disagreeable that he was finally arrested and imprisoned. He escaped abroad, travelled extensively in Europe and nursed his grouches against everything Swedish. He was from every point of view a mere adventurer but he was also the type of man who could appeal to the embittered landowners.

Patkul apparently believed still in the power and stability of Poland and he realized also that the independence of the Polish nobles and their disregard of all obligations to the state harmonized with the desires of his associates. Once Livonia and Estonia were annexed to Poland, all the Swedish reforms would be obliterated or discarded and life could go on as it had in the past with no interference by the government in the internal management of the estates, with practically no payment of taxes by the estate owners and with no limitations on their rights to deal with the peasants as they would.

It apparently never occurred to Patkul that there could be any question of Poland failing to recover the territory in case of a defeat of Sweden by a combination of nations. The significance of the Livonian wars and the struggle with Moscow a century earlier meant nothing to him. He seems to have accepted the frontiers of Moscow as something definite and unchanging and on that basis he went to work.

His first contacts were with King Augustus of Poland. That easy-going and dissolute monarch who owed his

throne to the pressure exerted by Peter and governed the country through his Saxon troops and officials easily was won over in 1698 and 1699 and consented with little hesitation to accept Patkul's proposals and to include them in a very definite understanding as to the future of the landowners and their powers.

He next approached Peter and also the King of Denmark, the traditional rival of Sweden for the domination of Scandinavia. He had something to offer both sovereigns, although he phrased his offers and his inducements in such a way as to retain for Poland both Livonia and Estonia. He finally succeeded in winning over both men to his plans and in 1700 the three countries, Poland, Moscow and Denmark, suddenly declared war on Sweden.

Then came a startling surprise. None of the three nations in the alliance were prepared for a hard struggle. All three counted on the inexperience and the youth of Charles XII. Peter advanced toward Narva, the most eastern of the Swedish fortresses in the area and was surprised when the small garrison declined to surrender without a battle. The King of Denmark took his time with his preparations and Augustus of Poland brought north a few more Saxon troops and the Polish Diet promptly made it clear that the King was only involving himself and his own resources and that Poland was willing to be a battleground, provided the nobles were not asked to fight.

Charles was completely ready. Within a few weeks he had invaded Denmark and forced the King to sign a humiliating peace. Then with 8,000 men, he turned to the northeast and in a blinding snowstorm, he wiped out the whole of Peter's army and forced the surprised monarch into a disastrous rout. Many of Peter's foreign of-

ficers were killed by the disorganized Russians on the charge of treachery and many more took refuge in the camp of Charles and entered his service. Even before this Patkul with Saxon forces and an army raised from the landowners had twice attempted to capture Riga without results and their retreating troops only escaped because of the indolence of the Swedish field commander.

In return for this Charles insisted that the various gatherings of the nobles should declare Patkul a traitor. They hated to do it, for they realized that he was one of their number and was the real leader of their cause, but they had no choice. It was either to do the will of the King or see themselves completely ruined.

In the meanwhile the Poles and Lithuanians fell into a real state of anarchy. In Lithuania the Lithuanian army under Prince Michael Sapieha was opposed by a coalition of the anti-Sapieha magnates and Michael was captured and lynched, while the malcontents came out openly for the ending of the system of electing kings and for making the position of Grand Duke hereditary in the Saxon family. Similar movements in Poland broke any hope of resistance to the Swedish King and soon both Warsaw and Krakow as well as the whole of Lithuania were in his hands.

With Denmark out of the war, Charles made no secret of his intention of forcing Augustus to resign the Polish crown. He made it clear that he was fighting Augustus rather than Poland and he finally compelled Augustus to abdicate after chasing him out of Poland and occupying a large part of Saxony. When Augustus did yield, he signed an agreement providing that Patkul would be turned over to the Swedes and Charles saw to it that he was immediately tried and executed. At the

same time he called a Polish Diet together and insisted upon their election of Stanislaw Leszczynski as a new King. Charles had his way but Stanislaw was not much of a military asset for the Poles and the Lithuanians continued their endless series of internecine skirmishes based upon the friendships and the antipathies of the big families.

The real burden of the war was felt in Estonia, Livonia and Lithuania. As in the wars of the sixteenth century, the Muscovite forces swarmed into the country, burning and ravaging as they went. Not a manor house or a peasant hut was left standing. The crops were carried off, the peasants and nobles who fell into the hands of the Muscovites were killed, and Peter did his best to turn the entire country into a desert.

The Swedish forces, far inferior in numbers, won almost every battle in which they participated but for the most part they were compelled to remain in the towns and fortifications, and were powerless to stop the depredations. Charles himself could not be everywhere at once and with a singleness of purpose, he devoted himself to the pursuit of Augustus, before he turned to clash with Peter, the last and most formidable of his enemies. As a result Peter and his generals wore down the garrisons and step by step, they eliminated the Swedes from such places as Narva, Tartu, and the other inland cities, which were immediately burned and plundered.

Peter had his eye on an outlet on the Baltic. He sent his best generals to the north and by 1703 he had succeeded in eliminating many of the Swedish posts on the Neva and on one of the islands he erected the fortress of Schlüsselburg, the nucleus of the future St. Petersburg. This was the idol of Peter's eye and though he tried in

ain to secure peace terms, the negotiations always broke lown because Peter was not going to surrender what was o him the most precious of all his achievements.

With Augustus out of the way, Charles turned his ttention to Peter, defeated him decisively several times nd driving to the southeast, finally entered Ukraine, vhere he made an alliance with the Hetman Ivan Mazppa who threw off Peter's yoke. There was some diffiulty in arousing the Kozaks rapidly, especially after 'eter captured Mazeppa's capital of Baturyn and masacred the entire population of the city. Then the Swedsh king was accidentally wounded and in the ensuing attle at Poltava, the Swedes and Mazeppa were defeated n 1709 and the two leaders made a long and hazardous etreat across the steppes to Bendery in Turkey.

This destroyed the Swedish empire but it did not ring peace. Such cities as Riga held out for some years. 'eter attempted to invade Turkey and was trapped and scaped capture only by bribing the Turkish commander. Then Charles made his way back to Sweden and renewed ne war until he was killed at the siege of the fortress of redriksten of Norway in 1718. The war still dragged n but without the king, the situation was hopeless and y the treaty of Nystad in 1721, Sweden relinquished stonia, Livonia, and the area around the fortress of iipuri in Finland to the Russians. Poland received nothng. Peter forced Augustus to resume the throne and he uaranteed that Russia would protect Poland against s enemies and its efforts to introduce a new and healthier olitical order both there and in Lithuania.

The devastation was tremendous. Riga and Tallinn ere almost the only cities which were not destroyed, illaged, and burned. A large part of the population had

been killed or taken into captivity and the country presented a sorry sight. The idea of the nobles that they would be annexed to Poland proved utterly false and instead they found themselves under the iron rule of Russia, against which the Knights had been fighting for over two centuries.

Chapter Eleven

THE RUSSIAN OCCUPATION

The anxiety with which the large landowners looked forward to the Russian domination proved unnecessary. Of course during the years of the war, they were subjected to heavy demands for money which they were ill prepared to give after the plundering and ruination of the country but they very soon came to realize that they could with profit and satisfaction exploit certain aspects of Russian policy.

In his zeal for westernizing Russia, Peter was more than eager to rely upon foreigners, especially Germans. He had acquired many of his notions from the Germans in the foreign section of Moscow, the Nemetskaya Sloboda, and with the shortage of trained officials, the Tsar rapidly acquired the habit of turning to the Baltic nobles for men to fill responsible posts. Then with a few inconsiderable exceptions, the Empresses of the next years, both Anna who had spent years in Kurland, and Elizabeth, both favored Germans and included large numbers in their personal entourage.

What was even more welcome was the utter lack of any democratic tendencies in the government. The Russian nobles were the only class who counted or who received any consideration from the regime and the mere

fact that the great landowners had all assumed German titles on the secularization of the Order, assured them that if they were obsequiously loyal, they would receive equal privileges with the Russians.

It was not long before the nobles began to scheme to recover those rights of which they had been deprived by the Swedes. They pushed Article XI of the Treaty of Nystad to its logical conclusions and the Diets of the Nobility set up Committees of Restitution to secure their rights. Baron Rosen for the Livonian Diet summarized in 1739 these rights as follows:

"First: the Dominium of the nobles was established at the first conquest of the country. Since that period the peasants have always been part and parcel of the demesne as homines proprii. In virtue of this status it follows that they can be made objects of bequests, acts of alienation and of session by sale.

"Second: the Dominium of the nobles is not confined to the person of the peasants, but also extends to his goods, which are accessory to his person. The right of the nobles to the goods of the peasants has never been restricted and the nobles can dispose of these goods as of their own property.

"Third: the nobility has power to augment or diminish the share of the peasants' goods which may be retained by him.

"Fourth: the nobility formerly had the right of life and death over the peasant, but voluntarily renounced this right to the State, retaining only the power of correction and discipline, including corporal punishment, a retention of which the peasants themselves insisted."

This is a clear and definite picture of the conditions under which the native population of Livonia and Es-

tonia had been living before the coming of the Swedes and which were now being restored by the grace of the Russian sovereign. The peasants had no rights which the noble was forced by law or custom to respect. What had been in the beginning the practice of conquering soldiers and Knights had been written into the law to be applied in the eighteenth century. Everything depended upon the whim of the landowner who could deal with his peasants as he did with his domestic animals. Everything belonged to him, the peasants, their miserable shacks, their household furniture, their labor, their crops, their handicrafts, and there was no one to question his judgment, his will or his methods of administering his estate. There were good and bad landlords but the difference between them was in their estimation of the way they were to act and there was no third person to criticize. The nobles stood together to maintain their rights and the Russian government with its autocratic basis saw no reason to question them.

It is small wonder that before many years had passed, the spacious and luxurious manor houses began to rise again, while the peasants remained in their makeshift shelters and were forced to work steadily harder to supply the money needed for the whims and the vices of the masters. Russian rule was a godsend for the landowners who received back with interest all that they had lost by the Swedish efforts to abolish serfdom and to create satisfactory conditions of living.

Life for the burghers was not so attractive. The cities like Riga and Tallinn had won for themselves certain powers of self-government and self-administration based upon the old mediaeval European city laws and practices. The Guilds and the city councils had real power. This

could not be tolerated under Russian law, for that did not recognize any special rights to the cities. Moscow and St. Petersburg were completely under the power of the Tsar's appointed officers. Imperial governors now appeared in the cities of the Baltic and began to exercise the same rights and privileges that they had in Russia proper. At the slightest sign of protest, of a demand that even Russian laws be obeyed by these officials, the offenders were hustled off to Siberia or sent to prison for long terms. Step by step all the old rights of the corporations and councils were removed and a dull Russian uniformity settled down over the entire burgher class which found itself as helpless as its serfs. Even the old proviso that a peasant could become free by taking refuge in a city and staying there for a definite period was abolished. The Russian system did not allow a man to change his status except by the permission of the Tsar and this was rarely granted.

A period of stagnation set in and all sense of civic pride vanished. In the past the Guilds or wealthy merchants would build churches or public buildings to beautify the cities. Now that stopped. Everything depended upon the will of the governor and he conceived his duties as the maintenance of the status quo except where he could move in the direction of strengthening his own authority. Improvements of any kind had to be approved in the capital and that required months and years to secure.

The Lutheran Church was in much the same position. There were some educated pastors but they were entirely dependent upon the landowners for their appointments and their salaries. They formed a special class who could be received by the nobles and the towns-

people and could at the same time meet with the peasantry. They were all German and some of them made no effort even to learn the language of the peasants, few of whom except the house servants knew any German and whose only personal contact with the masters was through bilingual overseers.

Education was as bad. The old Academia Gustaviana at Tartu had been finally closed at the time of the Northern War and almost the only school in the Baltic area was the Domschule (the Cathedral School) in Riga. This was, however, a fairly good school and it had on its staff men like Herder who during his stay in Riga noticed the excellence of the Latvian and Estonian folksongs and used them in the formulation of his theories of poetry. Elsewhere the nobles learned to read and write from the pastors who acted as private tutors but on the whole the intellectual atmosphere was no higher than it was in the Russia of the day and snobbery and viciousness replaced intellectual interest and thought.

The only human interest in Livonia and Estonia was brought in by the missionaries of the Moravian Brethren who began to work in the twenties and who spread their influence among some of the nobles as well as the peasants. Count Zinzendorf himself paid two visits to Riga and Tallinn. In 1737 they established in Valmiera a seminary for Latvian folkschool teachers and soon from it they had sent out as many preachers as the regular Lutheran organization possessed. Their success soon aroused the hostility of the established church and in 1743 the government moved against them as dangerous. Some of the preachers were arrested and imprisoned for 15 years in St. Petersburg. The movement finally died

out, although it had influenced a few of the leading men who began to try to help conditions.

When Catherine II came on the throne in 1762, a new period started. Catherine herself, while as much of an autocrat as Peter, was enlightened and loved to pose as a philosopher. In the beginning of her reign she had ambitious plans for reform and when she visited Livonia and Estonia in 1764, she was really shocked by conditions as she saw them. In 1751 a German pastor in Torma, Johann Georg Eisen von Schwarzenburg, had become an opponent of serfdom and had written several books on the conditions of the peasants. He had pointed out the obvious truth that the system was uneconomic and that it removed all sense of initiative from the peasants. His remarks were underlined by a revolt of the Livonian peasants in 1757 which was suppressed with the customary ferocity by the Russian army but discontent was still seething. Catherine had had him sent to St. Petersburg and after her own personal visit, she ordered the Governor General Count Georg von Browne, an Irish Jacobite now in the Russian service, to make further investigations.

Browne reported that the intolerable conditions resulted from three causes: the insecurity of the peasants who had no rights to anything, the excessive forced labor and payments which allowed them no time to cultivate their own small plots of land, and the utter irrationality and brutality of the landlords who punished serious and slight offences with the same severe floggings. He advocated a series of reforms, including a recognition of the peasants' right to own property, a regulation of the amount of forced labor that could be required and a

limitation of the right of the landowners to inflict corporal punishment.

He presented these proposals at a meeting of the Livonian Diet in 1765. He found a few supporters, especially Baron Karl Friedrich Schoultz von Ascheraden but the majority of the nobles felt themselves outraged. They regarded it as a highly iniquitous and unlawful procedure for the imperial Governor General to make any suggestions as to their treatment of their peasants and they expressed themselves with the greatest vigor. Browne retorted that he was acting by the orders of the Empress and that the necessary steps would be taken by St. Petersburg, if the Diet refused to act. This threat was enough and the measures were adopted.

That did not mean that they were carried out. Loopholes were left in the wording and the execution of the measures was left in the hands of the courts which were dominated by the same group of people. In case of an unproved appeal to the courts, the peasant making it could be flogged by the authorities, i.e. his owner or his friends and relatives. Furthermore Catherine herself vitiated the measures by sending her own appointees to investigate cases of improper treatment of the peasants and at the same time forbidding the peasants to go to these appointees with their own stories.

It was all part of that complicated intertangling of philosophical liberal views and reactionary autocratic actions that marked all the deeds and policies of the Empress, who shared the idea of making Russia a uniform whole with no talk of individual rights. In pursuance of this policy she steadily worked to eliminate the Livonian and Estonian Diets, remodelled the gatherings

of the nobles and adapted them to the Russian practices. As a result she even divided Livonia and Estonia into typical Russian "gubernias" and wiped out all distinctive features of the administration. She did this against the wishes of the nobles but even this did not mean that they were losing their influence at the court or that their actual powers were being limited.

She not only treated Livonia and Estonia in this way but also Kurland. She allowed Biren to return from exile. He spent his next years in the building of an elaborate castle, but he was finally compelled to abdicate in favor of his son. Then with the extinction of Poland, Duke Peter Biren also abdicated and turned over all his property to the government in return for a yearly pension.

In the meantime Catherine continued her pressure upon Poland and Lithuania. It was a sad time for both countries and even more so when she forced with Russian money and troops the election of her former lover, Stanislaw August Poniatowski, as King and Grand Duke. He was a member of the Czartoryski family which was of Lithuanian origin but by this time, the Lithuanian nobles had become so Polonized that they held estates in all sections of the country, usually affected not to speak Lithuanian, if they did, and treated the two areas as a single unit, unless it suited them to separate them to acquire additional titles. In neither country was any attention paid to the feelings or the condition of the peasants who preserved the ancestral feelings and traditions.

The Polish and Lithuanian armies were still two distinct forces but their numbers were strictly limited and their fighting power was almost nil. They were domi-

nated at every turn by Russian soldiers and their commanders were under strict surveillance.

Entirely regardless of the constitutional laws and the decisions of the local diets, there was only one question of importance. Would Russia be able to swallow the combined state at one gulp or would she be compelled to share the spoils with her equally avaricious neighbors, Prussia and Austria? The Czartoryskis and the King, to do them justice, hoped that they could carry through reforms under the eyes of Catherine and her agents. Their opponents, and they were many including Prince Karel Radziwill, the head of the patriotic Lithuanians, were willing to gamble moderately on the fact that they would not but every act of theirs was likewise watched by the omnipresent Russian agents. Any constitutional measure of reform in the joint state was vetoed by the Russians or their fifth column. Any unconstitutional measure was condemned on legal grounds by the same forces.

Under these conditions in 1768 the Confederation of Bar was formed by Joseph Pulaski and carried on by his young son Kazimierz with the tacit approval of Prince Karel Radziwill. Of course in the direct sense it was immediately suppressed despite the help of the French government under Dumouriez. The disconnected confederation spread throughout the two states, but they only served to show the military daring of Kazimierz Pulaski and started the train of events that led him to a heroic death at Savannah, Georgia, as a Brigadier General in the American Army.

The indirect result of this revelation of the still existing reality of the two states was the first division of Poland which took from Lithuania the eastern section

of the state, largely still inhabited by Byelorussians and the Roman Catholic Latvian Latgale. The dividing powers, Russia, Prussia and Austria, were not satisfied to seize the territory but they went further and demanded that the Polish-Lithuanian Diet ratify the act. The action was carried through by force and without even a semblance of legality that would have satisfied the most careless and indifferent.

At the same time there was created a Permanent National Council of 18 senators and 18 deputies, two thirds of whom were Polish and one third Lithuanian, to administer the state under the King. Of course these men were handpicked by Russia but they did develop a strain of patriotism and seriously undertook at least minor reforms. In a sense it was the last stage in the amalgamation of Poland and Lithuania. The same laws were made by this joint body for the two states, the upper administration was centralized and differences in the constitutions were disregarded. The nobles who ran the state, including such patriotic Lithuanians as Prince Radziwill, were scarcely aware of any differences between themselves and the Polish nobles and during the last quarter of the century, it was impossible to separate the governing bodies of the two states.

The same was true of the Educational Commission, the first president of which was Bishop Ignace Massalski of Vilnius, although it was largely inspired by Joachim Chreptowicz, the Under Chancellor of Lithuania. The dissolution of the Order of the Jesuits in 1773 left unowned its enormous properties and many of the more enlightened among both Lithuanians and Poles established this joint commission in an effort to get control of these properties and use them for educational pur-

poses. It accomplished a great deal in reorganizing the universities in Krakow and Vilnius and in establishing schools throughout the country.

The years between the first and second partitions were a curious time. A new spirit was definitely stirring in the land and while it left many of the gentry unmoved and did little for either the townsmen or the peasants, it at least showed a recognition of the need for abolishing the worst of the abuses, even though these as the liberum veto were supported by Russian power and armed force. In some ways it made even more difficult the position of the non-nobles, for the towns lost many of their old rights under the Magdeburg Laws, similar to the Visby law in the northern areas, and the Jews who had formerly been in charge of the collection of the taxes were compelled to go into petty trade and to interest themselves in the liquor distribution. Yet these manifestations, difficult and unjust as many were, seemed a necessity if any system was to be introduced into the general government of the country.

There were certain objections among the nobles of Lithuania who sought to have the old Lithuanian institutions taken as the basis for the new organization. In most cases these were not accepted but here and there enlightened landowners came to realize the evils of serfdom and voluntarily liberated their peasants or took measures to improve their lot.

Yet the main stumbling block remained. No important reforms could be carried through until the hold of Russia was broken. For a while the patriots played with the possibility that they might secure an ally in Prussia which was temporarily on the outs with Russia. In 1791 they felt sure enough of this to adopt the Constitution

of the Third of May which abolished the liberum veto and established a Council of Ministers common to the two states. It provided for the raising of an army of 100,000 men, two thirds from Poland and one third from Lithuania, and it specified that the crown would be hereditary in the Saxon royal family.

Later in the same year Reciprocal Conditions were adopted, providing for the equality of the two states in all commissions and higher posts. It was in effect a further step in the coordination of the two countries but with a due recognition of the existence of the two areas.

The Constitution of the Third of May marked the beginning of the modern period but it also meant the end of the state. It was not long before Russia and Prussia combined their forces. The Russian troops invaded Lithuania and the bulk of the Lithuanian army together with General Tadeusz Kosciuszko passed into Poland. The combined army was no match for the Russians and very soon the King, ever shifting in his allegiance to his country but respecting his old relations with Catherine, turned against the patriots. Then Russia and Prussia made the second division in 1793; Prussia received the lower Vistula and Russia took half of Lithuania and that part of Ukraine still under Polish rule.

The Russian army acted as if it was at home in the territory still left to Poland and so did the Prussians. As a result the patriotic forces gathered under the leadership of Kosciuszko and launched an uprising in Krakow on March 24, 1794. It established Kosciuszko as a dictator and developed a National Council to aid him in governing the country. Kosciuszko tried to inaugurate policies more or less similar to those which he had seen in the American Revolution and attempted to raise a popular

army to which he admitted peasants as well as nobles. The movement spread rapidly throughout the country and Vilnius passed into the hands of the rebels in April and so did Siauliai. The leaders of the pro-Russian party were liquidated, even though there is still some doubt as to whether they were more pro-Russian or anti-Polish.

The movement could not be successful. In some places the peasants rose, especially in Samogitia, where serfdom had taken a less firm root. Some of the gentry turned against the movement because of its liberal character. Others took more radical positions and incurred the dissatisfaction of Kosciuszko and the leaders. Russian forces under the command of General Suvorov, by far the ablest commander of the day, were thrown into the country and step by step the movement degenerated into a series of disconnected guerilla campaigns badly administered. Kosciuszko himself was wounded and captured at the battle of Maciejowice on October 10. Vilnius had fallen on August 23, Suvorov stormed the suburb of Warsaw, Praga on November 4, and massacred a large part of the population. The movement had collapsed.

Then the three empires, Russia, Prussia and Austria administered the coup de grace and wiped out the entire state. Russia took most of Lithuania. Prussia took Sudavia south of the Nemunas, and Austria a section between Parczew and the Bug. Poland likewise was divided and in November, King Stanislaw August Poniatowski abdicated, while the Russians produced "thanksgiving delegations" from the people who were henceforth to be liberated of all their rights.

When Catherine died in 1796, she had established her complete control over all of the Baltic peoples and Poland with the exception of a few small areas that had

passed to Prussia, and she had submitted the whole to the Russian desire for absolute uniformity under the watchful eye of the bureaucracy of St. Petersburg. It was the culmination of centuries of effort and seemed the last step in the elimination of freedom and independence.

Chapter Twelve

LITHUANIA IN THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY

Catherine died in 1796 and this brought her son Paul to the throne. Mother and son had long been at loggerheads and so Paul gave some relief to those people whom Catherine considered her especial foes. Thus he almost at once freed Kosciuszko from prison and he restored the Lithuanian Statute as a code of laws which his mother had banned. But Paul was not in any sense liberal and his oppression of the conquered provinces and the peasants became even more intense.

Alexander I who succeeded him in 1801 like his grandmother played at being liberal and he continued those of his father's policies which conferred certain privileges, especially on the great landowners. These profited the more because he was a close friend of Prince Adam Czartoryski, the son of the more famous statesman of the same name during the last stages of the independent Polish-Lithuanian state. Czartoryski persuaded him to revive the University of Vilnius but true to his own policy and traditions, Czartoryski did everything possible to strengthen the Polish character of Lithuanian culture and this tended to confuse even more many of

the Lithuanian nobles and to denationalize them still further.

On the other hand the more bitter opponents of Russia and a large number of the veterans of Kosciuszko's armies joined the Polish Legions of General Dombrowski to continue the struggle in conjunction with France. They dreamed of marching back to Poland with Napoleon and their hopes were shared by thousands of the young Poles and Lithuanians who could not forgive the three dividing empires.

Thus during the Napoleonic period there was a constant agitation for some sort of political revival. The pro-Russian faction went so far as to dream of a new Polish-Lithuanian state, independent but with the Tsar as its sovereign. The anti-Russians visualized a similar state under the Saxon dynasty. Both Napoleon and Alexander played unscrupulously with the aspirations of their respective supporters, while Prussia exerted a steady Germanizing influence on all who had fallen under her political power.

In 1807, at the time of the Peace of Tilsit between Napoleon and Alexander, there was set up a Duchy of Warsaw under the Saxon dynasty. This was carved out of the territory that had been seized by Prussia during the divisions of Poland. The Lithuanians hoped for a similar kindness from the French but they failed to receive it. The more Napoleon gave the Poles, the less he seemed inclined to do for the Lithuanians.

So things went on until in 1812 he began his invasion of Russia. When the campaign started, Alexander was in Vilnius but he was soon forced to retreat. Then when Napoleon arrived, he encouraged a Lithuanian uprising and established a Lithuanian Provisional Government.

It aroused high hopes but it was soon evident that it was merely a device to secure troops for the French army at the expense of the nobles of Lithuania, for the new regime was compelled to buy from the French the necessary arms and uniforms while it contributed food voluntarily to the French army. Napoleon turned a deaf ear to plans to unite this with the Duchy of Warsaw and at the same time the Poles showed their own desire to subjugate it to their purposes.

The result was that the entire fabric collapsed with the downfall of Napoleon and when at the Congress of Vienna, Alexander organized the Congress Kingdom of Poland under Russian control, Lithuania remained outside as an integral part of Russia, although it was still allowed to keep the Lithuanian Statute as its code of laws.

The Russian system weighed very heavily upon the Lithuanian landowners and peasants, particularly in Samogitia where there were many small freemen whom the government tried to approximate to serfs. Likewise the extensive demands for recruits who were required to serve in the army for twenty years furnished new difficulties and the garrisoning of large forces in the country to be supported by the peasants confused the situation still further.

Yet it must be remembered that the abolition of serfdom by Napoleon in 1807 in the Duchy of Warsaw had not been without effect. Some of the Lithuanian nobles, especially in Samogitia, had attempted to take earlier advantage of various Russian laws to free their serfs but these had usually been frustrated by the authorities and the tendency of the tsars to give their favorite generals estates in Lithuania at the expense of suspected nobles

subjected the people to further hardships. Finally when the nobles tried to imitate Estonia and Livonia in granting even a limited freedom, they were advised not to make any suggestions about it to the St. Petersburg government.

By the middle of the twenties, Russia had made it clear that it intended to give to Lithuania none of the privileges that it had granted to the Congress Kingdom of Poland. The country was divided into the three gubernias of Vilna, Kovno (Kaunas) and Grodno (Gardinas) and steps were taken to complete the process of assimilation, while on the other hand a considerable part of the more liberal nobility were won over by the Polonizing policy of the University of Vilnius.

Such Polish professors as Lelewel and the young Polish and Polonized students of the University were not without their effect in evoking the Polish uprising of 1831 to secure again a free Poland. A large part of the Lithuanians joined the movement which was doomed to failure without foreign aid. At the same time the old divisions began again. Except in Samogitia the vast majority of the Polonized landowners refused to listen to any talk of the liberation of the serfs and expected the serfs to rise. A Radziwill was made the head of the entire movement and some Polish troops were sent north under the command of a Lithuanian officer. Yet these brought no profit for discord soon began and the clashes between the Poles and Lithuanians were renewed and in a few months the fighting forces were compelled to cut their way back to Poland and the revolt was over.

The results were even more disastrous for the Lithuanians than for the Poles. The Lithuanian gubernias were linked administratively with the Baltic provinces in

the Northwestern Region. The seaport of Palanga was joined to Kurland. More important still the government came out strongly against the Roman Catholic Church, it confiscated much of its property, and it made it clear that from this time on the area was to be definitely governed by Russians, while any Lithuanians who entered the service would be transferred elsewhere and not allowed to serve in their own homes; the Lithuanian Statute was finally abolished and Russian law was universally introduced.

The methods of pacification only accented a development that had been going on ever since the annexation of the country by Russia. This was the growing tendency of the Roman Catholic Church in Lithuania to separate itself from the Polish movement and make its appeal to the Lithuanian peasants. During the eighteenth century there had commenced quite an active publication of books in Lithuania under Prussian rule. This was extended to Samogitia and a new group of poets, largely Roman Catholic priests, commenced to write in the native language and oppose the spreading of Polish influences among the nobles.

This was destined to be an important development, especially after Alexander II in 1861 liberated the serfs but with unsatisfactory arrangements for them to secure land. It, however, accentuated the struggle between the reactionary Polonized gentry and that part of the gentry which were in favor of social reforms. The struggle as in 1831 was complicated by the varying attitudes of both parties toward Poland and Russia and when in 1863 attempts were made to seize many of the more radical young men and put them in the Russian army, a new revolt flared up. This was much more poorly organized

than in 1831 but it found strong support especially in Samogitia, where such men as the Rev. Antanas Mackevicius gained fame as a guerilla leader.

The revolt had only a little initial success and it was suppressed with the greatest cruelty by General Muravyev who earned for himself the nickname of the Butcher. He executed hundreds of suspects and exiled thousands more to Siberia.

He did more than that for he definitely set himself the task of breaking the entire Lithuanian movement by forbidding Lithuanian books to be printed as in the past in Latin characters. His practice was made into a written order by his successor and was reaffirmed by Count Valuyev, the Minister of the Interior in St. Petersburg, who was ready to go to any lengths to make Russian and the Cyrillic alphabet standard throughout the country.

This apparently was a death blow for the movement but as in the case of Valuyev's orders on Ukrainian, the negligence of the Russian border guards and their venality led the order to backfire. The only result was the transference of Lithuanian printing across the border to Königsberg. There the Lithuanian writers were enabled to send their works, have them printed and then smuggled into the Russian Empire for distribution. In this way the Russian censors lost all possibility of influencing the movement and the question of Lithuanian literature became entirely one between the population and the police. The ownership of a Lithuanian book was a crime but one which the people were glad to commit.

The revolt brought about the practical end of all cooperation between the Polish and Polonized gentry

and the Lithuanian peasants. During the half century between 1863 and the revival of independence the Polish and Lithuanian movements developed independently and as the Polish movement grew more democratic, it became more openly anti-Lithuanian and was no more willing to recognize Lithuanian rights than had been the Poles of pre-division days. It was to have a baleful effect on the future, for it embittered relations between two peoples who were more or less in the same position as Roman Catholics living under the harsh rule of the Orthodox tsar.

Thus the awakening of the Lithuanian peasants and their training in a knowledge of their own language and institutions was carried on despite the watchful eye of the Russian authorities. It had little or nothing for decades to do with the political or revolutionary activities of some of the more romantic or adventurous elements. It was a slow and continuous process carried on in all phases of life, through the church, the hidden school, cooperative societies, etc., many of which were cloaked under ostensibly legal and harmless purposes. It was a slow development which showed few positive results for a half century and the course of which could be traced only by the lists of victims, executions, deportations, and other punishments.

Chapter Thirteen

THE AWAKENING OF THE LATVIANS AND ESTONIANS

The revival and awakening of the Latvians and the Estonians was even more unspectacular and deliberate. It was even more startling and unexpected for the native population under the pressure of the Teutonic Order and the later Baltic landowners had been forced to an even lower stage of poverty and hopelessness and had been held there for centuries.

The desperate uprisings of the people had in most cases been carried on without any other goal or purpose than the basic urge for throwing off a control that was galling and impossible to bear. They began in blind rage, were continued in madness and were drowned in blood by the arrival of the trained soldiers first of the Balts and later of the Russian armies. Then the peasants relapsed into a surly and gloomy obedience which drove to despair the nobles and their overseers on their estates.

The first voices that were raised to plead for a better existence for the people came primarily, as we have seen, from some of the Lutheran pastors. Thus in 1796 Garlieb Merkel, a Livonian publicist and the son of a pastor, published in Leipzig a small volume entitled *Die Letten* and pointed out the frightful condition under which the

people were living. This was later translated into French by the Abbé Sièyes and was circulated in liberal circles in Europe. From this period on there was a continuous succession of books of similar content and some of the pastors and the literate classes began to take an interest in these unfortunate mortals who could not call anything their own.

The liberal ideas of Alexander I found an outlet in the work of liberating the serfs but the Tsar showed no inclination to push these ideas any further. They were not acceptable to the nobility and that was enough. However the attempts of Napoleon to liberate the peasants led further pressure to be applied and in 1811 the Estonian Diet formally abolished serfdom. The Livonian Diet passed much the same law in 1818 and it might appear that the hour of oppression had come to an end.

This was far from being the case. It was a period of depression following the Napoleonic Wars and the nobles saw in the liberation of the serfs the opportunity to free themselves from the compulsory care of their peasants. They therefore liberated them but without any land. That meant that at one blow they had freed themselves from whatever existed in the way of traditional tenure and the unfortunate peasants were compelled to accept labor on whatever terms were agreeable to the master and his bailiffs who were allowed to flog them at pleasure, whenever they fell into arrears. It reduced the peasants to an even lower stage of dependency and added still more to the misery of the population who had become as it were a landless proletariat.

During this first period, almost the only truly progressive action taken in the two provinces was the reopening of the University of Tartu (Dorpat, Yuryev) on

the ruins of the Academia Gustaviana which had been closed since the Russian conquest. It was almost frankly opened by the Russians with a French rector as a German university for the Baltic Germans and it soon became famous. It secured a competent German faculty from Germany and it seriously undertook the task of creating an educated group of people in both Livonia and Estonia. Barely one fifth of the students were Russian in origin; the rest were originally Germans connected usually more with the bourgeoisie and the city burghers than with the landowning groups but some of them as pastors and teachers undertook to give some enlightenment to the peasants and slowly but surely some of these began to learn.

In a sense the very fact that the peasants were now separated from the land made it possible for the more ambitious and competent to profit by the new developments. The situation in Kurland was in a way the most promising, for at Jelgava the way was found for the publication of the first Latvian newspaper, *Latweeschu Awihses,* in 1822 and also the opening of the Academia Petrina made it possible for some of the Latvians who had prospered in some ways to secure an education.

It was a slow process, for at this period the only hope of advancement was for the peasant to break his connections with the land and go to the small and still stagnant cities, where by almost superhuman industry and self-denial, he might be able to secure a trifling amount of capital but enough to allow him to undertake some small business of his own and so painfully make his way.

For the great majority there was no other course but to continue to eke out a miserable existence and to

dream that somehow, sometime, the Tsar might take some action that would strengthen the peasants against their direct masters, the landowners. Almost every spring brought starvation and disease, as the masters demanded in rent more than the peasants could produce and village after village faced famine long before the growth of the new crops.

This was particularly true in the years after 1839, when the dejection of the peasants was so great that they fell into a sort of religious apathy and made their way to Riga to beg for help. The Orthodox bishop Irinarkh who met some of these unfortunates took their names. This convinced them that they were on some special list for transfer but at the inspiration of the landowners, the movement was checked by military trials of the people, hundreds were flogged merely for requesting relief and thousands sent to Siberia.

Yet the very hope of the peasants that things might be better in Russia proper gave the authorities an idea and they inaugurated a more strenuous campaign against the Lutheran Church and encouraged conversions to Orthodoxy. Of course the peasants gained little or nothing by this move but it was to mark a new stage in the relations of the Russian government to the two provinces.

In 1849, the next step was taken. Nicholas I had appointed some rather progressive thinkers to a commission of the Diet of Livonia. This new proposal was nothing else than recognizing the possibility of the peasant securing permanent control of his own holdings while the landowner retained full use of his. As a recompense the latter was allowed to preempt for his own use and that of his house servants one sixth of all the peasant lands on his estates (one fifth in Livonia). The law in-

tended that there should be a transfer of the economy away from feudalism to money, that there should be an end of forced labor and that without making the peasant a self-governing and independent member of the community, he should acquire the stability necessary to make him a productive member of society with some sense of responsibility.

Even these measures were bitterly opposed by most of the landowners who delayed passing the necessary measures through the Estonian diet until 1856, even though they faced serious difficulties with their peasants but the Governor Generals, drawn from the landowning class, were on their side. In 1861 Alexander II allowed a religious fanatic Johan Leinberg under the name of Malsvet the Seer to take a party to the Crimea. The movement threatened to engulf large elements of the population who waited anxiously for the predicted ship to appear. Of course it was a delusion and again the ubiquitous police were ready to restore order and drive the peasants back to their desolate places of abode.

However none of these tendencies entirely failed, for under Alexander II Russia began to take more interest in the cities, in the building of railroads to make them accessible and in ocean traffic through them. Every such move facilitated the self-improvement of the more ambitious of the peasants. It was no longer practicable to forbid the Latvians and Estonians to live outside of the walled towns, when their labor was needed in them. There was formed a native bourgeoisie which steadily grew in strength and in numbers and in time came to play an ever increasing part in the life of the cities. By the end of the century Latvians outnumbered the Germans in Riga and Estonians came to form the majority of the

population of Tallinn. The great landowners were the last to feel the effects of this new movement, for they were still the favored class of Russia and they exercised great influence through their connection with the court.

However the definite edict of emancipation of the serfs issued by the Tsar in 1861 which set out conditions under which the peasants could acquire land and pay for it over a long period of years had a startling effect. Even more than in Lithuania the Latvians and Estonians seized the opportunity to secure land of their own. The landowners charged them outrageous and excessive prices but many of the peasants did not think of that. They saw what they could do and they worked themselves and their families almost to death to strengthen their position, while those who were able to employ hired labor drove really harder bargains than had many of the landowners.

A new order was in the making and this accompanied the development of the intellectual life. Thus the first Estonian newspaper *Parnu Postimees* was established by J. W. Jannsen in Parnu in 1857 and later he transferred it to Tartu. On the analogy of the Finnish *Kalevala,* Widri Roim Ristmets, writing under the German name Friedrich Reinhold Kreutzwald, united a series of Estonian folksongs to form the connected epic of the *Kalevipoeg.* Similarly in Latvian at about the same period a Latvian press began to emerge and a literature to develop.

Again as in the case of Lithuania the early stages of this cultural revival had little or nothing to do with politics. It was the work of men who were desirous of bettering the moral and intellectual condition of the people. Many of them had no desire to condemn, except by inference, the established order. They were pietistic

and religious or they were interested in folksongs and the romantic tales of the past. Still they did find a way of reaching the hearts and minds of the people and in the long run they could not fail to strengthen the old feeling of nationalism which had apparently disappeared with the coming of the Teutonic Order.

This quiet work began to bear fruit, when it was brought face to face with the new movement for Russification which became strong in St. Petersburg after the accession of Alexander III in 1881. The higher Russian officials, especially Pobyedonostsev, the Procurator of the Holy Synod, felt that the landowning class of the Baltic area was too closely connected with German traditions and they decided to introduce changes in the regime to bring the area more in line with Russian practices.

At first the Latvian and Estonian leaders did not realize the menace of this new tendency and in fact they did reap considerable benefits, for with the previous abolition of the power of the guilds in 1866, the way was open for the Latvians and Estonians to exert their influence especially in the administration of the cities. It was not long before they had taken into their own hands most of the political power which had been possessed by the German burghers, insofar as it was not seized by the Russian officials.

On the other hand the attack on the Germans, so far from helping the cause of popular education by the substitution of Estonian and Latvian for German in what schools were coming into existence as the University of Yuryev as the city was now called, the Riga Polytechnic School, etc. and in the lower grades, meant only the study of Russian. Old teachers who were able to speak the languages of the people were removed from their

posts in favor of newcomers from Russia. Governmental economic offices were likewise Russianized and for a while it seemed as if the gains which had been made during the preceding quarter of a century had been completely wiped out.

The situation was even worse in questions of religion. There had been growing up a certain kinship between the Lutheran church and the people. More and more Latvians and Estonians had been becoming pastors and had been developing organizations connected with the church. Even many of the German pastors and teachers who had come to form an intermediate class between the nobles, the higher bourgeoisie and the local population were now suppressed. It became clear that the new system was the bitter enemy not only of the old Baltic barons but of the people who had been rising to power slowly but surely.

There were already ominous signs that some of the Germans were looking to Germany for protection in the crisis. There was no one to take an interest in the native population who had to depend upon their own efforts and they ran the risk of being crushed between the propaganda and the political aspirations of the two states. These were becoming more opposed as Russia tended toward an alliance with France and the whole theory of German-Russian cooperation was being thrown overboard by the German Emperor Wilhelm II.

The first impacts of this Russification and the realization of its meaning proved to be a setback for the leaders of the new national movements who were as yet only vaguely conscious of the possibilities of the forces which they had called into being. Even now it had not dawned upon them to what their efforts might lead but it was

not long before they recovered their spirits and a new generation set out to make secure all that had been thus far gained. This was in general the situation at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Chapter Fourteen

THE REVOLUTION OF 1905

When Nicholas II ascended the throne in 1894, he embarked upon a task that was far beyond his powers. From the beginning, he was in many ways a pathetic figure, for it was obvious that he did not have the strength or the determination of his father. He was torn between the desire to strengthen the Empire by the old and well-tried methods and to reform it moderately in order to meet the newer threats of the Russian revolutionists.

These last were far more powerful and menacing than they had ever been before and in some ways they seemed to be more united. Yet the agreement was more apparent than real. There were at least three main currents among the opponents of the government. There were the various groups that were looking for the introduction of a parliamentary regime. They wanted something similar to the rights that were possessed by the people in Western Europe but they were more or less agreeable to the existence of the tsar as a constitutional monarch. Opposed to them were the various groups of the Social Democrats, both Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, who were extreme Marxists and who found their chief support amog the proletariat of the cities, a rapidly increasing class. The third group were the Social Revolutionists who were pleading the cause of the peasants and

who incarnated the peasant craving for land and for prosperity. From ideological and tactical reasons it was obvious that these three groups would hardly agree upon any principle and their disagreements offered a strong ruler the opportunity to maintain himself in defiance of them all, for it was evident that if a revolution broke out, these parties would not see eye to eye in the matter of forming a new regime.

That was bad enough but there was still a further complication. The Russian Empire was inhabited by a large number of different races who thought primarily of securing for themselves some relaxation in the extreme policy of Russification that was being carried out. In other words they were raising questions of nationalism which Russian policy had consistently avoided for centuries. The majority of these nationalists were still unconsciously devoted to the Empire. They still felt an attachment to it and at the moment relatively slight concessions to them would have satisfied at least for the time being many of their aspirations.

Yet among these groups there was already a dangerous split. There was no agreement in any as to the next step. All of them were split by the same groupings that existed in the Empire as a whole. The non-Russians of the cities tended to sympathize with the Social Democrats; those of the country with the Social Revolutionists. No one could say how far these two factions would cooperate, how far they would agree with the more constitutional desires of the moderates, or how rapidly they would clash with one another.

In a word Russia was confronted with the possibility of a social revolution and with the possibility of a series of national revolutions. Which would come first and

which would achieve the greater unity among the people or sections of it? The ardent Russian Social Democrats had no use even for the nationalist Social Democrats, and so it went.

The defeat of the Russian armies in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5 and the destruction of the Russian navy at the battle of Tsushima Straits proved the last straw and from the autumn of 1904 on the spectre of one or another of these revolutions hung over the land. The spectre raised its head in widely different sections and perhaps nowhere more strongly than in the Baltic area, where the demand for Polish autonomy had never completely been drowned out by Russian repression. It was strong in Finland where the policy of Russification had wounded the feelings of the Finns and convinced them that the Tsar had violated the old rights and traditions of the country. It aroused the hostility of all the non-Orthodox in the areas where the tsarist officials had been trampling upon the feelings of the Catholics and the Lutherans.

The dangers of the situation were made clear by an illegal gathering of the Latvian Social Democrats in 1904 in Riga, where they formulated their demands on the government. These included the calling of a Constituent Assembly based on universal, equal and direct suffrage; the foundation of a Russian federated republic with wide self-government of the provinces; the abolition of all classes and privileges, the passport system, etc. and free justice, education and medical care; the abolition of a standing army; the separation of church and state; the substitution for all taxes of a graduated income tax; and a new labor law with extensive labor protection.

It will at once be seen that this was a city program

modified to attract the support of the more conscious intellectual national elements. It carefully omitted the sorest point in Latvian life, the landless condition of the peasantry. Similar resolutions inspired by the Social Revolutionists would have placed that first. Yet the most significant fact was the raising of a demand for the establishment in Russia of a federated republic with special rights for the provinces. These for the old Livonia, Kurland, and Estonia had vanished at least a century and a half before into the great maw of the indivisible Russia.

In the same year the Estonians had finally secured the dominating control of Tallinn thanks to the activity of Konstantin Päts and his journal *Teataja* and had it elected their own Vice Mayor Jean Poska. His policies were more in line with the city groups than were those of the Tartu intellectuals led by Jaan Tönisson and Oskar Kallas and they perhaps looked more to immediate reforms than to a long range program. The situation in Lithuania was fairly similar, although it was complicated by the large Jewish population of the cities, for these were themselves undergoing the same phenomena as the other large elements of the population, while they were often suspected by the peasantry because of their predominant role in certain branches of trade.

The news of the events of Bloody Sunday, January 22, 1905, when a throng of St. Petersburg workers, proceeding unarmed to the Winter Palace to present a petition, were shot down by orders of the tsarist government in the traditional Muscovite manner, turned all these discussional groups into action.

Great strikes were called in all the cities including Riga and Tallinn which were ended with difficulty, more by the use of force and the promise of certain re-

at issue. Hardly were these quieted than the agitation spread among the peasants in almost all the gubernias of Russia. Everywhere the peasants began to burn the manor houses and to assert their rights to land. In the Baltic area and especially in Livonia and Estonia the feelings of the mobs were directed primarily against the Baltic landowners, the German barons who were themselves the subject of attack by the Russification policy of the government. At this point the agitation was combined with the demand for a provincial settlement in which the principle of nationality would be strictly regarded and in which the Estonians of northern Livonia would be politically combined with their brothers in Estonia.

As events reached a bloody climax toward the end of 1905, great congresses were held in Riga, Tallinn, and Vilnius demanding political as well as economic reforms and urging a federal reorganization of the country. Thus in Tallinn, on October 14, a general strike was proclaimed, demanding the same reforms as were called for in Riga the year before. The Russian Governor promised to meet the demand of withdrawing troops but two days later, he seized an opportunity to open fire on a group of workmen in which 160 were killed or wounded.

On October 17 came the Tsar's Manifesto providing for the calling of a Russian Duma in which under varying restrictions the population of the non-Russian areas were allowed to vote for members of a central assembly but without any reference to the provincial congress called for earlier. Päts, realizing the defeat of the general cause left the country for exile, while a large section of his party formed itself into a Social Democratic group

and demanded still more reforms. On the other hand Tönisson and the Tartu group called a congress in Tartu on November 27. This was to contain a representative of the landowners and a representative of the landless from every village community, one representative from each union, and four from each town.

Again this conference split along the usual lines. The socialists under Teemant who had taken the lead of the extreme radicals emphasized the need for a thorough revolutionary and economic policy. Tönisson laid the entire stress on the securing of a provincial diet to be elected by universal suffrage and governing democratically. There could be no agreement between the two factions which began to meet separately.

In Vilnius on December 4-6 a congress of about 2,000 people including many returned exiles demanded a parliament for all parts of Lithuania to be elected by universal ballot. It called for the use of Lithuanian as the official language and urged that the people stop paying taxes to Russia, suppress the liquor monopoly, found Lithuanian schools, etc. These were obviously a combination of the two points of view and as always at this period the Russian governor promised clemency to the participants and assured them that their desires would be largely met.

In both the cases of Estonia and Lithuania, the demands for local autonomy and self-government had not gone so far as to urge more than a federated Russia and perhaps hardly that. By this the national desires would have been largely met. In Riga, where there was a larger defined proletariat and a larger Latvian bourgeoisie and radical element, the situation went further and some of the leaders issued a demand for a separate Latvian Re-

public to include both Kurland and other provinces inhabited by Latvians and these leaders inspired hesitating followers to join them.

In all cases the results were the same. With the weakening of the revolutionary tide in the Russian cities, the forces of the tsar commenced to gain strength and larger and larger forces of troops were sent to put down the unrest in the rural districts as well as in the cities. Punitive detachments penetrated into all sections of the Baltic area, villages were shelled and annihilated and the casualty lists grew steadily.

The Baltic German landowners now saw their opportunity to win back their power. They willingly placed themselves at the service of the Russian officials and through their agents they were able to track down most of the leaders of both the revolutionary and nationalist movements and then reveal them to the authorities. They received due reward for their services, a new distribution of political plums, the dominating position in the Duma representatives from the area, and liberal indemnities for their property which had been damaged or destroyed during the fighting.

At the same time the split between the Polonized Lithuanian gentry and the Lithuanian peasants was deepened. The former identified themselves entirely with the Poles and refused all cooperation with those who still spoke Lithuanian. In such areas as Vilnius they succeeded in preventing the use of Lithuanian in sermons and confessions in the Catholic churches and in every way they tried to show that Lithuania was only a part of Poland and that its future fate was entirely dependent upon the fortunes of the latter country.

Thus from the standpoint of the people of the Baltic

area, the movement of 1905 had been a complete failure. It restored the situation to the point where it had been in 1904 and had proved that there was no short cut to the desired new order. The leaders who had fled were gradually amnestied and returned home. The only profit was the experience that they had acquired and the opportunity which they had during the years of relative freedom from censorship that followed the revolution to extend their publishing activities, to strengthen some of their societies, and to prepare themselves for a new test.

Their experiences with the Duma during these years were disappointing. For each successive Duma, the election laws were continuously changed to reduce the influence of the non-Russian nationalities by an increase in the property requirements for voting, by changes in the procedure to give increased influence to the landlords, and by every device that was known to officialdom. Yet the continued work brought improved economic conditions to at least part of the bourgeoisie and the richer peasants. It gave them increased assurance, allowed the development of a new generation of young people, and to some degree broadened their contacts with the world. All these positive gains as well as the lessons of the previous failure were to come into good use when the next crisis broke in connection with World War I.

Chapter Fifteen

THE BALTIC AREA IN WORLD WAR I

World War I started on August 1, 1914 and almost immediately the hardships of the war began to fall with especial severity upon the Baltic area. In the very beginning no other section except the Ukrainian area opposite the Austro-Hungarian province of Eastern Galicia was so quickly affected, not only by the demands of mobilization but by the presence of armed forces and battles.

The Russian attack was delivered in the south against Eastern Galicia and in the north against East Prussia. This meant that the Russian armies moving to the attack had to pass over the old traditional route through Vilnius and Lithuanian territory including those areas that had previously passed under Prussian rule. The Latvian, Estonian, and Lithuanian divisions of the army were mobilized far nearer to the battle front and the borders and hence since speed was the main object they formed a large part of the troops that were in the ill-fated East Prussian campaign. This lasted from the entrance of the troops of Rennenkampf and Samsonov into East Prussia between August 17 and 21 until the beginning of the Russian withdrawal after the disastrous battle of Tannenberg at the end of the month. Throughout the winter and spring of 1915 the Russians made other vain attempts to advance but the Germans easily threw them back each time and by the late summer of 1915 the

northern part of the eastern front was fairly definitely established. It ran along the Daugava from its mouth to Kaunas and Gardinas through Poland to Tarnopil in Eastern Galicia. This meant that Kurland, Samogitia and such old and important cities as Vilnius were in German hands. A considerable portion of the overwhelming Russian casualties was from the Baltic divisions. For example every volunteer from the Association of Estonian Students in Petrograd was killed.

It was naturally Lithuania that had suffered the most and first, partly because Siberian troops had plundered some of the towns because they thought that they must be German and because in the retreat, the Russians had completely devastated the country, following the old and well-tried methods of Tsars Ivan and Peter in this area.

On the positive side the Russians had allowed the formation in Vilnius of a Central Committee for the Relief of Lithuanian War Sufferers. The president of this was Martin Ycas, a member of the Duma in Petrograd. The Vice Chairman was a prominent editor, Antanas Smetona. This group undertook to do what it could for the victims of the war and their families but as the Germans advanced and the Russians moved large numbers of Lithuanians to the east, the work of the committee was spread over a great deal of territory. There still remained in the homeland those people who for one reason or another could not retire.

As a result, the Committee finally divided into two sections. One part under Ycas withdrew into Russia to continue the purely relief work. The other half under Smetona stayed in Vilnius and were there when the Germans entered the city.

This second part had no less difficult and extensive

a task in its efforts to protect the population. More than 25,000 Lithuanians had been captured by the Germans in their first rush. Many of the cities and towns had been ravaged either by the retreating Russians or in the battles that marked their eastward course. The Germans themselves were undecided as to the future. On the one hand they showed every sign of their intention to occupy and annex the area. They took steps to change the gauge of the railroad lines to that of the German railroad system for ease of transportation and flooded the country with German currency, while they collected all the gold and Russian currency that they could find for further purposes of their own. On the other hand, they seemed aware of a possible counter-attack and in the first moments began to exploit and ruin what was left of the regional resources. They devastated the forests to make solid roads through the swamps which would last only a few days. They requisitioned food and in the summer of 1916 they brought about a great shortage and even a famine in the neighborhood of Vilnius.

With the results of the Revolution of 1905 staring them in the face, it would have been madness for the leaders of the Relief Committee not to establish contacts with the German High Command in an effort to secure, in case of German victory, favorable conditions for their people. They had still another problem which they met by the formation of another group which operated secretly, the Lithuanian Centre of Vilnius. This concerned itself with opposition to the Poles.

From the very beginning of the war, Polish sentiments had been sharply divided. The country had been divided in the eighteenth century between Russia, Prussia and

Austria. Now in the moment of the great struggle, there was a question on which side Polish interests lay. On the one hand Joseph Pilsudski, a Polonized Lithuanian who had been imprisoned in Russia for his part in the Revolution of 1905, was operating to raise Polish Legions to serve in the armies of the Central Powers to tear away Russian Poland. On the other Roman Dmowski, a former member of the Russian Duma, aided by Ignace Jan Paderewski, was working equally vigorously to bring Austrian and Prussian Poland into union with Russian Poland in the hope of securing at least an autonomous state under a Russian Grand Duke.

It was the task of this Lithuanian Centre to thwart both of these intrigues, especially that of Pilsudski, while Ycas and the group in Petrograd were trying to counter the efforts of Dmowski by winning sympathy for Lithuania in the western world, in the United States where there was a large Lithuanian population, and in the countries of the Triple Entente.

The Germans in their occupation suppressed all Lithuanian publications but they at least replaced them with one of their own in Lithuanian, entitled *Dabartis* (The Present) and in 1917 they allowed the Lithuanians to publish a heavily censored organ *Lietuvos Aidas* (The Echo of Lithuania).

In the meanwhile it was very evident that the Russian imperial armies in their northward retreat had paid little attention to the defense of Kurland. From the very beginning Rennenkampf had planned in case of defeat no defence south of Liepaja and the events of 1915 drove the Russians back to the mouth of the Daugava and left the whole of the province in German hands. The sus-

picion grew that many of the Baltic landowners in this area were not averse to passing under German rule and despite the patriotic speeches of their leaders in the Duma and their defence of the autocratic regime, far too many of these worthies seemed to find kinship with the advancing armies of Emperor Wilhelm II.

This was naturally displeasing to the Latvians and as the idea was shared by some of the reactionary non-German and anti-Balt officers of the army, it was relatively easy for the Latvians to secure permission from General Gurko who commanded the northern front to organize eight regiments of Latvian volunteers to protect the line of the Daugava from Riga to Daugavpils on its central course. This was the nucleus of the later Latvian army and even the Germans paid tribute to its heroic conduct during 1915 and 1916, when it formed on a relatively quiet sector the chief part of the Russian army in the area and when it later continued to hold the line after the Russian forces retreated.

The war caused losses to Latvia as a whole, although it was not at this time as thoroughly devastated as was Lithuania. The entire foreign trade of Riga was cut off by the German blockade of the Baltic and in preparation for a Russian retreat, the Tsar's officers took the precaution of wrecking most of the Latvian factories in advance.

In Estonia, much the same situation prevailed but the Estonians were only allowed a few battalions of their own troops and their losses were more at the time in men killed or captured at the front and in commercial stoppages and the closing of the port of Tallinn.

Thus by the time that the Russian revolution started in 1917, the old order as it had prevailed since 1795 was

definitely shattered; the old prejudices and quarrels had been fanned to a new height and the ideals of the twentieth century were hopelessly confused with the mistakes of past centuries. The time was ripe for anything to happen.

Chapter Sixteen

THE YEARS OF REVOLUTION

The Russian Revolution began on March 8, 1917. This time it proceeded in a way directly opposite to 1905, for the revolution triumphed almost immediately and on March 15, Tsar Nicholas II abdicated on behalf of himself and his son. On the next day his brother Michael to whom he had left the throne also abdicated and the dynasty and the Russian Empire were at an end.

The whole movement was so rapid and surprising that the controversies which had broken the revolution of 1905 before its success had had no time to commence. It was left for the government that succeeded to feel the full force of these movements which under the stimulus of a World War had become even more bitter and less disposed to compromise. If in time of peace the outcome had hung in the balance for weeks and even months, while the imperial authority still remained virtually intact, in time of war and with an enemy occupying land not too far from the capital and with the imperial authority gone, it would have required almost superhuman strength and wisdom to avoid a complete debacle. Those qualities were lacking and the disintegration of 1917 went on its almost predestined way.

It was very obvious from the beginning that changes would have to be made in the governmental system but no one foresaw what they would be. There was of course

the very clear sign of trouble between the bourgeois parties, the Social Revolutionists and the Social Democrats. The attitude of the nationalist groups was more obscure. The new government almost without thinking was willing to make some changes especially in the first days before its position became involved.

Thus on March 30, the Provisional Government accepted the 14 Points of President Wilson and recognized some part of Poland as an independent state. On April 12, in another outburst of reform, it allowed the formation of an Estonian Diet and named Jaan Poska, the former Vice Mayor of Tallinn as the Commissioner for Estonia and for good measure it added that portion of the Estonians living in the northern part of Livonia, of course without setting accurate boundaries. The new council easily absorbed all the rights of the old Baltic Diets of the Nobility and was instructed to prepare a code for regulating the future autonomy to be approved by the future Constituent Assembly. It made greater obstacles to the establishment of a definite Estonian army, even though both the Provincial Government and the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies (not yet Bolshevik) had realized the advisability of creating new military units based on local volunteers.

The Latvian regiments, already formed, were still holding the front along the Daugava. They drew their support from the Latvian population. So on July 5, with part of the Livonian territory already handed over to the Estonians, it seemed only wise to give the same privileges to the Latvians, especially as a large part of the territory of Kurland had already been in German hands for two years.

This left only the question of Lithuania to be con-

sidered. There under German rule the members of the Lithuanian Centre of Vilnius were trying to moderate the German demands and at the same time to counter the recognition of an independent Poland by both the Germans and the Allies including the Provisional Government. It was an almost impossible task, for the Lithuanians abroad had no prominent spokesman who could hope to compare with the personal appeal of Paderewski and his friends.

During the month of July, Kerensky who was then the leader of the Provisional Government, sent the old Russian army into its last attacks on the enemy. Within a few weeks that offensive had been ingloriously broken and the army had gone home, leaving the entire front exposed.

On August 1, with the danger of Polish interference steadily growing, there was held in Vilnius a gathering of some 21 men connected with the Lithuanian Centre. This was in defiance of German orders and to obviate trouble, they worked out a plan for calling together a still larger group of 264 representatives to arrange plans for a more lasting organization which might be of assistance to Germany. The occupants fell for this move and when 214 gathered on September 17, this Lithuanian National Assembly drew up a series of measures which provided for the establishment of a free and independent Lithuania, completely without reference to any previous existing relations with other states (an obvious reference to the old connections with Poland) and for the creation of satisfactory relations with Germany. It also created a National Council or Taryba of 20 members under Smetona to administer the new state.

This was a wise but temporizing measure for on Sep-

tember 3, as a result of the Russian collapse, the Germans had pushed forward and occupied Riga and a few weeks later they extended their hold to the islands off the Estonian coast. This seemed a death blow to the Latvian movement, for with every step of the German advance it became clearer that the Baltic landowners now saw their opportunity to achieve their century-old endeavor and to link their possessions by land with Germany. The fraternization of the German army and the disorganized Russians definitely menaced the Latvians who had long suffered disability from both the German barons and the bourgeoisie and they reacted accordingly.

A considerable part of the troops, especially those enlisted from the city of Riga, when they abandoned their posts under pressure, made their way to the east. They had become imbued with the Social Democratic doctrines and they finally put themselves at the disposal of the Bolsheviks, for whom they fought recklessly. The nationalist and bourgeois groups did not give up so easily. They withdrew to the northeast and gradually assembled at the city of Valk on the borders between the Latvian and Estonian populations.

Here they formed the Latvian National Council. This included not only the members of the Diet formed in accordance with the decree of July 5 but also members of the local diets of the provinces of Kurzeme (Kurland), Latgale and Vidzeme, representatives of the unions, the army, and in general responsible persons of all walks of life and professions. This group looked critically at the entire situation as it was developing in Petrograd and when the Bolsheviks under Lenin and Trotsky took over the government on November 7, they lost no time in expressing their real sentiments. On November 18, they

formally declared the independence of Latvia as a free and independent state. They announced that regardless of the decision of Lenin and the Bolsheviks to stop the war they would continue to fight on the side of the free countries until they had won their goal. They elected V. Zamuels President and Arveds Bergs Vice President and through Janis Goldmanis, a former member of the Duma and now Foreign Minister, they sent this declaration to the President of the All-Russian Constituent Assembly before its dissolution by the Bolsheviks and to the foreign ambassadors in Petrograd.

It was now the question of Estonia. Jaan Poska as the Commissioner of the Provisional Government was practically besieged in Tallinn by a Soviet formed out of radical Estonians and Russian soldiers and sailors and the same situation prevailed in Tartu. Despite this fact the elections for the Estonian Diet which were held in July gave a majority to the more conservative and patriotic parties. Päts and Teemant with the Agrarian League led the list and there was a safe majority over the Social Democrats, Social Revolutionists and Bolsheviks. The Diet met on July 14 and declared for the division of the big estates and the introduction of Estonian into the schools and demanded that Estonia be a Free State in a Russian Federation, a term that was really anathema both to the Soviets and to the Provisional Government.

Disorder continued and when the Bolsheviks seized power in Petrograd, the Tallinn Soviet proclaimed itself the government of Estonia. The National Council countered with the statement that it alone represented the legal government and it won over the Tallinn Municipal Council, the more so as the elections to the Constituent Assembly held in November had given the Bolsheviks

a decided minority, although they had elected too many members for comfort.

Once the Constituent Assembly had been disbanded, the Bolsheviks tried again to dominate the scene. On January 21, they ordered new elections but two months and more of their bloody rule had disgusted the people and their vote fell off so badly that they called off the elections and resolved to maintain their rule by force. To counter this the National Council on January 24 sent Tönisson to Stockholm as part of a delegation to get in touch with the Western Powers and Sweden and secure help.

This situation was too good for the Germans to lose. They had concluded an armistice with the Bolsheviks and were carrying on peace negotiations at Brest Litovsk but these negotiations were obviously insincere on both sides. The Germans were holding Riga and the Estonian islands and they hinted to the Council that they would be glad to take over Estonia also. This meant the restoration of the power of the Baltic landowners and was rejected by all the Estonian parties.

However they had one powerful group in their favor. The Balts, especially the nobility, appealed to the German authorities to send troops to aid them in recovering their power and in suppressing Bolshevism. The German army at once set out on this mission and it reached Tallinn within a month. At its approach the Tallinn Soviet fled on February 23. Before the Germans could enter the city on the 25th, the National Council met and proclaimed the independence of the country. Then the Germans came in and proceeded with their plans.

The German army, cooperating with the Baltic landowners, was now in complete control. By March 4, it had

seized Narva and held the entire country in its hands. Furthermore by the Treaties of Brest Litovsk it had made a paper peace with the Bolsheviks and under this it had assumed control of the entire Baltic area.

The German plan was to form a definite German state out of Kurland and another out of Livonia and Estonia over which they had received a provisional control. To govern they established a Landesrat which was overwhelmingly packed with the great landowners but to which for the sake of appearance they had added a few Estonians and Latvians whom they thought that they could control. The Landesrat was intended to ask the formation of an independent state with the ruler Wilhelm II or one of his sons.

It was a relatively simple matter for the Germans to carry through their plans and even after they had sent most of their best troops to the West, they could still rely upon German volunteers from the Baltic area. Everything was done to bring back the old order. For legal authority they referred back to various agreements made by Tsar Peter with the Balts at the time of the Treaty of Nystad in 1721 and thus found the inherited right of the German landowners to be the traditional and legal rulers of Livonia and Estonia, once the Bolsheviks had given up the rights of the Russian Emperor.

Under such conditions the Latvian National Council was compelled to abandon the country and go into hiding in Petrograd. Here the members succeeded in holding meetings in January and July and they sent a delegation abroad consisting of Janis Čakste, Zigfrids Meierovics and Janis Kreichbergs to secure allied recognition. They finally succeeded on November 11, 1918,

when England recognized them on the signing of the armistice.

With the German collapse in October, it became impossible for the regime of the Landesrat to maintain itself in power. The German army was rapidly disintegrating. Under these circumstances the Latvian National Council returned to Riga and celebrated the first anniversary of Latvian independence in its own capital.

These events had an effect upon the situation in Lithuania which the Germans had occupied since 1915. The accession of the Bolsheviks had definitely increased the German hold on the country and on December 11, 1917, the Taryba or Council of the country declared the independence of Lithuania and called for the establishment of a firm alliance with Germany especially in the economic and military spheres. The revelation of the German terms in the Brest Litovsk conferences turned the Taryba still more against them. On January 8, 1918, it called for the holding of a Lithuanian Constituent Convention and a month later on February 16, it definitely announced the independence of the country without recommending an alliance with Germany. The German occupying forces of course did not take kindly to this and suppressed the announcement. However, by clever manoeuvering, the Taryba succeeded in securing recognition of the country's independence on March 23 from Kaiser Wilhelm but only by virtue of the agreement of December 11, calling for a German alliance.

The Germans still continued to put pressure upon the Taryba to carry through this alliance and to proclaim as King or Grand Duke a German prince, preferably of the Prussian house, although some hints were made that

a Saxon would do as well. There were too many unpleasant memories of both houses in the country and so when the pressure became extreme, the Taryba elected as King Duke Wilhelm Urach of Würtemberg and he accepted the title as Mindaugas II. The Duke even began to study Lithuanian, although the German officials never accepted this appointment officially.

With the breaking down of the German power in the west, the German Chancellor finally gave way and provided for the establishment of a Lithuanian government. On November 2, as the German troops were everywhere in retreat, the Taryba declared Lithuania a Republic and withdrew the invitation to the Duke. It appointed Augustinas Voldemaras the Premier of the first Cabinet and set up a directorate of Smetona, J. Staugaitis, and S. Silingas to take over the government. The change was made on November 11 and the Republic started its career as a free and democratic state.

Thus the first phase of the Russian Revolution in the Baltic area was brought to a successful end. The three Baltic peoples had secured their independence for the first time in seven hundred years. It remained to see what they could do with it in the confused conditions of the day.

Chapter Seventeen

THE FANTASTIC CONSEQUENCES OF THE ARMISTICE

Peace or at least the cessation of hostilities came to Western Europe on November 11, 1918. There was nothing of the sort in the east. Instead there commenced an illogical period which does small credit to the intelligence and the judgment of the victorious democracies. The next months saw a series of struggles that for nearly two years devastated an area that had already been the theatre of war.

Great Britain recognized the independence of both Latvia and Estonia but it offered little material help in the exigencies of the moment. It was held back by the French who thought only of building up a strong Poland and were taking little thought for the rest of the eastern front.

On the other hand the policy of President Wilson was decidedly ambiguous. The same principles or lack of them that had sent American and British troops to Archangel and American and Japanese troops to Siberia in the summer of 1918 now came into play. At one and the same time there was talk of self-determination for all peoples as set forth in the Fourteen Points and the addresses of President Wilson and there was a firm belief

that the United States could not countenance any dismemberment of Russia, lest it injure the Russian people. There was a firm determination to assist peoples engaged in fighting Bolshevism and a refusal to send them military assistance or arms. There was a definite idea that the Bolsheviks were the deliberate tools of Germany in the upsetting and ruination of the Russian Empire and the confidence that it was only Germany that could hold the Bolsheviks in check. There was a belief that it was German intrigue that had dismembered Russia at the time of Brest Litovsk and a demand that the treaties signed there should be abolished. As a corollary of this it was believed that all nations mentioned in those treaties should not be recognized but that the help of their armies should be sought in suppressing Bolshevism. Finally there was a direct fear that the White Russian officers and armies were thinly veiled monarchists and hostile to democracy and that they should be helped in moderation to regain control of Russia but not be allowed to carry through any program of restoration.

Thanks to this extraordinary confusion, the Armistice Agreement signed on November 11 contained the following remarkable clause: "All German troops at present in the territories which before the war belonged to Russia shall likewise withdraw within the frontiers of Germany, defined as above, as soon as the Allies, taking into account the internal situation of those countries, shall decide that the time for this has come."

Apparently the victorious Allies had no idea of the disintegration of the German army in the east but these troops were as eager to get home as any that were streaming away from the Western front. Their discipline was

broken down and they were in large part a plundering mob. The new governments had no organized forces. Even in Poland with its Allied support there were months in which there was no organized detachment of more than a few hundred men owing direct loyalty only to their superior officer and independent of all superior authority.

Thus the Germans were in no position to serve as an effective barrier to the westward rush of Bolshevism. On the other hand, some of the more active and energetic of their officers conceived the idea of using this clause to pull something positive out of the German debacle in the West. They set to work actively to reorganize small units for service. They enrolled recruits in Germany and sent them to the east and when General Count Rudiger von der Goltz took over the command, these men found a competent officer who rapidly restored some kind of discipline.

Von der Goltz made no secret of the object which he was pursuing. It was to cement the German hold over the Baltic area. He realized that with the destruction of the Russian governing and technical classes by the Bolsheviks, the country was in need of trained assistance and he intended to see to it that that assistance came from Germany. He had no desire to use any of the non-German Baltic peoples in his scheme. They were to be the lower classes as in the past centuries.

It took about two months for the Germans to formulate this policy and put it into operation. In the beginning, while their troops still held Kurland, they had not dared to believe in their own success. Thus on November 18, August Winnig, the German High Commissioner

for the Baltic area, signed an agreement with the Estonian government, recognizing it as independent. A month later in December Winnig made an agreement with the Latvian government of Ulmanis to maintain German forces in Latvia to pursue the Bolsheviks and these troops were to receive Latvian citizenship and grants of land. Here was in part a revival of the former scheme of the Baltic landowners to settle their estates with Germans. Still up to the period the disorder in the German forces had not been checked and there was no effective resistance being made to the Bolsheviks.

The latter had invaded the Baltic area at the time of the Armistice. They swept along like a whirlwind, taking nearly all the Estonian cities and finally capturing Riga in January, 1919. Everywhere they devoted themselves to the suppression of the non-Bolshevik elements of the population and to pillaging and murdering.

The arrival of a British fleet in the harbor of Tallinn on December 12 was the first ray of light. This turned over to the Estonians two captured Russian destroyers and gave them the command of the sea. At the same time it gave courage and some supplies to a small Estonian force which undertook to save the city and which went into action successfully when the Bolsheviks were less than twenty miles away.

The saving of Tallinn and the arrival of a couple of thousand volunteers from Sweden and Denmark put new hope into the Estonian army. General Laidoner by strenuous exertions formed a small army and by daring operations and the use of armored trains finally drove the Bolsheviks out of the leading cities. Narva was recovered in a few weeks. On February 16, Bolshevism was put down on the island of Saaremaa and by February 24,

the first anniversary of the Republic, Estonia had been liberated.

On the other hand this was not so great a defeat for Bolshevism as it might seem. Estonia after all was in an isolated corner and the Bolsheviks wanted to go further. Their goals were Berlin and Warsaw and so their main forces steadily pressed southward. For them Riga was more important than Tallinn and when they captured that, the Ulmanis government had no choice but to retire along with the Germans. It accordingly moved to Liepaja which was also the German headquarters. At the same time in Vilnius the Poles had expelled the Lithuanians and then with the German withdrawal had themselves evacuated and on January 2, 1919, the Bolsheviks captured that city, while the Lithuanians withdrew to Kaunas to the west and lower down along the Nemunas River.

It was at this moment that the German opposition to the spreading of Bolshevism began to be effective, for they could retreat little further without opening East Prussia to the enemy. Allied toleration of their former enemies was likewise bringing its results. Without ratifying the agreements made by Winnig, the Germans with the arrival of von der Goltz in the field now dreamed of a German offensive and they made repeated attacks upon the Latvian authorities who finally had to seek refuge on a British warship. They then set up a friendly Latvian government under Pastor Niedra and commenced the conquest of the Baltic area.

Here was a fine position. By the spring of 1919, the mood for peace had so far developed in the west that the British felt themselves obliged to temporize. They had no troops to send and they were forced to accede to the

wishes of von der Goltz, even though they were becoming aware of his purposes. The Germans captured Jelgava in April with a force composed of German adventurers, White Russians, and nationalist Latvians. Under an English commander they recovered Riga on May 22.

Then as Allied feelings against this conquest grew, pressure was put upon Germany in Berlin to recall von der Goltz. However under the guise of action not by the Germans but by the Balts, the German Iron Division moved north. The Estonians realized the meaning of this new move and they sent their army into Latvian territory to Cesis, the old capital of the Livonian Order. Here they were joined by the northern Latvian army under General Balodis. The joint forces were surprised by the Germans on June 7 and were forced to retreat to Valk. Then they made careful preparations, counterattacked and recovered Cesis on June 23.

The Treaty of Versailles was signed on June 20 and under this the Germans were ordered to evacuate but no one knew whether von der Goltz would obey the order of Berlin or not, for he was by now a law unto himself. However, he lacked sufficient matériel to hold out. The new British High Commissioner, General Gough, persuaded him to evacuate Riga and Liepaja, and then arrested Pastor Niedra and restored Ulmanis on July 6. The delivery of supplies soon allowed the formation of a Latvian army of about 25,000 men, while the Balt Landeswehr was reduced to 2,000 men and sent to the front.

The trouble was still not over, for while the Lithuanians had been likewise pushing east against the Bolsheviks, they had been constantly harassed by the southern and southwestward movements of the same Baltic Ger-

mans. However now the obvious German manoeuvre had been thwarted. It remained for them to try something else.

The White Russians furnished a convenient excuse. Still without a definite policy toward Russia, the Allies allowed and encouraged the formation of a White Russian Army under General Peter Yudenich on Estonian territory with the object of recovering Petrograd. It made no difference that there was bad blood between Yudenich and the Estonians, for Yudenich made no secret of his desire to restore the unity of the Russian Empire and the Estonians were not allowed to express their real feeling. However this menace passed with the defeat of Yudenich in September, 1919, by the Bolsheviks after penetrating the suburbs of the Russian capital. The Estonians then disarmed and interned his troops.

Meanwhile von der Goltz, finding it expedient to withdraw into the background, handed over the control to Colonel Avalov Bermondt. Bermondt, a dashing if not too competent figure, duly declared himself the leader of a West Russian army and he at once naturalized as Russian subjects all the troops of von der Goltz. The old game began again and once more it was necessary to convince the Allies that this was not an attempt of the Russians to recover their lost territory but a German attempt at invasion with the object of lining up the Germans behind a White Russian government.

The Latvian and Estonian armies moved to meet this new menace, while Lithuanian forces acting independently attacked the southern units of the new Russian enemy. Allied delay in recognizing this menace for what it was nearly proved fatal to the new republics. The combined forces were no match for the veterans of Ber-

mondt who defeated them and were about to take Riga. Then the Allies woke up and a British fleet sailed into the Daugava and began to shell the flanks of the Bermondt forces. This decided the issue. The Latvians and Estonians rallied and forced Bermondt to retire so that by November 11, 1919, the situation was safe and by the end of the year the Germans had withdrawn entirely from the Baltic area. Bermondt disappeared from history, leaving behind him nothing but increased hostility between the Baltic Republics and the Germans.

It was now the turn of the Bolsheviks. As they pressed southward in their westward drive, they more or less ignored Estonia and at Tartu on February 2, 1920, they signed a peace with Estonia and recognized the independence of the country.

Their opposition to Latvia was more persistent and they still held some of the eastern districts in Latgale. They were still desirous of taking Riga and so a state of war still continued.

However they decidedly hoped to profit by the disputes that were going on between Lithuania and Poland. On April 19, 1919, the Poles had driven the Bolsheviks out of Vilnius and had annexed it and most of Lithuania to Poland in an endeavor to reunite the two countries. This was the favorite dream of Pilsudski, himself a Polonized Lithuanian. It led to further hostilities between the two peoples. In this imbroglio the Poles joined forces with the Latvians and on January 15, 1920, the joint forces occupied Daugavpils and separated the territory under the control of the Lithuanian Republic from Bolshevik territory. This was the more easy since the Poles were cementing their hold on Vilnius and the eastern part of the territory claimed by Lithuania.

The situation came to a head in 1920, when Pilsudski made an alliance with Ukraine and marched on Kiev in the south. This led to a Polish defeat and to the great invasion of Poland. The northern arm of the Soviet pincers swept through Vilnius and once this was done, the Bolsheviks turned it over to Lithuania by a peace treaty made on July 12. This insured Lithuanian support or at least neutrality in the ensuing battles, especially as Lithuania promised not to conclude peace with Poland without the permission of the Soviets.

The defeat of the Red Army at the gates of Warsaw changed the situation. It retreated as rapidly as it had advanced and on October 12, an armistice was signed at Riga which ended the armed conflicts. The new terms for the first time gave to Poland the eastern boundary which remained until 1939. The Lithuanians still held their capital of Vilnius and the new agreements with Allied sanction approved this.

Then on October 9, while the negotiations were going on, an "independent" Polish army under the command of General Zeligowski seized Vilnius. Zeligowski had been a Polish officer and a friend of Pilsudski and no Lithuanian accepted the theory that he had had a quarrel and had resigned his position and taken his troops with him. Zeligowski almost immediately turned Vilnius over to Poland which accepted it and rewarded him.

This was really the last act of hostilities. The three Republics were free. They were all small states along the shore of the Baltic between Germany and the Soviet Union and everything demanded that they cooperate. Their problems were identical; the dangers to them were the same. Still the Vilnius question which involved Lithuania with Poland ran through the relations of all

the states and to a certain degree prevented the constant and harmonious development of relations. Both Estonia and Latvia desired friendly relations with Poland as the largest of the new eastern states. Lithuania nourishing its displeasure at the loss of its traditional capital remained aloof and was to a certain degree inclined to be more kindly disposed to the Soviet Union which had recognized its claim to the city.

Yet in all other respects the three republics passed through the same stages. They surmounted the same obstacles. They shared the same downfall.

Chapter Eighteen

VILNIUS AND KLAIPEDA (WILNO AND MEMEL)

It was the bad fortune of Lithuania that at the moment of liberation there were at least two of its historically important cities that were claimed by neighbors. The one was the capital, Vilnius; the other was the seaport of Klaipeda (Memel) at the mouth of the Nemunas River. The disputes over both of these cities played an important role in the history of the League of Nations and in the organizing of the democratic movements of Eastern Europe between the wars.

Vilnius was the traditional capital of Lithuania. It was here that the state took its definite shape. It was from here that Jogaila had gone forth to marry Jadwiga of Poland in 1386. It was here that the kings of his dynasty had ruled in their capacity as Grand Dukes of Lithuania. It was here that all the triumphs and defeats of Lithuania were celebrated or mourned and it was only natural that the Lithuanians should desire the city back as the capital of the restored republic.

The Poles thought differently. From the time of the marriage of Jogaila and Jadwiga, they had consistently argued that that event had indissolubly connected the two states. They had insisted that this was still further strengthened by the Union of Lublin in 1569 and they

had never admitted that that was a tightened alliance and not a union. They pointed with pride to the Constitution of the Third of May which in the last moments of Polish independence had practically united the two states. They ignored all the evidence that was presented of the growing estrangement of the Polish and Lithuanian masses through the revival and development of the Lithuanian language and by 1918 they had convinced themselves that Vilnius was a true Polish city, even though the majority of its inhabitants were neither Poles nor Lithuanians but Jews.

The nobles of Lithuania had as a matter of fact been very thoroughly Polonized during the centuries and the sentiments of independence had been preserved among the common people. The situation was even worse than this for the leading men of the restored Poland were of this group of Polonized Lithuanians. Joseph Pilsudski, the great leader of the Poles, had been born near Vilnius and he was intent upon the recovery of his birthplace for his adopted state, while his brother Bronislas was a member of the Lithuanian Council in Switzerland. Gabriel Narutowicz, the first President of Poland, who was murdered a few days after his election, had a brother Stanislas who had signed the Lithuanian Declaration of Independence in 1918. Radziwills had their representatives on both sides. In fact the entire administration of Poland would have been disorganized, if it had not been for these Polonized Lithuanians who in a very real sense were the bulwark of the new Polish state.

It must be said in justice to Pilsudski, if not to all of these people, that he did accept in some sense the idea of a federation of countries to be grouped around Poland. He foresaw some kind of a special relationship between

Poland and Lithuania and between Poland and Ukraine but he was unable to influence the Poles who wanted a unitary state on the French pattern. After the bitter experiences of the Lithuanians with the Poles in the nineteenth century and before, no prominent Lithuanian would share Pilsudski's plans or consent to a restoration of the old relationships in any form. The constant struggle between the two peoples during the years of the disintegration of Russia and the frequency with which Vilnius had changed hands was sufficient to accentuate the bitterness in both camps and the actions of Zeligowski in seizing the city despite the acceptance by the Poles of the Curzon Line created an insuperable obstacle to any general agreement.

In the disputes before the League of Nations, Lithuania was at a disadvantage. France was an ardent supporter of Poland and the friends of Lithuania were at best lukewarm. They thought only of peace and could not understand why there should be opposition in Lithuania to the handing over of their traditional capital and the creation of at least an alliance.

The Poles with more experience in diplomatic and political life were able with French backing to swing one public inquiry after another to their side or to defy with impunity any decrees of the League because of the French support expressed both publicly and privately.

Thus when the League of Nations tried to investigate the Vilnius dispute in 1921, Paul Hymans of Belgium acted as chairman in the Polish-Lithuanian conferences at Geneva. Hymans took note of the arguments of Ernest Galvanauskas, the Lithuanian Foreign Minister, and worked out a plan which in effect restored the old union. It proposed the creation of Vilnius as an autonomous

district in this alliance, the cession of Suvalkai and Gardinas to the Poles and the adoption of Polish as a second official language of the Lithuanian Republic. The Poles secured a postponement for the inclusion of delegates from Vilnius but the Lithuanians objected to any election of delegates while the Poles held the city.

A second conference in September, 1921 was perhaps a little less adamant in the question of the alliance but it provided that the Poles should have special rights for the transfer even of munitions along the entire course of the Nemunas River and in Klaipeda.

Even these proposals were rejected by the Poles who proceeded to arrange for the calling of a Constituent Assembly of the Vilnius province. Every step was protested by the Lithuanians and when on January 8, 1922, the Poles arranged for a plebiscite, it was ignored by the Lithuanians, Byelorussians and Jews. Nevertheless the Poles continued with their policy and finally their obstinacy was rewarded when the Council of Ambassadors capitulated on March 15, 1923, and under French urging recognized all the disputed boundaries of Poland on the Polish terms.

This marked the end of any attempts at reconciliation. From that time Poland and Lithuania regarded themselves as in a state of inactive war. No trains or mail were allowed to cross the boundary and they had no diplomatic relations. For nearly 15 years Europe witnessed the unprecedented spectacle of two countries maintaining the motions of almost open belligerency, while on neither side was there any intention of committing any overt act. There was scarcely a shot fired along the border and in this the situation was very different from that on the

borders between all the states and the Soviet Union where there was continued unrest, sniping, and raiding in a time of declared peace.

There can be little doubt that the Lithuanian insistence on the terms of their agreement with the Soviet Union reacted badly on the regard in which the state was held. Europe and especially the Poles were decidedly and justly suspicious of Soviet policy and there was a constant propaganda to the effect that Lithuania was in a sense a barrier to the formation of a definite cordon sanitaire against Communism, even though there was no Communism in the country and the Lithuanian Communist Party was outlawed.

The struggle was continued in words at every session of the League of Nations. The Ambassadors tried in 1924 to work out arrangements for the use of the Nemunas for the floating of lumber. Prime Minister Voldemaras and Pilsudski met at Geneva in 1927 inconclusively and the Soviet Union maintained tension by insisting that its treaty with Lithuania obliged it to defend Lithuania against aggression. The Hague Tribunal in 1931 justified the stand of Lithuania but again there was no way of enforcing regulations and the situation remained as it was until 1935, when on the eve of German aggression Pilsudski compelled Lithuania to sign a treaty or be invaded.

The Klaipeda situation was almost as touchy. Klaipeda had been built as Memelsburg, a fortress of the Knights in the Middle Ages and while frequently an object of attack it had remained in Germany until 1918. It was then made a free state under Allied supervision but not quite so closely connected with Lithuania as

Danzig was with Poland. Since the bulk of the population was Lithuanian outside of the city proper, the Lithuanians demanded its inclusion in their state.

Finally on January 10-15, 1923, the Lithuanians organized the same kind of a coup that had been brought about in Vilnius by Zeligowski, marched in and expelled with little fighting the French garrison. The action had been expected and there was little difficulty in drawing up a satisfactory statute by which the Klaipeda territory became an autonomous section of Lithuania. It received a governor appointed by the President and he in turn appointed the chairman of a directorate of five members and arranged for a local diet to be elected for a term of three years. In 1928 Lithuania and Germany settled their difficulties and peace was restored, while Klaipeda was developed as the chief port of Lithuania.

The amount of energy that Lithuania had to expend on these two subjects and the cost of the negotiations not only in money but in nervous strain and time were a severe strain on the young Republic, and its relations with the other Baltic states.

At the end of the war there had been high hopes that it might be possible to establish an alliance between all the states on the Baltic including Scandinavia, so as to ward off the danger of a Russian attack. This rapidly proved impossible. Scandinavia withdrew from the negotiations. Then Finland followed because of its Scandinavian affiliations. Poland with its suspicious attitude toward the Soviets next fell out of the general scheme and besides it refused to treat with Lithuania. Next Latvia and Estonia became suspicious of the dangers of being too closely allied with Lithuania in view of the controversies in which that state was engaged. Thus step

by step the plans were reduced until there came merely a small alliance of Latvia and Estonia in 1924. Nothing else was accomplished from the signing of the peace treaties to the signing of non-aggression pacts with the Soviet Union in 1929 but subject to the League of Nations there developed close friendships between the three Republics, as it became clear that neither the Vilnius nor Klaipeda questions would result in hostilities.

Thus these two boundary disputes served admirably as the instrument for preventing the closer relations of states that should have been together. It was this negative aspect of the problem that was the most serious in the long run for all of the countries without exception.

Chapter Nineteen

THE DAYS OF PARLIAMENTARISM

The wars were finally at an end and peace seemed to be settling over the Baltic. It was welcomed by the peace-loving population as the dawn of a new era when the democratic instincts of the people would find the opportunity to build for themselves the happy and prosperous life that they desired. Now for the first time in seven centuries the common people held their future in their own hands and could do with it what they wished.

Everything was disorganized. The material damage to the cities and the farms was enormous. The railroads were in chaos. The fields were largely untilled. The currency was almost worthless, for the depreciated Russian ruble had been replaced by the German Ostmark and this had been poured out as rapidly as the official and unofficial printing presses could operate. Local institutions had largely swept away in the ever changing tides of war or had been rendered inoperative by the new conditions.

Under such circumstances the new regimes had to begin to function and to do everything at once. Even before the peace treaties had been signed, the various governments set to work to draw up new constitutions and to select from their past experience and knowledge what they thought would be of advantage to them. It

must be remembered also that there was a shortage of trained administrators and still more of legislators. A very few of the leaders had served in the Russian Duma but that during its stormy course after 1905 was rather an example of what to avoid. It had never become a truly governing body and the new governments had to take positive action and not merely resist the encroachments of a higher authority. All this meant government almost by trial and error.

The new constitutions were drawn up under the impact of the ideas that prevailed at the end of the war. That war had been fought under the slogan "to make the world safe for democracy" and the Western nations had concentrated their propaganda against the Kaiser and his associates. It is small wonder then that the new states were very suspicious of the executive power. This tendency reached its height in the first constitution of Estonia adopted in 1920, for under this all those functions which in other states were left in the hands of the executive were now reposed in the Prime Minister who could be forced out of power at any moment by a vote of lack of confidence in the Parliament. It seemed at the time the acme of democracy but it soon proved its weakness in practice, when Parliament split into a large number of small parties and the ever shifting combinations of these caused at least the theoretical resignation of all officials who were appointed by the Prime Minister. The small size of the country and the restricted number of persons available for the higher posts served to mitigate many of the evils of the system but it required only a few years for the Estonian Parliament to begin to seek for ways of changing this provision.

The Latvians and Lithuanians were more conserva-

tive, for they did provide for a President with limited powers dependent upon the Parliament but with enough rights during his term of office to conduct the business of the state in normal times. The men who were elected were men who had served their country well during the stormy years of the war and they had almost invariably a sharp sense of obligation.

All three countries adopted the principle of a one house Parliament elected by universal suffrage of both men and women and this in turn elected the President. A system of checks and balances was introduced, so that the Parliament could impeach the President but the President also had the power under certain conditions to dissolve Parliament or call for a referendum of the people on the subject. In Lithuania, if he did so, he was himself compelled to resign on the convocation of the new Parliament which then elected his successor.

Extremely liberal treatment was given to the minorities. The number of these varied in the different countries but they were chiefly Russians, Germans and Jews. The proportion of these varied. Thus in Estonia, where the Estonians formed 88.2% of the population, there was a minority of 8.5% of Russians, chiefly in the eastern district of Petseri, 1.5% of Germans, and 0.4% of Jews. On the other hand in Latvia, the Latvians numbered 75.6%, and the Russians 12.3% (of whom a large number were the distinct Byelorussians); there were 3.3% of Germans, and 4.5% of Jews who held a dominating position in trade, a heritage from the past. In Lithuania on the other hand the Lithuanians numbered about 81%, the Jews 7% with perhaps almost a majority of the inhabitants of such cities as Vilnius and Kaunas, the Germans 4% and there was a Polish minority of approxi-

mately 3%, a purely negligible figure in view of the centuries of connection between the two peoples.

Under such conditions the minorities, unless they were actively backed by foreign powers, could not become a menace to the state and as a result the attitude towards them was remarkably liberal. In both Latvia and Lithuania, the Jews were allowed to develop their own institutions, schools, and cooperative institutions with their own high schools and theatres, etc. They took part in political life either as members of distinctively Jewish parties which ranged from conservative to radical or in the case of the Bund as part of the Latvian Social Democratic Party. In Latvia they played a relatively small part in the government but they were preeminent in trade and formed a considerable portion of the various professions.

The Russians likewise offered no menace. They consisted in general of two classes, peasants who had been moved into the border regions or had lived there for centuries. Many were Old Believers as in Riga and found themselves better treated than in the old Russia where they had been persecuted by the Orthodox. The other type were definitely emigrés who had established themselves in the capitals; they consoled themselves that they were still in places that had been Russian in the past but they cheerfully preferred to waive the present situation in view of their hatred of Bolshevism and Communism. To a certain degree they needed watching, lest they be tempted to embark on some political adventure but apart from this there were few among them who had any Communist leanings.

The Germans offered a somewhat different problem. They were numerically few in number but they were

for the most part far more highly trained in all particulars. It was not for nothing that they had been for centuries the masters of the state and if there was any minority that was looked at with suspicion, it was they. Among them were the still smaller group of great landowners and they were the only people who had any right to feel themselves aggrieved, for they were stripped of most of their old perquisites and directly or through their German connections, they continually bombarded the League of Nations with accounts of their mistreatment. These were chiefly concerned with the solution of the agrarian problems.

The extent of the agrarian problem can be seen from the fact that in 1918, 58% of Estonia, 75% of Latvia and 22% of Lithuania belonged to great estates, largely controlled by absentee owners and worked on traditional modes of tenure by which the peasants in return for their occupation of their own lands owed a certain number of days' labor to the landlord. It was an ideal situation for the master and it doomed all the other agricultural classes to hopelessness and poverty. The Germans in Estonia and Latvia, the Poles and Polonized Lithuanians in that country considered themselves the upper class and reacted scornfully to all attempts of the peasants to better their lot.

No government could have existed in any of the three republics which did not make an attempt to solve this problem. Even the mere suggestion of delay in the early election caused a swing to the left and it could easily have started a movement against those native landowners who had prospered by their own efforts and who had been forced by competition to drive hard bar-

gains with their employees to meet the unpaid labor of their rivals. The peasants were land-hungry. They wanted their own small farms, their own homes, and they were willing to stand anything, if this could be achieved. They had none of the desire of the Slavs to live in villages but each man wanted his own homestead for his family and to be there as master of his own fate.

It is against the background of this mood and these conditions that the agrarian reforms were carried out. Thus for example in Estonia, the first Agrarian law passed on October 11, 1919, even before the adoption of the constitution declared all large estates government property which was later with the exception of forests and marshlands to be distributed to private owners, "to educational, industrial, and cooperative institutions . . . and to workers' associations collectively." The government promised later to indemnify the owners but in the meantime it visualized the creation of a class of peasant farmers each of whom would have as much land as he and his family with the aid of a pair of horses could use profitably.

In 1925 with the financial affairs of the state coming into order, the former owners were allowed to take back up to fifty hectares and in some cases to receive also twenty-five hectars of forests and their seaside villas. Arrangements made in 1926 provided that no payments would be made on the Russian government loans or to the Russian Agrarian Bank or to those who had played a hostile part during the wars of liberation. Other landowners would receive full compensation on the value of their estates up to 2000 hectares in 1914 at the rate of 20 Estonian marks for one ruble. Larger land-

owners received a lower rate until 60% was paid on an estate of 9000 hectares.

From these estates were created within ten years 37,859 new peasant holdings. With the reallotment of lands and repair loans the agrarian reform directly benefited approximately 25% of the total population of the country.

The reform in Latvia was as sweeping, if on somewhat different lines, for here out of the expropriated lands were formed 123,374 new holdings, none larger than 27 hectares. The old landowners, including 51 Latvian families, retained only 71,870 hectares out of the 3,000,000 in the hands of large estates in 1900.

The landowners received no compensation in Latvia largely because of their own political mistake. The leftist parties, thanks to the size of Riga, were stronger in Latvia than in Estonia and on the decisive vote in 1924, they were able with the aid of some of the minorities to garner 50 votes against compensation. The bourgeois and rightist parties which favored it had only 39 votes. The representatives of the landowners controlled 15 votes and had they joined those favoring compensation, they could have carried through some kind of a bill. Instead, they declined the vote and carried the dispute to the League of Nations on the ground that it was an attack upon them as Germans. The League refused to support them and no further steps were taken on their claims.

In Lithuania the land reform was carried out on much the same lines with the state taking over the forests and those estates which had been granted by the Russian government or which were owned by persons who had not returned to the country, a polite way for naming the Polonized Lithuanian lords who had thrown their

lot in with the Poles. Smaller estates received compensation. The reforms were not so far reaching, for the situation was not so critical but yet it produced over 45,000 new small farms.

These reforms entirely changed the character of the three countries. Instead of consisting of masses of landless peasantry dominated by a few landowners, they became nations of small landowning farmers paying the state a fixed sum for a term of years until the charge for their lands was reimbursed. Nowhere else in Europe were such gigantic reforms carried through with less turmoil and upheaval. It was of course aided by the fact that the concentration of landownership had gone so far that there were relatively few people to dispossess. Those few tried to recoup themselves by appealing to an international tribunal but in many cases only after they had by law altered their nationality. The majority of the dispossessed had been high officials in the defunct Russian government. Neither they nor their ancestors had been German subjects since the Middle Ages and their appeals for German protection did not impress any unbiassed international tribunal.

These reforms completely checked the danger of revolution from the left. They brought back of the governments the great majority of the population and gave them a definite stake in the success of the country.

Their effect on agriculture was equally marked. Contrary to the general rule that large holdings are more profitable, the reverse turned out to be true. The great estates had gone in for the large scale raising of crops which were not always fitted to the climate. The new owners emphasized dairying, largely for the export market and during the ten years after the war in all the coun-

tries the number of livestock and domestic animals and poultry largely increased even over the level of 1913.

Thus the agrarian reform fully achieved its purpose and whatever might have been the discontent of the Baltic barons, it inaugurated a new era of prosperity in the country which spread rapidly into the cities.

It was much more difficult to place the industry of these lands on a firm basis. The majority of the factories which had been in existence before 1914 had been definitely connected with the Russian market. That was now gone and many of the factories had been destroyed during the fighting or the machinery carried away. In the beginning the governments wasted precious money in trying to rejuvenate these factories on their old scale. Then when they realized the changed conditions, they abandoned the attempt where it was not necessary for the welfare of the state and concentrated on new branches of light industry and the development of the natural resources of the country. These efforts met with success and the plants were soon able to satisfy most of the needs for light industry, while the development of the oil shales of Estonia which proceeded at a steadily increasing tempo promised to expand into a major industry.

This was reflected in the financial status of the currencies. They had been thrown into a state of chaos at the end of the war but in one way or another by 1924, new currencies had been introduced based on gold and until the period of the depression, there was no appreciable difficulty in maintaining them at the legal rate in the free world markets.

Riga, Liepaja and Tallinn had been important seaports for Russian foreign trade during the days of the

Empire and in the treaties of peace with the Soviet Union, the new governments made every effort to maintain this position. They included very liberal concessions to the Soviets through free port and other normal commercial arrangements and for a short time it seemed as if this policy of friendship would be reciprocated. The small amount of goods exported through them seemed to be only a result of the disorder that prevailed in Soviet life. It was however soon obvious that the Soviets had little or no interest in maintaining and developing business relations. Even after the depression, the situation continued to deteriorate and it soon became clear that these ports were not destined under Soviet plans to have any part in the Soviet commercial schemes.

Nevertheless the invitation was not withdrawn. None of the Baltic republics followed the Polish tradition and changed the gauge of their railroad lines to the normal European gauge. The lines connecting Riga with the West were changed but those between Riga and the Soviet Union and Riga and Poland were not. As a result there arose in the main station at Riga the strange condition of a station with three gauges, the European for the trains to the west, the Russian for the trains to Estonia, the Soviet Union and Poland, and the narrow gauge for the trains to the summer resorts along the Gulf of Riga.

At the same time the republics revamped their educational systems and established universities in each of their countries. These quickly won an established place in the educational world and they cared for the education of the young people of the countries. Libraries sprang up and long before the end of the twenties, the three

Baltic republics were on their way to world recognition.

The last untoward event of this period happened in Tallinn on December 1, 1924, when the Communists attempted to seize control of the city. A band of some 350 Estonian Communists, Russian workers in the Soviet offices in Tallinn and newly arrived agitators seized some of the government buildings and the radio station and announced the formation of an Estonian Soviet Republic. They appealed for help to Moscow which was only too ready to assist them. They had completely misestimated the strength of the republic, for General Laidoner was ready for the move. Within a few hours the entire band had been rounded up or killed and there was nothing for Moscow to do but to ignore the adventure and try to deny its share in the abortive movement or to declare a full scale war. It was not ready for the second alternative and the movement was allowed to pass into history with no apparent results. Estonia like her neighbors outlawed the Communist Party and from that time, although the government was well aware that there were secret Communists in Estonia, the party did not succeed in making any impression upon the population or in presenting an open menace.

The three Baltic republics showed during the twenties the value of the accepted principles of European civilization. They started under the most unfavorable conditions with little except the ruins of their oppressors and the strength of their peasantry to back them. They came through the decade as respected members of the League of Nations. They had their disagreements and their successes. They had quarrels over the education of the few hundred Livs who were still speaking Livish but they were in essence a proving ground for the full expression

of the ideals of the League and President Wilson and they more than made good.

They showed that in a free world constructed on free principles there was room for small states to exist and be prosperous, provided that they worked honestly and sincerely for themselves and the general good. It remained to be seen whether that was enough for the world of the thirties.

Chapter Twenty

THE ANTI-PARLIAMENTARY REACTION

The glorious optimism of the new states soon began to be tempered by the realization that they had not reached the limit of their political development. They were affected by that general disease that was to infect nearly all of continental Europe outside of the Soviet Union—the weakness and the difficulties of an unrestricted rule by a constantly shifting coalition of political parties. It was serious enough in old established governments like France with a long tradition of parliamentary rule but it promised still greater difficulties in the new states where the people were not yet accustomed themselves to the limitations and obligations of popular government.

This disease which had early appeared was in its inception less serious and more serious than it seemed. At first it might have been handled by a little more tact and a rephrasing of the program of the different parties which in each of the three states numbered in the neighborhood of a dozen. When we reflect that the population of each country ranged from a little over a million to under three million, we can see the full folly of the arrangement and the ease with which party disputes would degenerate into clashes of personality instead of principle.

The serious feature was that Mussolini with his

Fascism had proposed an extreme method of solving the problem as it affected Italy and had sought to bolster his system by a violent outburst of imperialism. He was later imitated by Hitler with Nazism and a Pan-German ideology. Both of the movements with their apparent early success seemed to offer a convenient and practical way to stop a generally recognized evil and far too many people who were sincerely desirous of a reformation of the prevailing system failed to realize that this remedy was worse than the disease and offered a convenient weapon to the Communists for doing by indirection what they had failed to do directly.

There was another unique aspect of this Baltic situation. The men who emerged and secured the leadership in all three countries were not newcomers to politics. These were years of more or less turbulence but the power remained in the hands of the men who had aided in drawing up the original constitutions. There was nothing of that situation which prevailed in both Italy and Germany where braggarts like Mussolini and fanatics like Hitler succeeded in securing power and leading their countries to ruin. Had it not been for the dangerous political situation abroad and the menace of powerful neighbors, the struggle would have remained purely in the political sphere until a satisfactory solution had been reached. However the presence of Communism on the east and of German Nazism with its imperialistic policies on the west interfered with the development of political life and thought and gave to the controversy a sharpness and a severity which it might not otherwise have had.

Political disturbances started in Poland in 1926 when Pilsudski, angered by the actions of the right parties, moved troops into Warsaw and forced the resignation

of President Wojciechowski and put in as President Ignacy Moscicki, a distinguished professor of natural science. At the same time he forced certain changes in the constitution which put more power in the hands of the President and by his own assumption of the duties of Minister of War, he began a scarcely veiled dictatorship which lasted until his death.

As we might expect, the same forces stirred in Lithuania but in the opposite way. The accession of Pilsudski, a Polonized Lithuanian who was regarded as responsible for the seizure of Vilnius, strengthened the hands of those Lithuanian parties which regarded the treaty with Moscow as a danger for the country. The Bolsheviks cleverly used the opportunity to add fuel to the fire and again reminded the Lithuanians of their willingness to aid against Poland. A coalition government supported by the left and minority groups tried to make capital out of this situation.

On the night of December 16-17, 1926, a group of army officers broke into the session of the Parliament and forced the resignation of the Prime Minister and the cabinet. Then they persuaded President Grinius to appoint their candidate Voldemaras as Prime Minister and resign himself. The new Prime Minister called the Parliament together and although the entire left and the representatives of the minorities boycotted the meeting the rump session elected as President Antanas Smetona, who had been the Provisional President of Lithuania before the adoption of the constitution and who was perhaps more than any other man responsible for the recovery of national independence.

In a few months he dissolved the Parliament and then early in 1928 he issued by decree a new constitution for

the country. This reasserted the Lithuanian claim that Vilnius was the capital of the country. It also provided for the creation of an electoral college to choose a president for a fixed term of seven years, changed the methods of election, reduced the number of members of Parliament from 85 to 49 and extended the length of it from three to five years. It raised the voting age to 24 and provided for the appointment of a State Council to advise the President and cabinet.

These were largely in line with the development in Poland in the early years of Pilsudski's domination of the country and had very little or no connection with the revolutionary changes that had taken place in Italy or which were being threatened in Germany. It was merely an extra-legal attempt to meet the real or assumed threat from the east and introduced as its only novelty the strengthening of the power of the President and the ending of his direct subservience to the Parliament.

This new constitution remained in force for over ten years and Smetona was constantly reelected. He was thus the first and the fourth president of the republic, for in the short period from 1920 to 1926 there had been two presidents. The second, Stulginskis, had been compelled to resign when he dismissed the diet in 1922 and though he was reelected by the next diet, the third diet dropped him for Grinius who was able to serve only six months. There was abundant reason for anxiety on the part not only of the army officers but of all thinking people as to where this policy might lead. Nevertheless the methods adopted by the reformers contained the seed of discord, for it seemed as if the new regime were going to rest its power upon its own followers rather than to try to do the will of the people ex-

pressed in an orderly manner. Smetona was promptly branded a dictator, even by many people who sympathized with the avowed objects of the reform.

The critical situation of the other Baltic governments was revealed still more clearly when the depression broke over the world. The prices of all agricultural products dropped catastrophically and of course this carried down the financial structure of the three small states. Nevertheless by strenuous exertions, Smetona maintained the Lithuanian currency on a gold basis. Latvia did the same and Estonia was only forced to revalue the currency in 1933.

During these years the governments had applied all kinds of efforts to solve the problem confronting them and to give relief to the farmers who were the majority of the population and slowly but surely the tide began to turn again, even at the expense of diminution of international trade and a consequent growing tendency toward self-sufficiency in all branches of life. In a sense this was a healthy sign but at the same time the countries were so small that they could not consume their entire agricultural production and the inability to secure goods at reasonable rates that they could afford, created a fertile soil for political unrest.

The situation was basically not as serious as it was in Germany, for that country, still smarting from her defeat in World War I and being more heavily industrialized, easily became the prey for strange movements which culminated in the rise of Hitlerism and his adoption of the leadership principle, which he accomplished with a dangerous experiment at rearmament and a bombastic theory of German superiority as a race.

From the beginning of the rise of Nazism after the

depressions, the Baltic states could not fail to be aware of its significance, for it revived the German menace which had been only partly laid by the distribution of the estates of the German landowners. Many of these, rendered desperate both by their loss of power and the economic straits in which they found themselves, swung to the support of the new party. Such men as Alfred Rosenberg, Hitler's adviser on the east, was from Tallinn and it was soon clear that the new Nazi party was going to make extravagant demands on the Baltic states to put the Germans back into their pre-war dominating status.

Hitler's doctrines naturally found warm support among the various impoverished Germans in the Baltic area and also among many of the employed Germans who held responsible positions in the industrial life of the different countries and who could dream of even more power, if *der Führer* could carry out his idea. The seizure of power in 1933 in Germany seemed the final act of assurance and Nazism became a definite menace.

This was bad enough but there were two sides to the movement. On the one hand there was the definite German imperialistic side which was hostile to everything that the Baltic republics stood for. There was also the theoretical side of developing power and wealth through submission to a self-appointed leader without reference to imperialism. There were a large number of reckless egotists in the various countries, many of them ex-soldiers, fanatically anti-German and dissatisfied by the failure of the weak governments to solve the overwhelming financial and other problems facing them. These men absorbed from *Mein Kampf* what they felt to be its general essence and commenced to demand reforms similar to those carried out by Hitler. They wanted force and

violence and regardless of their attitude toward German claims, they were ready to serve as blind tools in crushing the democratic regimes. They needed money for their purpose and this money was forthcoming from Germany, if not directly, then through indirect channels, largely through the Lapua movement, a similar manifestation in Finland.

Then to make confusion worse, the left parties throughout Europe were won over by the Communists to the notion of a popular front, that is a union of all liberal and progressive groups with the Communists to check the growing menace of Fascism or Nazism. This insured a situation where the hitherto solid front of all parties against Communism would be broken and where any attempt to reform the governments from within would be labelled Fascism.

The Lithuanian coup d'état in 1926 with the subsequent changes had put the President and the government in a position where they could use force effectively. This was even true after there came a break between Smetona and Voldemaras who was unceremoniously stripped of his posts and saw his own personal organization broken up. He tried to seize power again in 1934 but he was again defeated. As a result in Lithuania the chief problem came from the distinctively German part of the movement.

The loss of Klaipeda had always been bitterly resented by Germans of all parties and as soon as Hitler took office, he extended direct aid to various conspiratorial groups in the territory. Thus in 1934 the Lithuanians discovered two such parties, the Socialist People's Party under the leadership of a man named Neumann and the Christian Socialist Workers' Party under Sass. Once sure of its ground, the government suppressed both and arrested

and tried for treason 122 suspected Nazis. Four were executed on supplementary charges of murder. 85 were sentenced to prison, although their sentences were later somewhat commuted. It created a tense situation between Germany and Lithuania but Hitler was still not ready and in 1936 the signing of new agreements superficially reduced the tension.

In Estonia the basic situation was different, for there all parties had recognized the inability of the government to function without an executive that was more or less stable. Prime Ministers of the most diverse opinions had made substantially the same recommendations but what had been tolerable in 1925 was impossible in 1932. Jaan Tönisson, one of the most liberal leaders had demanded a change in 1929 but it fell upon deaf ears until in 1930 a group of farmers threatened to march on Tallinn, if reforms were not made. Then there appeared in the picture the League of Soldiers of the War of Liberation, commonly known from the first letters of its Estonian name as the VAPS, an Estonian form of the Lapua. In the first stages the farmers demanded extreme protection of agriculture and called for the refusal of the vote to all who did not pay income taxes. It was obviously a self-seeking movement for the benefit of a definite class. The VAPS contented itself with merely demanding the election of a president and the reduction of the number of members of the Parliament. At the same time it was among this latter group that the governmental ideas of Nazism made a strong appeal and step by step their leaders made more and more demands which would finally have placed all power in the hands of a small clique.

It was obvious that something had to be done but

how? There were 11 parties in the Parliament and the representatives of the smaller ones felt that they had a vested right to their seats. They realized that any reduction of numbers or any change at all would unseat them. On the other hand the Social Democrats with 25 seats were well aware that they had no appreciable opportunity of securing control of the country and they feared that the establishment of an executive would lead to a control by the Right and Centre that would menace what they regarded as the achievements of the revolution. Meanwhile the VAPS was becoming more extreme in its demands and the mass of the public more disgusted with the situation. When the Prime Minister finally manoeuvered a reform bill through Parliament and submitted it to a referendum, it was defeated by a vote of 330,236 to 315,900. The negative vote was cast by a combination of the Social Democrats and the VAPS, the two extreme parties. It was in vain that the bill was slightly retouched and resubmitted. It was beaten this time by 333,045 to 161,089.

The lesson was clear but no one paid attention. Only an immediate agreement of all the parties could prevent a growing apathy on the part of the citizens which would sooner or later bring the VAPS to power. The politicians did nothing but continue their old game and the VAPS, heavily subsidized from abroad, continued to advance its demands.

By now these were definite and clearly based upon the methods of Hitler. They called for the direct election of a President with almost unlimited powers. He was to appoint the Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief of the army who were to hold office at his pleasure. The

Parliament was to be reduced to 50 members and the President could dissolve it at will and veto any measure that it passed. He had the whole power of appointment, could order general mobilization and on declaring a state of emergency could assume all power.

Tönisson was rightly suspicious of the new party for he knew its foreign connections and also the secret negotiations of some of the leaders of the VAPS with discontented German elements. He went as far as he could in proclaiming areas of martial law and in ordering the dissolution of the VAPS and similar groups but he was unable to take any positive steps and it was no surprise when the VAPS program was adopted by a vote of 416,000 to 157,000. The politicians had definitely lost the battle. The new Constitution was to come into effect 97 days later and 100 days after that the new president would be elected.

Tönisson's defeat threw him out of power and Konstantin Päts as leader of the Agrarians and the First Chairman of the Estonian National Council took his place to carry through the transfer to the new regime.

There was less agreement as to who was to form it. The VAPS and their friends wanted to secure a distinguished but colorless person who would be a puppet in their hands until they were ready to chart their entire course. This was not easy. They approached General Laidoner and offered him the task under three conditions: first that he appoint the VAPS leader M. A. Sirk as Prime Minister; secondly that he appoint General Larka, their nominal head as Commander-in-Chief, and third that he would accept the leadership principle as worked out in Nazism. Laidoner refused, especially on the two last

points. The VAPS then decided to speed up their program and to nominate Larka directly.

The elections were to be held in April and the VAPS were loudly boasting that they would resort to civil war, if Larka were not elected. What was the use of the new constitution if they were not to profit? They forgot one thing. The new constitution had come into force in January but Estonia was still being governed in the old way. How could that be explained? It was simply taken for granted.

Then on March 12, Päts acted. He simply accepted the position that the Constitution was in effect. Under it he declared a state of emergency, assumed complete power, appointed General Laidoner as Commander-in-Chief and proclaimed martial law. Incidentally he also cancelled the elections.

This was a surprising reversal of the situation. Päts at once dissolved all political parties, including the VAPS. He arrested some five hundred of its more or less prominent members but he allowed Sirk to escape to Finland. General Larka was left at liberty. The power of the organization was broken and there was an almost immediate return of confidence for Päts as the head of the rightest Agrarian Party, almost the largest in the state, and General Laidoner as the national hero of the War were trusted by the vast majority of the people, even if they did not altogether agree with his policy. Of course he was at once accused of Fascism, especially by the parties of the popular front but he paid little attention to this and proceeded along the lines which he had mapped out.

The next year the leaders of the VAPS made another attempt but this time they gave up any pretence of doing

it by constitutional methods. Sirk and Larka rallied their supporters for the sole purpose of seizing control of the government by armed force. They formed all their plans with the greatest care and set the day finally for December 8, when all the members of the government would be gathered in the concert hall of the Estonia Theatre for a commemoration of the first anniversary of the foundation of the National Party. They planned to seize these and with other detachments to get possession of all the important points in Tallinn much like the Communists in 1924, Päts was informed of the plot and on the night before he raided their meeting place and secured the necessary evidence.

This time the VAPS was ended. 150 suspects were arrested and imprisoned, although most of these including Larka were later given an amnesty. Sirk was allowed to escape to Finland and then he went on to Luxembourg, and while there he committed suicide. This marked the definite end of attempts to establish Fascism in its narrow sense of the word in Estonia.

In the meanwhile the same situation had developed in Latvia with the joint and separate efforts of the Germans to seize the country in the name of Nazism while they supported malcontent and despairing leaders who wanted to establish a full totalitarian regime while twenty-two parties in a Parliament of a 100 members blocked all reforms or action. The situation came to a head only a few weeks later than the assumption of power by Päts. Just as the Fascists were convinced that the seizure of government was within their power, Karlis Ulmanis, a former student of the University of Nebraska and a great admirer of Senator Norris of that state, came into the picture. He had been the first Prime Minister of the

Latvian government and he had guided the state through the difficult times of the wars against the Bolsheviks and the German-Russian troops under von der Goltz and Bermondt. From that time he had played a prominent role; now in the crisis, he asserted his position as Prime Minister, dissolved the Parliament and set himself up as the controller of the country and in 1936 he had himself named President as well.

Thus came about the surprising decline of parliamentary government which had been organized on too lax a pattern to stand the strain and the stress of the thirties. Yet the outstanding fact was, as we have noted, the return to power of the men who had led the struggle for national independence against both the Germans and the Bolsheviks. In one country after another the old trusted leaders came back and inaugurated a new period in the national development. It is hard to believe that they were actuated by any other motives than they had shown during their earlier activity. They may have grown impatient through fatigue or nervous strain, but the fact remains that with the rise of Hitler and the renewed activities of the Bolsheviks under the reign of Stalin, they seem to have felt that the excessive party strife which had disorganized political life could only be ended by the elimination of the Parliaments as they were then constituted. They were not alone in this, for with the single exception of Czechoslovakia under the presidency of Mazaryk, nearly all the new states of Europe had found their constitutions unworkable. Each in its own way was groping for some new solution of the tangle out of the impasse into which the countries had been plunged. Each found the same unsatisfactory solution in the ending of political parties. The smaller the country and the more compact and co-

herent it was, the more attractive did this solution seem but it was almost universally recognized as unsatisfactory and had peace remained in Europe, it is very likely that some new form of political organization would have been worked out which would have combined the advantages of a strong government and a parliamentary system. That was not to happen, for the shadow cast by the restored Germany and the Soviet Union grew blacker with each succeeding year.

Chapter Twenty-One

THE THIRTIES

Economists and political scientists can debate to their heart's content the situation which arose in the Baltic states during the fateful years before World War II. There was one certain fact. The economic results of the depression disappeared even more rapidly than from many of the larger countries. Agriculture and industry flourished and from almost every angle the countries were better off than they had been in the booming days of the twenties. Was this or was it not the result of the establishment of political stability?

It is easy to argue that this recovery was a world wide process, rendered necessary by the growing demand for agricultural products in the larger nations of central and western Europe and rendered still more necessary by the militarization of Germany and the increasing call for oil as shown by the development of the oil shale industry in Estonia. From this point of view there was little or no need for the disorders that threatened the countries during the years 1933 and 1934 and people were too hasty in abandoning their old systems.

It is easy for those students who see democracy as merely the unlimited application of the parliamentary

system of many parties as developed in these lands to condemn the new regimes which undeniably put an end to party strife by abolishing all parties for a party of National Unity, in which the President had a controlling voice. For such students there was something particularly appealing in the fact that Estonia had had twenty party crises and changes of government in fourteen years and had still survived.

It is easy for students of the left who are inclined to identify all Rightist regimes with Fascism to argue that the three Baltic states were under either a Fascist or a semi-Fascist regime. They can point out the limitations that the government laid on the opposition; they can cite certain punitive laws which limited the freedom of the press, which gave extended powers to the executive and which forced into exile or banished certain members of the opposition.

It is easy to hold that Smetona. Ulmanis and Päts went beyond the bounds of necessity in their reaction against the preceding governments and in their efforts to bring about an internal stability that had been previously lacking. They can be accused of extreme self-satisfaction in preferring their own ideas to those of many of their opponents who had likewise been the founders of the states.

On the other hand, it cannot be said that any of these leaders were actuated by any of those megalomaniacal dreams of greatness that had inspired Hitler and Mussolini. From the beginning to the end they had accepted very frankly the position of their peoples as small, liberty-loving, and consciously a part of the world community. They cooperated as fully as their predecessors in the work of the League of Nations and in all those efforts which

were made to secure collective security.

In their internal policy, their first care was to extend to all peace-loving citizens the benefits of the laws. Unlike the situation in Germany the minority groups, especially the Jews, did not suffer any additional restrictions because of their nationality. The governments which from the beginning had extended liberal minority rights, including schools, etc. did not restrict these and rather increased the number of posts which were open to the minorities. They continued to increase the number of rabbis and Orthodox priests serving as chaplains in the armies. The Lutheran Latvians provided opportunities and funds for an increased number of Roman Catholic bishops and priests. The Lithuanians supported non-Catholic groups and the Estonians supported Catholics and Orthodox and these years witnessed a significant increase in non-Russian converts to Orthodoxy.

It would be more fair to say that the leaders who had long been democratically inclined, when they were confronted with the twin menaces of Nazism and German infiltration from the west and of Communist attacks from the east and with the steady unpreparedness and indifference of the great powers of Western Europe, felt themselves more like the Roman dictators of the early ages of the Republic, men called to cure a definite foreign or domestic threat than they did as men divinely or personally chosen to lead an independent role.

In a sense Lithuania had remained longer in the position of the late twenties and its new constitution of 1938 was rather a belated imitation of the Polish changes in 1935 or those of Latvia and Estonia of the year before. Still we have to remember that in one sense Lithuania through its possession of Klaipeda was more directly

menaced by the advancing power of Hitler and by the Polish occupation of Vilnius; it was less directly menaced by the trends from the east.

We have no reason to dispute the repeated statements of Päts and Ulmanis that they were sincerely desirous of so training the population that they could restore to them a large part of the political rights which they had arrogated to themselves in the time of storms. Yet it was only natural in view of the European situation that they would hesitate at making far-reaching changes and that their supporters would tend to form themselves unofficially into a government party which would look at all questions from their own vested rights in the government. The more the governments and the countries improved their economic position, the more posts there were to be filled and the more people would feel their living tied to the maintenance of the status quo.

All three countries during these years paid especial attention to their fundamental industry, i.e. agriculture and it was undoubtedly the class of small landowners who in a sense were the backbone of the regimes. Still when we take into consideration the great number of these who had been created by the land reforms of the twenties, we come again to the almost paradoxical position that the new regimes really represented and had the support of the numerically most important classes and so long as they did not restrict the basic rights of these, there was little real danger of a serious internal opposition arising and there was little need to resort to the elaborate methods of suppression that were characteristic of the Fascist and Communist states.

In their policies the governments worked to stabilize and raise the price of agricultural products; they con-

tinued the work of settling new families on the soil, of reclaiming additional land and bringing it under cultivation by paying bonuses for such work; they established and strengthened cooperative marketing and aided abroad in the work of opening foreign markets; they tried to develop modern plants for the packing and preserving of foodstuffs, and by the end of the thirties the three republics were winning additional markets and providing increased outlets for the prospering agricultural population.

On the other hand, each in its own way, the governments resorted to traditional methods of maintaining their authority. There was little need for the displaying of force, although as we can see the regimes maintained a close watch upon those elements which might be critical of them.

These fell in the main into two distinct classes. There were first the remains of the Social Democrats who were of course congregated especially in the capital cities. These were abundantly able to complain that their own labor unions had been broken up and that the workers in the smaller plants had more restricted opportunities of complaint than those in the larger government-supported industries. They could complain that not enough money was spent on providing new housing at moderate rates in the cities and that the government was obviously supporting agriculture at the expense of the cities. Thus they were stronger in Riga than in Tallinn and in Tallinn than in Kaunas.

The second group was formed by the intellectuals in Kaunas, Riga and Tartu, the university city of Estonia. This group included many of the more prominent leaders as Tönisson in Estonia. It consisted of many of the

men who had sincerely endeavored by democratic means to eliminate the parliamentary impasse and who had not been able to find in parliamentary procedure the answer to the problems of their country. They refused to countenance any other solution, just as they had been unable to find a constitutional way out. As a result they made no effort to cooperate with the new regimes and preferred to remain in isolation. This did not tend to broaden their point of view and more and more they came to form small groups of ex-politicians who could not cooperate with one another and had no policy except to advocate a change of regime which was spreading prosperity. They had little in common with the Social Democrats and were no more willing to cooperate with them than previously.

Of course, since this group included many of the leading men of the countries, their loss to the government was tremendous. The regimes were deprived of many of the leading talents of the small states; they missed their experience and counsel but it is an open question whether the gain in stability brought about by less able men had not in large part compensated for the confusion and unrest of the preceding era.

Päts in Estonia showed the greatest ingenuity in attempting to reorganize the state politically. In the words of the *Manchester Guardian,* "he and his soldier-ally General Laidoner had no liking for the hard necessity of ruling as dictators". He recognized from the beginning the nature of the constitution under which he was governing and the evils of the old system.

He felt that the prime trouble was the fact that the Parliament had consisted of only one house and that there was no way of securing a balance against its abuse

of power without a second chamber which could compel a reconsideration by some sort of democratic principles. The question was how to establish this second house. In this difficulty he took a partial leaf out of the book of Mussolini and determined that if in one house the members would be elected by the people as individuals on a local basis, in the second they should be elected by the people in their occupations. He accordingly formed fifteen corporations, adding to the already established Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture, others of handicraftsmen, farm laborers and small owners, industrial workers, members of cooperatives, agronomists, persons engaged in medicine, veterinarians, dairy-men, druggists, store employees, and domestic servants. Then in March, 1935, he organized a State Economic Council of 25 members, 15 appointed by the Corporations and 10 nominated by himself.

In 1936 he called a new Constituent Assembly, which was likewise formed of two houses, the lower house elected by the people on a district basis and the upper house selected by the Corporations and public institutions. Nearly all of the opposition leaders were elected as members but they were unable to sway the final vote and when a new constitution emerged, it was passed in a referendum by a vote of 474,218 to 148,824.

The new constitution went into effect January 1, 1938 and contained many more checks and balances than did the second. The essence of this was to give more power to the Parliament but still leave it unable to take the bit in its teeth. Thus the President nominated the Prime Minister and the cabinet. If the Parliament refused a vote of confidence to them, the President was to call a new election. If the next Parliament also refused,

the cabinet had to resign. The President with cabinet approval could initiate legislation. Constitutional questions, taxes, treaties, and national defence were exempted from subjects on which he could demand a referendum. He could issue decrees with the force of law, if Parliament were not in session. He could veto legislation but this still gave Parliament the right to pass the same legislation again after a certain interval.

The Parliament consisted of two houses. The lower house was to have 80 members elected by direct vote of their constituents without the existence of party organization. An age of 22 was required for voting, i.e. it excluded most men doing their military service and an age of 25 was required to hold office. This house had to approve the budget but this was submitted by the cabinet which had to approve all changes. If the Parliament introduced a money bill, it had to show how the money would be secured and have its proposals approved by the Cabinet.

The upper house consisted of 40 members, each at least 40 years old. 10 were appointed by the President, 6 were members by virtue of their positions in the economic, military and religious life of the country and the rest were elected by the corporations. This chamber had the right to suspend or veto action by the lower house, unless the latter repassed the measures by a three-fifths majority.

The election of the President was likewise hedged about with formalities. Every six years, the Assembly, the upper house, and an electoral body selected by the local administrations, met separately to propose candidates. If they agreed on a man, they were to meet and a three-fifths majority was necessary to elect him. If they disagreed, and made more than one nomination, the

President was elected by the direct vote of the people.

The constitution read well. It incorporated many features from both the American and British systems as well as some highly original suggestions and could it have been carried into practice, the return of a workable system of democracy would probably have been assured. The only suspicious measure was the continued ban on political parties, which would have been bound to arise. As it was, the opposition to Päts and his policies secured 25 votes in the Assembly. These included old liberals like Tönisson and Piip, once Estonian Minister in Washington, Social Democrats as Maxim Unt, who was destined to play a role in the later Soviet regime and Neeme Ruus, a hidden Communist. This group was a good cross-section. The Päts partisans numbered 55 and with this backing Päts himself was duly elected President in April, 1938.

This was to be expected under the circumstances. The constitution gave indirect power to the President to influence the choice of his successor. Päts had a large and enthusiastic following among the substantial part of the population which was well aware of the economic improvement for which they believed him responsible and they were well aware of the growing dangers in the foreign situation. The real test of the document would have come in the next six years but that was not to be made.

It was only natural that the opposition could and would see little difference between this and the preceding constitution, as long as the same men had the confidence of the President. Still Estonia had taken a long step back toward Parliamentary rule and if even a few of the changes had been approved in the twenties, it is very

likely that the country could have passed through the crisis without the upsets and the turmoil that had arisen. Here came that tragic split in the thinking of the twenties and the thirties. The former had not thought of methods of administration and stability. As World War II approached, the people thought of these things too well.

The result was that the public sentiment of the greater part of the population upheld Päts in a policy of preserving martial law and of restricting some of the more liberal aspects of the new constitution. It was the price of the past disturbances, for it has always been more easy for even a well-disposed ruler to assume power than to relinquish it and Estonia was no exception.

The political situation in Latvia was similar. Here there was a still more complicated problem, for in Riga there were more disruptive elements than there were in Tallinn. Ulmanis made several tentative efforts to move toward a new constitution but he never did get around to inaugurate any active changes.

In Lithuania there still remained the old heritage of the disputes over Vilnius and Klaipeda which became steadily more critical as Hitler increased in power and the hour of World War II drew nearer.

Chapter Twenty-Two

THE BALTIC STATES IN THE INTERNATIONAL CONFLICT

In a very real sense the Baltic peoples and their leaders understood their real position in the world. They saw themselves as similar and yet diverse, as peoples with the same advantages and the same problems, as peoples menaced by the same dangers and with economic systems that supplemented rather than complemented one another. Only Lithuania with its Polish troubles over Vilnius stood out as something distinct and this distinction was of dubious value in the eyes of the world. It was this similarity economically that rendered it difficult for the three to unite on a common policy and the spirit of nationalism sharpened at times minor difficulties into serious problems. Yet the general similarity again prevented these from reaching the extreme of bitterness.

More than the Western powers, they understood the precise nature of the problems of eastern Europe. They had felt the bitterness of Russian oppression and they had seen the results and manner of Bolshevik aggression. They wanted none of either. Accordingly they realized that their position might not be improved, if a reac-

tionary Russian government replaced Bolshevism, for they knew that that would immediately follow in the path of the Grand Princes of Moscow and the Tsars of St. Petersburg. After the attempted coup d'état at Tallinn in 1924, they knew that the pretended gulf between the Soviet Union and the Communist International was only a blind to trap the unwary. At the same time they had no desire with their scanty forces to put themselves in open opposition to their eastern neighbors, unless the entire democratic world were going to be involved from the first moment. That as well as the Polish-Lithuanian feud had broken up all attempts at major groupings and alliances and forced them to rest their hopes upon the League of Nations.

Then came the reverse picture. They were under no delusions as to the German *Drang nach Osten*. They had just succeeded in clipping the political power of the Baltic Germans. The campaigns of von der Goltz had shown them what they could expect and every action of the German Republic and its threats of revenge revealed to them that a recovered Germany would scarcely depart from the path of the Teutonic Order and the policy of Prussia. In the early years they were somewhat consoled by the weakness of Germany, even though they were disturbed by the German flirtations with Moscow which came to a head at Rapallo in 1922. Again their only hope was in the League and again they were unwilling to take a strong position unless the entire League was ready to take action. They distrusted an alliance with Poland, not only because of the Vilnius dispute but because of the close alliance in the twenties of Poland and France with an obvious anti-German purpose.

They were thus ready to sign treaties of peace and

friendship with both of their enemies as soon and as often as necessary, provided that these treaties did not lead to any weakening of their own insecure position. In the first instance these were with the Soviet Union but it was only Lithuania that in its feeling of dislike for Poland had any hopes, even the slightest, that the Soviets could produce any positive assistance.

These treaties of friendship with the Soviet Union contained assurances that the Baltic republics would offer to the Soviet Union all those international rights and courtesies that were customary between free states and they went even further in allowing the Soviets the use of their ports for commercial purposes. Yet they were well aware that the Soviets were not reciprocating. They had owed a great deal to Britain and British help during the struggle for independence and they were abundantly aware that the Soviets would denounce in the most unsparing language every new commercial agreement made with either Great Britain or France. They knew that in the early days the Soviets had blasted the Lithuanian position at Klaipeda because of their friendship with Germany and their desire to keep the world from settling down.

This was the first and perhaps the safest period. The situation became more complicated when Germany, after the Locarno Pact in 1925, entered the League of Nations and received a permanent seat in the council. However this had apparently driven a wedge between Germany and the Soviets and this was itself a hopeful sign. On the other hand they could not fail to notice the growing tendency of the West to rest content that all was well and so they signed the Kellogg-Briand Pact and other

similar local agreements with little trust and a great deal of hope in their value.

This was followed by a Protocol between the Soviet Union and Estonia, Latvia, and Finland, negotiated by Litvinov as supplements to the Kellogg-Briand Pact. This guaranteed the inviolability of frontiers even before the final ratification of the pact. It was accepted cheerfully as another step in the regulation of the situation but always with the secret doubt that it was honestly meant.

Three years later came definite non-aggression treaties also negotiated by Litvinov between the Soviet Union, Estonia, Latvia and Finland, the three states with contiguous boundaries. This was even more definite for under its terms:

"Both contracting parties guarantee the inviolability of their common frontiers as laid down in the Treaty of Peace signed on February 2, 1920 (with Estonia and at other dates with the other countries), and undertake solemnly to avoid any act of aggression against one another and any acts of force liable to affect the integrity of the territory of the other Contracting Party or its political independence, regardless of whether such aggression or such actions are undertaken alone or conjointly with other States, with or without a declaration of war".

By now the old excuse of a difference between the Soviet Union and the Communist Party was wearing thin and this did not exclude a political coup. A few months later Litvinov proposed a new definition of aggression: "The interior conditions of a State, for example its political, economic or social structure, alleged defects of its administration, troubles caused by strikes, revolutions, counter-revolutions or civil war shall not be con-

sidered as justification for acts of aggression committed by another State." This seemed to be an ironclad agreement but it still failed to satisfy all doubts.

The rise to power of Hitler in 1933 was followed by Germany's withdrawal from the League in October and by the entrance into it of the Soviet Union which assumed the same obligations as all other states in the international community. This shifted the political balance, for it gave to the Soviets that international support which they had formerly lacked and it left Germany free to menace at will. It now became clear that cooperation with League action against Germany would involve a Soviet intervention in the Baltic countries exactly as League intervention against the Soviets before 1935 might have meant a German intervention. In both cases the Western Powers and their guarantees were the only security.

France had rejected a proposal of Pilsudski for joint Franco-Polish action against Hitler before the entrance of the Soviet Union into the League. That cooled the relations of Poland and France and showed a tendency to bring together Germany and Poland in their mutual official dislike for Bolshevism, while at the same time Soviet propaganda in western Europe working for a popular front against Nazism gradually lulled to sleep a great deal of conservative European dread of Bolshevism.

The Baltic states now became even more wary. Already the growth of Nazism during the depression had set on foot those movements which were only countered by the overthrowing of the old constitutions and the establishment of strong, if less democratic, regimes. On the other hand, they had to become suspicious of all

alliances. They rejected a proposal to accept Poland and the Soviets as guarantors of their independence from distrust of their guarantors as well as Germany. Hitler quashed the hopes of an Eastern Locarno Pact in 1934 which Litvinov had suggested as a means of securing a guarantee from all concerned to supplement the individual non-aggression pacts. Finally when the League proved its impotence in the case of Mussolini's attack on Ethiopia in 1935, the Baltic states withdrew their promise to move in case of an order by the League.

At the end of 1934 the three Republics grew more close. For the first time they signed a formal treaty of friendship. They did it not in the hope that their small armies could protect their countries in the face of a major outbreak but because the initial clash might not occur on their territories. They hoped that the storm would break in one of the other critical centres and that they could get safe help from the League before they were fatally involved. Even this hope failed when the League proved its impotence to halt Mussolini's attack on Ethiopia and then they tried their last card by denouncing Article 16 of the League which bound all members to take action against any state declared an aggressor.

Meanwhile Hitler had started his march to power. He remilitarized Germany, marched his troops into the Rhineland and then in March, 1938, he seized Austria. Each time Great Britain and France acquiesced to prevent a World War.

This was enough to fan into flame the old Vilnius question. In March, 1938, a Polish frontier guard was killed in Lithuanian territory. The Poles and Lithuanians disagreed as to the facts of the case, which was cloaked in considerable mystery, for no one seemed to know

whether his presence on Lithuanian soil was a deliberate act of provocation or an accident. On March 17, the Polish government sent an ultimatum to Lithuania and demanded the restoration of friendly relations within forty-eight hours of war. Lithuania was compelled to yield and to exchange ambassadors. The last constitution still maintained its claim to Vilnius despite Polish protests but the dispute was nominally ended. The Lithuanian Foreign Minister resigned as a protest and that was all. The ultimatum and peace changed nothing except a legal status which neither side regarded as all important. Yet it was a straw in the wind.

It was next the turn of Czechoslovakia and despite the treaties of alliance between that country, Great Britain, France and the Soviet Union no one stirred when the country was dismembered at Munich or was occupied in the spring of 1939.

While resting after his victory, Hitler suggested the return of Klaipeda to Germany. Klaipeda was not worth a war. The League and its members including the Soviet Union advised Lithuania to yield and under the circumstances the country had no other course. On March 22, the area was turned over to Germany with the sole promise that Lithuania would be allowed space for a free port. It was merely another promise, for even though certain details were settled on May 20, Germany had already begun to Germanize the area. Everything Lithuanian was forbidden, the language, schools and the press and to save themselves, some 21,000 Lithuanians and Jews fled across the border into the republic of Lithuania.

The hour had struck for the entire Baltic area. The changing back of the name of Klaipeda to Memel was but a portent of the next months. The democratic allies

had shown their weakness; the League of Nations had become a bad joke. The Baltic Republics between a resurgent Germany and a menacing Soviet Union were left to their own devices and their hopes of fitting into an international order sank, as they saw that order disintegrate.

Chapter Twenty-Three

THE FIRST SOVIET OCCUPATION

By April, 1939, the policy of appeasement of Hitler and the Nazis which had been pursued by Great Britain and France was generally discredited. Germany had already absorbed Austria and Czechoslovakia and was now directly menacing Poland by demanding again the port of Danzig with other rights in the country. As a result Great Britain changed its policy just about the time of the annexation of Klaipeda and announced that it would protect Poland.

The reaction of the Baltic states was mixed. On the one hand it did offer them hope for escaping the return of German domination. Yet it offered a still greater threat, when Great Britain began negotiations with France and the Soviet Union for the inauguration of an active policy to stop Hitler. It was obvious that with a German attack to the east, Germany would be in a position to close the entrance to the Baltic Sea and this would isolate the area from the west except for the remote possibility that the Scandinavian countries would intervene. The Red Army was the only military force that could be invoked to check the Germans.

At the same time the entrance into their territories of Soviet troops whether as enemies or allies was the one

thing that the countries from Finland to Rumania did not want. They had had enough experience with Russian and Soviet methods to know that once they entered as allies, they would be harder to remove than if they came as enemies. This was the more true because Soviet propaganda had done its work well in combining the western liberals and leftists against Nazism and any attempt on the part of small countries to develop a strong and anti-Communist government. The arrival of Soviet forces would be at once the signal for a renewal of those attempted coups d'état with which they were so familiar in the past.

As a result during the spring and summer little was done. The British continued negotiations but they did not desire to force Red troops into their allies' lands and Stalin insisted with apparently a great deal of justice that this was the only practical method of barring an eastward advance of the German army. Poland and the Baltic states waited anxiously for the outcome. There was little or nothing that they could do to help themselves in the crisis that was sweeping over a continent.

Then on August 23, 1939 there came the astounding news that Germany and the Soviets had signed a pact of non-aggression and friendship. This was signed by Ribbentrop and Molotov at a time when the Allied representatives were still talking in Moscow. There is still doubt as to the exact date when plans for this were first launched by the two totalitarian powers but it was apparently far earlier than any one had suspected. At the moment its terms were not fully known but enough was revealed to make it clear that there was now no power that could prevent Hitler's attack upon Poland.

This commenced on September 1, 1939 and it marked

the opening of World War II, for Great Britain and France came to the assistance of Poland. In the beginning they could offer little effective help. The German army overcame the heroic resistance of the Poles and pushed ahead rapidly, while thousands of refugees poured north across the Lithuanian border.

Then on September 17, despite its treaty of non-aggression and friendship with Poland, the Soviet Union announced that there was no longer a Polish government and it ordered its troops to enter and occupy a large part of the country. Eleven days later, a new German-Soviet agreement provided for the actual division of the country and made public various other understandings which had been reached. It was also clear that the two countries had come to an understanding about the future of the Baltic, although the full significance of this was not clear at the time.

The Baltic states had declared their neutrality at the very beginning of the German-Polish conflict but it was very evident that they could not maintain it without the consent of the two totalitarian powers. It was equally clear that they could not consider their own feelings, for their geographical position was such that they could not move on behalf of Poland or the western powers. They were politically in a vise.

Economically they were as helpless. The outbreak of war automatically closed the Baltic Sea to commerce and this immediately checked all their trade connections with Great Britain, one of their most important customers, and seriously menaced even their relations with Scandinavia. The only thing to do was to make new commercial agreements for the disposition of their surplus products

with Germany, the Soviet Union, and so far as possible with one another.

With this in mind the Estonian Foreign Minister Kaarel Selter went to Moscow on September 15 to work on these agreements. He found a disagreeable surprise which made clear the whole Soviet policy.

On September 14, a Polish submarine, the Orzel (Eagle) had put into the harbor of Tallinn, where it was promptly interned in accordance with international law. A skeleton crew, removing the armament under a guard of Estonians had almost finished the work and there were only six torpedoes left on board, when the Polish crew took advantage of a few moments of neglect to put to sea. Despite fire from the shore the Orzel submerged and escaped. The Estonian officers responsible were promptly removed and punished.

When Selter reached Moscow, he was informed that it was necessary for Estonia to sign a treaty of mutual assistance with the Soviets in view of this episode and to make an arrangement whereby certain ports could be protected by Soviet troops in view of the danger to the USSR which two days later occupied eastern Poland. The Estonian government had no choice but to submit and on September 28, signed a treaty. On the same day there was announced the Ribbentrop-Molotov agreement as to the future of eastern Europe.

The wording of this was both normal and peculiar. Under it the Soviet Union was to be allowed to station garrisons, naval bases and airfields on the Estonian islands of Saaremaa and Hiiumaa and at the town of Paldiski, a small harbor which had once been selected by Peter I as the site of a Russian naval base. Then the parties

promised each other full military assistance in case of any attack by sea "or across the Latvian frontier".

It was specified that this treaty would not affect the sovereign rights of the states or their economic systems or State organization. It purported to be merely a treaty of alliance and mutual assistance until the end of the war. The Soviets promised to pay reasonable rent for these bases and guaranteed that the territory would remain the property of the Estonian Republic.

Every one was aware that this was an end of the efforts at neutrality, although nothing definite was said. Estonia signed the agreement and the Soviet troops took up their positions at once.

Then on October 2, the Latvian Foreign Minister, Vilhelms Munters, was called to Moscow to repeat the performance. The Soviets demanded and secured bases at Liepaja and Ventspils, the two Latvian ports outside of Riga. They asked and received a coast artillery base on the Straits of Irbe between Ventspils and the fishing port of Pitrags. Stalin graciously withdrew a demand for a base at Riga. This agreement was signed October 5.

Before it was fully completed, the Lithuanian Foreign Minister Joseph Urbsys was likewise forced to appear. He was met with a demand for bases at Alytus, Prienai, Gaizunai and Nauja Vilnija, but unlike the others he was offered by the Soviets the control of the city and district of Vilnius, which the Soviets had taken away from Poland. This agreement was to be for 15 years. It was signed on October 10.

Thus within two weeks of one another, within three weeks of the Soviet invasion of Poland, Stalin and Molotov had forced the three Baltic states to accept Soviet control of all their principal means of communication

not only with the west but with neutral Scandinavia.

Finland proved more refractory when her turn came and accepted the challenge. Her troops fought excellently against superior forces and it was not until the spring of 1940 that the Finns were forced to sign a treaty ceding to the Soviet Union the region around Viipuri and giving them a lease on a naval base at Hangö.

It has since become apparent that the original draft of the Ribbentrop-Molotov agreement envisaged Lithuania as being in the German sphere of influence, whereas Estonia and Latvia were to be handed over to the Soviets. This was only a rough outline, for by September 28, when the delegates met again, Hitler had acceded to Stalin's request and abandoned his claims on Lithuania in return for other concessions. From this date Germany was uninterested in the Baltic states and ceased her efforts to penetrate them.

On the other hand, Hitler's race theories and his idea of bringing together all Germans led him to insist upon the right of all Germans in the Baltic area to return home. This was interpreted very liberally and during the winter of 1939-1940 the overwhelming proportion of the Baltic Germans were uprooted and left the region. Of the German minority in Estonia of some 16,000, over 13,000 went back to Germany and the proportions were similar in the other states. They were induced to return by every weapon in the Nazi propaganda arsenal, by the spreading of rumors that those who did not would be killed by the Russians and by the promising of finer posts in Germany. They were allowed to carry with them personal property up to $150, and they were allowed to turn their real estate and other property over to a fund established at the German legations which undertook to

dispose of it and forward them the money to Germany. This marked the end of the seven hundred year effort of the Baltic Germans to dominate the area.

Their departure was not regretted by any one. They had played a strange role from the moment of their appearance as armed crusading knights and with their exclusion from the position of dominant landowners and the failure of their efforts to introduce Nazism as in Germany, they had not gained in the general good will of the population. People of all classes were suspicious of them and leaving as they did at a time of economic difficulties, their disappearance left more opportunities in trade and industry. Their places were largely filled by the Jewish population of the cities, especially Riga and Tallinn, and they were hardly missed.

During the winter of 1939-1940, life in the three states went on much as before. In fact during the Soviet-Finnish war, the Soviet authorities and garrisons behaved with marked circumspection. The Soviet troops rarely were visible. After the first expressions of surprise at the superior living conditions, the Russians withdrew to their own leased areas and tried to avoid contact with the local populations.

There were many people who saw the handwriting on the wall and who were more distrustful of the Soviets than of the Germans. They pulled every possible wire to get their names on the lists of those eligible for departure. Many of the Swedes, even those who had lived on the eastern Baltic for centuries, worked through their legations and a large majority of these people too retired during the winter. For the most part, however, the patriotic citizens with grave doubts as to their future, deter-

mined to make the best of it and they made every effort to live up to their understanding of the treaties. The press censored its expressions of opinion, while for their part the Soviet leaders in Moscow repeated again and again their statements that the treaties meant no more than they bore on their surface.

The old cabinets resigned and were succeeded by more liberal men, largely from among those who had been swept aside in the post-1934 settlements. They faced sincerely and frankly the new situation and they did their best to maintain their own dignity, while they stressed to the full cooperation with the Soviet Union and abstained from many of their former contacts with the democratic powers.

It was a period of forebodings, rather than of despair. The early months passed so quietly that even some of the doubters began to assume an air of optimism and to believe that some of their previous suspicions had been exaggerated. Life began to resume the even tenor of its ways, as well as it could under the straitened and restricted circumstances of a world war and even the local Communists seemed to have ceased their activity.

Then the storm broke. There had been preliminary warnings in April and May, 1940, when criticism had been made of various minor acts by the governments. No one had taken these seriously for they had not seemed to be more than the normal amount of diplomatic incidents which arise inevitably in diplomatic relations between two countries.

On May 25, the Soviet government suddenly accused the Lithuanian government of permitting the kidnapping and torturing of some Soviet soldiers who had

strayed from one of the bases which they had secured some months before. The Lithuanians, still unaware of the purpose of this accusation, suggested that it appoint a commission to investigate the case and it even suggested that a joint Soviet-Lithuanian commission be appointed for this purpose. To their surprise the Soviet government made no answer but invited the Prime Minister Antanas Merkys to visit Moscow. He arrived on June 7 and was joined on June 10 by Joseph Urbsys.

Here the situation was introduced bluntly. Molotov accused the three Baltic states of forming a military alliance against the USSR, although no new agreements had been signed since the preceding October. The only treaties in existence were the much publicized alliance of Latvia and Estonia made in 1923 and the treaty of friendship between the three states from 1934.

On June 14 at midnight, Molotov handed Urbsys an ultimatum expiring the next morning at 9 A. M. demanding the punishment of General Kasimiras Skucas, the Minister of the Interior, and Augustus Povilaitis, Director of State Security for provoking a conflict between Lithuania and the USSR, the formation of a new government acceptable to Moscow, and the permission to send into Lithuania as many Soviet troops as seemed advisable to Moscow.

President Smetona and his cabinet offered to resign and to appoint General Rastikis, a former commander-in-chief of the army, to a new government. When this offer was rejected, on the 15th, Soviet troops began to pour across the borders from previously prepared posts. To safeguard the principle of state authority, Smetona and many of the high officials crossed into Germany and Prime Minister Merkys was left as the Acting President.

The Soviets paid no attention to him but on the 17th, appointed a leftist journalist, Jonas Paleckis, as Prime Minister.

Events then moved rapidly. On June 16, Molotov presented a similar ultimatum to the Estonian government and the Prime Minister Uluots was forced to resign and a leftist journalist and poet, Dr. Vares, was put in his place by the Soviets.

On the same day a similar ultimatum was presented to Latvia with the same charges and with the same results as Soviet troops swarmed into Riga and a Russian fleet sailed up the Daugava and threatened to shell the city of Riga. Then without reference to the President, A. Kirchensteins, an old man, President of the Society for Cultural Rapprochment between Latvia and Soviet Russia, was appointed Prime Minister on June 21.

To carry these changes through in the grand style, special representatives of high rank were sent from Moscow. The delegate in Tallinn was A. A. Zhdanov, a member of the Politburo; for Riga it was Vyshinsky; and for Kaunas, V. K. Dekanozov, a Vice-Commissar for Foreign Affairs. They arrived promptly, bringing with them strong detachments of the Army and the NKVD. They presented a previously approved list of candidates for the governments to whatever official could be found. These lists were to be approved without question on pain of immediate shelling and bombing of the capital. The army sent in was overwhelming. Thus 2500 tanks entered Latvia.

The process was everywhere the same. Professional Bolshevik agitators appeared, posting placards with photographs of the Soviet leaders; these were either new arrivals from Moscow or members of the Soviet labor

force in the various bases. The cities and other centres were filled with Soviet troops, while the few native Communists were projected into honorary but powerless positions. Some of these foolishly gave interviews that they were merely trying to develop good relations with the Soviets, while Vyshinsky in Riga attacked those ardent Communists who sought for admission to the Soviet Union.

Everywhere there were voiced demands for the release of political prisoners and the few that could be found were at once nominated for responsible posts.

In this atmosphere the most prominent of the national leaders, such men in Estonia as Päts and General Laidoner, in Latvia as Ulmanis and General Balodis, the hero of the War of Liberation were arrested and deported to the Soviet Union where they vanished without a trace. In a sense this destroyed the organized leadership but except in the case of Estonia, some fragment of the governmental system escaped abroad. In Lithuania it was President Smetona. In Latvia before the debacle the Council of Ministers had formerly appointed Karlis Zarins, Latvian Minister to London and in succession Alfreds Bilmanis in Washington, to handle all Latvian affairs abroad except in the Baltic States, Finland, Sweden, Germany and the Soviet Union, in case the government were overthrown.

Next came the elections to new parliaments. These were conducted on Communist lines and principles. All parties and organizations were abolished and in their place were formed various Working Class Organizations which alone had the right to submit the names of candidates for the new administration. The names put for-

ward were not exclusively those of citizens. For example in Kaunas the Soviet Minister Pozdnyakov was included in the list of candidates. In Estonia well-known figures as the Social Democrat J. Vain and even Tönisson were refused the opportunity to run on the ground that they were enemies of the USSR and "their activity could only destroy the united front of the working people and damage the present internal peace".

The elections were held on July 14 and 15 in all three countries. In all three, the voting was conducted openly and the person who voted received a stamp on his passport. Those who did not vote or had claimed the right to secret voting or made any other objections were noted in a separate list by the NKVD men guarding the polls. Under these conditions it is small wonder that the list was elected overwhelmingly with a vote ranging from 92.8% to 99.19% for the successful candidates, most of whom were not even known by name.

The new assemblies met on July 21. In all three countries, the halls were adorned with busts and pictures of Lenin and Stalin and with the symbols of the Soviet Union. The only matter of business that was proposed was the previously unmentioned demand that the Parliament should request admission to the Soviet Union and a delegation of 20 members was appointed to go to Moscow to present this petition in person to the authorities. This was the same procedure that had been applied in the area taken from Poland the year before.

The delegates arrived at Moscow and then on August 3, Lithuania was accepted into the Soviet Union. It was the turn of Latvia on August 5 and of Estonia on August 6. There were the customary speeches and the customary

laudation of the supreme virtues and merits of Stalin and so far as Moscow was concerned, the fate of the Baltic republics was settled.

All that was left was to reorganize them on the Soviet pattern. In quick succession, all of the Soviet legislation was introduced. All land and buildings were confiscated and became the property of the state. Banks were closed, the universities were purged by the elimination of the vast majority of the professors, while a few Communists remained and Russian professors were brought in to take their places. The churches were put under the usual Soviet restrictions. The old newspapers were suppressed. The former upper and professional classes were treated as state enemies and the outstanding leaders were arrested and taken out of the country on their way to exile and death in Siberia and the far north.

The workmen fared little better. Whatever increase in wages they received in the first days was soon swallowed up by the increase in the cost of living while the hours of labor were increased and the Stakhanovist system of the speed up was introduced. To make room for the increased number of Soviet officials who came from Moscow to enjoy the temporary revelling in wealth, the families were subjected to the Soviet housing laws allowing 9 square metres per capita. The factories were dismantled and much of the machinery were taken to the Russian Soviet Republic.

Everything possible was done to reduce the standard of living to that which prevailed among the masses of the Soviet Union, while there were steady efforts to russify the population and to eliminate those who proved themselves intractable. Moreover as in the Soviet Union, this included the bulk of the older Baltic Communists who

were usually labeled as Trotskyists and therefore subject to arrest. The diplomatic staffs of the three countries who were abroad and refused to recognize the legality of the seizure of power were declared outlaws and condemned to death *in absentia.*

So things went during the winter of 1940-1941. Then in the spring careful plans were made for the elimination of the population in still larger groups. There was later found in Kaunas a decree by Serov, a Deputy Commissar of the NKVD, providing for the setting up in each of the three republics of a troika usually composed of the prosecutor, the chief of the Communist Party and the Chief of the NKVD at various bureaucratic heights to arrange for the deportation of all suspicious persons. The plans for this action were carefully laid and on June 13, 1941, in one night about 10,000 Estonians were seized and deported. On the same day there were about 14,000 victims in Latvia, and approximately the same number in Lithuania. The majority of these were either students or persons who had somehow distinguished themselves in the independent republics, whether for intellectual work or for admirable service in the various professions, the state service, or in agriculture.

The movement was apparently aimed at still greater changes in the population when there came another change. This time it was the German-Soviet war.

Chapter Twenty-Four

THE NAZI OCCUPATION

To the oppressed peoples of the Baltic states, the news of the attack on the Soviet Union brought a ray of hope. They were well aware of the excesses of Nazism. They knew the Germans by the experience of centuries but they had never passed through as bitter an experience as during the year after the inclusion of the three Republics in the Soviet Union. Without thinking of the future, they saw in the advance of the German armies some promise for an improvement of their fate and perhaps some hope of a recovery of their freedom.

They were not inclined to wait for liberation but they wanted to have a share in it themselves, to reestablish, if possible, some semblance of law and order and to have a native and patriotic authority at hand to cooperate with the invaders. In this way they hoped to avoid a reign of anarchy and to have some claim to receive back at least part of their national independence. The leaders in this were of course for the most part hitherto unknown men. All of those who had distinguished themselves in the earlier years had been scooped up in the various Soviet manhunts and were no longer available.

The position of the countries varied in this. The German forces in East Prussia and the Government Gen-

eral of Poland were far nearer to Lithuania and would reach this first. The Latvians were more remote and the Estonians furthest to the north and the closest to Leningrad were not only the most distant but they were controlled by the strongest Soviet garrisons seeking to bar the approach to Leningrad. This fact must be remembered in the description of the situation on June 22, 1941.

In each country there were still small groups of activists who had not been discovered and destroyed by the NKVD. These men had very few arms and very weak organization. Perhaps it would even be fairer to say that they represented a potential rather than an actual opposition.

The first news of the crossing of the frontier was a surprise for the Soviet border forces and many units at the actual front retired in considerable disorder. The heavily armored German columns pushed ahead rapidly and their early successes against Poland had spread a high respect for their invulnerability. In fact they were in Kaunas and Vilnius by June 24 in their first rush.

On the evening of the first day of the campaign, small groups of Lithuanians succeeded in overpowering Soviet guards at some arsenals near Kaunas in the first surprise and armed themselves with the weapons secured there, while similar movements started at other points nearer the frontier. By the 23rd these had succeeded in extending their control over the whole of Kaunas, including the radio station and they proclaimed the renewed independence of the country and set up an independent provisional government under Joseph Ambrazevicius. This ordered back to their posts the old officials wherever they were still available. The movements spread rapidly and

the Lithuanians were already the masters of their capital, Vilnius, Siauliai and Panevezys before the Germans reached Kaunas and Vilnius on the 24th.

The forces involved were about 35,000 who had belonged to various groups and they had secured the aid of some 90,000 individuals, while about 10,000 Lithuanians who had been mobilized in the Red Army revolted and joined them. Here was the nucleus of a considerable fighting force, hardly prepared for serious battles but able to maintain domestic order and capable of development and with the aid of the Germans Lithuania was cleared of Soviet troops by June 27.

The Provisional Government through General Rastikis tried to approach the German commander but it was in vain. Hitler had no intention of moving to the east as a liberator. He was advancing to establish a *Lebensraum* for the Germans and he and his associates had no time or inclination to bother with any popular movements. He did everything possible to discourage the undertaking and finally after he had set up his own organization, Ambrazevicius and his provisional government resigned under threat of arrest on August 3.

The situation in Latvia was less fortunate. On June 28, there came a report from Stockholm that the Riga radio had broadcast an announcement that the city had been seized by Latvian patriots and that a national government had been set up. The next day the same radio broadcast from Bolshevik sources a list of the persons killed in a revolt. Other evidence seems to show that there had been a three day battle between the Germans and Russians in the suburb of Tornkalns, south of the Daugava. At all events, when the Germans entered Riga

on July 1, they found the city abandoned by the Bolsheviks but no traces of a national government. If there had been one, it was overwhelmed by the Red Armies who were retreating from Lithuania and was not able to make its influence felt even remotely.

Any knowledge of events in Estonia is even more scanty. The early German drive northeast toward Leningrad cut off in Estonia large Soviet forces which were suppressed piecemeal and it was September, before the Germans were fully in control. This seriously hampered the development of any national movement.

On July 19, Hitler appointed Heinrich Lohse to be the civilian chief of the newly conquered territory and on July 28, he reorganized the three Republics and the part of Byelorussia that had been occupied as the Ostland (the East Land) and thus in his archaeological mind tried to revive the situation as it had existed at the coming of the Germans seven hundred years before. In his mind Lohse was to have that position in the Third Reich that Bishop Albert and the Grand Master of the Livonian Order had sought in the thirteenth century.

This of course made clear the position of the native population. They were to be the servants of the Germans and Hitler even made a point of restoring to the area several thousand of the Baltic Germans whom he had withdrawn two years before at the time of the pact with Stalin.

All this was bad enough but with true German legalistic sense, he went one step further. He had recognized the absorption of the Baltic republics by the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union had nationalized all land, buildings and business. He had defeated and driven out

the Soviet officials. It was therefore perfectly logical that the German Reich was now the legitimate owner of all the former Soviet government property, i.e. of everything that existed in the three republics. As Dr. W. Zimmermann, the press chief of the Reichkommissar for the Ostland, published in an official organ on October 19, "The German Reich, therefore, becomes the legal heir to the Soviet inheritance".

It had only been a year or less since the direct Soviet conquest and while there had already been great changes in the population and a large number of deportations and deaths, it would easily have been possible for the German regime to restore their confiscated holdings to a considerable part of the population and to have laid the beginning for a new period of development. It would have served to win the loyalty and the assistance of a considerable part of the population and undoubtedly by adding to it certain grants of autonomy, Hitler would have been able to secure much needed troops.

The attitude which he adopted had directly the opposite effect. It showed the people almost at once that they had little or nothing to expect from the German rule except a forced Germanization and a German domination similar to that under which they had groaned for centuries. They became less well disposed to the Germans, although they had no illusions that their fate would be bettered by a German defeat, for that would only restore the Bolshevik tyranny.

The Nazis prohibited everything that reminded the people of the last twenty years. They barred the singing of the national anthems, the showing of the national flags, the celebration of national holidays. They paid no respect to any of the national monuments and their in-

difference to the feelings of the native population was on a par with that of the crusading Knights to the Baltic pagans.

In the same way they proceeded to destroy in the approved manner the Jews of the three countries. There were only a few thousand in Estonia and they offered little trouble. There were more in Latvia, almost 100,000 and they were isolated in a ghetto and finally liquidated. There were nearly 400,000 in Lithuania and these were moved from their homes throughout the country into three ghettos in Kaunas, Vilnius and Siauliai, and with the passage of time systematically annihilated, until before the final German retreat in March, 1943, they were almost totally destroyed and barely a few hundred survived.

During the latter part of 1941 and most of 1942, the German domination was carried on by means that were typical of the Soviets. The cooperative societies no longer under the Tsentrosoyuz with offices in Moscow were made subordinate to the Central Cooperative Section of the staff of the Reichskommissar. The farmers who were required to pay rent for their use of the property of the government were ordered to hand over to the German authorities almost three times their annual production of grain and then many were shot for refusing to fulfil their quota.

The Germans were treated as superior citizens. They were allowed to acquire land and they were protected by special government organs. They had their own code of laws passed in conformity with the German sense of law and the superior judges were empowered to annul any judgment of the local courts which were still allowed to function, in any case where Germans were involved

or where the judgment did not seem satisfactory or corresponding to the advantages of the German state or to the German consciousness.

The only concession that they made to the local population was the appointment of Counselors of each nation to the Reichskommissar and the local agents. These men were appointed as if to represent some vestige of local government and while some rather prominent Lithuanians, Latvians and Estonians took seats on these boards, it was more in the hope of securing some relaxation of the exactions on their people than with a hope of working out a satisfactory solution. Perhaps the Estonians were a little better off for Hitler's aide Rosenberg was from Tallinn and he announced that he did not regard the Estonians as Slavs but rather as Aryans and he left more power in the hands of the head of the council, a former Estonian member of the VAPS, than was the case elsewhere.

Yet even with all the promises and the assurances of their Aryan blood, the natives received ration cards allowing them to buy at most and under the most favorable conditions only half of the amounts that were allotted to the Germans and if there were any shortages, they were made up out of the stocks allotted to the non-German population. It was not in the slightest degree conducive to good feeling, especially as the Germans did not conceal their plans for settling large numbers of Germans in the country and of applying pressure to Germanize those whom they deemed worthy of being incorporated in the master race.

From the beginning they made strenuous efforts to secure volunteers for various security battalions to maintain order in the rear of the fighting fronts and to entice

people to work in Germany. The first attempts were largely failures. The men who had been in the armies before the Soviet occupation were willing to enlist under their own flags and in their own national units and this the Germans would not allow, for it implied the independence of the countries. Those who went to Germany for a period of six months served their term and returned home but they told such lurid tales of the intolerable conditions under which they were compelled to live that they dissuaded further volunteers.

During 1943 the Germans continued their efforts without special success but they applied sterner and sterner measures to recruit men and finally to mobilize them by force. As the German forces began to retreat they intensified their efforts and even promised that they would create national units as a Lithuanian army under General Plechavicius. The German offers seemed sincere but no sooner had such a movement seriously started than the Nazis broke their word and endeavored to use the new formation wherever they wished.

As a result of all this the underground in the various states found constant recruits. Whether under the name of forest brothers or of a revolutionary army, the young men slipped away from their places of abode and took to the woods. There with scanty arms, they preyed upon isolated German posts and it was scarcely safe for the Germans to move around the country except in alert and well armed masses.

This armed underground here as in Ukraine and in all the areas invaded by the Germans was for the most part anti-Bolshevik and patriotic. It was not, as the Soviets boasted, an uprising of love and devotion for Stalin and the Soviet fatherland but its ringleaders were those men

who had escaped the Soviet dragnet of 1940-1941. They were fighting for the liberty of the countries which Stalin had overthrown, and they resisted the Germans even though they had small hope that they could win, for the victory of either Germany or the Soviets meant the doom of the three republics and their population.

In the course of 1944 the German efforts to raise troops and to send large sections of the population including women and girls to forced labor in Germany created an increased hostility between the natives and the invaders. Even the handpicked counselors to the Reichskommissar rebelled at the methods that were used in the gathering up of the population and in the surrounding of villages by armed men with the idea of kidnapping the population for German purposes. The vast majority of these men were then arrested and taken to prison in Germany before the debacle.

Before the Red onslaught in 1944 the Germans did make some relaxations and attempts were made with some success in Estonia under Dr. Mae to form Estonian units but it was generally recognized that these units were almost equally hostile to the Germans and the Soviets.

As a matter of fact, in Tallinn during the brief period between the departure of the Germans and the arrival of the Soviet troops, the Estonian Provisional Government, an outgrowth of the Estonian Committee of Liberation, under the leadership of Otto Tief raised the Estonian flag over the city and broadcast the news of a national uprising. Of course it was all in vain and in a few days the Soviets were again in control.

The same happened, wherever it was at all possible. The Baltic republics died hard. A large part of the popu-

lation, literally by thousands, fled to the south and west ahead of the Soviet troops, for they well knew what was in store for them. Those who could secure any kind of craft put to sea in efforts to reach a possible haven in Sweden. It was a dangerous and often a fatal trip for the German guard vessels patrolled the shore and ruthlessly sank the boats with the unfortunate refugees, while German and Soviet airplanes vied with each other in bombing and machine gunning the victims. The Soviet did not care how many of the people they killed and the Germans were not going to allow any one to escape except to Germany if they could help it.

However about 36,000, chiefly Estonians, although there were many Latvians, made their way across the Baltic Sea to Sweden. About 350,000-400,000 chiefly, as we might expect, Lithuanians and Latvians made their way into Germany. Those who were caught in the Soviet Zone were quickly repatriated and the Soviet authorities made every effort to secure control of those in the British and the American Zones. Thousands were returned before Allied policy cleared up but there remained in the precarious safety of Western Germany a goodly proportion of those Baltic citizens who by one way or another were fortunate enough to escape the onrushing Red Army.

Chapter Twenty-Five

THE SECOND SOVIET OCCUPATION

The occupation of the three Republics in 1940 was so clearly an act of aggression that the United States and Great Britain both refused to recognize it and they retained in their capitals the diplomatic representatives of the states, despite the Soviet assertions that the pseudo-elections of 1940 had expressed the will of the people for absorption in the Soviet prison of nations. Baltic representatives continued to keep their seats in the League of Nations from which the Soviet Union had been expelled at the end of 1939 for its attack on Finland.

On the other hand the position of the Baltic diplomats even in Washington and London was very often difficult, for pressure was put on both the American and British governments to reverse their policy not only by the representatives of groups favorable to the Soviets and opposed to Fascism but by Russian liberals and reactionaries who could not forget that they had once formed part of the Russian Empire.

With the Nazi attack upon the Soviet Union in 1941, this pressure was increased, as there came a wave of pro-

Soviet sympathy. Stalin instructed his diplomats to sign the Atlantic Charter on September 24, 1941. Under this all the powers agreed to seek no territorial aggrandizement, to tolerate no territorial changes not approved by the people of the area affected and to allow the peoples of the several countries that had been overwhelmed to recover their liberty. On paper this involved the liberation of the Baltic states but Stalin made it very clear that he regarded the annexation of eastern Poland in 1939 and of the Baltic Republics in 1940 as free and democratic choices and as occurring before the date of the Soviet acceptance of the principles. By this device, he completely perverted the sense of the document but at the moment Great Britain and the United States wanted the aid of the Soviets against Nazi Germany and President Roosevelt had hopes of bringing Stalin into a partnership with the free world. As a result the case of the three Baltic republics was not brought up during the War and their governments in exile were not allowed to sign the charter of the United Nations, when it was formed in San Francisco. Thus non-recognition of the Soviet occupation remained in a sense largely theoretical and no steps were taken to give it practical effect any more than practical steps were taken in the other countries of eastern Europe to back up the allied members of the joint commissions responsible for governing the liberated countries as Poland, Hungary, and the lands of the Balkans.

Under these circumstances the Soviet armies had a free hand in the Baltic. As the Germans in 1941, the Soviet forces advanced west and southwest and left Estonia for later reconquest. Riga fell into Soviet hands, on August 8, 1944, Vilnius on July 13, 1944 and Kaunas

on August 1, whereas Tallinn was not "liberated" until September 22.

The lands were completely ruined by the movements of the armies and the bombing which they had undergone. Thus 95% of the dwellings in Tartu had been destroyed or damaged and the proportion in the other cities was well over 50%. The number of livestock had been reduced by over one half, there were practically no grain supplies, the factories were destroyed, and the Soviet army burst out of control as undisciplined barbaric hordes, killing and raping and plundering at will with no attempts by the officers to control them.

Yet everywhere the world was told of the liberal gifts made by the overjoyed population to the Russians and their great leader Stalin. It was only a euphemistic expression for the complete plundering of the land by the NKVD after the soldiers had finished their own personal work.

In the early weeks, the new Soviet regime which had been established largely under the same men who had been put in charge in 1940 issued statements of amnesty and proclaimed that with the end of Nazism and Fascism the Soviet Union had changed and that a more normal life would be lived in the future. A few selected foreign journalists were even taken around the country to see the ruined cities but the authorities very soon clamped down on their dispatches and did not allow the trip to be repeated.

Enough has come out of this period to show that the masses of the population had no illusions as to what would be their fate. They were not mistaken for in a very few weeks the NKVD moved in in full strength and commenced to question the population, to present them

with questionnaires and to hold that all who had not retired to the east before the German advance were very definitely enemies of the Soviet Union who deserved exemplary punishment. The questions put to the people individually were such as:

"Why did you not retreat with the Soviet Army in 1941?

"What employment did you pursue during the German occupation?

"What anti-German sabotage have you done?

"Name three accomplices.

"Name three collaborators of the Germans."

Men were given red tickets for military service, green calling them for labor service and white, calling for deportation. People's courts meeting without the presence of the accused condemned them to long terms of prison or to deportation, while their families were picked up, separated at the entrainment points and moved off to parts unknown. The majority wound up in the labor camps in or near the Arctic Circle, whether in Europe or Siberia. Here the living conditions were impossible and from the few persons who by chance succeeded in escaping it is known that from 60 to 65% perished in a short time from cold, overwork and starvation.

For a while the government delayed in introducing collective farms which made even less appeal to the people of the Baltic states than to the Slavs who were accustomed to village life. This was no act of kindness or of toleration for the machinery of the government was able to ruin the individual farmers even more easily than they could a village and by applying rules against hired labor and the other early stages of Soviet administration rigidly they hoped to force a situation where the

people would accept peaceably all the weight and rigor of the new order.

The religious life of the people was totally disrupted. It goes quite without saying that the Orthodox congregations in the three republics were rapidly brought under the direct control of the Patriarch of Moscow and those priests who hesitated were handled through the machinery of the Church and the NKVD. It was easy to remove most of the Lutheran pastors and impoverish the churches by resorting to the traditional Soviet devices of confiscating the buildings and then leasing them at exorbitant rentals to the congregations.

The situation in Lithuania which was primarily Roman Catholic was more difficult. The Kremlin was a bitter foe of Roman Catholicism in all its manifestations and while it announced that the Church was functioning as usual, practically all the bishops were arrested on one charge or another together with the leading priests. The operations of the Church were sadly disrupted, the Church institutions were closed, and all kinds of indirect pressure was exerted to hamper the life and work of the churches, while many buildings for non-payment of rent, etc. were transformed into state institutions.

The same thing happened with the intellectual and educational life. The universities were thoroughly russified and sovietized. This had been done in 1940 during the first occupation but a certain number of the old faculty had been able to retain their posts and to function in part even under the Nazi occupation. Most of the older men had succeeded in escaping. The new appointees did most of their lecturing in Russian and they followed strictly the lines of Soviet educational and intellectual theory, under which a proper understanding

of the general line of the Party is more important than any other quality. Even so they like the writers were constantly called to account for indulging in dangerous nationalistic vagaries.

The press of all three countries was likewise standardized and as early as 1945 the ostensibly national newspapers had begun to print the great bulk of their notices and their communications in Russian.

A still more serious result of the second occupation was the introduction into the territory of large masses of Great Russians and individuals from the other Asiatic Soviet Republics to take the place of the departed population. Very early the Soviet government paid especial attention to the population of the islands of Saaremaa and Hiiumaa, which controlled the east coast of the Baltic Sea. Within the first year ten per cent of the population was deported from some of the communities on these islands and with the strengthening of the military garrisons, the number of persons removed was vastly increased, until now there are probably very few of the original population left on them. The Soviet Union has arbitrarily extended its domestic waters to a distance of twenty miles from shore and has shot down at least one American plane flying outside of this area. Soviet patrol boats guard this outer stretch and the fishermen from the shore are not allowed to go beyond the appointed line and when they are on shore, their boats are carefully guarded to prevent any from escaping into the open Baltic and possibly reaching Sweden, exactly the same regulation as the Knights applied to the Kurs.

It is often overlooked that these republics are hermetically sealed off not only from the outside world but also from the Russian Soviet Republic itself. Travel even

within the Soviet Union is allowed only by special permission of the NKVD and the strict execution of the laws which prevent the workman from changing his place of abode has resulted in an even worse enslavement of the population than in the darkest days of the Middle Ages, when the regime was concerned only with the external life of the slave and paid no attention to his thoughts, his folksongs or his local customs.

The republics often under Russians are used only as sources for supply of the Russian Soviet Republic. The oil shales of Estonia are being rapidly developed but their products are being taken to Leningrad and to other Russian northwestern factory centres, while the population are sinking lower and lower into poverty, hopelessness and despair.

This has not been without the opposition of the people. During the first Soviet occupation and then under the Nazis, a large number of the more active and patriotic took refuge in the forests and the swamps and organized themselves into armed bands to prey upon the invaders. The return of the Soviets accelerated this movement and during the first years after the occupation, enough news leaked out to show that there was an organized guerilla force still carrying on a desperate resistance. While Poland was still semi-independent, armed bands of Lithuanian fighters on several occasions shot their way across the closely guarded borders and succeeded in arriving in lands under Allied control. They have revealed some of the exploits of these men who made common cause in the neighborhood of Byelorussia with the fighters from there and with representatives of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army which is still keeping up the hopeless

struggle in various regions, especially in the Carpathian Mountains.

They have confirmed the rumors of the elaborate clearing of the borders, the many lines of frontier guards that are thrown around the land, the use of electrified wires, of trained dogs, and of torture patrols that roam day and night to justify and prove the devotion of the people to the great Stalin and the Soviet fatherland, the Russian Empire.

For the suppression of these "bandits" the Soviets employed not only troops of the NKVD but also regular military units. In areas where they appeared, they have burned villages, killed and tortured or deported the bulk of the population, and now and then they have let slip certain details in their attacks on the democracies which they pour out so steadily in their press and at the United Nations meetings.

Within the three Baltic Republics since World War II life has continued to go on, but in a very real sense history has ceased to exist. There are still the periodic elections to the various Soviets in Moscow, but the names of the successful competitors in the Soviet elections are rarely announced and when they are, they are either well-known Russians or persons completely unknown, for all the outstanding men in the three countries who fell into the hands of the Soviets on their return have vanished as if they had never lived. Even most of the Communists who took part in the occupation of 1940 and had some previous connection with these lands have disappeared behind the same impenetrable veil. Of a few we know that they have been liquidated for "bourgeois nationalism". For the majority we can only guess

but it is abundantly clear that they have not received the rewards and the prominent positions that they expected for their betrayal of their own people.

Life is good only for the higher ranks of the Soviet hierarchy, for those people who receive large salaries and special ration cards and special facilities for purchasing in the special stores opened for their own benefit. For the ordinary Communist it is barely possible to exist and for the bulk of the population, death will come rather as a release.

The spirit of the three countries is represented now by the emigrés, those people, writers and artists who succeeded in time in making their way to Germany or to Sweden. They number in the thousands and despite the hardship of their lives, they have continued to work and publish until there are more books and pamphlets turned out in Sweden than there are in the homelands under Soviet rule in the native language. That is a strange commentary on the Soviet Union. Immediately after the war the Baltic University in the British Zone in Germany brought together more professors of the three Universities of Tartu, Riga and Kaunas than were still surviving in their native lands and the question of their future, the future of Baltic education long hung in the balance before the majority of them secured individual posts abroad. That is a strange commentary on the conditions in the Soviet Union and on the voluminous and verbose claims of the Soviet partisans that they have solved all problems of nationality and have established equality and freedom for all.

Chapter Twenty-Six

THE LITERATURE OF THE BALTIC REPUBLICS

The literature and the entire cultural life of the Baltic republics is in fact such as we would expect from their tragic history. Here were three peoples with varying languages, traditions and experiences, now coming together in a common oppression or success, now being torn apart as powerful external forces exercised control over some special part of their territory.

The outstanding fact is the wealth of the oral literature and the folksongs but this reflects very clearly the basic linguistic division between the republics. The Estonians, close relatives of the Finns, have preserved the basic elements of their ancient pagan traditions and origins. They have preserved the ancient forms of art, the trochaic verse which was used in the Finnish *Kalevala* and which has become familiar in its flowing rhythm through Longfellow's *Hiawatha*. On the other hand the *dainas* of the Lithuanians and Latvians as clearly go back to the ancient heritage of the Indo-European peoples in a rather early form of their existence. The long continued paganism of the Baltic lands encouraged this preservation, and while there has been a complete loss of most of the actual pagan details and most of the names of

the gods and the stories of their mythology, yet something of the old spirit has remained to furnish a distinctive flavor in much of the modern poetry and feeling toward nature.

It was only in the late eighteenth century that these began to receive any attention from the educated and gentlemanly world. Before that they remained lost in the peasants' huts and at the village gatherings. It was only about the time that Herder as a teacher in Riga first became aware of the beauties of folk literature that any attention was paid to these and that scholars and teachers began to write down the priceless legacy which by 1940 had come to include hundreds of thousands of lines for each of the languages. It was then and only then that the real beauty and the delicate feelings of the native folksongs and the connections between the manners and customs of the people and the verse tradition which they practiced were fully realized. There are differences in metre, and in the length of the poems, for a surprising amount of the Latvian folksongs have been composed in a four line form which is quite unique as a general standard of poetry.

The actual written literature in each case was in its original form a result of the religious dispute of the sixteenth century. The earliest Estonian and Latvian monuments are the results of Lutheran teachers and they consist of modified German hymns and prayers, grammars and handbooks for the preachers of the day. They were the tools created for the pastors, the one class of educated people who found the need for talking to the peasants in their native tongue. The same was the case in Lithuania but here thanks to the Roman Catholic Church, the

Jesuits countered the influence of the Lutherans in Prussian Lithuania by producing likewise Catholic books in the vernacular.

Nearly two centuries passed in this way—two centuries in which Latvian-speaking and Estonian-speaking German Lutheran pastors and Lithuanian-speaking German Lutheran pastors and Polish Catholic priests supplied in their own way hymns and tracts and books of moral advice to the peasants. Few of their works have any real artistic or literary value but they did a good work considering the position of the masses of the population at the time.

Then at the end of the eighteenth century when the classical revival was at its height, new influences began to be felt. There came a more personal feeling in the authors, the beginning of a literary sense, which offered a more abundant hope.

In Prussian Lithuania, Kristijonas Duonelaitis (better known from the Latin form of his name Donalitius, 1714-1780) modified the Latin hexameter to produce the *Metai* (The Seasons), a description of the year and the effects of the different periods on the life of the Lithuanian peasant. Despite its obvious crudities, it still holds its place in Lithuanian literature and has been translated into several of the European languages.

In much the same way in Latvian Gotthard Friedrich Stender (1714-1796), disliking the popular songs and hymns tried to elevate the people by writing rationalistic Arcadian pastorals, some of which passed into the fancy of the masses and were sung for several decades.

Estonian developed somewhat later and it was not until the early part of the nineteenth century that any

of the authors tried to shake themselves free from the old, restricted types and themes.

Yet as newer ideals began to penetrate along with the liberation of the serfs in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, what were the sources from which these ideas came? They were many and various, depending upon the country, the language and the people. Yet again there are certain definite streams easy to recognize.

There were of course the folk poems and the national traditions which could be repeated by some old singer in almost every village and which were sung at every peasant gathering. Yet even this material, rich as it was, needed to pass through a prism of literature if it was to be used most wisely. Here the Estonians had a slight advantage through their Finnic connections, for there was a similar stirring in Finland under the influence of Swedish models. But they were also derivative at the same time.

The Estonians and the Latvians both studied at the University of Tartu which had been reestablished in its old seat now labeled Yuryev by the Russians. But the culture, the faculty and the majority of the students there were German. So too with the schools in Riga, which was still dominated by the German burghers despite their feeling of aversion to the Russian overlords. It was then perfectly natural that to a surprising degree there was a pseudo-German attitude even among the non-German Baltic students. They knew German better than Russian and with the fame of Schiller and later of Byron at its height, it was preeminently German influences that directly or indirectly started the new literatures on their way.

The case was different in Lithuania. There was still

a great deal of German influence in the country especially in the western part along the borders of Samogitia, radiating from Königsberg and Klaipeda-Memel but this was largely Lutheran and the bulk of the Lithuanians within the Russian Empire were Roman Catholic. They were absorbed in the struggle with Poland and however much they may have objected to Polish influences and to the Polonizing of a large part of the Lithuanian population, especially the educated classes, their opposition merely led them to answer the Polish arguments in the Polish manner and the early Lithuanian writers were as much an imitation of and reaction against the Poles as were the others in their attitude toward the Germans.

Certainly from the time when Romanticism as a movement made its appearance, the three literatures developed differently. The growing emphasis on the national language and on the development of the national spirit sharply separated the reactions of the writers to the same general themes and movements. Russian influence came later but it is often difficult to know whether until nearly the end of the century this was not rather a reflection of the Western ideas of Russian literature than it was a direct impact, for it was not until the Russianizing policy took precedence over the Germanizing rule of the Baltic barons that Russian came to be a serious subject of instruction in the Baltic schools.

The three languages went their own way; they responded in their own way to the currents of the west and there were few common features, little attempt at uniformity until with the rise of Communism and still more with the shattering of the national life by the Soviet occupation, there came again a peremptory condemnation of

every feature of national life and tradition as bourgeois nationalism, insulting to the Great Russian people and their Georgian master, Joseph Stalin.

a. *Lithuanian Literature*

In view of the educational and cultural situation in Lithuania, it is not at all surprising that a great number of the early writers were Catholic priests. Such men as Rev. Bohusz (or Bauzas) wrote for the University of Vilnius on many Lithuanian questions as *"The Beginning of the Lithuanian Nation and its Language"*. The most of these writers were Samogitians and far too many of the intellectual leaders of the day followed in the path of Adam Mickiewicz and called themselves Poles; they wrote in Polish and represented to the full the impact of the Polonizing tendencies which had been evident for centuries. There were many others in the group, however that remained true to their native language as Silvestras Valiunas (1790-1831) and Simanas Stalnevicius (d. 1831). Even the next generation of men like Daukantas (1793-1864) and Bishop Motiejus Valancius (1801-1875) continued to have a practical purpose in nearly all that they produced, although their sketches of the life of the people at times rose to literary value.

Then came the belated Romanticism, still under the influence of Mickiewicz, as the early works of Bishop Antanas Baranauskas (1835-1902) with his descriptions of his birthplace, his glorification of the Lithuanian past and his ardent opposition to the growing Russian influence.

As we have seen, many of the beginnings were checked by the Russian insistence upon the use of the Cyrillic alphabet after 1863. In fact it was not until Dr. Jonas

Basanavicius (1851-1927) succeeded in publishing abroad the *Ausra* (Dawn) in 1883, a journal more or less influenced by Romanticism and Dr. Vincas Kudirka (1858-1899) did the same with the positivistic *Varpas* (The Bell) that the new literature was really started independently.

Of the Romantic writers of the period the greatest was perhaps Maironis, the pen-name of Rev. J. Maciulis (1862-1932) who won fame for his ardently patriotic lyrics and historical dramas, while another priest Canon Juozas Tumas-Vaizgantas (1869-1933) pictured the actual life of his own day. The number of writers multiplied, including such women as Zemaite (Julija Zymantiene) (1845-1921) who at the end of the century pictured the lives of the peasants and their relations to the landowners and also the two sisters Sofija (1867-1926) and Marija (b. 1872) Ivanauskyte.

It was not until the very beginning of the twentieth century that Symbolism made its appearance and perhaps it was at this time that Russian influence began to grow rapidly for one of the outstanding authors Jurgis Baltrusaitis (1873-1944) had made a name for himself in Russian Symbolism before he turned to Lithuanian.

The reaction against Symbolism was led by Vincas Kreve Mickevicius (b. 1882). Even before World War I he had appeared with studies based upon the simple and yet artistic treatment of folklore and psychology. Then in quick succession during the life of the new republic there appeared a galaxy of writers many of whom dabbled to some extent in the fashionable radical thought of the day, some of whom later put their pens at the service of the Communist regimes for longer or shorter periods. Yet the vast majority stressed Lithuanian history

and the past of Vilnius and Klaipeda in their works, and many of them are still writing abroad, while others who remained at home are known to have perished in the various purges, whatever may have been their personal views.

b. *Latvian Literature*

Much the same can be said about the breaking away from the older tradition in Latvian, for while the first Latvian journal *Latweeschu Awises* (Latvian News) appeared in 1822, it represented a Christian conservative faction and it was not until 1862 that three students of Tartu, Krisjanis Waldemars (1825-1891), Juris Alunans (1832-1864) and Krisjanis Barons (1835-1923) definitely organized a Latvian journal in St. Petersburg to defend the national cause.

The writings in the early years were argumentative, historical and political and it was not until the sixties with the stories of Pastor Juris Neikens, (1826-1868) that the Latvian prose fiction really acquired a firm and artistic basis, while it was Alunans who really started national poetry in the true sense of the word.

The early poets and prose writers as in so many other countries wanted to learn from the folksongs and the history and customs of the people. There was a very definite national romanticism, sometimes verging on realism in the works of Auseklis (Krogzemju Mikus) (1850-1879) and Andrejs Pumpurs (1841-1902) which won many friends and supporters, but this was bitterly attacked in 1893 by Janis Jansons (1871-1917) who introduced the new directions into the literature of the country. He strenuously insisted on contact with the newer naturalism of Europe, especially Germany, and

the presentation in the Riga theatre of Sudermann's *Honor* set off a bitter controversy between the older nationalists and the supporters of the new movement.

In a sense it was the repetition in Latvian of the same controversies that were wracking the literatures of all European countries—the clash between the traditional past and the spirit of modern European sceptical and naturalistic thought. The controversy was largely fought out by student groups at the University of Tartu and the younger men headed by Eduards Veidenbaums (1867-1892) and others finally secured the dominating position. To this group belonged Aspazija (Elsa Rozenberga) (b. 1868), the leading Latvian poetess and later the wife of Rainis (Janis Plieksans) (1865-1929). Yet in both husband and wife there was always hidden something of the older nationalistic and romantic idealism. It was through this group that the first concepts of Marxism reached Latvian society but many of the members as Rainis and Aspazija grew in later days to a more individualistic position in art.

Of all the writers Rudolfs Blaumanis (1863-1908) maintained most strongly his contact with the peasants and with peasant life and in his stories he reflected as few others the real existence of the peasant with all of its pleasures and tragedies.

This period came to an end with the disturbance of 1905 and the influence of Russian and of world symbolism began when a group of nine poets issued a blast against realism in 1906 on behalf of Neo-romanticism. Here they denied the power of reason and sought for some deeper solution of human life. They opposed the interest in political reform of many of the older writers and sought in art a religion for their own happiness and

well-being. The extreme of this school was Fricis Barda (1880-1919) who felt that there should be a higher synthesis of romanticism and naturalism in some form of pantheism.

The coming of national liberty found the older writers among the leading statesmen of the new nation. They had little time to continue their literary work and those who had reacted against Communism and the entire Russian influence tended rather to German expressionism. This went on until around 1928 when there appeared groups of flamboyant young writers largely devoted to free verse as Alexander Caks (Aleksandrs Čadarainis), (b. 1902). The establishment of the authoritarian regime in 1924 tended to stabilize conditions with a return to a strong national tradition.

Thus we can see that in Latvian literature the German and the Russian influences were throughout competing with the purely national element. Yet the general influence of Tartu and the schools of Riga had brought it about that relatively few of the important writers had ever spent much time in Russia proper. They travelled abroad to Germany but also to France and Vienna and brought back the products of their experiences.

c. *Estonian Literature*

Estonian literature left its swaddling clothes definitely under the influence of Finnish and Western Romanticism. Its earliest poet, Kristian Jaak Peterson (1801-1822) had been largely a writer of Anacreontic verse but he passed quickly into an interest in Finnic and his work was continued in the Estonian Learned Society founded in Tartu in 1838.

One of the founders of this, Friedrich Robert Fähl-

mann (1798-1850) an ardent admirer of the *Nibelungenlied, Faust* and Ossian conceived the idea of combining the Estonian poem of the son of Kalev as Lönnrot had done in Finland with the *Kalevala.* He did not accomplish this but it was carried out by Friedrich Rheinhold Kreutzwald (1803-1882), the Germanized form of Widri Roim Ristmets, who finally completed the *Kalevipoeg.* This differs markedly from the Finnish songs and reflects a more pagan atmosphere throughout.

The Estonian press had been founded in 1857 by Johann Valdemar Jannsen (1819-1890), the *Pärnu Postimees* (Parnu News) which he had later transferred to Tartu and which later became the organ of Jaan Tönisson. Jannsen's daughter Lydia Koidula (1843-1886) had been the first independent lyric poet. Yet this group was soon attacked by a group of realists headed by Edward Vilde (1865-1933) which as in Latvia dominated the scene until the Revolution of 1905.

Then there came the movement of Young Estonia Noor-Eesti headed by Gustav Suits (b. 1883). The movement which drew to some extent upon the Russian Symbolists emphasized even more the need of study of the Western literatures. Suits who became Professor of Comparative Literature at Tartu had a wide knowledge and being a careful critic and worker, he carried through a general broadening of the Estonian point of view especially in connection with the newer developments in Finland.

With the World War and national independence there came still another extension in the Siuru (Blue Bird) group which advocated a far more sensuous and exotic style to take the place of the restraint which had been developed by Suits and his associates. This period,

represented by such writers as Henryk Visnapuu and Marie Under, soon however gave place especially in prose to a neo-realism which in some of its leading exponents as Johannes Barbarus (Dr. Vares), the leader of the Estonian Communist Republic, led to Communism, while other writers as Anton Hansen Taamsaare (1871-1941) with his five volume novel *Truth and Justice* came to an acceptance of God and the moral law that was lacking in some of the other members of the group.

d. *General*

In such a short survey it is difficult to do more than indicate the confusing mass of influences which developed during a half century. One and all they reflect primarily the impact of the western European languages more strongly than direct Russian influence. With the submergence of all three countries, their literatures are passing into that same monotony, that same condemnation of "cosmopolitanism" that is now demanded of Russian literature. The only writers are those in the emigration, in Sweden and elsewhere, and they are resuming publication and living up to their ideals and artistic talents.

The revival of these literatures in the nineteenth century like the revival of the national spirit has been a tribute to the spirit of democracy and a demonstration of the artistic value of the small nation.

CONCLUSION

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY is a century of paradoxes. It was hailed at its entrance fifty years ago as destined to be an era of human progress and of civilization. It has witnessed man's increasing control of the material universe; it has seen his conquest of space and time; it has revealed his power to split the atom; it can give abundant testimony to the fact that to-day midway through the century modern scientific discoveries have brought all the capitals of the world to within a few hours of one another and has made it possible for men in all of them to conduct ordinary conversations as if they were in the same room.

Yet the grim commentary on this is that it is also the century of the iron curtain, the century of man's inhumanity to man, and the age when two thirds of Europe and one half of Asia have been blacked out by every means of scientific knowledge from communication with the rest of the world through the whims of a handful of ruthless tyrants living in a gloomy mediaeval fortress, the Kremlin in Moscow. In their considered actions there is a deeper lawlessness, a more fiendish barbarism than in the ignorant cruelty of primitive savages or men of the stone age, a deeper brutality.

The three Baltic republics are behind that barrier, hidden in a silence far deeper than were their ancestors at the time of Christ. All that we know of them is what leaks out through underground channels but there have

come copies of a few of the orders issued by the authorities of the NKVD providing for the arrest and deportation of almost every one who played even the role of a good citizen during the twenty years of freedom. It requires small calculation to figure that at least 15% and probably more of the population has been wiped out and vanished from all knowledge of their fellowmen.

When we add to this the losses that these three small nations sustained by the compulsory removal of the young and healthy individuals of both sexes to Germany by the Nazis and the Nazi liquidation of the Baltic Jews, we can begin to realize the change in the character of the population in the last twelve years. It requires no involved calculations to show that Stalin is rapidly bringing the Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians to the verge of national extinction as peoples and that his hopes of completing the task are amply seconded by the anti-Bolshevik Russians abroad with their plans for plebiscites in devastated and resettled areas with the right to vote shared by the people whom the Bolsheviks have moved in.

To-day in the confusion and tragedy of the cold war, in the face of the menace to human liberty that hangs over Europe and Asia, the Baltic republics have been forgotten exactly as they were neglected in the outburst of Soviet friendship that preceded the signing of the charter of the United Nations. They seem to be of such a small and negligible importance in the disorders of a world.

To-day the world is slowly coming to the point of view that it must contain Communism. By that it means that it must check the spread of the Stalinist power over further territories in Europe and Asia. At least that is

a preliminary step and only one, for it is still little more than the sterile conversations that went on in 1937 and 1938 about the increasing demands of Hitler.

The real answer to Communism is not containment but the passing of the free world to an offensive against it and its allies in the Russian anti-Bolshevik camp who believe in the sacred right of Moscow to dominate the world. Stalin and the Russians must be forced back into their own boundaries and not allowed to enjoy the profit of their ill-gotten gains.

That is not only a question of abstract justice but of pressing moment, for whatever be the shifting of public sentiment, time in one sense is on the side of the Communists. With every year, every month that they remain in control of the lands within the iron curtain, they are marching to their goal not only of indoctrinating the young but of destroying root and branch the minority peoples and their culture. It is now a matter of common knowledge that after World War II they liquidated several of the smaller autonomous republics in the path of the war. It is not to their immediate interest to destroy the nominal existence of the Baltic republics for that would raise again the question as to why these have officially vanished from the countries of the world. It is to their interest to liquidate and change the character of the population and to destroy the essential characteristics of their cultural life. That they can do with impunity and what they are doing to-day in the Baltic republics, they can do to-morrow in other countries that are under their control.

Their goal is uniformity, the creation of a world culture which will be rigorously Russian Communist in essence and national only in non-essential details. The

object of the free world and of the two World Wars was and is to produce a world which shall be broadly human and to which each people can contribute its own peculiar talents and ideas. That difference is fundamental and it marks the difference between a world of robots dominated by one machine-like brain and a world of men meeting and solving the problems of society.

In such a free world the size of a country is unimportant, so long as it sincerely cooperates and approximates the required standards. That the Baltic republics did in the League of Nations. That they could do in the United Nations, if they were free according to the principles of the Atlantic Charter. Their very existence as small, peace-loving nations was a sign of the triumph of the ideals of democracy for which World War I was fought. Their suppression in 1939-1940 was a symptom of the lowered moral zeal in World War II, which accepted Stalin and his associates as friendly allies solely for their supposedly practical use.

To-day in the shadow of World War III with renewed cries of insulted nationalism rising from all sides and all continents, it is high time for the world to return to its older ideal. Either imperialism or democracy, either uniformity or diversity must govern. If it is to be the former, the machinelike discipline of the Communist Party and its leaders must be the rule of the future. If it is to be the latter, then the free world must dare to assert in season and out of season the right of the nations dominated by the Communists to rid themselves of their unwelcome burden and no better way can be found than to insist upon the restoration of the liberty of the three Republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, to force the return of the hundreds of thousands of exiles, and

in the meantime to seat in the United Nations those duly appointed representatives who through the space of more than a decade have courageously tried to present to the world the cause of their martyred peoples.

When the world realizes that it cannot build lasting peace and justice upon injustice and tyranny, the three republics, despite all their suffering, will be brought back into the council of nations where they will do their part as in the past as peaceloving and cooperative members of human society. Despite pressure from the east and west they held their position and made progress so long as the democratic world held. They were the victims of the alliance of the two totalitarian systems of the Nazis and the Russian Communists. They vanished again because the free world sought totalitarian help and the free world can show its recovery in no better way than by restoring to them their liberty and granting them their proper role in the advancing of peace and civilization.

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NOTE

Since many places in the Baltic Republics are also often mentioned by their German, Russian or Polish names, a list of some of the more important with their forms is given below.

Estonia

Tallinn — Ger. and Rus. Reval
Tartu — Ger. Dorpat, Rus. Yuryev
Saaremaa — Ger. Osel
Hiiumaa — Ger. Dagő

Latvia

Daugava river — German Duna, Rus. Zapadnaya (Western) Dvina
Jelgava — Ger. Mitau, Rus. Mitava
Liepaja — Ger. Libau, Rus. Libava
Ventspils — Ger. Windau, Rus. Vindava
Daugavpils — Ger. Dunaburg, Rus. Dvinsk
Cesis — Ger. Wenden

Lithuania

Vilnius — Pol. Wilno, Rus. Vilna
Kaunas — Rus. Kovno
Gardinas — Rus. Grodno
Klaipeda — Ger. Memel
Nemunas river — Ger. and Rus. Nieman
Grand Prince Jogaila — Pol. Jagiello
Radvilas — Pol. Radziwill
Vytautas — Ger. Witold or Witowt
Žygimantas — Pol. Zygmunt, Ger. Sigismund

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