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LVIA & RUSSIA

ONE PROBLEM OF THE
WORLD-PEACE CONSIDERED

BY

ARVED BERG

(Member of the National Council of Latvia)

MAY 25 1925

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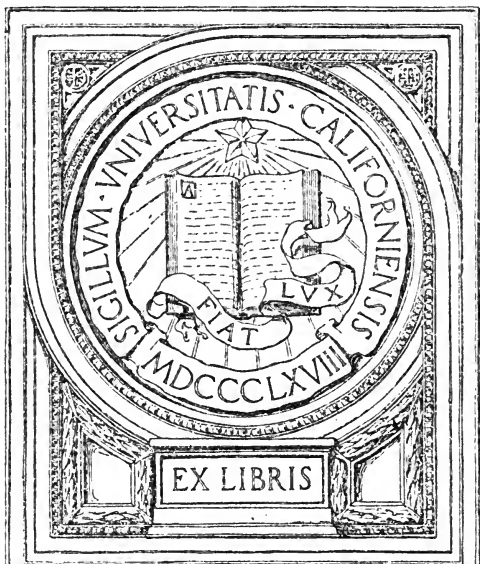


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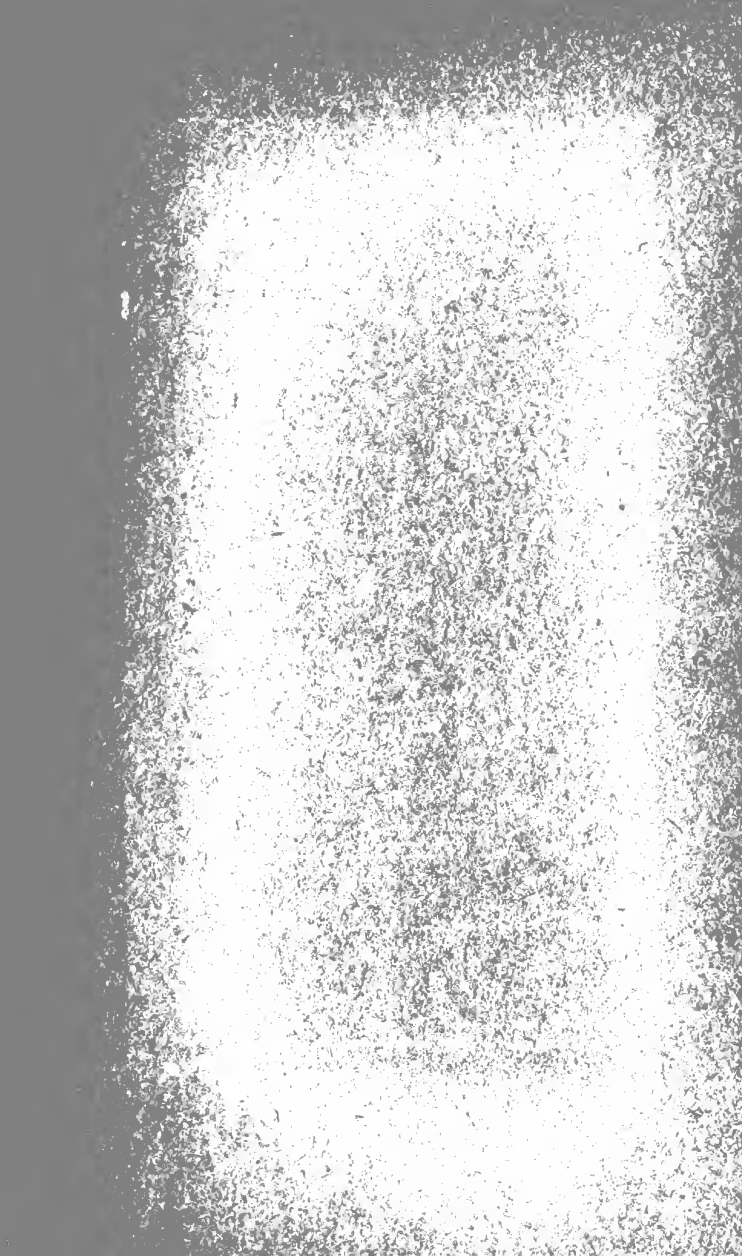
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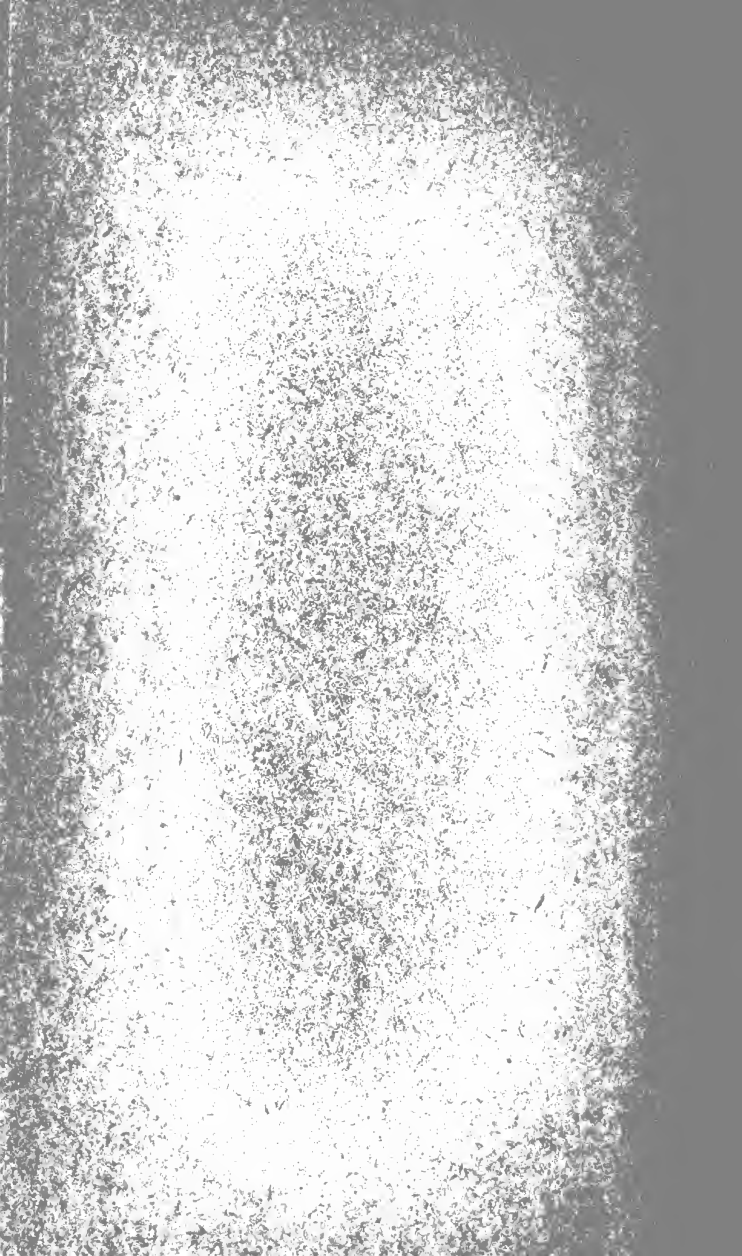
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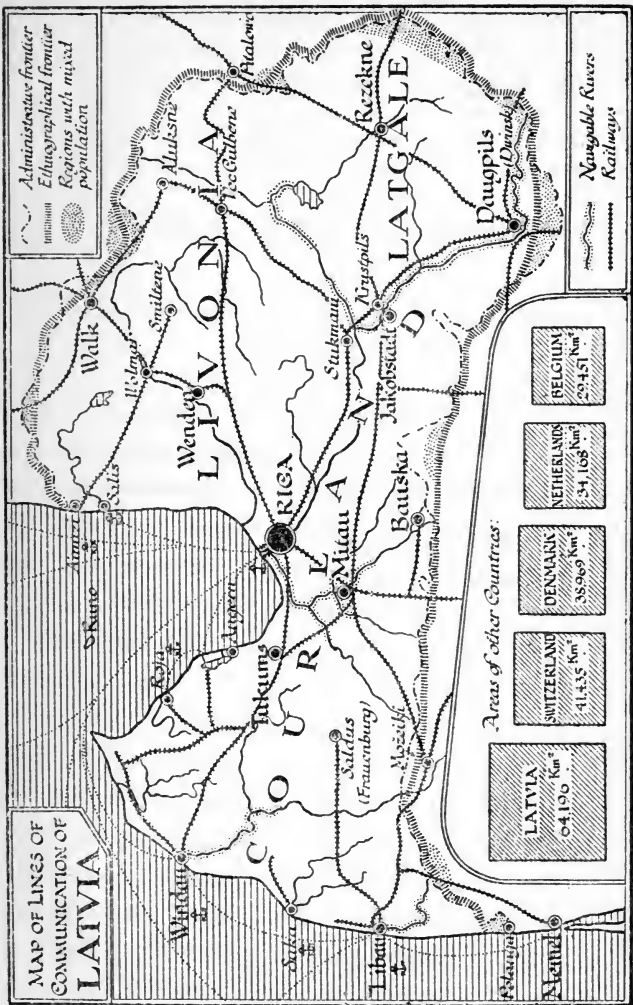
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MAP OF LINES OF COMMUNICATION OF LATVIA



Administrative frontier
 Ethnographical frontier
 Regions with mixed population

Navigable Rivers
 Railways

Areas of other Countries:

LATVIA	04,190 Km ²
SWITZERLAND	41,435 Km ²
DENMARK	38,969 Km ²
NETHERLANDS	34,108 Km ²
BELGIUM	29,451 Km ²

THE
LAW
OF
THE
STATE
OF
NEW
YORK
IN SENATE,
JANUARY 18, 1892.
REPORT
OF THE
COMMISSIONERS
OF THE
LAND OFFICE,
IN ANSWER
TO A RESOLUTION
PASSED BY THE
SENATE,
MAY 1, 1891.
ALBANY:
ANDREW D. WHELAN,
STATE PRINTER,
1892.

NEW YORK
AND
ALBANY

LATVIA AND RUSSIA

THE WORLD-PEACE AND THE CIVIL WAR IN RUSSIA

No world-peace is possible before peace in Russia is re-established! Indeed, how can we talk of universal peace when 180 million men are still in the throes of a most disastrous and terrible war, a war which leads, not to victory, but to annihilation?

There will be no peace in the world if there is no peace in Russia, for the boiling lava in eruption may well submerge the whole of Europe at any moment. That is why the Paris Conference will remain powerless if it cannot terminate the civil war in Russia. All that the Conference has done and is doing at the present time will be brought to nothing and will be a waste of time unless a normal and peaceful state of things is established in Eastern

Europe. Until the Peace Conference has settled these questions, humanity will continue to be overshadowed by the menace of such a catastrophe that the disasters of the four years of war will appear in comparison as mere child's play.

THE PARIS CONFERENCE FACED BY THE RUSSIAN SPHINX

The Peace Conference finds itself facing the Russian sphinx, whose problems a mind of western culture can neither comprehend nor solve.

The agglomeration of heterogeneous peoples in Russia leaves the ragged Hapsburg empire far behind. In Russia you have the complicated psychology of the Oriental, barely intelligible to his western brother. You have also the tangled economic questions and the centuries-old crimes of corrupt governments, the devastation of a world-war, and still more the material and moral destruction brought about by the awakening instincts of the half-barbaric

masses which call themselves Bolsheviki. And all this is intermingling and boiling over in an indescribable chaos which even the liveliest imagination could not conceive.

THE REPRESENTATIVES OF RUSSIA

There is no lack of amateurs ready to solve the riddle of the Russian sphinx. Each government represented at the Peace Conference possesses its own point of view on the Russian question; each political party, each organ of the Press has its own remedy for saving Russia. Nor is that all, for there are Orientals who have come to plead on behalf of their Fatherland before the world's Forum. Russia teems with people and opinions, so each group of the crowd assembled in Paris brings forward a programme of salvation. There is the **RUSSIAN POLITICAL CONFERENCE**, consisting of Sazonoff, Tzarist ex-Minister of Foreign Affairs; the prince Lvoff, ex-Premier; Tchakovsky, President of the **NORTH RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT**, and Maklakoff, ex-Ambassador of Russia under the Provisional Government.

This Conference has a theorist, an ex-director of the Juridical Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia under the Provisional Government, M. André Mandelstam, who has published a series of pamphlets in which he sets forth the theoretical and practical bases of the views of the Russian Political Conference. Outside this Conference, Kerensky, ex-Premier, is busying himself; and with him, Avksentieff, Zenzinoff, Argounoff, Rogovsky, Minor, Sokoloff, Slonin, all members of the All-Russian Constituent Assembly. We find also the PARIS SECTION FOR THE REGENERATION OF RUSSIA and the RUSSIAN REPUBLICAN LEAGUE. Add to these the representatives of the government of Admiral Koltchak and of General Denikin. From the South of Russia comes Schreider, ex-mayor of Petrograd, at present the president of the "Committee of the South," who was compelled to leave the four other members of his delegation behind on the Prinkipo island. Finally, to close the name-list, there is A. N. Briantchaninoff, "Chairman of the Slav Congress in Moscow and of the Russian National Committee in

London." In the *Pages Modernes* are collaborating Savinkoff, L. Andreeff, Strouve, etc. Briefly, the Russian chaos is completely enough represented, and the plans of salvation are not lacking.

RELATIONS BETWEEN RUSSIA AND THE BORDERLAND PEOPLES

The problems which the following pages deal with are somewhat more modest in comparison with the Russian imbroglio. They are those concerning the so-called "borderland peoples of Russia," *i.e.*, nationalities which have for a long time suffered under the Russian domination, which have been relegated to second and third class, and which, quite tired of this intolerable position, are looking for a better lot and greater possibility of development in an independent national life, by means of separation from Russia.

They have formed, for that purpose, a series of small independent States desirous of getting their independence recognised by the Peace Conference, which, in solving the riddle of the

Russian sphinx, will have to pronounce the decisive word on this question. Every one, be he Russian or a representative of the nationalities, is trying to solve this question in accordance with his point of view. The aim of the following pages is to elucidate it from the point of view of Latvia.¹

PROPOSAL TO POSTPONE THE SOLUTION CONCERNING "THE BORDERLAND PEOPLES OF RUSSIA"

Let us first consider the proposals of the RUSSIAN POLITICAL CONFERENCE: — "The question of the Russian borderland peoples must be postponed until it can be decided

¹ One of the published works of the Russian Political Conference (from the pen of Mandelstam), specially devoted to the question of Poland, has received a well-merited refutation in the brilliant pamphlet of M. H. Grappin (*Memorandum on the Application of the Nationalities Principle to the Russian Question*).

M. Gaston Gaillard, in his book *The Pan-Russian Movement and the Borderland Peoples*, Paris, 1919, gives a remarkable summary, with full documentary evidence, of the aspirations of the borderland peoples of Russia.

with the co-operation of the Russian people, for the questions relating to the future status of the nationalities included within the borders of ancient Russia cannot be solved outside the Russian people and without their consent." That is what the Russian Political Conference proposed in its note of the 6th March, 1919—the solution of the problem must be postponed as long as the Russian people is not in a position to make its will fully known and to take part in the settlement of these questions.

Evidently perceiving how impossible this proposal is, the Russian Political Conference is considering a compromise, and proposes "to apply in the meantime, before a definite settlement is arrived at, a provisional régime in accordance with the present necessities" of the States that have separated themselves from Russia, but "no definite solution should intervene." In other words, the Russian Political Conference proposes to recognise the *de facto* governments of the States detached from Russia on the condition that, in an undetermined future, the Russian people, express-

ing its will by the voice of the Constituent Assembly or by other means, shall say the final and decisive word.

PRACTICAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE POST- PONING OF THE QUESTION

It is supremely clear that this compromise of the Russian Political Conference would not give any practical solution, either at the present time or in the near future. The proof of this is in Latvia's desperate struggles on two fronts—against the Bolsheviki who have thrown themselves on her, and against the German army of occupation which has no wish at all to surrender the territory. In such circumstances, of what importance would be the recognition of the *de facto* situation? Moral help is indispensable; besides, it is necessary to have a solid juridical basis, recognised by the Powers, in order to exact from the Bolsheviki and the Germans, not another *de facto* situation in the place of the one they have caused, but the substitution of Right for their

illegal tyranny. Without this, the success of the struggle against the Bolsheviki and the Germans would become impossible, or at least more complicated. Consequently, arms and munitions become indispensable. Were they supplied by the governments backing up the Letts, means for the equipment and maintenance of the army would yet be lacking. These means cannot be obtained if the country does not provide its own finances, which in turn cannot be established until the State is judicially recognised. Strong in such a recognition, the Lettish army, for instance, would long since have occupied Riga and delivered it from the Bolshevik tyranny, but it simply dared not do it because of the lack of revictualling for the inhabitants. Assuredly, who would risk delivering goods on credit without knowing who is legally responsible for the debts? To be successful in the struggle it would be indispensable to restore the means of transport, the communications destroyed by the Bolsheviki, and to replace the rolling stock carried away by the Germans. But who would concern himself with that and invest

his capital in such an enterprise if there is no one judicially responsible, and if one does not know to whom the country is to belong and who is to rule it in the future?

The recognition of the present situation would in no way help the Lettish people to hasten its resurrection, so that it represents no progress towards the practical solution of the question in dispute.

IT IS DOUBTFUL WHETHER THE RUSSIAN
PEOPLE WILL SOON BE IN A POSITION TO
PARTICIPATE IN THE SOLUTION OF THESE
QUESTIONS

Of necessity, one could come to an agreement on this point if it were possible to foresee that such a situation would not last too long, but would soon disappear in the presence of durable and well-defined juridical relations. But this cannot be foreseen by anybody if the Lettish question is made dependent on the Russian people. Who would venture to affirm that the Russian people will soon be in

a position to manifest freely its will and share in the settlement of these questions?

Admiral Koltchak, for instance, has obtained, on certain conditions accepted by him, the promise of support from the Allied and Associated Powers, and he is backed up by the Russian Political Conference. But he is as yet only in Siberia; much time will elapse before he reaches the Volga, and from there Moscow is yet far; but after all Moscow is not the whole of Russia. Meanwhile, in the South, the Bolshéviki have decided, it appears, to give final battle to Admiral Koltchak. Even supposing that Admiral Koltchak wins the most brilliant of victories, much time will pass before tranquillity returns to the country, before he succeeds in re-establishing the administrative machinery, and a Constituent Assembly is elected in which the "Russian people will be in a position to make its will known freely."

Even leaving these arguments aside, can one be sure that the government of Admiral Koltchak and the Constituent Assembly convened by him will be recognised as authorita-

tive and as the expression of the free will of the Russian people? It is evident that in no case will this happen without the hottest opposition. Kerensky and his above-named colleagues, the Paris Section of the Union for Russian Regeneration, and the Russian Republican League in their declaration (*Humanité*, 21st May, 1919) say, evidently aiming at the party of Koltchak, "It is necessary that the governments of the free peoples declare openly that they will never recognise, in Russia, any government whatsoever which is a dictatorship of one man or of a group and does not acknowledge the principle of popular sovereignty nor take the essential measures for its realisation." In another direction, the Russian National and Democratic Union (*Bloc*), comprising the various leagues set up for the regeneration of Russia, protests violently against the conditions imposed by the Allied and Associated Powers on Admiral Koltchak and accepted by him (*Patrie*, 15th June, 1919). So the future opposition to the future Russian government is already there, and even makes an appeal for support to all

the free peoples. But who can say definitely that with this support either Kerensky or Koltchak will be in a position to get the upper hand?

And again, should the government of Lvov-Kerensky, or simply that of the latter alone, be recognised as enjoying legal continuity?

It is doubtful that the Russian Political Conference and Admiral Koltchak are agreed. M. A. N. Briantchaninoff, the Chairman of the Slav Congress in Moscow and of the Russian National Committee in London, talks openly of the unheard-of inability of the Lvov-Kerensky and Co. government (*Daily Telegraph*, 24th May, 1919). And the All-Russian Constituent Assembly of the 5th January, 1918, under the famous presidency of M. V. Tchernoff, which included Messrs. Lenin and Trotsky? But M. Gregory Schreider proves that the members of the Constituent Assembly of 5th January, 1918, were shot by order of Admiral Koltchak (*Daily Telegraph*, 28th May, 1919). Koltchak would perhaps like to continue in the same way. In any case, before

taking up the case of Latvia, the Constituent Assembly would have to decide the question of summoning Admiral Koltchak to judgment; and that might take up much time, considering the complexity of the question and the bias of the representatives of the Russian people, entailing debates of indefinite length. Consequently, whoever the candidate may be whose power will be recognised as expressing the free will of the Russian people, one may be quite confident that a violent struggle will ensue against him. For, to talk of free expression of the will of the people, either with or without the assistance of a foreign commission, in a country devastated by war and corrupted by Bolshevism, is naturally inadmissible until the most elementary order is established and the billows of political passion have subsided. And thus years will pass by, during which the question of the countries detached from Russia will remain without solution.

RIGHT OF THE RUSSIAN PEOPLE TO PARTICI-
PATE IN THE SOLUTION OF THE LETTISH
QUESTION

Outside the purely practical reasons, there is a matter of principle; and looking more closely at the proposal of the Russian Political Conference, one cannot but be amazed by it. By what right do they claim that the question of the Lettish people "cannot be solved without Russian knowledge and consent"? Who made the Lettish people slaves of the Russians? Who made the Russians guardians of the Letts? President Wilson has declared the equality of nations and their equal right to dispose of themselves. The second paragraph of President Wilson's message of the 22nd January, 1917, says: "The equality of nations on which peace must be founded in order to be durable, must imply the equality of rights; the exchanged guarantees must neither recognise nor imply a difference between the big nations and the small, between those that are powerful and those that are weak." In the speech delivered on the 27th Septem-

ber, 1918, Wilson declares: "The impartial justice we want should not make any difference between those in regard to whom we are willing to be just and those in regard to whom we are not willing to be just. It should be a justice not knowing any favouritism, but only the equal rights of the different peoples." Then, after such clear declarations on the part of President Wilson, can one who declares himself in agreement with this theory and expresses (like the note of the Russian Political Conference) his sympathy with the peoples detached from Russia, can he require the other nations to wait and not proceed with the restoration of their affairs until the Russian people has had the leisure to manifest its opinion? And, after the Lettish people have got rid of Bolshevism at the price of inconceivable efforts and have, with the assistance of the Allies, liberated Latvia from the German armies of occupation, and when they have finally succeeded in restoring their economic and intellectual life, by what right would the Russians, recovering themselves and facing a problematical future, arrogate to themselves

the authority to possess and rule a people for the regeneration of which they have not moved a finger? Granted the right of the nations to dispose of themselves, how could the Russian Constituent Assembly or the government of Admiral Koltchak be competent to decide the fate of the Lettish people and yet the Lettish Constituent Assembly or the Peace Conference be incompetent—the latter having already decided the destiny of many races?

To all these painful questions there is only one possible answer: Would not the Russian Political Conference admit that at the bottom of its proposition there shows itself all too clearly a point of view habitual to the old Tzarist régime, according to which the borderland peoples have no other right than to be the object of the dominant nation's rights? But with such opinions, borrowed from the old Tzarist régime's domestic habits or home-policy, it would simply not be safe to appear before the Peace Conference, which has proclaimed a just and happy future for all peoples, inaugurating a new era of international justice. Undoubtedly, the Russian Political Confer-

ence is cruelly deceived, both in regarding their proposition as "a practical way out of the present situation," and even in thinking they have given "a real proof of the new spirit of Russia." In point of fact, there is neither a new spirit nor a practical solution of the question.

A DEFINITE AND IMMEDIATE SOLUTION OF THE QUESTION OF LATVIA IS NECESSARY

The question of the formation of a State for the Lettish people must be settled definitely and as soon as possible. The Lettish people can claim it as a right, for it finds itself in the first rank of the peoples who have suffered from the war. The interests of the other nations also require it, for they will feel the greater security the fewer undecided questions there are, the fewer centres of trouble and disorder.

The definite solution can be arrived at in two ways: either by the reconstitution of Russia in her former boundaries, excluding

perhaps Poland, which would find its ethnographic frontiers again, and that is the proposal of the Russian Political Conference, of M. A. Mandelstam, and other people and institutions pretending to represent the Russian people; or by the absolute recognition of the independence of the peoples which have separated themselves from Russia, and that is what their representatives are working for.

THE RECONSTITUTION OF RUSSIA

However, M. A. Mandelstam, the literary idealist of the Russian Political Conference, declares, in his *Memorandum on the Delimitation of the Rights of States and Nations* (Paris, 1919), that the interests of the countries detached from Russia, their right to free development of their economic and intellectual culture, will be guaranteed and can only be guaranteed by their reunion with Russia. This reunion, he adds, is necessary not only in the interests of Russia, but also in the interests of these same countries.

PROJECT OF AN ALL-RUSSIAN FEDERATION

It is certain that they do not propose the reconstitution of the old Tzarist régime, which, according to M. A. Mandelstam, is no less detested by the Russian people than by those of the border countries; their aim is rather to form a new Russia built on a quite different foundation and distinguished by a perfect justice towards all the peoples inhabiting her territory. "Russia, emerging from the Revolution," says the Russian Political Conference, "and definitely divorced from the centralising tendencies of the old régime, is largely disposed to satisfy the legitimate wish of these nationalities to organise their national life. The new Russia does not conceive her reconstitution otherwise than in a free co-existence of the peoples forming part of her, on the principles of autonomy and federalism." And M. A. Mandelstam, forgetting that it is very difficult for him, not being of Russian origin himself, to speak and make promises in the name of the Russian people, asserts: "The Russian

people has never been in agreement with the old Russian policy in regard to the borderland peoples, and has always suffered with them from the same absence of political rights. It will only wish to be allowed to work side by side with its non-Russian brethren, mindful of their rights as it will be of its own. . . . The common life could be organised on the basis of autonomy or on that of the federative principle, or else on that of union. In any case, the borderland peoples would no longer need to fear any attacks on their personality on the part of New Russia."

POINT OF VIEW OF THE RUSSIAN GROUPS IN REGARD TO THE FEDERATION OF RUSSIA

No doubt, there are many good intentions and nice promises abroad; but nevertheless we will allow ourselves slightly to doubt their perfect sincerity, be it only in regard to some of the representatives of the Russian groups.

How, for instance, do they reconcile this crop of promises with the following facts?

When, at the beginning of the year 1917, *i.e.*, even before the Revolution, the Lettish deputies in the Imperial Douma raised the question of self-government for Latvia, M. Miliukoff, then the all-powerful genius of the Progressive Coalition (*Bloc*), expressed a hostile opinion on this question, and underlined it with the following words: "Then it will be necessary to grant autonomy even to the Samoyedes!" When, the same year, but already after the Revolution, under the régime of Kerensky, the law concerning self-government for the Baltic provinces was in elaboration, and the Lettish deputies pointed out the absolute necessity of fusion, compact and with well-defined boundaries, of all the territories inhabited by the Letts, in a unity of self-government without which the development of the Lettish civilisation would become difficult, the Russian Government replied with a refusal, based on the inconvenience of altering the existing departmental boundaries. More recently, in the *Pall Mall Gazette* of May 6th, 1919, M. C. Nabokoff, emphasising his status as a Russian diplomatic representative

in London, puts the Letts and Esthonians in the same rank as the negroes of Texas. Their leaning towards autonomy is described by him as a "self-determination in a nursery," and he regards the Letts and Esthonians as "victims of Teutonic propaganda," to which he, M. C. Nabokoff, will never and in no circumstances submit. Consequently, as regards the promises of the Russian Political Conference and the assurances of M. Mandelstam, we have testimonies of the representatives of the different Russian political groups at different periods in their different situations, before the Revolution, after the Revolution, and after the second Revolution; testimonies, thoughtless perhaps, and ill-calculated, but so much the more sincere.

However, the "Russian diplomatic representative in London," who, from the service of the Tzarist government, has gone over, without much effort, to that of the government represented by M. Mandelstam—after having acquired a fuller knowledge of Texas, and even without this, will be quite willing to change his views about the Letts and the

Esthonians in accordance with the views and intentions of his new chiefs. No doubt M. Miliukoff, who has been able to master his antipathy to Germany, will, for reasons of necessity, vanquish also his aversion for the self-government of Latvia. But how can the Lettish people, or the Peace Conference as it decides the fate of nations, be assured that in the future and under new conditions, Messrs. Nabokoff and Miliukoff will not reconvert M. Mandelstam, Admiral Koltchak, etc., along with themselves and the Russian Political Conference? Can one expect the Lettish people or the Peace Conference to have faith in their word when the Russian groups themselves have not full confidence in one another?

Kerensky and his colleagues do not believe a bit in the promises of Admiral Koltchak in regard to the convening of the Constituent Assembly on a democratic basis. M. A. N. Briantchaninoff categorically rejects M. Kerensky. M. Miliukoff, as it appears, professes no confidence in the Constituent Assembly presided over by V. Tchernoff, and

Admiral Koltchak even shoots its members, which crime M. Schreider will never forgive him. If there exists such a complete mistrust among the Russian groups in regard to one another, if people who know the valuable qualities of their fellow-countrymen release floods of accusations on one another, what faith is it possible to have, I will not say in the sincerity of their promises, but in the possibility of fulfilling them?

IMPOSSIBILITY OF A RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Besides personal confidence or mistrust, there are also much deeper reasons of an objective kind which clearly show that the promises of the Russian groups are, in spite of their good will, absolutely unrealisable. One would need to be imbued with an absolute Bolshevist disregard for the laws of historical continuity to admit that Russia, by the mere force of a decree and solely by the good will of honest people, will straightway pass from being a country subject to Tzarist

despotism and unaccustomed to the respect of rights, of personality, and of nationalities, to a régime of equality of rights and justice for all. There are no big jumps in History; and if they are attempted, they are paid for grievously. The proof of this is afforded by the happenings in Russia, which, it was boasted, had passed without bloodshed from the autocratic régime of the Tzar to the "freest régime in the world"—the Lvov-Kerensky régime; but streams of blood and unheard-of cruelties have followed. Russia has fallen to ruins under the despotic régime of Lenin and Trotsky.

HISTORICAL IMPOSSIBILITY OF AN ALL- RUSSIAN FEDERATION

The history of centuries, customs and habits, rooted usages and popular psychology are much more effectual than the best intentions and decrees, which in the most favourable circumstances can only bring about an external change. But under the mask of the latter

the Past continues to exist. We have already shown that in the proposal itself of the Russian Political Conference, under a new phraseology, there is concealed at the bottom the psychology of the Tzarist bureaucracy, of which the Russian Political Conference has not succeeded in freeing itself. If the old psychology is so sturdy in the minds of the best sons of Russia, who are accustomed to direct themselves according to the best theoretical conceptions, and who have been brought up in the atmosphere of European ideas, what then can be expected from the over-excited instincts of ignorant masses reared in utter contempt of another's personality and rights?

It is certain that the rebirth of Russia will coincide with an extraordinary upheaval of the nationalist wave, a quite natural upheaval after the humiliation of national dignity suffered by Russia, an upheaval of which all that is foreign and non-Russian will be the inevitable victim. This wave will clear the ground for Messrs. Mandelstam, Sazonoff, Kerensky, Schreider, etc. M. C. Nabokoff will

incontestably allow himself to be carried away by that wave, and if Admiral Koltchak and General Denikin do not, at least those that will come after them, perhaps M. Brianchaninoff, will benefit by it.

A COMMON CIVILISATION, INDISPENSABLE
TO A FEDERATION, DOES NOT EXIST

What will be the effect of this Chauvinist wave on the All-Russian Federation planned by the Russian groups, and composed of a series of national States? In accordance with the laws of reaction, the Russian nationalist upheaval will call forth a similar movement in the other nationalities of the Russian Federation. Besides, these peoples are even now in different stages of civilisation. They are being besought from various directions, and the exasperation of the national feeling in each of them will set up another and a still more sensitive difference. There will not be that spiritual community without which a free co-existence is inconceivable. This

spiritual community did not exist under the Tzarist régime, which however tried to create it by enforced russification, going even so far as to prohibit the use of the mother-alphabet and the public use of the mother-language, and ordering that teaching in the elementary schools should be given in Russian to children who did not understand a word of it. By such proceedings, a kind of spiritual community among the peoples of Russia has indeed been created; no one doubts it—there is unanimous opposition against such means of furthering Russian civilisation.

No harmony of civilisation could exist, even in the projected All-Russian Federation. Within its limits there would be nations which, owing to favourable geographical situation and greater activity, have long led the intensive life of western civilisation; and there would also be peoples which are as yet in the first stage of civilisation.

For instance, what harmony is it possible to imagine as existing between the Letts and the Samoyedes of M. Miliukoff, or between the Esthonians and the Fetishists of Siberia?

Russia is populated by nations unable to understand one another, not only on account of the difference of language, but also because of the contrasting customs and habits, ideas, religious creeds, and popular psychology. No one of these nationalities possesses such a strong preponderance in the matter of numbers and civilisation, nor such powerful influence, that the other peoples should submit to it of their own free will.

M. Victoroff-Toporoff finds (*Pages Modernes*, No. 1, April, 1919, p. 24) that there is something which unites all the nationalities of Russia—"the great intellectual force of the people of Greater Russia," which through the medium of masterpieces of the famous Russian teachers and writers, has spread broadcast among all the peoples of Russia. It is certain that no one will try to minimise the importance of Russian literature, nor dispute the place which is its due among the literatures of the world. But Russian literature by itself is not yet world-literature, and the literature of other nations as well has exercised an enormous influence on the peoples of Russia. For

instance, the influence of the French masters on Lettish culture is far stronger than that of Russian art. But apart from this, each nationality detached from Russia has its national literature, which we all admit does not perhaps possess great masterpieces like Russian literature, but has nevertheless its individual character, and consequently stands nearer and dearer to its people and is capable of greater influence on it than all the masterpieces of foreign art.

The All-Russian Federation has no common basis for its diverse members in the field of civilisation. Consequently, there are two courses open to it:—either to give to each people the liberty of development, in which case the nationalities would very soon disperse intellectually in all directions; or to revive the russifying centralist tendencies, the likelihood of which is made evident by the expected rising of Russian chauvinism. In both cases there remains nothing of the Federation.

THE ECONOMIC PROBLEM OF A FEDERATED RUSSIA

If between the peoples of Russia there are no interests in common as regards intellectual culture, there is still less in common in the economic relationships of the different parts of Russia.

It is well known that Russia, since the ministries of Vishnegradsky and Witte, leaned more and more consciously towards the protectionist system; and having created the autonomous Customs tariff of 1893, leaned towards the creation of a self-supporting economic unit. This policy was based on balancing the agricultural interests on the one side and the industrial interests on the other. Industry was protected at the expense of agriculture, but without exceeding the limits which allowed the world's markets to be preserved for Russian agricultural products, for otherwise this would have led to the destruction of Russia's commercial equilibrium. This was a quite reasonable policy, and indispen-

sable from the point of view of a one and indivisible Russia with an economic system completely centralised. And this policy, supposing its necessity, must be reverted to in a reunited Russia.

But it is also quite clear that to the interests of this policy, indispensable to a self-sufficient economic unit, important interests of the different parts of Russia have been sacrificed. For instance, the corn-growing central provinces of Russia have lost the English market, with difficulty retaining the much less profitable market in Germany.

On the other hand, Latvia, in no way interested in the export of cereals, was obliged, in order to assist the Russian grain export, and in virtue of the commercial treaties concluded between Russia and Germany in 1894 and 1904, to submit to concessions in regard to German industry which were incompatible with her own industrial interests.

By the case of Finland, it is possible to form an idea of the results of such an economic system. From the importation of Russian corn, Finland passed to the importation of

German and American flour; instead of Russian sugar she used German. In return the products of Russian industry have not been able to conquer the Finnish market, in view of the impossibility of their competition with German products. Finland, having Customs frontiers with Russia, was able to avoid the too disadvantageous consequences for her of that Russian economic policy which sacrificed local economic interests to a centralised economic system for Russia. If there had not been Customs frontiers between Finland and Russia, Finland would have had to pay much dearer for her bread and to purchase industrial products at a much higher price. The other parts of Russia, not enjoying economic autonomy, have not been able to avoid the disastrous consequences of the Russian policy as Finland has done.

Consequently, the founders of Federated Russia will have to solve the following question: Must we revert to a centralised policy and neglect the local interests of the different parts of Russia, or must we grant the right of an autonomous economic policy to the differ-

ent members of the Federation? In the former case, there would remain very little of the "free co-existence of the peoples forming part of it on principles of autonomy and federation." From this point of view the nationalities would be less favoured than Finland, which, as is well known, was far from feeling outside the danger of Russian pretensions. If, on the contrary, the founders of the Federated Republic of Russia propose to give to the various States the right of an autonomous economic policy, then the Federation will very soon fall to pieces, for the economic interests of the different States tend in different directions, and economic interests are much more powerful than historical memories.

The economic problem will therefore be solved either to the advantage of a Russia which supports herself, but is at the same time centralised, or to the advantage of the independence of the nationalities which have separated themselves from Russia. In either case there is no place for federation!

THE ALL-RUSSIAN FEDERATION FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF CONSTITUTIONAL LAW

There still remains to be elucidated the project of an All-Russian Federation from the point of view of constitutional law, *i.e.*, the possibility of creating, with the aid of the nationalities of Russia, a durable State on the basis of federation.

The definite and authorised answer to this question was given by the late M. Kokoshkin, professor at the University of Moscow, in his report (Summer, 1917) to the Congress of the Constitutional Democratic Party on the subject of the desirable form for the future State of Russia. He proved the utter impossibility, from the point of view of constitutional law, of reconstructing Russia on a federative basis; and the Congress of the Party entirely subscribed to his opinion. There remains little to say after the view of Professor Kokoshkin.

All federations of States can work on one condition only, *viz.*, that there is one among

them which has the power, owing to its importance and influence, to support and unite all the other members. Germany gives us an instance of this law. First, in 1866, Bismarck was compelled to exclude Austria by force from the German Confederation, on account of her competition with Prussia, so that he could, in 1871, gather round him the German Federation, in which Prussia, both by her real force and in accordance with constitutional law, became the predominant partner. And the Prussian spirit guided Germany. Prussia was the cause of Germany's extraordinary development, and also of her unprecedented defeat. The contrary is instanced by Austria-Hungary, which tottered in proportion as German Austria increasingly lost her preponderance.

Can one reckon on finding, among the nationalities of Russia, a member of the projected Federation with enough authority, from the point of view of constitutional law, to unite and support the other members of the Federation? To this question Professor Kokoshkin has given a negative and cate-

gorical reply, and we must abide by this opinion.

Evidently, the section of the Great-Russians could, in the first place, lay claim to such a part. But they count only 65 millions out of the 180 millions forming the population of Russia. Besides, this section is far from having preponderant economic importance, and it has remained, in the matter of civilisation, well behind the other members of the projected All-Russian Federation. If the leading part is given to this section—a majority of votes in the Council of the Federation, for instance—it would be a great injustice to the other nationalities, and they would never consent to it; an otherwise senseless injustice, because the section of the Great-Russians will evidently never be in a position to perform the part assigned to them, nor could they perform it except by using physical force, *i.e.*, by re-establishing the policy of centralist absolutism, the policy which has sustained so complete a defeat, and that not only by a mere historical chance.

If there is no directing centre, it is clear that

the All-Russian Federation will fall to pieces on the morrow of its foundation on paper, for there will be no power in a position to reconcile the divergent interests of the various members of the Federation. Georgia, for instance, will never consent to vote credits for the development of Northern railway systems. Latvia will give no contribution for the construction of Black Sea ports; and Ukraine will not send her sons to defend the Baltic Sea. The combination of these interests, so different and so scattered, would only result in a State-structure so weak that it would fall to pieces at the first serious blow.

Thus, from the point of view of constitutional law, we arrive at the same conclusion to which the analysis of the tendencies of civilisation and economic life led us—that the All-Russian Federation will transform itself either into a centralised State maintained by force, or it will divide itself into independent States.

There is no place for a Federation in Russia! Neither the land nor the men upon it were made for it; this is proved by History. The

history of Russia in her beginnings shows us a certain number of principalities, independent of one another, and on the whole not subject to any authority. Owing to the efforts of the more powerful princes, and under the duress of the Tartar yoke, the principalities united, not into a Federation, but into a centralised State; and each principality, deprived of its independence, did not become a member of a Federation, but passed into another State.

The same course was followed in regard to the contiguous and neighbouring countries conquered by Russia.

Not only Finland and Poland, but also the Baltic, Ukraine, and Georgia were united to Russia, and received from her at least the guarantee of their special rights and of their separate position in the Russian State; but Russia did not keep her word in regard to all these States, but had them all subject to a centralised policy, after having destroyed, or attempted to destroy, all the individuality of these countries. And this is in no way by mere chance. The Russian plain, having almost no

natural divisions, is not a favourable field for the creation of a Federation, and the Russian soul, understanding no *via media* between "all" and "nothing," is not the cement with which it would be possible to build a Federation always based on the limitation of one will by other wills, and on a clever and experienced blend of the different inclinations.

THE LEANING OF THE PEOPLES OF RUSSIA TOWARDS INDEPENDENCE

Not being able to put their trust in the All-Russian Federation and not finding therein enough guarantee for their natural rights, the peoples of Russia have separated themselves from her and are building up their independent national life. This is what is rousing the opposition of the representatives of the Russian groups. The grounds for it are given by M. Mandelstam in several pamphlets published by the Russian Political Conference.

ECONOMIC DISADVANTAGE OF SEPARATION
FROM RUSSIA

First of all, M. Mandelstam finds that the independence to which the nationalities detached from Russia are aspiring is disadvantageous to these peoples themselves: "So they would merely find in their independence a satisfaction of their national vanity, too heavily paid for by the loss of their economic prosperity." (*Memorandum on the Delimitation of the Rights of States and Nations*, p. 79.) Concerning Latvia in particular, M. Mandelstam foresees that the commerce of her ports will enormously suffer, for they will lose the benefit of the Russian transit trade. Agriculture, which will lose the Russian market, will equally suffer from it; her industry will be deprived of fuel and raw materials (p. 60). Finally, Latvia will not be in a position to guarantee "the reimbursement of the enormous amounts spent for the development of her economic prosperity and for her defence" (p. 79).

SETTLEMENT OF ACCOUNTS BETWEEN
LATVIA AND RUSSIA

Let us take the last point first, viz., the mutual settlement of accounts between Latvia and Russia.

It seems that here M. Mandelstam wishes either to frighten us or simply to "overcharge" us.

Now from the statements of the Ministry of Finance it is evident that Latvia has given yearly to the State a surplus of revenue over and above the expenditure, which is valued at about 30 million roubles, after having paid out of her own revenues all the expenses of the State within the boundaries of Latvia, including expenditure on numerous institutions, on strong armies and frontier guards, etc. In how many yearly instalments does M. Mandelstam intend to repay that surplus to Latvia?

It is absolutely impossible to understand of what expenses for the defence of Latvia M. Mandelstam is speaking. Latvia's share in

the State Budget, including army and navy, as we have already seen, is paid off with a surplus for the Russian Budget. Of what other expenditure then is M. Mandelstam speaking? Of war expenses for a defence which was a failure and brought Latvia nothing but destruction and ruins? Who would pay for a task so badly done? And if that is the expense referred to, what is the cost M. Mandelstam puts on the senseless and aimless devastation carried out in Latvia by Russian armies? They are very well depicted in the exhaustive work by M. J. Sahlit, member of the Imperial Douma.¹

Another indiscreet question: At what rate of exchange does M. Mandelstam suggest paying the mass of Russian credit-notes with which Latvia was deluged, and against which the Russian Government has received goods of a fixed weight and at a fixed price?

If a reckoning is set up—for conscience' sake, naturally—Latvia will have to receive

¹ P. J. Sahlit, *Devastation of Latvia by the Russian Armies*, Petrograd, 1917 (in Russian).

from Russia amounts which will be a considerable balance in the establishment of her own finances.

ECONOMIC INTERESTS OF LATVIA

Concerning the economic interests of Latvia, it is scarcely probable that M. Mandelstam need defend them against the Letts themselves. This time M. Mandelstam has evidently gone to unnecessary trouble. If the economic interests of Latvia so weightily necessitate her reunion with Russia, the Letts, being accustomed to calculate quite dispassionately, will soon see their advantage and will be anxious to adhere to the All-Russian Federation projected by M. Mandelstam of their own free will. Consequently, why does M. Mandelstam insist on establishing Latvia's happiness by force and compulsion? Is it possible he has forgotten that he who tries to prove too much proves nothing?

Besides, M. Mandelstam appears to be ill-informed on the economic life of Latvia. It

is not true that Latvia needs the Russian market for her agricultural products. It will not be difficult for her to find a more profitable market in the West. It is equally not true that Latvia will be deprived of the transit trade of Russia, for her ports are the most convenient transit points for Russia; and Latvia, for the purpose of increasing and developing this transit trade, will do her best to further her own interests. M. Mandelstam is equally mistaken as regards Lettish industry. Fuel, in the shape of coal, has been supplied to her up to the present not by Russia, but principally by England, and Russian iron ore could easily be replaced by Swedish. Generally speaking, one may say that Latvia, being in a better economic situation than Russia, can rightly hope that the latter will look for normal economic relations with Latvia, and it would have been more comprehensive and more natural if M. Mandelstam had only taken up the defence of Russia's economic interests.

ASPIRATIONS OF THE LETTS

M. Mandelstam may unhesitatingly leave the defence of Lettish interests to the Letts themselves. They have studied them and understand them well. Lettish aspirations were born neither to-day nor yesterday. The birth of the Lettish movement took place in 1860. Since that time it has been under the double oppression of the Baltic barons and the Russian bureaucracy. But it has courageously borne this double yoke, and has proved its vitality and activity. It has thrived and developed; it has taken deep root in the soul of the people whence it cannot be eradicated again. It is certain that the Lettish people possesses what President Wilson calls "well-defined national aspirations." These have clearly appeared in the sharp and closely-followed line maintained by the Lettish people during the whole war in perfect unanimity. The Letts have fought with all their might against Germany to defend their aspirations against Teutonic tendencies. The

National Council of Latvia, in the fatal period of the Russian flight and the German occupation of a considerable portion of Latvia, was able to centre in itself the whole social activity and political thought of the Lettish people. In its first session, from 16th to 19th November, 1917, it asked for the Lettish nation the right to dispose of themselves. In the second, from 15th to 19th January, 1918, it very categorically stated that "Latvia asks to be recognised as a sovereign, independent and indivisible State." The National Council informed Russia of its decision in the speech of its representative, J. Goldman, in the Constituent Assembly of Russia, on the 5th January, 1918. The National Council, in spite of the personal danger to its members, in a protest note addressed on the 4th April, 1918, to the German Chancellor, Count Hertling, explicitly opposed the German inclination to unite Latvia to Germany. Already in July, 1918, the National Council had addressed itself to the Allied Governments and the opinion of the whole world, protesting against the peace of Brest-Litovsk and revealing the

clumsy deceit of the German occupation authority in proclaiming as the will of the Lettish people the decisions of the Landesrath, a usurping body composed of German barons and their servants; and the National Council emphasised the unbending decision of the Lettish people to attain the realisation of its natural rights to independence. The National Council of Latvia considered it a great honour that its aspirations were crowned with success. It was recognised as an independent body by the Governments of England and Japan.

Having suffered long at the hands of both Russia and Germany, the Lettish people has come to the conclusion that it would find its interests guaranteed only by independence. It is not a passing mood, but a firm conviction, for which the Lettish people has suffered and which it will never and in no case surrender. And it awaits the realisation of its aspirations and the solemn proclamation of its rights.

PROTESTS OF THE RUSSIAN GROUPS

However, the Russian groups protest in the name of the interests of the Russian people, who, they say, will oppose the separation of an independent Latvia. One might briefly reply that the one-sided interests of the Russian people would not solve this question, and that an exclusive solution in favour of the interests of the Russian people would be in opposition to the principle of international relations proclaimed by the Allies. In his speech delivered on the 4th July, 1918, President Wilson declared: "The settlement of any one of the questions concerning either territories, national sovereignty, economic or political relations, must be made on the basis of the free acceptance of such a settlement by the peoples directly concerned, and not on the basis of material interest or advantage of any other nation or people." And in the message of September 27th, 1918, President Wilson said: "No individual or special interest of a nation or a group of nations shall be able so to inspire a part of the

arrangement that it would not be in agreement with the united interests of all."

It would seem that these declarations leave nothing to be desired from the point of view of clearness and conciseness, and they were pronounced in the most solemn manner and adopted both by the Allies and their adversaries as a basis on which future international relations might be established. It would seem also that these declarations do not leave any doubt about the fact that the question of Latvia and her fate should be solved on the basis of the aspirations and wishes of the Lettish people, and not in accordance with the interests of Russia. However, to complete the picture, we might as well discuss the question of those Russian interests which, we are told, would suffer by the separation of Latvia.

ECONOMIC INTERESTS OF RUSSIA

The Russian groups and their ideologists put forward the economic interests of Russia, which, they say, do not in any way permit

the separation of Latvia. "Russian foreign trade," says Mandelstam (*Memorandum on the Delimitation of the Rights of States and Nations*), "was principally sea-borne; from this point of view the Baltic ports were of the highest importance to it" (p. 58). "The complete separation of the Baltic provinces from Russia would put this latter in an extremely difficult and grave situation, by depriving her of her outlets in the Baltic, which are not only the most important but also the only practicable ones in the winter" (p. 60).

The fact in itself is certainly correct. Before the war almost half of the imports and more than two-fifths of the exports of European Russia by sea passed through the great ports of Latvia: Riga, Libau, Windau. But who would suppose that Latvia will close her ports to the transit trade of Russia? On the contrary, Latvia understands quite well that she is the natural intermediary between East and West, and will, in her own interests, do her best by every means to encourage trade with Russia. The natural destiny of Latvia is

to be a storehouse for goods coming from the West to Russia and *vice versa*. And everything makes us believe that Latvia will be in a position to perform that rôle better than Russia herself.

The chief conditions required by commerce are the following : Suitable technical establishments, simple and precise juridical relations, and lastly, order and tranquillity. Russia has not been able to provide these conditions. To be satisfied of this, one has but to remember the wretched equipment of the ports, so disproportionate to their world-importance, the miserable state of the railways, the lack of means of transport, the abuses and disorder. Judicial relations were regulated by laws dating almost from the Flood, the same for the Russian villages as for the towns of universal importance, laws which would much better have suited the former alone. The proceedings at the courts of law were of fabulous duration ; the code of laws affecting commercial houses and companies was out of date ; conditions of credit were of the worst ; and, in consequence,

Germany, which enjoys the ability to accommodate herself to all the Russian conditions, increasingly invaded the economic life of the Baltic Sea, dispersing the competition of others. No, it was neither Russian firms nor capital which prevailed there, but those of Germany, and the watchword came not from Petrograd but from Berlin. Russia would not have succeeded as quickly as Latvia in freeing herself from the preponderating influence on the shores of the Baltic. That is why Russia's interests will in no way suffer if the intermediary's rôle is played neither by her nor Germany, but by those who are familiar with the Baltic, whom nature has attached to it, and who consequently have natural rights to it.

STRATEGICAL INTERESTS OF RUSSIA

The Russian groups lay great stress on the strategical interests of Russia. The separation of Latvia, they say, would greatly prejudice these. The frontiers of Russia, after

Latvia's separation, would strategically be so disadvantageous that it would be difficult to defend them successfully. The former frontiers, with Latvia included, were on the contrary very favourable. Yet Russia did not and could not defend them. There is no doubt that if, in 1914, the Germans had, instead of throwing themselves on France, directed their forces to the East, they would have occupied without much difficulty the whole territory of Latvia; and Russia would have been deprived anyhow of the advantages of strategical frontiers and bases for her fleet. This hypothesis has been fully proved by the events that followed. In the spring of 1915, the German forces, relatively weak, easily succeeded in seizing the South of Courland, with the very important base for their navy at Libau, and took up positions on the River Venta. An attempt was then made to draw the attention of the Commander-in-Chief, Grand Duke Nicholas Nikolaievich, to the necessity of a vigorous defence of Courland in view of her military, political and economic importance. It was then that the Grand Duke, not sharing

the opinion of the Russian groups on the strategical importance of Latvia, made his famous retort, "I don't give a damn for your Courland!"—words which to-day still resound in the ears of every Lett. And in the summer of 1915, a few German detachments were seen occupying, almost without any resistance on the part of the Russians, the greater part of Courland. It is easy to believe in the little importance of the German forces and in Courland's weak defence when one learns that mere patrols of cavalry took possession of whole towns almost without firing a shot. Seeing this, two sections of Lettish reservists who had been ordered to retreat, begged to be allowed to defend Mitau, and the permission was granted to them. These heroic soldiers offered to the Germans such a violent and unexpected resistance that the latter hesitated for a long time before coming nearer to the town.

In the autumn of 1915, the front was established on the line of the River Daugava (Dwina). The Russian Political Conference will perhaps say that this is precisely the

strategic line which they contemplate. If that is so, it is fresh proof that in the hands of Russia strategical advantages have no importance. We know from the words publicly pronounced by the commander of an army on the Riga front, Radko-Dmitrieff, that Riga would have fallen in the autumn of 1915 but for the bravery of the Lettish troops, raised, as it is known, by Lettish patriots, after heated argument with the Russian bureaucracy. In the main, it was not the Russians so much as the Letts who defended the Riga front. It is enough to recollect the long siege which they sustained without respite on the "island of death," near Ixküle, and the famous breach made by them in the German front near Mangoul, a breach which unfortunately led to nothing, owing to the lack of Russian troops to support them. Let us quote the characteristic and significant words spoken by the Kaiser after an inspection of the Riga front: "Riga will fall into my hands like a ripe fruit when eight stars have died out on that front." He meant by this the eight detachments of the Lettish army.

The 2nd September, 1917, the Germans broke through the Riga front, and at least two Russian divisions would have been made prisoners if it had not been for the stubborn resistance of certain Lettish regiments, which were then annihilated. After this struggle they existed only in name, a glorious name with which the Bolsheviki continued to frighten their Russian adversaries.¹

By this we can see that favourable strategical positions, in unskilful hands, become rather a snare than an advantage. The fact is that you cannot get immediate advantage out of a favourable strategical line if you have not the wish, the will, and the capacity to profit by it. Russia lacked both the goodwill

¹ As fear has big eyes, even among fearless people like M. Savinkoff, it is believed, for instance, that this latter gentleman has found in the Bolshevik lines two divisions of Lettish Rifles, *i.e.*, 60,000 men (*Pages Modernes*, No. 1, page 7). If we take into account that many Letts have fought from the beginning in the ranks of the Czeko-Slovaks, in the army of Denikin and in that of the North, and remembering that the Lettish regiments have suffered great losses during the war, one can only ask with amazement where this great number of Lettish youths comes from. No more than 3,500 Letts can be counted among the Bolsheviki, all the rest are a vision inspired by fear.

and the capacity; they were absent in the Commander-in-Chief as well as in that moujik deserter from Riazan who replied to all exhortations: "Why should I fight? I'm not going to fish in that sea."

The world-war has proved that patriotic spirit in an army and an understanding of duty are no less indispensable than the technique, favourable positions, etc. Will Russia be able to make her Grand Dukes and moujiks believe that their feeling of duty must extend to the strategic frontiers of the Baltic Sea, in a foreign land? We doubt it. Therefore, Russia's defence will not be prejudiced if the strategical points aimed towards the West fall into stronger and surer hands than hers.

And the question of Russia's defence must be examined from another point of view. Against whom is Russia preparing her defence in the West? Against Latvia? It would be a grave insult to Russia to pretend that Latvia, with her two million and a half inhabitants, could dream of an aggressive act against Russia, which, counting only the Great-Russians, possesses 65 million inhabitants.

Against Esthonia then, with her million and a half inhabitants? Against Lithuania, with her six million inhabitants? To put these questions is to answer them. Against Poland or Ukraine? But in that case the strategical positions of the Baltic Sea have nothing to do with it. Against a coalition of all these States? This is questionable, for strong and adequate as a defensive coalition of all these States might be regarded, an offensive coalition on their part against Russia is obviously unlikely and futile, for in the latter case there could be neither community of interest nor a common object in aggression.

There remains the hypothesis of M. Mandelstam (*Memorandum on the Delimitation of the Rights of States and Nations*, p. 57), that the territory of Latvia may serve as a very favourable point of disembarkation for armies attacking Russia. If M. Mandelstam has Germany in view as a potential adversary, one can set him at ease by telling him that all the interests of Latvia are directed against Germany, and to suspect her of a future alliance with Germany is simply inadmissible. In the

case of an aggressive tendency on the part of Germany, Latvia will have to defend herself, and one can suppose that she will do it more successfully than Russia, which could not thus be other than much obliged to her, in view of Latvia's carrying out for her a task which had proved beyond Russia's power.

Russia's defence will thus in no way be prejudiced by the shores of the Baltic not being guarded by herself but by a more watchful sentry, of whom one could not expect any aggressive tendency, but who would nevertheless oppose himself, in the name of his own interests, to any aggression coming either from the West or East.

The Lettish people claims the realisation of its natural right to an independent existence and free development. Within the boundaries of Russia this was and will be impossible. Consequently, the Lettish people is right in demanding its constitution as an independent State, and this all the more because the interests of the Russian people will not suffer by it.

GUARANTEES OF THE WORLD-PEACE

It would be possible to end here if the question was merely one of tracing a line of delimitation between the interests of the Russian people and those of the Lettish people. But that is not so—one could not lose sight of a more universal interest. What will be the result of the limits traced between the Lettish people and the Russian people, in the matter of other nations' interests? A new international dawn will rise when the Paris Conference has established guarantees for the maintenance of peace. Everything must be done to avoid the disasters of a future war.

And precisely from this point of view, voices are heard proclaiming that in the interests of political equilibrium, a strong Russia must be rebuilt, as far as possible within her former frontiers. They even say that if no Russia existed, one must be invented.

PRINCIPLE OF POLITICAL EQUILIBRIUM

Certainly, it is possible to make a primary reply to this opinion by saying that political

equilibrium is incriminated, and that in its place will come the League of Nations guaranteeing peace and justice for all. The reply is valid. But we are also disposed to agree with those who say that the League of Nations will be formed only in the future and at present it is incapable of fulfilling all the tasks which we await from it. For this reason, if only as a subsidiary factor, one must not lose sight of the problems of political equilibrium.

RUSSIA AS A FACTOR IN POLITICAL EQUILIBRIUM

This equilibrium does not establish the necessity of re-creating Russia as she was before the war, for Russia was in no way a factor powerful enough to support that equilibrium. Knowing Russia's internal weakness, Germany had no fear in launching the world-war. And during the war Russia's forces proved insufficient to weigh down the scales of victory on the Allies' side. On the contrary, during all the time the hostilities lasted,

Russia was strategically, as well as politically and economically, the weakest point of the Allies. Finally she left them to the grace of God after having made them a present of the pest of Bolshevism. It is clear that, even in the case of reconstruction in her former boundaries, Russia will not for a long time be in a position to perform the part of an ally and help to maintain the European equilibrium. Russia is ruined; ruined not only by the war, but also, and much more, by Bolshevism; ruined physically, economically and much more morally and intellectually. More than a generation will be required before Russia can count as a factor in European policy. And who will maintain the equilibrium in the meantime?

INTERNAL WEAKNESS OF RUSSIA

But even after a long rest and complete external reconstruction, Russia, in the case of serious aggression, will always prove internally to be a considerably weaker factor than

it would be possible to judge of from the outside. That was the case during the Japanese war in 1904-5. And so she was also during the war which has just ended. Russia's external strength has always been imaginary, for she has always been weak internally. And this is not an accidental, momentary or passing weakness, but a weakness dependent on Russia's composition and her home-policy. We have already shown that Russia is composed of a series of regions which by their population, history, culture and economic interests are not bound together, but tend in different directions, and are merely held together by perpetual compulsion. By reason of this there will always be a centralised home-policy in Russia, and, consequently, a lot of unsolved and insoluble problems therein; a policy the principal means of which will always be force and compulsion. And as soon as compulsion relaxes, the problems and anomalies artificially kept under come again to the surface and paralyse all the forces of Russia. The history of Russia shows that precisely on account of her internal weakness

and under the threat of revolution, she has been unable to end with success any one of the last wars.

POLITICAL LEANINGS OF RUSSIA TOWARDS GERMANY

But besides that, as concerns Russia, it will never be possible to tell in which direction she will turn. At the beginning of the last century, allied to Prussia and Austria, she fought against France, and became the inspirer of the Holy Alliance which was directed, in full accord with the character of Russia's home-policy, against all the rights of peoples. In the middle of the last century, she fought against England, France, and Sardinia, after having secured the neutrality of Austria and Prussia. In 1870, her friendly neutrality gave Prussia the opportunity to crush France. There is something fateful in her traditional friendship with Germany. Behind the back of France, though allied to her, it was towards Germany that Nicholas II. felt himself at-

tracted (see his correspondence with William II., published in Bourtzeff's paper *L'Avenir*, 1917), as well as his ministers Sturmer and Protopopoff, unmasked in the speech of P. Miliukoff in the Imperial Douma, in February, 1917; M. Miliukoff himself (*Pages Modernes*, April number, 1919, page 6); and the Tzar's General Skoropadsky; and Lenin and Trotsky who signed peace with Germany of the Kaiser and wanted an alliance with Germany of Scheidemann at any cost. At heart, M. Mandelstam also is not too remote from this fatal leaning. He threatens war if the Paris Conference shows itself disposed to recognise the independence of the States detached from Russia (*Some Reflections on the Question of a Great Poland and the Shores of the Baltic*, p. 10; *Memorandum on the Delimitation of the Rights of States and Nations*, p. 81). With what war and in alliance with whom does M. Mandelstam threaten us?

It is evident that the Russian Political Conference is not free from that fatal inclination. Its representative, M. Sazonoff, former Minister, is revealed by Prince Lichnovsky

as ready to abandon France, "Russia's cherished ally," to Germany for plunder, on condition that the latter consents to give Russia a free hand in regard to Austria-Hungary.

It is also very interesting to notice that the crusade against the independent States of the Baltic, preached by M. Mandelstam in Paris, is put into execution in Latvia by the armies of General von der Goltz which have upset the legal Government of Latvia recognised by England and Japan. The hand of M. Mandelstam, seeking allies for the crusade against Latvia, has not remained in the air; von der Goltz has grasped it enthusiastically. Future Russia and bygone Germany have met in a common intrigue against independent Latvia. Finland, Esthonia, Lithuania, Ukraine and independent Poland are specks in the eyes of both; and who can guarantee that the points of contact will not increase with the lapse of time?

RUSSIA AS A PROBABLE DESTROYER OF
THE WORLD-PEACE

Russia has been and will be an ally too unsteady to count as a factor of equilibrium in European politics. Moreover, she is a troublesome factor, and likely to become directly or indirectly the instigator of a European war. In 1904, Russia got herself involved in war with Japan, which exhausted all her forces. During a sequence of years, Germany had her hands completely free in the East, and it was certainly not Russia's balancing forces, but considerations of a quite different nature, which then prevented Germany from falling upon France. On three occasions during the last century Russia's leanings towards complete possession of the Black Sea have served as causes of war; and in that just ended, Russia's interests in the Balkans were the motives for aggression on the part of Austria and Germany. With Russia's reconstitution her leanings towards possession of the Black Sea and particularly

the Straits will necessarily revive; this has already been announced by the "Chairman of the Slav Congress in Moscow and of the Russian Conference in London," M. Briantchaninoff, with the idea that the mandate of guardianship over the Dardanelles and Constantinople should in all justice be entrusted to nobody but Russia.

M. Briantchaninoff's opinion is not a mere accident; we have no reason to regard it as such. There is no doubt that, in a reconstituted Russia, by a natural reaction from the humiliations and outrages suffered by the country, the nationalist wave will rise very high. This nationalism will have as its aims those of militant Slavism. One of these aims has always been the orthodox Cross towering over "Haghia-Sophia." And the Straits were promised to Russia. M. Sazonoff spoke of that in the Imperial Douma amidst a storm of applause. This long-pursued object has escaped from Russian hands thanks only to the microbes which made their way into M. Lenin's sealed-up carriage. It was almost reached, and it can be reached. It is necessary

to try to reach it. Lenin is already no more. M. Briantchaninoff will be heard with thundering voice; M. Miliukoff will not be able to refuse his help, having shown interest in the Dardanelles during his whole life. M. Sazonoff has in his hands the Allies' promises, which only for a time fell into the hands of "Comrade" Tchitcherin. Thus the watchword: "To Constantinople!" And that means: "To Belgrade! To Athens! To Bucharest!" and also "To Paris! To London! To Washington!"

RUSSIA'S POLICY IN THE BALTIC

From the direction of the Baltic Sea, reconstituted Russia threatens us with another political danger. This danger comes from the strange policy Russia has pursued in the Baltic countries, a policy whose repetition is revealed by many signs. Feeling instinctively her administrative incapacity, Russia thus distinctly shows the effects of the influence of German elements in the staff of her adminis-

trators. During all the time of her domination over these countries, she left full power in the hands of the Baltic barons who—except in some accidental and temporary cases—have been the administrators and the real masters of the land. They took great advantage of this situation, endeavouring to give the country a German character. Further, they organised systematic German colonisation, for the realisation of which Berlin put large sums at their disposal. This colonisation took on such vast proportions and was carried on so openly that it finally attracted the attention of the Russian Government itself, which, in order to paralyse its effects, set up Russian colonisation in its turn. The latter, however, led to no results, the Russian peasant not being prepared for the intensive agricultural methods adopted in the country. The feelings and leanings of the Baltic nobility have clearly shown themselves during the war. It is enough to remember that they offered to General Hindenburg a third part of their lands for the purpose of colonisation. Their leanings were in perfect accord with the aims of the Pan-

Germans, of whom many were emigrants from the Baltic, and who, like Professor Schiemann and P. Rohrbach, have not been playing an unimportant part. It is extremely interesting to observe that these tendencies have not ceased with the defeat of Germany. It is known that the Germans have promised to Latvia energetic assistance against the Bolsheviki if a right to the land is granted to all the combatants.

It is certain that after the war there will be a surplus of population in Germany, and it is not for nothing that Count Brokdorff-Rantzau complains in one of his notes that it will be difficult to find room for this surplus of inhabitants, as it is probable that the principal States will close their doors to them. There is no doubt whatever that a large part of this excess of population will go over to the Baltic, where they will find land ready for them and will be received with open arms by the Baltic barons of Pan-German mind. The Russian Government, as past experience has proved, will be unable to oppose this fresh *Drang nach Osten*, and if the Lettish people do not

possess enough freedom of action, that is to say, if there is no independent Latvia, one can be supremely sure that German influence will be very great. On the other hand, the resolution of the various Landestags, Landesrats, and Regenschaftsrats, which have asked for the closest *rapprochement* with Germany, militarily and economically, and have offered the ducal crown to the Hohenzollern dynasty, leaves no doubt about the direction in which the sympathies of the Baltic Germans will go. The Baltic is, in the hands of Russia, a borderland with predominant German interests, a land to which Germany stretches out her hand, a land always ready, at a moment favourable to Pan-Germanism, to detach itself from Russia and pass over to the side of her adversaries. Thus, to be logical in the matter of the Baltic States, one must decide, not between Russia and Latvia, but between the latter and Germany.

And thus the argument of political motives leads to a conclusion which is not at all to the advantage of Russia's reconstitution. For the re-establishment of equilibrium in Euro-

pean politics, Russia is of no value. She is not, to that end, something which should be invented if she did not exist.¹

THE POLITICAL RÔLE OF THE NEW STATES

In order to have an absolutely clear idea of the question, it is still necessary to look at the other side; *i.e.*, to represent to oneself the probable policy of the States detached from Russia. We have already shown that one cannot expect aggression from these States, because of the relative external weakness of them individually. It is equally unimaginable that they should form an aggressive alliance, for one cannot realise a common aggressive aim for all these States. Consequently one cannot expect a violation of peace from their side.

But taking into account their relative weakness, will these States not be subject to

¹ Details on this point will be found in the pamphlet of Count Jean Tarnovsky, *La Menace Allemande et le Péril Russe*, Imprimerie Moderne, 17, rue Duler, Biarritz, 1919.

envy and aggression on the part of their stronger neighbours, and will they not in this way, against their will, be the cause of disturbing the peace? It is necessary to envisage this peril, but it is possible to avert it. In this one may rightly rely on the League of Nations in which the small nations put all their hope.

Assuredly, the League of Nations is just now not strong enough; but, in view of the general national exhaustion, one cannot expect, as soon as peace is concluded, aggression against the States which have the authority of the Peace Conference on their side. If aggressive forces gather later, the League of Nations will have had time in the interval to organise itself definitely and to command moral and material strength sufficient to check aggression.

There is another way, too, of guaranteeing the security of the new States: an alliance between them, or at least between those of them which have access to the Baltic Sea; viz., Finland, Esthonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and probably White-Russia, an alli-

ance with many certain chances of development in one direction or another. Assuredly, there are still ancient accounts to be settled between some of these nations, but common and vital interests are so strong that History will be no obstacle in the matter. All these nationalities have always had continual relations with Western civilisation, and there would quickly and easily be formed between them a community of intellectual and moral interests. The economic intercourse between them is also capable of vast development. For instance, Poland can supply all the other States with her coal, and Lithuania can supply the corn which Finland needs. Undoubtedly, there are common interests between all the above-named States in the trade of the Baltic Sea. Each one of them has a natural *Hinterland*, and, consequently, is vitally interested in the guarantee of freedom of trade in the Baltic Sea. Besides, the mere political interest of common defence is a strong enough basis for an alliance of all the Baltic States, for they are under the double menace of Germany on one side and Russia on the other. All these

States have experienced in fact the gravity of this menace, and so all will understand the great value of this defensive alliance.

THE DOMINIUM MARIS BALTICI

(Command of the Baltic Sea) has been for centuries a bone of contention between the Northern and Eastern States of Europe. For this the Teutons have contended, and Poland, Lithuania, Sweden, Denmark, Russia. Germany had the same aim, and before the war had nearly reached it. During the whole of history, every State which acquired strength and authority in the North or East of Europe, evinced this inevitable leaning towards possession of the Baltic Sea, and it was only in the measure of its success in that direction that it could play its part as a Great Power, a rôle which ceased the moment the State was deprived of that DOMINIUM MARIS BALTICI. To give it again to one of the coastwise States would mean a fresh menace to the peace of Europe; but by putting it into the hands of

those to whom it belongs by natural right, that is to say, into the common possession of the States surrounding that sea, one would remove one of the causes of probable conflicts in the future of Europe.

LINE OF PARTITION BETWEEN RUSSIA AND GERMANY

For yet another reason the Baltic States, or rather their alliance, will have a great rôle to play—that of a boundary line of economic and political culture between Russia and Germany. This partition—which might be called a *cordon sanitaire*—is absolutely indispensable. Germany's direct influence on Russia, with no obstacle between them, is a real danger. To the naïve and dreamy soul of the child-like Russian villagers, the extreme sociological theories of the West, born from a very complex economic situation, are a direct temptation and a dangerous poison, as illustrated by M. Lenin's sealed railway carriage. The teachings of German Social Democracy

have taken such root in Russian soil and have produced such a harvest that it has caused much merriment to the Teuton Field-Mars-hals; while to Russia it has brought extreme abasement and almost irretrievable disaster.

And this is likely to happen again, everywhere and always, whenever a backward race, neighbour of another highly developed, would fain borrow from the latter and put into immediate operation "the latest advances of civilisation."

It is the same in regard to economic relations. Germany, deprived of her colonies, and lacking sufficient resources in raw materials and rich markets, will necessarily direct the surplus of her economic energy towards Russia, which will easily become a German colony and submit entirely to German influence. In this respect, Germany had already arrived at considerable results before the war. She will work in the same direction, and after the signing of peace with still greater activity, which will assuredly lead to results hardly desirable from the political point of view. A Russia invaded by capital and technical

forces from Germany, and a Germany with Russian raw materials and Russia's market at her disposal, will be such great economic powers that each will separately appear a serious menace, and all the more so if in alliance.

But what is more clear and more important is the line of political partition between Germany and Russia. The political security of Europe used to be constantly under the menace of an alliance between Russia and Germany, an alliance which would have radically destroyed the balance of power. This menace was in no way artificial but perfectly real, and might have been realised at any moment. As we have tried to prove, it will inevitably reappear with the reconstitution of Russia. The vanquished two of this great war will not at once submit to their fate; both will be discontented and will cogitate ways of improving their situation. This alone is a sufficient basis for a *rapprochement* or an alliance. Russia will not resist for long the temptation of an alliance with Germany, of which the leaders beyond

the Rhine are already openly talking. Consequently, it is necessary to separate Russia from Germany, that is, to prevent their direct union, and to that end it would be impossible to find a more adequate and easy means than the *cordon sanitaire* of the States named. Truth to tell, it would be necessary to invent this alliance if it did not force itself into being.

CONCLUSION

We have arrived at the end of this study and may now summarise.

The question of the organisation of the Lettish people in an independent State must be decided quickly and definitely. The restoration of anything whatever of the *status quo ante*, whether *de facto*, temporary or indefinite, would serve no purpose because it would not give to the Lettish people the juridical basis necessary to the reconstruction of a ruined life. This question must be solved independently of the will of the Russian

people, because, in principle, the idea that the destiny of any people whatsoever depends on the will of another people, is inadmissible; because also it is impossible to foresee when the Russian people will be in a position to make its will freely known. In definitely deciding the destiny of Latvia, it is necessary to reject the project of an All-Russian Federation.

Such a federation is impossible. In accordance with the laws of historical continuity, it is impossible to pass from a centralised State to one of the most complicated and most delicate forms of State organisation. Besides, the peoples of Russia have no such community of intellectual, moral and economic interests as might become the solid foundation of a free co-existence in one and the same State. The All-Russian Federation will either divide itself into different States or change itself into a centralised State in which the natural rights of its different peoples will not be guaranteed. The only just solution of the question of Latvia is the recognition of that country as an independent State.

This is not only the natural right of the Lettish people. It has long been the object of its permanent and definite leanings, and these are in harmony with its well-recognised interests.

The interests of Russia will in no way suffer from the separation of Latvia; neither economically, for Latvia will certainly be a better intermediary between the West and the East than Russia was or would be; nor strategically, for Latvia will be a much more conscientious sentinel on the Baltic Sea than Russia was or would be.

It is impossible for Russia to claim to re-enter her former boundaries on the necessity of European balance of power, for, as a factor of equilibrium, Russia has been found wanting, and one can foresee her future complete submission to the economic and political influence of Germany, as well as to her civilisation.

On the other hand, the interests of a lasting peace demand the creation of a series of independent national States for the peoples inhabiting the shores of the Baltic Sea; and, between them, a defensive alliance for which

there are sufficient grounds in the shape of common economic, political and intellectual interests. Such an alliance would play at the same time the rôle of the necessary line of demarcation between Russia and Germany. Moreover, it is the only natural solution of the problem of the *Dominium maris Baltici*, which has been an apple of discord for centuries and has often been the disturber of the world's peace.

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