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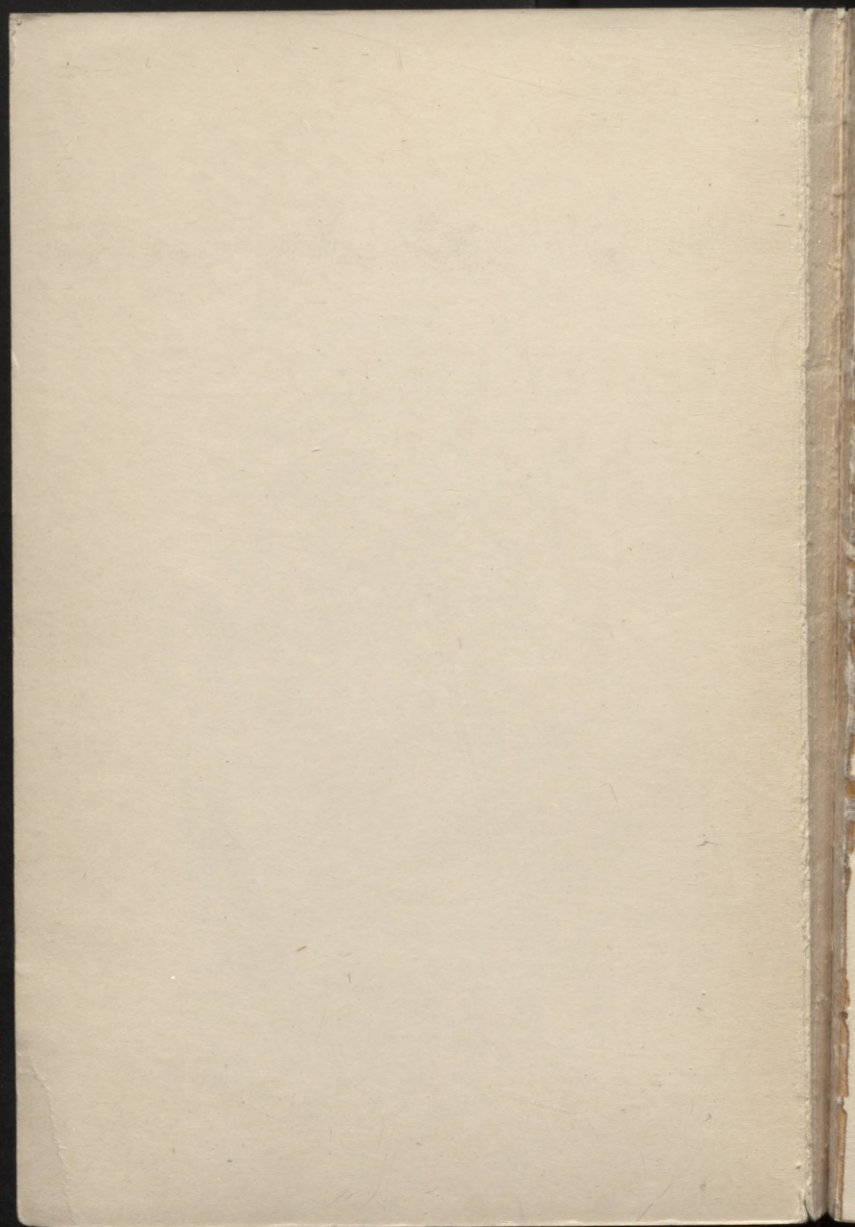
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BALTIC PROBLEM

by

Arnolds Spēkke





LATVIA AND THE BALTIC PROBLEM

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A HISTORY OF RECENT HISTORY

BY

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and "The Baltic Sea"

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LATVIA
AND THE
BALTIC PROBLEM

SKETCH OF RECENT HISTORY

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FOREWORD

The French manuscript of this little book was ready for the press about the middle of 1951; it was published early in 1952. The intervening three years have seen a profound change in the attitude of the world towards the Baltic problem, in some respects a change of principle. It is therefore the author's wish to attempt in a later publication, by a series of chosen quotations and analyses, to present the Baltic question in the framework of the urgent and grave problems of the whole of Eastern Europe. Urgent for the peoples of this neuralgic part of the world who bear, with ever-growing impatience, the heavy oppression of foreign domination. Grave for the whole world, which is not succeeding, and will never succeed, in finding any kind of stability and tranquility without the rectification of the fatal errors—political, economical, national and psychological—made concerning these peoples who are today forced to lead a miserable existence beyond the "Iron Curtain".

LATVIA, COUNTRY WITH AN AGE-OLD FRONTIER

The continent of Europe has three small inland seas, the Baltic, the Adriatic and the Black Seas and the larger Mediterranean, the history of which, as an intercontinental sea, differs considerably from that of the other three. The shores of these latter seas have for centuries experienced great invasions, and in general the history of their inhabitants has been tangled and full of adversity. Before the dawn of European history the direction of the great migrations and of the displacement of peoples was from east to west (the Indo-European expansion). But after the gradual crystallisation of the nations and of the European States, and after the creation of the civilisation of our mistress of continents (a French geographer has called Europe the "continent of quality"), a civilising expansion began in the reverse direction, from west to east. Early manifestation of this is the penetration of Ancient Greece into Asia Minor. These flows and ebbs have been particularly felt on the coasts of the inland seas, because it is here that the forces of the continent meet those of the free seas—peacefully by the exchange of goods and ideas, or in struggle for positions of advantage. And as Europe, in the expressive formula dating from the time of Humboldt, is only a peninsula of Asia, the huge, rigid forces of the Euro-Asiatic continent are particularly felt on the eastern coasts of the inland seas before mentioned. We may recall, apart from the history of the Baltic, the historical destinies of Dalmatia, Albania and the Epirus on the Adriatic. Again, in a rather different geographical projection, we may think of the north coast of the Black Sea, especially of the Crimea (Greeks, Kingdom of the Bosphorus, Goths, Khazars, Italian colonies, Tartar Khanat,

etc., etc.). Such situations are both privileged and dangerous: privileged because rich in varied infiltrations, as is always the case with historic cross-roads; dangerous and—in times of great conflicts—tragic, because always the object of the covetousness of big neighbours. The geographical situation of the Baltic coast leads us to one more comparison. The great rivers rise outside the ethnic and political frontiers of the Baltic countries: the Daugava (Duna) in the province of Tver, 13 km from the sources of the Volga; the Niemunas (Niemen, Memel) in the province of Minsk. The German Rhine flows into the North Sea on the Flemish coast and, like the Baltic rivers, increases the pressure of the continent on the coast. But the Flemish-Dutch coast is on the ocean, while for the Baltic States the Scandinavian peninsula constitutes a form of barrier. By cutting off from the Balts direct access to the vast horizon of the ocean, Scandinavia, also, increases the pressure of the continent on the Baltic Sea.

To sum up, let us say that if there were only geography or rather geographic destiny, to be taken into account, as certain of its schools would have us think, the fate of the Balts would have been very hard. But it is civilising resistance, it is history, which created the Baltic countries. This it is which has preserved them through the centuries from all kinds of dangers, not least from the obscure forces of pre-history (Slav expansion of 6th to 10th century). And this it is which will save them once again from those continental embraces which more resemble strangulations.

II

MUSCOVY BECOMES "RUSSIA" IN CUTTING THROUGH THE ROAD TO THE BALTIC

It is not my object to write here a handbook of history, but rather to go in search of certain facts and situations in past centuries which can make more clearly understood certain events of our own days. We shall therefore skip the centuries of the great Slav expansion (from the 6th century), the attacks of the Vikings (from the 8th century), the period of the Latvian regional States (from the 8th century), the arrival of the German-Saxon crusades in the Baltic countries for a stay of several hundred years (13th century), and come immediately to the 16th century, that of the first large-scale attempt of the Muscovites to invade the Baltic countries.

This "Livonian War" (1558—1582), conducted by Ivan IV, the Terrible, is not forgotten, but neither is the fact that it was only his distant successor, Peter the Great, who succeeded in conquering a part of the coast of the sea which was still called "the sea of the Northmen". The Great Soviet Encyclopædia is very frank on the subject of Ivan IV (p. 368): "The question of the eastern Baltic (pribaltiki) had a decisive importance for the historic destiny of Russia: on this question depended whether Russia would enter the system of European States or not". But Ivan the Terrible did not succeed. On the opposing side there was Poland's greatest King, Stephen Batory, who succeeded in leading with firmness his armies composed of Poles, Lithuanians, Hungarians, Germans, and even some detachments of Tartars, against the Russians and the Tartars of the Muscovite Czar.

Picturesque descriptions of these bloody events, played out

also on Baltic soil, can be read elsewhere. But it is necessary to underline here an intercontinental element in this savage conflict between east and west. Muscovy alone was too weak to make for herself a road to the Baltic; only after having organised her Asiatic hinterland was she to succeed. It was the work of three Russian czars, with their wars of expansion: two are called "Great", and the first, the precursor, "Terrible" (Ivan IV, Peter the Great, Catherine II, the Great). The conquest of the west was no easy task for the Muscovites.

After the period bearing the epithet "confused", Czar Aleksey, taking advantage of the wars of the Swedes with the Poles, tried his fortune. He succeeded for a certain time in besieging Riga, and then retired (1656). Muscovy was ready to make dangerous raids, but she could not yet break in the walls of the "solid German towns" (words of Ivan IV) or subdue even small regions of the western civilisation. It was going to need all the force of an exceptional personality like that of Peter the Great, as well as two decades of war (1701—1721, Peace of Altmark, 1729), to conquer a part of Livonia, with her chief port, Riga. And it was going to need also a coalition of States, directed against the genial but extravagant Charles XII. The joy of the Russians, after their victory, was immense. But the country itself, after the cruel campaign of Sheremetyeff, resembled an open wound, and was suffering moreover from the plague.

The Duchy of Courland remained apart, for three quarters of a century (her total existence was two and a third centuries). Sweden was liquidated as a Great Power, and Poland was trampled from one end to the other by the armies of conquerors (Swedish and Russian). As we have said, the advance of the Muscovites towards the west was not rapid.

With the arrival of the Russians in the Baltic we are faced with a change of great importance, with vast repercussions. In other words, we are in the presence of a profound change in the age-long diagram of forces in eastern Europe. I have once compared this diagram with the sign of the cross ("Lettonia—Il Mondo d'oggi", Rome 1939, p.p. 19—20). The forces of the west (Scandinavian, German) and the forces of the east (Russian), advancing towards the east and west respectively,

meet rather often, to settle their accounts, on the eastern shore of the Baltic. Most often the meeting-place has been the district around the mouth of the River Daugava—named also Veina, Duna, Dvina, Dzwina (how many names, how many calamities!), where Riga stands. These horizontal forces are crossed by the vertical forces (Finnish, Estonian, Balt, Polish). When the vertical line prevails there can be seen on the historical maps a whole series of political unities, from the White Sea to the Black Sea. But when, of recent date let us note, the empires of central and eastern Europe are on the march, we hear only of conquests, of partitions, and, in modern times, of protectorates. To this diagram of forces, with its unstable centre, is bound the fate of the Latvian people. After the Northern War, with central and northern Livonia become Russian, the rest of the vertical line had sooner or later to disappear. We had entered the century of the partitions of Poland.

The late Professor Temperley (p. 218) gives us a suggestive vision of the dangerous geographic situation of Poland and the surrounding area. "Poland," he writes, "forms part of the great plain which begins in France, extends across northern Germany and Russia, and terminates at the Urals. It lies at the point where this plain, which is comparatively narrow in the west, widens out like a fan, owing to the southward bend of the Carpathians, to spread henceforth from the Baltic to the Black Sea. This position at what may be called the neck of the funnel, or the gateway from the broad plain of the east to the narrower one of the west, has placed Poland athwart what has always been the great commercial and military highroad between east and west, and also upon several important routes between north and south... This position has brought great advantages and perhaps even greater dangers." (See also p. 219 for a close analysis of the political importance of the Polish rivers, and p. 223, where the author speaks of "that broad isthmus between the Baltic and the Black Sea which leads from eastern continental Europe to the peninsular Europe of the west".)

III

THE PARTITIONS OF POLAND (1772—1795) AND THE TREATY OF TILSITT (1807)

There is no country of Europe which has not lost its independence for some period, but none which has suffered so many partitions as Poland—concerted partitions by her great neighbours. Why has this been? Obviously for the simple reason that the native land of the Polish people stands just on the base line where the so-called European peninsula breaks off from the Euro-Asiatic continent. The vertical line of our diagram of the cross passes across the country of the Poles. This does not signify a fatality before which national and political energy must abdicate. It only means that we have here an area constantly coveted by forces of different origins, an area where geography and history are in almost permanent conflict (if I may modify thus the expressive formula of J. Ancel, who has applied it to Livonia).

In the 18th century Poland was partitioned three times (1772, 1793, 1795). This meant that the three (and once the two) States which achieved this noble task had become considerable, even formidable, political factors. And there were besides stimulations of an ideological nature: "Poland" (writes Professor Temperley, p. 225) "was the first experiment with a federal republic on a large scale down to the appearance of the United States. In the 16th and 17th centuries this Republic was the freest state in Europe, the state in which the greatest measure of constitutional, civic, intellectual, and religious liberty existed." But this was only to find herself beset in the 18th century by Prussia and by two "women's" empires (Catherine II and Marie-Thérèse), as they were ironically termed by Frederick

the Prussian (called Great, but obviously not for any love of liberty). And the successors of these same three sovereigns found themselves allies again at the Battle of the Nations at Leipzig. The real *spiritus movens* of the Polish partitions was the Russian Czarine, cleverly seconded by Frederick the Great, who earned for all this, it is sad to say, the fervent eulogies of Voltaire (see: "The Partitions of Poland" by Lord Eversley, p. 162). When Poland fell, too liberal for her surroundings, the Duchy of Courland (formally attached to the Polish Crown) dropped also, like a ripe fruit, into the august bosom of the Czarine. *Finis crasis*: the vertical forces ceased to exist, at least in appearance, on the historical maps, for an interval of about a century.

And, to complete the picture, there is the Treaty of Tilsitt of 1807, by which the last of these vertical forces, Finland, until then a Swedish province, became a zone of Russian influence. We see the Emperor of all the Russias, Alexander I, and the Emperor of the French Revolution (mother of all the revolutions of modern times), Napoleon I—enemies of yesterday—shaking hands on the raft of Niemunas—Niemán, to seal the act of partition of zones of influence in the European continent. The agreement lasted scarcely five years—often the fate of such solemn agreements—but the political fortunes of Finland were henceforth to take a new direction.

THE CENTURY OF NATIONALITIES (19th) IS STRONGER THAN THE CONGRESS OF VIENNA.

In 1815 the Congress of Vienna sat and amused itself in the splendid palaces of the Habsbourg capital; in 1918 in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles the Peace was signed which ended the First World War. The famous century of national and social revolutions had opened, the century of the struggles and triumphs of the "third estate" and of the violent débuts of the "fourth". A century of great acquisitions in the domain of the sciences and of humanitarian progress; a century, at the same time, of strong materialistic current, of which the latter-day consequences are far from attractive or promising for humanity.

The Baltic sector was established "for eternity", as the decree of the 20th January 1809 of Czar Alexander said in regard to Finland—and came under Russian aegis. Finland however, kept certain privileges. Poland which, after beginning as "Poland of the Congress" (see below), that is to say as a much reduced kingdom united to Russia (in consequence of international recognition of the Third Partition—1795), ended by becoming, after the revolutions of 1830-31 and 1863-64, one of the worst treated provinces of the czarist empire.

The world grew accustomed to consider this situation as normal and, looking at the political maps of Europe created by the Congress of Vienna, it forgot to study the older historical maps.

The Baltic Sea was henceforth a frontier and no longer a centre of cultural expansion as it had been for ten centuries and more. And it was repeated, without possibility of objection, that "Russia had indispensable need of the ports of the east coast of the Baltic Sea, as every living organism has need of lungs of

breathe". It was the "imperialist psychology" preached in the great volumes of world history in the 19th century. The name Poland became a symbol of national disgrace. And as to the Balts, who knew them at that time? Who knew even of their existence? Naturally there were exceptions: the linguists of the century were interested in the Baltic languages, especially in Lithuanian, curiously archaic in its phonetics. Historians studied the splendid annals of the Lithuanian Grand Duchy (14th and 15th centuries); from the pen of Elisée Reclus came beautiful lines on the Latvians, etc. But the public at large were to discover the Balts with surprise at the end of the First World War.

The century of nationalities, as the 19th century is called, awakened to a new life not only the "great"; it revived also the "medium" and even the "small". Not only did two great nations of Europe, Germany and Italy, find their political unity, but many medium-sized and small nations also tried to realise, without thought for sacrifice or victim, the supreme idea which stays not before sacrifice (words of the Latvian poet, J. Rainis). While Metternich and Nicholas I were still in the ascendant, Greece, Belgium and Serbia were liberated. Serious unrest took place in Spain and Ireland, and the stormy year 1848 made itself felt almost everywhere. The intrinsic force of the idea of nationality was such that, following the Russo-Turkish War, at the Congress of Berlin (1878) under the presidency of Bismark, the unconditional sovereignty of several Balkan peoples had to be recognised; and thus was initiated the future "balkanisation" (a term used always in a derogatory sense) of an important sector of Europe. Finally, to the number, already noticeably risen, of sovereign peoples, the First World War added Albania, Poland, Finland, the three Baltic States, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Ireland. In the east of our continent the political rhythm is always slower. And thus we find ourselves before the multi-coloured tapestry of political unities in this "continent of quality", during the period between the two world wars.

At Riga, the capital of Latvia, where now no foreign diplomatic representative and no foreign journalist is admitted, there were, during this period, more than twenty foreign legations, as well as numerous consulates and representatives of the large newspapers of the world.

AT THE OPENING OF THE CENTURY OF WORLD WARS

To understand certain problems better, let us take some steps backward. The world had become so accustomed to the political maps of the Congress of Vienna, especially as concerned the Baltic coast, that the appearance of the Baltic States, created by peoples "without historic past", seemed to many a matter of surprise and even something far from normal. A series of objections and criticisms were put forward, sometimes to the disconcertment of leading persons well disposed towards the Baltic peoples. The ink has faded on these polemical texts, printed or written. The economic and administrative capacities of the Baltic peoples are no longer doubted, and our efforts and cultural aspirations are accepted as natural and legitimate. The Latvian emigration of 1944-45 has opened the eyes of many. A burning problem in 1919-1920—the agrarian reform—may be regarded, in the face of the experiences of today in many countries behind the Iron Curtain, in the light of a social panacea, saving the principle of land ownership. In these regions there remained only the principle of force, or what is called "political equilibrium and military equilibrium". This is now more true than ever, and I shall speak of it again towards the end of this booklet.

That there should be such polemics surrounding the act of birth of the new States was rather natural in this old continent, so imbued with *amour-propre* and political snobbery. Confidential reports and drawing-room gossip often resemble one another: this is true for Belgium in 1830 and for Poland in 1918; for the Balkan countries after the Congress of Berlin; for the Baltic countries after the Peace of Versailles. It is frequently

difficult to distinguish secret ambitions, interests and the voice of self-esteem from the traditional style of official reports.

At all events, towards the turn of the 20th century we find in Latvia and in the other Baltic countries a middle class nationally disciplined and politically militant, peasants well-off or even rich, industrial workers with a good standard of life and, above all, an intellectual élite, ready to take on its shoulders the responsibilities of power despite all difficulties.

Some explanations may here be given for the foreign reader. The generations of the Latvian "Risorgimento", to use this pleasing and expressive Italian term, have left to posterity a legacy of economic and cultural effort, and of national unity. The period of russification during the latter half of the reign of Czar Alexander III (d. 1894) only succeeded in slowing down these efforts by forcing the active minds to draw back. But socialist influences, coming largely from Russia, as the faithful shadows of political oppression, provoked division also in the circles of Latvian nationalism at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th. Therefore the revolution of 1905 (with its most violent eruptions in the "Baltic provinces", in the Caucasus and at St. Petersburg), took place for the most part under the red flags of the political parties of the Left; although in the country the peasants interpreted it in general as an occasion of national struggle against the ancient oppressors, the "Baltic barons". This national and social fermentation was an infallible indication of changes, more or less immediate. In the towns, at the municipal elections, the German majorities, protected by the fortress of medieval privileges, were taken by assault. And the country districts, always faithful to their administrative autonomy (in the Communes), became very active in the creation of agricultural and cooperative societies. Thus, the formulas of regional autonomy, or even of national independence, put forward during the stormy years of 1905, were only the logical continuation of the fight for rights. This fight went on—let us not forget this Baltic nuance—under the double pressure of the German-Balt aristocracy, still strong at home and in the czarist court, and of the Russian bureaucracy, growing ever more harassing.

VI

THE FIRST WORLD WAR AND THE PEACE OF VERSAILLES

Before the war of 1914—1918, as already said, the rest of the world, and particularly the West, knew little of the Balts. In czarist Russia they were considered as a kind of German, in the West as a kind of Russian—the term “Balt” being connected with that of “baron”.

This fact was the more curious in face of the tourist and watering-place propaganda which existed and even had some influence on literary creations; not to mention the interest which even the general public had, for example, in the Basques, in the Bretons for their folklore, in the “Highlanders” and the courageous Irish. The Balts had twice to cross the “valley of death”, to be twice at the crossroads of the greatest conflicts of history, to merit an ever-growing interest in the different corners of the globe.

The best proofs of this state of things during the First World War are furnished by the voluminous histories of that war; for example, “The Times History of the World War”, 20 vol., 1919, and G. Hanotaux, “Histoire illustrée de la guerre de 1914”, 17 vol., 1920. In these publications are to be found, duly placed, the names of Courland and Livonia, but no mention of the Latvian people. This is so in spite of the important feats of arms of the Latvian Rifle Brigades, formed as early as 19th July 1915. Only the famous Flemish poet, Verhaeren, heard these distant echoes.

The military chronicle of this First World War evokes anew before our eyes the diagram of forces of which I have spoken. At first the three powerful empires in struggle, termed

the horizontal forces, after a certain fluctuation of the line of equilibrium (East Prussia, German counter-blow, Russian attack in Galicia, etc.) counterbalanced one another for a period of some three years, with the northern line of the eastern front bisecting the territory of Latvia on the Daugava-Duna-Dvina River. This line was crossed by the Germans only after the demoralisation of the Russian troops by Bolshevik propaganda.

It is certainly here that mention should be made of the formation of the Latvian riflemen (eight battalions and one reserve battalion, afterwards transformed into nine regiments). Their creation was for those times an act without precedent. Still in full "psychology of the czarist empire" the organisation was permitted of national military units, with Latvian officers, even with national flags—and this was accorded to a people on the confines of the empire, who had only ten years before shown themselves extremely revolutionary. It is known now that there was much opposition in high circles in St. Petersburg (baptised Petrograd during this war) and that the Latvian Deputies in the Douma had to work without respite to achieve their aim. Finally, the statute of the Latvian troops was approved by the Czar in person, whose annotations on certain official documents are rather amusing to read. Evidently, the hatred of the Latvians for the "Baltic barons" seemed to offer some guarantees, and the Latvian formations were sent immediately to the front. There they fought as men should fight who defend their native land. And if there is need of outside testimony we can quote from a speech of Kaiser Wilhelm, in which he spoke of the "eight stars of the Riga front" which would have to be extinguished for this city to be conquered. (See Temperley, p. 394) But the sacrifice of the Latvian riflemen was in vain from the immediate military point of view: the more they drove in the German lines, the more the Russian reserves took the opposite direction. (Battle of Christmas 1916, etc.) The discontent of a small part of the riflemen made them succumb to Bolshevik slogans, but the great majority of the Latvian troops managed to avoid suffering the corruption of the Russian soldiers. It is from these reserves that the new Latvian army was then formed. The minority which went Red passed to the direct service of the new leaders of the Kremlin. But with time

there were quarrels, as ever during revolutions, and Trotsky, to rid himself of these insolent Latvian "pretorians", threw them against the troops of General Wrangel in Crimea. The survivors, after no ordinary vicissitudes, returned and became good citizens of the Republic.

Before and parallel with these military events, there was a real and rapid growth of political organisation, even under the German occupation. A few dates can give the reader a chronological conducting wire.

The Central Committee for Aid to Refugees from Courland, St. Petersburg, August 1915.

The Provisional Council of Livonia in Riga, March 1917 (immediately after the abdication of the Czar).

The Latvian National Council, October 1917, and the Democratic Cartel of Riga, under the German occupation.

The Provisional Council of Latvia, 17th November, 1918, which, the following day, proclaimed the Constitution of the Latvian State.

The Germans and the defeated Russians both changed their political colour, but did not resign themselves to the loss of the positions they claimed on the Baltic coast.

Two other chronological lists may be given.

From the German side, in 1918:

The Baltic Duchy, the Duchy of Courland;

The German Landesrat;

The mission of A. Winnig as representative of the Republic of Weimar.

In 1919:

The military mission of General von der Goltz;

The putch of Liepaja (Libau) against the Provisional Latvian Government, 16th April;

The attack of Bermont against Riga, in October;

15th July, 1920, Peace Treaty with Germany.

From the Russian side:

The Bolsheviks, after the first set-backs, in action again:

1918, December: invasion of Latvian territory;

1919, 3rd January: fall of Riga;

1919, 22nd May: Riga liberated by the Germans and Latvians;

1920, January: liberation of Latgale with the help of the Poles;

1920, 31st August: Peace Treaty with the Russians.

Finally, on 1st May 1920, the Constituent Assembly of the Latvian Republic met for its opening session.

It can be seen that in Eastern Europe the end of the First World War was rather eventful. In Paris the Allies, masters of the situation after the victory, were little disposed to intervene directly, either because of their very limited knowledge of the circumstances, their mistrust of the "new forces", or again because of uncertainty of the future and of the possibilities of the Russian revolution. They did, nevertheless, help the Latvians in their often desperate struggles, but this help was limited to the sending of military missions, the granting of loans and supplies, the sale of certain quantities of arms, etc. (see David Hunter Miller, "My Diary at the Conference of Paris", New York, 1924; esp. Vol. XVI, p. 363 et seq.). It was only at the moment of the perfidious attack of Bermont before Riga that the Allied fleet opened fire to aid the Latvian troops. So, it can be noted, the Treaty of Versailles mentions the Baltic States only in passing. The first emergence of these States on the scene of modern international law dates from the "peace" of Brest-Litovsk between the Bolsheviks and the German Reich (3rd March 1918 and more particularly 8th August 1918), in which the Bolsheviks renounced officially all their rights over Livonia and Courland (Latgale was to remain within the frontiers of U.S.S.R.). The Treaty of Versailles mentions the Balts under the vague formula of the "Provisional Governments of Estonia, Livonia and Lithuania." (par. 433) Pars. 116 and 117 imposed on Germany the obligation to recognise whatever organisations succeeded in forming, in the territories which belonged to the Russian Empire. Par. 433 dealt with the abolition of the clauses of the Treaty of Brest Litovsk, and laid down that the German troops still stationed in the Baltic States should leave.

The final reckoning of the war of 1914—1918 was for the Latvians tragic and at the same time happy: formidable losses were sustained, acquisitions of historic value gained. The refugees from Courland, greatly reduced in numbers, came back to the

homeland; the devastation and ruin were repaired during a decade of constructive work. The losses in population were only slowly replaced: in 1914 there were 2,552,000 inhabitants of Latvian territory; in 1925, after the return of the refugees, 1,845,000; this makes a loss of 700,000, or more than a quarter of the population.

Another essential element in the emergence of the Baltic States is the moral and practical support given by the Allies of the First World War to the age-long aspirations of the Baltic people. Latvia is particularly grateful to Great Britain on the political plane and to France on the cultural plane. I will not linger to recount here actions and episodes, as, for example, the participation of Lt.-Col. H.R.L.G. Alexander, later Field-Marshal, Governor General of Canada, and Minister of Defence in the British Government, touching our struggles for liberty, or the protection afforded to the Latvian President K. Ulmanis by the British Legation during the putch of the 16th April 1919 at Liepaja (Libau). Let us end, then, with a passage of Professor Temperley, who had words of esteem for the Balts (op. cit., p. 292): "In the case of these two countries (Estonia and Latvia) . . . the struggle for freedom and for national independence was an even more remarkable process than in the case of Finland. The severest phases came after all the exhaustion of the Great War, when both states were fighting with both Germany and Russia, and backed by no previous experience of what constructive statesmanship meant. We are still too close to the events to get a true perspective, but it may be confidently asserted that when the full story comes to be told, the epic of the Estonian and Latvian struggle for independence will rank high among the world's records of such performances. "A people without an *épopée*," said Goethe, "can never become of much worth", but in the recent elaboration of their *épopée* these peoples proved their worth."

Here also the Latvians might make use of the occasion to express their sincere gratitude to their French friends of those times, especially to those of intellectual circles (Professors Seignobos, Meillet, Hauser and many others), who encouraged and supported their efforts in difficult circumstances, among the indifferent and even hostile currents of that post-war world.

VII

THE RUSSIAN EXPANSION TOWARDS THE WEST FORCED TO FALL BACK ON ITS BASES

From 1918 the Russia of the czars, henceforth the U.S.S.R., became, geographically, Muscovy once again, if one considers only the western frontier. But she retained all her immense Asiatic hinterland, with a consequent pressure on her western frontiers infinitely greater and more dangerous than in the time of the czars. The creator of Bolshevism, Ouljanov-Lenin, had broad and deep views concerning the value of the almost limitless expansion visualised; and his *bons mots* on this subject, as, for example, that "to reach London one must go by way of China", are well known. Red Russia of our days resembles, if one can risk such a comparison, an enormous tortoise which has always its shell to retire to in case of danger; or better still, a prehistoric dragon which can always menace its neighbours while remaining more or less inaccessible in its cave. The new leaders of the Kremlin knew this well, and they began the "bonapartism" of their revolution, and came out in search of prey, only when the others were in the act of tearing one another to pieces. But our Baltic coast which, during the years of these last wars, has given so much food for thought and discussion to the "great", also underwent a change after 1918. The Baltic coast is no longer a frontier-line of Latvian principalities between the Vikings and the Russians (8th—11th centuries), a bridgehead of the German "Drang nach Osten" (13th—16th centuries), an apple of discord for neighbours struggling for possession of the *dominium maris Baltici* or, better still, of the Baltic trade (14th—17th centuries), or a frontier of the Russian empire towards the West (19th century). Since the fateful year

1918 this coast has become a frontier of civilisations, of ideologies, the "cordon sanitaire". A French scholar has said in a public lecture in Riga that Latvia leans against the great eastern plain, but turns her eyes to the West. I would change this image and say that, leaning against the Baltic Sea, Latvia looks with mistrust on the eruptions of the "eastern volcanic plain", as an Italian futurist has described Russia. Eastern Europe differs in some ways from Western Europe: frontiers there change more often, but the peoples do not unite. Dominations come and go, like waves at high tide, but the bordering rocks remain where they were. Looking closely at a linguistic map of Europe we see immediately the distribution of the great linguistic, and consequently ethnic, bodies: these lie to the west, in part to the centre, and then to the east of the continent. The zone between the line Haparanda—Danzig, Trieste—the eastern coast of the Adriatic, and the line Petsamo—Viipuri (Viborg)—Narva—Minsk—mouth of the Dniestr—Constantinople (all very approximately, of course) appears as an agglomeration of numerous linguistic-ethnic unities of different origin (Finnish, Balt, Slav, Latin, Albanian, Greek). This is the zone which I have mentioned before as the base of the European peninsula, the zone of transition—innocent word! This is what an historian of the 16th century had to say of this region (A. Guagnini, "Sarmatiae Europae descriptio", 1578.); "You (King Stephen Batory) will have difficulties and trouble in ruling these lands (the central part of the zone) especially because there (in Eastern Europe) the unrest and the variety of nations, languages, laws, customs and other things are so great that to rule there in a suitable manner you will need the highest wisdom and the highest virtue (*sapientia virtuteque summa... opus sit*)."

These *summa virtus et sapientia* we have seen replaced during the more familiar centuries of history by force, pure and simple, covered by the most beautiful formulas and declarations, from (to look only at modern times) the century of partitions to the Atlantic Charter, and Stalin's Constitution. But the dramas and tragedies do not come to an end; they multiply, on the contrary, and might it not be time to have done also with the fine declarations?

The arguments relating to the forces in play in this "zone"

were expressed also in the Treaty of Versailles which, in theory at least, tried to implement the Wilsonian principle of the self-determination of peoples, or, to speak simply, to give liberty to those who have merited it. Much that is detrimental was said of this treaty and its critics start always from the point of view of pure force. Many fears were also expressed—hatred and scorn were kept for more appropriate moments—for the stability of the new equilibrium around the Baltic.

If force alone is regarded as master of the world some of these fears are justified. There were too many of these border peoples around the Baltic and the disproportion of the forces between them was too great. What then the solution? The present one of 1951? Or hope in the United Nations, the second edition of the League of Nations? And if the moral forces of humanity do not succeed in dominating, in a certain measure at least, the brutal forces of nature, including those of human nature, then shall we begin again putting Poland between Minsk and Stettin, arbitrarily causing the Balts to disappear or rise again, and go on for ever dividing zones of influence in the Balkans? Latvia, for her part, honestly filled her role during twenty-two years of independence, when not prevented from doing so. The word "honestly" is not my invention; it belongs to a French politician of high repute, to Monsieur E. Herriot. The ridiculous accusations of the Bolsheviks in their ultimatum of the 16th June 1940 prove it, with their eloquent *argumentum ex silentio*; no better could be found. What was to happen to this "honest republic" will soon be seen.

The criticisms of the stability around the Baltic were accompanied, as we have seen, by fears. The most obstinate came, this time, from the United States. It was, in fact, the author of the famous 14 points, President Wilson, who did not wish to give his "placet" for the creation of the Baltic States. Today, in the light of other circumstances and of different valuations, it is very curious to meet these negative formulas of days gone by. Temperley writes (*op. cit.*, p. 297): "By this feeling of friendship and honorable obligation to the great nations whose brave and heroic self-sacrifice contributed so much to the termination of the war, the Government of the

United States was guided in its reply to the Lithuanian National Council on the 15th October 1919 and its persistent refusal to recognise the Baltic States as separate nations independent of Russia. The same spirit was manifested in the Note of this Government of the 23rd March 1920, in which it was stated with reference to certain proposed settlements in the Near East that no final decision should or can be made without the consent of Russia." This was also the reason for the American refusal to recognise the independence of the "so-called Republics of Georgia and Azerbaijan." Though the Republic of Armenia was recognised by the United States, the Americans were nevertheless of the opinion that the frontiers of Armenia should not be traced "without Russia's consent and agreement". This was the official facade. But it did not long resist the pressure of the psychology of the "springtime of the nations", particularly in North America, so much attached to the liberty and dignity of the human person. On the 28th July 1922 the United States, chronologically the last (the first was Italy), recognised *de jure* the three Baltic States, but in the motivation there is still a shade of the past to be seen: "The Government of the United States has always underlined that advantage should not be taken of Russia's state of confusion to expropriate her territories; and this principle, it seems, is not violated in recognising now the Governments of Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia, created and maintained by the local populations." (quoted from the "Latv. Enc." p. 110).

Alongside these fears were expressed old grudges emanating from the East towards the Baltic States. It is curious that the ex-Commissar of Nationalities of the U.S.S.R., the Georgian Stalin, should be the most obstinate in this sense, more Russian than the Russians themselves. The author quoted from the "Latvian Encyclopædia" (p. 111—113) has succeeded in re-constituting a long chronicle of the hatred of the Russian Dictator for the independent Balts. As early as 1922 there was said to be a Bolshevik military plan for the invasion of Estonia; it was qualified by Lenin as adventurist, but upheld by Stalin. On 1st December 1924 the Bolsheviks let loose their *putch* on Tallinn (Reval), which was suppressed by the Estonian military forces and the civil guards. Such checks there were,

but the grudges continued for long years; and it is useful to think over, from this point of view, all that was to take place in connection with the Baltic problem during and after the Second World War.

Some few further remarks are in place concerning the Polish frontiers of the "after Versailles" period, which were to touch the Balts very closely. When all was still in flames in Eastern Europe (Bermont, Lithuanians-Poles, Poles-Bolsheviks) the Supreme Allied Council, at its session of 8th December 1919, created the so-called Curzon Line—no doubt to reestablish a fixed point in the fluidity of events. This Line, famous henceforth, is to be seen on the map in Temperley's book (VI, between pages 282 and 283). It runs from south to north, across Eastern Galicia, a little to the east of Przemysl, then makes a dart towards the east from which it straightens out again east of Kholm; then continues northwards, by Brest-Litovsk to Grodno, with a little curve to the east at the south of this town, and finally north-west towards Eastern Prussia. The line was to signify a linguistic-ethnic division, to separate the Poles of the provinces become Polish in time past from the White Russians and the Ukrainians. It followed also the general direction of British policy concerning Poland at that time (see Temperley, VI, p. 239 & 283). The biography of Lord Curzon ("The Earl of Ronaldshay", 1928, III, p. 261) is very proud of the work of this politician: "It is difficult to know which to admire most, the courage or the assurance with which he (Lord Curzon) set about devising new and often purely arbitrary frontiers for the protesting peoples of Central Europe, and unravelling the tangles of Silesia, Fiume, Poland and other foci of continental trouble." We do know, however, that before long the line failed to resist the force of events: the Poles succeeded in creating their eastern frontiers well beyond it, with, moreover, the express consent of the Russian dictator, Lenin (see Fischer, I, p. 463). The Curzon Line also greatly helped certain circles to attack Polish "imperialism" and "federalism", but not to see or take account of Soviet imperialism (see Fischer, I, p. 243 et seq., 264 et seq.). Its true role has been played during and after the Second World War. I could not pretend to know what visions of political clairvoyance were experienced by the eminent

British politician, who came from the great school of Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury, eminently anti-Bolshevist and even anti-Russian—as *démarches* in Turkey and Persia bear witness. My duty is only to deal with Lord Curzon's attitude towards the Balts, and also, alas! the grave consequences of his "Line" for Eastern Europe after the Second World War. The first Latvian Foreign Minister, S. Meierovics, had talks with him when head of the Foreign Office, and described him as a perfect lord "to the last stitch of his coat" (a Latvian saying). That he was opposed to our recognition *de jure* we know (his reasons are set out in the "Latv. Enc." p. 107-108). But all these are things of an already rather distant past. What is of present and vital importance is that the Bolsheviks seized upon this "line" for their clever, sometimes even rather theatrical game (see chapter XVIII) in throwing the Poles against the Germans and isolating and trying to annihilate the Balts. We shall speak of this again in the said chapter XVIII.

VIII

THE SPRINGTIME OF NATIONS AND THE MENACING CLOUDS OF THE TOTALITARIAN MESSIANISMS

It was really splendid, this "springtime". The latent forces, exploited under czarist Russia, of peoples "of different origin" ("inorodtsi" they were called then), from the Arctic Ocean to the Black Sea, from Poznan to Minsk and Kiev, exploded suddenly, like those northern springs after the long silence of winter. And sceptical smiles and ironical looks from some quarters did not succeed in weakening the creative outburst, defined by Lenin, touching the Latvians, as "the full national blood".

These springtime waters flooded wider lands than those which they could dominate by making new river-beds for new rivers. Caucasia, in its isolation, fell again rather quickly under Muscovite dependence. The Ukraine fought heroically, but once again it was a lost battle. The frontiers of the new Poland "floated" dangerously, and violently jostled those of Lithuania around Vilno and Grodno (Vilnius and Gardinas). Here and there differences arose in the determination of frontiers, but these were generally short-lived, except in the unhappy Lithuanian-Polish case.

It was not only politically and nationally that a new era had begun, but from the social point of view also. It is calculated that in all the enormous zone between Germany, Italy and U.S.S.R., with a total population of 104,000,000, where thirteen States were created, a "green revolution" was achieved which signified the end of about 35,000 great landed properties, and the creation of an infinity of small and medium-sized properties in their place (see "Latvijas Vēsture", Stockholm, 1948,

p. 305—306). Whatever may be the social effects of such reforms in other countries, the Latvian people, at that great turning point in history, gave their quite unambiguous reply, on 16th September 1920, when the Law of Agrarian Reform was voted at the Constituent Assembly: all the Latvian votes (from the most Left to the most conservative) were for the law; all the votes of the non-Latvian minorities were against it. Thus, nearly a quarter of the total number of Latvians, formerly agricultural workers, permanent or journeyman, on the German-Balt properties became proprietors themselves. All the relevant figures have been quoted and requoted: one need only refer to the various monographs on Latvia, and especially the Statistical Atlas of Latvia, 1938.

Every great war is a revolution, it has been said. The First World War gave birth to the first world revolution—at least to a social revolution with an ideology which continues to rage in human hearts and minds. Without entering rather explicitly into the nature and the nuances of this ideology in Eastern Europe, one runs the risk of not understanding the recent history of these regions. Every active and creative people models its socialism on its figurehead—its Marx, its L. Blanc, its Mazzini, its Bakounine. The Russians, late entrants in the race, threw themselves into it with all the often primitive vehemence of their nature. And, from the “New Russia” of the sixties of the 19th century (rather different in its “psychological key” from “new” Italy, Germany, etc.) over the long, quite impressive period of the social-revolutionary terrorism, they finally found their “Marx” in the Russian-style dictator, the maximalist-Bolshevik Lenin, and plunged into a State communism without its like hitherto in the world.

But it was all very Russian: one has only to consider the simple historic fact that all the nations limitrophe to the czarist empire on the west and south, that is to say those most advanced, detached themselves from the Russian metropolis, when the latter had scarcely entered into the phase known as “the world revolution”—even after having digested socialist extremism rather quickly, as happened, immediately after the First World War, in Bavaria, Hungary, etc. All these limitrophe nations not only broke away from the Red empire, but managed at times

to make clever play with the card of the red spectre, to reinforce their position abroad. To enjoy the luxury of the greatest democratic liberties at the very side of the most absolute of dictators shows without doubt a national base of great solidity. This "luxury" was not, however, able to endure throughout the decades of the independence of the "border" countries, as they were sometimes called by those who had not forgotten the old czarist psychology. In proportion as the U.S.S.R. became stronger again and the dangers were more felt, so there was a development towards the Right in the internal politics of the Baltic States, Hungary, the Balkan States, etc., all in a state of legitimate defence. Thus, on the eve of the Second World War, we see U.S.S.R. enclosed on the west by States whose democratic institutions were modified or adapted to the exigences of the times. Latvia also had her corporative period, the last six years of her independent existence. But all the legislation of these years and the absence of emigration, except of a few rare persons, as well as the attitude of foreign powers, showed that this slightly too straight rectification of the initial errors of an excessively democratic legislation was not taken tragically. When, during the summer of 1940, the Bolsheviks sought to liberate with great demonstration those detained for political reasons in the central prison in Riga, they found only 250 persons, well nourished and smiling, as seen in the photographs.

The revolutionary or communist ideology of our country has certain quite special characteristics which explain in a manner the distribution of its zones of greatest success. The famous Spanish philosopher J. Ortega y Gasset, in his book of 1930, "La Rebelion de las masas" (The Revolt of the Masses), has already touched the wound. He has done it as a brilliant essayist and good Professor of Philosophy. But the disquieting increase in world population must perforce bring the ever-growing masses to a certain vulgarisation (in the primary sense of the word); and often to a banalisation even of the benefits of human civilisation. This is to be remarked in an accentuated degree in the less advanced zones of humanity. It is an ill trick of destiny towards man to have made this revolution of the masses start in just that ex-empire of the czars where the terrible prophet of his country, Dostojevsky, three quarters of a century

ago, spoke in his novel "The Possessed" of "the idea which will be found on the high-road"; and of a "half-science which will make true science tremble". And what may this signify once the restraints of moral responsibility and religious feeling are lifted? We are faced with the terrifying biography of a Yejov, of a Yagoda, of a Dzierjinski or of a Himmler—the last described by Count F. Bernadotte as a very complex being but having one essential trait, his "unchanging half-instruction". If we re-read, after twenty years of unique experiences, chapter VIII of Ortega y Gasset's book ("Why the masses intervene everywhere and why they do so only by violence"), or Ch. XIII ("The greatest danger—the State"), and if we consider his picture of "hombre-masa" (mass-man, i.e. of the masses) we shall have something to meditate on! "The mass... hates to the death all that is not itself."

The Balts, as all the former "border peoples" who, of enormous numbers, are now called "satellites", do not belong to the zones of the greatest success of mass ideology in the communist sense, and this costs them dear, very dear.

So the springtime of modern Latvia was a rather stormy springtime towards its end.

The indication of dangerous changes in international relations is the foreign policy of the different States, especially medium and small States, the most sensitive towards such changes. The foreign policy of the Baltic countries had these high tides and these ebbs of resistance, always with a sincere faith in international collaboration. If such system of collaboration, the eternal desire of humanity, did not function in the "after Versailles" world, it was certainly not the fault of the Balts. The vice of limitless ambitions, capable of upsetting all the order humanly possible on this earth, must be sought elsewhere.

The maximum programme was first attempted: from the White Sea to the Black Sea, one heard it toasted. But Finland, following the example of Sweden, and full of mistrust towards Polish foreign policy, quickly drew back. Then the unhappy Vilna conflict brought discord between Lithuania and Poland for all the period to come, to such a point that there could come into being between these two States the sadly famous "green frontier", a frontier covered with grass. So Latvia and

Estonia were forced to fall back on the minimum programme: the Alliance of 1st November, 1923. On 12th September, 1934, this alliance was transformed, by the adhesion of Lithuania, into an Entente Baltique. The latter can be defined as a geographical and political element of a balanced nature and of an autonomous region. (See on this subject the fine book of Prof. L. Cialdea: "L'espansione russa nel Baltico", Milano, 1940.)

This entente also was to crumble with the whole system of balances and ententes of "after Versailles", which perished, not because of internal crises, but because of the aggressions of certain political constructions believing themselves messianic, though actually based on the most elementary and low passions of humanity. One of these modern "prophets", Adolf Hitler, said: "I can only dominate the masses when they are in the throes of hysteria."

A good foreign policy or a good international orientation of a country is always supported and animated by its economic relations, its foreign trade. The trade relations of the Baltic States gave complete denial to the false legend of the Russians' need to possess the eastern coast of the Baltic; and of that, not less often put forward during the first years of their independence, that the Baltic peoples were in need of the Russian market—both legends largely invented by Russian annexionists of all political colours. Latvian statistics are very eloquent and clear in this respect. In 1938, for example, the direction of foreign trade was as follows: Great Britain: imports, 20%; exports, 41.9%; Germany: imports, 38.9%; exports, 29.5%; United States: imports, 6.3%; exports, 1.4%; U.S.S.R.: imports, 3.5%; exports, 3%, etc.

As concerns the economic benefits claimed to have been derived by the Baltic coast from czarist Russia, it is useful to look through the year book of the Russian Ministry of Finance of 1913, as the late A. Bilmanis has done (p. 36—38). Russia pocketed in that year, after deduction of administration expenses, etc., from Courland, Livonia and Latgale (i.e. the present territory of Latvia) the round sum of 18 million gold dollars.

IX

THE BALTIC PROBLEM ONCE AGAIN FATAL FOR EUROPE

If not to arrest the nazi dynamism, at least to prepare for worse eventualities, Anglo-French diplomacy started counter-measures. Thus the sadly famous Anglo-French-Russian discussions commenced in Moscow in the early months of 1939. On 3rd August 1939 Stalin replaced his Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, by Molotov, which could itself be interpreted as a change of political orientation. The change had in fact been decided at the Kremlin, as was soon to be seen; but officially Moscow was still trying to save anti-nazi appearance. In the course of these discussions, which dragged on unendingly, some indiscretions gave the impression that the problem of the Baltic States was one of the most dangerous rocks against which the fragile craft of the conversations might break at any moment. Scarcely had the talks foundered when it was being said in informed circles that the failure had been due to the "fault" of the Balts. Meanwhile the unfortunate Balts themselves were clinging to the last wisp of straw, the League of Nations, and did not weary of repeating their wish to stay out of the conflict of the great powers. But, as was said by the Swedish Minister, Mr. Sandler, neutrality is not a protection, it is rather neutrality itself which is in need of protection; or, in the conception of the Portuguese Prime Minister, Mr. Salazar, neutrality is a highly costly thing. Meanwhile the clouds were growing ever denser and darker over this corner of Europe known as "the area where the clouds pile up". They were soon to burst with all the violence so well known to the Baltic States. Thinking now, at a distance of several years, of these "démarches" to guard neutrality, we

should remember also the situation of Duke James of Courland (between the Poles and the Swedes) in the middle of the 17th century, of his captivity in 1658 and of his liberation after the Peace of Oliva in 1660.

Here, then, is what took place in Moscow from April 1939 onwards (L. Salvatorelli: "Vent'anni fra due guerre", Rome, 1941. p. 533—534): "There was a wide difference between the initial theses. Great Britain wanted U.S.S.R. to conclude treaties of guarantee with all the States bordering on her European frontier, without a direct Anglo-Russian treaty being signed. The Russian Government, on the other hand, asked for a tripartite alliance with Great Britain and France to guarantee the security of the States situated between the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea, together with guarantees for Belgium, Holland and Switzerland. On the 8th May the British Government made new proposals to Moscow according to which intervention of the U.S.S.R. in defence of the bordering States would be dependent on the previous intervention of France and Great Britain on behalf of the aforesaid States. Moscow found these proposals also insufficient. Then on 24th May London put forward still further propositions which finally accepted the idea of a defensive Anglo-French-Russian alliance for the affairs of Europe, based on complete reciprocity. But as the U.S.S.R. had no frontier with Germany, in the event of entry into action of the pact because of a German attack against one of her eastern neighbours, Russian aid would have meant the entry of Russian troops into the territory of one of these States, and for such an entry the consent of the State concerned would be necessary. Thus was brought on the carpet the whole problem of the relations between Poland and the Baltic States on the one side and U.S.S.R. on the other. Molotov insisted on being assured that no German penetration should be made into the Baltic States. But the British Government pointed out that it was impossible to impose a guarantee if the States did not ask for it. Molotov let it be understood that the U.S.S.R. could approach Germany and resume commercial negotiations, etc."

The precise and categorical tone of this passage reveals without doubt some good diplomatic source. See also "Latv. Enc." p. 125—126, where certain Latvian repercussions are mentioned.

See especially Professor L. B. Namier's book: "Diplomatic Prelude, 1938—1939", London, 1948, where, in Chapter V ("Anglo-Russian Negotiations" p. 143—210), will be found a rich and interesting documentation on this problem. It is, however, a pity that the author treats the Baltic States as a negligible quantity, as provinces lost to the Russian Empire, for which, even in its present form, he has a great respect. (See pages 144, 161, 162.) The importance of the Baltic States in these unsuccessful negotiations is shown, *inter alia*, by a passage in the well known work of Grant and Temperley (page 698): "One of the main difficulties in the way of a successful issue of the Anglo-Franco-Russian negotiations was the problem of the Baltic States," and a little further on (page 699): "Whatever the explanation, however, for the failure of the efforts of the Western Powers to secure a treaty with Russia, the fact remains that that failure was a substantial contribution to the worsening of the diplomatic situation in Europe on the eve of the Polish-German crisis."

Lord Halifax, for his part, declared in the House of Commons on 5th December, 1939: "Events have shown that the judgment and the instinct of His Majesty's Government in refusing agreement with the Soviet Government on the terms of formulae covering cases of indirect aggression on the Baltic States were right." (Švābe, p. 53.)

The sequel is well known. It has been repeated I know not how many times. Ribbentrop arrived in Moscow and the conversations came to an end so quickly that, several years later, Mr. Byrnes was to draw rather preoccupying conclusions. (See Chap. XIV, p. 286.) The treaty that did not materialise transformed the two nations, yesterday still the fiercest enemies, into friends. In Berlin victory was sung, and someone perhaps flattered himself that he had surpassed the glory of Bismarck, who had succeeded in immobilising Russia while he attacked the France of the Second Empire. In Moscow they were convinced of having warded off an imminent blow which it would have been impossible to check. "We have cooked something very hot", Stalin is said to have remarked. Later, when by the force of circumstances he had become the ally of the Westerners, he provided himself, in order to avoid having the pretty document of 23rd August 1939 put every moment before his eyes, with the following declaration,

made on 3rd July 1941: "We assured peace to our country for a year and a half and made possible the preparation of our forces for defence if Fascist Germany should risk throwing itself on our country. This was an indisputable advantage for us and a loss for Fascist Germany." ("Soviet Enc." p. 699.)

The Molotov-Ribbentrop pact concluded, the British feigned surprise, but there are indications that they had been *au courant* for several months already of the double game of the Bolsheviks. And as there is no end to such games I take the liberty of recommending my readers to peruse the numbers of "The Times" at about 23rd August 1939. They will, I guarantee, be well rewarded for their trouble in searching out and turning over these old newspapers.

The French Government also, it would seem, had sufficiently early information of the suspicious manœuvres of the Bolsheviks, but, to accept the word of M. A. Rossi (p. 27—28), it did not profit much from the warning signs.

And the Balts, the unhappy Balts? Immediately after the downfall of Poland they were to make their sad journeys to Moscow, where, in long and painful discussions with the Muscovite leaders (the Balts were still taken into discussions at that time), they were to hear *verbis expressis* that they were at the mercy of the Bolsheviks because Germany had sold them; or because, as Lord Halifax said later: "Herr Hitler bartered what was not his property—the liberties of the Baltic people."

The following are some extracts from the account of the last Latvian Minister for Foreign Affairs on the negotiations in Moscow (besides some copies of the original, dated 2nd October 1939, see also the English translation in Bilmanis, p. 192 et seq.): Stalin said to the Latvian delegates: "I tell you frankly, a division of spheres of interest has already taken place. When I said that we have to observe our peace treaty also with Germany, as far as Germany is concerned we could occupy you. However, we want no abuse (zloupotrebitj). Ribbentrop is a sensible person." (The notes were written during the actual conversation, which explains why they are abrupt, as if cut short.) That the Latvians might not make objections, Stalin animates before their eyes the sad picture of crushed Poland, of Poland which did not wish to accept the Muscovite "aid": "I prokroutili oussi po polski." (This

bon mot is quite untranslatable; its meaning could be expressed by a paraphrase such as: "In acting the fine gentlemen in the Polish manner they have lost their game.")

In the great "Sov. Enc." (p. 698—699), after eight or nine years, these events were presented to Russian readers as follows: "The governments of Chamberlain in England and of Daladier in France, and the reactionary governments of Poland, declined with a criminal (*prestoupno*) refusal to come to an understanding with the U.S.S.R. to make a common war on Fascist Germany. And when Germany proposed to the Soviet Union a treaty of non-aggression the Soviet Union accepted it."

Such were the results of the double Muscovite manoeuvre and of their Baltic game.

THE SECOND WORLD WAR RESPITE FOR THE BALTS

The two world wars of the 20th century both had their immediate cause in the so-called *casus belli* of conflicts in the zones of our continent where the interests of the Germanic and Slav peoples have clashed for centuries (Sarajevo and Danzig). Accounts here were obviously badly settled centuries ago, and such problems always leave very long "tails" in history. No one would say, I believe, that German-Slav accounts are today settled to the great satisfaction of the two sides, and the outlook is not particularly encouraging. If the Western Slavs (Poles, Czechs) and the Southern Slavs (those of the Balkans) had been more "Slavs of pure blood", as the Great-Russians believe themselves to be, the different Germanic peoples would have had a much more difficult game. But as the civilising action working from West to East has detached the Southern and Western Slavs in many ways (confession, institutions, mode of life, etc.) from their eastern brothers, they have acquired also, in the course of centuries, certain characteristics of the peoples of the frontier-zones between the European peninsula and the Euro-Asiatic continent. There is always to be found, therefore, among the Slavs of the West and the South, some prodigal son. In the time of the slavophiles of the 19th century it was Poland; now we may look for this biblical son a little more to the south.

As "intermediary" countries also they received the first blows of the forces I have termed horizontal. To Poland, partitioned as she had been on 23rd August 1939 in Moscow, there remained only to die in eighteen days. To die heroically. The Russians,

when the great storms to the west had passed, took their share of her according to the plan and the chart (17th to 21st September).

This was a stab in the back if ever there was one, although it was thought good to apply this comparison only to Fascist Italy. The explanation of this act appears as follows in the "Sov. Enc." (p. 699): "Following the orders of the Soviet Government, on 17th September 1939 the Red Army began its march of liberation, with the aim of protecting the life and property of the population of Western White Russia and of Western Ukraine." Menaced by whom?

The Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, as in their time those of Catherine and Frederick, functioned to perfection: the Soviet troops established their bases in the Baltic countries and planted their flags along approximately the Curzon Line. The Versailles period had ended.

But the Bolshevik plan foresaw also the "rectification" of the frontier with Finland and of bases in that country. So Finland received an ultimatum, but she did not cede without battle. In the final reckoning the result was the same, because the Bolsheviks got all they had wanted from Finland; but there was a difference in the matter of prestige, as of geographic conditions. Prestige counts for much, especially when one has the possibility of saving it; and geography sets in play forces often decisive in the life of peoples. The wisdom of each nation shows it how these forces may be exploited or preserved. It is geography (with particular reference to the Gulf of Finland) which has in a certain sense directed into different channels the political destinies of the peoples inhabiting the eastern coast of the Baltic, to the north and to the south of this gulf. The fact that Swedish expansion, from the Middle Ages, was only able to resist the various pressures for a century and a half (to the south of the Gulf from 1561 to 1729) is one proof of this. Another is the policy of the czars and of the Bolsheviks as regards Finland, from the time of the Treaty of Tilsitt to the present day. In 1809, after the war of Czar Alexander I, as in 1941 after that of Stalin, Finland was completely open to the conquerors. Instead of putting his heel on the vanquished the czar made a present to the Finns of their so-called Magna Charta. His Red successor declared himself satisfied with the Peace of 12th March, 1941, i.e., with the frontier

of 1940, imposed on the Finns at the end of the "hundred days' war" (with this "gesture of generosity" charming President Roosevelt: see Ciechanovski), and with the choice of Mr. J. Paasikivi as President of the northern republic. Why? One could give a whole series of reasonings of a geographic order, of international policy (the policy of the Soviets towards Scandinavia), of suspicions of a military order even, but with this our subject is not directly concerned.

To come back again to the Latvian homeland, "enriched" with Soviet military bases; the air grows heavy there, always more heavy. After the first emotions were over, after the entry of the Russian troops (25,000 altogether), the public took courage again. Observing the timid, sometimes even ridiculous attitude of the poor Bolshevist soldiers at the sight, completely new for them, of a comfortable and free social life, the Latvians wove a whole garland of anecdotes at their expense—especially about the Russian women, come with special permits to make purchases in this newly discovered corner of the "rotten West". A part, too, of the Latvian population, especially in the capital, had not lost hope of being able to get on in some way or another with the new or future masters of the situation—running a certain risk, of course, and discounting only the loss of a certain percentage of their property. It was still hoped that the Bolsheviks of 1939-40 might have changed in comparison with those of 1919, and that the experience of twenty years of administration of a great empire would have made them more amenable. The unfortunate Latvians, and the Balts in general, were the first to fall into a snare which was later to be spread for other peoples of Western Europe. The same spectacle was to be seen time and again, which might suggest sad reflections on the intelligence of collective humanity. No credence is ever given to the warning experiences of others, even those of one's immediate neighbours; we always believe that when the critical moment comes we shall be much more intelligent and cunning, but fate comes to overwhelm and things are still worse than with the others.

Those of the Latvians who, in the organisation of the State, had to know certain things cherished few illusions. It was quickly seen that the country was being invaded by spies and enemy agents under cover of various missions most innocent in appearance.

Now, after ten years have elapsed, all the world has learned to appreciate the artistry of the social mimesis practised by the Bolsheviks. Openly nothing could be said or done, but, in speeches delivered in the country, President Ulmanis, who had made acquaintance with Russian prisons already (before 1918), called upon the people to prepare for an uncertain morrow; "I should not be saying this to you if the times were not so serious." (See Z. Unams: "Neatkaribas saulrietā" ["The Twilight of Independence"]) Oldenburg, 1950, p. 15).

Towards the end of 1939, by ways which it is better not to state yet, it was learnt that at Moscow the rulers of the Kremlin were carefully preparing the programme for complete occupation or incorporation of the Baltic States. The best proof that the Latvian Government was preparing for possible catastrophies is the fact that as early as the beginning of 1940 consideration should have been given to investing full powers in a representative abroad who "shall not lose freedom of movement and of action." These full powers were adopted at the session of the Cabinet of Ministers of 17th May 1940 (see Bilmanis, p. 201—202). As holder of the Powers was designated Mr. Charles Zarine, Latvian Minister in London, and as his substitute, Mr. A. Bilmanis, Latvian Minister in Washington (since deceased).

This respite, of nearly nine months' duration, for the Latvians and the other Balts was based on the general calculation of the rulers of the Kremlin on the development of military actions in the West. They were thinking at the beginning of a long war of exhaustion, but when they saw that the rhythm of events was outstripping their calculations, they changed their tactics and threw off their masks. To the Balts there remained only the choice: to surrender or to die.

THE DEFEAT OF FRANCE

MOLOTOV EMULATES PETER THE GREAT

Under the blows of Nazism on the march, Poland crumbled in eighteen days. France, after a desperate resistance of one month, lay down her arms, like Belgium and Holland. The Bolshevik leaders grew alarmed, as we have said, the more so because from certain suspicious declarations of Hitler the conclusion could, if desired, be drawn that he wanted to spare Great Britain so that he could fall on the U.S.S.R. We have since heard the testimony of several German generals that the Führer really did want to spare the English the worst consequences of Dunkirk. In 1940 these were great military secrets, but the "bible" of Nazism had already been printed in millions of copies: every reader of "Mein Kampf" had seen how Hitler pictured to himself the future of the German people (see chapter XIV).

Mr. Cordell Hull relates (p. 810): "John C. Wiley, our Minister to Latvia, cabled me on June 19 information from a reliable informant that the Kremlin was in a state of acute anxiety and confusion over recent developments." The American information service appears to have worked well. Soon after the Molotov-Ribbentrop agreement, the American Ambassador in Moscow warned the Latvian Minister there of the existence of the secret protocol which contained the partition of the Baltic States. ("Latv. Enc." p. 128.)

Moscow decided then, in the month of June, to act, and three emissaries were sent to the Baltic countries (Zhdanov—Estonia; Vyshinsky—Latvia; Dekanosov—Lithuania) to create on our coast a "zone of protection", "new strategic frontiers",

"better defensive positions". Such were the phrases to be used later to the Anglo-Saxons at the big international conferences. This time the occupation of the Baltic countries proceeded in the reverse order from that of 1939. Lithuania was first blocked so that no one could escape, and then the process moved northwards. Three of the best trusted personalities—and the pretty game of cat and mouse begins. It must not go too quickly: perhaps tomorrow it will be necessary to go along with the Anglo-Saxons, who don't like "political desperados", as Mr. Cordell Hull once called dictators.

So everything must be done "legally": "broadening" of the political base of the government, "elections" for parliament (with a single list, of course), vote in "parliament" demanding incorporation, solemn session in the Kremlin, and the comedy is finished for Latvia, as for her sister nations. Vyshinsky played his part so well that immediately after the incorporation of Latvia he was promoted to the grade of Deputy Commissar of Foreign Affairs (there were no ministers yet in the U.S.S.R.). I still seem to hear phrases of one of his big speeches in Riga, which was recorded and broadcast (it should still exist somewhere): "There are persons who fear that all this can signify the end of the gifted Latvian people (talantlivij latishskij narod). Nothing of the kind: let them look towards the East, where the sun has already risen, etc." (something like that). Indeed, thousands and thousands of my compatriots had soon afterwards to take the direction of the sunrise.

These events are sad, but when the Balts—after 1940 and up to 1946 or 1947—were weak enough to show a sad face to some Western European, they were met at the most with a smile of condolence or an attitude of superiority. There were naturally exceptions, the more remarkable.

The first to react on the international level against the act of force were the Americans. Mr. Sumner Welles, Under Secretary of State, described the Russian action as "the devious process whereunder the political independence and territorial integrity of the three small Baltic republics—Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania—were to be deliberately annihilated by one of their more powerful neighbours" (declaration to the press on 23rd July, 1940).

At the other end of the scale there were States, not directly

menaced, which hastened to recognise the incorporation—for them every Latvian became henceforth *ipso facto* a Russian subject.

The British attitude was complicated, as it always is when solutions are difficult to foresee. In London the Russians were not given a free hand to liquidate the Latvian Legation and Consulates as was done in various European capitals. In 1942 (the date of the Anglo-Russian Agreement, though it is questionable whether it signifies a consequence of this agreement), the names of the Baltic States were removed from the diplomatic list, and the names of the Baltic diplomatic representatives placed at the end of the list. But the Legations as such were not touched and they are still exercising their functions today. Perhaps if the situation had worsened, the Balts would have finished like the Polish Government in exile, but despite all the difficulties of Great Britain, things have never gone so far.

Meanwhile, the situation of Great Britain became grave. Mr. Cordell Hull described it thus (page 801): "As France fell, Great Britain laid before us a frank and sombre picture of her perilous position. With her back to the Atlantic wall, she was now fighting for her life, and she needed all the help we could possibly give her." In an effort to detach Russia from Germany, and profiting, as Mr. Cordell Hull says, "from the note of strain" between the two friends of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, the British Government sent to Moscow Sir Stafford Cripps, "who threw a bait to Molotov" which he did not reject. This bait was the gold deposit of the Balts in England and in America. The American Minister, Mr. Hull, however, rejected this combination (p. 811—812).

That was the first *démarche*; others followed, as we shall shortly see.

The Bolsheviks, after having annihilated the independence of the Balts, sang victory. In his secret account of the 2nd October 1939, the Latvian Minister of Foreign Affairs recorded the following words of Molotov: "It was Peter the Great's concern to procure for Russia an outlet to the sea. We are now without these outlets; in our present situation we cannot remain."

In his speech of the 30th June 1940, after the so-called incorporation, he said: "It would be unpardonable for the Soviet

Government not to do the same as the Russian czars from Ivan the Terrible, especially in the present circumstances, as they may never be so favourable again." And how did the Latvians react? Why did they not reject the Russian ultimatum of 16th June 1940, which contained ridiculous accusations, as the Finns did? Why did they not fight and die with glory? Why did they not oppose the enforced and falsified "elections"? To some of these questions time has already replied—in ten years of experience and of Bolshevik experiments in Western Europe. Some Latvian politicians tried in 1940, with more courage than good sense, to present their list of candidates; they disappeared and the result was the same. It can be relied upon to be the same if a single list is to be voted for—a uniformity without possible error. But why was there no military resistance? The reply is quite simple. Alas! from all points of view, geographical, political and military, it would have been madness pure and simple—in June, 1940, be it understood. Comparison with Finland does not explain everything. Finland had, at least, behind her a country friendly or amicably neutral (Sweden). She was also not very far from the coasts of the Atlantic Ocean. We had behind us Hitlerite Germany, and we were the victims of the secret Russo-German protocols (see Rossi, p. 218). From the political point of view, the international situation was completely catastrophic for the Balts and extraordinarily favourable for Molotov. America was still looking on at the European conflagration; England was counting her dead and wounded from Dunkirk, and was preparing for the life or death struggle of the following autumn; France was at the mercy of the imposed armistice; Germany and Russia were firmly resolved to allow no other power a hand in the settlement of things in Eastern Europe.

From the military point of view the Russian forces grouped on the Latvian frontiers were calculated to break any resistance in a very short time. But if, in this connection, any doubts should be entertained on the military qualities of the Latvian soldiers, recollection could be made of the last years of the First World War, and of the struggles of 1944—1945.

The choice was, then, very simple: either to send the youth to its death for a cause momentarily lost, and to provoke at that moment a rather indifferent shrug of the shoulders in the rest

of the world; or to suffer, in a given situation, humiliation and foreign occupation, preparing meanwhile for the morrow. It seems that this was the thought of President K. Ulmanis (died, deported to Russia, in 1942): "To follow the time", as Mr. Unams says (op. cit. p. 23).

After receiving the Russian ultimatum, the President invited the German Minister von Kotze to reply to three questions:

- 1) In the event of a Latvian-Russian conflict, would Germany remain neutral?
- 2) Would the Latvian Government be able to buy arms in Germany?
- 3) Would Germany permit the Latvian Government and army to withdraw into the province of Klaipeda (Memel)?

The German Minister gave his immediate reply, without needing to consult his government: "Germany would not be interested in the problems of the Baltic States." (Unams, op. cit. p. 18; also according to the "Deutsche Diplomatisch-Baltische Korrespondenz" of June 1941—a year later). We may quote another saying of our last President. On the eve of the publication of the Moscow pact, on 5th October 1939, in an intimate circle of his collaborators, one of the youngest exclaimed: "But Mr. President, would it not be better to fight? A people that fights for its liberty can never perish." Then, slowly marking his syllables with his fist on the table, the President said: "That thought pleases me, but one must know when it is time to fight." (Unams, op. cit. p. 12).

The time was unfavourable to the Balts, in 1939 as in 1940.

XII

"THE TERRIBLE YEAR"

A little before his death, and only some months before the invasion of his country by Bolshevism, the Latvian poet and publicist E. Virza, in a moment of prophetic vision, wrote a poem, the saddest of his life: "The Terrible Year" (Baigais gads). In it he foretold, in a half biblical style, the misfortunes and disasters which were to overcome Latvia. All was so exactly foreseen, and so powerfully expressed, that the Russian invaders even deigned to reprint this poem in their papers with comments on the inevitable "final catastrophe" of the bourgeois world, going so far as to proffer compliments to the great Latvian patriot. When the year of the first Bolshevik occupation was over, the Editor Mr. Gopper had the happy idea of publishing a volume of photographs taken of life in Latvia from 1940 to 1941, with the title of Virza's poem. Thus, under this name, that year has entered into the memory of the Latvian people. Other years still more "terrible" were to follow, from 1945 onwards. But the influence of the poet's vision was so deep that the privilege of this epithet has been bestowed only on the period between June 1940 and June 1941.

The Balts, as we have said, were the first to experience the new expansion of Bolshevism and of its pitiless methods, which are today, ten years later, so well known in the whole world. But in the early stages of the great war, of which the end was so uncertain, and in face of the dangerous menaces of Nazi power, no one was thinking much about the Baltic people, and no one listened much to them. To the chancelleries of the great powers the Baltic States were rather embarrassing elements. The public was lulled by a complete agnosticism of things Russian, displaying,

as it has been well put, "different degrees of ignorance" of these things and these methods.

At the Baltic tragedy—the first act of the tragedy—people simply smiled sadly or shrugged their shoulders: "Small events in the great drama of the war." One could even detect some doubt about the political experience of the "young" Baltic republics, or hear reasoning like the following: "They belonged to Russia before 1914. Well! Russia has taken them back again." Such reasoning exists still, as Sir Maurice Peterson tells us (p. 259).

The principal events of this year of Russian occupation have already been well described, especially in Ceichners's book, based on official Bolshevik publications in Latvian and Russian. Today, after ten years' experience of the Bolsheviks in Western Europe, from the occupation of the Baltic States to the coup d'état in Czechoslovakia (1948) these methods have been so often recounted that it is hardly worth while to set it down once more. If we nevertheless briefly do so, it is to demonstrate the dogmatic rigidity of Bolshevik procedure. In other words, the Bolsheviks, abroad for the first time, in the countries of the Balts, applied all the "iron apparatus" of their legislation: their regulations, decrees and laws. Thereafter they only repeat elsewhere the "national" variations of this leitmotif; so that anyone who has heard but the first letters can recite the whole alphabet.

In a question very important for the Latvians, the Bolsheviks showed, however, certain hesitations and adopted certain tortuous processes, namely in agrarian problems, which had difficulties even for the first theoreticians of socialism, such as K. Kautsky. On this subject Stalin is reported to have said to Mr. Churchill (see Fitzroy Maclean, "Eastern Approaches", 1949, p. 465—466), that the battle with the peasants was more dangerous and more terrible than the battle for Stalingrad. That, we may add, referred to Russian peasants who have been accustomed for centuries to the psychology of their "mir", i.e., of the agricultural commune. Mr. Winston Churchill relates this conversation with Stalin in Volume IV of his Memoirs (p. 447). The frankness of the Prime Minister is really impressive.

Abroad, therefore, the Russians had to advance with caution. Although the Balts are not numerous, Moscow was rather prudent,

always in view of a double *mise en scene* "in spe". To begin with, then, it was declared officially that in Latvia, for example, there would be only a few kolkhozes, composed of volunteers; there would be no imposition, no official constraint (see Ceichners, p. 361). In fact, at the end of the first Bolshevist occupation of Latvia there were only a few kolkhozes. But that did not in any way signify that it was intended to leave in peace the individual peasant proprietors, the worst enemies of forced collectivism. (Lenin had said: "They will be annihilated, these kulaks.") (see chap. XIX). But to begin with their existence was to be made as precarious as possible, and then they were to be ruined economically. With this intention the Russians introduced an agrarian reform, which imposed a new division of land property, for demagogic ends, thereby ruining the peasant property in Latvia, the heritage of long years of work. From the point of view of the systematic legislation of a country this reform, especially in view of the forced and accelerated kolkhozation of the year 1947, was pure nonsense, dictated solely by political considerations and internal propaganda. In 1947 the Russians could already permit themselves the complete crushing of the peasant class in Latvia. Peace had come; Russia had no longer need of "Lend-Lease"; the Balts had been discussed at Teheran and at Yalta.

Except in this particular, on which I have insisted because the agrarian problem has been for centuries the keystone of the social structure of the eastern Baltic, the rest presents the programme, henceforward classic, of the Bolsheviks. A Swiss newspaper of the time has given a simple and clear formula: the whole economic system of the country, based on private enterprise, was broken into fragments ("kurz und klein geschlagen"). If it is desired to observe at close hand the theory and the social and economic practice of the occupiers of Latvia during the first year of Bolshevik occupation, it is only necessary to consult the most recent monographs on the country.

"The Terrible Year" ended with a terrible event, which has passed into the memory of the people as the Latvian St. Bartholomew's Night—the night of the 13th to 14th June 1941. It will be related in subsequent chapters how the Bolsheviks, at the moment of German aggression, carried off with them, before

leaving the Baltic countries, a large number of "slaves". Is this an atavistic psychology or a modern, as characterised by M. Ortega y Gasset? This horrible act of modern vandalism cost the Latvian nation 34,250 people (23,016 men, 7,218 women and 4,016 children) of all social classes, from workmen to bankers, industrialists and politicians. A list of the deported is with the International Red Cross at Geneva. There were also found in the courtyard of the central prison in Riga, and elsewhere, piles of corpses of people assassinated by the Bolsheviks before their flight (see Ceichners, chap. XVII, and "These Names Accuse", Stockholm, 1951).

HITLER WOULD OUT-DO NAPOLEON

Numerous publications, especially memoirs of the period of the Second World War, make it possible for us to guess at what precise time of his career Hitler had decided, "with the infallibility of a somnambulant", to attack Soviet Russia. The Russian campaign was, Hitler himself said on the opening of the attack, the gravest decision of his life. The disastrous consequences of this decision prove that Hitler had not understood the wise advice of Bismarck to German leaders, never to create two fronts in Europe. Even after the catastrophe of the first winter campaign (1941—42), Hitler still thought himself superior to Napoleon ("he resisted where another failed") ("wo ein anderer zerbrach"). Such "predestined" men always feel themselves superior to all others, and in the end they always make the same mistakes.

To carry through a policy with more or less certainty, the chancelleries of the great must be able to discover the secrets of their rivals. If we look back, to the first years of the Second World War, we can see—as far as one can know these things from the publications accessible to the great public—that certain sources of information have functioned wonderfully well, even those which led to the *sacra sacrorum* of the Nazi projects. The attack against the U.S.S.R. was first foreseen by the Americans. The American Minister Mr. Cordell Hull gives us information on this subject. The American leaders, it seems, had known for six months that the Russo-German conflict would happen, and had knowledge also of the previous creation of a German administration for conquered Russia, as of the existence of large stocks of banknotes (roubles) prepared with the same end in view, etc.

All this information was transmitted to the Soviet Ambassador in Washington. On the eve of the Russo-German war—"The first week in June we received convincing cables from our Legations in Bucharest and Stockholm that Germany would invade Russia within a fortnight. The Department sent these reports to Ambassador Steinhardt in Moscow. Eight days before Hitler marched into Russia, Prime Minister Churchill sent the President a message saying that, from every source at his disposal, it looked to him as if a vast German onslaught on Russia were imminent" (Cordell Hull, p. 973).

Mr. Cordell Hull states that when, in June 1943 (see p. 1174), he asked the Moscow Government the exact moment when they were convinced that the German attack was imminent, "Molotov came right back by saying this conclusion had been reached in April or May, but that of course most of the Russian people did not believe it until after the war was actually on."

Let us compare this with the dramatic description of events in Moscow in Gafencu's book: "Les préliminaires de la guerre à l'Est" much talked of in its time. Let us remember also the 35,000 deported during the "Latvian St. Bartholomew's Night", who were, directly or indirectly, the first victims of this "diplomatic game".

And now some observations on the preparation of the German plans. Mr. Byrnes (p. 289) attributes the birth, in Hitler's head, of the idea of an attack to the period of his conversations with Molotov during the visit of the latter to Berlin in November 1940. These pages of Mr. Byrnes are most suggestive and, even if they do not embrace the whole period of the rupture between the Nazis and the Bolsheviks, will always be fruitful in visions and in psychological possibilities for those who seek understanding of the developments of the war.

In his book several times referred to, Mr. A. Rossi has built up a full table of the progressive rapprochement of the two dictators. Begun with Stalin's speech to the 18th Congress of the Bolshevik Party on 10th March 1939, it was then conducted by the special agents of both sides, the "qualified" diplomats, and especially the Russian, being left disdainfully on one side,

and finally concluded by the "coup" of the 23rd August in Moscow. This table is well documented, and we carry away from the book the impression of being able to follow rather closely the secret path of these most important negotiations. At all events, when we consider well Stalin's words in his speech above referred to: "We will not permit the war provokers, accustomed to get others to pull the chestnuts out of the fire, to drag our country into conflicts" (Rossi, p. 19), we understand certain phases of his subsequent attitude towards his Western allies. The "war provokers" were, of course, the West; but so many things have been pardoned to Stalin.

The "ascending" part of Mr. Rossi's book is followed by the "descending", which proceeds towards the complete Germano-Russian rupture in 1941. This last line is more abrupt and the movements more rapid (chap. VII—X). The final phases can be completed by Mr. Gafencu's book already cited.

If I have insisted on these subjects, it is to show the reader the manner of preparation of manœuvres which one fine day are let loose as storms of violence.

We live today in an epoch of unlimited probabilities and we can make certain comparisons.

On the German campaign in Russia there is already a whole literature. The evidence of German army men, analysing the causes of the final defeat, is most interesting. These German soldiers are not excessively tender towards their former supreme chief, and the military "genius" of Hitler grows paler and paler.

These are matters which touched the Balts, especially in the final phases of the war, and we shall return to them. Let us consider now the reactions of the Baltic peoples to the opening of the Russo-conflict. They were those of any living organism: to react immediately against those who heap on them vexations, humiliations and suffering without end. "As early as June 23rd, Lithuanian patriots had seized the Kaunas radio station and the governmental buildings in which the provisional Lithuanian Government, headed by J. Ambrazevicius, commenced its activities. Similar uprisings took place in Wilno, Siauliai and elsewhere. The revolt cost the lives of some 4000 Lithuanian partisans. Guerilla battles against the retreating Red Army also

took place in Latvia and Estonia, and for a few days the Riga radio could announce to the world that Latvia was again free from occupants. Arrangements were made for setting up Latvian army and home-guard units, and the formation of a Provisional Government was negotiated." (Švābe, p. 57—58.)

Alas! many young lives were lost in vain for this noble cause.

XIV

OSTLAND

WESTERN EUROPE DOES NOT OBEY "MEIN KAMPF"

In chapter XIV of "Mein Kampf" (ed. 1937): "An eastern orientation or an eastern policy", we read: "Thus we National-Socialists abandon definitely the foreign policy of all the pre-war period. We begin again from the point which was left six centuries ago. We cease the continual incursions of the Germans towards the south and west of Europe, and we turn our eyes to the countries of the east. We put an end to the colonial and commercial policy of the pre-war times and we pass to the policy of land conquest ("Bodenpolitik") of the future, And if we speak today in Europe of new territories ("Grund und Boden"), we think in the first place only of Russia and her neighbouring ("Randstaaten") and dependent States". "All that has been done up to now", continued Hitler, "were only half-measures (for example towards Poland) and child's play has been made of the term: 'Germanisation'" (see I, 268; II, 25), etc.

There we have the backbone of the programme. In order that everything should be set on solid scientific bases, the Nazi theoreticians discovered the great German geographer Fr. Ratzel and, more important to them still, the Swede J. R. Kjellén, the creator of geopolitics. Various anthropologies were also exploited and, without too many scruples as to inaccuracies and contradictions, a theory of "space" (the "Grossraum" of Prof. K. Haushofer) and of German racial purity (the nordic race) was constructed to inscribe on the flag of the swastika and to march to the conquest of the promised lands. "As if", as Mr. Gafencu has

neatly said, "Hitler wished to imitate the chief (Führer) of a nomadic Germanic tribe of the Middle Ages."

We have here the half-science of Dostojevsky, German fashion, and while poor Ratzel has spoken often of space ("Raum") he also insisted on the practical experience "that the advantages of situation are easier to obtain than those of space" ("Politische Geographie", 1897, p. 245). The history books are full of darts which signify dynamism, and geography is transformed into geopolitics, in which we see a great deal of politics and very little geography, as a French scholar has said. It goes without saying that it is Kjellén too who is the first to foot the bill for this. The darts, by the way, are to be found also in the "Great Soviet Encyclopædia" of 1948—on the map of the Russian counter-attack of 1943 (between pages 720 and 721).

But the situation of the Reich in 1941-1942 was such as to suggest to many people—let us be frank!—the vision of an enormous "space" established for the application of the "New Order" (neither order nor new, as President Roosevelt ironically remarked): from Cap Nord to the Sahara, from the Volga and the Caucasus to the Channel! Before invading the lands of East Europe a programme of action had been drawn up: To the three Baltic States, White Russia was added, to augment the solidity of the space, regardless of the enormous differences in the standard of life. All this together was to be called "Ostland". The plan of action (see "Nuremberg Trial" XI, 580) was that the Reich Commissar for Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and White Russia should have the foremost duty of creating a German protectorate, in order to transform these regions into an integral part of the German Great Reich. This should be done by Germanising the elements racially acceptable by the colonisation of peoples of German stock, and by the evacuation of undesirable elements to another part of the Reich—meaning White Russia. In "Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression", 1946, Vol. III, p. 690-691 (Instruction for the Reich Commissar in the Baltic Countries and White Russia [Ostland]—found in Rosenberg's files) we read: "With regard to the process of Germanising or resettling, the Estonian people are strongly Germanised to the extent of 50% by Danish, German and Swedish blood and can be considered as a kindred nation. In Latvia the section capable of being

assimilated is considerably smaller than in Estonia. In this country stronger resistance will have to be reckoned with, and banishment on a larger scale will have to be envisaged. A similar development may have to be reckoned with in Lithuania, for here too the emigration of racial Germans is called for in order to promote very intensive Germanisation (on the East Prussia border)... White Russia will first of all have the difficult task of admitting some of those elements who are expelled from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania and from the Polish section of the Warthe territory, etc. . . .”

There has often been exploitation of the regrettable fact of the massacre of Jews by the Germans on Latvian territory—one of the direct consequences of the racial theory—to throw discredit on the Latvian people, and often for dubious motives. The tragic picture of these massacres in Ostland is seen in Volume XXX (p. 71—80 and elsewhere) of the “Nuremberg Trial”; and we find comments which would be useful reading for those who continue to make such reproaches, in Volume XI, p. 560 et seq. and p. 595 et seq.

If we study well the points of the programme cited above we easily understand the German manoeuvres for dispossessing the Latvian peasants and the Balts in general. In fact, the Nazis had hardly arrived among us before they announced that all immovable property in the towns (not to mention factories, banks, commercial enterprises, etc.), and all landed property, belonged to the German Reich, because Germany had conquered it *jure belli* from the Bolsheviks, who, in their turn, had expropriated the former owners. And although a part of the property was restored to some of the “former” owners, this was out of pure “generosity and goodwill” on the part of the German authorities.

Economic exploitation by the Germans had, in theory at least, reached its “nec plus ultra”, especially as far as fats and sugar were concerned: the native population were allowed to keep 1%—3%. In general the rations for the Latvian population amounted to a third of the German rations. On the question of the organisation of compulsory labour in Latvia—a problem henceforward only too well known throughout the world—details are to be found in the “Nuremberg Trial”, XXX, p. 101—114.

Appreciation of the place of the Latvians in the Nazi scale of anthropological aristocracy will be gained from a charming passage concerning us (op. cit. XXX, p. 112). Saukel writes that for the compulsory workers from the Baltic States it is forbidden to live in the police districts of the province of their place of work, and they are moreover prohibited from having sexual relations with German citizens. But they are not compelled to wear a distinguishing mark. No "B" then, as the unfortunate Jews had their "J". These were the events that followed that 1st July 1941, when the German troops had been greeted as liberators from the Bolshevik nightmare, with flowers and with flags flying in the wind.

To understand the position at the beginning of the Russo-German War, it must be taken into account that the secret orders mentioned above only came to light later. The Nazis hid their aims well, as their Führer wished (see "Nazi conspiracy", VII, p. 1086, et seq.). At the beginning one saw only German soldiers and floods of Russian prisoners who thought the moment good to escape from the Bolshevik yoke.

It is thanks to the extreme "intelligence" (sic) of the Nazi leaders that this Russian state of soul was transformed, after several months, into partisan movements against the Germans! Soon there arrived in Latvia the "blacks" (S.S.), and among them a certain number of Baltic Germans, who considered that they had accounts to settle with the Latvians from the period of Latvian independence. These men naturally tried to apply the maximum programme. As a single example may be mentioned the attempts, albeit ephemeral, of "comrade" von Holst to abolish in Latvia all secondary and higher schools, leaving only the elementary.

In general, the set-up of German administrators and employees in the Baltic States was too mediocre and numerically inadequate, not to mention other defects, to be master of the situation. This was especially so in the country, where the peasants managed to get through in spite of the, really superfluous, orders and demands.

Further, the developments of the war prevented, to a considerable extent, the realisation of the initial German programme.

Early in November 1942 the Americans landed in North Africa, and at the beginning of 1943 came the disaster of Stalingrad.

German acts in the Baltic countries often gave a certain impression of hysteria. The greater part of the documentation relating to these events fell into the hands of the Russians, when they reoccupied the Baltic countries in 1944-1945. They have naturally published (for example in the Nuremberg Trial) only those portions which suit their policy. It is therefore to a certain extent premature to try to form definitive conclusions on this period, but certain general lines can be seen or conjectured.

To take, for example, the attitude of the German occupation authorities towards the civil population of Latvia, before the new Bolshevik invasion. A whole gamut of methods is there, beginning with the merciless persecution of those who sought to flee across the Baltic to Sweden (in fishing boats be it recalled), to the mass evacuation of civilians to Danzig, Stettin, etc., without consulting their wishes. This mass evacuation, which it seems was made chiefly on the demands of General Schoerner, began with the regions of probable immediate Russian occupation—to deny the invaders human material useful for their army, and for forced labour. It had already been ascertained that the Russians were proceeding, in the conquered regions, to a total mobilisation of the population.

Mr. Unams, quoted earlier, who lived through the years of the German occupation and was able to observe a number of things at close hand, tells (p. 106, 108, 110, 114) of different German projects concerning the inhabitants of Latvia. Their aim was to force to the furthest possible limit the defence of the country and then to abandon it without warning, to show the world how the Bolsheviks would treat the Latvians (doubtless after having evacuated all that could be transported); to use certain groups of Latvian intellectuals for their propaganda, etc. The more the dangers grew, the more chaotic became these plans. Here is a passage from "memoirs not yet published", as the author says (p. 110): "The actions of the German National-Socialist during the war were often dictated by chance and stupidity. Chance, accompanied by over confidence, played its part when events came by surprise, and when the subordinate

Nazi officials failed to receive directives from above. They were without ideas and initiative of their own because . . . Stupidity had also its card to play when events surprised the leaders themselves and they failed to take their stand before a situation, or did not want to disavow their principles, or when they lacked the courage to acknowledge their faults."

THOSE OF WHOM THE PEOPLE DO NOT SPEAK OPENLY

Although gravely wounded by the hard blow of the winter campaign in Russia (1941—1942), Germany, by the domination of the greater part of the European continent, was still terribly strong. One can judge from the tone of certain pronouncements of Western leading men, that they did not feel at all sure of their final victory in the spring of 1942, before the beginning of the great offensives. The military situation on the various fronts appeared rather unfavourable to them. The Japanese had driven the Americans from the Philippines, the British from Malaya and Burma, and the Dutch from the Dutch East Indies. Germany, full of menace and enriched by experience, was preparing a great new offensive against Russia, while her submarines were enraging the chiefs of the Atlantic fleets of the Allies. Moreover, there was still an element which could, in the long run, prove fatal—namely the financial exhaustion of Great Britain after her life and death struggle (see the declaration to the press, on 23rd November 1941, of Lord Lothian, British Ambassador to the United States). It can be easily understood that Great Britain should be seeking support and allies in all directions, and she particularly wanted to reach an agreement with Soviet Russia. But Stalin knew the advantages of his geographical situation, and it was he who, despite the reverses suffered, wished to dictate the conditions of the alliance. He said as much to Mr. Eden, who came to Moscow in this connection in December 1941. Mr. Cordell Hull (p. 1166—1167) tells us the conditions: "Stalin said to Eden that the conclusion of any Anglo-Soviet agreement would depend on whether the two countries reached an agreement on the future Soviet frontiers, particularly on the inclusion of the Baltic States and the restoration

of the Finnish-Soviet frontier of 1940." Mr. Eden himself, in a subsequent article, full of close psychological and political observations ("Soviet Foreign Policy. The Chameleon and the Bear",—*"The Daily Telegraph"*, 6.10.1949) is a little less explicit, but he says: "Stalin's real concern was the Soviet frontiers. He suddenly demanded a pledge from me, there and then, that Britain would recognise in treaty form the Soviet frontiers which had existed immediately before the German invasion of Russia. This I declined to give." He must, Mr. Eden said, report to his Government to coordinate the views of the United Kingdom Government with those of the Dominions, etc. "But for Stalin this was not enough. He wanted agreement on the spot, and that was impossible. (The conversation became) sharp, which no doubt did good in the end." Mr. Eden thus saved for the moment the international position of the Baltic States. But the British Government, in view of the general situation, began to exercise diplomatic pressure on Washington, to obtain the concurrence of the Americans in the demands—almost ultimative in nature—of Stalin.

On publication of the IV Volume of the *Memoirs of Mr. Winston Churchill*, we became acquainted with one of the official documents on this subject. Texts of this kind are always very instructive for the Balts. Mr. Churchill writes to President Roosevelt, on 7th March 1942 (see p. 293):

"If Winant is with you now he will no doubt explain the Foreign Office view about Russia. The increasing gravity of the war has led me to feel that the principles of the Atlantic Charter ought not to be construed so as to deny Russia the frontiers she occupied when Germany attacked her. This was the basis on which Russia acceded to the Charter, and I expect that a severe process of liquidating hostile elements in the Baltic States, etc., was employed by the Russians when they took these regions at the beginning of the war. I hope therefore that you will be able to give us a free hand to sign the treaty which Stalin desires as soon as possible. Everything portends an immense renewal of the German invasion of Russia in the spring, and there is very little we can do to help the only country that is heavily engaged with the German armies."

The diplomatic battle between the two Anglo-Saxon capitals

was very lively. The Americans (especially Mr. Cordell Hull) were categorically opposed to this violation of the principles of the Atlantic Charter. They held fast to the American rule of conduct not to fix frontiers during the war, so as to avoid later complications. Mr. Cordell Hull even threatened to make public the whole controversy, as well as the official declaration of the American points of view (Cordell Hull, p. 1167, 1172—1174). The British then drew back, and the Russians, in view of their dependence on American aid, signed—probably with clenched teeth—the Anglo-Russian Pact of 26th May 1942, without touching the problem of frontiers.

A victory, then, for the principles of international law? Yes, but at what a price! Firstly, the whole battle took place in the complete silence of the great chancelleries, which means that it was feared to touch these things openly. In other words, the more the international or world importance of the Baltic problem grew, the more it was hidden from the public. Secondly, this diplomatic battle gave birth, it seems, in the heads of the American leaders to the impression that before the choice between force and justice, that is to say, between the friendship or at least the acquiescence of the Soviets and the possibility of a new 23rd August 1939 *in extremis*, the first solution would be preferable in the ferocious world-wide struggle, of which the end could not then be well foreseen.

The sure indication that the Baltic cause was taking a bad turn is that in Washington a radical solution was mooted, namely the evacuation from their homelands of all the Balts who did not want to remain under Russian domination. There was discussion of this possibility, which appeared a little too cruel even to the initiators. Molotov as a good Communist naturally rejected any such suggestion. But fate, implacable to the Balts at this time, applied this cruel measure two years later when the Russians “evacuated” to Siberia masses of the Baltic people, in conditions which recall the worst moments in their history.

The more the Russians, fighting gallantly for their country, gained in military prestige, the more necessary they became to the Western Allies, who did not hasten to make a landing. The star of hope for the Balts began to pale. During the decisive

struggle of 1943—1944, a struggle no longer of peoples but of masses, the voice of the Balts grew less and less perceptible. However, there was someone who did not forget “his” Baltic republics—the dictator of the Kremlin.

When Mr. Cordell Hull left for the Moscow Conference (October 1943) President Roosevelt gave his instructions (Cordell Hull, p. 1265—1266): “. . . As for Poland and the Baltic States, the President said that, when he should meet with Stalin, he intended to appeal to him on grounds of high morality. He would say to him that neither Britain nor we would fight Russia over the Baltic States, but that in Russia’s own interest, from the viewpoint of her position in the world, it would be a good thing for her to say that she would be willing, two years or so after the war, to hold a second plebiscite in the Baltic countries. While Russia was satisfied that the plebiscite she had already held was conclusive, he commented, the rest of the world did not seem to think so. He thought that the same idea might be applied to eastern Poland, but that the new boundary, in any event, should be somewhat east of the so-called Curzon Line, with Lemberg (Lwow) going to Poland, and that a plebiscite should be held after the shell shock of war had subsided.”

A funeral oration, then!

To conclude, there is the testimony of the Polish diplomat, M. Ciechanowski (p. 93 & 94). He relates his impression of the visit he made, with M. Raczynski, to Under-Secretary of State Berle on 21st February 1942: “. . . When Raczynski criticised Soviet expansion as akin to the German Haushofer “Grossraum geopolitical theory”, Berle expressed the view that it should be possible to secure the development of smaller States while simultaneously taking into account the defensive requirements of great Powers directly interested. As an example he pointed to Costa Rica, which, as he said, the United States could have occupied (to guarantee the security of the Panama Canal, A. Sp.) if it had ever wished to do so, but which permitted and appeared quite satisfied to have American defensive bases on her territory and showed no concern for her own safety. I reminded Mr. Berle of the unhappy situation of the three Baltic States, resulting from the establishment of Soviet “defensive bases” on their territory,

and added that soon after the first Soviet garrisons had occupied them the entire countries found themselves incorporated in the Soviet Union. Berle admitted that the Baltic States were deeply attached to their independence and added, as if withdrawing from his former argument, that the ideas he had outlined were still quite unprepared and would need to be carefully thought out. Nevertheless, this conversation gave us much food for thought. We could not help wondering whether these remarks were the prelude to a possible change of fundamental American views." In fact, relates the author a little later (p. 107—108), the subsequent conversations with President Roosevelt and with Mr. Hopkins only confirmed these doubts. It is useless to cherish illusions: the Baltic cause was in an unfavourable position during the last years of the Second World War and during the first years after the "Peace" of 1945.

"Le Figaro" of 7th February 1951 reproduced a letter of President Roosevelt of 20th February 1943, marked "ultra secret". This document dispels all doubts on the attitude of the late President towards the Balts. A further proof is given in Hopkins (op. cit., p. 706): "The President, Mr. Eden and I (i.e. Hopkins, the date: 13.3.1943) dined last night and discussed, in great detail, the post-war geographical problems of Europe. *Russia*. Eden stated he thought Russia was our most difficult problem . . . I asked him what he thought Russia's demand at the Peace Table would be. Eden said he thought they first would demand that the Baltic States be absorbed as states in the U.S.S.R. He felt Stalin would insist upon this for reasons of security and that he would make out a case that there had been a plebiscite in 1939 (Mr. Hopkins's error: not 1939, but 1940, A. Sp.) which indicated the desire of the Baltic States to join the U.S.S.R.

The President stated that he thought that this action on the part of Russia would meet with a good deal of resistance in the United States and England; that he realised that, realistically, the Russian armies would be in the Baltic States at the time of the downfall of Germany and none of us can force them to get out. He, the President, said he thought the United States would urge Russia not to take them into the U.S.S.R. without a new plebiscite, but agreed that they would have very close economic and military

arrangements with the Soviet pending a plebiscite. Eden thought Stalin would not agree to this and would be insistent that we agree to the absorption of the Baltic States into the Soviet Union. The President said he realised that we might have to agree to this, but if we did, then we should use it as a bargaining instrument in getting other concessions from Russia."

TEHERAN, YALTA AND THEIR SEQUEL

Of all the long succession of conferences between the Western Allies and the Bolsheviks, from the first Western tentatives to interest Stalin in discussions "in small committee", to Potsdam, where their military collaboration was formally terminated (see general review of the "Enciclopedia Italiana" appendix II, 1948: "Guerra mondiale, storia diplomatica", p. 1103—1130), the names of Teheran and Yalta have remained the most engraved in the public mind. As time goes on these two names figure more and more in the imagination of the Western world, as if surrounded with suspicious fog and dangerous shadows. In the United States the published agreements, as well as those of which the existence was supposed, aroused immediate criticism and expression of anxiety. The first to voice such expressions, if I am not mistaken, was the ex-Ambassador of the United States in Moscow and Paris, Mr. W. Bullitt. Then, as the post-war collaboration of the Western allies with the Russians diminished from year to year, the tone of the polemics on the subject of the Roosevelt-Cordell Hull policy towards the Russians was heightened even so far as sometimes to become violent. It would not be correct on our part to concern ourselves with such exchanges of views between the different political groups of North America; but our direct interest, and our duty even, demand that we should try to catch a glimpse of what they lead to and the lessons they teach. To mention one example: on the 18th November 1950, the National Day of Latvia, at our Legation in Washington Mr. Armstrong, a Member of the U.S. Congress, in the course of an eloquent speech offering his good wishes, said that at Yalta, when the Baltic problem arose, Stalin threatened to conclude a separate peace

"with his former friend Hitler" if the United States did not recognise the incorporation of the Baltic States by the Soviet Union (see "Londonas Avize" of 29th November 1950). An American Congress Member, speaking thus in public, will certainly know he must take responsibility for his words.

Publications (memoirs, etc.) on the great and decisive conferences of Teheran (28th Nov.—1st Dec. 1943), Yalta (4th—12th Feb. 1945) and Potsdam (17th Jul.—2nd Aug. 1945) are not yet numerous. It is therefore not easy to trace, even approximately, with any certitude, the line of development of the Baltic problem during the last three years of the Second World War. But from the small quantity of documentation which I have at my disposal, as well as certain aspects of international relations, it is possible to draw some conclusions and to guess the development of events as concerns the Baltic States. There is, first of all, the book of Mr. R. E. Sherwood: "The White House Papers of Harry L. Hopkins", Vol. II. This book was written, as the author says, with the aim of defending the memory of Mr. Hopkins against those who attribute to him the unlucky role of having given bad advice to the President on his Russian policy. (We may recall, to have an historic perspective, President Wilson's counsellor and friend, Colonel House). To appreciate at their just valuation the quotations which follow, the reader is asked to remember the instructions of President Roosevelt to his Minister Mr. Cordell Hull (chap. XV).

During the Teheran Conference, President Roosevelt stayed at the Soviet Embassy there (see II, 771 seq.). For explanation of this see also the judgment of Roosevelt on Churchill and Stalin (II, 790). There were between the two heads of state private conversations apart from the official conferences. Once Roosevelt touched in passing on the problem of the Baltic Sea, that is on the problem of access to this sea—freedom of the seas being one of the fundamental principles of American foreign policy. Stalin reared up immediately (II 776—777) because, through some error of the Soviet translators, he had thought that the President was referring to the question of the Baltic States. Reacting on this interpretation, he stated categorically that the Baltic States, by the expression of the will of their peoples, had declared their wish to belong to the Soviet Union and that, in consequence, the

question was beyond discussion—"not to be touched". Another time (II, 788—789) Roosevelt tried to explain to Stalin and Molotov, with rather small success, certain American political principles concerning public opinion: "Roosevelt felt it necessary to explain to Stalin that there were six or seven million Americans of Polish extraction, and others of Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian origin who had the same rights and the same votes as anyone else and whose opinions must be respected. Stalin said that he understood this, but he subsequently suggested that some "propaganda work" should be done among these people." And finally, on page 790, we find a small but significant remark: the President is said to have spoken to his collaborators of Stalin's "attitude of cynicism towards such matters as the right of small nations". To give a little more weight to these quotations, let us seek confirmation elsewhere. Mr. Byrnes (Ch. 3, p. 64—65), for example, transmits to us a remark made by Stalin to Hopkins: He, Stalin, cautioned against what he termed a tendency on the part of small nations to create and exploit differences among the great powers in order to gain the backing of one or more of them for their own ends. "A nation need not be innocent just because it is small", he said. Further, General Bedell-Smith, ex-Ambassador at Moscow, has stated (according to "L'Europeo", Rome, 8th Oct. 1950) that the groups of Lithuanians, Latvians and Estonians, and of citizens of other countries subjugated by Russia who have abandoned their native land and emigrated to the free countries, represent centres of potential opposition, as the Soviet leaders well know. A Russian diplomat, with a rare frankness or clairvoyance, had said to him in Paris, he adds: "That is exactly how we Communists began."

On the Teheran Conference we have still the testimony of Mr. Sumner Welles in an article in "The Evening Star", Washington, at the end of 1950: "Stalin himself, at the Teheran Conference at the end of 1943 declared that, except for American production, 'the war would have been lost'. Should not the United States, at the moment of which I speak, have explored the possibility of reaching a firm agreement with Stalin on postwar political and territorial settlements? (1943 is in question, A. Sp.). Of the commitments Stalin asked, the Curzon Line had long been regarded in the West (from what date? A. Sp.) as a legitimate

boundary between Poland and Russia. It was in fact accepted by Mr. Churchill and Mr. Roosevelt at Teheran. The adjustments involving Bessarabia and Bukovina were not a major difficulty. From the American standpoint, the only one of the commitments sought by Stalin that could not have been accepted was that for the permanent incorporation of the three Baltic republics into the Soviet Union. Yet even here it is doubtful whether Stalin in the winter of 1943 would have proved altogether obdurate." (See also the manoeuvres of the Soviet leaders described by Mr. Byrnes—chap. V.).

On the situation of the Balts at Teheran we have also the details of Mr. Ciechanowski. It is 1943, in full sway of the charm exercised by Stalin on President Roosevelt and on a good many of his collaborators, including for a time Mr. Cordell Hull. The Red dictator knows well how to play the card of the American diplomat, and in consequence the eastern coast of the Baltic is in permanent danger of being abandoned to Russia. Things still go fairly well for Finland, but the cause of the Balts is subordinated to a very suspicious Soviet agnosticism. Stalin declares that he has not yet well thought over this problem; he would not attribute great importance to the subject of the political statute of these countries; he would still seek to study better the aspirations of the populations, etc.

On Yalta the sources at my disposal are rather few, but nevertheless eloquent. Mr. Sherwood, previously quoted, describes (II, 844) a dinner at which everybody was in good spirits. Mr. Bohlen had a conversation with Vyshinski, his neighbour at table: "Vyshinski said that the Soviet Union would never agree to the right of small nations to judge the acts of the Great Powers, and when Bohlen ventured the opinion that the American people were not likely to approve of any denial of the small nations' rights, Vyshinsky said that the American people 'should learn to obey their leaders'." This is the rising sun promised to the Baltic peoples!

Mr. Sumner Welles, in the article quoted, wrote that at Yalta, also, "Poland's future limits and the political composition of her future government were taken up." Of the Balts he said not a word.

Mr. Ciechanowski, for his part, writes violent pages on

Teheran and Yalta. On the Curzon Line he is painful to read, and the description of the return from Yalta of President Roosevelt, already very ill, is truly tragic. A general conclusion on Yalta (see chap. 38: "Total surrender at Yalta, February 1945") is given in Mr. Stettinius's book (conversation between the author and Mr. Ciechanowski of 14th March 1945): Mr. Stettinius said that the President intended to "fight for the Polish cause", but on arriving at Yalta he found the situation so tense, and Stalin so obstinate and determined to carry through his intentions concerning Poland, that the President immediately realised that he could not insist upon rejection of the Soviet territorial demands without risking a complete break with Stalin.

In his book which appeared some years later: "Roosevelt and the Russians, the Yalta Conference", New York, 1949, Mr. Stettinius completely defends the policy of his President at Yalta (see particularly the chapter: "Appeasement or Realism?", p. 295 seq.). The President's policy regarding Poland is explained as follows (p. 301): "By February 1945, therefore, Poland and all of eastern Europe, except for most of Czechoslovakia, was in the hands of the Red Army. As a result of this military situation, it was not a question of what Great Britain and the United States would permit Russia to do in Poland, but what the two countries could persuade the Soviet Union to accept" (the last phrase is underlined by the author). This poor result of the great "lend-lease" action has little in common with the late President's hope that the "Soviet Union had decided to take its place in the United Nations as a good citizen" (p. 307). The Balts were no longer mentioned, but they are perhaps understood in "the Soviet territorial demands".

Mr. Sumner Welles (op. cit.) attempts an explanation: "As I see it, the critics of the agreements reached at Teheran, Yalta and Potsdam confuse cause and effect." To this the Balts could reply: we have been accused, up to a point, of being the cause of the war, through no fault of our own: now, more than anyone else, we are suffering from the effects and consequences of the great upheaval. There is no mistaking this, it is sufficiently clear.

In Mr. Samuel Flagg Bemis's recent book: "A Diplomatic History of the United States" (3rd edition, 1950), we find

enumerated, on pages 895—899, three secret agreements at Yalta: on the subject of the repatriation of prisoners of war, on the method of voting in the Council of the four “great”, and on the entry of the U.S.S.R. into the war against Japan. Of the Baltic sector and of Poland, not a word. But the author states that the United States have gone “more than half way” to reach an agreement with the U.S.S.R. (p. 898).

To conclude, we quote a general conclusion on the post-war period, formulated by Sir Maurice Peterson (p. 258—259): “It was obvious before, during and after the war that Soviet foreign policy would tend to run on a double track. There was the line of Tsarist imperialism and the line of militant communism. The former track led primarily and directly towards the recovery of territories which had belonged to Tsarist Russia: the latter, if it were to be used, would lead the Soviet Union towards the realisation of all the aims set down in the Marx-Lenin-Stalinist doctrine, the propagation of communism and the advance, for which the period after a great war had always been held to be especially propitious, towards world revolution. The hope of the Western world was that if the Soviet Union was not unnecessarily thwarted and checked in its progress along the track of Tsarist imperialism—and the means by which the Soviet Union could be checked within its own radius of action were not in any case very apparent—the switch-over to the second track of militant communism might be postponed or even averted altogether. It was a hope which drew fresh strength from the meeting of Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill at Yalta and which even survived the later meeting at Potsdam in the summer of 1945. The policy which the hope inspired has been called appeasement, particularly in America”, etc.

This is admirably clear and we should thank the distinguished English diplomat for his frankness. But as the Balts, not to mention their neighbours, lie right across the two lines of Soviet policy, they could give a definition or paraphrase more crude and undiplomatic of this whole international situation. They might formulate it as follows: in the desire for their pacification the Bolsheviks were permitted to devour the conquered and annexed countries; but the Russians were not pacified, and, on the contrary, by constantly increasing their demands, have created a dangerously

tense situation. The West may question why the Bolsheviks are not contented with their already enormous conquests, but those who happen to know them closely could give a perfectly simple reply: It is because in the Bolshevik régime the disproportion in numbers, conditions of life, privileges, power, etc. between the tiny leading minority and the great enslaved mass is so enormous that the edifice would not remain standing without methods violent and always more violent. Individuals must stir and exert themselves continually, pity is not for them; the equilibrium would be lost if they acted otherwise. If there exist in the West strong currents which consider this State to be the last word of social perfection, it is up to them.

The international situation of the Balts can be seen now in a two-fold and distinctive aspect. We are treated by the Bolshevik occupiers the worst of all the subjugated peoples: for an attentive reader of the observations of this brochure additional commentary is unnecessary. From the point of view of the rights of peoples, on the contrary, the Baltic States are alone among the annexed and satellite countries in being recognised *de jure* today, after more than ten years, in the persons of the representatives of their last legal governments of 1939-1940—notably without conditions by the United States, the Holy See, Brazil, etc., and by Great Britain, France and many other countries with certain restrictions of a formal character.

Despite the many ups and downs and all the perilous oscillations which the Baltic problem has undergone during the last eleven or twelve years, there exist no official documents, signed and sealed, emanated from the great chancelleries of the West, with formulas of official recognition of the incorporation of the Baltic States, which constitutes an act of violence against us by the U.S.S.R. This is clearly the response, predominantly moral, which the civilised states make to the Bolsheviks, who have tried to pull the string too hard in the case of the Baltic States. One day we shall know what was said concerning us at Yalta and elsewhere. Despite all the menaces on the side of the gentlemen of the Kremlin, officially there emerged only silence.

XVII

A PEOPLE'S DESPERATE STRUGGLE

After Stalingrad (February 1943) the big steam roller changed direction and instead of the "Drang nach Osten" Europe had to face the "Drang nach Westen", foreseen by Spengler, and by some less known "Baltic Cassandras". At the beginning of 1944 the Red Army, baptised through patriotism the Soviet Army, was already at the Estonian frontier; in April it invaded Roumania and in September Bulgaria and Jugoslavia. In July it penetrated deep into Lithuanian territory and endeavoured with a massed attack towards Jelgava (Mitau) and the Gulf of Riga, to cut off Riga and central and Eastern Latvia from Western Courland. The point of this attack was broken, but the operation destroyed the capital of the ex-Duchy of Courland, Jelgava (Mitau): of this town there remains only a heap of ruins. Central Livonia was already a battlefield, and Riga finally fell, on 13th October 1944. There remained only the Courish bridgehead, where the 19th Latvian division (2nd division of the Latvian Legion), together with some German units, resisted for long months a crushed superiority of Bolshevik armies. This division repulsed at least six mass attacks, making possible by this sacrifice the evacuation of a good part of the fugitives, especially women and children, towards the West. In May 1945 the division lay down its arms before the victorious Bolsheviks, who treated these brave Latvian soldiers as they are in the habit of treating all who dare to refuse to submit to their Asiatic messianism. The Latvians, during these years, were not popular in the world. As a subject of talk they were avoided, and the truly epic struggle of the Latvian legionaries, undertaken in defence of their fatherland and

to allow the retreat of their families, has been simply and deliberately forgotten.

The Latvian émigrés have already published a considerable number of memoirs, accounts and even poems with descriptions of the life of the Latvian people during the nine months: summer 1944—spring 1945. It is the picture of a deadly fever seizing upon a whole human community, a whole people. The "white roads" of Latvia were at first filled with refugees, with all their goods reduced to some clothes on carts and wagons, even hand-carts. The same roads were then ploughed up and crushed by the Soviet tanks; the farms were devastated and deserted, the towns in flames. All fled towards the West, always towards the West... , but on the one side was the sea, and over the Lithuanian frontier the German armed police could be seen—well known figures.

On the Western coast of Courland the number of refugees increased continually. The forests swarmed with German deserters and Russian agents; the German police pitilessly pursued all who tried to embark for "the other side", the Swedish coast. The Baltic Sea, moreover, was already full of fast Russian vedettes which did their best, in conjunction with Soviet aeroplanes, to hunt down the Latvians. All this time there were incessant battles raging, at a distance of some tens of kilometres from the coast.

The Latvian poetess Strēlerte, in a poem which will live on, brings before our eyes the infernal picture of the flight:

"... On all the roads of our life, in all the trials
that fate will lay on us,
Across the smoke, the blood and the anguish,
Before our eyes will float the picture of the
burning coast of Courland."

At last the German authorities decided (see above) to evacuate a certain number of civilians, and thus a good part of the population were able to leave the country and avoid the gratuitous journey to Siberia reserved for them.

Latvians are reproached for having worn the German uniform. The units in question were special formations with distinguishing Latvian features. They did not fight during the German offensive phase, but later, and then it was a matter of defending the homeland and of saving the homes. What possibility of survival had

the Latvians between the two great peoples in conflict, with their fanatical ideologies? Moreover, the German authorities mobilised the Latvians by force, as had been done in Alsace-Lorraine—and in flagrant contradiction to international law.

We have already the memoirs of several Latvian officers (see especially the booklet of Colonel A. Plensners: "Information on the Latvian Legion", Pinneberg, 1949). The Germans admitted the Latvian officers to the rank of colonel.

The mobilisation of the Latvians began at the beginning of 1943—a dramatic coincidence with the Battle of Stalingrad. The Nazi authorities wanted Latvian troops composed of volunteers, to have a clear conscience before the Hague Convention of 1907, but were not successful in this. The mobilisation was then proclaimed, but the Latvian military leaders, before committing themselves, presented counter-proposals—not an easy thing to do in 1943. Their demands were: 1) All the Latvian units should be formed and trained on Latvian territory; 2) the "Latvian Legion" should be used only for the fight against the Bolsheviks and on Latvian territory; 3) the units of the "Legion" should be commanded by Latvian officers; 4) in the units of the "Legion" should be incorporated the "police battalions" formed previously.

On broad lines, the German authorities agreed to these conditions and kept their promises. It was only at the beginning of the critical period that they appointed German officers as divisional commanders, instead of Latvian, the better to maintain their control.

The chronicle of the battles of the Latvian legionaries is not yet written. These troops fought heroically, near the Volchov marshes and the banks of the Velikaya, near Pskov—defensive positions of the Baltic frontiers. At the end of the war the Latvians fought also in Courland and in Germany. These were stages of an unceasing struggle against a formidable numerical and technical superiority, a continual sacrifice to the national ideal. The 15th Latvian division escaped from encirclement; after having been forced by the Germans to dig trenches in Eastern Germany they surrendered to the Americans and British towards the end of April 1945; the 19th division remained.

Something will be said in the following chapters on events in Latvia; here we will mention those who are dispersed over the

whole world. They are very numerous and represent a big percentage for a people numerically small. Let us give some figures, although the situation is very variable. In the Latvian records in Germany in 1946 115,000 persons were registered; in Sweden and Denmark there were nearly 5,000 persons; in all, then, about 120,000 emigrants. At the end of 1950 their distribution throughout the world was, very approximately, as follows: in the United States, 30,000; in Canada, 15,000; in Australia, 20,000; in Great Britain, 15,000; in Germany still, 20,000, and 20,000 in Sweden, Denmark, Belgium, France, South America and elsewhere. Very few of these Latvian emigrants have been able to find work in their speciality. Some professors, engineers and technicians of various kinds, artists, etc. have had this opportunity. The rest have had quite simply to start life from the bottom. The men are working in agriculture and in factories, and in the coalmines of Belgium and England. The women are working as nurses, housekeepers or servants, etc. They take work where they can find it and the attestations of the authorities are generally good.

The emigrants have no wish to vegetate. They wish to resist morally and to unfurl their national flag in the wind of foreign lands. The Latvians are known for individualists. The climate of emigration can give birth to faults based on that quality. There are, in fact, divisions, a natural thing in any emigration; but all are united when it is a question of duty towards the homeland.

The emigrants feel the need to express their opinions and their desires. In each foreign country where any considerable number of Latvians are to be found there exists at least one Latvian newspaper (generally weekly)—in Sweden, in Germany, England, the U.S.A., Canada, Australia and the Argentine. Numerous are the reprints of recent literary works, among which are to be met works of young writers of talent and much promise. Exhibitions of paintings are difficult to organise, but exhibitions of applied art, so popular among the Latvians, take place in nearly every Latvian colony. There are frequent concerts by our artists, especially in England. The national tradition of Song Festivals has even been reestablished, despite the inconvenient circumstances of emigration, again in England. Latvian scholars abroad have

published different works in their fields. For some years there existed even a Baltic University (together with the Lithuanians and Estonians) at Pinneberg, near Hamburg.

Let us end this chapter by saying that there are now few Latvian families who are not in mourning. The cross which we bear is heavy, but we have not lost either courage or hope.

THE ISOLATION OF THE EAST COAST OF THE BALTIC

THE CURZON LINE "A LA RusSE"

During the talks between the leaders of the Kremlin and the last free Polish Government, that of Mr. Mikolaichik which refused to accept the Curzon Line as basis of discussion, a reply was given as categoric as in the case of the Baltic States (see Cordell Hull, p. 1441); namely, that before the reestablishment of Polish-Soviet relations the Polish Government must publicly accept the Curzon Line as the eastern frontier of Poland. This conception dated already from Teheran (see chap. XIV). At Yalta, Stalin at first presented to the Western Allies the acceptance of this line as an enormous sacrifice on the Russian side. This scene is related to us by Mr. Byrnes (chap. II, p. 29—30). To the suggestions, he says, of President Roosevelt and of Prime Minister Churchill, who both recommended the acceptance of the Line, each in his own way, Stalin replied with an impassioned statement: "The Curzon Line is the line of Curzon and Clemenceau and of those Americans who took part in 1918 and 1919 in the Conference which then took place. The Russians were not invited and did not take part. Lenin was not in agreement with the Curzon Line. Now some people want that we should be less Russian than Curzon was and Clemenceau was. You would drive us into shame. What will be said by the White Russians and the Ukrainians? They will say that Stalin and Molotov are far less defenders of Russia than are Curzon and Clemenceau. I could not take such a position and return to Moscow with an open face." At this point, Stalin stood at the conference table as he spoke. It was the only time during the

entire conference that he exhibited his strong feelings in such a manner. "I prefer the war should continue a little longer although it costs us blood, and to give Poland compensation in the west at the expense of the Germans", he continued. I will maintain and I will ask all friends to support me in this . . . I am in favour of extending the Polish western frontier to the Neisse River." The discussion was long and earnest but Stalin finally accepted the Curzon Line in principle and a somewhat equivocal statement on Poland's frontier was approved.

I do not intend here to dwell on the Russian manoeuvres, but I must underline two essential points of our Baltic interest in regard to this "Line". The first point we could call the psychology of the Westerners on this subject. Basing themselves on the fact that the Line must, or should, represent an ethnic division (Poles, Ruthenians, Ukrainians), the Western statesmen were opposed to Poland, assuming *tacito consensu* that the Polish claims beyond the Curzon Line were based on "imperialism" pure and simple: in other words, on political tendencies to be condemned. Mr. Cordell Hull himself spoke in 1940 of being well able to understand the best defensive positions of the Russians—the best, be it added, also against the Western Allies themselves, a thing understood only ten years later. And it was Prime Minister Churchill who said at Yalta that the Russian claim to the regions around Lvov, for example, "is one not founded on force but upon right" (Byrnes, p. 29). At the time of which we are speaking I find nowhere any illusion to Soviet imperialism, and still less any attack against this imperialism. It was found quite natural that the White Ruthenians and the Ukrainians should be subjugated by Moscow. Their delegates were accepted at the United Nations Organisation but no one has ever dared to ask himself whether these peoples are really so desirous of belonging to "grandmother" Russia. The other observation concerns military questions, that is to say, questions of the balance of forces in this European sector. The Curzon Line "rediviva" bears a resemblance of rather bad augury to the former frontiers of "Poland of the Congress"—"Kongresowka", as the Poles called it. I refer to Poland under the reign of Czar Alexander I, who claimed to be the spokesman of the Polish and Lithuanian peoples, to repay the Kingdom of

the Jagellons for the treatment which it had received at the Congress of Vienna. Though enlarging the frontiers of the new Lithuania by adding to it the Vilnius (Vilno) region, Lithuanian by right, the line cuts off from the Baltic coast a hinterland necessary to it for resisting pressure from the Euro-Asiatic continent. The Kremlin leaders know this very well, and to deprive the Balts of their continental communications with the West—a natural intercourse of centuries—they aimed at cutting the legs, so to say, of the Baltic coast by occupying East Prussia and annexing it to the U.S.S.R. This annexation was recognised immediately by the Western powers (see Byrnes, chap. 5, p. 104—105): “At Potsdam, we had agreed to support at the Peace Conference the claim of the Soviets for Königsberg and the valuable territory of East Prussia. We had recognised for the time being their *fait accompli* in Eastern Germany, and had made a reparations settlement they then regarded as acceptable.” The ring around the Balts was hermetically closed. Poland was pushed towards the West so that she should, as soon as occasion arose, settle accounts with the Germans, obviously not too enthusiastic about the frontier line of the Oder—Neisse. *Divide et impera*. Moscow, then, was given complete satisfaction, and in the West there were perhaps some doubts. Greatly moreover, the Eastern coast of the Baltic, isolated and closed, has become one of the most fortified bases of the whole Communist empire—a defensive and offensive base. If the newspapers, especially the Scandinavian ones, are able to give so much impressive information on this subject, I do not doubt that military circles know a great deal more. Thus the “cordon sanitaire” of other days has become a formidable arsenal, but this time “anti-sanitaire”. Such are the surprises to which the Baltic coast is sometimes submitted when history takes a wrong direction.

Russia has, since 1945, greatly over-reached the Russian ethnic frontiers. The situation of the Baltic peoples is in 1952 very different from what it was in the time of the Russian czars. After the period of liberty and of the flowering of their creative forces, they are experiencing now a merciless oppression. As Stalin said (see Cordell Hull, p. 1295), the Russian offensive of the summer of 1943 was “an opportunity that might occur only

once in fifty years to inflict a decisive defeat on the German army." And on the same occasion he spoke of taking "advantage of this present opportunity which," he repeated, "might occur once in fifty years . . ." (cf. the "prophecy" of Professor Temperley at the beginning of chap. XXI of this book, A. Sp.). The master of Russia saw there the maximum of his hopes.

But the present situation of the Baltic coast, as an integral part of Eastern Europe, is only a provisional solution. It is one of those "geopolitical" phenomena characterised by the wise words of Fr. Ratzel: "It is space which will correct the excesses of situations created provisionally."

A small remark in conclusion to prove how much alive still today is the complex that I have ventured to call "the Curzon Line psychology". In the issue of 19th December 1950 of the "Saturday Evening Post" there appeared an article of Mr. Strauss-Houpé, in which the author "offers" the Baltic States, Bessarabia and Eastern Poland to the Russians so that they should be satisfied and withdraw their troops from Germany, Austria, Poland, Hungary, the Balkans, etc. As can be seen, the author is as generous as Ribbentrop was in his time, but since then the price has risen a lot!

XIX

VÆ VICTIS ET DERELICTIS!

Having satisfied their desires for vengeance in the "fortress of Courland", and subjugated this "undocile" Latvian people, so much "imbued with bourgeois pride", the Bolsheviks were henceforth absolute masters of the situation. They then began systematically their work of "assimilation of Baltic life into Soviet life", as it was put, still with a certain moderation, in 1940. In order not to be disturbed in this task, they hermetically closed the frontiers of the Baltic States to all diplomatic agents and all foreign journalists.

To start with, the Russians carefully "cleansed" the country of all who belonged to the armed forces, to the home-guard, the police, the administration, political parties, intellectual circles, etc., in fact of all "suspects". It is calculated that from the three Baltic countries there were deported, during the year of Bolshevik victory, from 400,000 to 500,000 persons. The exact figures are not known because the Russian political police (its name changes so often) is jealous of its statistics. "Regular" deportations continue still, even in periods of lull. We will endeavour only to note the periods of mass deportations. The general picture is given to the public by the book of D. F. Dallin and B. F. Nikolayevski: "Forced Labour in Soviet Russia" (1947). Details concerning the Baltic countries are to be found in the article "Deportācijas" in the Latvian encyclopædia "Latviešu Enciklopēdija" (with a map of the principal concentration camps, p. 481). After the two mass deportations of 1941 and 1945 there was the third which lasted until March 1949, having started during 1947—that is to say at the time of the Bolshevik offensive

against the "kulaks"—and which is thought to have cost the Latvian people at least 50,000 new victims.

These deportations and these enormous figures have often evoked in the press of the Latvian emigrants cries of anguish and alarm. The fear is felt lest all this should end in the complete annihilation of the Latvians, Estonians and Lithuanians, as has been the fate of different peoples of the U.S.S.R. An American journalist, Mr. Edmund Stevens, having former relations with Russia and speaking an impeccable Russian, succeeded in penetrating this guarded Baltic bastion and heard an officer of the Russian political police declare: "A difficult people, these Latvians! They don't like us and do not accept easily our social order. They are too difficult and egoistic. If I could have my way I would send them all across the Urals, and then we would repopulate the country with our own people." When, relates Mr. Stevens, he made objections, saying that it would be a rather difficult undertaking, the colonel replied: "If it was possible with the Germans of the Volga, with the Tartars of the Crimea and with the populations of East Prussia, it ought to be possible also in this case." (quoted from "Il Messaggero di Roma", 26th March 1950).

The infiltration into the Baltic countries of individuals of different nationalities and races of European or Asiatic Russia is considerable. This, apart from the influx of starving people and beggars, which is also quite considerable, would indicate a political tendency of the Soviet Government. Attempt has been made to establish calculations of the demographic and ethnic movements in Latvia on the basis of the number of electors in 1947, 1948 and 1950, according to figures given by the "Soviet Encyclopædia"; and it has been concluded that while the number of Latvians has fallen, the total number of inhabitants of the country has risen.

Reflections on these facts are naturally of a very sad nature for those who have their home on this coast of the Baltic. If enforced emigration, that chronic malady of humanity, is in itself a calamity, it becomes tragic in these ultra-modern days, when it is sometimes called "genocide". Every period has its vocabulary. But the Balts, as often during their chequered history, find a consolation in their innate qualities: their endurance, their tenacity

and their vitality. Moreover they were born in a land where it has always been necessary to "live dangerously", as Nietzsche said. Indeed, what was the aspect of our Zemgale after its conquest by the Teutonic Order (13th century)? How did Livonia look at the end of the Muscovite Wars in the 16th century? or after the Northern War in the 18th century, when the Russian General Cheremetyev found nothing more to destroy in Livonia, as he wrote in a report to the Czar? And after the First World War, of which my generation still feels the heavy consequences? In their misfortunes the Baltic people fortify themselves by the conviction, based on the lessons of history, that their role is far from being over.

Besides physical means, the Bolsheviks, as is now everywhere known, apply their methods of propaganda and of coercion, to break the resistance of those who will not obey. To mention two examples only. The Bolsheviks "work on" the youth from an early age. They isolate children completely from surroundings susceptible of "ideological infection" and bring them up like artificial ideological plants. All this is possible and effective in the conditions of a State administration without scruple, and thanks to modern means of propaganda: newspapers, posters and slogans, "Red corners", radio, deafening loud-speakers, etc. According to the Russians, the gravest fault of the youth of Latvia today is that of "idealising former times and idolising the West" (see: *Latvia under the Bolshevik yoke*, 1949, p. 14—15). This education has its effects; it has its influence on minds and souls; and if one day these young Latvians of school age today are called upon by other systems of education to change their opinions and convictions, much time will be needed, and there will perhaps be some crises of conscience. But there is another side to the medal also. All spiritual constraint can produce reactions, and even disgust and aversion. It is thus that the violent methods of the dictators give birth to the forces which will sooner or later be called on to destroy them. It was Russian czarism which engendered the anarchists, nihilists and revolutionary socialist terrorists. A large percentage of the active Russian revolutionaries came from Orthodox Seminaries where they had begun their studies. Among these renegades and rebels Stalin, dictator of All the Russias, is to be found.

The other example, being "universal" also, and forming part of the Bolshevik programme, should be quoted because of the local Baltic nuances, based on a long history. It is the most tragic picture of all the drama. The "Sovetskaya Latvija" of the 1st August 1947 published the militant slogan: "A mortal blow must be given to the kulaks and to the bourgeois nationalists," for which we can read: to the peasants and the intellectuals. Of the latter, after the experiences of the Russian occupations of 1919 and 1940, a great part fled abroad, where they endure hard privations and sufferings; but there was no other solution for them. One of my colleagues has drawn up the figures concerning the University of Riga and of the Agricultural Academy of Jelgava. In 1944 out of the total number of 522 teaching staff members of these two higher educational centres, 368 took the road of exile and only 154 stayed behind, or were forced to remain—70% against 30%. As to the peasant, especially the northern peasant, it should be said that he never leaves of his own will his bit of land. He has to be suppressed or driven away, and the Bolsheviks have done both. We will quote figures: "The first 4 kolkhozes (i.e. collective farms) were established in Latvia in the winter of 1946-47 with a total area of 1000 hectares. The Soviet authorities gave these kolkhozes whatever aid they could. By September 1st 1947 the number of Latvian kolkhozes had grown to 16, by January 1st 1948 to 49 and by May 1st 1950 to 4200, including 97 per cent. of all Latvian farmers. The average area of a kolkhoze is 300 hectares" (Švābe, p. 63).

We find more recent information in the "Izvestia" of 19th January 1951. The article is written by the Secretary of the Latvian Communist Party in person: "During the years of the Soviet régime great changes have taken place in the agricultural economy of Latvia. The process of collectivisation in the republic was finished two years ago. During the past year the kolkhozes have been concentrated: in the place of the 4,115 kolkhozes existing before, 1,792 agricultural cooperatives have now been established." The author states that Latvia will produce sufficient grain for herself, and continues: "There is before us a big programme of activity in putting up buildings for the kolkhozes, in making the peasants move from the isolated farms and live in the kolkhoze villages." This process of the

systematic destruction of the individual farm had only begun. This fact is also confirmed by the figures given in the Bulletin: "Latvia behind the Iron Curtain", No. 38, January 1951, p. 7. In our frank "bourgeois" language this signifies that nearly all the Latvian peasant-farmers (the case is the same for the other Baltic countries) have been driven from their lands and despoiled of their properties. Moreover, they have been declared enemies of the Soviet régime and as such they are generally debarred from joining the newly founded kolkhozes. What is the fate of these unfortunate people? A good part have been deported, and those who remain have a future full of peril. The farmer with an individual property is for the Bolsheviks "a dog"; "his name is an insult" (Ceichners, p. 405—406).

It was a well premeditated blow and, from the social point of view, the most cruel that has been directed against the Latvian people, to whom, already in 1940, the Russians gave solemn promises that they would not be subjected to this calamity. The Latvian peasant, attached to his land for centuries, had created by his tenacity and his courage the prosperity of his country. He had carried on his shoulders the weight of so many foreign dominations, in this part of Europe where aggressive currents from all points of the horizon mingle and clash. His individualist spirit had already been noted by a chronicler of the Middle Ages, who spoke of the "hardy character of the Latvians who build their houses all alone in the forests." Historians often in the course of the centuries hold up to praise the individualist character of the Latvian farms—surrounded by fences and hedges and beautiful with venerable trees, hiding the farms from the view of passers-by and creating an intimacy by blossoming to the centre of the farmstead, that centre being the courtyard surrounded by the several buildings of the farm (the house, the barn, the old corn-flailing barn, and various stables). On this subject we can read the descriptions of the celebrated voyager F. G. Kohl, writing more than a century ago, or the recent epic poem of the Latvian farm "Straumēni", by Edvarts Virza (of which there are French, German and other translations). This individualist spirit is one with the sentiments of family intimacy and is reflected in the "Dainas", the rich collection of Latvian Folk Songs, handed down in part from pre-Christian centuries.

All this age-old charm of the Latvian home is, then, now to be replaced by the kolkhozes, bringing with them the psychology of the Russian village, of the "derevnya", with its road, dusty or muddy, through the centre, without flowers before the houses, without protecting trees, without ornament of any kind—a thoroughfare dominated by the sounds of the inevitable "garmochka" (small accordion) and on feast days frequented by people who have given to the Russian verb "goulyatye" (to walk) the significance of a great pleasure.

To the Latvian peasant this psychological complex gives inevitably the feeling of banality and disgust. Even stunned by the Soviet loud-speakers which spread everywhere the monotonous leit-motif of Bolshevik propaganda, the Latvian will try to resist to the end, having before his eyes the picture of his home and his household gods.

TOWARDS A NEW INTERNATIONAL CRISIS

Public opinion often resembles the "one track mind": it does not like to complicate its loves and hates. Those who know how to keep two arrows on their bow, as Mr. Harriman has said of Stalin, have great advantages and a future in this world.

During the last years of the war, particularly after Stalingrad and immediately before the "Peace" of 1945, there existed in North America a very high admiration for the Russians, as contemporary writings show us. Even the responsible American chiefs had been influenced to a certain extent by the "personal charm of the Russian generalissimo", as they had openly confessed. Many shocks and blows were therefore necessary for the great public to change its mental attitude. "Uncle Joe did a good job", was a much repeated slogan during these years. But the great chancelleries would not be up to their responsibilities if they could not foresee at a certain distance what lies ahead. Mr. Cordell Hull, with the frankness of a strong character, while admitting the impressive strength of the Russian dictator, had good reasons, as early as 1944, to ask himself: "... whether Marshal Stalin and his Government were commencing to veer away from the policy of cooperation to which they had agreed at the Moscow Conference (end of 1943), and which, with a few exceptions, they had followed since then" (p. 1459). He communicated his doubts to his Ambassador in Moscow, Mr. Harriman, whose reply, as far as one can glimpse it from some lines in Mr. Cordell Hull's memories, seems to be the model of a diplomatic report (p. 1459—1460). This report only reinforced the doubts of the American chief and we are assisted in our better understanding of the troubles of Mr. Byrnes during the

years 1945 and 1946, and the melancholy end of his efforts. After having gone 77,000 leagues "in search of peace" (figures and plan inside the cover of his book, original edition of 1947), the author has to confess quite frankly that the Russians have no wish for an entente with their allies of yesterday.

The turning point came, then. But truly to deserve this name it had to be approved and sanctioned by public opinion, and this came only in the course of some years.

Formerly, considerable time was needed for such reversals; the opinion had even been expressed that one generation would not see more than one great war. This is no longer a valid reckoning. And any who observed the politicians and heard their speeches in 1945 and in 1950, that few years later, will have seen that in our days the wheel of history turns at an impressive speed.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to state with mathematical precision the date on which this change of public opinion towards the Soviets began. But we can more or less appreciate the depth of the change from books, memoirs and critical essays published, and direct attacks against Moscow, against its social system and against its foreign policy, from 1947 (when Mr. Byrnes's book appeared) onwards. In 1948, 1949 and 1950, especially, a great number of publications of this kind appeared, and the public read them with much interest, in the originals or in translations. The latter are usually made in double quick time. It all goes much more quickly now, especially as compared with publications of the same kind after the First World War. On the 5th June 1947, at Harvard University, Mr. G. Marshall, one of the most eminent American politicians, delivered his famous speech, precise, short and simple, which inaugurated the famous "Marshall Plan". As "Lend-Lease" was, in its time, absolutely necessary for the defeat of Germany and her allies, the "Marshall Plan" came to save Europe, physically and morally exhausted, without strength and almost without will. Europe was freed from the grip of Moscow, so well versed in exploiting such situations.

However many comparisons one cares to make between the two great revolutions—the French and the Russian—one essential difference must always be acknowledged. The first revolution was born in time of peace, as a manifestation of new social forces

in evolution. The Russian revolution, on the contrary, was the consequence of a lost great war; it was the overthrow of the forces of the Russian "ancien régime", provoked by external shocks. So the Soviet "bonapartism" has very special characteristics, at least as concerns its expansion towards the West: it advances only when the "others" are engaged in fratricidal struggles, or are already on the ground. But for the enormous American Lend-Lease, the fate of Russia would obviously have been different, and but for Teheran and Yalta the Bolshevik flag would not have been seen over the Elbe and at Berlin.

No explanation is necessary of the furious propaganda which the masters of the Kremlin let loose against the "Marshall Plan," but the battle was lost from the start. American dollars were and still are more powerful than the street demonstrations of the Bolsheviks. But there were behind this greater "plans" still. Launching their plan of aid, so wide in scope and political aims, the American leaders doubtless were reckoning still with the 77,000 leagues travelled in vain by Mr. Byrnes. Their ex-allies of Moscow, for their part, came to realise that to resist against "encirclement" only had the effect of increasing the gifts. Let us, however, see the effects: the *coup d'état* in Czechoslovakia in 1948 (loss for the West of the important Skoda factories), meetings and congresses of the "counter-atomists", creation of enormous kolkhozes instead of medium-sized ones, incessant "peace" propaganda, and finally Korea. Tension continued and grew. The clash in Korea was a real turning point. It was this which provoked the weighty rearmament of the United States, Great Britain and France, and which gave life to the Atlantic Pact. The Russians if they wanted to break through the Western lines should have made their bonapartism on the French pattern.

If developments follow the lines indicated, the Baltic problem, as an organic part of the general problem of Eastern Europe, should emerge from its temporary lethargy. In fact prudently, but with clearly seen implications, there has been talk in the British Parliament and American Congress about the forced labour camps in U.S.S.R. Figures are even quoted, and the sad fate of the Baltic deportees mentioned. Even at the United Nations the Balts are spoken of in passing, although cautiously,

not to shock the undecided and the neutral. As if there could still be neutrality in this great international problem! These developments are of very recent date. It is therefore not possible at present to record, in the perspective of the times that will one day be called history, all the nuances of the psychological and political changes in the matter of the Balts. We can only, for the moment, remark some significant facts, more or less official. The Foreign Affairs Committee of the United States Senate has several times given evidence of a growing interest in the peoples of Eastern Europe now under Bolshevik domination. Quite recently Baltic Committees have been admitted to the "National Committee for a Free Europe", whose aims and intentions are well defined and favourable to the cause of the Balts. "The Voice of America" has begun regular broadcasts in the Baltic languages. Finally let us mention the declaration which representatives of ten nations at present behind the "Iron Curtain": Albania, Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Roumania, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia signed in Philadelphia on 11th February 1951 (the birthday of President Lincoln; we know what that name means to Americans!), in the same hall in which, in 1776, the Declaration of Independence of the United States was proclaimed. In this Declaration are to be found Abraham Lincoln's famous words—today more true than ever—that the world cannot live if one half is free and the other in a state of bondage.

PERSPECTIVES

The late Professor Temperley, writing more than a quarter of a century ago, made a prophetic statement which is in some way disquieting for the peoples of Eastern Europe ("A History of the Peace Conference of Paris", 1924, Vol. VI, p. 283); "The next fifty years will be *fraught with fate* (*italics mine, A. Sp.*) for her (i.e. Poland) and for the other countries of Central Europe." If Prof. Temperley were still living one could ask him what were his reasons for this prophecy, which might fatally involve two or three generations from our part of the world.

One thing is certain: the Versailles Treaty period was a radical and fateful upheaval for the people living between the Rhine and the Urals, a revolutionary change, politically and socially. When the First World War had brought about the disintegration of the three empires which, in 1795 at the Third Partition of Poland, had, as they thought, finally liquidated the "intermediary" zone, new political factors of the zone, in their turn, divided up the parts of the heritage. Then, when opportunity offered, the great neighbours proceeded to reassume "their rights" (there are those who have no hesitation in also speaking thus) over the zone "fraught with fate". But things do not repeat themselves in the same fashion. Hitler and Stalin, to impose on the world their fourth partition of Poland and of the eastern coast of the Baltic, must have very much surpassed the methods of Frederick the Great and of Catherine II. In modern times we begin to use new terms for new "forms" in social life, for example: "anthropological selection" and "genocide". Germany has already provided an abundant documentation on this.

The gentlemen of the modern Kremlin, the absolute masters of all Eastern Europe, are good gamblers—compliments to whom they are due—but their hazards are dizzy ones. Russia is at the apogee of her expansion, thanks to her good luck. Such a Russia has never been seen, even when the Cossacks rode in the streets of Paris and Milan. The dynasties of the Rurikovitchi and the Romanoffs would feel very small before the power of Stalin and and of the dynasty of the Politbureau. If Russia had not become Bolshevik would she have ever reached these heights?

The strength of the U.S.S.R. leaders is enormous, without doubt, but their régime is already worn. A third of a century is long for a régime like that of Moscow. Some observers believe that Russian "bonapartism" (see Ch. XX) will succeed in entering upon a period during which the military will try to realise their dream of world domination. Others express fear for the fate of the Russian people, that is to say, the Great Russians; they who now go forward, as the British diplomat said, by the dual paths of Russian empire and world revolution, and who are the true instigators, *volens volens*, of the Bolshevik revolution. It is already said openly: "Stalin's policy puts the Russian nation in mortal danger," or: "The fate of Russia and of the Russian nation will be at stake in the future world war." ("The Eastern Quarterly" Vol. IV, No. 1, Jan. 1951, Article of Mr. R. Wraga, p. 32).

The solution belongs to the future, but there is lacking today an element essential for assurance that the international situation be not fraught with danger. The missing element is stability. For the international situation, especially in Eastern Europe, is false, distorted and consequently temporary.

Leaving aside the present balance of military and industrial forces on this globe, it must be said that the "psychological situation" is false for the subjugated peoples: the worn-out and stale slogans are no longer successful in concealing injustice. The situation is false for the Russians themselves, because one of these days they will awaken from that state of soul which has been justly called "the tense atmosphere of unreality, tension, oppression and suspicion" (see Mr. Fitzroy's "Eastern Approaches, 1949, p. 114). The process is slow because it goes to the depths. When it comes to an end, when all is accomplished, as the Holy

Scripture says, new foundations will be established for the existence of the peoples of Eastern Europe.

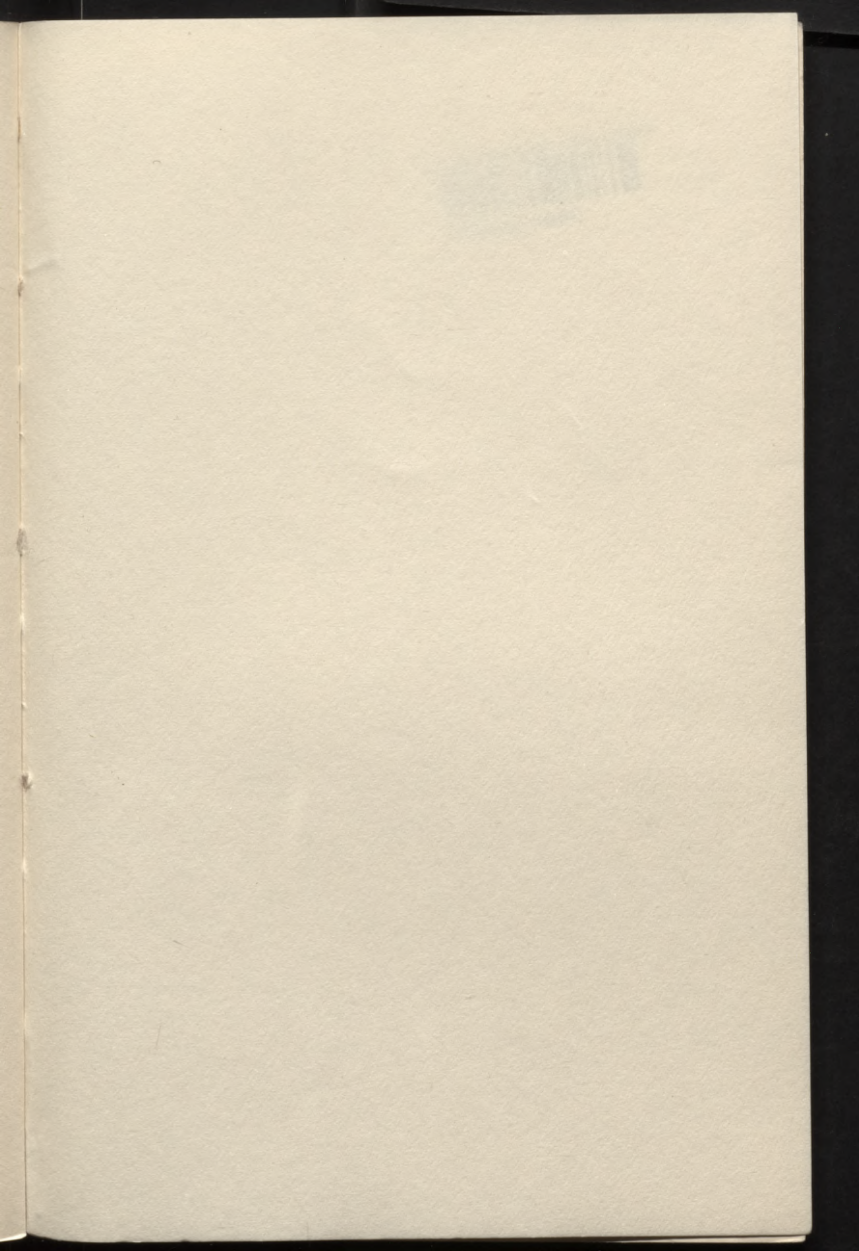
From the point of view of the Balts, the future solutions, to be humane and stable, should respect their rights and their "deep attachment to liberty" which several authors have remarked.

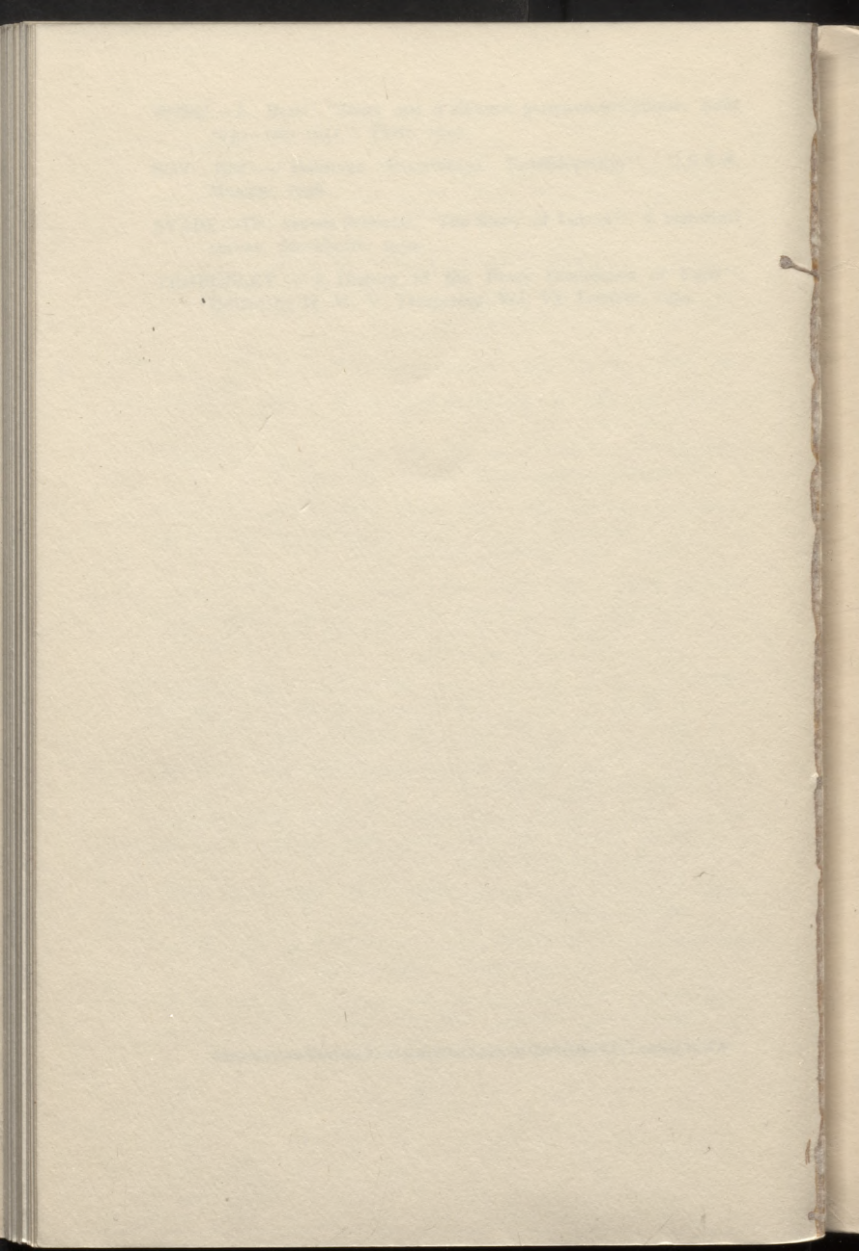
The Latvian, Estonian and Lithuanian peoples have sacred and inalienable duties towards their martyrs and their dead.

BOOKS SEVERAL TIMES QUOTED

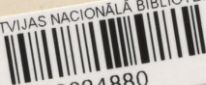
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