UNITY OR CHAOS

Course of Lectures delivered at the Conference on Poland for Teachers held at the University of Liverpool on September 25-26, 1943

EDITED BY
THE POLISH PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE
61 Hamilton Square, Birkenhead

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

THE organisers of the Conference on Poland for Teachers, held through the courtesy of the Vice-Chancellor at the University of Liverpool on September 25th and 26th, 1943, are fortunate in being able to publish the addresses delivered then. The very large attendance and the keen interest shown throughout the Conference encourage them to think that all teachers will be glad to have a printed record of the proceedings. As Honorary Secretary to the Conference I am privileged to express on behalf of the Committee, their deep gratitude to the Polish and British speakers who gave so generously of their time and special knowledge, and I feel confident that a wide circulation of this report will be a valuable contribution to the cause of international friendship and understanding.

Helen M. Stephen.

Honorary Secretary.

December, 1943.

CONFERENCE ON POLAND FOR TEACHERS

COMMITTEE :

Miss F. J. Baldwin, B.A.
C. N. Baty, Esq., M.A.
W. H. Bolan, Esq., M.A., LL.B.
G. H. Boothman, Esq., J.P.
Rev. R. Brinker, M.A.
Professor A. Bruce Boswell, M.A.
W. F. Bushell, Esq., M.A.
H. V. Clark, Esq., M.A.
G. B. Dempsey, Esq., M.A.
E. F. Dewhirst, Esq.
Rev. Canon R. W. Howard, M.A., Hon. C.F.
Miss E. N. Howells, M.A.
W. T. Lancashire, Esq., J.P.
A. Longley, Esq.
C. H. Mather, Esq.
Dr. A. MacPhee, M.A., B.Com., Ph.D.
Miss F. A. Macrae, M.A.
C. F. Mott, Esq., M.A.
Sir A. D. McNair, C.B.E., LL.D., F.B.A.
Professor J. F. Mountford, M.A., D.Litt.
J. M. Pearson, Esq., A.C.A.
Richardson Peele, Esq., M.A.
Miss L. Redfern
Professor P. M. Roxby, B.A.
A. G. Russell, Esq., M.A.
Miss H. N. Stephen, M.A.
I. Williams, Esq., B.A.
J. Williams, Esq.
H. R. B. Wood, Esq., M.A.

Programme of the Conference held at University of Liverpool (Arts Theatre), on September 25th and 26th, 1943.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 25TH.

10.15 A.M. OPENING ADDRESS.
By Professor S. Kot, Ph.D., Polish Minister of State and formerly Professor of Cracow University.

10.45 A.M. THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND FOR A CENTRAL EUROPEAN FEDERATION.
By Professor P. M. Roxby, B.A., Professor of Geography at the University of Liverpool.
Chairman : Professor S. Kot, Ph.D.

12.0 NOON. POLAND IN THE LIGHT OF THE PAST.
By Professor A. Bruce Boswell, M.A., Professor of Russian History, Language and Literature, at the University of Liverpool.
Chairman : The Rev. Father Joseph Howard, M.A.

2.30 P.M. POLAND'S POSITION IN CENTRAL EUROPE.
By F. A. Voigt, B.A., Editor of the "Nineteenth Century and After."
Chairman : Captain Alan Graham, M.P.

3.30 P.M. THE SPIRIT OF POLISH LITERATURE.
By Dr. Mary Corbridge-Patkaniowska.
Chairman : Sir Arnold D. McNair, C.B.E., LL.D., F.B.A., Vice-Chancellor of the University of Liverpool.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 26TH.

2.15 P.M. EDUCATION IN POLAND.
By Dr. B. S. Drzewieski.
Chairman : H. N. Lowe, Esq., M.A., M.Sc., Barrister-at-Law, Deputy Director of Education, Liverpool.

3.30 P.M. POLISH SOCIAL SERVICES.
By Dr. Adam Ciołkosz, Member of the Polish Parliament.
Chairman : H. J. Kelly, Esq., B.Sc., British Council Officer for the Northern Region.

4.30 P.M. TEA AND CONCERT.
At the Students' Union, Bedford Street North, Liverpool.

FOREWORD

W. F. REDDAWAY, M.A., Ph.D., F.R.Hist.S.

NOT the least among Hitler's benefits to mankind is the friendship that he has established between Pole and Briton. Of old " the French of Eastern Europe" turned rather towards France, or followed Kościuszko to America. Britain was severed from their land by barriers of every kind—by distance, politics, language, religion, and by the slanderous tongue of the great nation that lay between. For Germans, it was and is an article of faith that Poles are " mere wind," sterile and aiming at nothing good. Britain, though she condemned the Partitions and later lost all tenderness for Russia, could not reject what seemed to be the verdict of History—that the State called Poland was unfitted to survive.

That verdict was challenged most perplexingly by the first World War. Poles fought on both sides and created rival governments, which united to put forward wide territorial claims. Perplexed and weary, suspecting both the Poles and French, our statesmen with some qualifications accepted the Polish right to independence and to independent access to the sea. For twenty years, indeed, the new nation defended herself and grew in numbers, trade and education. But was she not Nazi at heart and tyrannical towards her own democrats, Ukrainians and Jews ? Few Britons knew Poland or the Poles and therefore few could answer.

September, 1939, however, drove away many doubts. The nation faced with superb courage a new Partition, and one whose avowed desire was to degrade or even to obliterate the Polish race. During four tormented years, the fortitude, the grace, and even the gaiety of our welcome guests has made them the conquerors of the British people. " I have as much of this in art as you, but yet my nature would not bear it so "—thus runs our silent confession and we naturally seek to know more of their land and history which have bred such heroes.

No illumination could surpass that of the Teachers' Conference enshrined in this little book. Well chosen Polish and British scholars, led by perhaps the most brilliant of Polish Statesmen, have flashed their torches upon history and geography, literature and politics, education and social achievement, to the unquestionable profit of their hearers. Thus, Professor Kot, with amazing self-control towards the would-be assassins of his nation, surveys the post-war scene, and predicts a Hitler legend like the Napoleonic, which long deluded France. Poland, he declares, must be guarded against the inevitable German onslaught. But, speaking as the Minister of State, he demands not indeed a widened territory upon the Baltic, but an integrated European *bloc*, strong enough to defend the area between the Baltic and the Aegean. To attain this his Government would surrender a part of its sovereignty. And he calls upon Britain to lead and guide countries infinitely closer to herself than was Scotland to England when the nineteenth century began. Professor Roxby added a demand for the fulfilment of an economic necessity—combination between the peasants of seven Central European States.

Later speakers gave some indication of the Polish spiritual resources for performing such colossal tasks. They could not fail to show how her inspiring literature brought the nation through trials unmatched in history, nor how the reborn Poland used a bare two decades of uneasy peace for advances in education, in the social services, in all the manifold activities of a modern progressive State. Professor Kot proclaimed himself, like Paderewski, a peasant's son, and Professor Boswell, in his learned and lucid survey, pointed to the strength which peasant industry and zeal have added to the old virtues of idealism and individual effort. Even if, as Mr. Voigt candidly declares possible, Poland should again suffer partition, we may be confident that unprecedented glories will one day be hers. But the knowledge that this Conference has diffused should at least make for a better present.

I. UNITY OR CHAOS

Professor S. Kot, Ph.D.

The Opening Address delivered at the Conference on Poland for Teachers, held at the University of Liverpool on September 25-26, 1943.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I hesitated whether I should address you as something of an expert on Polish culture, which subject I taught at the University of Cracow for twenty years, or whether I should invite you to join me in a broad survey of the post-war scene. I have decided upon the second course; and I think you will agree with me that, though we are all teachers by profession, it is our duty to take now the keenest interest in the great events which will ultimately affect every other problem, including education.

To-day it is preposterous to query the certainty of victory. Victory is at hand, and, within a few months, the great problems of peace will be staring us in the face. The greatest problem of all is to make it a lasting peace, to avoid a new avalanche of slaughter for us or for our children.

There are no miracles. Germany will not be struck off the map. The German people will not be eradicated, and their character will not change overnight. No doubt we shall hear a great deal about "good Germans," as soon as this old story is likely to bring them in any dividends. But men who have spent their youth in bombing women and children in defenceless cities, or in persecuting and torturing the peoples of conquered Europe, are not likely to change their stony hearts as soon as the final "all clear" is sounded. They will revel in the glorious memories of the German conquest of Europe. They will again blame fate or the Italians or some new traitors for cheating them of victory and world domination which they had confidently expected, and for which they have so assiduously toiled for years. No doubt a Hitler myth will arise just like the Napoleon myth which hung over France for fifty years after his death, and this myth will

incite the Germans to retrieve their fortunes, and launch a third and better-planned attack on the world at the first opportunity.

How are we to thwart this hideous nightmare of a third German War within the span of one human life? The task is immense, and no precautions can be neglected: disarmament, severe control, re-education, democratization, uprooting of the German military caste, suppression of armament industries, punishment of war criminals, surrender of all their loot and so on. As a Pole, however, I want to emphasize one such fundamental precaution, and that is the setting up of an integrated Central European Bloc which would be strong enough to nip in the bud every German attempt at the subjugation of the area extending from the Baltic to the Aegean.

The German attempts at *revanche* will not start on the Channel nor on the Rhine. As in the late thirties, they will start in the East, because this part of Europe is weaker. The Germans will always hope to achieve domination there by mere intimidation while lulling Britain, the U.S.A. and France into a false sense of security and apathetic lethargy, the policy which Hitler so successfully exploited, between his accession to power and the Munich agreement. Without the control of the vast area of some 400,000 square miles and a population of over one hundred million, Germany cannot have a sufficient basis for embarking on her programme of world domination. By wile or force, she must first put at her disposal the vast natural resources and the manpower of the nine or ten countries which border on her, from the east and the south-east. It will always be, as it unfortunately was before and has been during the present war, comparatively easy for her to achieve this by playing off piecemeal one country against another and taking advantage of the old suspicions, quarrels, political immaturity, megalomania, etc., of the nations concerned. But this purpose will be impossible of realization if Germany is faced with a strong, united and compact bloc, without cracks into which the Germans could put their spanners.

I do not underestimate the difficulties and the magnitude of the task of creating such a bloc. I am fully aware of the obstacles which occasionally may drive to despair even the most enthusiastic supporters of this idea. Nevertheless, it is a job which must be done if a repetition of the recent tragedy is to be avoided.

Success in this great enterprise depends primarily on two factors. The first is the will among the countries concerned to enter such a federation. This will exists in Poland, for this I can vouch knowing my people as I do. We are second to no other people in our passionate love of independence, but we fully realize that in this age of shrinking distances and of larger units we cannot possibly survive unless we join a larger unit than that provided by Poland herself. We are ready to bear the necessary sacrifices involved in this, to surrender a part of our sovereignity, to adapt ourselves to the situation arising from the setting up of a regional and supernational entity in our part of the Continent.

I am convinced that the nations of this region who are now suffering so cruelly under the German yoke are similarly animated by analagous feelings and desires.

This is not the case, however, with all the governments of the countries of this region, some of which, far away from the German oppression, in the safety of London, harbour illusions about resuming the old game of haggling and quarrelling and of prestige and power politics. They seem to forget all the sufferings entailed in invoking the assistance and support of more powerful neighbours outside our region—they still hope that they may find a safe harbour in some "neutrality," or in alliances with Germany or other powers, forgetting the sad fate which has befallen every neutral in this war and every ally of Germany including even the largest of them, Italy. And, therefore, the countries of this region need a second factor to consolidate them—namely, the encouragement and guidance of the leading great powers, Britain and the U.S.A., who will shape the post-war world.

You cannot evade this task, difficult though it may be,

by telling yourself that Britain has no vital interests in this part of the world, which is far off and which may be left to its own fate. I have already said that distances have shrunk appallingly and that this shrinkage is a paramount factor of the modern world. As a matter of fact, the region I am referring to is infinitely closer to Britain than Scotland was to England as late as the beginning of the nineteenth century. You have discovered in this war that even Japan, thousands of miles away, can be a mortal peril to the British Empire; do you think you would not feel, within a few weeks at most, the repercussions of any alteration in the status and independence of the countries in Central Europe? No such fallacy can be entertained by anyone. And because Britain cannot turn her back on these countries, she must lead and guide them. Her leadership, based as it is on Britain's faithfulness to her pledges, her devotion to the noblest ideals and her unflinching loyalty to the principle of the right of every nation to an independent life, will be sought after, acclaimed and gratefully accepted by all the peoples of the region I am speaking of. We shall derive an inspiration and a model from the British Commonwealth, this unique association of free and independent nations in the pursuit of peace, justice and happiness.

A great British statesman, Lord Castlereagh, is said to have remarked at the Congress of Vienna, that Austria was the only power with which Britain could have no conflict whatever, and which should be her natural ally. The Austrian Monarchy has collapsed, and it would be foolish and futile to think of its resurrection. But what was the Austrian Empire? It was a kind of federation, mainly the result of chance, of the nations of Central Europe excluding Germany. A new federation on entirely different lines must be born. This federation would guarantee that no great continental power could possibly dominate the rich valleys of the Vistula and the Danube, nor the Balkan bastion, which drives a wedge into the Mediterranean basins, so vital to Britain. It would ensure that the world will not be continually faced with headaches

resulting from petty rivalries and ambitions in this region. It would mean the saving of money on armaments and the opening of a large new market for the manufactured goods of Britain and America. And no one can visualise a situation in which this bloc would constitute a menace for Britain or the peace of the world.

Now I shall state that in my opinion—and I think all my countrymen share it—Poland should form the nucleus of this federation. Of all the nations of this region, Poland is by far the strongest, numerically, morally and culturally. We have not been the spoilt child of history. For generations, we have had to suffer the hardships of war, always waged in self-defence. To illustrate this point, I shall recall that in the 17th century England enjoyed 75 years of peace, while Poland only fifteen. War is the school of characters. It was our character and our unshakable faith in the justice of our cause, which enabled us to survive a hundred years of partition. And it is these qualities again which make it possible for us to survive our present ordeal.

I shall enumerate but a few facts, which may convey to you an idea of what I mean by saying " this ordeal." No country under German occupation is exposed to similar trials and horrors. In Western Poland, which has been annexed to the Reich, the Polish educated class has been completely uprooted, the Clergy either murdered (over 3,000 priests) or expelled. All Polish property has been confiscated. The Poles who have not been deported either to work in the Reich or to Central Poland are mere slave labourers. Those who were expelled, had to leave their homes in two hours and were permitted only to take a few bundles with them.

The Polish educated class has been decimated. In the concentration camp of Oświęcim alone, over 60,000 Poles had been killed up to October, 1942, and there are many more such concentration camps. All Polish Higher and Secondary Schools have been suppressed, and not a single Polish book has been published during the last four years. Furthermore, Polish youth is being systematically

demoralised by pornographic publications, by the encouragement of illicit sexual intercourse and prostitution, by drink, debauchery and gambling. Marriage between Poles is hampered in every way. Polish girls deported to Germany are being dishonoured, raped and degraded. Their children are taken away from them and brought up as Germans.

The whole Polish population is being terrorised by a refined system of hostages, by mass reprisals, which include the razing of whole villages (over 300 of them) by the illegal recruiting of Polish boys to the German Forces (some of whom have since been captured in Sicily and Africa) and by deliberate starving, especially of children. Food rations for Poles are about one-fourth of the minimum needed to keep a human being alive, and the earnings of the population, which have remained at a pre-war level, make it impossible for them to take advantage of the black market on which prices are soaring and are often 25 times higher than before the war.

During the four years of German occupation 1,800,000 Jews have died, one million as a result of extermination, 500,000 as a result of massacres and 300,000 from hunger and exposure.

We believe that such sacrifices entitle us to something. We have been first in suffering, it is only just that we should be first in assuming new duties and responsibilities. And, may I add, the Poles have a long record of self-defence against the recurring German menace.

A thousand years ago, under the continuous pressure of German inroads in the East, the Slavonic tribes inhabiting the valleys of the Vistula and the Oder, formed a homogeneous state, which was to be known as Poland. Later, the great Polish Commonwealth, which resulted from the Union of Poland and Lithuania, was brought about to stem off the menace of the Teutonic Order. Now, once more, we must resort to our traditional policy of union and federation, in order to secure ourselves and our neighbours as well, against the recurrent danger of German aggression.

I should not like to burden you with historical parallels. However, the teachings of history cannot be neglected. And history teaches us that in the past the Poles have managed to bring into being and maintain a Commonwealth of many nationalities, united by the bonds of freedom, equality and mutual respect. If difficulties were to divert us from our path and make us abandon our purposes, we should betray the sacred duty which we have towards our country, and towards our children and children's children.

I shall add one more word. Poland is often represented as a country dominated by a reactionary landlord class. Nothing could be further from the truth. I am, myself, the son of a peasant. The present Polish Prime Minister is a peasant, his deputy is a workman.

We are fully aware of the keen desire of the broad masses of the Polish people to improve their education, their standard of life, and to exercise fully their civic rights. But our common people know only too well that this cannot be achieved unless Poles are complete masters in their own house. They know that the aggressors were anxious to exterminate the humblest peasant and worker. no less than the rich and the educated. They know that unless their country is strong and independent, theirs will be a slave's fate, that they will be reduced to the status of helots, driven away from their homes, humilated and exploited and made to work in distant parts for the benefit of harsh and ruthless foreign masters.

Our aim is a true democracy within the framework of a national and independent existence. We want to unite, but on equal terms and not as a subject race included in an alien " Lebensraum." We want guidance, and advice as well, but this we shall accept only from proved friends who have never failed us, and of these I am glad to say, Britain was, and always will be first.


High Mountains
Mountains and Plateaus
Uplands
Lowlands
" below Sea-level
EUROPE
PHYSICAL
Miles
200 100 0 200 400
ARCTIC OCEAN
North Cape
Lapland
Kola Penin.
White Sea
Pechora
Ural Mountains
Ob
Arctic Circle
Faroe Is
Scandinavian Alps
Gulf of Bothnia
Finland
L. Onega
Lake Ladoga
Volga
North European Plain
BRITISH ISLES
NORTH SEA
Jutland
BALTIC SEA
Oder
Vistula
Pripet
Dvina
Volga Heights
Don
Volga
English Chan.
Rhine
Elbe
Oder Mts.
Vosges
Carpathians
Dniester
Bay of Biscay
Danube
Sea of Azov
Caucasus Mts.
Crimea
CASPIAN SEA
Pyrenees
Mont Blanc 15,600 feet
Alps
Apennines
Adriatic Sea
Dinaric Alps
BLACK SEA
Balkans
Rhodope
Iberian Peninsula
Corsica
Sierra Nevada
Balearic Isles
Sardinia
Sicily
Cape Trafalgar
Strait of Gibraltar
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
Etna
Cape Matapan
Malta
Crete
Cyprus
Asia Minor
Dardanelles
Aegean Sea
West
East from Greenwich
0
20
40
60
50
40
30
20

II. THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND OF FEDERATION IN EAST CENTRAL EUROPE

Professor P. M. Roxby, B.A.

The problem of reconstituting Poland cannot be rightly visualized except in relation to the broader setting of Central Europe as a whole and to the principles on which the complex life of the Continent can be established on a stable and constructive basis. We all hope, not for a piecemeal settlement which takes into account only local factors, but for a settlement which allows of future growth and which aims at knitting together the peoples of Europe, with their different cultures and interests, into a real European community, where the different groups are conscious of being parts of a bigger whole.

No settlement has any real prospect of permanence or of averting further catastrophes which has not that as its central purpose. No people has a greater claim to our sympathy and sense of justice than the Poles, and equally no people, by virtue of its geographical position, bitter historical experience and humane outlook, will be able to make a greater contribution to this main objective.

A fundamental problem of Europe is how to reconcile two principles which have long been in conflict: the desire of the various ethnic groups for freedom of self-expression, self-government and security, and, on the other hand, the imperative need of Europe for a higher and, particularly, economic unity. How can these two things be reconciled? How can Europe achieve *variety within unity?* We know that the last Peace Settlement of Europe failed to achieve it. Hitler has not tried to achieve it. His objective has been enforced

uniformity under one dominant group, which is something very different from variety within unity. This last can be achieved only by the peoples themselves, under wise guidance and within the framework of a Peace Settlement which encourages combination.

All that part of Europe to which Poland belongs has been called " The Eastern Marchland of Europe " and it is important to note some of the ways in which its borderland character is shown, for this is an essential part of the political problem which it presents. Geographically, it is the transitional region between strictly Peninsular Europe and the great trunk of Euro-Asia. Here most of the characteristic structural features of Peninsular Europe have their eastward termination. Here the intricate Hercynian Highlands end eastwards in the Bohemian Massif and the great fold-mountain chains of the Alpine system, the southern boundary of Central Europe proper, culminate in the Carpathian Arc ; on the other hand, the relatively narrow North German Lowlands open out through the Polish Plain into the vast, unbroken plains of Russia. Here Central Europe lies open to all the influences and movements that have come from the steppeland. Except for the Carpathians, there are no natural boundaries, although numerous marsh areas have played an important part in isolating and preserving peoples, the famous Pripet Marshes in the case of the White Ruthenians and the marshes and lakes of the Baltic shores in the case of the Estho, Letts and Lithuanians.

This geographical position at the gateways from the steppeland into the restricted and much more varied terrain of Peninsular Europe is reflected in the confused *melée* of ethnic groups which occupy the Marchlands. A great zone of mixed and overlapping nationalities extends from the Baltic into the Balkans between the essential Germany and the essential Russia, and includes the three Baltic peoples already named, the Poles, the White Ruthenians, the Ukrainians or Little Russians (on either side of the Dneiper), their close kinsmen, the

Ruthenes of South-East Poland, who also extend over the Carpathians into Roumania and into the sub-Carpathian Ruthenia of Czecho-Slovakia as it existed in 1938, the Czechs, the Slovaks, the Magyars, the Roumanians and the numerous Balkan groups. How this complex grouping has come about is to be understood only in the light of historical geography which is beyond the scope of this address. It is important, however, to stress the significance of the geography of religions in this area, for it is one of the most important aspects of its borderland character.

This region was long the borderland of Christendom as defined by the extent of Charlemagne's Empire of the Ninth Century, the earlier Holy Roman Empire. Thereafter Christianity was spread east of Germany in two different forms and from two directions. There was the direct eastward expansion of Roman Catholicism, of which the Poles have been and still are loyal adherents. In a much more ruthless and militant form it was also spread eastwards along the Baltic shores by the Order of the Teutonic Knights, but much of the area which came under their direct influence subsequently became Protestant, as in the case of East Prussia.

The other form was that of the Orthodox or Eastern Church, spreading from Byzantium (Constantinople) and it was this form, together with the Cyrillac script (as distinct from the Latin or Roman script), which reached the Russian Slavs. It had its first great centre at Kiev, the chief organising focus of the earliest Russia, and subsequently (after the destruction of Kiev by the invading Tartars) at Moscow, the focus of the later Muscovite Kingdom, which grew into the Empire of the Czars.

The position, however, is more complex than that, because, after most of the area which had formerly been included in the Kievian group of states had come under the control of Poland-Lithuania (first dynastically linked in 1386), there developed the so-called Uniat or Greek Catholic Church The position was that the ruling power (Poland-Lithuania) and governing classes

were Roman Catholic, while the peasantry was traditionally Orthodox. The Uniat Church was a compromise by which the authority of the Pope was recognized but the liturgy and many of the usages of the Orthodox Church, including the right of the priests to marry, were maintained.

Religion in this part of Europe is a vital factor in determining outlook and cultural affinities, more important than "race" and quite as important as language. It is their attachment to the Uniat Church which forms the chief bond of the Ruthenes of South-East Poland, lifferentiating them not only from the Roman Catholic Poles, but from their kinsmen, the Little Russians or Ukrainians of the Orthodox Church.

In still another vitally important aspect is this part of Europe transitional. Here is the borderland between Industrial Western Europe and Agrarian Eastern Europe, between what a French author has called in the title of a well-known book *Les Deux Europes*, so different are they in their economic and social conditions. The line of the Vistula and the Moravian Corridor mark the approximate division. Western Poland, Bohemia and Moravia come within Western Industrial Europe, but over by far the greater part of the zone of mixed and overlapping nationalities agrarian interests predominate. For the most part they are essentially peasant communities. This is true of the Baltic peoples, of a large part of Poland proper, of the White Ruthenians and of the Ruthenes of South-East Poland. It is now less true of the Ukrainians east of the Polish border, where the influence of the modern industrial development of the U.S.S.R. is felt. As a result of that development East Central Europe tends to be an almost purely agrarian zone sandwiched between industrial Western Europe and the new industrialism of Russia.

Most of these Agrarian communities are economically weak and the poverty of the peasants has long been an acute problem, which has been rendered far graver by the circumstances of the war. It was this poverty and

weakness which made possible their economic enslavement by Germany after the great crisis of 1930-2. It is well-known that Germany had acquired a stranglehold over much of East Central and South-East Europe several years before the second World War began. For example, in 1929—before the economic blizzard—Germany and Austria between them supplied 29·8% of Bulgaria's imports and took 42·5% of her exports. In 1938 Greater Germany (i.e., including Austria) supplied 52% of her imports and took 59% of her exports. About 80% of the population of Bulgaria is dependent on agriculture. It is also one of the geographical realities which have to be faced that Germany, in whatever form she may emerge from this war, will again have great economic interests, influence and markets in this region. The numerical strength, the geographical position and resources, the industry, the skill and technique of the German people make it inevitable. It is the declared intention of the United Nations to demilitarise Germany, but not to throttle her economically, which could lead only to further disaster. But the future interest and influence of Germany in this zone need not mean economic and political servitude if the smaller states and ethnic groups can sink their differences, pool their resources and co-ordinate their policies and so acquire greater strength and bargaining power.

What then are the prospects ? Attention may be drawn to a remarkable movement which has not hitherto attracted much attention, but is full of promise. Throughout the Spring and Summer of 1942 there met in London, under the Chairmanship of Sir Frederick Whyte, a group of Peasant leaders representing seven of the principal Agrarian countries lying to the east and south-east of Germany: Czecho-Slovakia, Poland, Jugo-Slavia and Greece (of the United Nations) and also Hungary, Bulgaria and Roumania (Axis satellite states).

The central question of this Conference, which extended to twenty sessions, might be put in this form: "What lies beyond the victory of the United Nations for the

Peasant peoples of East Central and South-East Europe ? " This question was asked in full knowledge of what Nazi domination had involved both before and during the war, and also of the potential economic power of a defeated Germany, to which reference has already been made.

At the close of the Sessions, in July, 1942, these Agrarian leaders signed what the Chairman described as a *Peasant Programme*, its substance in general terms being as follows : The principles of the Atlantic Charter were taken as a starting-point and affirmed. The belief in and desire for peasant proprietorship on the part of the leaders and the groups, for which they were spokesmen, were emphasized but this must not be conceived " in terms of scattered and uncoordinated units," i.e., there must be a common programme and combined action, so that by means of Co-operative Societies and large scale organisations (for such purpose as the purchase of fertilisers and feeding stuffs and for marketing), peasant proprietorship can be economically profitable. It was also recognized that a certain measure of industrialism was essential and could be achieved only by pooling of resources. A combination of Agrarian States can achieve an industrial programme which is beyond the capacity of a single state.

Stress was laid on the vital interest of the Western Nations and the Allied Powers in general in solving this chronic economic problem of East Central Europe which has such dangerous political implications. Appeal is made to the wealthier Western Nations to make the inauguration of this programme possible by economic treaties and guarantees, and by the provision of the capital which will be necessary to achieve the education and organisation through which alone extensive schemes of land-drainage, irrigation, water-conservation and generation of hydro-electric power can be carried out. They involve inter-regional and probably inter-state planning ; indeed, in their widest implications they amount to a kind of Tennessee Valley scheme on an international scale.

An outline of the scheme is given by the Chairman, Sir Frederick Whyte, in an article entitled " From the

Bohemian Forest to the Black Sea: A Peasant Programme" (*Contemporary Review*, November, 1942). The full report is to be published shortly by the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House) with a preface by Sir John Russell, whose knowledge of European agriculture and of the relative merits of different types of rural organisation is unrivalled.

A significant remark by Sir Frederick Whyte is that special means must be taken to prevent these peasant peoples from falling apart again owing to political and national differences.

The immediate post-war situation should be favourable to combination. The peasant groups of East Central and South-Eastern Europe are primarily anxious to be rescued from intolerable economic conditions. They have, broadly, the same interests and the same hopes, which are likely to be realised only by combination and by stressing the things which draw them together, and not the things which separate them. The immediate problems, when peace is declared, will be the relief of appalling suffering and misery, a grim fight against disease, the re-stocking of farms and, in general, the rehabilitation of economic life—and all this must be done irrespective of frontiers and nationalities. In this combined effort and the spirit of co-operation which it may develop, lies probably the best hope of subsequent federation, whatever precise form that may take.

Many of us hope that in the future political frontiers will lose much of the sinister significance and importance which they have had in the past. From many points of view, they are, at the best, artificial, especially in a zone such as this, with its complex pattern of overlapping languages, cultures and religious faiths. They cannot, indeed, be ignored. Professor E. H. Carr, in his important work "The Conditions of Peace," argues powerfully for the postponement of decisions about frontiers until Europe has been economically rehabilitated and, in that process, has come to realise the inter-dependence of its different parts. Such a postponement may not be

possible. However that may be, no settlement is likely to be satisfactory unless it gives the maximum amount of autonomy and freedom of cultural expression within a political framework based on common economic needs. In East Central and South-Eastern Europe this seems possible only through federation, a principle which, in different forms, can operate both *within* states and *between* states, if they are willing to part with some of their sovereignty.

III. POLAND IN THE LIGHT OF THE PAST

Professor A. Bruce Boswell, M.A.

The problems of Poland which are to be discussed at this Conference cannot be adequately understood without some knowledge of their background in the Past. It is true the Polish and the British people have much in common. They are both among the most religious peoples in the world while, at the same time, they are both profoundly critical. At the same time it cannot be denied that they are quite ignorant of each other. Some of the present audience may happen to know a great deal about Poland. But I always remember the words of the late Sir Alfred Dale, first Vice-Chancellor of this University, who gave the following advice to young lecturers: "Never take any knowledge for granted in your audience. For instance, if you are speaking about the Battle of Waterloo, state quite clearly that the British defeated the French; that Napoleon commanded the French. And it might be useful to add that Nelson was not there."

What I have to say to you, then, will be simple and short. An Englishman can speak about Poland in some ways better than a Pole, because our attitude to Poland is not due only to ignorance, but to hostile propaganda about which I will speak presently; also because a Pole is apt to be pessimistic about the Past and to emphasize the heroic deeds of Sobieski or the charge at Samosierra rather than the more constructive achievements of his great men. The past history of Polish representative government has been condemned by his totalitarian neighbours, so that he is self-depreciatory about it.

The first question we have to ask: "Where is Poland?" has been so fully treated by Professor Roxby that I need say little about it. But I always find the following unscientific figures a help. Poland has few natural boundaries except a part of the Carpathian Mountains and a small part of the Baltic seaboard:—Polish Pomorze or Pomerania


A HISTORICAL MAP
OF
POLAND
between 1494-1939
= Republic of Poland in 1939 (Boundary line)
TALLINN
ESTONIA
RIGA
LATVIA
LITHUANIA
KAUNAS
KÖNIGSBERG
GDANSK
WILNO
MINSK
BYDGOSZCZ
TORUN
BIALYSTOK
WHITE RUTHENIA
POZNAN
GREAT POLAND
WARSAW
MAZOVIA
PODLASIE
POLESIE
POLAND
ŁÓDŹ
LUBLIN
VOLHYNIA
CRACOW
LITTLE POLAND
LWÓW
BRATISLAVA
Danube
BUDAPEST
HUNGARY
CERNAUTI
RUMANIA
UKRAINE
1494
1772
1657
1770
MOSCOW
SMOLENSK
OREL
KURSK
KIEV
ODESSA
U.S.S.R.

(the word means "seaboard"). East to West the Poles dwell in an unbroken plain. About 100 miles East of Berlin the speech changes rather abruptly from German to Polish. For 300 miles to Brest Litevsk, Polish is spoken. For 400 miles from Brest to near Smolensk, Polish and Ruthenian are mixed (White Ruthenian in the North, Ukrainian in the South); Polish predominating in the West. From Smolensk for 250 miles to Moscow the language is Great Russian. It is useful to remember that Napoleon at Smolensk regarded himself as still in Poland.

On this plain, called Polska (from the Polish word "pole," meaning "plain"), live the Poles (masculine Polak, feminine Polka), numbering about twenty-five million, closely associated with about ten millions of other groups, most of whom have been associated with Poland since the Middle Ages. The Poles belong to the Slavonic race—a European branch of the Aryan peoples like ourselves—connected with the Czecho-Slovaks, the Eastern Slavs (Russians and Ruthenians) and the South Slavs (Serbo-Croats, Slovenes and Bulgarians). The Slavs were divided at an early date, since the Russians and Serbs took their civilization from the Eastern Empire, adopting a form of the Greek alphabet and joining the Orthodox Eastern Church, while the Poles, Czecho-Slovaks and Croats took their civilization from Rome, joining the Western Catholic Church and writing their languages in the Latin alphabet.

Life in an open plain had for the Poles three important results. Firstly, they had no natural frontiers except a small seaboard and a small section of a mountain range. Whereas Britain could easily defend herself by the sea; France, Spain, Italy, Greece and Yugo-Slavia were protected, to a great extent, by sea and mountains; Poland was exposed to attack from almost every side. Her exposure to raids from Mongols and other steppe-nomads in the East, and to Germans in the West, made her position strategically weak. Only alert diplomacy and military vigilance could preserve her independence, and she was liable to be completely overwhelmed if this vigilance was relaxed.

Secondly, life on a plain facilitated a continual movement of her people which made State-making very difficult and fluctuating.

Thirdly, life on a plain not only involved hostile relations, but also friendly contacts with many peoples. In contrast to our simple island story, Polish History shows a complex of close relationships bringing close political and social contacts with Czechs, Hungarians, Eastern Slavs and Baltic peoples. This led to political union with Lithuanians, Ruthenians and (Old) Prussians. Above all it meant the reception of great masses of German colonists. At one time, Poland became an asylum for almost all the Jews of Western Europe. Toleration and privileges on an unusual scale were granted to these peoples.

Geographically, Poland suffered from her remoteness from cultural centres. That is why she came into history a century or two after other nations had absorbed Eastern or Western culture. But it also gave her the benefit of isolation among a ring of equally backward neighbours, enabling her to pass from a tribal to a State system unhindered—a fundamental factor in the evolution of a distinctive Polish civilization. Her early development under a brilliant native dynasty of Princes and Kings preserved her independence of the Holy Roman Empire.

In this evolution, Poles were constantly at odds with their Slavonic kinsmen, the Czechs, and between the two peoples there developed a hostile relationship, like that of English and Scots, that has gone very deep in dividing Central Europe. The reasons for this are important. Firstly, the Czechs joined the Empire, thus becoming partners with the Germans and adopting more German influences than the Poles whom they, in their turn, regarded as outside the civilized European community. Secondly, the border province of Silesia, though mainly inhabited by Poles, was the only possible field for Czech expansion, and at a time of Polish weakness it was occupied by the Czechs and remained part of the Bohemian group of States from 1340 till 1740, when it was seized by Frederick the Great. Thirdly, when Bohemia lost its independence

in 1620, its Upper and Middle Classes were almost eliminated by Austria, so that modern Czechoslovakia is a State of predominantly peasant origin in contrast to the Polish social community where, till quite recent times, the gentry played a leading part. Fourthly, the Czechs, being oppressed by Austria, looked more and more to Russia to help them and thus their political outlook differed profoundly from that of the Poles who were nearer to Moscow and suffered from the rise of modern Russia, especially from the time of the Partitions. It is a pleasant change of attitude to-day, when these two peoples, so close in language, religion and culture, are striving to terminate the ancient rivalry and unite in a Federal Union.

By the end of the twelfth century, a Polish State had been created and developed, but Poland was not yet on a cultural level with the West and South of Europe. It was in the thirteenth century, formerly regarded as a Dark Age of disunion, superstition and loss of territory to the Mongols and Germans, that a fundamental advance was made. This advance was associated with political disintegration, but in each small unit the Prince, the Bishop and small groups of magnates and clergy, brought about the great advance which created Polish civilization. As a result, in the next century, Casimir the Great was able to revive a Polish State resting on a firm foundation of European, but essentially Polish civilization.

What was this civilization, peculiar to Poland ?

First of all, it was critical, volatile and imaginative—above all individualist—thus contrasting with the German and Muscovite civilizations. It expressed itself in the growth of representative institutions comparable to that of England, and the evolution of a democracy of the gentry in a land surrounded by autocratic States. This parliamentary system attracted its neighbours and led to union with the Lithuanians and Ruthenians. Even Prussia sought to join Poland to escape the tyranny of the Teutonic Knights, and received Charters and liberties which made City States like Dantzig loyal to Poland till the end of the Republic in 1795.

Secondly, it was Catholic and European, derived from Germany, France and Italy, founding a University at Cracow in 1364, and producing a number of great scientists from Copernicus to Mme. Curie-Skłodowska. At the time of the Renaissance an enlightened age of satirists and lyric poets corresponded to our Elizabethan age, and in particular a group of great writers put political and social ideas in the forefront not only of Polish, but of European learning.

Thirdly, Poland displayed great economic strength in her hard-working, but quick-witted peasants, who cut down the forests, tilled the land and developed a great system of agriculture, which incidentally fed England when she took to a pastoral economy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and gave us masts for our infant navy, carried to us by the active merchants of Dantzig.

Fourthly, Poland developed a great military power which enabled great generals to defeat the Swedes, Turks, Austrians, and to capture Moscow. The last of these great leaders was Jan Sobieski, who saved Europe from the Turks at Vienna. The Polish cavalry were so famous that even the Polish costume was adopted by the Lancers or Uhlans of our own and other armies.

Strengthened by this brilliant civilization, Poland was for some centuries a great Power. But the very nature of Polish culture led to its decline. The Monarchy had become elective, the Executive was weak and subject to the Legislature. When education declined, the whole structure, depending on the intelligence and civic ideals of the individual, was weakened. Poland had no hereditary ruler, no administrative machine or standing army to defend her against the strength and aggression of her neighbours. The Partitions of Poland were effected successfully, not so much through the weakness of Poland, as owing to the overthrow of the balance of power in Europe caused by the outbreak of the French Revolution. Two factors in this time of tragedy were fundamental in deciding the future of Poland. The first was the agreement between Prussia and Russia, first made in 1762,

which led to the first Partition, and ultimately created a great vested interest between two autocratic Powers against any revolt of the Democratic and Revolutionary peoples of Central Europe—especially the Poles. This profoundly influenced the diplomacy of Europe especially in the time of Metternich, Nicholas I and Bismarck. It survived the fall of the Hohenzollerns and Romanovs and was revived at Rapallo and again in 1939, in order to effect a Fourth Partition of modern Poland. It was accompanied by a bitter and sustained propaganda against Poland and the Poles which has profoundly affected European opinion.

The second important factor was the great revival in every department in life which took place in Poland after the First Partition. The years 1760 to 1795 form one of the great creative periods in Polish History. It begins with the establishment of an Educational Commission—the first of its kind in Europe—the reform of the Universities of Cracow and Wilno, and the revival of schools, and it culminates in the reformed constitution of 1791, praised by Burke and remaining a model to future Polish constitutional progress.

So the fall of the State was not the end of the Polish people or their civilization. A great mass of highly-educated and progressive Poles were left—so important an element that their friendship was sought by Emperors. Napoleon used their military talent and created a new Polish State. Tsar Alexander made a Pole his Foreign Minister and also established a kingdom of Poland (1815-31). This indefatigable community, though without a State after 1831, contrived to defend and develop its native civilization and to solve many of the social and political problems of the nineteenth century.

The first half of the century—the so-called " Romantic Age "—was a time of idealism, hope of the recovery of liberty, revolutionary movements and creation in literature, art and music. Poets and historians strengthened the national attachment to a Polish civilization and prevented disintegration in a world of political division. This age

ended with the failure of the Insurrection of 1863, and was followed by a great reaction against romanticism which expressed itself in social, economic and industrial constructive work, in the course of which the peasants were absorbed into the activities of the national movements and a new middle class emerged. This work was the last achievement of the old class of the gentry who gradually became only a part of a wider community. In German Poland, the organising ability of several leaders, in particular Father Wawrzynyak, strengthened the social and economic cohesion of the Polish community by Co-operative Societies which withstood the efforts of the German government at absorption of the peasants. In Galicia two great developments took place after the granting of autonomy by the Austrian government :— firstly, the revival of constitutional government in which the peasants took an important part; secondly, the revival of Polish schools and of the two ancient universities of Cracow and Lwów. Russian Poland developed Polish industry, and the rise of the Polish Party of Socialists attracted the workmen to the national cause, while the National Democratic Party under Dmowski revived the ideal of national unity. The revival of political thought played a great part in winning the peasants and workmen to the national cause and in particular influenced the million Poles in Silesia, lost to Poland since the fourteenth century. It brought new problems, however, in the local movements for independence among the Lithuanians and Ruthenians, especially the Ukrainian movement.

The War of 1914 brought hope of reunion, but it also brought material destruction on a great scale. In 1918-19, the Poles restored their State—which was not merely an artificial creation of Versailles. The main tasks of the new State were :—

(1) Recovery from the ruin of the War.

(2) The struggle for frontiers against Lithuanian, Ukrainian and Czech claims and the war with the Soviet Union in 1920.

(3) Land reform involving the satisfaction of peasants' demands for land at the expense of the great estates.

(4) Industrial revival, including the coal-mining industry in Silesia, the textiles of Łódź, the metallurgical industry of Warsaw and the oilfields of Galicia.

(5) Railway development, both from East to West on the great route from Paris to Moscow, and North to South, bringing the Silesian industries into touch with the Baltic at the new seaport of *Gdynia*—one of the great achievements of construction

(6) The advance of education in a network of primary and secondary schools and a revival of old and creation of new universities.

(7) The development of social services including an interesting system of dealing with the problem of unemployment.

In these developments the new Poland showed the old virtues of idealism and individual effort strengthened by the zeal and hardworking character of the peasant element. Perhaps the democratic ideals of free criticism and party strife hampered Poland in her efforts in comparison with the more ruthless powers of her totalitarian neighbours. But Englishmen will not blame her for this. It is a mistake to emphasize the brilliance or temperamental elements of the Poles at the expense of the qualities of tenacity and hard work which have helped them to emerge from the apparently hopeless divisions and oppression of the nineteenth century. The caprices and excesses of the magnates of the eighteenth century are things of the past, and a new democratic community based on the peasant and workman has emerged.

There are many problems to be solved by contemporary Poland; the question of frontiers, the relations with Czechoslovakia and Lithuania. In all of them Great Britain can do much to help towards a just solution, especially as the main problem remains—that of security.

Poland is remote from military help from Western Europe and seapower for geographical reasons. Her future depends on the future establishment of security in Europe as a whole, not on any balance of power. A sound solution of this problem of security alone can allow a people in a bad strategic position to live their own life and make their own contribution to the advance of civilization as Poland has shown herself capable of doing.

IV. POLAND'S POSITION IN CENTRAL EUROPE

F. A. Voigt, B.A.

Those of us who have occasion to write or speak about Poland are constantly confronted with a certain difficulty —the difficulty that so few people can see Poland through a clear medium.

Now, let me go straight to the point and get that clear from the beginning. I am referring to Russia. The whole Polish problem is made difficult mainly by the attitude which a great number of people in this country have towards Russia. And, if we regard Poland as one of the keystones of post-war Europe, as indeed we must, we must face the facts. We cannot go round that keystone. The difficulty is not so much Russia itself, because the Russians in their recent pronouncements about Poland direct and indirect, have been extremely frank. They know what they want and they say what they want.

In this country, Poland is often assigned like Russia to Eastern Europe. It is my task this afternoon to speak of Poland's position in Central Europe.

What do we mean by " Central Europe " ? It is a vague term and may mean several things. It may mean what the Germans call "Mitteleuropa." To them " Mitteleuropa " was a predestined field for expansion and domination— a domination that would, in the end, make them masters of all Europe and much more. We should, I think, reject the term " Central Europe " as a political term. Geographically, " Central Europe " would include Switzerland, but would exclude Poland.

What used to be called " the Eastern Question " embraced Poland and the Balkans, especially the Balkans. Should we use the term " Eastern Europe " instead of " Central Europe " to denote the countries we have in mind ? Now, " Eastern Europe " includes Russia. It lies on both sides of the line dividing Russia from the rest

of Europe. It therefore includes two different worlds, as it were, and does not convey any kind of political or economic entity.

That is why the term " Middle Zone " has come into use, for it conveys not the German " Mitteleuropa," nor the ambiguous, or at least, dual " Eastern Europe," but a political, economic, and geographical reality, the region between the Baltic and the Aegean, between Germany and Russia. This region is neither German nor Russian; although politically divided, it offers a foundation for durable unity. It is made up of eleven* nations which have much in common, all of which stand or fall together. Of these, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia are the most important, and it seems to me that there can be no Europe unless these States survive, and they can't survive unless they work together.

I have made these few prefatory remarks so that we may see more clearly what the term " Central Europe " means and what Poland's position is.

I suggested just now that Russia and Europe belonged to different worlds. I should say that they belong to different civilisations and I think the Webbs were right when they referred to the Soviet Union as a new civilisation. We think of the Polish eastern border as just one of Europe's many borders and no different from any other. Some people think that this border is not a very satisfactory one, and that it ought to be shifted.

As a matter of fact, it is one of the few European borders created since the last war that was stabilised by free agreement. Poland and Russia agreed to accept it under the Treaty of Riga, which was signed in 1921. And until the present war, that border was never questioned either by Poland or by Russia.

On either side of it a civilisation grew up. You only have to cross that border either way and you will realise that you are passing from one civilisation to another, from the

* In view of the declaration of the Moscow Conference, it should not be impossible to achieve some form of link between Austria and the countries of the Middle Zone.


EUROPE : POLITICAL
Countries not fully named
A. = ANDORRA
B. = BELGIUM
E. = ENGLAND
E.P. = EAST PRUSSIA
H. = HOLLAND
M. = MONACO
N.I. = NORTHERN IRELAND
S. = SWITZERLAND
Sc. = SCOTLAND
S.M. = SAN MARINO
W. = WALES
MILES
200 100 0 200 400
Arctic Circle
Hammerfest
Murmansk
Archangel
SIBERIA
NORWAY
SWEDEN
Trondheim
FINLAND
Sverdlovsk
Bergen
Oslo
Stockholm
Helsinki
Leningrad
Vologda
GREAT BRITAIN
N. IRELAND
Sc.
Edinburgh
Belfast
I.F.S.
Dublin
Gothenburg
Tallinn
ESTONIA
LATVIA
Riga
Kazan
Moscow
SOVIET RUSSIA
Samara
Tula
Saratov
DENMARK
Copenhagen
LITHUANIA
Kovno
Minsk
E.P.
Hamburg
W.
London
Hanover
Berlin
Warsaw
POLAND
Breslau
Kiev
Kharkov
Cologne
Prague
Krakow
Paris
Nantes
CZECHOSLOVAKIA
Rostov
Astrakhan
Dijon
Munich
Vienna
FRANCE
AUSTRIA
Budapest
HUNGARY
Odessa
Iasi
Bordeaux
Lyons
Milan
Venice
RUMANIA
Bucharest
Bilbao
Toulouse
Genoa
Belgrade
Sevastopol
Batum
Tiflis
Baku
Sarragossa
Marseilles
YUGOSLAVIA
Madrid
Barcelona
Rome
S.M.
BULGARIA
Sofia
Istanbul (Constantinople)
Lisbon
SPAIN
Seville
Valencia
Naples
Ankara
TURKEY
IRAN (PERSIA)
Malaga
Gibraltar (Br.)
Tangier
Palermo
GREECE
Athens
Izmir (Smyrna)
SYRIA
Alexandretta
Baghdad
IRAQ
MOROCCO
ALGERIA
TUNIS
Malta (Br.)
Cyprus (Br.)
Damascus
West 0 East from Greenwich

older European to the new Russian, or the reverse. I am not saying that one civilisation is better than the other, I only say that they differ from one another—differ fundamentally. The eastern border of Poland is not, therefore, one border like another—it is the eastern border of Europe.

To shift a frontier is a serious matter in any case. It may mean the transfer—and, therefore, a grievous uprooting—of whole populations. The transfer may take the form of forcible deportations—tens or hundreds of thousands of men, women and children may be removed from their homes and their land and be sent to distant places of exile. Mass-deportations—there have been many during the last thirty years—are one of the tragedies of our age. Therefore let us refrain from talking airily about changing frontiers, though some changes will be necessary—changes at the expense of the enemy, not for gain or vengeance, but for the security of all, and for no other reason.

Let us refrain above all from talking airily about changing Poland's eastern frontier, for there the change would be a double tragedy. The future of Poland is not at all certain. The possibility, at least, exists that she will be again partitioned. In considering this possibility, let us at least bear in mind what another partition would mean—in human terms, but also in its consequences for all Europe, ourselves included.

This Polish question is not a new one at all—it is a very old question. Burke was passionately interested in the Polish question; He thought that Britain and France should have prevented the partition of Poland at the end of the eighteenth century. Lord Salisbury was, on the whole, not too friendly towards Poland, but he, too, was interested in the Polish question and studied it closely.

I have referred to past partitions, but we must not try to deceive ourselves. The danger of yet another partition exists. It was at the beginning of this war that the fourth partition of Poland was carried out. It was through the German attack upon Russia that Russia became the ally of Poland. Will there be a fifth partition? It depends on the outcome of the war. The personal interest of our own

country demands that there be no more partitions. The countries of the Middle Zone were mainly agrarian, but there has been an economic change in Europe, due largely to the work done by the R.A.F. It is due to the R.A.F., and the threat which the R.A.F. offers to Germany, that she has been forced to shift a lot of her industries farther afield, with the result that parts of Poland, Czechoslovakia and so on, have become one of the greatest industrial agglomerations in Europe. Now that circumstance has created an industrial basis for these countries which are also agrarian, you have what you did not have before, not merely a common interest in the presence of two dangers, not merely a common sentiment, but also what is absolutely necessary nowadays—an industrial basis. These countries, by working together, can be, and will be, if they do work together, a Great Power in every sense of the word.

Now it is always easy to address other countries from a pulpit, as it were, and exhort them to "come together." It is not as simple as that. If countries are to come together, or to federate in any form, there must be a common vital interest and a common purpose. In this case there are certainly common interests, and certainly a common purpose—the purpose being their physical survival. These countries are between two dangers—the German danger and the Russian danger. And I must say, in defence of Russian foreign policy, that as long as the Russians feel that in that region there is going to be chaos, and, as long as the Russians are not convinced that we mean what we say when we say that Germany will be disarmed, the Russians rightly think that they must take precautions. Without a serious policy towards Germany on our part, the Russians are bound to say "We have lost the peace once before; we cannot take any risks." Moreover, when we read what is written in a large number of popular newspapers and journals as to what is going to happen after this war and how we are going to deal with Germany, the Russians are bound to suspect that the German menace will survive the war, or at least be allowed to revive and start the Third World War. But it is not my task this

afternoon to talk about British foreign policy towards Germany. Only we have to bear it in mind. At the moment we are very gratified, as we have every right to be, at the course the war is taking. We are going to survive, but we must also bear in mind that our Eastern and South-Eastern allies are faced with certain interests dependent upon the outcome of this war. It is not enough for us to win the war and defeat the Germans. We have certain interests and pledges and it is not just that the enemy must be beaten—of course he must. But what sort of a Europe is going to emerge after this war? And we cannot separate ourselves from Europe.

We are inclined to look down upon the countries of East Central Europe. It is true that all was not well in them between the two wars, but very few of us really understand what it is to create a new country.

Let us consider Poland in particular, as she is the subject of our discussion to-day. We must not forget that the modern Polish Republic only existed for about twenty years. She was made up at the end of the last war, of three different parts which had belonged to three Empires—the German, the Austro-Hungarian, and the Russian. These three parts had different administrations, different laws, and different civilisations, and, what made it most difficult to knit them together, different industrial, commercial and financial systems. There had been tariff walls between them; and their railways, canals, posts and telegraphs, instead of serving Poland, instead of being centred in the Polish capital, Warsaw, served the three Empires.

To knit the three parts together in one Polish Republic was a prodigious task. But it was accomplished in a very short time. Despite blunders and internal conflicts, Poland made good in the short space of twenty years. In twenty years, this old nation, which is yet a new nation, had to build up out of three very different elements an entirely new State. It is not surprising that there were difficulties.

The same was true of Czechoslovakia. We must allow for the extreme difficulties of building up a new State, difficulties which we have not experienced in hundreds of

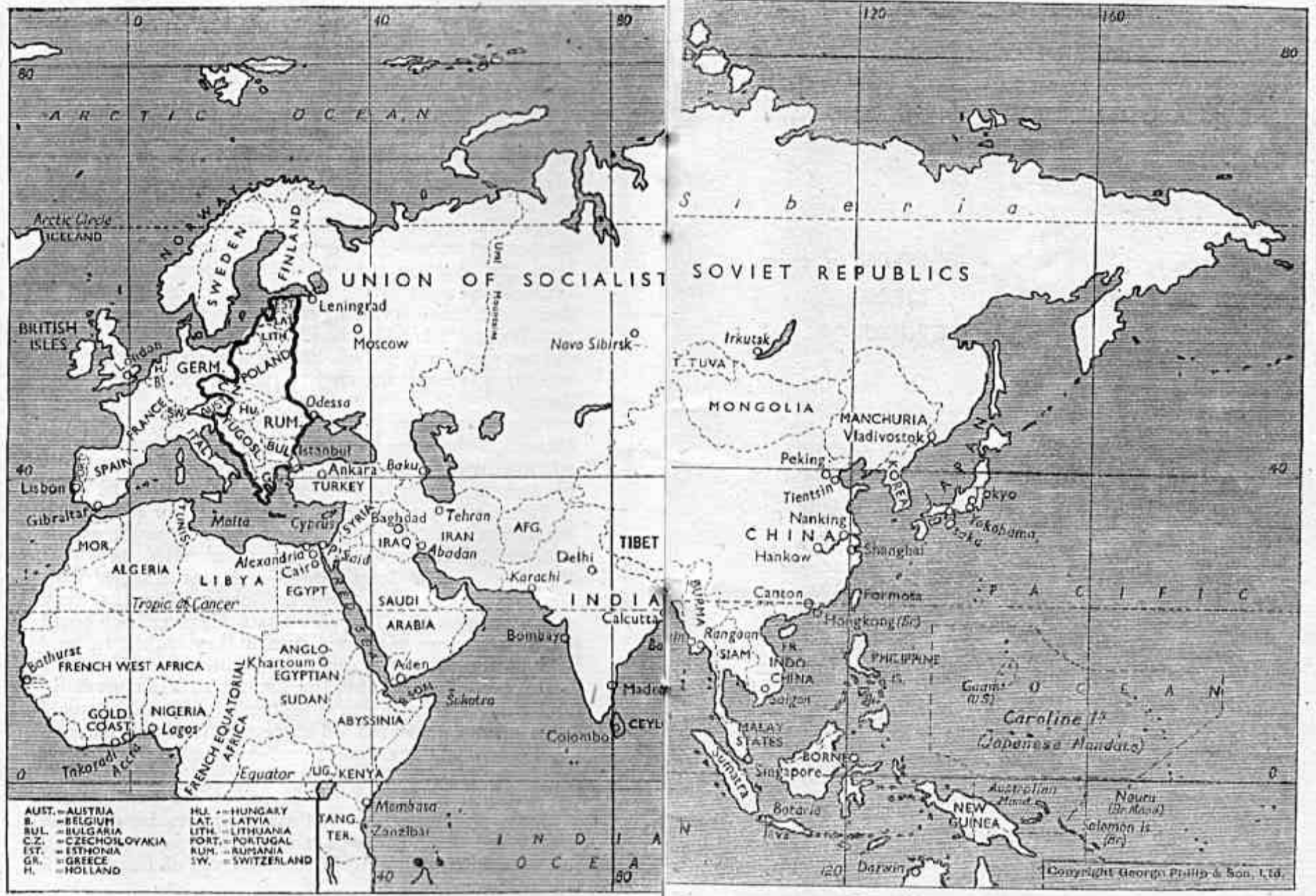
years. People were saying of the Eastern and South-Eastern countries that they are always quarrelling with each other and that they are a nuisance. Now they are being criticised because they want to co-operate.

It is not exaggerating when we say that the civilisation of Europe depends on the coming together of these countries and establishing a Union. And I must say that, of all these countries, it is in Poland where the determination to found a Union is strongest. I have been told by people who are in touch with these countries that among the peasant masses there is patriotism as there has always been, but that the realisation of a *common* destiny is taking deep roots in the national consciousness. And, I don't think that I am giving away a secret at all when I say that General Sikorski, when he spoke about these things, did not speak only for his country—he spoke for all. He was the spokesman not only of Poland, but of the Middle Zone.

Now let us look at it from the Russian point of view. If these countries come together, if they form a greater unity, what is the effect upon Russia? It gives Russia what she has never had in her history—absolute security in the West.

Together, these countries have more than 100 million inhabitants. Divided they are hopelessly weak, as the Second World War was to show. But united they have the making of a Great Power—a Power stronger than Germany, but not as strong as Russia. Together, they would remove the German menace for ever, but could not be a menace to Russia even if they wished to be—which they do not. Besides, a Commonwealth is never aggressive. We cannot imagine the British Commonwealth, as a whole, starting a war of aggression—if it did, it would not remain a whole, but fall to pieces. That the Commonwealth will fight as a whole in self-defence has been proved in two world wars.

I am convinced that the future of our own country depends upon the future of the countries between the Baltic and the Aegean. Let us further consider and go into our interests and into the structure of Europe as a


ARCTIC OCEAN
Arctic Circle
ICELAND
NORWAY
SWEDEN
FINLAND
UNION OF SOCIALIST SOVIET REPUBLICS
Leningrad
Moscow
Nova Sibirsk
Irkutsk
Siberia
BRITISH ISLES
London
GERM
POLAND
LAT.
LITH.
FRANCE
SW.
HOL.
BEL.
Hu.
RUM.
Odessa
ITALY
BUL.
Istanbul
SPAIN
Lisbon
Ankara
Baku
TURKEY
Gibraltar
Malta
Cyprus
SYRIA
Baghdad
Tehran
IRAN
AFG.
TIBET
MOR.
TUNIS.
ALGERIA
LIBYA
Alexandria
Cairo
Port Said
IRAQ
Abadan
Delhi
Karachi
INDIA
EGYPT
Tropic of Cancer
SAUDI ARABIA
Calcutta
Bombay
Bathurst
FRENCH WEST AFRICA
ANGLO-EGYPTIAN SUDAN
Khartoum
Aden
Madras
Socotra
GOLD COAST
NIGERIA
Lagos
FRENCH EQUATORIAL AFRICA
ABYSSINIA
Colombo
CEYLON
Takoradi
Accra
Equator
UG.
KENYA
Mombasa
TANG. TER.
Zanzibar
INDIAN OCEAN
MONGOLIA
TUVA
MANCHURIA
Vladivostok
Peking
KOREA
Tientsin
Nanking
CHINA
Hankow
Shanghai
Tokyo
Yokohama
Canton
Formosa
Hongkong (Br.)
BURMA
Rangoon
SIAM
FR. INDO-CHINA
Saigon
PHILIPPINE IS.
Guam (U.S.)
PACIFIC OCEAN
Caroline Is. (Japanese Mandate)
MALAY STATES
BORNEO
Singapore
Sumatra
Batavia
Java
NEW GUINEA
Australian Mandate
Nauru (Br. Mand.)
Solomon Is. (Br.)
Darwin
AUST. = AUSTRIA
B. = BELGIUM
BUL. = BULGARIA
C.Z. = CZECHOSLOVAKIA
EST. = ESTHONIA
GR. = GREECE
H. = HOLLAND
HU. = HUNGARY
LAT. = LATVIA
LITH. = LITHUANIA
PORT. = PORTUGAL
RUM. = RUMANIA
SW. = SWITZERLAND
Copyright George Philip & Son, Ltd.

COMPARATIVE TABLE*
SHOWING ESTIMATED AREA AND POPULATION IN GERMANY, THE MIDDLE ZONE and U.S.S.R.

(in round figures)

AREA :

Germany . . .	181,000 sq. miles
Middle Zone . .	625,000 ,,
U.S.S.R. . . .	8,240,000 ,,

POPULATION :

Germany	69,000,000
Middle Zone . . .	120,000,000
U.S.S.R.	180,000,000 (120,000,000 of which are in Europe)

Germany . .	381 persons to sq. mile
Middle Zone .	192 ,, ,, ,,
U.S.S.R. . .	22 ,, ,, ,,

*The figures are based on *Whitaker's Almanack* for 1937. Territorial changes effected after 1937 have not been taken into account. Figures for Population include estimated natural increase since 1937.

whole. If an enemy is defeated and, if, having been weakened, he is kept weak (as Germany will have to be kept weak), you create a kind of dislocation. Europe becomes unbalanced. Personally, I think it is a mistake to think only in terms of weakening Germany. We should rather think in terms of remaining strong ourselves and growing stronger. It seems much easier to weaken your enemy and keep him weak—it seems the simplest thing to do—but it is very difficult to keep another country weak. But you can keep another country relatively weak by being strong yourself. The mistake made after the last war was not only in allowing Germany to elude her obligations under the Treaty of Versailles, but in allowing ourselves to become weak. After this war it is most important that Poland and the countries of the Middle Zone be strong, well-armed and prosperous, and that they should be faithful allies of ours. It is much more important to build up their strength and to maintain this alliance than to keep Germany in a permanent condition of weakness.

There is one thing about Poland to-day which is unique. Poland had her internal conflicts before the war, but Poland under enemy occupation and in the presence of the terrible dangers that will menace her even when the Germans have been defeated, has achieved an astonishing national unity.

If Poland ceases to exist as an independent nation, what are the consequences? What is to become of Czechoslovakia? The threat to Czechoslovakia in 1938 was followed by the threat to Poland in 1939. If Poland is menaced afresh, so will Czechoslovakia be menaced afresh. The people who scoff at the prospect of unity among the countries between the Baltic and the Aegean, say "Well, Russia has saved the world (although we have done a little of the saving ourselves), we must not quarrel with Russia." And certainly we must not. The first way to quarrel, to be in deadly conflict, is to have a clash of vital interests. But if these countries are united, there can be no clash of British and Russian vital interests in Europe. As I have pointed out, Russia will have

absolute security—and our security in the eastern Mediterranean will be assured ; for the Balkan countries are part of the Middle Zone and if they are independent and yet united, strong and on friendly terms with ourselves, there is nothing that can threaten us in the Eastern Mediterranean. In addition, Great Britain also would have new opportunities for capital investment and new markets in the Middle Zone. The trade that was chiefly Germany's would be hers.

But the Balkans will not remain independent if the other countries of the Middle Zone do not remain so. What Bismark said about Bohemia remains true to-day of Czechoslovakia as a whole : " Whosoever is master of Bohemia," he said, " is master of Europe." And the same is true of Poland. All these countries hang together. And if we want permanent friendship with Russia the thing to do is to leave no doubt whatever that the independence of all these countries is a vital interest of ours.

Now let us consider our pledges. Pledges are given, or at any rate ought to be given, as far as they correspond with certain vital interests. Between the two World Wars, we suffered from a disease. You only had to sign a treaty and agree to come together and everything was splendid. There were far too many treaties and pacts, and this disease we suffered from has been called " Pactomania." But there are certain treaties which must be made because they represent certain realities, and they must be kept as a matter of interest and honour.

We have certain obligations towards Poland. Let us not forget them ! In August, 1939, we signed the Anglo-Polish Treaty, in which we pledged ourselves to support her if she has to defend herself not only against armed aggression by *any* European Power, but also against any attempt, by *any* European Power, to undermine her independence.

When a great newspaper says, as it did the other day, that Poland (as well as other States, who are neighbours of Russia) must have friendly Governments, the validity

of this treaty is denied. You cannot force people to be friendly. It cannot be done.

It is a bad habit to think of the nations in two categories —big and small. I think that many who have travelled about Europe would agree that, if Europe consisted only of small nations it would be one of the happiest places in the world. The problem to-day is not that of the small but of the bigger units. In the European economy, and in the structure of Europe, the small nations are absolutely necessary. And it is not merely sentiment that has pledged this country to defend the small nations. It is a matter of vital interest, for if there were no small nations Europe would never have security, unless she came under the domination of one Great Power—as she certainly would. And that domination would be extended to Great Britain. In the security of the Narrow Seas, the independence of the Low Countries is a necessity—and always has been. For the security of the eastern Mediterranean, and, therefore, of our imperial communications, the independence of the Balkan countries is a necessity—and always has been. For the security of all Europe, the independence of Poland and of Czechoslovakia is a necessity—and always has been.

In June, 1941, Mr. Eden said in the House of Commons that "The Polish people will redeem their freedom . . . That remains our pledge." In August of the same year, the Atlantic Charter was signed by President Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill. The Charter laid down, amongst other things, that there shall be "no territorial changes without the freely expressed wishes of the people."

In May, 1942, the Treaty of Alliance was signed by Great Britain and Russia. In that Treaty the principles of the Atlantic Charter were reaffirmed and it was agreed by both signatories that they would neither seek self-aggrandizement nor interfere in the internal affairs of other Powers. In July, 1941, the Russian-Polish Treaty was signed. Under the treaty, Russia renounced her claim to those Polish territories which she had occupied in 1939. The juridical situation is therefore clear. Great Britain and

Russia are pledged to uphold the territorial integrity and independence of the Polish Republic within her frontiers as they existed before the war. The only possible exception to this pledge could be the district of Teschen which was occupied by the Poles in October, 1938. The claim to that district is a matter to be settled between Poland and Czechoslovakia.

The destruction of Polish independence would be incompatible with the Atlantic Charter which was accepted by all the Allies. Russia, when attacked by Germany, was driven out of Eastern Poland which she had occupied. She thereupon concluded a Treaty of Alliance with Poland in which she renounced her claim to the region she had occupied—this region which she now claims afresh, is a little more than half of all Poland in size and a little less with regard to population.

Do we agree with the inclusion of Eastern Poland with Russia or not ? Let us make up our minds. It is not a matter of quarrelling, but of understanding the situation. Do not let us pretend either that it does not matter. The point is—is this country pledged by its interests and by its honour that an independent Poland will survive ? The answer can only be *Yes* !

The whole Polish-Russian dispute, which was passed over in silence in this country, was followed with apparent interest in the countries of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. When, some months ago, the Polish Government appealed to the International Red Cross to have certain allegations that were made about the massacre of 8,000 Polish Officers investigated, the whole Polish question came into the foreground. This question, which has so preoccupied the greatest statesmen of this country and also Napoleon, cannot be just passed by. We must face it now, in this war, when we have for the first time the opportunity of solving it once and for all. We must understand it to find the right solution.

I am quite sure that the British Government has sound views on these matters, but it does need the support of a public opinion. You, who are all school teachers, will

understand this. You can do much to promote an enlightened public opinion, because it is you who lay the foundations of enlightenment in the minds of the young. What after all is the issue? Not only security of our own country, but the future of Europe. Now Europe is more than a geographical expression. Europe is the chief repository of the Greco-Roman and Christian heritage—of *our* civilisation. Ours is not the only civilisation. I do not even assert it is the best, but it is *ours*—and for us it is the best. Europe is in danger of dissolution. Poland is only a part of Europe, but an essential part—as for nearly two hundred years some of our greatest statesmen have realised.

It is no accident that passionate interest in the Polish question goes back as far as Burke and Sheridan. Sheridan made one of his greatest speeches against the Partition of Poland. But independence is useless without strength to defend it. A strong and independent Poland is, therefore, demanded by the national honour and the national interests of Great Britain.

If Poland does not emerge from this war independent, intact, and strong, then the dissolution of Europe will proceed instead of being arrested. This it seems to me, is the larger view we must take. In this larger setting must we consider the Polish problem.

The writer of this pamphlet is solely responsible for the opinions or proposals it contains, except where otherwise stated therein. The responsibility of the Polish Publications Committee for this and other publications issued by it and published under the names of particular authors is limited to commending it to readers as a contribution to the study of the subject.

Printed by C. Tinling & Co., Ltd., Liverpool, London and Prescot