

Poland

Lights and Shadows in the Life of an Ancient Nation

Editor's Introduction

(W IMIĘ BOGA ZA NASZĄ I WASZĄ WOLNOŚĆ')

This collection of essays, based on articles, lectures and broadcasts, was first printed by Talbot Press in 1941, reprinted in August 1941 and March 1943; the last included a paper read to the Catholic Association for International Relations in 1942, dealing with *Polish-Russian Relations, Past and Present*. The book was his first publication of his writings in Ireland, though he was active in giving lectures either in person or via the radio.

Some were written before 1939, others before June 1941 when the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact, 1939, was in force before the German invasion of Russia, while the last deal with events known up to the end of 1942, i.e. after the 1941 Sikorski-Maiski¹ Pact but before the Katyn massacre, 1940, came to light in 1943, the death of General Sikorski in mid-1943 and, more generally, between Dunkirk and D-Day and before the full extent of the mass murder of ethnic, religious and social groups in concentration camps and elsewhere, combined with ethnic cleansing, became public knowledge.

As the book is long out of print I give this transcript as a historical record for the benefit of those who are interested in Polish-Irish relations of the early to mid-20th century, to give a historical context to Polish identity 1918-39 and to current events since the late 20th century re-establishment of full independence by Poland and other European nations, as a result of the breakup of the USSR into its constituent nations.

He was a man of his time addressing the Irish people and nation of that time when Roman Catholic patriotic nationalism against neighbouring aggressors was an important part of the psyches of both Poland and Ireland. His lectures, articles and broadcasts acted as a counterweight to a pro-German attitude in Ireland that arose from anti-English politics and culture and general anti-Polish propaganda after the Versailles Treaty. His underlying philosophy, as stated in October 1939, was:

“I belong to this old and apparently incurable school of liberal thinking – and goodness knows how much ridicule and derision it provoked in recent times – which refuses to surrender its belief in freedom and democracy”

After his retirement in February 1954 and freed of the necessities and niceties of diplomacy he contributed many articles to Irish newspapers, primarily the *Irish Independent*, *Irish* and *Sunday Press* and *Irish Times* mostly concerning his analyses of Cold War politics up to 1960; he died in 1962. In 1954 and 1955, the *Irish Times* and *Irish Independent* published

some chapters of his unpublished memoirs, which included commentaries on the historical and contemporary political and constitutional events and issues in Poland, the Ukraine, Estonia and Ireland.ⁱⁱ

While many of the observations are relevant to the times in which they were written, others such as the essay Freedom by Consent reflect the continuing debate on the relationship between the individual and state and the historic development and effects of democratic principles and constitutional liberties. His arguments regarding the foundations of these principles, liberties and related legislation, are a useful, if perhaps idealistic, antidote to the cynical commercial ideologies that underlie the globalisation of economies. The chapter on Moral Disarmament is also relevant though cast within the context of the aims and ideals of the League of Nations.ⁱⁱⁱ

Note on the Transcription

The order given in list of contents and as referenced in the foreword differ slightly. Longer paragraphs have been split for ease of e-reading. I have made minor changes to the arrangement of some footnotes, which were originally integrated with the text; punctuation and presentation, and, with apologies to all lovers of the Polish language, have mostly omitted letter accents; but no changes or redactions to the text with the exception of modernising some country names and the omission of the original index. Note when M. precedes a name, it stands for Mister (Mr.). I have added a few reference endnotes as an aid for further research, dates of births and deaths are taken from Wikipedia.

Ian Cantwell, 2015

Contents

Foreword (p. 3)

Chapter I: From the Origins of Poland to the Battle of Warsaw (p. 4)

Chapter II: “Freedom by Consent” (p. 23)

Chapter III: Contemporary Poland (p. 29)

Chapter IV: Few Remarks on Polish Literature (p. 43)

Chapter V: Moral Disarmament (p. 46)

Two Letters, Wilno and South-Eastern Poland (p. 50)

Chapter VI: Polish-Russian Relations, Past and Present (p. 55)

Foreword

The present volume contains a selection of papers, addresses, and speeches give by the Author at the request of numerous Irish bodies, scientific and other, on the subject of Polish history, constitutional development, demography, culture, etc., and also articles on the same subject published in the Irish press. Thus the sketch, *From the Origins of Poland to the Battle of Warsaw*, represents a summary of three lectures given in 1937 and 1938 at the National University in Dublin and University Colleges in Cork and Galway.

Freedom by Consent” is a reproduction of a speech delivered in 1939 at the Opening Meeting of the 86th Session of the University Philosophical Society, Trinity College, in proposing a vote of thanks to the President for his address, *Freedom by Consent*.

Contemporary Poland is a paper read at the meetings of the Irish Institute of International Affairs and of the Catholic Association for International Relations in 1940. *Few Remarks on Polish Literature and Art* made the substance of a Broadcast talk in 1936. Lastly, the *Moral Disarmament* was chosen by the Author as the subject of one of his talks to the members of the Dublin Rotary long before the outbreak of the present war. As the tremendous upheaval of our days is likely to be followed by some sort of disarmament, the Author thought that some outlines of the basis of any future disarmament scheme may not be out of place in this booklet.

As a rule, however, only those of the Author’s addresses and articles have been included here which bear directly upon Polish affairs and which may prove helpful to the reader, not altogether familiar with the subject, in grasping the scope, meaning magnitude and trend of the issues involved in the present conflagration so far as Poland is concerned.

Two letters to the press, published in October, 1939, and dealing with *Wilno* and *South Eastern Poland*, conclude this volume. A few adjustments and small alterations appeared to be necessary to keep the text, as far as possible, abreast with the most important and topical problems and to avoid repetition. Otherwise the material offered here to the reader was preserved in the same form as originally compiled.

Chapter I

From the Origins of Poland to the Battle of Warsaw

Origins of the Polish State

I do not wish to dwell on the matter of the origins of the Polish Nation, which is still a matter of controversy, but will endeavour to put before you facts well established by historical research. The nucleus of the future Polish State emerged as an independent unit in the second half of the tenth century, under the rule of a prince Mieszko, or Mieciclas I, founder of the first reigning dynasty of the Piasts, and occupied the territory lying approximately between the rivers Odra (Oder) and Vistula and its tributaries. Mieszko accepted Christianity and converted to it all the tribes under his rule. The capital of his state was established in Gniezno (Gnesen).

Problems of Political Geography

It is an interesting fact that the newly erected Polish State had to face the very same problems of political geography that became characteristic of Poland's future destiny throughout her long and stormy history: on his western frontiers Mieszko met with the bellicose, well organised and powerful German Marks, the vanguard of the Emperors; on his eastern borders he came into clash with the outposts of the Grand Duchy of Kiev, whose ruler, Vladimir, had just embraced Christianity from the Byzantine missionaries.

First Reigning Dynasty

Mieszko's son and successor, Boleslas the Brave, who reigned from 992 to 1025, proved to be one of the greatest rulers Poland ever had. Both in external and domestic affairs he displayed a remarkable genius, foresight, and perspicacity, and in numerous wars it fell to his lot to wage, he never failed to manifest the qualities of an accomplished strategist and true leader. His most spectacular victories were: *Pomorze*, which means country beside the sea; Eastern or Vistulan Pomerania (is sometimes called in English Pomerelia), which gave Poland the outlet to the Baltic Sea, in the North; the conquest of Moravia and Slovakia in the South, and the capture of Kiev, the capital of the Grand Duchy of the same name, in the East.

By his victories and conquests he first opened the great trade route leading from Western and Middle Europe to the shores of the Black Sea and further into the East, and thus laid the foundations of the extraordinary prosperity Poland enjoyed throughout the Middle Ages right down to the epoch when new continents were discovered and various other trade routes laid down.

When the Emperor, Otto III, visited the Polish ruler at his capital Gniezno, he was amazed to see the splendour and brilliancy of the Polish court. Boleslas elevated the church of Gniezno into a Metropolitan See with jurisdiction over the bishoprics of Cracow, Wroclaw (Breslau) and Kolobrzeg (Kolberg) and was crowned King of Poland in 1024, the year before his death. One of the principal tendencies of his reign centred round the creation of a great state which

would embrace all Western Slavonic nations and tribes and constitute a federation powerful enough to withstand aggression from whatever quarters it might fall. If he failed in the accomplishment of this stupendous task, he nevertheless left to his people an undying testament which reads: Poland to maintain her place in the sun, nay, to survive at all among her neighbours, must keep strong externally, united and consolidated internally.

Boleslas the Brave's Successors

But the first to forget this flawless testament were Boleslas's successors. It would hardly be possible to deal with all of them in so short a survey of my country's history. One name, however, calls for exception – Boleslas III, the 'Wry-Mouth', to whom the Kingdom of Poland owes the definite incorporation of Pomerania about the year 1211. But on the whole it could be said fairly accurately that in the course of the thirteenth century Poland began to drift towards an extremely dangerous split into several principalities whose rulers, all of the Piast dynasty, were engaged in a devastating internal struggle for supremacy. During this partitional period Poland was subjected to almost incessant raids by all her neighbouring enemies, with the result that the great Kingdom of Boleslas the Brave shrank to the limits of a politically insignificant unit.

Tartar Invasions of Europe

Two events of international magnitude occurred, however, at that time, and they are well worth mentioning. First, the Mongol invasion of Europe by Jenghiz-Khan and Batu-Khan. All the principalities lying east of Poland were trampled down under the ruthless heel of the barbarians and became their pitiful prey. Poland, divided as she then was, could offer the invaders no adequate resistance. Still, one of the Polish rulers, Henry the Pious, Duke of Silesia, gathered round himself whatever he could of the flower of the Polish knighthood and met the Tartar hordes on the fields of Lignicia in 1241.

Henry and his knights perished all, but such was the exhaustion of the barbarians after this battle that they soon recoiled and fled back towards Russia. Through this deed Poland established her first claim to the title Defender of Christendom and Western Civilisation, a title which was so often reaffirmed in the course of the subsequent centuries. May I be permitted to quote here from one of my Irish friends, Colonel O'Connell^{iv}, who, in a brilliant article dealing with the Polish victory over Bolshevik Russia in 1920, thus depicted Poland's position and role on the map of Europe:

"Poland was the most Eastern Country possessing a Western, Latin-derived civilisation and Catholic religion. All her Eastern adversaries had either none or a Byzantine culture, and in religion were either Pagan, Mohammedan or Greek. And all these hostile Governments were definitely absolutist and obscurantist. In other words, the least objectionable adversary from this direction must inevitably be hopelessly alien to everything that lay behind Poland. The latter country was, therefore, in the strict sense, a shield interposed to ward off a standing Eastern menace. Sometimes the shield was pushed aside or beaten down; but as long as it was there at all something could be saved from the havoc."

The Teutonic Order

The second important event to which I have just alluded occurred when another Polish ruler, Conrad, Duke of Masovia, being constantly harassed by heathen Prussian tribes, invited in 1228 the Knights of the Cross, later to be known as Teutonic Knights, to come over and keep his troublesome neighbours in submission. The Order, originally an international confederacy, became in the course of time a purely Germanic body. They founded a strong settlement on the Baltic shore to the east of the Vistula estuary and, taking advantage of their first-rate military organisation, soon had either exterminated or absorbed through colonisation the autochthonic Prussian tribes and had become masters of the country.

This is how it came to pass that the Polish Baltic provinces to the west of the Vistula, known as Polish Pomerania, form a sort of a wedge between East Prussia and the German province of Brandenburg. About seven hundred years later, i.e. in our days, a curious and certainly misleading definition has been invented for this old Polish land of Pomerania which is now so often called 'the Polish Corridor'.

Now, in size this 'Corridor' is about one-third of the size of Eire; historically, ethnographically, economically, and from the point of view of religious unity, Pomerania forms an integral part of Poland, and it was detached from her only at the end of the eighteenth century, at the epoch when Poland lost her independence and was dismembered by Prussia, Russia and Austria. But even under foreign domination never did Pomerania fail to send Polish deputies to the German Reichstag since the establishment of this body in 1870.

Period of Weakness

Profiting by the division and weakness of the Polish Kings and Dukes in the thirteenth century the Teutonic Order crossed the Vistula, extended its dominion over the left bank of the river, and captured Gdansk (Danzig). It may be interesting to note that never before or later did Poland give the Church so many saints or people of saintly life as during this period of her existence, but politically she was diminishing dangerously.

Ladislas the Short defeats the Teutonic Knights

The fourteenth century brought a complete change in the situation. Ladislas I, called Lokietek, which means the Short, succeeded in reuniting the Polish lands, and was crowned King in 1319 in Cracow, which since became the acknowledged capital of the Kingdom. Meanwhile grave complications were accumulating along the northern boundaries. When the Teutonic Order began to extend its settlement in Pomerania the clash between the Order and Poland became inevitable. King Ladislas hoped at first for an understanding through negotiations, and appealed for decision to the Holy See. After much procrastination a verdict was given entirely in favour of the Polish side to the litigation: a Papal Bull was issued condemning the Order, and the Pope's commissioners passed a sentence under which the Order was to restore Pomerania to Poland and to pay a considerable sum in damages.

After twelve years of further litigation and through the powerful influence of the Order the Pope quashed the previous decision and, as the matter was thus left in abeyance, it became manifest that a solution could be reached only by force of arms. It was an extremely difficult war for Poland, as the Order managed to obtain support from their ally, King John of Bohemia. Ultimately, however, the Czechs were repulsed and Ladislas defeated the Knights in a battle at Plowce in 1332. Notwithstanding this victory Pomerania was to remain in the hands of the Order for some time to come. Yet never, throughout the fourteenth century, did any of the Polish Kings surrender the title of *Pomeraniae et Haeres*.

Casimir the Great: His Policy and Reforms

It will, I presume, interest you, that Ladislas's son and successor, King Casimir, is the only King of Poland on whom the adjective of 'Great' was bestowed, and that is not because of his achievements as a warrior – as a matter of fact was played quite an insignificant part in his reign – but because of his lasting merits as a peacemaker, lawgiver, and architect of his people. It was under his enlightened and highly proficient kingship that the first Polish university was established in Cracow in 1364 (i.e. about 225 years before Trinity College was founded in Dublin); that a Statute of laws was promulgated; that beautiful buildings began to adorn the land of Poland; and that the peasants were given rights and protection against serfdom. To the Jews, who were then a persecuted and outcast lot among all European nations, he threw open the doors of his Kingdom, granted them rights, and gave them opportunities to settle down.

Incidentally it would, perhaps, be interesting to note how the thread of history sometimes pursues its uninterrupted course through many centuries and how the causes of a contemporary situation may be found in an event remote in the past. The fact that Poland of today is so keenly interested in the solution of the problems of Palestine is closely related to and is consequential upon Casimir the Great's Jewish policy. The Jews, quite naturally, took full advantage of this King's hospitality, flocked into Poland in masses, and multiplied to such an extent that out of the whole population of Poland, aggregating about 35,000,000 inhabitants, more than 3,000,000, i.e. almost 10 per cent, are Jews.

As an enormous percentage of them live almost exclusively on trade and its derivatives, the country has not only become overflooded with Jewish trade concerns, shops, middlemen, and so on, but the Jews themselves, having reached the point of saturation in this branch of national activities, are no longer able to draw from it an adequate livelihood. Neither the Polish majority nor the Jewish minority are happy in such conditions, and it is felt on both sides that a solution must be reached by which some of the Jewish settlers of more recent date should be given channels for free emigration, whilst the older settlers would continue to live in Poland as her useful and loyal citizens.

Under King Casimir, Poland suffered, as regards her territory, a rather severe blow by ceding Silesia to the Luxembourg dynasty. In return the Emperors renounced once for all their titular claims to the Polish Crown, and thus peace was restored on Poland's western frontier. A part of Silesia was returned to Poland after almost 600 years of foreign bondage, as a result of the

plebiscite of 1921. The loss of Silesia was partly made good by the incorporation into Polish territories of a province which henceforth received the name of Eastern Little Poland, sometimes known as Galicia. Casimir's role as one of the greatest peacemakers of his time reached its zenith when he was selected mediator between the Emperor and King Louis of Hungary, and the Polish capital was chosen as the place for negotiations. It was there that the Emperor, Charles IV, was married to Elizabeth of Stettin and the wedding festivities celebrated, King Casimir and the City of Cracow displaying on this occasion the might and richness of the Kingdom.

Foundation of the Future Democratic Constitution

A question on which historians still dwell with uncertainty is: why, though the purely Polish Piast dynasty was at that time far from being extinct, King Casimir, who died without male issue, bequeathed his throne to his nephew, Louis of Hungary? It might have well been that Casimir was not able to fix among the Piast princes one fit to continue his great work, but there is another more likely explanation.

By that time the Polish upper classes had become conscious of the fact that there was nothing supernatural in the institution of the crown and its position among the various other factors constituting the organism of a state, and that the basis on which relations between the ruler and his subjects should be founded was that of a contract to be observed loyally and faithfully by both sides of the agreement. The Polish Lords felt positive that the imposition of such contract upon a foreign prince would be a much more feasible affair than in the case of a prince of their own blood, as some of the Piast princes still exercised a good deal of patriarchal authority over their subjects.

Polish Magna Charta

Be that as it may, the Lords gave the King heir full support in his choice, making it, however, conditional that Louis should accept the so-called *Pacta Conventa* (the Polish Magna Charta) by which the gentry and aristocracy had to be granted some inalienable rights and privileges. Thus it came about that in 1374 the first foundations of the future Polish democratic constitution had been laid.

The subsequent chapters of Polish history are crowded with epoch-making events which precipitated Poland towards the goal where might and greatness were awaiting her, and contain also the story of a moving episode on which every Christian heart should dwell with deep gratification: the story of the self-sacrifice and devotion of Queen Jadwiga¹ of Poland. At this point in my narrative it is, however, necessary to revert once more to the activities of the Teutonic Order. After the capture of Pomerania the Order became attracted by the principalities lying to the East of their settlement, Samogitia and Lithuania, which were still plunged in the darkness of paganism. The invasion of these countries was undertaken under the pretence of converting them to Christianity.

¹ Pronounced *Yadweega*

But the very spirit of Christianity was so conspicuously absent from the Order's policy towards the wretched Samogitians and Lithuanians that the latter began to bear an equal intensity of hatred towards the Knights and the Christian faith itself and to identify it with brutal force and political subjugation. They would not have Christianity from the Order and turned their eyes to Poland. When the temporal and spiritual lords of Poland accepted Jadwiga, who was the daughter of Louis of Hungary and great grand-daughter of Ladislas the Short of Poland, as Queen, they were aiming at something higher than the purpose of securing a sovereign to their country

Conversion of the last Pagan Nation in Europe

The general situation drove home to them the bold idea of uniting Poland and Lithuania into one powerful state capable of dealing with all its neighbours, and of displaying, if necessary, a formidable military force. They consequently arranged for a marriage between Jadwiga and Ladislas Jagello², Grand Duke of Lithuania, making it conditional that the latter and the whole of Lithuania should accept Christianity. The plan was carried out without a hitch. Ladislas was elected King of Poland in 1386, and in the same year took place his conversion and marriage with Jadwiga. Lithuania was peacefully received into the fold of the Church. One actor of this historic drama had, however, to suffer – the beautiful and sweet-hearted Queen, formerly betrothed to a handsome prince, William, Duke of Austria. This love romance had to be sacrificed on the altar of the conversion of the last pagan nation in Europe.

Wars with Teutonic Knights

Meanwhile time became ripe and propitious for grave decisions on Poland's northern frontier. The long awaited armed contest between Poland and the Teutonic Order was maturing and the issue was fought out on the fields of Grünwald (or Tannenburg) in 1410. Against the brilliant and highly-trained forces of the Order there was arrayed a not less brilliant and valiant Polish Army supported by the Lithuanians who, ill-equipped and primitive fighters as they were, were led by an outstanding warrior, Grand Duke Witold of Lithuania, and breathed nothing but hatred and revenge towards their prospective conquerors.

Roughly speaking, this battle may be divided into three phases: first, the Lithuanians attacked and were routed; then the Poles came into action and the issue seemed for some time to hang in the balance. In the handling of the troops, however, Ulrich von Jungingen, the Grand Master of the Order, found quite a match for himself in the Polish General, Zyndram of Maszkowice. The decision was reached when the bodyguard of King Ladislas, regardless of the danger to which the Polish sovereign became exposed, was thrown into battle and turned its tide in Poland's favour. Then the Lithuanians returned and completed the victory. 18,000 Teutonic Knights fell at Grünwald, 14,000 were taken prisoners.

The effects of this battle were both immediate and far-reaching: notwithstanding the fact that Poland did not make full use of her victory – as a matter of fact not once throughout her history did she make much use of any of her victories – she gained a long breathing space to

² Pronounced *Vaguella*

collect her resources for still greater achievements; such brilliant attainment of a common end brought Poland and Lithuania closer together; and the first act of union between the two countries incorporating Lithuania into the Kingdom as an autonomic unit was sealed in 1413. On the other side weakness and faction began to tell heavily on the external and internal affairs of the Teutonic Order; the spell of invincibility was broken and the Grand Master, Henry von Plauen, found himself in the dire necessity of taking refuge at the court of the Polish King.

The Jagellonian Dynasty

The Jagellonian dynasty was now firmly established. Two memorable reigns were to follow the rule of King Ladislas, those of his sons, Ladislas III and Casimir IV. The romantic personality of Ladislas III has come down to history bearing the nimbus of a Crusader who made a heroic effort to stem the Turkish invasion of Europe. The Polish King took command of a select body of Polish and Hungarian knights and led them into a battle that was fought in 1444, on the fields of Varna, in Bulgaria. The innumerable hordes of Sultan Amurat completely submerged the small forces fighting under the banner of the Cross, the King and almost every one of these faithful Christians being slain. This defeat, heavy and painful as it was, did not reflect in the least on the growing importance of Poland as one of the great powers; rather it added laurels to her reputation as a devoutly Christian nation.

Casimir IV

It may be said that never before or later did Poland attain a greater measure of efficiency and foresight than under the reign of Ladislas of Varna's brother and successor, Casimir IV, called the Jagellonid. A happy and well-balanced embodiment of wisdom, bravery and vision, this ruler gave equal weight to all outstanding problems of his kingdom's external and internal policy, and solved almost all of them with equal resourcefulness and vigour. At the end of another successful war with the Teutonic Order a peace Treaty was concluded in 1466, under which not only the whole of Pomerania was returned to Poland, but also Marienburg, the capital of the Order, Elbing, Stum and Warmia became incorporated into the Polish State. What was left of the former East-Prussian domination of the Order became a fief of Poland and the Grand Masters acknowledged themselves vassals of the Polish Crown.

Thus the whole of the Vistula estuary, Danzig, and the Baltic Sea, stood open for Polish export trade and paid their invaluable contribution to the ever increasing prosperity of the Kingdom. Through a series of skilful diplomatic moves Casimir IV saw that the Crowns of Bohemia and Hungary were offered to two of his sons. It might interest you that one of them, also Casimir, became a saint and was canonised in 1520. Poland, Lithuania, Prussia, Bohemia, Hungary and Wallachia, all came under the sceptre of the Jagellonian dynasty and, through Casimir's cherished idea of bringing all these countries and nations into a permanent federation united by common allegiance to the King at Cracow did not prove practicable, nevertheless, on his death he left Poland in a position of hitherto unknown splendour and might. Thus at the end of the fifteenth century the stage was set ready in Poland for the most brilliant period of her history which opened in the sixteenth century.

Two Last Jagellons

It is true that neither of the last two Jagellons could possibly be given the same historical eminence as their predecessors. Both Sigismund I, called the Old, and Sigismund II Augustus would, probably, have made quite good rulers in a country enjoying a better geographical position and having less dangerous neighbours. Poland needed stronger personalities. However, so might and prosperous was the legacy handed down to those two Kings that they only had to carry on and the state machine moved forward by the impulse given to it during the preceding reigns.

Lands of the Polish Crown

In the course of the sixteenth century another great territorial expansion was accomplished: Livonia (to-day the independent Republic of Latvia) was merged into the Polish dominions, and the Duchy of Courland surrendered to the Polish Kings as their fief. The following lands became united under the Polish Crown: the whole of the ethnographic Poland (with the exception of Silesia); East Prussia, partly as a dominion of the Crown, partly as its fief; the Duchy of Courland, Livonia and the Southern part of Estonia; Lithuania; the Palatinate of Polotsk, Witebsk and Smolensk; Palatinates and Principalities forming the basin of the Dnieper and its tributaries; lands beyond the Dnieper right down to the Black Sea. In the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the Kingdom of Poland was the largest State in Europe.

The Golden Age

But the true grandeur of this age, which is known as the Golden Age of Poland, was due less to political or military successes than due to the amazing development of Polish culture. The University of Cracow rose to be one of the best known and most sought out centres of knowledge in Europe. It was there that Nicholas Copernicus, the astronomer, and a host of outstanding theologians, scientists and humanists received their upbringing. Literature and art flourished. A brilliant array of philosophers, historians, poets, novelists and economists enriched the national literature with works which even today are still throbbing with life and actuality. The writers of this epoch manifested a decisive tendency to free themselves from an excessive Latin influence and laid the foundations of the Polish language as spoken to-day.

Both in Cracow and Warsaw, the new Capital of the Kingdom^v, and all over the country magnificent buildings in the Renaissance style were erected, adding to the impressive but somewhat gloomy architectural background of the Middle Ages a stroke of refinement, elegance and gaiety. Contemporary chronicles contain many a description of the Polish King, surrounded by his Chancellors, Palatines, Marshals, Hetmans and Castellans and the supreme pageantry of the Court. In the field the Polish Army stood unbeatable.

Stephen Bathory

In such conditions of power and glamour the end came to the glorious Jagellonian dynasty which became extinct with the death of Sigismund II Augustus in 1572. After the episodic

reign of Henry of Valois, brother of Charles X, King of France, the Polish electors called to the throne Stephen Bathory, Palatine of Transylvania, husband of Princess Anne of Jagellon. Little they knew by doing so they crowned a man whose destiny was to enrich the gallery of the Polish Kings by yet another illustrious character. No sooner had he ascended the throne that he became fully aware of the true conditions and made himself master of the situation.

After the weak reign of the last two Jagellons and the subsequent inter-regna Poland needed radical internal reforms to put an end to the misguided theories of personal liberties, and a stronger protection for her lands against an ever increasing pressure. King Stephen never hesitated to ruthlessly suppress all manifestations of mutiny and anarchy whether they sprang from the Danzig burghers or from the great nobles, and did everything that human effort could compass to ensure good government, efficient organisation and universal respect for the law. His victorious campaign against Tsar Ivan the Terrible of Muscovy proved to be a masterpiece of strategy and tactics. Very unfortunately for Poland, his reign only extended eleven years, and it was amidst preparations for another Russian campaign that this remarkable King died in 1586.

Policy and Constitution

Here it becomes imperative, in order you may be in a position to follow the subsequent chapters on my country's history, that I should break my narrative and put before you a concise explanation of the political and constitutional structure of this old Kingdom of Poland. I am well aware that the idea of an Empire is not very popular nowadays: it is so often associated with the subjugation of weaker nations by a more powerful one. However, what is history cannot be ignored, and this is why I have to tell you that this old Kingdom of Poland was undoubtedly an Empire.

The Polish Race as a numerical unit was originally very far from being in proportion to the extent of the state it built. But the fact is that any conquest achieved by the sword or by peaceful means – and most of them were achieved by peaceful means – was immediately followed by the penetration of Polish culture, which proved to be such an attractive force that the gradual absorption of the conquered or incorporated nations led finally to the creation of a strong homogenous basis for the future of a unified State.

Obviously, this Kingdom of Poland was an Empire whose boundaries reached, at the height of its power, almost from the River Oder to far beyond the Dnieper and from the Baltic Sea right down to the Black Sea, but, if we look at it in its historical perspective, it would certainly appear to have been strange and, I should say, an anomalous Empire. The characteristic features of other empires then in the making were a complete and rather brutal subjugation of all weaker nations and an obvious trend towards an autocratic central authority.

In Poland tendencies diametrically opposed were gradually developing. So far back as 1425 a law was promulgated known as *Neminem captivabimus nisi jure victum*, guaranteeing personal liberty of the citizens. The year 1454 is memorable for the clear and definite establishment of a parliamentary regime which henceforward had to be exercised by a bi-

cameral system consisting of a lower chamber and a senate. Under the law, *Nihil novi sine communi consensu*, promulgated in 1505, the Crown became powerless to legislate without the common consent of the two chambers. In the course of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries Poland can be said to have reached the most advanced stage of democracy which the social structure of the day would suffer.

‘The Most Serene Republic’ as an Empire

The official title of the Kingdom was ‘the Most Serene Republic of Poland’, a title that goes to show the essentially republican character of the state. The throne became elective, with this difference only to the modern republic that the kings were elected for life. The union between Poland and Lithuania forms, on the other hand, a very striking example of the policy by which Poland sought to enlarge and strengthen her Kingdom.

The union was, as I have said, first established in 1386, by the marriage of Queen Jagwida of Poland with Ladislas Jagello of Lithuania, and Poland succeeded in drawing strong links between the two countries not by use of force, but by methods entirely different. As early as 1413 the rights of the privileged Polish classes were extended to the corresponding classes in Lithuania. I wish you to note a few opening sentences of this first act of union between the two countries. Here they are:

“In the name of the Lord, Amen. May this deed be remembered for ever. It is known to all that he will not attain to salvation who is not sustained by the mystery of love, which does nothing wrong, radiates goodness, reconciles those in discord, unites those who quarrel, dissipates hatred, puts an end to anger, furnishes to all the food of peace, brings together the scattered, lifts up the fallen, makes rough ways smooth, turns wrong into right, aids all virtues, injures no one, delights in all things; he who takes refuge in its arms will find safety, and thenceforth, even though insulted, will have no need to fear. Through love, laws are established, kingdoms are ruled, cities are set in order, and the welfare of the state is brought to its highest; amongst all the virtues it is the most to be commended, and if anyone shall hold it in contempt he will deprive himself of everything good... May love unite us, make us equals, us whom religion and identity of laws and privileges have already joined”.

Mr. Paul Super, an American, who lived for a long time in Poland, and is responsible for this wonderful rendering of the original text into English, when commenting upon this pact in his extremely interesting book, *Events and Personalities in Polish History*^{vi}, says:

“What a document! Was there ever another such treaty? It puts the 13th Corinthians into politics, where it is certainly much needed if not thoroughly at home. And that treat was written, read, discussed and signed on the far eastern plains of Poland in the year 1413, between the leaders of two nations, one just entering the Christian family, the other still living largely in wooden houses and under thatched roofs. One would like to print the whole text; it is a noble document.”

Attractive Force of Polish Culture and Freedom

In 1569 the whole edifice of a permanent union was crowned by the Act of Lublin. This act can rightly be regarded as heralding the principles underlying the free union of the United States of America. Under one King and one Parliament of the Kingdom there existed two autonomous units governed entirely by local administration; moreover, each member of the union kept a separate army under the command of a separate Commander-in-Chief (the Grand Hetman of the Crown and the Grand Hetman of Lithuania). Such was the intrinsic value of this union that we see Poland and Lithuania sharing in common as subsequent vicissitudes of the Kingdom.

Even the tragic sacrifices of the nineteenth century had an equal share of Polish and Lithuania blood. The foundations laid down by the Act of Lublin survived all onslaughts made from various quarters, and not just prior to the Great War did different forces and tendencies make themselves felt in Lithuania, thus bringing about the present disruption between the two countries. It may interest you to know that the Polish national hero, Kosciuszko; the great poet and patriot, Mickiewicz; and Marshal Pilsudski himself, were all Lithuanian Poles.

All territorial conquests, whether of Eastern Little Poland in the fourteenth century, of Eastern Prussia in the fifteenth century, or of Livonia and Courland in the sixteenth century, was inevitably followed by a policy respecting local institutions and preserving their autonomy as incorporated or vassal provinces. An attempt to bring about a union with the Ukraine along lines characteristic of the Polish-Lithuanian federation was made by Poland in the seventeenth century, but, unfortunately for both countries it proved abortive.

There is in the British Museum an extremely interesting manuscript under the title of *Relation of the States of Polonia and the United Provinces of that Crown, anno 1598*, whose authorship is ascribed to a Scotsman, Dr. William Bruce^{vii}, a soldier, scholar and diplomat, for sometime lecturer at Zamosc Academy, Poland, in later years British Agent in Danzig. This is how the sagacious observer describes the character of the relations between the Polish Crown and its Dominions in the sixteenth century:

“Despite some dissatisfaction in Prussia, Livonia, and even in Lithuania, these provinces are held in by the sweetness of the Polish liberty, immunities, privileges, honours and security against foreign power by the union, which they should never so long enjoy under another Government”³

Reformation and its Failure

In so far as the religious aspect of the nation is concerned, the Poles, fervent and devout Catholics as they were and are, always bore a distinguished mark of sincere tolerance towards all other creeds and faiths and never forced their own deeply cherished religion on anyone unwilling. This is why religious wars and persecutions are conspicuously absent from the pages of Polish history. When pressure was brought to bear upon King Sigismund II Augustus in order that he should adopt stern measures against the Reformation, his answer

³ Quote from Dr. W Borowy, An English Relation of the State of Polonia, *The Warsaw Weekly*, no. 39, 1937

was "I am not king of you consciences!" When speaking on the same subject in the Senate, John Zamoyski, Chancellor of the Kingdom, one of the greatest Poles of the Golden Age, to whom I will refer later, said "I would give half my life if those who abandoned the Roman Catholic Church should voluntarily return to its pale; but I would prefer giving all my life than to suffer anybody to be constrained to do it, for I would rather die than witness such oppression"⁴

Causes of Growing Internal Weakness

No doubt, this Royal Republic of Poland was a great, civilised, democratic and tolerant state, and the question which urgently obtrudes itself is, why it so happened that Poland collapsed at the end of the eighteenth century? Why did she prove impotent to deal with her situation at that time? What was the reason for it? The one, obvious, current explanation is her manifestly unenviable geographic position. This, however, can reasonably be taken as only one among other contributing causes of her subsequent partitions. What were the other causes?

The old constitutional methods, based, as they were, on truly democratic and fundamentally sound principles, contained, none the less, some perilous germs which, preying upon certain features of the Polish national character, grew to the extent of hampering and upsetting the most essential functions of the state machine. One has to bear in mind that Polish People were, and still are, extremely individualistic and independent both in their opinions and actions, and that they are much inclined to resent anything, real or imaginary, what may seem to interfere with their liberties.

That the principle, by which the common consent of the two Chambers became a preliminary to any new law being enacted, should have produced such a strange and outplacéd offspring as the so-called 'liberum (free) veto', cannot be explained by other causes than the agency of this typically mentality where the respect of the individual and his freedom seems to outdistance all other considerations.

Liberum Veto

The misuse of this curious parliamentary weapon has, undoubtedly, been exaggerated by many historians with a bias against Poland. The fact, however, remains one that one or several unruly, dissatisfied, or even bribed deputies were in a position to oppose themselves to an overwhelming majority of the Diet, to stop the legislative machine and to render inoperative a bill however vital for the state and common welfare. Here lies the root of the evil which, together with party strife and faction, had undermined and was ultimately to destroy the constitutional efficiency of the old Republic.

The executive power was becoming weaker and weaker until it was brought to a tragic inertia. In vain the best Polish Kings, statesmen, churchmen and philosophers made strenuous efforts to improve this state of affairs by trying to awaken public conscience to the impending dangers so as to amend the constitution and public morals. Any attempt to increase the authority of the executive was only too often denounced as an onslaught on the liberties of

⁴ Translation by Mr. P. Super

the people, as a Machiavellian plan aiming at the establishment of an *absolutum dominium* which became a real obsession with the Polish electors, a sort of a bugbear dreaded above all. They certainly succeeded in escaping the *absolutum dominium* under their own kings and ministers only to imperil the very edifice under which they were so jealously cultivating their individual liberties

John Zamoyski and Sigismund III

When King Stephen Bathory died two candidates put forward their claim to the Polish Crown: Maximilian of Austria and Sigismund, Crown Prince of Sweden, son of John Vasa and Catherine of Jagellon. The first made a disastrous attempt to impose himself by force of arms. He lost his cause by sustaining a crushing defeat from John Zamoyski, the most remarkable statesman and soldier of the Bathorian period. Consequently, the Polish electors gave their preference to the Swedish prince, a descendant of the Jagellonian dynasty.

But when the new king arrived in Warsaw and was first approached by John Zamoyski, then Chancellor of the Kingdom, the only way the latter was able to express himself on this solemn occasion was by addressing one of the King's lords-in-waiting: "Say, what is this dumb devilkin you brought to us?" Says one of the Polish historians: "these few words are significant enough to show how quick was the Chancellor to grasp the new situation and to perceive the frustration of the hopes he and the nation had placed on the new sovereign".

Crown Prince of Poland called to the Throne of Muscovy

This foreign-bred and rather narrow-minded ruler seemed to have exerted himself and sacrificed the power of his kingdom to one particular goal – that of the recovery of the Swedish Crown and of a union of Poland and Sweden under his personal kingship. Futile as this idea was, it dragged Poland into a series of unnecessary and profligate wars with Sweden. Again, an unjustifiable alliance with Austria and the Emperor involved Poland in an untimely war with the whole might of the Ottoman Empire.

In the east an opportunity was wasted and lost once for all. In 1610 the Polish army under the command of the great soldier, Grand Hetman Zolkiewski, inflicted a humiliating defeat upon the Russians and the supporting Swedes, and never arrested its victorious march until it reached the walls of Moscow. The Poles occupied Kremlin, the Tsar Vassili Shuyekey was taken prisoner and brought to Warsaw and, crowning moments of those events, the Douma of the Russian boyers called to the throne Ladislas, the King of Poland's son.

I would not like to be accused of too sanguine an estimate of the possibilities which then lay open to Poland. I only wish to stir you to imagine what a different course the whole history of Europe might have taken if the Crown Prince of Poland and his descendants had been firmly established on the Russian throne. Sigismund III was not gifted with such a vision. He wanted the Russian throne for himself, but the Russians did not want him, and so one of the greatest schemes history reveals fell through. Though engaged on three fronts, Poland was quite capable of dealing heavy blows to all her enemies. New territorial concessions were

obtained from Russia, the Swedish invasion of Livonia, East Prussia and Pomerania was brilliantly repulsed, a terrific Turkish onslaught was stemmed and beaten off in a series of truly epic fights.

The situation created by the outbreak of the Thirty Years War was another vital issue which was completely mishandled. Had Poland had at that time anything like a sound external policy she could have imposed herself as an arbiter to the fighting European powers. But Sigismund never seemed to have grasped what ought to have been his dominant thought, namely, the all-importance of a clear national and international policy. His regime tumbled along from one blunder to another, with the result that on his death in 1632, Poland was left without any definite political objective, but with an empty treasury instead and, moreover, in a state of ever increasing constitutional disorder.

‘The Deluge’

After the short and rather encouraging reign of Ladislas IV it fell to Poland’s lot to pass through a calamitous period expressively called ‘the Deluge’. All that breathed jealousy, aggression or covetousness seemed to have joined hands for Poland’s destruction. At this critical juncture the throne was ascended by John Casimir, brother of the late King. He was not a bad ruler, but it would have required a superhuman personality to successfully bear the weight which had fallen on his shoulders.

First the Ukrainian Cossacks rebelled. Originally the rebellion was not directed at the King or the Government, but only against the great Polish landlords, the so-called Ukrainian kinglets, whose possessions covered thousands of square miles, and who felt strong enough not only to rule the country by themselves, but also to overrule the Ukrainian policy of the King and Parliament. Though ultimately suppressed in a sanguinary battle at Beresteczko, the Ukrainian rebellion laid bare the vulnerability of Poland and greatly encouraged her other enemies.

An act of high treason, committed by one of the great nobles, opened the gates of the kingdom to Charles X of Sweden, and in less than a year the latter’s army invaded and occupied almost all of Northern, Central and Western Poland, whilst the Eastern provinces has become prey of Muscovite incursions and depredations.

At the time when everything seemed to have fallen into ruins a mysterious event shook public opinion to its very depths, waking the nation from its degrading lethargy: the heroic defence of the monastery of Czestochowa⁵ with its famous shrine of Our Lady. The monastery stood firm as practically the only islet, rising from the submerged national territory, into which the iron heel of the invader had never sunk, and the successful defence of Czestochowa by a handful of soldiers and monks, under the command of Prior Kordecki, marked a turning point in the history of ‘the Deluge’.

⁵ Pronounced *Czenstohova*

It was from the proud towers of this monastery that recovery and regeneration descended. The Swedes were driven back to the sea and peace was concluded under which the Polish Kings renounced all claims to the Swedish crown and a portion of Livonia was ceded to Sweden. Now Poland was able to concentrate upon her third enemy, Russia, and so brilliant were the opening stages of the campaign that a favourable peace seemed to have been in easy reach. An ignominious rebellion against the King raised by another great noble thwarted these expectations, and when peace came Poland was compelled to cede to Russia the whole of the eastern bank of the Dnieper, Kiev and some other districts.

The turmoil of those years synchronised with another event fraught with grave consequences: East Prussia, which underwent secularisation during the period of the Reformation, ceased to be Poland's vassal and proclaimed itself independent as from 1660.

The Last Crusader

The reign of John III Sobieski, spectacular as it was from an international point of view, nationally speaking, was just a brilliant interlude woven into the events on which tragedy was to cast its shadow. Had he been just a warrior greedy of martial glory, or a politician with strong views and of ruthless ways, a different turn in Poland's history might not have been outside the region of possibilities. But he first of all was a Crusader, the last Crusader of pure metal, and a military genius who unreservedly lent himself to the cause of Christianity. His remarkable victories over the Turks, crowned by the immortal glory of his Viennese campaign in 1663 and by the subsequent salvation of Christendom and Europe, made him one of the outstanding figures in world history.

But as a Polish King he died an embittered and disappointed man, a ruler who became only too familiar with the sense of tangled impotence to grapple with impending catastrophe.

External Weakness and Constitutional Disorder

If under the Vasa dynasty Poland was lavishly and recklessly squandering the great heritage of the preceding ages, she began under two Kings of the Saxon dynasty to helplessly totter towards her fall. Both Augustus II and Augustus III devoid, as they were, of all national spirit, displayed a conspicuous indifference to the alarmingly growing external weakness of their Kingdom and the ever increasing faction, corruption, and apathy in its internal affairs. Let us give them credit of having embellished Warsaw by the erection of some very fine buildings.

The Downfall

When the curtain rose to unveil the reign of the last Polish King, Stanislaus II Augustus (Poniatowski), the stage presented a scene of complete confusion and disarray with some arrogant intruders in the forefront dictating their shameless will to the righteous possessors of the place. The first partition of Poland by Russia, Prussia and Austria was committed in 1773, and tore away about one-third of her territory. Twenty years later the country fell victim of

another partition, and in 1795, the year of the third partition, the old Kingdom of Poland crumbled to its end, not to resuscitate until after one hundred and twenty three years.

Kosciuszko

But Poland went down with her colours flying. Two glorious events marked her sinking into political non-existence: the promulgation of the Constitution of the 3rd May, 1791, under which the throne had become hereditary, *liberum veto* to be suppressed, the executive to be strengthened, and the peasants to be given complete freedom; and next, the great national uprising under the leadership of Thaddaus Kosciuszko^{viii}. These two vents, like two blazing beacons, illuminated the thorny path towards resurrection and never ceased to tell the toiling people: *Nil desperandum!* Poland is not dead!

The Miracle of the Great War

The story of how the Polish people preserved their spiritual unity, nationality, religion, and language throughout the darkest period of their history which began with the partitions and ended in 1918, would bring me far beyond the limits of this essay. Suffice it to say that when the Great War broke out the Poles presented a strong national conglomerate only too eager to shake off the humiliating yoke of foreign bondage. The miracle of the Great War, in so far as Poland is concerned, consisted in the fact that all the three partitioning Empires, notwithstanding the striking circumstance that they were fighting in two opposite camps, collapsed in the end, thus giving Poland a unique chance to reunite her lands and to re-create the State.

But no miracle is of a nature to produce lasting effects in the domain of politics unless its magnitude and essentials are grasped by human beings, and it could be said that fate bestowed on Poland at that time three men who knew how to rise to the occasion: Roman Dmowski, Ignace Paderewski and Joseph Pilsudski. Had this triumvirate found the way to unite their efforts and establish a close collaboration between themselves, many a future disappointment and trial could, probably, have been spared to the Polish people.

Dmowski, Paderewski, Pilsudski

Be as it may, to Dmowski goes the credit of building up his country's future destinies on the victory of the Allies, which he had clearly foreseen, of winning for Poland her Western boundaries, and of securing for her a seat as an Allied Power at the Versailles table.

It is to Paderewski that the Nation is deeply indebted for the part he played in the events as Poland's Ambassador at large, an Ambassador accredited not to a single state indeed but to the whole world. No other man could have possibly pleaded Poland's cause with more persuasive eloquence, Paderewski himself being the living embodiment of everything that is pure and noble in the Polish character.

It was, however, Pilsudski who, owing to his tremendous personality, rose to the heights of an overpowering and domineering factor in Polish post-war politics. He started his life as an

obscure revolutionary fighting almost alone the whole might of the Russian Empire. He ended his career in the military field as the hero of the Battle of Warsaw, in internal politics – as a virtual, if not officially proclaimed, dictator of Poland.

When Poland came from the destruction of the Great War that ravaged her lands for four years, he lent himself to the most urgent problem of fixing a permanent frontier on the East and of relieving the ever growing pressure from Bolshevik Russia. To re-create the opportunity that had been lost in the seventeenth century and to bring about a union with the Ukraine under the aspect of a close alliance and co-operation was one of his schemes.

This is why he led his army into the Ukraine and occupied Kiev. The Ukrainian nationalists badly failing in their promises to support the Polish army, it had to withdraw and began to bear the whole brunt of a new formidable force which had just arisen from the shambles of the old Russian Empire. Bolshevism armies had just defeated the counter-revolutionary Russian generals and captured all those dumps of munitions which the allied powers had sent to Russia in support of the whites against the reds. A plan for a gigantic onslaught into the heart of Europe was maturing. Poland stood in its path. Never mind; once again she must be wiped out.

Poland Confronted with the Bolshevik Menace

Let us now see what was the attitude of other European powers towards this deadly duel Poland had to fight out. At a conference of the Allied Powers held at Spa in July, 1920, an almost complete isolation of Poland became manifest. Europe did not rise to see that if Poland was fighting for her own existence she was at the same time defending all that stands for the conception of Western civilisation. In fact, however, France did her best to assist Poland by forwarding her as much war equipment as she possibly could, and by directing to Warsaw General Weygand, one of her outstanding Staff-Officers. The half-hearted support from Great Britain could hardly be taken into serious consideration. Mr. Lloyd George^{ix} seemed to fancy an immense Bolshevik Russia much more than a strong democratic Poland.

But even the only way by which France could give Poland substantial help, namely, by sending her munitions, was greatly obstructed owing to the transports being continuously held up in Danzig and in the countries lying between France and Poland. By the middle of August, 1920, the roar of Bolshevik cannon could be distinctly heard in Warsaw. The Diplomatic Corps left the capital and moved to Poznan, with one brilliant exception: Monsignor Achilles Ratti, the future Pope^x, then Nuncio Apostolic in Poland, had too much confidence in Marshal Pilsudski to be bothered about this removal.

The Battle of Warsaw

Then by a stroke of genius a possible calamity was suddenly turned into one of the most glorious and decisive victories known to history. In the advancing Russian forces Marshal Pilsudski saw a gap extending from the left wing of the Central group of armies to the right wing of the Southern army. He threw a screen against the latter, concentrated some of his best

divisions along the left wing of the central enemy group, attacked it from the flank and almost completely annihilated it^{xi}.

General Sikorski

Brilliantly as it was conceived, this manoeuvre could obtain a decisive result on the condition only that the pivot of the Polish armies placed north of Warsaw should be maintained intact. Otherwise the success of Pilsudski's thrust might have easily been frustrated by the Russian masses advancing towards Warsaw from the north and north-west. The tremendous task of holding up and counter-attacking the Russians in this direction was entrusted to General Sikorski, and the result of his action was such that the Northern Bolshevik army escaped wholesale surrender mostly owing to its remnants, amounting from 50 to 100,000 men, taking refuge in East Prussia. Nevertheless, 70,000 prisoners, 231 guns, and 1,023 machine guns fell into the hands of the victors.

There is a description of the Battle of Warsaw, 1920, in English, by Lord D'Abernon, in which he classified it under the heading of the 'Eighteenth Decisive Battle of the World' (this is the title of the book^{xii}). Drawing a parallel between this battle and the Battle of Tours, fought in 732, by Charles Martel against the Saracen, he says:

"The victory of Charles Martel has been termed one of those signal deliverances which affect for centuries the happiness of mankind. The Polish victory of August, 1920, has an equal, in some ways, perhaps, a superior title to honour. For the civilisation endangered was of a far higher order; compared with it, the century of Charles Martel was barbarous. In 1920 the set-back entailed by the defeat would have been incomparably graver. Whilst the hosts of Abd-el-Rahman were inspired by fierce religious zeal, they had an ordered state and culture. The enemies of Poland had no ambition but to set class against class, no creed but destruction of the existent order, no policy but to annihilate all that stands for our conception of religion, justice and good faith."

Treaty of Riga

Peace had been restored by the Treaty of Riga, concluded in 1921. Though victorious, Poland agreed to waive her claims in respect of almost one-third of her historic possessions, and this she did in order that a working agreement should be reached and frictions between two countries made as few as possible.

Consequences of a Victory

I do not want to make any excursions into the sphere of conjecture by suggesting to you what might have happened if the Battle of Warsaw had not been won. Better pens have done it. What I am anxious to say is this: if Poland has regained her independence to the fullest degree; if she is now well organised state with a growing population of about 35,000,000 inhabitants; if she possesses an army about which I would only say that it is one of the finest defensive forces in Europe; if she has her alliances with France and Rumania and pacts of non-aggression with Germany and Soviet Russia; if she occupies a semi-permanent seat in the Council of the League of Nations; if her counsel and participation in all international

affairs are sought with ever increasing appreciation; if the foreign powers are rapidly raising the status of their legations in Warsaw to Embassies, thus stressing Poland's growing importance as a great power – all these achievements would not have been possible without the Battle of Warsaw being won.

Chapter II

‘Freedom by Consent’

The Auditor’s^{xiii} paper is of an exceptional wide-scope – it covers a tremendous area of ideas and conceptions such as the relationship between the State and the individual, between the organised community and the individual, the law and the individual, such as freedom and compulsion, liberty and domination, free thinking and thinking by order etc. Consequently, my contribution to this debate must be regarded as a very modest and thoroughly inadequate attempt to deal with subjects that could provide ample food for an endless series of discussions

The State and the Individual

Speaking of myself, I belong to this old and apparently incurable school of liberal thinking – and goodness knows how much ridicule and derision it provoked in recent times – which refuses to surrender its belief in freedom and democracy. In our opinion the origins of the State, as an outer form of an organised human society, are to be found more on the debit side than on the credit side of mankind’s balance sheet.

The State proved to be a necessity first of all to exercise its restraining and limiting power over the individual, and only with the rising and evolution of the ideas of democracy it began to assume characteristics of an institution called upon to protect, to widen, and even to encourage the freedom and initiative of the individual.

Democracy and Economics

Provided and always provided that democracy will extend its beneficial influence from the purely political sphere over economic conditions, by which I mean a better and more adequate access to, and distribution of, the material welfare, we believe that a democratic State can achieve such a stage of development where, making allowances for all human shortcomings and deficiencies, its balance sheet could be reversed in the sense that the safeguarding of political and economic freedom of the individual would come first and the necessary restraining power only next to it.

Is Progress a Reality?

Well, an objection may be raised against this rather optimist conclusion, and it may be argued that it stands inasmuch only as progress may be assumed to be a reality and not just one of mankind’s sentimental dreams. And what is progress? Could it be visualised as a straight line unswervingly leading towards a better future? Or is it something of a viscous circle keeping hapless humanity imprisoned within its impassable boundaries? Or could it be pictured as a spiral along which mankind would move repeating the same achievements and mistakes, each time on a larger scale only? It is true that my generation that survived the Great War, received tremendous blows of a nature to almost kill any optimism at all.

At the end of that War we were all enthusiastically working for a new world where, as we believed, principles of common law, principles universally accepted as a basis of the relations between individuals, would be extended to the sphere of international relations; for a world where any state convicted of an international crime would be hunted down and punished with the concurrence of all law-abiding nations, just as an individual guilty of a criminal offence would be hunted down by the police and punished by the courts. We placed a tremendous hope in the Society of Nations as an instrument called upon to be the guardian of international justice. We all know what became of our hopes!

This progress of yours!: Would say the pessimist. Could you sincerely believe in it when, in the middle of the twentieth century, things are going on in Europe which would make the heart of Attila or Tamerlane throb with delight and envy! And yet we believe in progress because we believe in some fundamental, immortal and indestructible principles of justice and freedom which are deeply rooted in the hearts and minds of a vast majority of civilised nations and individuals – and I am speaking to you not only in my own name, I am also speaking on behalf of a nation I have the honour to represent, a nation whose history was for the past 150 years, and continues to be, a tremendous and inextinguishable expression of these principles!

Law and Freedom

I have mentioned Law, What is law? I admit that its definition seemed always to me one of the most elusive. Whatever definition we may take, it will, after some analytical effort, come to the same: law is law. And yet we all know what law means. The definition of law as a complex of precepts purporting to restrict the freedom of the individual on one side and to safeguard it on the other, appeals to me most, not because it would be free from the equation of x being equal to x , but because it includes freedom as a fundamental purpose of, and justification for, the very existence of the law.

Obviously, there are individuals as well as nations that either do not understand the meaning of freedom or do not care to enjoy its blessings. They may have their own ideas of what duty is, but they most certainly do not attach any importance to freedom. Jerome K Jerome, for instance, knows of a nation whose idea would be:

“Blind obedience to everything in buttons.” But he is very much doubtful if the souls of the dead representatives of this nation could ever reach Heaven by themselves. “That the soul of any single individual,” (belonging to this nation) he says, “has sufficient initiative to fly up by itself and knock on St. Peter’s door, I cannot believe. My opinion is that they are taken there in small companies, and passed in under the charge of a dead policeman.”

The mentality of such nations is so completely alien to me that I am not going to make any attempt to fathom its substance.

‘Freedom by Consent’

By a curious coincidence the history of my own nation, Poland, can provide scores of memorable illustrations to the Auditor’s thesis. They could go to show how freedom by consent can be obtained both in internal and external relations of a country, and how deplorable may be the consequences of freedom being misused or brought to exaggeration.

It may interest you that in the course of the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Poland was not only the largest, most civilised and powerful State in Central and Eastern Europe, she can also be said to have evolved a constitution which, as Professor Charles Sarolea^{xiv} observes in his *Letters on Polish Affairs*, has anticipated by three or four hundred years the most modern ideals of democratic government. While, says the same author, in the eighteenth century the number of full citizens of Poland was about fourteen per cent, in England, half a century later, the electors formed less than two per cent of the population.

A Forerunner of the British Commonwealth of Nations

Again, it is commonly believed that the idea of a Commonwealth of Nations did not materialise until the year 1926. In fact the Royal Republic of Poland bore many striking features which go to show that it was there that the corner-stone of the future structure of the United States of America and of the British Commonwealth of Nations had been laid first. Take, for instance, the free union of Poland and Lithuania, concluded in 1413, and expressed in a document which hardly has an equal in the whole history of international relations.

This truly immortal Treaty puts at the very basis of the forthcoming union the Christian principle of love which, as the preamble to the Treaty points out, is the only source of everything that is good, lasting and fruitful. It is gratifying indeed to think that a union built up on such principles and devoid of all elements of compulsion and coercion should have survived five centuries of history not to be destroyed until forces equally hostile to Poland as to Lithuania managed to bring about its disruption, let us hope only a temporary one. I would strongly recommend to every prospective student of Polish history to start by getting acquainted with this document as the best means to grasp the very spirit of the document.⁶

Tolerance and Decentralisation

An attitude of complete tolerance and respect for local institutions, religion and language was unmistakably taken by the Polish Government toward such vassal States of the Polish Crown as the Dukedom of East Prussia, Dukedom of Courland, Moldavia. The immense dominions of the Crown divided into thirty-four provinces or, as they were then called, Palatinates, were enjoying all the privileges and benefits of a broadly conceived self-Government.

Up to the closing decades of the sixteenth century the constitutional life in Poland grew and developed on the basis of such fundamental Acts as *Nominem Captivabimus* (1425) securing the freedom of the citizens (to be strict – of their upper and middle classes) from unlawful

⁶ See p. 13 for a quote from the preamble

imprisonment; the so-called *Statutes of Nieszawa* (1454) which formed the mainstay of the future Parliamentary system; or *Nihil Novi* (1505) under which the validity of the state legislation was made conditional upon the common consent of the two Chambers.

The death of the last King of the Jagellonian dynasty, in 1572, left the Polish throne vacant and caused an interregnum of a considerable duration. The problem of who was to be Poland's new King was a thorny one, but it appears that the electors took advantage of the interregnum period not so much for deliberations over the merits and demerits of this or that candidate as for evolving a new constitutional order which they embodied in the so-called *Pacta Conventa* of 1573.

Pacta Conventa of 1573

If we consider this piece of legislation in all its bearings we will be forced into the conclusion that it put an end to the idea of a monarchy in Poland by divesting the King of his most essential privileges and powers and by reducing his status to that of a first State Magistrate elected for life. But, apart from this, the *Pacta Conventa* introduced into the Polish constitutional life quite a new factor by endowing the citizens with the right to withdraw their allegiance to the King in case of the latter having transgressed or broken any of the stipulations under which his election became valid.

Just imagine the almost infinite variety of interpretations which could have been given to this or that act of the Crown and the number of bodies and individuals who might have considered themselves authorised to question the legality of any measure take by the King. And indeed the *Pacta Conventa* gave rise to a series of so-called *Confederations*; in other words – associations of citizens with the object of begetting a state of more or less patent rebellion against the Crown.

‘Confederations’

It is only fair to say that some of these confederations had been undertaken with the best possible intentions, but it would be equally fair to stress that throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the whole constitutional structure of the Royal Republic had been receiving shattering blows from all those whose abnormal ambitions reckless, as it sometimes occurred, of treason, or whose misguided liberalism could have found security under the cover of the *Pacta Conventa*.

Role of Unanimity

Another curious tendency developed around the fundamentally individualistic Polish frame of mind. To the fanatical adherents of the so-called ‘golden freedom’, tantamount in reality to an unlimited freedom to dissent, the rule of majority appeared to be too weak a shield against the spectre of the mostly imaginary dictator, and consequently the principle of unanimity had been gradually been adopted instead.

Taking into consideration that Poland was a highly decentralised state and that the deputies had to present themselves to the Lower Chamber with precise instructions from their respective electors, it is not difficult to imagine what sort of hindrances and obstacles, arising from the unanimity rule, any legislative measure had to overcome before it could have become law.

A Turning Point

It is true that the momentum given to the State under the Jagellonian dynasty and the vigour of the nation proved sufficient to carry Poland through the most troublesome century in her history (the seventeenth), and even to put into John Sobieski's hands the great opportunity of dealing a staggering blow to the Ottoman Empire. It is true that the glorious Constitution of the 3rd of May, 1791, redeemed all the errors of the past and reopened before the nation most hopeful prospects so tragically brought to nought by the three portioning powers.

But it is equally true that in our search for causes which were responsible for the twilight and downfall of the Royal Republic at the end of the eighteenth century we should not be overlooking the year 1573, which presents itself on the road of Poland's history as a sort of a milestone whence manifestations of misused freedom began to overshadow the principles of sound democracy.

An Unworkable Experiment

With the rebirth of my country in 1918 the nation's first preoccupation was to set up a constitution second to none as far as democratic principles were concerned. And then it seems to have appeared to have occurred to some leading personalities of the day that Poland could hardly survive as a democracy with its changing governments and party struggle in face of the alarmingly growing military power and skilfully masked hostility of her two hereditary enemies, Germany and Russia, the two totalitarian dictatorships aiming again, as Frederick II of Prussia and Catherine II of Russia of old, at the destruction of Poland's very existence.

Some Polish leaders thought the situation could be met by placing extraordinary powers with the President of the Republic and with a single-party Government and by making the poll virtually inaccessible to political Parties. I do not think, however, I would be presuming on history's future verdict if I venture to advance the opinion that this departure from Poland's age-old traditions of democracy and liberties did not prove justifiable and well-conceived both with regard to Poland's external and internal conditions and needs.

'Terrible and Magnificent'

When writing to me some time ago an Irish friend described Poland's history as – terrible and magnificent. Terrible it certainly is because of Poland's unfortunate geographic position and the insatiable covetousness of her neighbours. But how much more than terrible it is magnificent, and magnificent it is because of the indomitable spirit of the nation, because of its constant readiness for the supreme sacrifice in order that not only Poland but all freedom-loving peoples could preserve their liberties and dignity.

Do not let yourself be deceived by the apparent silence of death which seems to-day to envelop my country. The heart of the nation is alive and is beating in unison with the loftiest ideals that ever inspired human beings...^{xv}

Chapter III

Contemporary Poland

Poland must be seen in her Historical Perspective

What you expect to hear from me is, I presume, a concise survey of the events covering the period as from Poland's resurrection in 1918 to her invasion and temporary destruction by Germany and Russia in 1939. If this is so I must begin by taking exception to the possibility of speaking about Contemporary Poland without reference to her past.

Worse than introducing confusion and obscurity into the subject, it would be equivalent to a futile and incompetent effort to deal with some outer effects and emanations only of a phenomenon whose very substance and causation lie deeply rooted in ten bygone centuries. In spite of some misleading appearances, the history of Poland represents throughout the centuries an uninterrupted chain of antecedents and sequels.

Poland of 1919-39 cannot be explored even to a small degree of accuracy if we were to choose the method of tearing her away from her historic foundations and of regarding her as an accidental creation of some particularly benevolent circumstances which, as some people would believe, converged all in favour of the rising of something new, not clearly defined, fraught with the unexpected, even artificial, something which would remind us of the past only because its name was to be – Poland. Such method would be entirely erroneous and, consequently, could lead to nothing by entirely erroneous conclusions.

Poland is an old nation and state. Polish civilisation and culture are very old. Poland's political ideas are, perhaps, the most striking among all that ever emerged from European soil. Polish political writers of the sixteenth century were able to produce treaties which even nowadays are still pulsating with all the vigour and sense of actuality. If, therefore, you are to understand this narrative you should follow me in some excursions into the past which I am compelled to undertake for this paper's clarity.

'Quasi-Historians'

In particular, I wish to warn you against those quasi-historians who think it appropriate to subordinate the venerable science of history to some vile aims of a dishonest propaganda, who wilfully make you forget or even try to justify in your eyes the most objectionable crime Europe had ever witnessed – the partitions of Poland at the end of the eighteenth century – and who are responsible for the fabrication of such resonant but senseless slogans as 'Versailles Poland' or 'the Polish Corridor', forged with the intention to represent the reborn Poland in the light of artificiality and transient expediency.

The expression 'Versailles Poland' was invented to urge upon those willing to listen to it the idea of a free gift given to Poland by the Allies of the Great War with, presumably, no other view than to annoy and inconvenience German and, possibly, Russia; of an artificial creation devoid of vitality and inner ties. 'The Polish Corridor', on the other hand, was invented to

impress upon one's mind the existence of some narrow, odd, arbitrary passage cut out to serve merely some sinister purpose of separating East Prussia and Germany. These slogans are not only baseless, they are malicious, and it is a pity that those who are making use of them would not try first to widen their horizons by acquiring more knowledge on the subject so far as history, ethnography, geography and economics are concerned.

Treaty of Versailles

What is the interdependence between Poland as she rose in 1918 from her apparent death and the Treaty of Versailles? It is true that this document which, incidentally, bears the signature of the Polish Delegates, gave formal international recognition to a rebirth of Poland as an independent State. It is true that the three Empires, which partitioned Poland at the end of the eighteenth century, all were defeated in the Great War, though fighting in two opposite camps, and collapsed. It is also true that the far-seeing Polish Statesmen, represented by Dmowski, cast Poland's lot with the western democracies. But to what extent was the Versailles Treaty responsible for the very rebirth of Poland or for the extension of the boundaries within which she regained her place among sovereign nations?

Very few people seem to remember that long before Statesmen and Diplomats gathered round the Versailles table a rising of the Polish population against the German occupants brought about the disarmament of up to 80,000 German troops destined to keep Warsaw and Central Poland under submission; that when Paderewski, this noblest among all living Poles, made, early in 1919, his first appearance in Posnania, a province seized by Frederick II of Prussia about 125 years before, the enthusiasm of the population gave rise to an immediate revolution and the expulsion of the German authorities from this cradle of the Polish nation; that another Polish rising against the Germans, under Korfanty^{xvi}, another great Polish leader, secured the reunion with Poland of a part of Upper Silesia after almost 600 years of severance from its mother-country.

'Polish Corridor'

And what about this famous 'Polish Corridor', which in reality, forms, besides Posnania one of the most ancient Polish provinces, the province of Pomerania, in size equal to Wales and inhabited by well over 1,080,000 people, Poles in 91 p.c.; which even under the Prussian domination voted always for Polish deputies for the German Reichstag? As from the end of the tenth century right down to the beginning of the fourteenth, Gdansk (Danzig) and Pomerania either form a part of the Polish Kingdom or as ruled by Polish Dukes. In 1308 Pomerania was seized by the Teutonic Knights and the Polish population of Danzig and Tczew (Dirshau) was butchered.

And then again, shortly after the Polish victory over the Teutons at Grunwald in 1410, Danzig and Pomerania reappear on the map of Poland to remain there throughout the fifteenth, sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries right down to the time when the sinister figure of Frederick II of Prussia began to cast its ominous shadow over Poland and to

work for her destruction by the seizure of Danzig, Pomerania and Posnania. This robbery was completed in the year 1795.

And then again, in 1919 the map of Poland assumes, in so far as her frontier with Germany is concerned, its ancient historic shape, with this difference, however, that Danzig is no more included within the territorial boundaries of Poland but becomes a Free City, and that Pomerania loses its size as compared with its historic outlines.

Poland loses much Territory in the East

But the territorial losses Poland suffered at her rebirth in the north and west were insignificant in compared with losses in the east. When in 1920 the Russian invasion of Poland sustained a crushing defeat at the gates of Warsaw the Russian colossus lay prostrate at her feet and the Polish troops could have arched far beyond the line of the weakening Russian resistance and could have restored Poland's historic frontier along the Dnieper. If she had hesitated to do this it was partly because her own exhaustion, partly because she felt reluctant to start independent life anew by reconquering provinces largely inhabited by a White-Ruthenian and Ukrainian population.

The so-called 'Curzon Line' Lloyd George was so anxious to enforce on Poland before the latter's victory over Russia became manifest was a mere figment devoid of any historical, political or ethnographical foundation. The drafters of this arbitrary Polish-Russian frontier seem to have entirely overlooked – or was it they had never heard? – that the sole basis, on which the Tsars might plausibly have claimed the historically Polish lands between the 'Curzon line' and the Dnieper, was the Orthodox religion which formed a sort of a link between the Russians and the majority of the White-Ruthenian and Ukrainian populations of those lands; that the Bolshevik Government by repudiating any religion whatsoever practically discarded this basis, and that, therefore, some new good reasons should have been produced to make their claim good.

What were they to do? The so-called 'social justice'? In other words, the very abyss of destitution, poverty and enslavement to which, conformably to the Bolshevik practice, every human being should be degraded? Again, as in the case of Poland's western frontiers, the signatories of the Versailles Treaty, to be exact – the Ambassador's Conference, had to recognise only a state of affairs as created by the Poles themselves, which they did in 1923.

So this is what facts alone tell us about the rebirth of Poland in 1918-20, this Poland which some amateur political writers persist in calling 'Versailles Poland', this Poland which consented to abandon more than one third of her historic possessions.

How was Poland Built Up?

And how did it come about that the Poles, a comparatively small nation, were able to build up a state which as from the fifteenth century right down to the eighteenth was the largest in Europe? Was this achieved through military conquest and by the sword? The true explanation of this extraordinary phenomenon lies elsewhere. Students of the history of Poland must

inevitably arrive at the conclusion that aggressive wars are almost completely absent from its pages.

They would learn that in 1241 the Poles fought at Lignicia a deadly battle with the Tartars, thus saving Europe from another barbarian invasion; that in 1410 they defeated the Teutonic Knights, thus redeeming Poland from a mortal danger of a German conquest and reducing East Prussia to the condition of a vassal state ; that in 1587 the Poles defeated the Austrians and frustrated their plans to impose upon Poland an unwanted King; that in 1621 and 1672 they defeated the invading Turks and, in 1683, had won the battle of Vienna, thus saving Europe from becoming a Mohammedan continent; that throughout the seventeenth century they were repulsing five invaders, sometimes at a time, the Turks, the Swedes, the Muscovites, the Cossacks, and Tartars; lastly they would learn that in 1920 the Poles won the battle of Warsaw, the eighteenth decisive battle of the world, as Lord D'Abernon calls it, and thus saved Europe from becoming a Muscovite slave-camp. But where are Poland's wars of aggression?

As for myself, I am aware of one such war only, and this was waged against Russia at the beginning of the seventeenth century with a purpose of establishing a Polish dynasty in Moscow. Militarily it was a success ending in the capture of the Russian capital; politically, however, it proved a failure. The Russians accepted Ladislas, the Crown Prince of Poland, as their sovereign, but strongly objected to King Sigismund III of Poland's candidature. Since the latter did not rise to the occasion, the whole scheme of giving Russia a Polish King and thus changing the whole course of history fell through never to reappear.

Polish Commonwealth of Nations

Something completely different from war and its implications paved the way which led Poland to her destination of a nucleus round which aggregated the greatest Commonwealth of Nations known to the history of Europe, and this was the way of democracy. As from the fifteenth century Poland developed a unique, if premature, system of democratic Government which, throughout the following centuries, remained in striking contrast with the autocratic and ruthless methods of government adopted by her neighbours.

Poland's democratic institutions, liberties granted to all citizens by her Constitution, freedom enjoyed by her national minorities, religious tolerance, high standard of Polish civilisation, all converged to make Poland a focus not of fear, but of attraction, a centre of gravitation for smaller neighbouring nations such as Lithuania, Livonia, Courland, a part of Estonia, Ruthenia, Moldavia, which all joined Poland voluntarily as this union brought to them liberty and safety. The Ukrainian problem stood apart, and yet it is noteworthy that efforts to bring about a union with Ukraine along the lines of the Polish-Lithuanian federation can also be traced in the policy of the Warsaw Government. Unfortunately for both these countries these efforts proved fruitless.

Poland as an Essential Factor in the European Structure

The idea of a Polish Commonwealth of Nations powerful enough to keep Russia outside Europe and to keep Germany within her ethnographic boundaries is commonly known as the Jagellonian idea after the name of the Polish dynasty under which it took shape. Among all schemes, having for purpose the preservation of European peace and equilibrium, it is certainly one which deserves utmost attention and consideration.

The Polish nation not only rose to the heights of some remarkable political conceptions but also knew how to put them into operation. We, therefore, will consent to be reduced to a state of submission and servitude no more than any other ancient and proud nation would allow themselves to be turned into a Nazi protectorate or a Bolshevik field of experimentation.

Let us not forget that no such thing as the Prussian or Russian menace had ever disturbed European politics so long as there was a powerful Polish dam strongly wedged in between Germany and Russia and capable of keeping these two countries' aggressiveness down and apart. And is it not the fact that of Poland losing her independence at the partitions period that is really accountable for the appalling growth of lust for conquest which lent thenceforth such a disquieting colour to her neighbours' policies?

The existence of the two conditions is, however, indispensable to make Poland a real champion of her historic mission: she must be strong and her frontiers must be strategically sound. A weak and indefensible Poland always acted and will act upon Germany and Russia's imperial not as a deterrent but as an encouragement.

Compassion and Comprehension

It is becoming something of a habit to express compassion with Poland. Well, compassion is a very noble feeling, but what we really want is not so much compassion as comprehension. We want people to understand that, having regard to Poland's traditions, historic mission, achievements, and high Christian *morale* of our people, we do not admit the possibility of being treated as something inferior to those Teutons and Muscovites who, accidentally and temporarily, may obtain a purely physical preponderance over us.

Sources of German and Russian Hatred

It is a pity that only two nations seem to fully alive to the tremendous potentialities abiding in the Polish nation, and these two are the latter's two mortal enemies, the Germans and the Russians, and it is there that lies the explanation of their savage hatred for everything Polish. There was also a man who called Poland the corner-stone of Europe; he did not live long enough to help Poland to regain her past greatness, and his name was Napoleon. During the partition period, i.e. throughout the nineteenth century, both Germany and Russia were striving to destroy the very idea of a Polish State.

As all their brutal and cruel efforts proved unsuccessful and Poland rose again, what they are working for now is the extermination of the very Polish Nation. Indeed a campaign of total

annihilation has been launched upon Poland, a campaign aiming at the destruction of all foundations of any nation's life, i.e. moral, religious, physical and intellectual. There is no sphere of human existence that would be excluded from this infernal scheme, church, science, education, family, art and literature, economics, material welfare, the right of ownership and even the right to live, all being condemned to doom and extinction. What, apart from all other considerations, adds to the invader's fury is that the fact that it is Poland that never produced a single traitor or even appeaser, nay, a single man who would be prepared to collaborate with the oppressor under the latter's heel,

Poland in 1919-1939

Let us now have a glance at Poland's economic, internal and external situation during the period 1919-1939. I know that public opinion in this country is divided as to whether the activities of the reborn Republic of Poland deserve praise or blame. I wish I could be given an opportunity to collect and publish all the letters I received from my Irish friends, known to me and unknown, since the War broke out.

They could be piled up into a monument of nobility, kindness and friendship for Poland. I shall never forget the generous response to an appeal for funds for the Polish civilian sufferers. May we ever be able to reciprocate. However, I do not live in a fool's paradise and, consequently, I am aware that a good deal of criticism also is being raised against my country. This is, for instance, an extract from a letter I received some time ago from an Irish friend:

"I am ashamed still," he says, "at the indifference that so many people here display towards your country. All the propaganda has been directed at killing the natural wave of sympathy towards Poland which the people of this country would feel, by insinuating a doubt: didn't Poland do something - (*what?* They don't exactly know) - to deserve it?"

So now let me put before you a very short survey of *what* exactly Poland *was* doing in this twenty years' long period, as from 1919 to 1939, during which she had been given a breathing space of peace.

What was the material heritage received by the National Government when, in 1918, they took over the administration of the country? Just a few figures: The total number of buildings destroyed during the War, 1914-20, by all sort of invaders was estimated at 1,785,305, distributed as follows: schools - 6,586, churches - 1,969, buildings of public utility - 1,793, habitable stone buildings - 27,000, habitable wooden buildings - 499,850, agricultural buildings - 1,248,107.

By the year 1924 about 68 p.c. of this wastage had been made good. By the year 1939 not only reconstruction of the devastation had been completed with a considerable excess, but also such remarkable achievements had been carried out as the construction of the port of Gdynia and the creation of the Central Industrial District, which can be classified among the marvels of modern skill, enterprise and endurance.

National Reconstruction

Let us now take a few figures at random. In 1918 Poland had about 1,750 locomotives, 3,043 passenger carriages and 30,000 goods trucks. In 1937 she had well over 5,550 locomotives, 11,350 passenger wagons and 164,000 goods carriages. 1,250 miles of new railway tracks had been laid. The number of passengers transported in 1937 amounted to 266 millions and the number of tons of goods transported was roughly 78 millions. In 1918 Poland had not a single vessel. In 1937 she had a mercantile fleet of 400 units with a cargo capacity of 145,300 tons. In the same year Polish air-lines covered 5,696 km and carried 33,308 passengers. The population has increased from 26 millions in 1919 to over 35 millions in 1938.

In the school-year, 1937-8, there were in Poland: 27 universities and other academic schools, 74 teacher's training schools, 2,230 secondary schools, 103 special schools, 28,722 primary schools, and 1,651 nursery schools, providing for the education of 5,402,300 pupils. Death-rate was steadily decreasing being 16.7 per 1,000 inhabitants in 1925, 15.5 in 1930, and 14.0 in 1937. Illiteracy, another scourge inherited from the occupants, fell from 33.1 p.c. in 1921 to 27.9 p.c. in 1931, and is by now far below this figure.

The agrarian reform was carried out by way of evolution, the principle of private ownership being safeguarded. As a result of the operation of the Land Reform Act, 696,400 new farms and holdings have been created, and an area of 2,535,000 hectares (a hectare is equal approximately 2½ acres) had been broken up and parcelled during the period 1919-1937. Out of a total agricultural area, smaller holdings occupy 57 p.c., larger (as from 100 hectares), 25 p.c., and the remaining 17 p.c. is owned by the State, Municipalities, Public Bodies, Model Farms, etc.

Just think for a moment of the milliards of money used for the reconstruction of the country, of the amount of skilled labour required for that same purpose, of the enthusiasm and perseverance displayed by the whole nation in order that its beloved land may recover and prosper. There seems little doubt that if those milliards, that skilled labour, enthusiasm and perseverance had been diverted into the production of guns, bombers, tanks, and walls of concrete, a different story of the German-Russian invasion of Poland might have been told today.

Internal Policy

The internal policy of the resurrected Poland is clearly divided into three periods, the first ending in 1926, the second – extending from that year until the present time, the third – inaugurated in October 1939, by the Polish Government in exile, now residing on the most hospitable and friendly British soil. The first period gave full expression to the revival of the ancient Polish spirit of democracy and liberties. Under the Constitution passed in 1921 the powers of the Sejm (Lower House) were very extensive, whilst the rights of the Senate were restricted to a few functions only. Any Polish citizen enjoyed the right to vote for the Sejm on reaching the age of 21, and of 30 to vote for the Senate. The ballot was universal, direct,

secret, and based on the principle of proportional representation. All privileges of birth, class and titles had been abolished.

The difficulty the restored Republic had to deal with in the early days centred chiefly round the task of stability in Administration. A clear-cut governmental majority was lacking owing to the appearance of many political parties and groups giving rise to a series of ministerial crises and frequent changes of Government. Taking it for granted that "Poland was a victim of her parliamentary system" Marshal Pilsudski, who played such a prominent part in the life of the reborn Poland, carried out, in 1926 his *coup d'etat* which virtually placed in his hands all the powers of the state. Thus ended the first period and the second had begun.

What seems to have been Pilsudski's aim was a *non-party* Government supported by a *non-party* majority and enjoying attributes of political continuity. No such scheme could, however, be expected to work with the required degree of smoothness under the old Constitution, so a new one had to be devised and it was adopted in 1935. Its overriding idea was to increase the powers of the Administration so as to enable the President to govern the country by decrees. The Sejm lost its old supremacy, whilst the role of the Senate was greatly enhanced.

But the true cause which made the new Constitution so unpopular with such powerful political bodies as the National Democrats, the Populists and the Socialists, lay chiefly in the Electoral Law which, though formally preserving secret and direct ballot, introduced a very intricate system of selecting candidates for election and rendered impracticable both a free designation of such candidates and any electoral campaign practised in democratic countries.

The coming into force of the new Constitution almost coincided with Pilsudski's death, and its incompatibility with Polish tradition and the keen sense of democracy soon became manifest. What was meant to be a *non-party* Government degenerated into a *single-party* Government which, however, should not be taken for a *class*-Government.

This period ended with the establishment of the new Polish Government under General Sikorski, a remarkable statesman and soldier, whose long-awaited rise to power was received by Poland with a sigh of relief and with deep confidence.⁷ General Sikorski's Government, then in France, opened its activities by resolutely reverting to the old principle of a National Unity Government and by formally dissolving the Parliament issued from a curtailed electorate. An important milestone pointing to Poland's future constitutional regime was thus set up.

Minorities

The minorities problem in Poland would require a special chapter. Suffice it to say that this problem exists necessarily in Poland as it exists in every Eastern and Central European country, and that it gave the Polish Administration quite a lot of trouble. What remained to be

⁷ An unbroken continuity has been preserved in the functions of the Polish Constitution. General Sikorski's Government being the legal and immediate successor in office of the preceding one, under which Poland became invaded by Germany and Russia

seen was whether the various claims and the usual grumbling on the part of the minorities contained anything such as a disloyalty to the State. Recent events have certainly put the true attitude of the minorities to a severe test which, I am glad to say, gave a very gratifying result. The only minority which proved disloyal was the German, incidentally the smallest, not exceeding 2.3 p.c. of the whole population.

As to the remaining, this is what the Prime Minister of Poland said in one of his speeches: "It ought to be said that one country has been profoundly moved by demonstration of loyalty to Poland on the part of the Slav and Jewish minorities. Therein lies an irrefutable proof that the Polish community emerged intact from the frightful ordeal which has been inflicted upon them".

Reports are arriving from South-Eastern Poland that a guerrilla fighting against Soviet occupants is being carried out by numerous Polish and Ukrainian detachments, supported by the local population, both Polish and Ukrainian. The Ukrainians, who are being oppressed with particular ruthlessness, have joined the Polish regulars in large numbers and they are harassing Soviet garrisons in Poland.

Needless to say, every single Pole sympathises deeply with his Ukrainian compatriots as well as with the Jewish minority which, under German occupation, is being subjected to methods of persecution spectacular even against the background of those truly unspeakable conditions to which Polish populations in general are now succumbing. Petty and insignificant indeed must now seem the issues over which our minorities used to quarrel with their legitimate Government.

External Policy

Poland's external policy was clear in the extreme. With regard to our geographical situation, we had to evolve a system which would give us certain guarantees against the rapacity of Poland's two hereditary enemies, Germany and Russia. So far as our western neighbour is concerned, an alliance with our age-old friend, France, was the only conceivable and sound scheme. This alliance was concluded in 1921. It should be made clear that some attempts relating to the years 1934-38, to bring about a sort of artificial friendship with Germany, must be regarded as purely personal experiments on the part of a few politicians.

The nation remained unflinchingly faithful to its true Francophile sentiments and convictions, and was not prepared to accept any other orientation for Poland's external policy. Our recent alliance with Great Britain and the unequivocal attitude adopted towards the Polish cause by the great transatlantic Republic have definitely placed Poland on the side of the western democracies.

In so far as Danzig is concerned, all Poland was striving for was that Danzig should be permitted to live its life of a truly *free* City, be ruled by its own people and enjoy the liberties of a free community, provided Poland would maintain her rights to use its harbour facilities for her sea-borne trade.

Facing the German Threat

It is worth stressing that, whatever criticism existed in the Polish community against the late Government, and this criticism became particularly manifest and widespread as from 1934, this Government succeeded in rallying the nation round themselves in one particular issue, and this occurred when they had firmly rejected Hitler's encroachments upon Danzig and Polish Pomerania. This extraordinary unanimous attitude of the nation was not dictated by any underestimation of Germany's military power, but by a centuries-old experience of the Prusso-German methods in attempting to annihilate Poland.

Whether Prussia and Germany are ruled by a Grand Master of the Teutonic Order, by a Frederick II, by a Bismark, a Stresemann or a Hitler, the similarity of these methods is striking: first Danzig, next Pomerania, and then the destruction of Poland. The Press, public bodies, organisations, all sort of institutions and assemblies, meetings of intellectuals, peasants and workmen – never tired to adopt resolutions making clear that, if another intrusion on Poland's rights is made, this time by Hitler, she should fight *regardless* of what her actual or prospective allies might or might not have done.

This firm stand of the Nation contradicts and makes worthless allegations to the effect that Poland's stand originated in the pledges given to her by her Western Allies, and that without these pledges she would have yielded to German demands.

The alternative Poland had to face was this: either an ignominious surrender preceding a no less ignominious extinction of her independent life, or a struggle, no matter how appalling may be the odds. By taking up the challenge of the whole might and fury of the Nazi military machine Poland not only saved her national dignity and honour, she also broke the vicious circle of continuous bullying and aggression and, by inflicting upon her invader heavy losses and by giving her allies ample time to mobilise and prepare, opened to them wide prospects among which the disclosure of new methods of fighting were of paramount importance.

Eastern Problem

Poland's security along her eastern frontier presented a different problem. Faithful to the old Jagellonian tradition and conscious of the fact that the Baltic area had, in the meantime, broken into intensely nationalistic fragments, Poland was relentlessly striving for the substitution of a federation of nations for the old Polish Commonwealth of Nations. In 1922 a document was signed in Warsaw by the representatives of Poland, Latvia, Estonia and Finland, aiming at the establishment of a close collaboration between these states.

This nucleus of a future Baltic federation was not complete as Lithuania was at that time snubbing Poland in a rather childish way as she wanted to set up her capital in the Polish city of Wilno, where the Lithuanian population amounts to two p.c., at most, a whim tantamount to a Polish pretension, if such fantastic thing could be imagined, to establish a Polish capital in, let us say, Danzig. Finland on the other hand, could not make up her mind to what group of states she belonged, Baltic or Scandinavian, and objected to the ratification of the agreement which, consequently, became void. Rumania concluded with Poland a pact of

mutual assistance in case of a Russian aggression, and yet this state, not speaking of the Baltic counties, remained just as neutral and dumbfounded spectator of the combined German-Russian invasion of Poland, as if all these nations preferred to be destroyed, each in succession, instead of putting up a united and hopeful resistance.

‘What Might Have Happened’

Let us now for a moment leave the region of ‘what happened’, as Winston Churchill says in his *Great War*, for these of ‘what might have happened’ if, I should add, the Polish plan of a close collaboration of all states situated between Germany and Russia had materialised. A political and military co-operation between Poland, on one side, and Rumania, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Finland on the other, is firmly established.

Poland is attacked by Germany and, after inflicting upon her severe losses, crosses the river Vistula and takes up defensive positions in the marshes and forests of Eastern Poland. The nature of the country makes German tanks and bombers useless. The established individual superiority of the Polish soldier over his German adversary compels Germany to maintain on her eastern front huge forces which are virtually marooned in an impassable country.

Russian forces assembled along the Polish frontier in compliance with the secret clause of the Ribbentrop-Stalin agreement, remain inactive from fear of exposing their southern flank to a blow from Rumania and their northern flank to a combined advance of Lithuanian, Latvian, Estonian and Finnish armies. The formidable task of the French-British Allies becomes so much easier and the end of the war is in sight. One may call it a dream, I for myself call it a great forsaken possibility.

And what became of those states which, for their own sake, could have played such a conspicuous part in the present conflict in close collaboration with Poland? Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia have lost their independence to Russia. Finland has chosen to face Russia single-handed. Rumania is trembling from fear of losing Bessarabia and of losing her economic, if not political, independence to either Russia or Germany.⁸

Czechoslovakia

Poland’s relations with her south-western neighbour, Czechoslovakia, did not open under a happy augury. At the time when Poland was fighting her mortal duel with Russia in 1919-20 the Czechs marched into the Polish province of Teshen^{xvii}, inhabited in 77 p.c. by Poles, and annexed it. This event had cast a deep shadow on all future dealings between the two countries. It should also be kept in mind that the late Hapsburg Monarchy, always faithful to the doctrine of *divide et impera*, did its utmost to sow seeds of discord between its Polish and Czech subjects.

However, the resurrected Poland was quite capable of rising above these regional animosities. In 1923 a Government came into power, with Dr. M. Seyda^{xviii} as Minister of Foreign Affairs, which was particularly alive to the advisability of bringing about a better understanding with

⁸ Events that actually happened a few months later

the Czechoslovak State, and a most cordial telegram to this effect was sent to Prague. I just happened to be at the time in Warsaw and to see the answer. To say the least, it was a discouraging sort of diplomatic document: the Polish offer was rejected purely and simply.

Speaking for myself – and I am confident I am in complete harmony with a vast majority of my countrymen – I never thought that the return of Teshen to Poland should have been synchronised with the German invasion of the Sudetenland, or that it should have been attained otherwise than through friendly negotiations^{xix}. But I do not think that any educated Czech could ever plead, with any degree of reasonableness, against the justice of the very principle of this return.

History, ethnography and geography, all seem to point to the necessity of a close understanding and collaboration between the Poles and the Czechs, and I am glad to say that the conversations General Sikorski had recently with Dr. Benes, ex-president of Czechoslovakia, and other Czech leaders, bore a particularly friendly and cordial character.⁹

General Sikorski on the Outlines of Future Policy

What are the outlines of future external policy of Poland? To elucidate this point I don't think I could do better than quoting a few passages from a speech delivered by General Sikorski some time ago:

"Truly," he said, "it is not to no purpose that Poland has fought till her last breath against two enemies, that her capital, her towns and villages have been reduced to ashes and her churches desecrated. Such depredations do not inspire terror among civilised nations. They arouse indignation and such utter disgust that the whole human conscience must at last wake up to the idea of a united Crusade, which, however, does not exclude the idea of particular efforts. Through the upheavals which convulse the old Continent the idea of European solidarity is already dawning. Sooner or later this idea will unite in one community of free independent states all the nations imbued with a sense of a European citizenship.

Moreover, is not this conception a natural consequence of the moral, spiritual and material development of the Greco-Roman and Christian civilisation? In any case for us, Poles, there cannot be any doubt that it will be that just and united Europe which will again revivify the ashes and ruins heaped up in our country by men who have foresworn their own conscience. Indeed, for us, the question is not only one of Poland alone. For centuries we have defended and represented in that part of Europe a civilisation which has made us what we are to-day."

'Poland is the Test of Europe'

In his appreciation of what Poland really means to Europe, Hilaire Belloc, the well-known Catholic writer^{xx}, says:

⁹ A joint declaration of policy has since been published, heralding a close Polish-Czechoslovak collaboration both during and after the war

"Poland is the test of Europe. The restoration and preserving of a powerful and independent Polish State is, and must be, among the very first of our political objectives in the fearful struggle with which we are faced... It will henceforward be the necessary pivot upon which everything will turn, whether we can or cannot effect the restoration of Poland.

If we cannot it will mean that the forces destructive of all by which we have lived, have triumphed. Our descendants will no longer be able to call themselves civilised men, inheritors of the Roman Empire and of Greece through the strength of the Catholic Church and through its power to preserve. The very magnitude of the issue makes it difficult to grasp. The statement of it sounds so exaggerated as to be fantastic; yet it is strictly true. We stand or fall by Poland; and 'we' means all our art, literature, philosophy, all the mighty heritage now at stake."

Poland's Fight and Martyrdom not in vain

The moral aspect of the German aggression and methods in the occupied Polish territories has already aroused the condemnation of the highest spiritual Authorities and the horror of the civilised world. As to the material advantages gained by the Allied cause through the Polish campaign, the following few figures may, perhaps, be of some avail.

In September, 1939, Germany invaded Poland with 70 divisions. The total German strength which invaded Belgium and France in August, 1914, and was opposed by the combined forces, French, British and Belgian, was smaller by approximately 3 divisions, and the first battle of the Marne was won against 44 German divisions only. Technically the German army of 1914 was quite a mild proposition as compared with the mechanised forces that invaded Poland in 1939.

To this greatest war machine in history the Poles were able to oppose 36 half-mobilised infantry divisions and 10 cavalry brigades, with almost no mechanised units to support them. Notwithstanding this crushing superiority on the enemy side, the Poles began, as from the 12th to the 17th September, to stubbornly resist any further German advance, and everything seemed to point out that the front would be stabilised. But at this very time a treacherous attack on our rear had been let loose by Russia.

But even so, German losses, as given by neutral sources, amounted to 239,625 casualties, out of which 91,278 were killed and 63,417 severely wounded, which is equivalent to a complete annihilation of up to 12 divisions; 190 tanks destroyed, 361 damaged; 420 flying machines destroyed.

History will reveal the mistakes of the Polish High Command in not bringing its army to its full strength before the outbreak of hostilities and its strategic dispositions of general character. It is to the rank and file, to their heroism and steadfast resolution, to the defenders of Warsaw, Modlin, Hel and Westerplatte, to the undaunted fighters of Kutno and Lwow, that the eyes of the Polish Nation are turning. But the true greatness of this nation and of the Polish soldier and the greatness of their sacrifice for Europe's freedom will, probably, not be fully acknowledged and understood until the war is fought to its bitter end and – won.

War Aims

One more point. The organisers of this meeting asked me to say a few words in respect to the war aims as seen by the Polish people and Government. This is a question extremely simple to answer, inasmuch as its broad outlines are concerned, and extremely complicated with regards to its details. A complete restoration of Poland to her sovereignty and territorial integrity is our principal and all-important war aim.

Victory is our aim, as a Frenchman put it to the world with a lucidity and clarity so characteristic of his nation, and there can be no victory without (1) the complete restoration of Poland and her fellow-victims; (2) the complete restoration of the damages done by Prussianism to Europe; (3) guarantees that such assaults will not be allowed to occur again.

As to the future constitution of Europe, we see it in the light of the declaration by the Polish Prime Minister I quoted to you a while ago, and to which I may add a few words. We consider this war a total war both as regards its means and aims. It is not a war between two groups of states with opposite political and economic interests. It is predominantly a struggle between a world based on Christian ethics and the Roman Law on one side and forces opposed to those principles on the other.

The ideological aim of this struggle, as seen by Poland and her Allies, is far from being limited to the defence of their existence only. It is a fight to preserve and secure the European civilisation against all such powers which are striving to annihilate all human conquests achieved *ab Urbe Condita* and *post Christum Natum* and to oppose might as the only criterion in the relations between nations, governments and individuals.

It is evident that in the light of the human values involved in this gigantic struggle, any premature, hasty and patched-up peace would be a worse calamity than war itself. It certainly may be a peace of silenced churches and concentration camps, of stifled consciences and enslaved bodies, of desolation, despair and ruins, but not a peace acceptable to free men and women with the flame of liberty burning in their hearts.

And would it be a peace even in the conventional sense of the word? In our profound belief it could only be a truce fraught with ominous tremors and new terrible upheavals, as no proud nation will, unless totally exterminated, ever acknowledge brute force as its only guidance.

Ladies and gentlemen, we may be here divided on many questions and in many opinions; there are, however, two things, I believe, form a solid link between us, and these are: our ardent desire to preserve the liberty to profess our religion and our love of our countries and of freedom.

May I ask you to ponder for a moment how these two most cherished among all our spiritual possessions could be saved without the menace of oppression and subservience, being crushed and eliminated from our existence, and a *just and lasting* peace secured to the world?

Chapter IV

Few Remarks on Polish Literature and Art

I am sure that many of my Irish listeners to-night are inclined to associate my country almost exclusively with those tragic pages of her history which tell of her collapse and partitions. Only a few, perhaps, are aware that before her decline in the eighteenth century Poland was a large, prosperous, and highly civilised country whose territories lay partly in Central, partly in Eastern Europe. Elective Kings reigned over the country, surrounded by Primates, Chancellors, Palatines, Marshals and Castellans.

A chamber of deputies, elected by a vast portion of the population, and a Senate composed of the Hierarchy, aristocracy and high officials were invested with legislative power. Under the command of daring and experienced generals the Polish armies were always ready to defend the State's extensive boundaries against incessant invasions and to hold aloft the banner of Christianity.

An ancient University, one of the glories of the country, the Alma Mater of a brilliant host of astronomers, philosophers, writers and men of science, flourished. There was a remarkable tendency prevailing with the Government of the State to treat weaker nations and tribes under its control not as enemies to be exterminated but as legitimate members of an ever increasing family. Well, all this sounds much more like a fairy tale than historical facts, and yet I can assure you that such were the conditions under the ancient Royal Republic of Poland at the height of its power and prosperity.

It is a different thing that this state of affairs, as subsequent events showed, did not prove to be stable. If Poland had been surrounded by states professing the same liberal principles as she did, her history might have taken a different course. Unfortunately, however, under the conditions prevailing then in Europe, this democratic and anti-militaristic state was bound to become prey to the jealousy and aggressiveness of the three might empires forming an iron ring around her. And this is exactly what happened. Under the banner of those Empires this ancient Royal Republic of Poland collapsed, as you know, towards the end of the eighteenth century.

I do not intend to speak to you tonight of those noble but fruitless efforts to regain our independence which, like threads of pure gold, run through the history of my country in the nineteenth century; I am anxious only to draw your attention to the remarkable part that national literature and art played during those dark days in keeping the nation alive and united. There are scores of names I would like to mention to you in connection with this great work but, knowing how difficult Polish names are for a foreign audience, I will refer only to a very few outstanding figures.

In the first half of the nineteenth there is the famous constellation of the three writers of the Romantic School in Polish literature. First Adam Mickiewicz,^{10xxi} the great poet, patriot and philosopher, who has left an indelible mark not only in literature but also in the heart of every Pole. He died in Constantinople when engaged in a dramatic effort to raise a regiment of Polish emigrants to take service against the Russians in the Crimean War. So great were his merits for the national cause that the nation thought it only adequate that his remains should be laid to rest in the Royal Castle of Cracow among kings and national heroes.

Next to him comes Julius Slowacki,¹¹ who raised the Polish language to a hitherto unknown height of brilliancy, expressiveness and glittering purity. Lastly, Sigismond Krasinski^{xxii} who, though perhaps not of so popular appeal, possessed an extraordinarily deep and prophetic insight into psychological and social problems. One of his great dramas dealing with class war gives the reader such a vivid picture of social unrest and struggle that it might have been written after the experiences and events within the memory of the *living* generation.

To skip over numbers of other names and to bring you right up to the period immediately preceding the restoration of Poland, I shall again only mention three names: Henry Sienkiewicz^{xxiii}, the world renowned author of historical novels, who occupies quite a remarkable place in Polish life, as it was he who, never despairing of Poland's future, stirred up the enthusiasm of the nation by depicting in a masterly way the glory of bygone ages. Next Stephen Zeromski^{xxiv}, who embodied in his writings the everlasting spirit of revolt and protest against political and social crime and injustice. Lastly, Reymont^{xxv}, who is responsible for exploring the mysterious mind of the peasant community and disclosing the enduring strength of the nation which lies there.

Again, among great Polish painters who were extremely numerous towards the end of the nineteenth century I would like to mention the name of Jan Matejko^{12xxvi}, whose historical pictures may be considered as the plastic counterpart of Sienkiewicz's historical dramas.

All of you know Chopin, but I am sure very few realise that apart from him there existed in the nineteenth century in Poland a numerous group of remarkable composers, and that in the same century the foundations of Polish national opera were laid by Stanislaus Moniuszko^{xxvii}. Among the composers included in to-night's programme I would like to signal out Szymanowski^{xxviii} (born 1883), the acknowledged of modern tendencies in Polish music, a figure of world-wide fame in contemporary musical art, a composer of true genius and of accomplished mastery of technical means, who has enriched musical literature with symphonies, operas, concertos, songs, etc.

I should also like to say a few words on Karłowicz^{xxix}, in whom the highest hopes and expectations were placed but, unfortunately, was lost on a solitary ski-ing expedition in the Tatra mountains in 1911, when only twenty-nine years of age. But even within the short

¹⁰ Pronounced *Mitzkievich* *Polish Books of Pilgrimage*, by Mickiewicz, there is an Irish translation by Liam O Rinn (Dublin, 1920 <http://catalogue.nli.ie/Record/vtls000218972>)

¹¹ Pronounced *Slovatzki*

¹² Pronounced *Mateyko*

limits of his life he gave to instrumental and vocal music some real gems of inspiration and high technical perfection.

Again names of outstanding men and of their works occur to me, but within the short time at my disposal there is no hope of making you acquainted with even a fraction of them. I wish only to stress that Polish literature and art during the dark period of the partitions and political non-existence never failed to serve two purposes: first, of keeping the nation's spirit, language and traditions alive, and secondly, of adding a generous share to the world's treasury of spiritual achievements.

This twofold aspect is perhaps the most characteristic feature of the Polish creative genius of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and it should not escape the attention of anyone studying modern Polish history. Writers, poets and artists of Poland seem to be passing now through a period of crisis: the heights of patriotic mysticism have had to be abandoned and national literature and art have to face and to reflect an altered situation in which Poland once more occupies her rightful place among free and independent nations.

Still the Polish people's gratitude goes and will always go, as long as the Polish heart beats, back to those great men who gave all the power of their genius unreservedly to the service of their country and who helped the nation through the most difficult period of its history and taught it never to despair.^{xxx}

Chapter V

Moral Disarmament

In taking for my address the subject of 'Moral Disarmament', I should like to make it clear that I am not speaking on behalf of anybody, or anything but just as an ordinary member of our Club who is sometimes asked to put some ideas before his fellow Rotarians to be discussed by this assembly.

I feel that the vital problem of disarmament should not be omitted from the wide range of subjects discussed at our weekly meetings, and I hope that this same subject will be chosen in the near future by someone who has better authority to speak on it than I have.

The problem of disarmament is now occupying the best brains all over the world. I do not certainly intend to tackle it in all its complexity, nor do I intend to try to put before you the history of its vicissitudes since it first was recognised as a subject of universal importance. There are so many opinions, so many theories, so many points of view to defend or criticize, and so many things to be said, that it would be hopeless to try to touch upon them all in the short space of time at my disposal.

But if we were to look at the problem from the most general point of view, one thing strikes us – it is the continual controversy regarding the precedence of the two main ideas – disarmament and security. By security I mean the creation of a situation in which all states, before disarming, may feel secure from any foreign aggression. By material disarmament I mean an unconditional reduction or laying down of weapons of warfare.

Now which of these two shall take place in an attempt towards universal peace? In other words, would disarmament, pure and simple, imposed on all nations, and automatically carried out by them, be the solution of the problem and bring suffering humanity peace, goodwill and mutual confidence?

To my mind security and disarmament are so interdependent and closely bound together that it would be impossible to draw a line of demarcation between them and to deal with either separately. Security is an absolute indispensable factor which must go hand in hand with the process of material disarmament. Security means not only that any given state should be allowed to keep a fixed defensive force corresponding to its geographical and political situation, or that it could rely on an international police force in case of any unprovoked aggression. Security implies also the idea of 'moral disarmament, in other words, the idea of goodwill and mutual confidence.

There is an old Polish proverb which says: "He who wishes to strike will always find a stick". Now I feel that this proverb is applicable to not only to the individual but to any nation which lacks the spirit of moral disarmament, no matter how scrupulously such a nation may comply *pro forma* with the disarmament regulations of some recognised international body.

It can be assumed that any future war, and we earnestly hope humanity will be spared any such scourge, may not necessitate huge battalions and divisions of well trained soldiers. Any chemical factory working in peace time for purely scientific purposes could be changed in a few days into a factory producing poisonous gases and highly destructive scientific weapons. Any passenger plane can be easily transformed into a bomb-dropping machine, etc., etc. It is therefore quite probable that in any such imaginary war the numbers of direct combatants would be comparatively small, as science could put into their hands weapons of hitherto unknown force for destruction and death.

Now let us suppose for a minute that there is a nation in which a large section of the community lacks the spirit of moral disarmament. Would the suppression, pure and simple, or the reduction of the officially existing armed forces, prevent such a member of the international society from using its potential means of destruction? To my mind the decisive factor in such a case would be, not so much the officially existing material possibilities for war, but rather the mentality of the nation, whether it sincerely repudiates war or not.

What is security in the relations between the individuals in any organised society? If I came over here, and am now freely addressing you, all unarmed, it is because I feel absolutely secure that nobody in this assembly will harm me bodily, no matter how annoyed all of you may feel listening to this address. I even did not bring a hammer with me, such as I see here, and it is not because I could not have obtained a similar, or even better one, but because I felt perfectly secure that this one was not going to be used against me, and that the worst that could befall me here is to have to listen to some witty and pertinent remarks upon my address. This is because we have all completely disarmed morally towards each other, and there is therefore no necessity to carry weapons to protect ourselves against any imaginary aggression.

If such a state of affairs which has been attained between individuals, if the overwhelming majority in any civilised society has agreed for a long time past, that instead of fighting duels, and coming to blows, there are much more reasonable and effective means of settling their disputes, the question presents itself: could such a position be obtained in the relations between nations, that is between collective members of the international society? If we could only answer this question in the affirmative it would mean that we would arrive at a point where every nation could discard its arms with safety.

Now, if the promotion of goodwill in the relations between nations by coercive means seems to be a rather futile task, there are undoubtedly many means by which ill-intentioned outbreaks and excesses can be prevented. Such is the point of view of a Memorandum on the realisation of Moral Disarmament submitted by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland to the Secretary-General of the League of Nations on the 17th of September, 1931.

"National Law," it says, *inter alia*, "must always reconcile the freedom of the individual with the interests of the community; certain restrictions must be placed on this freedom in order to safeguard the higher interests of society. With a few rare exceptions the interests of the community, to which the freedom of the individual was subordinated,

have hitherto been thought to coincide with the interests of the various social classes existing within the nation. But a higher society exists outside the nation, namely, international society."

Why should not domestic legislations take this society's interests into account as well as those of national society?

The problem was raised in 1927 at the First International Conference for the Unification of Criminal Law. Certain legislative work along these lines was also undertaken in three countries: Brazil, Rumania and Poland. The draft penal codes of these three countries explicitly stipulate that any person guilty of incitement to war shall be punished with imprisonment.

The Governments of almost every country have adhered to the principle of condemning war as an instrument of national policy, and have since endeavoured to base their international actions on this principle. Their domestic policy should also be based on this principle, and severe measures taken to deal with any person attempting to undermine the moral bases of world peace by propaganda of hatred. A suitable modification of national legislations would only be the logical complement of international agreements now in force.

Propaganda aimed at disturbing friendly international relations is usually carried out by associations or in the press. The problem of the press was raised by the Swedish Government at the meeting of the Special Committee appointed to consider measures for preventing war. That Government drew the Committee's attention to the disastrous influence a certain section of the press might exercise during an international crisis.

The Polish Government fully shares this view. Not only when an international dispute has arisen, but also in daily life, the press may exert, if it so desires, a salutary influence by calming people's minds and supporting the Council of the League in its difficult task as mediator, or it may play a fatal part by stirring up feeling and misrepresenting the facts of the case.

But to punish the author of false news is only a repressive measure which, though of undoubted value, does nothing to correct the wrong information. This last result might be secured by extending the application of the right to reply to foreign governments. The latter would be entitled to ask a newspaper to correct false information it had published concerning the position of their countries. To prevent abuses, provision should be made for any rectification from a foreign legation to be sent through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the country where the newspaper was published.

Other means as, for instance, the setting up of an international disciplinary tribunal for journalists might also be considered.

The whole problem of moral disarmament, in so far as it affects the press, should be examined by the conference of journalists, whose report would serve as a basis for Government decisions. Journalists themselves would be the most competent people to draw up a system of safeguarding international interests without compromising the freedom of the

press. It may be noted that the question of moral disarmament was the subject of important discussions at the Geneva Press Conference in 1927.

In order to secure lasting moral disarmament, a great effort must be made to protect young people from everything capable of breeding in them hatred of a foreign nation. School teachers should therefore be forbidden to abuse their position by arousing in their pupils' minds distrust and ill-will towards foreigners. School-books, particularly those dealing with history, geography, etc., etc, would have to be examined. On the other hand compulsory instruction should be given to young people to render them familiar with the aims and organisation of the League of Nations. The sub-Committee of Experts of the International Committee of Intellectual Co-operation framed certain recommendations on this subject. This Committee recommended, *inter alia*:

- 1) Compulsory instruction in all schools in regard to the work and aims of the League of Nations, and more generally the development of international co-operation
- 2) The formation of special League of Nations' chairs in the faculties of law
- 3) The elimination from school books of everything capable of arousing hatred of foreigners, etc., etc.

An international convention binding Governments to take certain measures for eliminating from school instruction the elements of hatred and inculcating in young people's minds the dominating ideas of the League of Nations would be the most effectual way of making real progress towards educating young people in the spirit of international solidarity.

Certain competent bodies (for instance, the International Institute of Intellectual Co-operation, the International Committee on Intellectual Co-operation and the International Educational Cinematographic Institute) should be instructed to investigate the problem of moral disarmament in so far as it is affected by broadcasting, the theatre and cinema. The practical suggestions resulting from these investigations might be used as a basis for Government action.

These are some of the proposals of the Memorandum which I thought might be interesting to bring to your notice as they indicate some means by which moral disarmament may be promoted simultaneously with material disarmament.

All I wish to add now is: the further the ethics which rule the relations between individuals in any civilised community penetrate into international relations the shorter will be the way to such moral disarmament.

Two Letters

Wilno

Sir – I saw in your paper of this day a paragraph: Vilna Returns to Lithuania, which concludes as follows: “Vilna, which had been Lithuania’s capital since she emerged from the domination of the Tsars at the end of the eighteenth century, was seized by Polish troops under the command of General Zeligowski in 1921”

May I be permitted to correct this statement to the effect that at the end of the eighteenth century an event occurred which was in complete contradiction with this statement: Wilno did not emerge then from the domination of the Tsars, but was seized by Russia as one of the consequences of Poland being portioned between Russia, Prussia and Austria.

Wilno had definitely ceased to be capital of a separate Lithuanian State in 1569, as an outcome of a free union concluded by Lithuania with Poland. Since then Lithuania became a partner in the Polish Commonwealth of Nations, which, apart from East Prussia as a Polish fief, comprised, *inter alia*, Livonia, Courland, and a part of Estonia as free Dominions of the Polish Crown.

In so far as recent events may be concerned, here is their brief summary:-

April 1919: Wilno is liberated from the Russians by General Pilsudski

July 1920: Wilno is seized by the Bolsheviks during the Polish-Russia War

July 12 1920: A Lithuanian-Soviet Treaty is concluded under which Wilno had to be ceded by the Russians to Lithuania. The treaty was never observed by the Soviets, who continued to maintain a garrison there

August 1920: The Bolsheviks flee from Wilno before the advance of the victorious Polish Army

October 1920: The city is re-occupied by a territorial White Ruthenian-Lithuanian Division of the Polish Army under General Zeligowski^{xxxi}

January 8 1922: Election for a Constituent Assembly for Wilno and district is held. Although the election was boycotted by the local Lithuanians and partly by the Jews, out of 387,397 persons on the electoral rolls 249,375 (about 65 per cent) recorded their votes. The Assembly voted for the incorporation of Wilno and district with the Polish Republic.

March 22 1922: The delegates sent by the Wilno Assembly to the Warsaw Diet signed an Act of Incorporation

March 14 1923 The Ambassadors’ Conference recognised Poland’s Eastern frontier

The Census of 1931 gives the following figures relative to mother-tongues of the population of Wilno and district: Polish 59.7 per cent, Ruthenian 0.1 per cent, White Ruthenian (White Russian) 22.7 per cent, Russian 3.4 per cent, German 0.1 per cent, Yiddish and Hebrew 8.5

per cent, and Lithuanian 8.5 per cent. The total of the Lithuanian population in Poland amounts to 80,000 out of 35,500,000.

South-Eastern Poland

Sir – With reference to my letter you were good enough to publish in your paper of October 12 on the subject of Wilno and district, I received some more inquiries asking for further particulars concerning national minorities within the Polish State. I hope that my letter might have helped people genuinely interested in Polish affairs to view the ‘Wilno problem’ in the light of objective dates, facts and statistics eloquent enough to make clear the predominantly and indisputably Polish character and Polish cultural structure of Wilno and district. It is not without gratitude that I saw in one of the leading Dublin weekly papers a reference to General Zeligowski, in which he is called – the hero of Wilno, a title which surely belongs to him by right.

The interest of my correspondents seems now to centre round the South-Eastern corner of Poland which was known from the fourteenth century as Eastern Little Poland, received an adulterated name of Eastern Galicia under the Austrian rule or, let us say, misrule, which lasted from 1795 until 1918, and recovered its historic name with the rebirth of Poland in 1918.

Russian Invasion

Questions I am expected to help solve are these: To what extent the allegation is true that, by stabbing Poland in her back and invading Eastern Little Poland in September, 1939, Russia simply recovered territories to which she would be entitled to on account of some presumable historic and ethnographic claims? Is there any truth in the assertions so widely diffused by Lloyd George and his followers to the effect that Eastern Little Poland was ruled by a handful of large Polish landowners against the will of the ethnically different and numerically overwhelming majority of the local population? What is the demographic and cultural aspect of the province?

I venture to ask the hospitality of your paper for the following few explanations. The whole Polish area where the Ukrainian question took on a definite political form covers three districts (or governorships): the district of Lwow¹³ (Lemberg or Leopold), of Stanisawow¹⁴ and Tarnapol.

This land was incorporated with Poland in the course of the fourteenth century, and never since – with the exception of a short period during the Great War – had any Russian invader trodden upon its soil.

The truth is that the Polish Dominions extended right down to the Dnieper and even far beyond that river, but Eastern Little Poland, with Lwow as its Capital, did never, under any form, belong to Russia.

¹³ Pronounced *Lvoov*

¹⁴ Pronounced *Stanislasavov*

Austria. If the Hapsburg Empire had ever excelled in anything at all it was undoubtedly in its masterly application of the principle, *divide et impera*. The Vienna Government exerted themselves to keep little Poland (Galicia) in submission through artificially fomenting faction between the Polish majority and Ukrainian minority and by placing the whole life of this province under an unscrupulous control for which purpose gendarmes and policemen, mostly of Czech nationality, had been employed. The scheme worked not without success; foundations were laid for a strife between the Polish and Ukrainian population and a deep resentment against the Czechs was securely planted in the hearts of the local Poles.

An event, however, took place which frustrated to a certain extent the plans fostered by the Viennese Administration: an early split among the Ukrainians in Eastern Little Poland, and the non-Polish Christian populations of this land fell hence into two distinctly separate parts opposing each other.

The 'Ukrainians' embraced the nationalist tendencies, whilst the 'Ruthenians' were professing some sort of Pan-Slavic ideas.

As to the Polish element in Lwow and district, its complete moral and numerical superiority over all other elements showed at its best on the occasion when the Ukrainians made in April, 1918, an attempt to seize that town and a part of South-Eastern Poland: the Polish population alone dealt with the situation without even appealing for help from the regular army.

Let us dwell for a moment on the demographic aspects of the situation. The population of three mentioned provinces of Lwow, Stanisawow' and Tarnapol amounts to 6,246,000 and is composed of: Poles, 2,926,300 (or 47 p. c.); Ukrainians, 1,675,300 (or 27 p. c.); Ruthenians, 1,138,500 (or 18 p. c.); the remaining 8 p. c. being accountable for other national groups. Even assuming that the Ukrainians and Ruthenians could be regarded as national totality, which is not the case, a margin would still be left in favour of the Polish population.

This is so far as mere numbers are concerned. The cultural superiority of the Polish majority is unquestionable and goes far beyond its numerical preponderance, and the University of Lwow, founded by King John Casimir in the seventeenth century, enjoys the reputation of one of the foremost centre of science in South-Eastern Europe.

With regard to the problem of land-ownership in the districts of Lwow, Stanisawow' and Tarnapol, it is noteworthy that 179,700 new farms and holdings covering 339,900 hectares (0.405 of a hectare being equal to an acre) have been created there under the operation of the Polish Land Reform Bill as from 1919 to 1937.

The Ukraine

Another question which presents itself to any impartial observer is this: is there any ground for a closer understanding between Poland and those Ukrainians who live now as a compact and indisputably national unit under the Moscow Government? In the light of history this is not an easy question to answer in a few words. Here is, however, a document of some recent

date, a proclamation issued to his troops in 1920 by Ataman Simeon Petlura, probably the only Ukrainian leader worthy of his name:

"The common cause of the Allied a Ukrainian and Polish Armies will make good the errors of the past, and our blood shed in union in the struggle against the old historic enemy, Moscow, which once crushed Poland and sounded the doom of Ukraine, will symbolise the beginning of a new period of Polish-Ukrainian friendship."

It is, therefore, fair to say that the Bolsheviks marching into Eastern Little Poland were simply liberating their 'brothers' from an intolerable oppression by a Polish minority? What is the situation of the Ukrainian population under the Moscow dictatorship?

And should we bear in mind that there are well over twenty-three million Ukrainians living in the U.S.S.R.!

This is how the situation is viewed by an English observer:

"Between 1929-1938 there have been a number of famous trials in Soviet Ukraine, and after each new restrictive legislation of the national rights of the Ukrainians has been introduced. The Central Government is gradually retreating from the position it took up in 1923 and is reintroducing the Tsarist policy of russification. The result is constant friction between the Central Government and the Ukrainian Communist leaders, who at first assisted the Bolsheviks against Petlura, believing as they did at the time they were serving their country... The cases were dealt by the customary Soviet judiciary system in the light of which the death penalty or penal servitude for life is judged normal for the majority of these offences...

The arrests affected among the older and more sincere Ukrainian Bolsheviks, who believed Ukraine would be free and Communist is enormous... The arrested have been replaced by new men, mostly Russians from Russia proper, who are indifferent or hostile to Ukrainian ideals. In the years 1937 and 1938 there was a particularly strong influx of Russians into the Ukraine, Many of them, however, were arrested after a few months stay, and charged with conspiring with the Ukrainians, which goes to show that the national movement is strong and widespread in the Ukraine."¹⁵

Poland's Frontiers

Curiously enough, those who are now so prone to pile up fantastic accusations against Poland have never been heard to raise their voice against such an enormity as the oppression of twenty-three million Ukrainians by an alien Muscovite dictator, but the fact that there is a certain Ukrainian minority within the historic and ethnographic boundaries of Poland seems to fill them with indignation. "Imperialism," "Crime," they would dramatically exclaim. No wonder one is entitled to ask what is it that lies behind these invectives – ill-will or ignorance? Let us favour the more charitable view.

One more point. The same amateur writers on Polish affairs use sometimes such a definition as 'Versailles Poland'. They should bear in mind that Poland's frontiers were fixed by the

¹⁵ *The Diplomatic-Political Correspondent, A Monthly Review*, February, 1939

Versailles Treaty only inasmuch as Germany and East Prussia were concerned. Southern, Eastern and North-Eastern Polish frontiers were fixed by Poland herself, and, when doing this, she left outside her new boundaries at least one-third of her historic possessions.

Chapter VI

Polish-Russian Relations, Past and Present

Polish-Russian relations, old as they are, are not, strictly speaking as old as they are generally believed to be. True, contacts and clashes between the Kingdom of Poland and the Duchy of Kiev could easily be traced back to the end of the Xth and beginning of the XIth centuries. The Duchy of Kiev can, however, hardly be spoken of not only as the nucleus but even a precursor of the future Muscovite Russia.

This Duchy was founded by the descendants of a legendary Viking, Rorik, and attained in the course of the XIth and XIIth centuries a considerable degree of civilisation, but its prosperity and culture were undermined first by a rival branch of the same Rorik dynasty, which established another Duchy in central parts of Russia proper, and was ultimately destroyed by the Tartars in the middle of the XIIIth century.

It was, therefore, not the Duchy of Kiev but the Duchy I have just mentioned, founded in Russia proper with its capital first in Suzdal, next in Vladimir and finally in Moscow that formed the nucleus of what became known in history as the Muscovite Tsardom, Russian Empire and quite recently – the USSR, and it is the intercourse with this political organism that gave rise to Polish-Russian relations.

By the middle of the XVIth century during the period covering the reign of Sigismund II Augustus and Stephen Bathory in Poland and Ivan the Terrible in Russia we can trace these relations as being already in full swing. You must, however, bear in mind that about 150 years previously before the just mentioned sovereigns ascended the throne an event took place which left an indelible mark on all future shapings of things in Eastern Europe: it was the union of Poland and Lithuania.

Just at the outset of the XIVth century a dynasty of able statesmen and daring warriors established itself as ruling princes in that corner of Europe which lay to the north-east of Poland and was known as Lithuania and Samogitia. The name of the founder of the dynasty was Gedymin. The conquests of this Duke and his successors spread with astonishing rapidity southwards, along the lands lying between Poland and Russia proper, and embraced a certain portion of the Ukraine and Kiev. Thus came into being an ephemeral state with no defined frontiers, no organised administration and even no fixed capital, just an outcome of conquest.

For as the Lithuanian Dukes could have spread southwards – the situation on the western and north-western frontiers of their dominions was entirely different. There they had to carry on a desperate and almost helpless struggle against the Teutonic Knights who, through an unforgivable blunder of a Polish Duke, Conrad of Masovia, had just established themselves in east Prussia, and against the Knights of the Sword. Using as pretext the conversion of the Lithuanians into Christianity these two powerful and predatory Orders were all out for domination, annihilation of local populations and conquest.

It certainly goes to the credit of the Lithuanians that they were so quick to in grasping that only a close collaboration with Poland could save both their tribes and themselves from complete extinction. Very fortunately this alliance shaped itself as from the very beginning into a Union which was first established in 1386 through the marriage of the Lithuanian prince Jaguello – the founder of the famous Jagellonian dynasty under the name of Ladislaus II – with the Polish queen Jadweega, confirmed in 1413 and given its coping stone by a deed of undying glory, the Act of Lublin in 1569.

Now it would be of paramount importance to give you a concise picture of what were the effects of the Polish-Lithuanian Union upon the lands stretching between Poland and Russia proper, once conquered by the Lithuanian rulers and now incorporated into the Polish-Lithuanian kingdom. Advanced as were the Polish democratic institutions even in that remote epoch the deep social gap dividing the upper and middle classes on one side from the so-called lower classes, or peasantry, on the other remained throughout the centuries to come unfulfilled. The upper and middle classes took the opportunity of the Union by first adopting the *Polish Religion* – this is the definition of the Catholic religion in those regions even nowadays.

Gradually the Polish language, institutions and customs found a free way into their very midst without any sort of compulsion ever being exercised by anybody. As a consequence of the natural and unconstrained penetration of the Polish culture the representatives of these classes became within a comparatively short space of time as good and accomplished Poles as any other human beings born in the Masovian plains, in Pomerania or Posnania, in the Cracovian highlands or Silesia. The purely Lithuanian aristocracy and landed gentry underwent the same voluntary process of polonisation.

Meanwhile, the peasantry had been left entirely to themselves and continued to live their lives of primitive dwellers of marshes, forests, fields and steppes. They also preserved their Orthodox religion.

Let us now see what was the national outlook of those peasant populations spread between Poland and Russia proper. Let us start from the region of Kiev. Of the Ukrainians, actual inhabitants of this region, nothing was heard in Europe until the XVth century. Ukraine is really a Polish word equivalent to the English *Borderland*, and indeed the name was given to the region because it formed a border province of the Kingdom of Poland. A *Ukrainian* means, therefore, nothing less or more than a *dweller of the Borderland*. They speak their own language, which is more like Polish in the West and more like Russian in the East.

Now, if from the Kiev region we push north, towards the sources of the river Dnieper and its affluents, we will find the country becoming more and more marshy and woody, and there, without noticing any clear line of demarcation, we will find ourselves among a different sort of people which, for some unprecised reason are called White-Ruthenians and which call themselves by a more proper name of *Poleshuks*.^{xxxii} This name, excuse me it's very long interpretation, means really – dwellers of land where once forests grew. They also speak their own dialect, still less developed than the Ukrainian. But both in Ukraine and White-Ruthenia

you will come across, quite apart from the big Polish land-properties which are now a thing of the past, numerous compact and homogenous Polish settlements.

Now, by giving you this abridged description of the lands between Poland and Russia proper, I actually brought you within an easy reach of the very thesis of this paper, which reads as follows: by eliminating such causes of international friction as sheer lust of conquest and domination we must arrive at the conclusion that the fundamental cause of the age-old Polish-Russian feud centres around the question: is it Poland or is it Russia that should be given priority in the possession of those lands.

Our claims are based on history and culture, and partly on ethnography and strategic reasons since it would constitute an obvious impossibility to defend Poland from an Eastern aggression given that the Prypiet Marshes should remain in the hands of a hostile power. Russian claims on the other hand used to be based partly on ethnography, mostly on religion since, I have just told you, the majority of the peasant populations of these lands profess, just as the Russians did, the Orthodox creed.

If I am stressing that the Russian claims *used* to be based mostly on the religious aspect of the problem it is because the Bolshevik Government by repudiating any religion whatsoever have practically surrendered this basis and had to substitute for it the communistic principle of the so-called social justice.

But, poor as some of the dwellers of these lands may be, they are extremely attached to their 5-10 acres of land, their cottage, pair of horses, cow, and covetous as they may be of increasing their property at the expense of the landed gentry, they are most reluctant to ideas of being expropriated themselves and seeing *their* property just melting away and being merged with the State property. So this basis of the Russian claims to these lands must also be considered with great care, circumspection and good knowledge of local conditions.

I feel that at this point of my paper you might be well entitled to a question: but why, you may ask, should those lands belong to *either* to Poland *or* Russia? Why not leave the peoples there to live their own political life and form their own state-organisms? There is only one answer to it: history proved the utter futility and impossibility of any such solution. Just as nature would not suffer vacuum, so policy does not admit any prolonged existence in human communities of chaotic conditions. Order may be good or bad but it is bound to replace chaos.

To begin with the so-called White-Ruthenians: their sense of statesmanship is non-existent, as is their culture. Furthermore, even their sense of nationality is extremely vague. In 1918-39 the Polish Government held several censuses of population in these parts of those regions which returned to Poland in 1921, and the spaces in census forms opposite the word *nationality* could have been filled with anything like: Polish, White-Ruthenian, Ukrainian, Lithuanian. You would be surprised to see how many people used to answer this question by the word *local*, just local, meaning people just living in those regions and abrogating any nationality whatsoever.

Let us now move southwards and see how things shaped themselves in the Ukraine. The Ukrainian national movement made its first appearance on the stage of history in the course of the XVIIth century when a Ukrainian leader, Bodan Chmielnicki^{xxxiii}, incidentally a Polish squire, rebelled against Poland. Originally it was a purely social upheaval, a sort of jaquerie directed against the so-called Ukrainian kinglets, Polish lords holding their enormous land-properties. The initial successes of the revolt emboldened its leader to considerably widen the scope of his ambitions, and thus it was that the idea of a sort of a semi-independent Ukrainian national state originated.

But the events to follow soon proved how slender were the foundations on which all such ambitions and hopes were built. The whole history of the movement contains nothing but plots with the Sultan, Khan of Crimea, and the Tsar of Moscow against Poland, conspiracies with the Tsar against Poland and the Sultan, intrigues with the Sultan against the Tsar, and so on. The rebellion was ultimately subdued and the land remained under the Polish Crown.

About one hundred years later, with the growing weakness of the Royal Republic of Poland, there came the partitions under which Russia seized the long coveted lands of the Ukraine and White-Ruthenia. Under the iron rule of the Tsars nothing was heard of the Ukrainian national movement until 1905, the year of the first Russian revolution. The short-lived flash of Ukrainian aspirations was quickly quenched but it lit up into a much brighter flame 12 years later, with the outbreak of the second Russian Revolution. There occurred a truly amazing sequence of events so vividly remindful of what had happened in the XVIIth century.

A National Ukrainian Government and army were established in Kiev, just to be smashed to smithereens by a marauding band of Russian Bolsheviki. The so-called Ukrainian Government turned then to Germany begging for help. The Germans entered Kiev in March, 1918, and under their protection the Ukrainian Government was re-established. After a few months the Germans overthrew this more or less democratic representation and installed in their stead a puppet ruler, Hetman Skoropadski^{xxxiv}. The flight of the Germans from Ukraine brought about the reappearance of the Government of the previous days which again was quickly disposed of by the Russian, counter-revolutionary General, Denikin^{xxxv}. The latter was in turn defeated by the Bolsheviki who again seized Kiev.

Then the Ukrainians turned their eyes towards Poland and concluded with her an agreement under which Poland undertook to assist the only efficient Ukrainian leader that ever existed since Chmielnicki, Simeon Petlura^{xxxvi}, to re-establish a sort of national government in Kiev. The Poles entered the long-suffering town in May, 1920, but for a few weeks only. Once more the Bolsheviki captured Kiev and thus all hopes for a national Ukrainian State vanished like a dream.

Reverting now to the purely Polish-Russian relations it is to be said that they passed through several distinct phases. In all Polish-Russian wars waged in the course of the XVIth and XVIIth centuries Poland definitely had the upper hand. At the beginning of the XVIIth century Moscow itself was for some time occupied by a Polish garrison.

Just to make you visualise the extent of the Polish Dominions at that epoch I shall mention a few names which, by now, must be familiar to you owing to the war communiqués: Bratzlav, Kiev, Czernigov, Minsk, Mstislav, Smolensk, Witebsk, Polotsk, were just capitals of Polish Governorships, or, as they were then called, Palatinates.

By the second half of the XVIIth century there seems to have been reached a certain balance of power between the two states, though in 1686, as a consequence of the disastrous wars with the Cossacks, Tartars, Turks, Swedes and Russians, all at a time, Poland had to cede Russia her possessions east of the Dnieper and Kiev. In the XVIIIth century the balance swerves definitely in Russia's favour.

By her participation in the three partitions of Poland at the end of that century Russia not only seized the long coveted lands of the Polish Crown, not only contributed to the annihilation of the Polish State, but also pushed her dominions as far westwards as the river Vistula, on which lies the Polish capital, Warsaw. As a result of the Napoleonic Wars she went even further and grabbed a huge portion of Polish land west of the Vistula.

Later this protruding stretch of territory proved in turn a great disadvantage to no other power than Russia itself as it provided Germany in 1914 with an excellent *place d'armes* from which they could so successfully embark upon their campaign of the destruction of the Romanov's Empire.

What became of Polish-Russian relations as from the partitions right down to the beginning of the first Great War could either be described in volume of historical research or depicted in a very few words as a succession of outrages and savagery, repulsive and abhorrent as much as they proved senseless and stupid, inflicted by Russia upon her downtrodden great neighbour. In 1831 we were on the verge of winning a war against Russia, but we ultimately lost it.

After the Rising of 1863 the Russian policy of persecution attained its very climax of ignominy, and it is noteworthy that the bloodiest among all Russian caciques to rule Poland, the so-called hangman Muraviev^{xxxvii}, had been allotted to 'purge' no other parts of Poland than her Lithuanian and White-Ruthenian provinces, so anxious was the Russian Government to obliterate the very memory of Poland in those regions.

And yet I must tell you that, whilst the existence of any sense of equity to Poland in Germany should be ruled out as a rather grotesque flight of the imagination, it should be said in fairness that there undoubtedly were scores of Russians – friends of Poland, who would admit the iniquity of the partitions, the stupidity of the persecutions and the right of Poland to regain her independence. If I have any authority whatsoever to speak on this particular subject it is because I was born in the historically Polish Ukraine under the Russian rule, because I graduated in a Russian University and because the number of Russians I met in my life must certainly have reached four figures.

True, this Russian liberalism would become distorted at the very moment you would tackle the problem of those lands of which I have spoken to you at such length. "Oh, it would be

said, if Poland dreams of the re-incorporation of her historically Eastern provinces, that would be an utter impossibility!" And yet the difficulty in solving the problem is that if you discard its historical and cultural aspect you would just land in the very midst of shifting sands.

At the outbreak of the first Great War it rightly occurred to the Russian ruling classes that the war could not be won without some sort of co-operation with Poland, and consequently a movingly worded manifesto was issued promising the Poles the re-union of her lands – left however unspecified as to their extent and character – and a sort of autonomy under the Russian Crown. This document did not produce the desired effect, first, because it was signed only by the Grand Duke Nicholas, Russian Commander-in-Chief, the Tsar himself preferring to remain non-committal and, secondly, because Poles were already busy to prepare ground for the restoration of their country's sovereignty and territories in their integrity.

With the outbreak of the second Russian revolution in March, 1917, followed by the overthrow of the reigning dynasty, there appeared on the surface of Russian politics those exactly liberally-minded Russians, like Prince Lvov and Kerenski^{xxxviii}. In principle they were ready to acknowledge Poland as an independent State but with regard to the territories Russia would have to restore to her they remained absolutely vague.

Then came the third revolution in October, 1917, which placed the power over the Romanovs' Empire in the hands of the extreme socialists, commonly known as Bolsheviks. And it is exactly at this time that a most important and little known event took place: the first Bolshevik Government repudiated all treaties referring to partitions of Poland and proclaimed them null and void. Theoretically, therefore, the whole territorial Russo-Polish situation had been reverted to the state in which it existed in 1772, i.e. before the first partition.

This act of undoubtedly great statesmanship remained, however, sheer theory. Wherever Polish soldiers would march eastwards to establish a provisional line of demarcation with Russia they would come into hostile contacts with the growing strength of the Bolshevik armies. It was partly from these clashes that the Polish-Russian War of 1920 erupted. If I say – partly, it is because a very much wider reason for attacking Poland was provided by the desire of implanting a triumphant Bolshevism all over Europe.

In this war we ultimately won a series of resounding victories. What happened next is, probably, more characteristic of the Polish mentality than anything else. You must bear in mind that the Poles are fundamentally a peaceful nation and once they see the possibility for an amicable settlement they would simply clutch to it.

Therefore, having to our credit and support our victory over Russia on one side and the formal repudiation by the Russian Government of all acts connected with the partitions on the other, we sat down with the Bolsheviks round a Conference table and agreed to let Russia have about *two-thirds* of our historical possessions. These concessions of the victor to the vanquished were embodied in a Treaty concluded in Riga, in 1921. This, however, was the very extreme limit to which our spirit of conciliation could have been brought.

It must be said that Polish-Russian relations in the period 1921-39 were not tinged with particularly friendly feelings. If the past 125 years of history provided Poland with good reasons to be distrustful; it is not clear why the Russians should have maintained an attitude of unfriendliness towards their loyally-minded and peaceful neighbours – unless, of course, we would assume that Russia was still grudging Poland the restoration of even *one-third* only of the latter's Eastern lands. However, an important agreement had been reached between the two countries under the shape of a pact of mutual non-aggression.

We all know what happened to this pact. Just on the eve of the German onslaught on Poland in September, 1939, a different sort of pact was signed in Moscow by Russia and Germany and we have some grounds to believe that, apart from an agreement concerning a new partition of Poland being reached verbatim, a secret clause to this effect had been actually included in the pact.

If instead of coalescing with Poland's enemy in another international crime Russia would have joined hands with the undaunted Polish army the war would have been probably over by now. Blinded by sheer lust for domination and easy conquest Russia stabbed Poland in her back. Appalling, indeed, is the penalty Russia is now paying for the ill-conceived and dark blunder, to call it by no harsher name, committed in August, 1939. Millions of her dead and mutilated, ruins of her towns and villages, the scorched earth left behind her armies – is all she gained from her short-lived pact of friendship with Germany.

When, on the 22nd June, 1941, the thundercloud of the German invasion of Russia burst over the surprised world there were a few men who were not caught napping^{xxxix}. Among them was General Sikorski, Polish Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief. He acted quickly and wisely. Incidentally, he is also the man who in his pre-war writings foresaw with astonishing lucidity the aspects of the future war, known now as the 'blitz'. Unfortunately neither the then Polish Government, nor the French Government before the debacle of June 1940, would listen to him.

Much as I would like to give you a fuller account of the motives which prompted him in his action, this would necessarily bring me into a detailed description of the actual conditions in German-occupied Poland, which must remain outside the scope of this paper. Suffice it to say that if the mass executions of the Polish populations, the expropriations, starvation, the horrors of concentration and labour camps and other means of physical destruction of the Polish nation – and I should recoil before telling what means are they – would be allowed to proceed at a pace as hitherto, then in about three years we may expect only half the Polish population to survive at all. It is horrible to think what could happen should the war continue longer.

Our primordial and paramount aim is to make the war as short as possible, to liberate our people and to save them from moral and physical agony and death in the shortest imaginable time. It should be obvious to any impartial observer that, should we remain hostile to Russia in her conflict with Germany or even only neutral, we should be contributing to the

prolongation of the war and thus playing right into the hands of those who wish the Polish nation to be wiped out of the map of Europe.

In August, 1941, General Sikorski signed with the Russian Plenipotentiary a short and comprehensive agreement under which: the USSR proclaimed Russo-German Treaties of 1939 concerning territorial changes in Poland void; Poland declared not being bound with any third power by any agreement directed against the USSR; diplomatic relations between the two countries to be resumed immediately, on the signing of the agreement; the two Governments undertook to extend to each other all help and assistance in the war against Hitlerite Germany; a Polish Army to be created on the territories of the USSR, its Commander-in-Chief to be appointed by the Polish Government; on the resumption of diplomatic relations all Polish prisoners, war and civil, to be released.

Quite recently, General Sikorski went on a long and perilous journey. He visited Malta to inspect Polish naval units there; Tobruk – to greet the Polish Division on the very eve of its brilliant breakthrough the German and Italian encircling ring; then he went to Cairo. It may interest you what sort of a welcome the Polish Prime Minister was given by the Egyptians. Here is a passage from the Cairo paper *Al Misri*:

“You were right, General, when you said that a nation which did not produce a single Quisling cannot perish. Only a madman can dream of breaking the power of resistance of 30 million patriots. General, your country will rise again and regain its independence. Every heart in Egypt beats in unison with the hearts of our Polish friends.”

Next he flew to Syria and Palestine and thence to Kuibyshev to meet the President of the USSR. The climax of the General’s journey was reached when he addressed the Poles throughout the world in a most confident and rousing broadcast from the Kremlin. It may be that this broadcast will erect itself as a momentous mile-stone in Polish-Russian relations.

A joint Russo-Polish declaration issued in Moscow on the 4th December, 1941, state *inter alia*: when peace is restored the relations between the two States will be based on the principles of neighbourly co-operation, friendship and mutual observance of reciprocal obligations:

“The maintenance of a just and lasting peace can be achieved only by a new organisation of international relations based on a federation and enduring alliance of the democratic countries. The respect of the International Law supported by a combined armed force of all the Allied Powers must for a decisive factor in the building up of such an organisation.”

As regards the Polish-Russian frontier it has been drawn by the Treaty of Riga under the circumstances I have already mentioned. No Polish Government would ever agree to any further territorial concessions. As far as the future on the whole it is so difficult to make prophecies. All seems to depend on mutual goodwill and on the way mutual obligations will be carried out. Poland’s history, past and present, testifies to the fact that she, at any rate, is wont to honour her signature and word.

It also may be said with certain amount of accuracy that not a single State will emerge from the present Armageddon under its pre-war aspect. Even from a purely religious point of view things are now going on in Russia which only a year ago would have been ruled out as an utter impossibility.

History has taught us a lesson which in no other times could have been more significant than at the present day, and this lesson reads as follows: neither Russia nor Poland could live in a compulsory union imposed by either side upon the other. In the course of the XVIth and XVIIth centuries, when both the military and political preponderance was on the Polish side, Poland's efforts to bring Russia into a union proved futile; likewise the events of the XVIIIth and XIXth centuries, when the political and military situation underwent a complete change in Poland's disfavour, showed how hopelessly miscarried were all Russia's efforts to force Poland into an unwanted union under a brutally imposed domination.

Some of the 1½ million liberated Poles arrived from Russia in London. Among them was the veteran Polish leader, Professor Stanislaus Grabski^{xl}. On hearing that some Polish politicians would raise certain objections to the Polish-Russo agreement as signed by General Sikorski, he said:

"I think that if there are people best qualified to give verdict on the merits or demerits of the agreement they should be Polish prisoners in Russia, and I shall tell you this: we accepted it wholeheartedly. As for my own sufferings in prison and concentration camps they only brought me nearer to Christ".

The Poles in Russia are now free. They are free to pray to God just as we do in this country. The Polish army is growing rapidly in strength and our Commander-in-Chief in Russia, General Anders^{xli}, told us not so long ago that soon it will be fully equipped by our British and American allies and ready to join battle on still another front and to meet the enemy wherever need be. Let us hope, they will be the first to march back into their beloved liberated country.

You may say: what a strange metamorphosis, this sudden and radical change in Polish-Russian relations! Strange, if you wish, in normal times. But is it really so strange if we place it in its right perspective, on the foreground of this terrible upheaval that is now shaking the whole of our globe?

The true significance of the tragic events unfolding before our eyes is clear: is mankind going to live their lives as enslaved robots under the heel of a couple of tyrants, or are we to bequeath to our children a better world in which they would enjoy freedom and dignity of God's creatures?

What is the use of continuously looking back and cultivating old animosities and hatreds, futile so far as the future is concerned, if such is the stake of the titanic struggle in which we have become engulfed?

So this is my answer to all those who say: "So now, you Poles, are fighting for Russia." Wherever we have fought, are fighting and shall fight – in Poland, France, Norway, over

England, in the Atlantic, in the Mediterranean, in the Western Desert, in Russia – we fight for our country and for the liberation of our people.

But we are fighting not only for our freedom. The age-old Polish slogan says: For our freedom and for yours^{xlii}. We fight also for all those peoples who either actually strive for their freedom or are determined to remain free.



Flag of the November 1831 Uprising – Polish Army Museum

- ⁱ Ivan Maiski (Jan Lachowiecki), 1884-1975, he was Soviet Envoy to the UK 1932-43
- ⁱⁱ His papers are currently in the National Library of Ireland as an unsorted collection. Acc. No. 4610
- ⁱⁱⁱ His sister, Maria, worked as Senior Assistant for the League, 1924-37
- ^{iv} James Jeremiah O'Connell http://centenaries.ucd.ie/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/OConnell-Jeremiah_Joseph.pdf for his Polish articles see http://sources.nli.ie/Record/PS_UR_075557 and http://sources.nli.ie/Record/PS_UR_075552
- ^v Originally capital of the Duchy of Masovia; it became seat of the Sejm in 1569 and official capital in 1596. In partition interlude it became capital of the Province of South Prussia in 1796 and regained its status of capital of Poland in 1918.
- ^{vi} Indo-Polish Library, no. 10, 1944, reprinted in 2008: There must be an earlier edition as it was a source in the late 1930s. Paul Super was Secretary of the YMCA in Poland, 1922-46
<http://special.lib.umn.edu/findaid/html/ymca/yusa0009x2x49.phtml>
- ^{vii} c. 1560-1613, *Polski Słownik Biograficzny* and 'Pardon me my Lord, that I wrytte to your honour in Scottish... William Bruce as the first Stuart diplomatic agent in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth by Anna Kalinowska in *Scotland and Poland – Historical Encounters, 1500-2010*, ed. T M Devine & D. Hesse, Edinburgh, 2011
- ^{viii} Andrzej Tadeusz Bonawentura Kościuszko 1746-1817
- ^{ix} In a letter to the *Irish Press* 29th September, 1939 he writes: "I saw in your paper some extracts of a letter published by Mr. Lloyd George in answer to a letter from the Polish Ambassador to London replying to an article by Mr. Lloyd George which appeared last Sunday in one of the London papers. In his reply Mr. Lloyd George accuses Poland of having "the most feudal system in Europe". I am afraid on this occasion the author of *War Memoirs* displayed the same truly astounding lack of general knowledge which, at the time when the Versailles Treaty was negotiated, made him discover 'Polish Imperialism', far from being satisfied with its claims in Europe, was showing sinister designs to extend territorial claims over Asia Minor. It never occurred to him, until he was told by someone having some knowledge in geography, that the only resemblance between Silesia – a part of Poland – and Cilicia – a province of Asia Minor – was of purely phonetic character. Now, only if he would have consulted any handbook relative to Polish statistics, he could have discovered without much trouble that, out of the total area of Poland, 58 per cent is owned by peasants and smaller farmers, 25 per cent by larger landowners and 17 per cent by the State and Municipalities, and that the breaking up of the large estates for division among peasants is carried out gradually and systematically."
- ^x Pope Pius XI: He was forced to leave Poland in 1921 by the Government because of his political activities
- ^{xi} The author served as Intelligence Officer attached to the GHQ of the Volunteer Army
- ^{xii} Warsaw, 1920 and London, 1931 He served with the Anglo-French mission
- ^{xiii} F. S. Stewart, B. A. In his paper, Mr. Stewart said that there would be no absolute freedom, for the freedom which they called license was a snare, if they refused to control themselves, to subject their actions to the censorship of their own minds. The world was now at war, and he believed that all countries concerned in it must share the guilt. We in Ireland were the spectators. Perhaps it is our task again as it was before to preach the gospel of peace to the world, the gospel that would make men free, the gospel of tolerance and respect for others. *Irish Press* 27 October 1939
- ^{xiv} 1870-1953 *Letters* was published in Edinburgh, 1922, <https://archive.org/details/lettersonpolisha00sarouoft>
- ^{xv} J M Dillon T.D., seconding, said "Freedom founded on truth was the hope of mankind... It was not freedom by consent that was imperilled today, but individual liberty itself. He had been struck in recent years by the lack of enthusiasm amongst the rising generation for liberty. He believed a great many of them thought that efficiency, or rather expediency in getting something done was more important... Freedom by consent was not enough. Freedom founded on truth was the hope of mankind. Lawful government ruled by the delegated authority of God and was itself subject to the superior natural law ordained, which not only entitles it to obedience but required it to respect the antecedent rights of each member of the society over which it had been placed to rule... If the freedom in the world was to survive it must be founded on truth and supported by justice, and that was not enough, for unless it was surrounded by charity, hatred would break in and tear down the most perfect human institutions that could be conceived by the mind of man". *Irish Independent*, 27 October 1939
- ^{xvi} Wojciech Korfanty 1873-1939
- ^{xvii} Teschen is the modern spelling
- ^{xviii} Marian Seyda 1879-1964, Minister of Foreign Affairs, 1923 and Minister of Congressional Affairs, 1940-44 with the Polish Government in Exile
- ^{xix} In his memoirs he is critical of Colonel Beck's re-annexation of October 1938
- ^{xx} *The Test Is Poland*, London, 1939

^{xxi} Mickiewicz translated Thomas Moore's *The Meeting of the Waters* into Polish c. 1827/8

Czyż jest na całym świecie tak miłe ustronie,
Jak dolina, gdzie jasne zlewają się źródła?
Dolino! będę w sercu błyszczeć kwiaty twoje,
Póki w duszy ostatni promyk życia płonie.

Nie dlatego o tobie tak wspominać miło,
Że cię szmaragd odziewa i kryształ oblewa,
Że masz żywe strumienie, urodziwe drzewa:
Ach, w tobie coś droższego, coś miłszego było!

Tu byli ukochani przyjaciele moi;
Oni rozleli lubość w lubej okolicy,
Oni czuli, że piękność, która ziemię stroi,
Miłszą jest, kiedy w miłej odbita żrenicy.

Daj Boże, bym wrócił w to rozkoszne ustronie
I obok mych przyjaciół spoczął na twym łonie,
Kiedy przeminą wszystkie życia niepogody
I mieszają się serca, jako twoje wody!

(Dzieła, vol 1 – Wiersze Czytelnik: Warsaw, 1993).

<https://patrickcorness.files.wordpress.com/2011/12/translation-ireland-polish-irish-issues-in-translation.pdf>

^{xxii} Napoleon Stanisław Adam Feliks Zygmunt Krasiński 1812-1859

^{xxiii} Henryk Adam Aleksander Pius Sienkiewicz 1846-1916 He was awarded a Nobel Prize in Literature, 1905

^{xxiv} Stephen Zeromski 1864-1925

^{xxv} Władysław Stanisław Reymont 1864-1925 He was awarded a Nobel Prize in Literature, 1924

^{xxvi} Jan Alojzy Matejko 1830-1893

^{xxvii} Stanisław Moniuszko 1819-1873

^{xxviii} Karol Maciej Szymanowski 1882-1937

^{xxix} Mieczysław Karłowicz 1876-1909

^{xxx} The concert broadcast, *Polish Hour*, 2 June, 1936, consisted of the above introductory talk followed by two recitations: *Father's Return*, *Vision of* (Mickiewicz) and *On the death of Marshal Pilsudski* (Watson Kirckonnel) and *Three pieces for cello* (Karłowicz), Ida Starkie O'Reilly; *Theme Varie and four Etudes* (Szymanowski), Douglas French-Mullen, piano; *Songs* (Szymanowski and Kamiński) Jean Nolan, soloist; and Polish National Anthem. The station orchestra was conducted by Dr. O'Brien, led by Terry O'Connor and compeered by the author.

^{xxxi} Lucjan Żeligowski 1865-1947

^{xxxii} Inhabitants of historic Polesia; now a distinct cultural and ethnic population in Belarus, but have apparently become assimilated in surrounding countries

^{xxxiii} Bohdan Khmelnytsky 1595-1657

^{xxxiv} Pavlo Skoropadsky 1873-1945

^{xxxv} Anton Denikin 1872-1947

^{xxxvi} Symon Petliura 1879-1926

^{xxxvii} Mikhail Nikolayevich Muravyov 1796-1866

^{xxxviii} Georgy Yevgenyevich Lvov 1861-1925 & Alexander Fyodorovich Kerensky 1881-1970

^{xxxix} While, In 1942, he supported Sikorski's policy of seeking rapprochement with Russia His first thoughts on hearing about the German invasion, taken from his memoirs, were "And it was, may I be forgiven this violent digression, into that impassable Ukrainian mud, snow, frost and blizzard that Hitler threw his Panzer and motorised legions in 1941! The first thought that occurred to me when I heard of the invasion was: what a stupendous, unique opportunity to be rid of the two evils at a same by, first, letting Hitler deal some devastating blows to the Soviet forces and then by letting mother nature take care of Hitler's legions! This was not to be. The Western Allies chose to pump into the tottering Soviets all conceivable assistance as long as they attained the creation of a Frankenstein monster they do not know how to deal with otherwise than by re-

creating a German Frankenstein monster. There certainly never was any 'miracle' of Stalingrad or any other 'miracles' that could be put to the credit of the Soviet armies. Miracles, if any, could be traced to the facts that the lethal dose administered by Hitler to his own forces took well over three years to produce its deathly affect and that the Russo-German campaign which by all standards of military judgement, ought to have ended during the winter 1941-42 by a disaster for the Germans far worse than the Napoleonic disaster in 1812, dragged into 1945!"

^{xi} Stanisław Grabski 1871-1949

^{xii} Władysław Albert Anders 1892-1970, he visited Ireland in the early May 1957

^{xiii} *Za naszą i waszą wolność*