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BUREAU OF PEACE

POLISH - CZECH RELATIONS



W A R S A W — 1 9 3 6

PUBLISHED BY THE POLISH INSTITUTE FOR COLLABORATION WITH FOREIGN
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WACŁAW KRZYŻANOWICZ

PROFESOR WYDZIAŁU FILOZOFII I HISTORII NAUCZANIA
W WYDZIALE NAUK POLSKICH I NAUK SPOŁECZNYCH
UNIWERSYTETU WARSZAWSKIEGO

POLISH-CZECH RELATIONS



1080499

DRUKARNIA WSPÓLCZESNA, SP. Z O. O., WARSZAWA, SZPITALNA Nr. 10.

BIBLIOTEKA
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FOREWARD.

I am a decided partisan of mutual friendly understanding between all nations, and for that reason especially between the Poles and Czechs, who are a neighbouring nation and linguistically next to the Slovaks the most akin to us.

For nearly forty years I have maintained friendly relations with many Czechs and, although privately I have often told them the bitter truth, yet neither in the press nor at public meetings and international congresses have I preferred a claim against the Czechs and their policy. In my opinion, polemics in the press and appeals to any international forum do not usually improve but, on the contrary, embitter mutual relations. I also expected that thanks to the efforts and collaboration of numerous Polish friends of Czechoslovakia and Czech friends of Poland the mutual relations between the two nations would, in the course of time, take a more favourable turn. And yet we have to admit to-day that the labours of Polish-Czech and Czech-Polish associations have not

produced the desired results. These associations manifest a great deal of good will, but they have often sinned by a lack of sincerity and civil courage. Instead of elucidating many problems, analysing them in a friendly spirit and trying to find the real causes of misunderstandings and the means for removing them, they have occupied themselves in arranging banquets, celebrations and festivities and have offered to the community only that, which Masaryk rightly designated, when speaking of the prewar Slavophiles, as "Slovenske deklamovanki" (Slav declamations). And thus it escaped our notice that the friction in Polish-Czech relations has reached a stage which cannot be conjured by any "declamations". It is therefore the aim of the present book to elucidate the essential and deeper reasons of the friction existing in Czech-Polish relations and to analyze the means of eliminating or at least of mitigating it to a degree in which it would cease to poison the political atmosphere in both countries whose common boundary has a length of almost 1,000 kilometres.

I am of the opinion that in order to achieve a real understanding between the Poles and the Czechs it would be necessary to be bold enough to adopt the principle of John Huss: "Search for the truth, speak the truth and defend the truth until death". Truth in this case would undoubtedly hurt both the pro-Polish Czechs and pro-Czech Poles. However, a candid

acknowledgment of the true situation would be conducive to an understanding and might alone lead to a future friendship between the two nations, or at least to that relationship which, in my opinion, would be still more important, i. e. to a peaceful collaboration based on firm foundations.

At the moment when this book had already been sent to the printers, the press announced that the venerable President of the Czechoslovakian Republic, Professor Masaryk, had resigned his high office. The chief creator of modern Czechoslovakia, rightly named by his countrymen for his great merits "The Father of the Country", has retired into private life. He is not only one of the greatest Czechs living, but also one of the greatest statesmen of Europe.

But in acknowledging this fact in the interest of truth, it has to be admitted for truth's sake also, that as regards his policy towards Poland Professor Masaryk has committed a grave error. That great statesman, as far as his views on Poland were concerned, has yielded to small men.

He has not followed Huss and Žyžka, but like Komensky and Palacky he underestimated Poland, her strength and importance, and overestimated the forces hostile to her.

Beyond the old aristocratic Poland he did not seem to have perceived the new Poland, democratic and progressive.

1. A THOUSAND YEARS OF HISTORY.

Contrary to common belief and expectation based on the kinship of blood and language of both nations and on their common dangers and interests, Polish-Czech relations in the course of their thousand years' history were by no means idyllic. On the contrary they were often inimical.

The Polish annalist Gall (at the beginning of the XII century) called the Czechs "the most bitter enemies of Poland" ("infestissimi polonorum inimici"). And the Czech historian Goll says that even St. Adalbert (died in 997), "the common saint of the Czechs and the Poles, could not accomplish the miracle of awakening brotherly love between the kindred nations".

In the X century the Czech princes of the House of Przemysl conquered and annexed to Bohemia a section of Polish territory including Cracow. The Polish king Boleslas the Valiant in the XI century desiring to unite the territories of Poland and Bohemia in one state, occupied Bohemia in 1003. A year later he had to leave Prague, due to German pressure, but he kept under his sceptre Moravia and Western Slo-

vakia. After the death of Boleslas the Valiant the Czech duke Brzetyslaw endeavoured once more to join Polish territories to Bohemia. He even conquered Gniezno, the then capital of Poland, but, threatened by the German emperor who desired to prevent the union of two Slav countries, he withdrew from Poland, after having plundered its capital. Przemysl Ottokar II helped the Teutonic Knights against Poland and in 1267 adopted a fantastic plan to convert to Christianity, and to annex politically Lithuania, Jacwiez and Galindia. His son Venceslas, basing his claims on the forged last will of Gryfina, widow of Leszek the Black of Poland, claimed the principalities of Cracow and Sandomir, defeated Ladislas the Brief of Poland and, with the support of Polish ecclesiastical dignitaries, crowned himself King of Poland in 1300. Upon the extinction of the House of Przemysl, Bohemian kings of the Luxemburg dynasty, John and his son Charles IV, the German emperor, took advantage of the subdivision of Polish Silesia into small principalities and of the perpetual menace threatening Poland from the Teutonic Knights along the northern frontier, and joined Polish Silesia to Bohemia. And at the battle of Grunwald in 1410, although the chief of the Hussites Zyzka fought on the side of Poland, the royal Bohemian forces fought the Poles on the side of the Teutonic Knights.

During one century there was a relaxation of the

inimical Czech policy toward Poland, when the Hussites were in power in Bohemia. Žyžka promoted the candidature of Ladislas Jagiełło to the throne of Bohemia. But the Catholic Polish clergy, prompted by religious considerations, frustrated that plan. It was only after the death of George Podiebrad (died 1471) that the Jagiellons (Ladislas and his son Louis) occupied the thrones of Bohemia and Hungary during a term of over half a century. When Louis fell at Mohacz (1526) both crowns, the Bohemian and Hungarian, passed from the Jagiellons to the Hapsburgs.

The Polish detachment of Lisowski which was sent by the Polish king Sigismund III, an ardent catholic, to the assistance of the Hapsburgs, contributed to the rout of the Czechs at the battle of the White Mountain (1620). After that rout a large Czech emigration (36,000 families) came to settle in Poland and was received with great friendship and hospitality by the Poles. The famous Czech theologian, pedagogue and politician Komensky spent many years of exile in Poland. But he repaid the hospitality received by treason, siding with the Swedes when they invaded Poland. Komensky was inviting England, Hungary, Switzerland and Danzig to make a crusade on Poland at the time when the Poles were beginning to repulse the Swedish invasion. In his hostility to Poland Komensky was prompted by religious fanaticism and Czech patriotism. He was hoping that the Swedes,

whom he thought invincible champions of Protestantism, would conquer Poland, smash catholic Austria, restore freedom to the Czechs and enable the "Bohemian brothers" to return to their mother country. Upon the repulse of the Swedish invasion by the Poles, Komensky was compelled to flee and he revenged his frustrated hopes by publishing a pamphlet full of falsehood and venom against Poland, whom he slandered in the Western world. At the time of the partition of Poland, in the epoch of the French Revolution and the Wars of Napoleon, the gentry and upper middleclass of Bohemia were almost completely germanized and faithful to Austria. Many Frenchmen, Italians and Hungarians, but no Czechs, participated and died in the struggles for the freedom of Poland during the XVIII and XIX century. The Polish Revolution of 1831 found a powerful response in the German literature in the famous "Polenlied". Simultaneously the Czechs, as Austrian officials in the era of absolutism, were eagerly and unscrupulously germanizing the Poles in Galicia. The Czech patriots regarded the idea of Polish independence as a "delusive dream" and condemned the Polish struggles for independence, especially those that were directed against Russia. Palacky, "the father of the Czech nation" said at a meeting of Czech deputies summoned on the occasion of the Polish insurrection in 1863, that "he saw the liberation of Slavdom solely through the Russian Czar",

that he "did not believe in the victory of the insurrection, but should such victory be achieved, it would be our (i. e. Czech) greatest misfortune". In one of his articles he clearly said: "the Poles do not deserve any help and consideration". Thirty years later Masaryk upon his return from a journey to Russia wrote in 1891 that the Poles must become reconciled, just as the Czechs have become reconciled, to the idea that in the present world situation they cannot possess an independent state. Professor Masaryk remained, just like Palacky in the past, an adversary of the independence of Poland until the fall of Czardom, and in 1920 he was like Palacky in 1863 against any help being given to the Poles against Russia, even Bolshevik Russia. "The Czechs — says Dmowski — striving themselves for their independence did not assist us in our aspirations at the time when old Russia still existed, they took a rather pro-Russian stand and planned over our heads their political and economic union with Russia".

As will be seen from this brief historical sketch of Polish-Czech relations from the X to the XX century, the fact of Polish-Czech friendship, so often advanced by pro-Czech enthusiasts, cannot be proved historically. No undue importance, however, should be attributed to it. A Pole, or a Czech or a German of our times can and ought to strive for mutual understanding notwithstanding ancient struggles.

2. THE LAST TWENTY YEARS.

Czech policy toward Poland within the last twenty years has a greater importance to us than in bygone times. Polish foreign policy within that period was conducted at first by Dmowski and Paderewski and later by Joseph Piłsudski. As regards the foreign policy of Czechoslovakia it remained throughout that time, and still remains, in the hands of Professor Masaryk and Dr. Benes. It must be regretfully stated that the policy of both these prominent Czech statesmen has been all through unfriendly to Poland, being but seldom interrupted by short periods of collaboration and by an attitude that might be called correct. It was only because of the relative weakness and limitation of Czech influence that the Czech policy toward Poland has not done more harm to the latter. It is true that Masaryk, according to his own words, sympathised in his childhood with the Polish insurrection in 1863. As a mature man, however, when from a Slovak he evolved into a conscious Czech, Masaryk changed his views and dropped his Polish sympathies.

He wrote in 1894 that in the Polish-Russian conflict he thought it quite justified (jiste opravneny) that "our (i. e. Czech) antipathy should be given to clerical and aristocratic Poland". Simultaneously, in the fight for the Cieszyn (Teschen) district, Masaryk's organ "Cas" announced the slogan: "in Silesia we are with the Germans against the Poles".

I may state categorically that during the last years before the war Masaryk was not pro-Polish, he was not even a partisan of Polish-Czech collaboration. During his conversations with me in Prague in 1908 and in Warsaw in 1909 he frankly admitted being a partisan of Austria and said that the Czechs in Vienna ought, for both political and economic reasons, form a block with the Germans against the Poles in Galicia. Not only did Masaryk not show any sympathy to us, but he maintained a greater reserve to us than any other "distinguished foreigner". We could feel that the Czech statesman had long forgotten the sympathies of the Slovak boy to Poland.

Obviously no one has the right to reproach Masaryk for such an attitude to us and he rather deserves respect for his sincerity and frankness. As once said by Professor Baudouin de Courtenay "no nation has either the duty or even the cause to love another nation". The idea of independent Poland was for Professor Masaryk until 1917 a "delusive dream". And it is necessary to state that even our former con-

querors, Russia and Germany, preceded Professor Masaryk in at least formally recognizing the right of Poland to independence.

After the international recognition of the principle of Czech and Polish independence, and during the diplomatic struggles for the frontiers of the new states, Dmowski countenanced without reservation the territorial programme of the Czechs (except their claims to Cieszyn) and, as he states himself, he did so "irrespectively of the attitude that might be adopted by the Czechs to our cause, for it lies in our (Polish) interests that Bohemia should exist, and that she should be as strong as possible, although of course not at our expense"... "The Czechs however, says Dmowski, did not at all countenance our territorial claims. They wanted a Poland that would be small, weak, strictly ethnographic, so that she should not exceed Bohemia in power, and so that Bohemia could have a common frontier with Russia. The ethnographic principle, however, did not restrain the Czechs when they seized Polish Cieszyn" (The Policy of Poland and the Restoration of the Polish State, pages 252 — 255).

"Efforts to detach Eastern Galicia from Poland were made even in France and the Czechs assiduously participated in those efforts" (page 469).

The Czechs issued maps in 1917 on which Poland is shown not only without Eastern Galicia but even

without the Chełm district. And in 1918/1919 during the fighting between the Poles and the Ukrainians, the Czechs helped the latter and subsequently endeavoured to create in Prague an Ukrainian irredenta against Poland.

3. THE CZECH INVASION OF SILESIA IN 1919.

The anti-Polish policy of Masaryk and Benes manifested itself most glaringly in the unexpected armed raid of the Czechs on Cieszyn on the 23rd January 1919 and in the action against Poland during the Polish-Bolshevik war in 1920.

The object of the Polish-Czech frontier conflict concerning the Cieszyn district may seem territorially unimportant. Yet the number of Poles living on the territory of the two ethnographically Polish counties belonging to Czechoslovakia (Cieszyn and Frystat) is 122,000 according to Polish statistics compiled by the Committee for the Studies of Polish-Czech Relations. According to the Austrian census of 1910 there were living on the territory of these two counties 122,224 Poles, or 76.7% of the population, the remainder being composed of Germans with an insignificant fraction of Czechs. The Czech census of 1930 shows only 76,230 Poles in that territory. Until the war, after a lengthy struggle during which the Czechs, acting on Masaryk's instructions sided with

the Germans (Czech foremen and engineers employed in German firms acted against the interests of Polish miners) the situation in the Cieszyn district became stabilized to such a degree that only in five or six villages was the conflict still persisting between the Poles and the Czechs. Prominent Czech politicians, like Stanek and Kłofacz, were telling the Polish deputy Włodzimierz Tetmajer: "For the sake of a great political principle and the great future of both nations we will certainly not fight about one or two villages. That is a minor conflict which will not be difficult to settle". When Austria broke into fragments, the Polish National Council in Cieszyn and the Czech Narodni Vybor fixed without difficulty a temporary frontier on the 5th November 1918, leaving the final settlement to Warsaw and Prague or ultimately to the Peace Conference. Nobody in Poland anticipated any armed aggression on the part of the Czechs. The Poles in Cieszyn could have easily mustered at that time some 20,000 soldiers and thus prevent any Czech attack. But the Polish National Council in Cieszyn, trusting the Czechs, did not agree to any compulsory mobilisation and allowed merely the enrolling of volunteers. The Polish socialists opposed even any voluntary enlistment. Prague knew that Poland had practically no army at that time, that she had to carry on a war in Eastern Galicia with the Ukrainians, with the Soviets on her eastern border and with the Ger-

mans on their western borderland. The question whether Poland could exist at all was discussed in Prague in the press and at meetings, and that question was answered negatively. It is significant that not a single voice was raised in Prague to say that in case Poland were to be seriously endangered, the Czechs would come to her assistance, in spite of the famous Masaryk's aphorism "Without a free Poland there cannot be a free Czechoslovakia". Just the reverse: the Czechs decided to take advantage of the existing critical situation of Poland and occupied by force a part of ethnographic Poland. And Masaryk justified that attack which was contrary to the agreement of November 5th, 1918. In an interview published in the Temps on February 14th, 1919, Masaryk stated: "We had no choice except to take the coalfields by force; it would have been impossible to secure the exploitation of those coalfields by means of an agreement; therefore force had to decide". Bismarck could not better express and apply the principle "Might is Right" than Professor Masaryk, a pacifist, has done. (Of course the Czechs would be indignant were that principle ever to be applied to them). In spite of the Czech attack and of their obtaining, as far back as in 1917 and behind the back of Dmowski, the promise of France to grant them the whole of Austrian Silesia, the Supreme Council, acting in accordance with Wilson's principle of selfdetermination, decided to call



for a plebiscite in the Cieszyn district. Unfortunately no plebiscite was held. For a promise (unfulfilled!) of assistance in her struggle with the Bolsheviks in 1920, Poland was compelled to renounce the plebiscite and entrust the settlement of the dispute to the Council of Ambassadors which divided the Cieszyn district and assigned two Polish counties to Czechoslovakia. In that division Poland did not receive a single village with a Czech majority. The Czechs, however, received a territory in which, according to the census of 1910, 69 communes had a Polish majority of over 90% and many had a relative Polish majority, for instance Bogumin (32.2% Poles and 7.3% Czechs).

4. THE YEAR 1920.

In 1920 Poland, devastated by four years of war carried on in her territory, with a small and insufficiently equipped army and no ammunition plants, was fighting for her existence and also, as stated by Lord d'Abernon, as a bulwark of Europe, against Bolshevik Russia. The very life of Poland depended upon supplies of war material. The road through Germany was closed, the road through Danzig was made difficult, and the road through Rumunia was too close to the front. The only secure and safe road was through Czechoslovakia, which separated Poland from the West by a narrow strip of land nearly 1,000 kilometres long. The Czechs decided not only to stop any supplies from their country to Poland, but also to prohibit the transit of goods from Hungary, Italy and France, although they realised well enough that this step would jeopardise the existence of Poland. Even when the then prime minister of Poland, W. Grabski, prompted by the Bolshevik danger, renounced the plebiscite in Silesia (and such action of the

Polish premier was in itself a guarantee of the Czech victory in Cieszyn, considering the pro-Czech attitude of the Allies at that time) — the hostility of the Czechs to Poland remained without any change. Dr. Benes who to-day takes such a resolute stand in defence of far-away Abyssinia, did not in 1920 offer any assistance to Poland, although Article 16 of the Covenant of the League of Nations was already binding at that time. Far from showing any compassion to the struggling Poles, Dr. Benes exercised every effort to prevent any help to be given to Poland by those of her friends who were ready and willing to assist her. The Hungarians, for instance, wanted to send to Poland 20,000 cavalrymen whom Poland lacked at that time. As a return for the concessions Poland made to the Czechs in Cieszyn, she only obtained from the Allies the sending of a mission with Lord d'Abernon and General Weygand at their head. When that mission was compelled by accidental damage to the engine of their train to stop in Prague for a few hours, the chiefs of the mission decided to take advantage of that accidental stop by trying to learn something positive about the situation in Poland from the competent statesmen of the neighbouring and kindred nation. Thereupon Masaryk, according to the statement of Lord d'Abernon. "not only did consider the capture of Warsaw by the Bolshevik Army a matter of certainty, but he warned us against

organizing any military assistance to the Poles on two grounds: it was certain to be completely ineffective in a military sense and it was liable to destroy the authority of the Western Powers in the subsequent negotiations for peace. By openly siding with the Poles in their hopeless position, we would do them no good and we should do to ourselves much harm". The mission, however, following definite instructions, did not avail itself of the advice of the "friends" of Poland, did not turn back and proceeded to Warsaw. A month later, after the Polish victory at Warsaw, the Allied Mission passed through Prague on their return journey. And there, says Lord d'Abernon somewhat ironically, he "was much impressed by the intelligence and the breadth of survey of M. Benes", who assured him that as soon as he will have created the Little Entente and "added Poland to it", "...we can be indifferent to any attack from the Soviets or from Russia and we can also keep Hungary quiet". He added that it would be useful to postpone the inclusion of Greece and Bulgaria in the Little Entente. And Lord d'Abernon concludes with a touch of the English sense of humour: "What a difference victory makes!"

"A month ago the atmosphere here was secretly hostile to Poland; to-day exactly the reverse. Had the Anglo-French Mission followed the advice given at Prague in July, we should have abstained from any

action at Warsaw. In that case what would have happened?" (The Eighteenth Decisive Battle of the World, pages 20—21, 112—113). Unfortunately Lord d'Abernon was mistaken in believing that the attitude of Prague to Poland became friendly after the latter's victory over the Bolsheviks. The Czechs did not cease to fight Poland. They permitted the transit of war material through Slovakia, but they applied all their efforts in France and England to oppose the eastern boundaries of Poland fixed by the Treaty of Riga and particularly tried to prevent the granting of Eastern Galicia to Poland. Only Poles and Ruthenians form the population of Eastern Galicia since the Middle Ages and not a single Czech is living there, but still the Czechs are interested in that province, because it contains oilfields and is contiguous to Russia. It is for those reasons that M. Benes strove to deprive Poland of Eastern Galicia and attempted to obtain from the League of Nations a mandate for Czechoslovakia over that province.

5. THE CZECH ANTI-POLISH PAMPHLETS.

Not much change occurred since 1920. The policy of Czechoslovakia directed by Benes remained without change, i. e. hostile to Poland. The mutual exchange of visits, certain services mutually rendered, the conclusion of treaties and agreements should not delude us or be taken as a proof of friendly relations. We exchange courtesies and services and conclude treaties with all the members and non-members of the League of Nations, even with those who are not particularly friendly to us. We exchanged many courtesies and concluded many agreements with the Czechs, but invariably we met with an attitude described by Lord d'Abernon as "secretly hostile" and with proofs of obvious unfriendliness. That may be proved by the speeches of Kramarz in Bratislava in 1925 (concerning the temporary character of the alliance with Poland and Rumania, the nonrecognition by the Czechs of the Treaty of Riga, and the striving for obtaining a common frontier with Russia), by the interview given by Masaryk in 1930 concerning Po-

morze as a danger to peace, by the countenancing of Ukrainian irredenta and the asylum granted by Czechoslovakia to Ukrainian terrorists, which is being proved now at the trial of the murderers of minister Pieracki, by attempts to undermine the alliance existing between Poland and France, by the intrigue against the election of Poland to the Council of the League of Nations and by the anti-Polish propaganda conducted by Czech press agencies. It is in Czechoslovakia and not elsewhere that was issued the most virulent anti-Polish pamphlet since the times of Komensky, and that pamphlet was written by a Czech social-democratic senator Vozka, the friend of President Masaryk, whose friendship with Vozka dated from the times when the latter was an intelligence officer of the Allies in the United States. But let us leave M. Vozka, who, after the publication of his pamphlet in German in Hitler's times, admitted that his accusations against Poland did not conform to the truth. More important is that what Professor Masaryk himself wrote about Poland in June 1922 in a short article written in English to the Slavonic Review (translated in 1934 into French and Czech and in 1925 into Polish) under the heading "The Slavs after the war". That article, written by an author of such standing as Masaryk, was for a long time considered in England as the most reliable view on Poland. Many prejudices held by some Englishmen

against Poland are due to Masaryk's article. The worse enemy of Poland among cultured men could not present her less favourably than did Masaryk on that occasion. It was the work not of a professor and scholar but of a pro-Russian, anti-Polish and anti-Ukrainian politician. In Russia, for example, Professor Masaryk does not find any Ukrainians but only "Little-Russians concerning whom Slav scholars disagree as to whether their language is different from that of the Great-Russians or is merely a dialect of the latter". But where Poland is concerned, Professor Masaryk finds even "Ukrainian oilfields" in Galicia. He endeavours to belittle the population of Poland fixing it as 17.5 million on the basis of the census of 1900, and fixing the number of Czechs and Slovaks jointly as 9.8 million. Yet at the time Masaryk cited the above figures, another census, that of 1921, has already been taken both in Poland and Czechoslovakia. According to Professor Masaryk's calculation the proportion between the Poles and the Czechoslovaks would appear to be 7 to 4, whereas in fact the proportion between the Poles and the Czechs (without the Slovaks) is 31 to 8, for there are in the world 8 million Czechs (without counting the 3 million Slovaks), i. e. as many as the Poles living in foreign countries. Professor Masaryk calls Spain, whose population in 1922 was 21 million, a great Western Power, while he includes Poland, whose

population was then 27½ million and is now almost 34 million, among the small countries of the East (from Finland, to Albania). Moreover, the population of that "small" Polish State includes, according to Masaryk "60% catholics and 40% non-catholics, i. e. orthodox, protestant and Jews, that is to say, Little-Russians, Germans, Russians and others... In view of the religious uniformity in the population of Poland's neighbours, the creed plays here an important part". Hence any intelligent man may easily draw his conclusion: Poland is a small country, endangered by minorities, devoid of vitality, afflicted by differences in creed and obviously not cultural, for, writes Masaryk "the smaller Slav nations are, with the exception of the Czechs, culturally negligible. It is only the Czechs who, by their cultural level, are akin to the Western nations".

6. THE TWO APHORISMS OF PROFESSOR MASARYK.

The adherents of "declamations" in Poland and Czechoslovakia are fond of quoting at public meetings and in the press the following two aphorisms of the Professor Masaryk: 1) "Without a free Poland there cannot be a free Czechoslovakia, but also without a free Czechoslovakia there cannot be a free Poland" and 2) "By the command of history we must form a defensive alliance". Yet both those sayings are unfortunately contradicted by history. Poland and Bohemia were never joined like Siamese twins. At the times of Boleslas the Valiant (XI century) Poland was strong and Bohemia was weak. On the other hand, Bohemia was strong in the XIII century, when Poland was weak owing to division into many principalities. Even after the downfall of Bohemia in the XVII century Poland could have remained a great power, were it not for the fact that owing to her disarmament in the XVIII century she succumbed to attack and partition. Poland had at the time of her first

partition merely 7,000 soldiers on a territory of 750,000 square kilometres and a population of 12 million, whereas her enemies had 800,000 soldiers.

The policy of Professor Masaryk is a glaring contradiction of his thesis. When striving for a free Bohemia in 1914/15 he was inaptly leaving Poland under the yoke of the Czar. In 1920 he disconnected the idea of the freedom of Czechoslovakia and of Poland to such an extent that he did not show the least concern in the preservation of a free Poland. On the contrary: for the sake of obtaining a common frontier of Czechoslovakia with Russia, Masaryk did everything in his power to deprive Poland of any outside assistance and to surrender her to the Bolsheviks. Thus Masaryk must have believed after all that a free Czechoslovakia could exist without a free Poland. As a matter of fact a strong and free Poland could undoubtedly maintain her existence, even should Czechoslovakia break up into her original ethnographic sections.

History also shows that the famous "command of history" supposedly compelling Czechoslovakia and Poland to form a defensive alliance was not obeyed either by the Czech princes of the House of Przemyśl in the Middle Ages when they strove for the subjugation of Poland, or in later times by Komenský who, expecting that the Swedes would conquer independence for the Czechs, lured them to an attack on Po-

land and worked for her partition. Neither was that command followed by Palacký who thought that the resurrection of Poland would be a misfortune for the Czechs. In recent times the leaders of the Czech nation, Masaryk and Beneš, when working for a free Czechoslovakia fought the idea of the independence of Poland, subsequently attacked her, tried to detach her south-eastern provinces, endeavoured in 1920 to deprive Poland of any help from the West and permitted to-day the almost sadistic treatment of the Polish population in that part of ethnographic Poland which has been seized by Czechoslovakia. Thus it seems that the aphorism of "historic command" is merely designed to be a Czech article of export for Poland, for it has never been applied in practice by the Czechs. It has been uttered by Professor Masaryk simply as a convention slogan in Kieff in 1917. Yet in Poland that historic command has been applied quite disinterestedly and without any reservations by the leaders of the National Democratic Party headed by Roman Dmowski and Paderewski, who countenanced the territorial claims of the Czechs even in Carpathian Ruthenia where not a single Czech is living and which forms a narrow strip approaching Russia. Those Czech claims, which were contrary to the interests of Poland, were countenanced by Poles at the time when the Czechs made every effort to belittle Poland territorially.

7. WHY ARE THE CZECHS HOSTILE TO POLAND? THE CZECH INFERIORITY COMPLEX AS A REASON OF 1) PANSLAVISM AND PRO-RUSSIAN ATTITUDE, 2) THEIR UNFRIENDLINESS TO POLAND, 3) CZECH IMPERIALISM.

The unfriendly policy of Professor Masaryk and Dr. Benes towards Poland is by no means merely the personal policy of these two Czech statesmen. The majority of Czechs endorses that policy *).

That policy may, in my opinion, change only with the lapse of time, when the majority of pre-war politicians have disappeared from Czech political life. That policy has a deep source in the prewar Czech

*) I use the definition "Czechs" and not "Czechoslovaks" for two reasons: 1) The Slovaks, Hungarians and Germans of Czechoslovakia have no reasons to be hostile to Poland. 2) There is no Czechoslovak nation in Czechoslovakia. The definition "Czechoslovak" is merely a political-geographic term. Even if the Slovaks conformed to the Czech thesis which maintains that they are not a separate nation, they would then be Czechs but not Czechoslovaks".

psychology historically evolved. The Czech anti-Polish policy is historically the result of the extraordinary difficult national situation of Czechs in pre-war days. That situation caused an inferiority complex among the Czechs, an afflicting consciousness of their smallness incomprehensible to other nations, and in order to get rid of it they turned to Pan-Slavism leaning on Russia. And as the Poles, from Kościuszko to Piłsudski were fighting the Russian aggression and were little concerned that the aggressor was a "brother Slav" — therefore the Czech patriots, who saw their salvation in Russia, thought it their duty to be more anti-Polish than the Russians themselves, especially when the Czar repaid their zeal with diamond rings and appointments as professors, engineers etc. in Russia.

Only few people fully realise the difficulties the Czechs have to face in their own independent state. Out of 15 million inhabitants of Czechoslovakia the Czechs form only 7 do 7½ million and the Slovaks approximately 2¼ million. The territory of Czechoslovakia has most unsatisfactory strategic frontiers, enclosing a narrow belt of a length of over 1,000 kilometres and an average width of only 140 kilometres. The Germans represent in Czechoslovakia almost a quarter of the population (23%) and in Bohemia proper as much as one-third. Moreover they dwell in a compact mass in the borderland along the German

frontier. According to Czech statistics of 1921, the Germans form a majority in 113 counties of which in 84 they reach 80 to 95% of the population^{*)}. The Hungarians in Czechoslovakia form almost 5% of the population and have a compact majority in many counties in the borderland. The Slovaks and Carpathian Ruthenians are demanding autonomy in their territories in which the Czechs represent only a small percentage as an immigrant element of the population.

So it is at present. And a hundred years ago the situation of the Czechs was almost hopeless. The national consciousness of the Czechs was atrophic. The first "awakeners" of the Czechs wrote predominantly not in the Czech language but in German. They viewed pessimistically the possibility of the rebirth of the Czech nation. Dobrovsky wrote in 1827: "It is our fate (I wish I was mistaken) to witness and to contribute to the final downfall of our nationality". Kollar complained that the culture of small nations is petty and sickly, and he sought a remedy in the Panslavic idea, seeing in it a way of salvation for his small nation.

In 1849 Palacky thought delusive the idea of the independence of Hungarians, Czechs, Slovaks, Ru-

^{*)} For comparison's sake I may say that in Poland the Germans form only 2% of the population, are not in a majority in any county and only in 6 counties exceed 20% of the population.

manians, Slavonians and even of the Poles. As late as in 1886 Masaryk asked the question whether "the 5 millions of the Czechs would be able to escape denationalisation in the course of time". The Czech paper "Narodni Listy" sadly wrote in 1890: "The small and weak nations must inevitably unite with the stronger nations and dissolve in them, irrespectively whether they are kindred or alien nations".

In the introduction to his book "Ceska Otazka" Masaryk wrote in 1894: "I also deplore our inferiority complex but am convinced that the reason of it lies not in the smallness of our nation. Yet I am convinced that the inferiority complex, which is afflicting us today, will pass in the course of time". Professor Masaryk thought then that in order to remove the "smallness complex" of the Czechs a thorough analysis of the national defects should be made and that the Czechs must strive to raise their cultural level, for even a small nation may preserve its nationality by its culture. Yet the way pointed out by Masaryk was not popular with the Czechs. To the mind of an average Czech another way of overcoming the smallness complex was more appealing: the consciousness that he is a member of the great Slav community, which meant in practice that he should become a relative of the great Russian nation, from whom he may expect support and assistance. The Czech was raising his moral in his difficult nationalistic struggle

in the same manner as the Montenegrin, who in reply to an embarrassing question concerning the numerical strength of the Montenegrin nation said: "Together with the Russians it counts one hundred million people".

The war has given to the Czechs other and better means to overcome their inferiority complex: the possibility for 6 or 7 million Czechs to establish an extensive state to include large territories not ethnographically Czechish. The means used by the Czechs were decidedly imperialistic. The extreme Czech imperialists of the war period were not satisfied to obtain historic Bohemia only, but demanded (Masaryk's book, page 84) Vienna from Austria, the whole of former Silesia and other territories which formerly belonged to the Bohemian Crown even for the shortest time, and moreover such territories which never belonged to that "Crown", as for instance Slovakia, Carpathian Ruthenia, a corridor to Yugoslavia dividing Hungary from Austria, the Nowy Targ district (in Poland) and a mandate over Eastern Galicia. In brief, the Czechs demanded a large state in which the Czechs would represent only a minority of less than 25% of the population.

Masaryk understood the absurdity and irrelevancy of such extreme imperialism of his countrymen *).

*) That imperialism manifests itself today in a rather naive form. At the Brussels Exposition in 1935 there was exposed at

He rejected the idea of the annexation of Vienna and Breslau and of creating a Czecho-Yugoslav corridor, but at the same time he changed his prewar view as to the best means of overcoming the inferiority complex of the Czechs: instead of doing it by only the raising of the level of culture of his people, Masaryk adopted imperialistic tendencies. That imperialism was skillfully presented to the West by Benes as an endeavour to create another Switzerland. It must be admitted, however, that Masaryk adopted the imperialistic stand after considerable hesitation, for, he confesses, he nourished doubts "whether the Czechs were mature enough to maintain an independent state... with such considerable minorities."

Yet once having taken an imperialistic course, Masaryk exercised it with great talent, consecutiveness and force and without any pretence of advancing any "humanitarian" idea, on which might be based the claim for an ethnographic or federal Czechoslovakia. Masaryk simply stood by the rights of the "Bohemian Crown", i. e. by the principle of restitution of all former Czech territories, including those which were once upon a time conquered by former Bohemian kings, as for example the duchy of Cieszyn con-

the Czechoslovakian Pavilion a map of Bohemia in the 13th and 14th century on which the whole of Poland was shown as a Czech province and Bohemia stretching to the Balkans and the Adriatic Sea.

quered by Bohemia from the Polish princes in the XIII and XIV century. Of course, Masaryk recognized historic rights only when they suited the Czech purpose. Masaryk not only did not recognize historic Poland within her frontiers of 1772, but opposed the awarding of Eastern Galicia to Poland who is entitled to that province not only by historic rights but by ethnographic rights as well, for the Poles are autochthonous there on equal footing with the Ruthenians. And anyhow Poland's rights to Eastern Galicia are infinitely more valid than the rights of the Czechs to Egerland. As regards Hungary, Masaryk thought that the rights of the "Crown of St. Stephen" should always give way not only to the natural rights of the Slovaks to independence but also to the rights of the Czechs to treat Slovakia as a Czech province.

In his dealings with the Slovaks, Masaryk the imperialist entirely supersedes Masaryk the humanitarian. The first official step leading to the annexation of Slovakia was made as early as on the 10th of January, 1917, long before the conclusion of an understanding with the Slovaks in Pittsburgh. On that date the Allies notified President Wilson that one of the aims of the war is the "liberation of Italians, Slavs, Rumanians and C z e c h o s l o v a k s from alien rule". It was intended at first to mention only "Slavs" in that note. But Benes succeeded, thanks to Briand's support, to insert the term "Czechoslovaks" as a

separate nation (Masaryk, World Revolution, page 197). In their dealings with the Czechs the Slovaks have always believed that they are concluding with them an agreement based on federation or autonomy. Masaryk explains that the agreement of May 30th, 1918 made in Pittsburgh, which he signed and confirmed again on the 14th of November, 1918 as President of the Czechoslovakian Republic, has no validity, because it was concluded by only the Czechs and Slovaks who were American citizens (page 307); he asserts that "territorial autonomy would be of no advantage to the Slovaks" (page 308) and that "the Slovak is more used to obeying than to commanding and ruling" (page 244). Masaryk does not admit that the Slovakian language is distinct from the Czech. That is the reason why the Komensky Slovak University in Bratislava has so far only a single Slovak professor. It must be emphasized that the uniting of the Slovaks to Bohemia has been an ancient Czech aspiration. In the pamphlet issued in Prague as early as in 1906 by the association "Czesko-Slovenska Jednota" we read of the spiritual absorption of Slovakia by the Czechs: "We must absorb spiritually and digest Slovakia as quickly as possible. We are striving for a cultural unification with the Slovaks. If we succeed in that we will become stronger nationally and culturally. Our many afflictions are due to our being a small nation. Together with the Slovaks we would

be 9 million strong. Then our national consciousness would deepen and we would be able to impose on the State (Austria-Hungary)".

Masaryk explained to the Sudetian Germans that historic right must decide in their case (page 604), that the right of selfdetermination "has so far not been clearly formulated" (page 605), that the Czech majority would sustain harm (economic interests) by the separation of the German minority, and that the separation from Czechoslovakia of say two million Germans living in the borderland would expose the remaining Germans to greater chances of denationalisation.

Masaryk's real master stroke was the obtaining of the annexation of Carpathian Ruthenia by Czechoslovakia. The American Hungarian Ruthenians desired at first to be joined either to Galicia or to Bukovina, and it was only at the convention at Scranton on the 12th of November 1918 that they decided to join Czechoslovakia, a state which was to be founded on the federalistic basis. But without waiting for the resolution of Scranton, the Czechs demanded three and a half years previously the annexation of Hungarian Ruthenia by Czechoslovakia. As early as on the 15th of April, 1915 Masaryk submitted a memorandum to the British Foreign Office stating that the Russian dynasty would be very popular in Bohemia and that the plans and wishes of Russia would be decisive for

the Czechs. He demanded therefore the joining of Carpathian Ruthenia to Czechoslovakia because that province constitutes a corridor between Bohemia and Russia.

At the time of the Bolshevik offensive on Warsaw in 1920 Professor Masaryk, disbelieving in the victory of Poland, declared to Mr. Gillerson, the delegate of the Russian Red Cross: "We consider Hungarian Ruthenia as a temporary possession which we shall return to Russia at the first opportunity. You may say so officially to your Government". At the Peace Conference the Czechs succeeded in annexing that province as an autonomous territory. The Czech imperialists attach great value to Carpathian Ruthenia, which they view as a starting point toward the obtaining of a common frontier with Russia at the expense of Rumania or of Poland.

Masaryk accused Dmowski of imperialism during the war. He might have been right, for there is no large historic state in the world that is not imperialistic. At least I do not know of such a state. But I do not know whether Professor Masaryk fails to realise that were he the guide of Polish policy at that time, he would, applying in a manner peculiar to him the principle of historic rights (the Crown of Boleslas the Valiant and the Jagiellons) and the natural rights (kinship of language and a federation more or less voluntary) demand and probably obtain a sort of

Polish-Slav-Lithuanian State with a territory of over one million square kilometres and a population of 50 million, a state stretching from the Oder to the Dnieper, with an autonomous Lithuania, Ruthenia and Slovakia. His next step would be to persuade the Lithuanians and Ruthenians, just as he did the Slovaks, that autonomy is of no advantage to them, that they are used rather to obeying than to ruling. And M. Benes, were he the Polish minister of foreign affairs, would try to convince Europe that a new four-lingual Switzerland has been created. When reproaching imperialism to Dmowski, Professor Masaryk has obviously overlooked the fact that his own territorial programme was infinitely more imperialistic than that of Dmowski.

8. A CONVERSATION WITH A CZECHOSLOVAKIAN POLITICIAN.

I was among those who, overlooking the sad past and the not too cheerful present, thought it imperative to work for a Polish-Czech rapprochement, hoping that the unfriendly policy of Masaryk and Benes towards Poland would not remain eternally so and that the new generation of the Czechs, nurtured in a free and a fair-sized Czechoslovakia and thus cured of the smallness complex and reliance on Russia only, would renounce the policy striving for a common frontier with Russia, which policy is endangering peace and is clearly directed against Poland and Rumania. Several years ago a prominent Czechoslovakian politician (many times a cabinet minister) gave me the following answer during a friendly chat in which I was speaking of the unfriendly attitude of the Czech policy toward Poland and of the unnecessary and irritating oppression of the Polish autochthonous population in Czechoslovakian Silesia. To me those two facts were the main obstacles to a Polish-

Czech understanding. My Czech friend replied: "Our policy has certainly been so far unfriendly to Poland to a certain degree. It will unfortunately remain unfriendly as long as M. Benes is our foreign minister and his dismissal during President Masaryk's lifetime is unthinkable. In Cieszyn Silesia the partisans of Benes form the vanguard of Czech chauvinism in the struggle with the Poles. I may, however, assure you that among the masses of our people no hostility to Poland is felt. The vast majority of the Agrarian party, in spite of some economic conflicts, favours an understanding with Poland. Even in the Kramarz group, formerly pro-Russian and anti-Polish, there is an increasing tendency for an understanding and rapprochement with Poland". When I enquired about the real causes of the different attitude of various Czech political parties to Poland, my friend mentioned the difference of views concerning the Czech-German relations. In his opinion President Masaryk and M. Benes are convinced (that was before Hitler assumed power in Germany) that the problem of the German minority in Czechoslovakia had been satisfactorily settled and that the relations of Czechoslovakia with Germany were quite good. They thought that Germany would apparently never try to annex the Sudetian province. Only the frontiers of Poland are, in their opinion, threatened by Germany (the famous interview with Masaryk concerning Pomorze in 1930).

War will occur sooner or later on account of Pomorze, they thought, but such a war will be local only. Any closer link with Poland would unnecessarily draw Czechoslovakia into a dangerous conflict, of which that country must be wary, being threatened by Hungary and having an unfavourable strategic situation and being weak in the military sense. Such a view, according to my friend, is not shared by the Czech political parties, which oppose the policy of Benes. They believe that a German attack on Pomorze would in no case be a local conflict but would cause an European war. A German victory would endanger the safety of Czechoslovakia and therefore the closest understanding both political and military, with Poland is in the interest of Czechoslovakia.

At the time I held that conversation with the Czech politician public opinion in Poland was pro-Czech without any reservations. I emphasized that fact to my friend and pointed out that, in view of the increasing oppression of the Poles in Czechoslovakian Silesia, the pro-Czech attitude of Polish public opinion would not last long. Therefore we, who strive in Poland for a Czech-Polish rapprochement, might be left soon in a vacuum if the present state of affairs does not change. Since the time of that conversation, Polish-Czech relations have not improved at all, they are becoming gradually more and more strained and

the oppression of the Poles in Czech Silesia has reached an unprecedented tension.

According to a prominent Czech publicist, dr. Kahanek, the Czech chauvinists believe that in 50 years' time there will be left no trace of the Poles in the Cieszyn district. Polish public opinion, which is generally speaking pro-Czech, is painfully surprised by the tension which has arisen between the two countries. Yet that feeling of surprise, felt by the Poles now as in 1919 when the Czechs raided Polish Silesia, is a proof that the public opinion in Poland has a scanty understanding of the Czech policy toward Poland. It may be said of the majority of Poles what Masaryk said of his countrymen appearing at the meeting in Moscow in 1867: "We did not know Russia, just because we were pro-Russian from the very beginning" (Ceska Otazka, page 112). To the "brotherly oppression" of the Czechs are subject other Slav minorities besides the Poles. They believe that to make Czechs out of the Germans and Hungarians would be rather difficult because of the difference in language, but they think the task would be easier with the Poles and the Ruthenians whose languages are similar to Czech. The Czechs treat the Slovaks in the same way as the Russians treat the Ukrainians, i. e. they do not recognize the separate nationality of the latter.

I entirely share the opinion of my friend the Czechoslovakian politician, that as long as the Czechoslovakian policy is conducted by Benes it will remain if not openly at least secretly hostile to Poland, as Lord d'Abernon expressed it, I may be reproached for revealing the above mentioned facts which, people may think, will rather embitter than improve relations. I am of a different opinion. The facts I stated are little known in Czechoslovakia and the Czech public opinion is convinced that so far the Czechoslovakian policy has been friendly, or at least correct, toward Poland and that only Poland jointly with Germany works for the ruin of Czechoslovakia. I think it imperative that the Czechoslovakian people should be fully informed, provided the Czechoslovakian censor allows it.

9. THE FOUNDATIONS OF POLISH AND CZECHOSLOVAKIAN POLICY.

I have said previously that I do not attribute undue importance to the unfriendly relations of a thousand years' standing. I may say that the last twenty years of unfriendliness count more but here as well it all depends upon whether the present hostile policy of leading Czechoslovakian statesmen toward Poland will be continued.

In order to ascertain whether any change is possible in the relations of Czechoslovakia with Poland, we shall analyze the fundamental aims of the policy of the two countries.

To Poland relations with Germany and Russia have a paramount importance. Poland, a pacifistically inclined country, wanted always and wants still the preservation of friendly relations with both those countries. She is desirous of settling by peaceful means any possible misunderstandings which might arise in future in her relations with those two contiguous countries. That is why Poland concluded

within recent years a pact of non-aggression both with National-Socialist Germany and Bolshevik Russia. Those pacts caused great surprise to many foreign politicians who did not fully understand the political situation of Poland. As a safeguard of an unprovoked aggression on the part of any of her two big neighbours, Poland concluded two purely defensive alliances, with France in the West and with Rumania in the East. The relations with Czechoslovakia have a secondary importance for Poland and are subordinated to her relations with Germany and Russia.

To Czechoslovakia her relations with Germany and Hungary have a fundamental importance. Hence the Czechs strove since the end of the war and are striving to this day for the maintainance of correct neighbourly relations with Germany. They succeeded in doing so until the advent of Hitler in Germany. As a safeguard of German aggression the Czechs concluded an alliance with France and recently with Russia as well. They created the Little Entente as a safeguard against Hungary. The Czechs, it seems, also do not consider relations with Poland to be of fundamental importance to them.

Thus the Czech state reason would not clash with that of Poland were it not for the Czech aspiration to obtain a common frontier with Russia. Such a frontier would, in the words of a leading Czech statesman, be politically equivalent to an access to the sea

for Czechoslovakia. This Czech aspiration would materialize solely in case of a catastrophe befalling Poland or Rumania. We could afford to consider that Czech aspiration as a clumsy attempt without any consequence, were it not for the fact that it expresses itself in a steadily unfriendly and aggressive attitude of the Czechs to Poland; it is due to that attitude that the Czechs opposed the frontiers of Poland, attacked her in 1919, acted to her detriment in 1920, countenanced the Ukrainian irredenta and harboured Ukrainian terrorists, encouraged Lithuanian imperialism which strove for the annexation of Vilno (where the Lithuanians do not even represent 2% of the population!), abused Poland in the press, especially in the organs of the Benes group, and questioned the validity of her frontiers, tried to undermine the Polish-French and Polish-Rumanian friendship, and finally conducted an almost exterminating struggle with the Polish minority in the Cieszyn district.

10. WHAT WOULD BE THE MEANING OF A DEFENSIVE ALLIANCE BETWEEN POLAND AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA.

A military alliance with Czechoslovakia would not be of paramount importance to Poland, although it would represent a power of 50 million souls. In case Poland was attacked by Russia we could not expect any great help from Czechoslovakia in which a pro-Russian sentiment is prevailing. Considering the strained Polish-Czech relations, the events of 1920 might repeat themselves, and even if Poland was weak, Czechoslovakia might side with Russia. In case of a German aggression against Poland, the Czechs would either remain neutral in accordance with their present policy, or even if they came to the assistance of Poland they would not be able to render her any effective help. For in the Czechoslovakian army every third commissioned officer and private would be either a German or a Hungarian and might behave in the same way as the Czechs behaved in the Austrian army during the Great War.

Moreover, it seems that the Czechoslovakian soldiers entertain more pacifist feelings than is admissible in an army called upon to fight another army less pacifistically inclined. In case of an aggression on the part of either Russia or Germany, Poland could count above all on her own strength first of all, and secondly on the alliance with great powers. Thus it would be until the time when collective security against aggression is created by the League of Nations upon foundations that would be stronger than now. Poland has to conduct a world policy and cannot in any case base her security on a Polish-Czechoslovakian alliance only.

For the Czechs an alliance with Poland would be of a greater importance than vice-versa, if only for the reason that Poland is a much stronger state than Czechoslovakia. Yet to neither of the two countries would their alliance have a decisive importance. Against Hungary Czechoslovakia would be defended by the Little Entente, against Germany by France and Russia. In my opinion, the Czechs overestimate the importance and certainty of Russian assistance and do not sufficiently appreciate the dangers connected with the marching of a Russian army into Czechoslovakia. *)

*) Even during the honeymoon of the Czech-Bolshevik alliance a Bolshevnik author publishes in the „Izvestia“ an account of a visit of Soviet journalists to Czechoslovakia under the ominous headline: „The undermined fields in Central Europe“.

But even supposing that Czechoslovakia could count on Russia's support, should Russia be fully occupied in the East, or Hungary arrive at an understanding with Rumania, or changes occur in the French policy — then an alliance with Poland would be decisive for the security of Czechoslovakia. The stronger Poland becomes, the more an alliance with her would be valuable for Czechoslovakia. For the anti-Polish attitude of Czechoslovakia was caused by her premature conviction that Poland is weak and constantly exposed to catastrophes.

Poland has no reason to conduct an anti-Czech policy on the international forum and to strive for the weakening of that country. Yet it would be preposterous to expect that the Polish Government should to-day continue to lead the pro-Czech policy of former days, knowing that the Czechs' foreign policy is harmful to the most vital interest of Poland and that their internal policy tends to undermine the existence of the Polish minority in Cieszyn Silesia.

When Professor Masaryk and M. Benes conducted during 20 years a policy of weakening, reducing and isolating Poland, and some Czech publicists of the Benes group, like M. Stransky, are advancing projects for the dismemberment of Poland, it is not surprising that the more sanguinarian Polish publicists are advocating the breaking up of Czechoslovakia into her elemental parts. Anyhow if Czechoslovakia in her

endeavours to obtain a common frontier with Russia should become a sort of Russian vanguard in the heart of Europe and would thereby increase the dangers threatening Poland and Rumania from Russia, a counteraction of both menaced countries would be inevitable. The international situation is very complicated and full of dangerous possibilities at present. All those who are working for a Polish-Czechoslovakian understanding must strive for creating such conditions which would give the maximum of security to both countries, or at least should try to prevent a tension which might ultimately cause a dangerous conflict.

Otherwise they might in the future share a heavy responsibility, if in the relations between the Czechs and the Poles, force should ultimately have to decide again as it did in 1919 when the theory of force, advanced by Professor Masaryk, was applied.

11. THE CEASING OF THE EXTERMINATION OF THE POLES IN SILESIA AS A CONDITION FOR RESTORING NORMAL RELATIONS.

The essential condition for the reestablishment of normal Polish-Czech relations in the nearest future would be the ceasing of the policy of extermination applied to the Poles living in Czechoslovakia. In my opinion the Czechs committed a great political mistake when they invaded Polish Silesia in 1919 and took advantage of Poland's difficulties in 1920 by forcing her to renounce the plebiscite in Silesia and deprived Poland of the counties which are ethnographically Polish: Cieszyn and Frysztat. The Polish character of these two counties was recognized by the Czech public opinion, as testified by ethnographic maps drawn by such Czech nationalists as Professor Niederle, by the works of Czech scholars of earlier times and by the recent work of the Czech scholar Adamus (*Jazykova Otazka ve Skolstvi na Tiesinsku*, 1931). The annexation of these two counties created a sort

of small Alsace-Lorraine between Czechoslovakia and Poland.

The mistake made by Czechoslovakia may be explained by the fact that Czech politicians anticipated at that time that Poland would either collapse or be reduced in size and weakened. Such anticipation proved erroneous, being based not so much on cold facts as on the silent wishes of the Czechs. When counting on the Bolsheviki in 1920, Masaryk and Benes made a mistake, just as Komensky in bygone times counted on the Swedes and their conquest of Poland. The Czechs wanted to annex the Polish section of Silesian Cieszyn both for economic reasons (rich coke fields of which Poland is deprived) and for strategic considerations (communication with Slovakia via Cieszyn). Yet strategic reasons cannot count here, for the railway line runs here within a few hundred metres of the Polish frontier. Their error in this respect is understood by some Czechs, even by the organ of M. Benes (Ceske Slovo No. 16 of 20th July 1925) which admitted the wrong done to Poland. Dr. Ferdinand Kahanek, a prominent Czech publicist did not hesitate to write (Poledni Listy of 3rd August, 1934): "We made an error by taking the Cieszyn district, violating the treaty concluded and stopping the shipments of ammunition to Poland in 1920. Our policy in the post war period was assuming that Poland would become the Balkans of Europe. M. Benes

said that war would soon occur because of the Polish "Corridor" and some of our people spoke of the impending fourth partition of Poland. Poland was to M. Benes the "suppuration" of Europe in prewar times. He thought that after the war Poland would remain the original abcess of Europe. M. Benes frustrated the original plans of France for the establishment of a Polish-Czechoslovakian cooperation to replace the collapsed Austria".

The Czechs could efface their error even without any alteration of frontiers, if they would treat humanely their small Polish minority, treat it at least in the same way as their German minority. If the Czechs did so, the Polish minority might become a link between the Poles and the Czechs instead of becoming a cause of discord. It seemed that the Polish-Czechoslovakian Convention of 23rd April 1925 would solve the problem of the Polish minority and that the Poles in Czechoslovakia would be levelled in rights and would be subject to no compulsory denationalisation. Unfortunately only the appearances of emancipation have been preserved and a policy of extermination is conducted with an ever increasing ruthlessness. True, the Poles have Polish schools with Polish teachers (it seems that not many teachers of German and Ukrainian origin have been left in Polish schools) and theoretically the Poles may send their children to the minority schools. But in practice

economic and administrative duress drives Polish children to Czech schools. While the number of Polish children in Polish primary schools was in 1916 — 23,376, in 1920 — 22,104, in 1924 it dropped to 12,265 and in 1934 to 12,488. The Czechs succeeded in converting their theoretically liberal minority school law into a means of denationalisation of their minorities. In those communes in which the number of Czech children was insufficient for the establishment of a school by the commune, the Czechs established at Government's expense over 90 schools for the Czech minority in communes ethnographically Polish (sometimes a separate school for one Czech child!) and filled subsequently such schools with Polish children under threats of dismissing their parents from employment. Three Czech secondary schools have been established in Cieszyn, one school for the German minority which is only a fraction of the Polish minority in that district, and no Polish secondary school has so far been maintained by the State in Czechoslovakia. There was an equal discrimination applied to Polish trade schools. In a mining country such as Silesia, the Poles are not admitted to schools for training pitmen. Not a single Pole has been appointed judge or notary-public in Czechoslovakia, there is not even a single notary who knows the Polish language. There is also discrimination against Poles in the civil service. Nowhere are Po-

lish inscriptions affixed, in spite of regulations to the contrary, while there are German inscriptions wherever the German minority happens to live. In districts ethnographically Polish the Ceska Matica (Czech School Organisation) has been granted licences for 16 cinema houses, whereas the Polish School Organisation (Macierz Szkolna) has not been granted a single licence. Numerous Poles living for scores of years in Czechoslovakia have been refused Czechoslovakian citizenship, unless they send their children to Czech schools or join Czechoslovakian associations. Denationalisation of Polish Cieszyn is fostered by means of colonising that district with unemployed Czechs, excluding the Poles. Parishes are to-day given to Czech priests only who are propagators of Czech nationalism. The number of Polish clergy dropped from 18 to 11 and the number of vicars from 32 to 7. The Polish press is persecuted and confiscated even for reprints from Czech papers and suspended for long periods of time. When a census is compiled the number of Poles is purposely diminished. An anti-Polish newspaper is issued in the Polish language and the Polish population is being told that they are not Poles but merely polonized Moravians. All that makes the Polish population in Czechoslovakia extremely bitter. It cannot understand why, while in the times of German Imperial Austria almost every

Polish child could freely attend a Polish school, now in the "Slav, democratic and humane" Czechoslovakia 10,000 Polish children are being driven to Czech schools under duress.

12. MEANS OF AGREEMENT. THE PART TO BE PLAYED BY THE POLISH AND BY THE CZECH COMMUNITY.

The Czechs suggest that their disagreement with the Poles should be submitted to international arbitration and they complain that the Polish Government rejects that proposition. The rectors of Czech universities recently addressed themselves to the rectors of Polish universities proposing to investigate jointly the problem. I do not know the texts of the letters exchanged in that matter. In my opinion, arbitration may prove effectual when it concerns the fixing of frontiers or an ordinary dispute concerning a law. But arbitration is useless when it attempts to settle the question whether a law is being applied and how it is applied. An arbitration committee may decide that a Polish child should attend a Polish school. But an arbitration committee would be helpless in a case where a Polish father is forced under economic or administrative duress to send his child to a Czech school. The Poles will obtain equal rights in Silesia only then

when the Czechs are imbued with goodwill toward them. The modern state has so much power over a citizen belonging to a national minority, that any external help will avail little when the state and the whole community will side against him. What matters most in Polish Silesia is the goodwill of the Czechs to the Poles and an absence of that goodwill cannot be remedied by any arbitration.

As regards the discussion of the scholars, the most it could do would be to declare that the population of Czech Silesia is of purely Polish extraction and that it was Polish since times immemorial. The scholars could not establish whether any Pole has under duress sent his child to a Czech school. Terror would suffice for making a Pole declare at the assembly of scholars that he desires his child to attend a Czech school.

Without anticipating the stand which will be taken by official politicians, I think it imperative that both communities, Polish and Czech, should as soon as possible apply their strenuous endeavours to the creation of a favourable background for the friendly and neighbourly relations of the two nations.

Various associations and organisations, both Czech and Polish, might effectively influence the masses and the authorities, with the aim of eliminating the frictions and the essential causes of the present tension. Let the pacifists of both countries work on those lines and let them create a more favourable

atmosphere in which the Governments of both countries would be able to work for an understanding. Such an understanding would be lasting only when based on a true goodwill, on ceasing to apply oppression to minorities and upon the elimination of glaring grievances which are an obstacle to friendly relationship.

I am fully aware of the difficulties which might arise. But I am deeply convinced that there exists no problem in human relations which could not be settled by peaceful means if mutual goodwill and loyalty are applied so as to remove the object of friction, which is poisoning the atmosphere in both countries and preventing the restoration of conditions which would be morally and psychically healthy for the evolution of future generations.

All men of goodwill in Poland and Czechoslovakia have to-day a duty to work for an amicable solution of their mutual misunderstandings and for the harmonization of the political aims of both countries.

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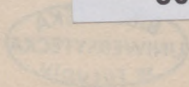
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