

THE BALTIC POLICY OF THE TEUTONIC ORDER

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INTRODUCTION

CONDITIONS ON THE BALTIC FROM THE EIGHTH TO THE TWELFTH CENTURY

The Baltic was always a scene of activity, and in consequence all the states surrounding it have striven for dominion over its waters. In prehistoric times it was controlled by the Slavs in the south and by the Scandinavians in the north. Frisian merchants penetrated it, but they were only visitors from outside, while the Prussians, Lithuanians, Courlanders and other tribes settled on the coast from the mouth of the Vistula to the Gulf of Finland appeared only as rovers on the waters of the Baltic, and played no part in its economic history. The Germans were completely cut off from it by Slavonic territory, and as merchants stood far behind the Frisians and Scandinavians. If they reached the coastal markets, it was not by sea.

This state of affairs continued until about the middle of the twelfth century, and evidences of it are to be found in a chain of Norse and Slavonic trading posts. Schleswig-Heide in Denmark, Jomsborg, Jumne and Reric in the Slavonic area, and further east Truso and Saeborg, which later developed into Riga. In default of other evidence, the rich finds of coins furnish evidence that even in those far-off ages the Baltic served the needs of international trade, and had an economic significance comparable to that of the Mediterranean in the south. This was due to the enterprise of the Swedish Varangians, who penetrated in their sailing-boats down the rivers of Old Russia and established commercial relations with Byzantium and the Far East.

THE GERMAN PRESSURE EASTWARD IN THE TWELFTH CENTURY

None the less, the turn of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries saw an economic revolution in the Baltic comparable to that which marked the end of the Middle Ages. The age of Lothar of Supplinburg (1106—25) in Germany and of the Margraves Albert the Bear and Conrad Wettin, is characterized by the powerful and uninterrupted *Drang nach Osten* which by the middle of the twelfth century had deprived

the Slavs of considerable slices of territory and reduced them to a state of dependence on the Empire. From that time onwards, the German states to the east took up the obligations and the tasks of empire, and supported the rulers of Germany in their eastern policy. Besides the Slavs, the Germans in the Elbe valley were confronted by another powerful enemy, the Danes, who after their great victories over the Wends in 1157—68 made themselves masters of the broad rolling valley of the Oder, together with the island of Rügen (Rugja). Subsequently, they overran the rest of Pomerania between the Oder and the Vistula, and at last subjugated the whole of the Lechitic Slavs between the lower Elbe and the Vistula. However, the events of 1223—27 and their defeats at the hands of the Germans put an end once and for all to Danish rule in Slavonic lands. Of the conquests of the Waldemars, they retained only bits of Pomerania and the island of Rügen, and even these not for long. That is to say, in less than a century the Germans broke the resistance of the Slavs and drove back the Danes beyond the sea. The current of emigration from Germany to the former Slavonic areas concerns us closely, for by this means alone was it possible to people the towns of Prussia with German colonists, whose economic influence in the Teutonic Order's state became all-powerful. One form of German colonization was the establishment of trading settlements under German law, and in numerous cases that law was conferred on pre-existing Slavonic settlements. It is worth noting that the first of the trading-posts founded at this time was Lübeck, a town destined to have a powerful influence on the fortunes of the Hanseatic League and the whole economic history of the Baltic down to the end of the Middle Ages. The thirteenth century saw, too, the rise of a whole series of later Hanseatic towns such as Rostock, Wismar and Greifswald on the coast between the Elbe and the Oder.

Contemporaneously with their colonization of the lands of the Western Slavs, the Germans made a powerful thrust eastwards by the establishment on the Vistula of the military Order of Our Lady. After

the donation of the district of Chełmno to the Teutonic Order by Duke Conrad of Masovia, and the conferring upon it of the conquered Prussian territory by the Emperor, the firm establishment of the Order on the Baltic became only a question of time. After its advance eastwards to Lithuania had been checked, the political future of the state and the economic prosperity of the Prussian towns alike required the attainment of unrestricted access to the sea. Accordingly, we have to record that the thirteenth century saw the rise on the southern coasts of the Baltic of two new powers, which altered the political and ethnological complexion of the area between the Elbe and the Memel, and at the same time prepared the way for the economic revolution of the thirteenth century.

It would be very characteristic if we were able to show that the settlement of the southern edge of the Baltic basin by the Germans was the result of a far-seeing plan, and the accompanying pressure towards the coast the work of the German crown. But it was not so. 'We, who are accustomed to associate the idea of the state with the idea of nationalism', writes Sattler in his discussion of the relation of the *Ordensstaat* to the Hanseatic League before 1370, 'and who consider that the representation of its citizens abroad is one of the first duties of the state, can scarcely believe that *Kaiser* and *Reich* had nothing whatever to do with that great evolution which created the so-called new Germany; we are inclined to regard this fact as proof of the inherent weakness of the political organism of the period, and so all the successes gained in that field in the following centuries appear to us almost miraculous'.¹ The pressure of the Germans towards the Baltic was then a phenomenon which recurred from time to time, and was completely independent of the political aims of the medieval Empire, just as the Teutonic Order was innocent of any designs of naval expansion when it established itself on the Vistula at the beginning of the thirteenth century, and subjugated the Prussians in the name of the Cross. However much German historians may boast of the occupation of the Slavonic territories on the Elbe, and the contemporary advance of the Teutonic Order in Prussia as evidence of a well thought out plan conceived in the brain of the Grand Master Hermann von Salza, the fact remains that the dominion the Order obtained over the Baltic in the thirteenth century, when it drove out the Slavs, Scandinavians and Frisians and crushed their trade, was due neither to Kaiser nor Order, but to quite different factors, of which we shall speak shortly.

None the less, it must be admitted that when it had once established itself in Prussia, the Order began to

show a comprehension of maritime problems, and quickly learned the advantages accruing from access to the sea. Hermann von Salza familiarized himself to a certain extent with Baltic affairs when he mediated between the Danish king Waldemar and the Low-German dukes in 1223, and when he induced the Emperor Frederick II to confer on Lübeck the privileges of a Free City of the Empire. We find the Knights pressing towards the sea at the very beginning of their wars with the Prussians, when they advanced parallel with the Vistula, or actually along its right bank. In 1233 they undertook considerable expeditions into Prussia with the support of the Silesian dukes, Conrad of Masovia, Ladislas Odonicz, and the Pomeranian Dukes Świętopełk and Sambor. Both of these expeditions were victorious, a large part of Pomerania being occupied and the town stronghold of Marienwerder founded. Four years later, Margrave Henry of Meissen came to the assistance of the Order, and penetrated as far as Lake Drausen, while in the following year he reached the Frisches Haff. For the first time, the Knights of the Cross stood on the shore of the Baltic, and here they established themselves, building the fortified post of Elbing where Lake Drausen falls into the sea, and likewise a town, which was populated mostly by settlers from Lübeck and consequently served to promote commercial relations between Prussia and the west. The Lübeckers themselves took part a few years later in the founding of a trading post in Sambia, which fact is the best evidence of their interest in Prussian affairs.

Two years later (1238) the Knights marched eastwards along the coast and founded the stronghold of Balga, at a considerable distance from Elbing. Their further progress was held up for a time by disputes with Świętopełk of Pomerania, who was beginning to be seriously troubled by their advance, but an accommodation was reached, which gave them a free hand to undertake further conquests, and in 1253 we find Świętopełk forced to keep this peace, under threat of losing the stronghold of Danzig. Two years after that (in 1255), the Knights, under Ottokar II of Bohemia, made an expedition into Sambia and founded Königsberg on the river Pregel. By 1255, therefore, the Order was master of the Baltic coast from the Nogat to the Pregel, and thus was in a position to carry on trade actively and with security. None the less, at the same time an agreement was made with Bishop Henry of Courland concerning the building of the stronghold of Memel (Klaipėda) — proof, if proof were needed, that they designed to hold the Baltic coast and cut off the Prussians from the sea. Although these acquisitions were threatened by the Prussian risings during the next ten or fifteen years, the Order with foreign help won back what it had

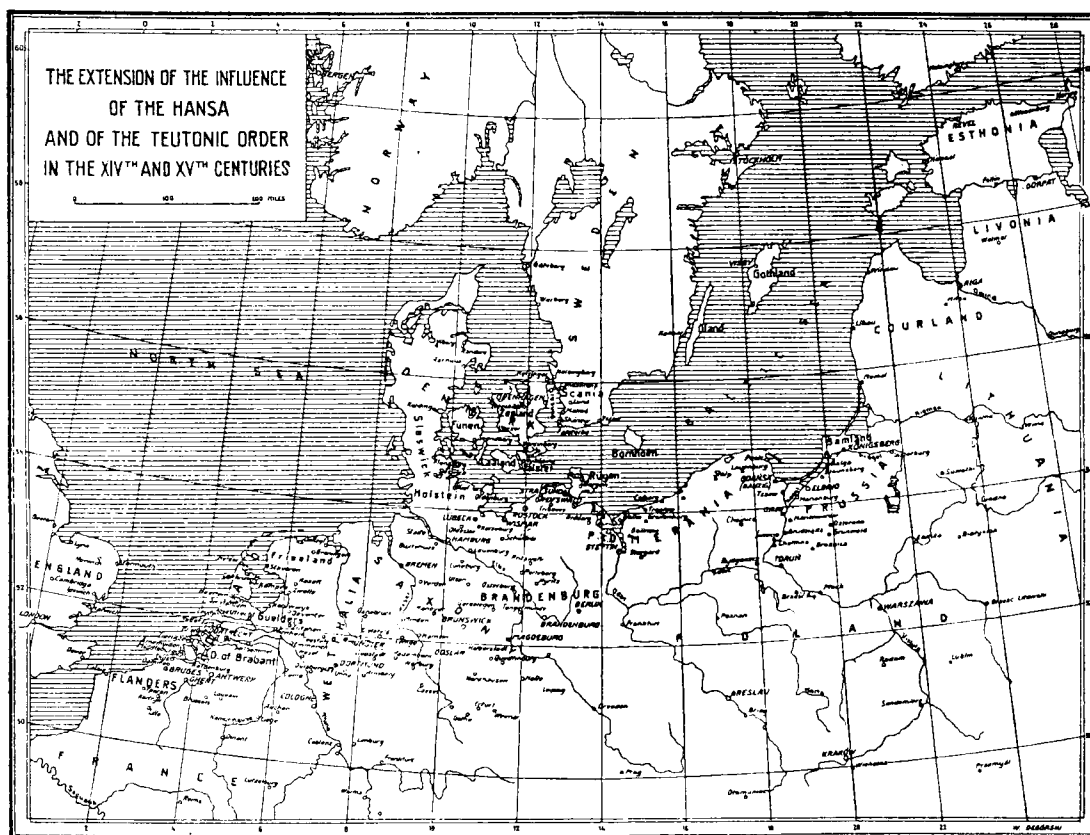
¹ 'Uns, deren Blick an nationale Staaten gewöhnt ist, uns, die wir wissen, dass die Vertretung seiner Angehörigen nach Aussen eine der ersten Pflichten des Staates ist, uns scheint es fast undenkbar, dass Kaiser und Reich an dieser ganzen Entwicklung keinen Anteil nahmen, welche ein

neues Deutschland schuf, wie man es nannte; es ist uns ein Zeichen für die völlige Unhaltbarkeit der damaligen politischen Zustände im Reiche, aber fast ebenso wunderbar, muss der Ersatz uns erscheinen, der im Laufe der Zeiten dafür geschaffen ward...'

lost, and by 1283 might regard the whole of Prussia as conquered territory.

A glance at the map suffices to show the political aims of the Knights. On the one hand they endeavoured to cut off the Prussians from the west, whence various papal bulls show that they obtained arms, and, on the other, they strove to drive a wedge between Prussia and Pomerania, whose rulers, as papal bulls likewise show, began to be hostile to the Order and to unite with its enemies in 1242. Here the Order was favoured by fortune, inasmuch as quarrels within the ruling family of Pomerania enabled it, in alliance

Vistula to beyond the mouth of the Memel, defending it by a series of fortified posts. Not only military and political but also economic considerations were at the root of this urge, and economic needs likewise led the Order to secure the possibility of timber-floating on the Vistula. None the less, it was hampered in its external movements throughout this century, by reason partly of the incessant wars with the Prussians and partly of domestic pre-occupations. It fortified the country, did its utmost in support of the towns, and laid the foundations of a flourishing maritime trade. It secured its communications with Germany by agree-



with Polish dukes, to secure itself against the rulers of Danzig, and by the middle of the thirteenth century to dominate the mouth of the Vistula. The agreement made in 1242 between it and Conrad of Masovia, and directed against Świętopełk of Pomerania, fixes a line down the middle of the bed of the Vistula as the frontier between Pomerania and the possessions of the Teutonic Knights. But only nine years later, the Knights forced Świętopełk to cede the 'island of Zanir', the large and fertile alluvial flat between the Old Nogat and the Vistula. We have now seen that in the course of the thirteenth century the Teutonic Order fought its way from the district of Chełmno to the Baltic, and took possession of the coast from the delta of the

with the Great-Polish dukes, and endeavoured to live on the best terms with its Masovian and Kuyavian neighbours. Yet it fully understood the significance of access to the sea and neglected nothing to secure it. One thing more is certain: everything which it did prepared the ground for that flourishing development of Prussian towns and trade which marked the fourteenth century.

After the subjugation of Prussia, about the year 1283, the Order regained its freedom to deal with external affairs. Its mission might, indeed, be said to be fulfilled, but it continued to engage in tasks and follow plans which it had obviously had in mind much earlier. The young state showed a tendency to expand in two

directions, comparable to that which it had shown from the moment of its first establishment on the Vistula. The Knights of the Order incorporated with themselves the Brothers of the Sword, in Livonia, but this was at first a source of much trouble to them, owing to the quarrels between the Brothers and the Archbishop and townfolk of Riga. The Order was threatened on this side not only by the Lithuanians, at whose hands it suffered several defeats, but also by the Danes, who had occupied Estonia.

Riga also was hostile, and being an important trade centre was able to carry on its own independent policy. In 1330 the Land Master, Eberhard von Munheim, laid siege to it, and in its extremity it did not hesitate to call even upon the pagan Lithuanians for aid. The town stood a six months' siege, but in the end was forced to submit, and with the approval of the Emperor was surrendered to the Knights of the Cross. Not content with this victory, they succeeded in obtaining from the Emperor and the King of Denmark the right to the neighbouring duchy of Estonia, on which they had cast envious eyes from the very beginning. Very soon it was in their hands, and only one difficulty remained: between Prussia and their Estonian and Livonian possessions lay pagan Lithuania, which accordingly it was necessary to conquer, if the whole coast from the Vistula to the Narva was to be theirs. This, however, was a task which the Knights never quite succeeded in accomplishing.

None the less, Livonia and Estonia never had the same significance for the *Ordensstaat* as the Pomeranian districts beyond the Vistula. The Order had its roots in the (German) Empire, from which it drew all kinds of support until the end of the fourteenth century, and consequently had no desire to be cut off from it and isolated in the east. Only the seizure of Pomerania could give the Order a common frontier with the Empire, and this it was ready to go to any lengths to attain. Navigation on the Vistula was assured by agreements with the Polish and Pomeranian dukes, the alluvial plain of Żuława was annexed; Gniew was built on the left bank of the river and a foothold in Pomerania was secured. Finally, Danzig was seized and Pomerania subdued in 1309. Being unable to justify this act of violence, German historians attempt to give it a legal basis on the ground of agreements made between the Order and the Margraves of Brandenburg, the supposed lords of Danzig and Pomerania. They agree, however, that the purpose of the seizure of territory on the left bank of the river was primarily political and economic: the safeguarding of land communications with the Empire.

These conquests, and above all the last, brought with them certain incalculable political consequences, which make themselves painfully felt even to-day. In the course of little more than a hundred and fifty years, the Germans made themselves masters of the whole of the southern coast of the Baltic, driving

out the former Slavonic inhabitants and abolishing the rule of the Danes, who were settled in certain places in the area. And the Teutonic Order led the way. Unlike the German emperors, immediately on reaching the Vistula it perceived the significance of access to the sea. No wonder that German historians are wont to praise the Order for its colonizing activity and its far-reaching plans of Germanization, whilst Polish writers of history bring this or that prince before the tribunal of posterity, charged with lack of political sense and neglect of the importance of the sea. Let us confess frankly that there were aspects of the matter which the Poles did not perceive, and that our forefathers more than once helped the Order to its triumphs. But if, looking back over seven centuries, we try to establish the motives of action, we are likely to have as little success as those who would try to foresee the consequences of the actions of to-day. On the other hand, it should be noted that the Teutonic Order, standing on the shores of the Baltic, did nothing to extend its power over its waters. This neglect, likewise, makes itself painfully felt to-day, the more since certain maritime problems were crying for solution by the Order, but in vain.

The fourteenth century saw both Empire and Order faced by a new power on the Baltic. Along the whole coast, from the Elbe to the Narva, there sprang up in a relatively short time a line of commercial towns, which in the fifteenth century united for economic and political purposes into the famous Hanseatic League. Riga was founded in 1201, and developed into an important trading centre. Rostock was confirmed in the grant of Lübeck law as early as 1218, and therefore must have been founded still earlier. Wismar was founded somewhat later, between 1222 and 1229, Stralsund about 1230, Greifswald between 1241 and 1248. Stettin, famous during the period of Pomeranian independence as an animated centre of commerce, which sent out colonists to all the Pomeranian towns, received the grant of Magdeburg law in 1243.

The Teutonic Order's towns likewise developed remarkably swiftly. Toruń, founded 'on bare roots' as it was said, but endowed with a great number of privileges after only twenty or thirty years of existence, was an important town carrying on a varied trade. The port of Elbing, which before 1309 was to Prussia very much what Danzig was to Pomerania, quickly grew to be a considerable harbour for sailing-boats and was the original centre of the maritime trade of the *Ordensstaat*. Other towns grew up quickly, but only Königsberg took its place beside Danzig, Chełmno and Toruń as one of the leading towns of Prussia.

The Knights of the Order realized the advisability of enlisting the towns in support of their power, and at the same time the necessity of dividing that power with them. Accordingly, the Order granted to its burghers, and especially those of Toruń and Chełmno,

such large powers of self-government that they became very independent in their relation to the Grand Master, and completely free of his control in their conduct of external affairs. In the thirteenth century these towns had been unable to dispense with the aid of the Order, and so the Grand Master and his diplomats had represented them in their negotiations for commercial agreements with foreign powers.

Similar relations developed among the Wendish towns, which made contact with Flanders through Lübeck, and with the Prussian towns through Elbing. At first they joined with Lübeck in organizing the Hanseatic League, but later lost much of their influence in it, whereas Lübeck retained its predominance, thanks to its independent position as a Free City of the Empire.

In short, there arose along the Baltic coast in the fourteenth century a whole line of trading settlements which were already powerful economic factors before they united in the Hanseatic League, and which in the fourteenth century brought about fundamental changes in the economic sphere. The Swedish trading-post of Birka fell, but was replaced by Stockholm, where a strong German colony supported the influence of Lübeck. The Norwegians were excluded from participation in Baltic trade in the thirteenth century, though they had long maintained close relations with Gardariki or Novgorod Russia. The ancient Schleswig-Heideburg likewise fell into decay, but near at hand rose Lübeck, and fell heir to its economic tasks. Jümmena disappeared from the delta of the Oder, but Stettin, Greifswald and Wismar

arose not far away. Further east, Elbing rose near the old Prussian Truso, and Riga came into being on the ruins of the Varangian stronghold of Saeborg.

In fact we may safely assert, without in the least detracting from the economic merits of the Hanseatic League, that on the Baltic it followed in the track of the Frisians, Varangians and Slavs, and in developing its trade in northern Europe profited most skillfully by the existing conditions. During the thirteenth century it rose to be a power with which every country in Europe had to reckon. Its distant protectors, the German emperors, regarded it with respect, and it was feared by the kings of England, and of Scandinavia, and by the counts of Flanders. Occasionally they ventured on war with the Hanse and were victorious, but they never really defeated it till the end of the Middle Ages. Wars are often won by gold, and the Hanseatic cities had so much that they had no cause to fear even long wars. The weak side of their organization was the divergence of political and even of economic interests which frequently manifested itself among the members. In fundamentals, however, they were united, and hence often vanquished their opponents. The League's existence depended from the beginning on exchange between the north and west, and consequently its trade was borne by sea. Flanders and England, the Scandinavian states, and the whole southern coast of the Baltic, together with Poland and Novgorod Russia, formed the Hanseatic League's domain, which it exploited economically from the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries.

I

THE TEUTONIC ORDER IN ALLIANCE WITH THE HANSEATIC LEAGUE c. 1350—1410

THE ORDER AND THE LEAGUE'S STRUGGLES FOR PRIVILEGES IN FLANDERS.

From the moment of its formation, the Hanse had two clearly defined aims, which it was not able to realize without the aid and consent of certain states. On the one hand it desired to secure far-reaching concessions in the Baltic countries and in the west, and on the other to exclude all non-German commercial competitors from the waters of the Baltic. Hence the attitude towards it of the rulers of the Baltic states, including the Teutonic Order, was of very considerable importance.

From the very beginning, the Order was in alliance with the Hanse. The latter had not infrequently stubborn enemies in the rulers of the countries with which it traded, and accordingly even after 1410 was glad of the aid and protection of the Order. In spite of its economic power, it felt the need for support in its dealings with foreign states, if only because the Hanseatic merchants were looked down upon

as mere traders. Thus, for example, during the Anglo-Prussian conversations in 1386, the English king's representatives told the delegates of the Teutonic Order that 'they would rather put faith in the word of trusty knights and gentry than in that of sailors, traders and the like.' In such cases the Hanse could nowhere look for better support than that given it by the Order, with its capable diplomacy, its financial resources, its armed forces, its widespread connexions in the west and the respect with which it was regarded by the rulers of Germany — a respect such as no prince of the Empire enjoyed. Down to 1410, the Order was occupied with maritime questions, but it came into contact with Baltic affairs far more, indirectly, through the Hanse.

It is interesting, therefore, to observe the attitude of the Grand Masters towards the Hanse at the period when the latter was forced to wage war in defence of its trading rights in foreign countries, and to make

great sacrifices in order to maintain its vessels on the waters of the Baltic.

The most important questions, the favourable solution of which tasked the resources of the Hanse to the utmost, were four: freedom of trade in Flanders; the wars with Waldemar Atterdag of Denmark in 1362—70; the defence of its trading rights in Scandinavia and the maintenance of the freedom of navigation on the Baltic during the war between Margaret of Denmark and Albert III of Sweden in 1385—97; and the struggle to uphold its trading rights in England between 1377 and 1408. These questions we shall consider, in so far as they concern the Baltic policy of the Teutonic Order.

It was of cardinal importance for the Hanse to gain freedom of trade in Flanders, which in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was the centre of the whole commercial exchange between Germany on the one hand and Italy and England and the northern states on the other. Flanders textiles were known all over Europe, and formed the principal article of Hanseatic trade. The League, and Lübeck in particular, had enjoyed important privileges at Bruges since 1307, but suffered from various restrictions in the later years of the century. Obtaining no satisfaction by its protests, Lübeck decided to 'starve Flanders out and kill its textile trade'. This boycott lasted three years, at the end of which, in 1360, Flanders was obliged to submit, confirming the Hanse in its old privileges and granting it new ones.

The inhabitants of the Prussian towns regarded Flanders as 'a meeting-place for merchants from all over the world, where the people from Prussia enjoyed more freedom and privileges than anywhere else', and they were the more eager to establish relations with it, inasmuch as its large population of weavers consumed Prussian corn, in exchange for which they sent cloth.

The Teutonic Order likewise had had interests here from the time when they began to trade at all. Königsberg and Marienburg had factories at Bruges, the former dealing in grain, the latter in amber; and the general turnover at this town in 1402 was 8,409 *grzywny* (marks) — one-sixth of the total turnover of all the factories established by Königsberg. In the course of the disputes between the Hanse and Bruges it became clear that Prussian trade was in fact hampered in various ways although, on the other hand, the counts of Flanders recognized that their cities were dependent on Prussia and consequently required good relations with the Order. When Lübeck's conditions for terminating the boycott of Flanders goods were too onerous, the Count endeavoured to cause disagreement among the Hanse towns and to win Prussian support by specious promises, but in vain. The Prussian towns held firmly to the League, and thus contributed in no small measure to its victory over Flanders in 1360.

Again, the efforts of the Count to induce the Order to conclude a separate commercial treaty with Flanders were equally unsuccessful. The Grand Master, Winrich von Kniprode, stood loyally by the Hanse and the Prussian towns, even at the expense of the Order's immediate interests.

THE ORDER'S RELATIONS WITH THE HANSE AND WALDEMAR IV 1340—75

During the wars between the Hanse and Denmark in 1362—70, however, this same Grand Master's attitude was different. King Waldemar IV Atterdag had ascended the throne of Denmark in 1340, and, by his conquest of Scania and other Swedish provinces in 1360, made of Denmark a great power. He began to dream of hegemony over the Baltic, and of forming the three Scandinavian states into a united kingdom; nor in such an attempt would he have met with opposition from the Hanse association, had he not attempted to diminish its trading rights in the peninsula. It had, however, its own fishing-ground off Skanör and Falsterbo in Scania, where the fleets of the various towns gathered a rich annual harvest. The herrings caught here were one of the most valuable articles of Hanse trade, and found their way to Poland, Russia, Hungary, Silesia, and even Bohemia. As long as Scania was in Swedish hands, the Leagues's fishing rights remained unquestioned, but after its conquest by Waldemar, difficulties began.

Lübeck and the other Wendish towns might have borne the new imposts levied by the king, had not the capture of the rich Hanseatic city of Visby on the island of Gotland in 1360 revealed the danger threatening them from Denmark, and made war inevitable. It broke out in 1361, and ended in disaster for the Hanse. Not all the associated cities allowing themselves to be drawn into it, it was waged almost exclusively by the Wendish cities. When the Scandinavian powers allied with the Hanse also failed, the great fleet suffered a crushing defeat at Elsinore in 1362, and the vanquished had to put up with further imposts, which greatly interfered with their trade in Scandinavia.

The Prussian merchants could not remain indifferent to the Danish war, waged as it was in an effort to preserve the *status quo* in regard to the Scania fisheries. It is true they had no rights themselves there at this period, but obviously they would be affected as much as the Wendish cities by Waldemar's ordinances. Accordingly their representatives took part in the conference of Wismar in 1361, along with the delegates sent by the Grand Master, and we are told that they undertook to execute the conference's decisions. Two things only are surprising. In the later war between the Hanseatic League and Denmark the Prussian towns contented themselves with giving indirect help, levying the tax decided upon in

1361 and paying it over to the League. Still more striking is the fact that the Danes did not spare the property of the Prussian merchants during the war, nor did they return their confiscated goods at the end of it, although they were willing to compensate the merchant subjects of the Teutonic Order. Obviously, the Order not only preserved neutrality but tried to dissuade its subjects from taking military action against Waldemar IV.

This procedure on the part of the Grand Master caused the Prussian towns to offend the other members of the League, yet did not save them from the consequences of the war. However, they sent delegates to the congress of Lübeck in June 1363, where they undertook to pay the arrears of tax and to commence negotiations with Winrich von Kniprode, in the hope of getting him to aid the Hanse towns with men and ships in the coming Danish war.

Nevertheless, the Order remained neutral, even though it could and ought to have asserted itself in the great war for domination in the Baltic. It has been supposed that the Grand Master was unable to commence hostilities against the king of Denmark because the latter was on good terms with the Emperor and the Pope, but this seems improbable in view of the fact that the fate of German cities was at stake, and that they were under the protection, if only nominal, of the Emperor Charles IV. And if the Papacy would have been disquieted by a conflict between a religious Order and Christian Denmark, why was it not similarly disquieted by the war between the Order and Poland? The truth was that the Order carried out its own policy, independent of either pope or emperor.

Not discouraged by the negative attitude of the Order and the Prussian cities, the Hanse still endeavoured to induce them to co-operate against Denmark. Its efforts, however, were in vain, for in 1363 the delegates of the Prussian cities replied that the Order was threatened with war by the Duke of Schweidnitz — which was not true — and offered merely to contribute a tax, in return for which the town of Kampen was to furnish armed men for an expedition. In the following year the Teutonic Knights answered equally evasively: *non possunt facere subsidium cum armatis et navibus propter impugnationem paganorum*, and refused even to allow their ports to be used as bases for attacks on the Danish possessions.

The chroniclers do not tell us, but it is obvious from the whole procedure of the towns that they acted under pressure and according to the will of the Grand Master. Further, the accounts of the Hanseatic envoys on the Vistula leave no room for doubt that Winrich von Kniprode made a separate agreement with Waldemar. Although our sources of information are scanty, it is certain that in 1362-64 the paths of the Hanse and the Order began to diverge. The latter, which had once encouraged its subjects to establish relations with the German cities and thus

pointed the way to the future Hanseatic League, in 1364 forbade its merchants to attend the League Congress at Nöresund.

This policy of the Grand Master's may have been advantageous to the Order, but was certainly not so to its cities. This appeared almost immediately, on the outbreak of the second war with Denmark, in 1367. Waldemar did not observe the terms of the peace of 1365, and desiring to annoy the associated cities, attacked the trade of the Prussians, who were not included in the treaty. In the summer of the following year we find the burgomaster of Danzig urging the Wendish towns not to purchase the booty taken from the Prussian towns by the Danes. In December the Prussian towns tried to organize a confederacy against Denmark, but the Hanse delegates gathered at Rostock made the Grand Master a negative reply. At the same time, however, to avoid giving him cause for offence, they sent to him Alard, a notary from Stralsund, to negotiate.

This led to nothing, and the Order and the Prussian towns might even have stood aside during the conflict with Denmark, but for the action of the towns on the Zuider Zee — Amsterdam, Stavoren, Harderwyk and Kampen — and Dordrecht, which joined with the Teutonic Knights and England and Flanders in an alliance against Waldemar IV. The Wendish cities now came in, and the so-called Confederacy of Cologne was formed against Denmark and Norway, on November 19th, 1367.

This second war took a completely different course from the first. The Hanseatic fleet blockaded the coasts, and in the course of 1396 the army overran the whole country and reduced the important fortresses of Öresund and Scania. Next year the Danes had no choice but to make peace, and cede the castles of Skanör, Falsterbo, Malmö and Elsinore on the Sound. This overwhelming victory ranged the Hanse by the side of the Baltic powers, and assured it the hegemony in the Sound and the Baltic for thirty or forty years. Denmark was abandoned even by its king, and was deeply humiliated by the Peace of Stralsund, which even forbade the council set up by Waldemar to nominate his successor without the consent of the Hanseatic League.

The confederacy and the war had been the work of the Prussian cities, and they accordingly reaped from it the richest reward. But Winrich von Kniprode remained completely indifferent to the fortunes of the League, once it had embarked on the war with Denmark. This is the more strange, in that he had at first urged it to war, had received the Hanse envoys, and in June 1367 had sent Ludekin von Essen, governor of Danzig, to the congress of cities at Stralsund. But this was the end of his action. Only a month later, when the Prussian and Dutch towns formed an alliance at Elbing, no representative of the Teutonic Order took part in the proceedings,

or at least, none is mentioned as having done so. It is certain that its aid was sought, for the Hanse looked in all directions for allies, and on February 2nd, 1368, formed a confederacy for the war against Denmark with Albert, King of Sweden, Albert, Duke of Mecklenburg and his sons Henry and Magnus, and with Henry and Nicholas, Counts of Holstein.

Further, when war was declared against Waldemar at the Congress of Lübeck in February, 1368, and *litterae querimoniales* sent to the Emperor Charles IV, the Pope, and thirty secular and ecclesiastical princes (including Casimir of Poland), the Grand Master was, doubtless intentionally, left out. Obviously the Hanse were not counting on help or support from the Order. On the other hand, however, it has to be admitted that the Order did not prevent its subjects from taking part in the action against Denmark, as it had done in the former war. The Prussian cities furnished five vessels, each with a hundred armed men, levied a tax, participated in congresses, and in general took an active part in the operations without meeting with the slightest hindrance on the part of the Grand Master.

The Order's passivity in this case turned out advantageously for the Prussian towns. Waldemar IV had left his kingdom before the commencement of hostilities, in order to look for allies outside Denmark. In June 1370, he was in Prussia, and even before the conclusion of peace between the Hanseatic League and Denmark, the Prussian cities endeavoured to obtain from him the right to fish off Scania. He agreed, conferring the privilege on six of the Order's towns separately, and stating expressly that he did so at the instigation of the Grand Master. Besides, the Order showed consideration for the exiled monarch, and received him most hospitably in Prussia. Afterwards, in 1389, the Grand Master Conrad Zöllner von Rotenstein reminded Queen Margaret how her father, Waldemar IV, 'when he had been driven out of his own country confidently sojourned in the new land of Prussia, enjoyed his wealth in peace and quiet, and felt himself more secure among us than anywhere else'.²

We cannot but admit that the policy of the Order during the first and second Hanseatic-Danish wars was extraordinarily successful, when we see how the Grand Master permitted his subjects to defeat Waldemar IV and yet contrived to maintain friendly relations with him. The Order gathered in the fruits of this policy on the fatal field of Grunwald (Tannenberg) and during the Thirteen Years' War.

THE ORDER AND SCANDINAVIA AT THE TIME OF THE UNION OF CALMAR.

Both of the Hanse's wars with Waldemar had been waged for the purpose of securing trade privileges

in Scandinavia and safeguarding navigation on the Baltic. As long as the victors retained possession of the four Danish castles — Skanör, Falsterbo, Malmö and Elsinore—and as long as the Council of State continued to have a strong influence on the government of the country, the trade of the German cities on the Baltic was carried on in comparative peace. In 1385, however, the castles were handed back in accordance with the terms of the Peace of Stralsund, and Margaret, daughter of Waldemar IV, came to the Danish throne. From the very beginning, the queen showed no more goodwill to the cities than had done her son, King Olaf of Norway. On his death in 1387, the Hanse merchants were persecuted in Norway, their privileges were disregarded, and the terms of the Peace of Stralsund were broken. Moreover, piracy began to appear on the Baltic, and soon spread to such a degree that it was dangerous for single ships to put to sea.

The Grand Master could not watch this development with unconcern, since the sea-borne trade of the Order's two factories suffered equally with that of the Prussian towns. Indeed, the rulers of the Order did all that lay in their power to put down the pirates and uphold the privileges of the Hanse in foreign countries. To this end their diplomacy was active in England, Flanders and Holland, especially under the grand-mastership of Conrad Zöllner von Rotenstein and under that of Conrad von Jungingen.

This increased political activity on the part of the Order in the years 1375—1440 was not unaffected by what was going on at this time in Scandinavia, the countries on the southern coast of the Baltic, and Poland, while abroad the Order was known to be both rich and militarily strong. In order fully to explain the situation, it will be advisable to devote a few words to politics in northern Europe between 1385 and 1398.

Five years after the conclusion of peace at Stralsund, Waldemar died, and the power passed into the hands of a council of state which was favourably disposed to the Hanseatic League. But when Margaret, the late king's daughter and 'the craftiest of women', came to the throne, the position was totally altered. She had one design, the complete realization of which could not fail to provoke reactions far beyond the borders of Denmark: namely, the union of the three northern countries under the Danish crown. But this was but her immediate aim, and was to be the means of attaining that dominant position on the Baltic which her father before her had desired. Here, however, she was opposed not only by the Hanseatic League and the Teutonic Order, but also by Sweden and the dukes of Mecklenburg and Pomerania.

Margaret was favoured by fortune in the realization of her plans. The union of Norway with Denmark was accomplished without bloodshed and

² 'do her us synem riche vortrebin wart, in guter zcu-vorsicht by uns in unsirn landen zcu Prussin was, und syn

gelt doselbest in unsirn lande gutlich und fruntlich vor-czerte, und by uns synis lybes sicherer was dan by andirn.'

endured for centuries. On the other hand, the acquisition of Sweden took her considerably longer than might have been expected after her first victories. Since the expulsion of the Danish Olaf, the Mecklenburger Albert III had been king of Sweden, but there was general discontent with his rule, which was supported only by numerous Germans settled at Stockholm and hated by the natives. About 1384 the idea was mooted of expelling Albert and recalling the Danish dynasty. This became known to Margaret and she encouraged it. At the same time, however, as a sign of her own claims to the Swedish crown, she caused her son to take the title of heir to the kingdom of Sweden. If, in spite of the state of tension, the outbreak of war was put off till 1388, the cause was to be found in the impossibility of carrying on operations successfully without holding the castles in Scania, which were to be returned to Denmark in 1385. When hostilities finally began, they soon revealed the weakness of the Mecklenburg rulers of Sweden. Their army was defeated at Aasle on February 24th, 1389, and King Albert, his son Eric and a large number of nobles were taken prisoner. One castle after another then surrendered, until by the end of 1389 only Stockholm still held out, owing to the attitude of the Germans who inhabited it.

However, the Mecklenburgers took up arms in defence of their duke, and, feeling themselves unequal to a campaign on land, declared a privateering war against Denmark, Sweden and Norway, and began to destroy merchant ships in the Baltic. Every sea-rover accordingly gravitated to Mecklenburg, in order to plunder the Scandinavians under the leadership and protection of its nobility. Their chief task, however, was to victual the Stockholm garrison of *Vitalienbrüder* — who derived their sobriquet from this circumstance. These latter not only soon made themselves felt by the Danes and Norwegians, but became the terror of merchant sailors on the Baltic. When they succeeded in occupying the island of Gottland, navigation became almost impossible, and there were moments when trade by sea completely ceased.

The Hanse became convinced that the only way out of this intolerable state of affairs was to be found in the conclusion of peace between Albert III and Margaret, and accordingly offered itself as mediator. Peace was finally made in 1395, Margaret agreeing to liberate the Swedish king on condition that he should pay 60,000 gold marks or return to captivity in case of his inability to do so. This settlement was guaranteed by the Hanse, including the Prussian cities, to whom Albert had to surrender Stockholm until the conditions should be fulfilled.

But the peace of the Baltic was thus secured for only a short time. The *Vitalienbrüder* soon resumed their piracies, and Albert's son Eric put himself at their head and seized the island of Gottland,

and even made an attempt to capture Stockholm. Meanwhile, Margaret accomplished her design of uniting the three Scandinavian kingdoms, by the Union of Calmar on July 20th, 1397. The surrender to her of Stockholm in the following year decided the fate of Mecklenburg power in Sweden. Whatever was the actual significance of the Union of Calmar, it created a new situation, with which the Hanse and the Order had to reckon. And, naturally, during the long conflict between Mecklenburg and Sweden on the one hand and Denmark and Norway on the other, both sides strove to enlist the support of the two above-named powers. Accordingly, the attitude of the Grand Master towards the disputants, and towards the slowly prepared for Union of Calmar, was of extreme importance.

A notable feature of the Teutonic Order's policy under Conrad Zöllner and Conrad von Jungingen was its close co-operation with the Prussian towns, and even, whenever possible, with the German Hanse. The latter constantly appealed to Marienburg for aid, and the Grand Masters did in fact intervene on its behalf at the western courts and in Denmark. None the less, the Hanse went its own way, and, while availing itself of the Order's assistance, was not inclined to allow it a deciding voice in the dispute between Margaret and Albert. In this it was to a certain extent justified, the Order having taken up a neutral attitude in the wars of Waldemar IV, which gave it no claim to the advantages conferred on the towns by the Peace of Stralsund. Daenell is of the opinion that between 1375 and 1398 the Hanse was the deciding factor among the Baltic states (*die ausschlaggebende Macht unter den Ostseemächten*), which is perhaps true, although it must not be forgotten that the Order remained in direct contact with Scandinavia, and that its chief efforts at this time were directed towards England and Holland, a field in which its diplomacy scored several victories. It was not, however, sufficiently strong for simultaneous energetic action in Scandinavian affairs, though the opportunities were many.

In its relations to Denmark, the Order preserved that neutrality which it had maintained throughout the Hanse's wars with Waldemar IV. This had been the policy of the Grand Master before the decisive battle between the forces of Margaret and of Albert in 1389, and likewise after the latter's defeat at Aasle, which he probably recognized as fatal to the hopes of Mecklenburg. The principles determining his attitude he set out at length in a letter to Margaret dated September 23rd, 1389, when there were rumours of proposed joint action on the part of the Order and the enemies of Denmark. Conrad von Zöllner expressly denies these, and begs the queen not to believe them, but rather to help him to get back his property which had been confiscated by Denmark. In this case, he assured

her, the Order would do its best to establish peace and friendship with Denmark, as in the days of Waldemar IV.

This attitude of neutrality was maintained by the next Grand Master, Conrad von Wallenrod (1391-93), but his successor, Conrad von Jungingen (1393-1407), decided on an aggressive step, which the Order was to regret.

It was not easy to persist in a neutral policy when Queen Margaret in 1393 strove to draw the Order to her side, and to induce the Grand Master to take action against Mecklenburg. It is true that in the negotiations with the Danish plenipotentiary, Jan Blome, nothing was mentioned except commercial matters and the recovery of the property of Prussian merchants, captured by the Danes, but there can be little doubt that other matters also entered into the discussions. Wallenrod gave Margaret elaborate explanations, yet at the end confined himself to expressions of sorrow for the consequences of the war — which 'caused such loss and damage to his poor people' — and suggested that she come to an agreement, in which case he promised to do everything in his power to serve her. This time the Order was sincere; for we presently find its envoys, together with those of the Hanseatic League, endeavouring to negotiate a peace between the captive Albert III and Margaret, although the main task fell to the Hanse. In 1395 we even hear of gifts sent by Margaret to Jungingen, and of a new Danish embassy at Marienburg. There are, however, no data in the correspondence or compacts between them which throw light on the real aims of the queen in regard to the Order. It is certain only that Conrad von Jungingen sent Albert von Schwarzenburg, commander from Świecie, and Johann Tiergarten, commander from Marienburg, to Scania, where an agreement between Margaret and Albert was at last reached in May 1395.

The representatives of the Order had a very considerable influence on the course of the negotiations. A glance at the Grand Master's correspondence at this period will convince us that the Order strongly supported the cause of peace, in its own interests, it is true. The new envoy to the Danish court was expressly instructed in August, 1395, 'to push the matter forward and conduct it to a favourable issue'.³

These friendly relations between Denmark and the Order were maintained for several years. The Order sent its factor Johann Tiergarten to the congress of representatives of the Hanse and Denmark at Copenhagen in 1398; and while the Hanse envoys obtained a number of successes, securing the confirmation of their privileges in all three of the northern kingdoms, and compensation for their property which had been captured at Bornholm, the delegate of the Order did not come away empty-handed. On September 1st, 1398, he concluded an alliance with Eric VII,

Queen Margaret, and the council of the three northern states, which was afterwards confirmed by the Grand Master Conrad von Jungingen.

The Treaty of Copenhagen did not create any new situation between Denmark and the Order, which guaranteed each other freedom of trade and concluded peace 'in perpetuity'. Further, the Order bound itself to 'sit quiet' and to compel its subjects to do so likewise. Danish diplomacy was indeed constrained to make economic concessions to the Hanse, but might be regarded as successful in maintaining the *status quo* in Scandinavia. For by its recognition of Eric of Pomerania as ruler of Denmark, Sweden and Norway, the Hanse made a settlement unfavourable to the legitimate claims of Albert III, who had been expelled. The Order did the same, and yet with curious inconsistency recognized Albert's right to Gottland even after the conclusion of its alliance with Denmark in 1398. The Treaty of Copenhagen put an end to the state of war in the Baltic and established favourable conditions for Hanseatic trade in Scandinavia, while at the same time confirming the Union of Calmar, which became the foundation-stone of Danish power on the Baltic.

Gottland had been occupied by an armed force of Teutonic Knights in April, 1398. It was their only act of aggression on the Baltic, and several accounts of it are preserved. One of them tells us that 84 ships, large and small, assembled at the mouth of the Vistula at Easter, 1398, and put to sea, well provided with food, powder and muskets, and in fact everything necessary for war, and carrying 4,000 armed men, including 50 knights, together with 400 horses. Such a splendid force had not been seen on the Baltic since the days of Waldemar the Great, or the famous expedition of the Slavs against the Norwegian Konungahalle in 1137. In the first war with Denmark (1362-63) the Hanseatic League had only 52 ships at its disposal, of which but 27 were actual warships, the remainder being large boats. Five years later, in the second Danish war, the Wendish towns led by Lübeck furnished only 12 ships and 1,045 men, and other groups even less.

Possibly the Teutonic Order intended by this demonstration to frighten Margaret into making concessions. In any case, the results corresponded to the cost. They overran the island and took its capital, Visby, at the first attack, beating its garrison of *Vitalienbrüder* to their knees, or driving them on to the North Sea. From this time onwards peace reigned on the Baltic, Queen Margaret having disposed of the pirates in Danish waters. After the conquest of the island, the Order's fleet returned to Prussia, leaving only a small garrison behind.

The question of the real ownership of the island remained open, for whoever was entitled to it, most certainly the Order was not, nor could they justify

³ 'die sache czu volrekken und vort czu tryben uff eyn lobelich ende.'

their occupation of it either by law or by necessity. However, their diplomacy was equal to the occasion. Recognizing that after Albert's expulsion Gottland passed to Margaret, and that it would be difficult to purchase it from her, they took it as pledge from the former, in whose hands it still was, for the sum of 10,000 nobles. The condition that the king had to pay three times this sum if he wished to redeem it reveals the true aims underlying the transaction: if it were made impossible for Albert to regain it, the Order would be established in the centre of the Baltic.

However, here the Grand Master's diplomats overreached themselves, for though it might be possible to argue whether Gottland was a province of the Danish or the Swedish Crown, it could not for a moment be maintained that Albert had any right to it after the Union of Calmar had been formed. By his alliance with Eric VII, Conrad von Jungingen recognized the dethronement of the Mecklenburg prince, and could not consistently thereafter buy or take from him in pledge what did not belong to him. The Order was fully conscious of the weakness of its position in face of Denmark, and, knowing Margaret's plans, began to fear the loss not only of the island but of the money they had deposited. The measures they took at this time to secure their rear on the sides of Poland and Lithuania are the best evidence that they expected trouble with Denmark over Gottland.

Margaret at first accepted the occupation of the island calmly, and did not demand its return even at the Copenhagen congress of 1398. But as soon as she obtained possession of Stockholm a month later, and thus secured herself against a Mecklenburg attack, she put forward her claims to Gottland, at first by way of negotiation.

However, it was difficult to reach an agreement, Conrad demanding that she should first come to an understanding concerning Gottland with Albert: a course to which neither of them was inclined. The Hanse tried in vain to prevent the outbreak of war, for Margaret determined to take possession of the island by force, and sent out a fleet against it from Calmar in 1403. But it soon appeared that she had less success in war than in diplomacy. Though the Swedish forces occupied the country, they were unable to overcome the resistance offered by the capital, which was relieved in 1404. These events were followed by the first and last meeting between the armies of the Order and of Denmark, and by a battle at sea. In both of these the Swedes suffered defeat, and their fleet was annihilated. This left the queen no course but to negotiate, in which she was strongly supported by the Hanse, and once again her diplomatic talent was successful. As the Order had constantly sheltered behind the name of Albert III, Margaret came to an arrangement with him and purchased his rights to the island for 8,000 Lübeck marks. The

Grand Master tried to annul this bargain, but in vain, and in 1409 he surrendered the island to the Danes for the sum of 9,000 nobles.

The Knights had invaded Gottland in triumph in 1398, but ten years later they abandoned it in humiliation. Their claims to it were disallowed, and they were repaid only such monies as they had spent on actual construction. When they restored the island to the Danes, they renounced their maritime schemes and left Denmark predominant in the Baltic. That is to say, in 1408 the Teutonic Order was finally defeated in its struggle for sea power.

However, its diplomatic ill-success might yet have been made good by victory on land. But only three years after the evacuation of Gottland, the Teutonic Knights were overthrown at Grunwald and the fate of the whole Order hung by a thread. These events proved the wisdom and prudence of the policy followed by Jungingen's predecessors, who, instead of dissipating their strength at sea, gathered it on land. The Gottland affair marked the beginning of a new political policy with regard to Poland, which was ended by the liquidation of the Order's dominion in West Prussia in 1466.

THE ORDER DEFENDS THE HANSEATIC LEAGUE IN ENGLAND, FLANDERS AND ELSEWHERE

It would be an injustice to the Order to omit mention of its diplomatic efforts in England between 1370 and 1408, when it was engaged, together with the Hanse, in combating English influence on the Baltic, and when at the same time England was a most important centre of the Order's foreign trade.

The Prussian Hanseatic towns had long maintained active commercial relations with England, regulated by a royal license of 1303. Hirsch has calculated that the turnover of the English merchants at Danzig from 1300 to 1437 averaged £400,000 yearly: a very considerable sum for those days. The English government long recognized the Hanse's privileges, and it was only at the end of the reign of Edward III (1327-77) that difficulties for it began, owing to the raising of the duty on its wares. Further, about 1375 the English merchants first put forward their claim to the same privileges in the Hanse towns as the latter enjoyed in London; and more particularly to permission to open a factory at Danzig on the same lines as the German trading stations at Bruges and Novgorod. This dispute over the right to establish themselves in Prussia is regarded by Hirsch as the chief issue between the merchants of England and of the Order, and almost every treaty concluded between the Knights and the English Crown has reference to it.

In this quarrel over trading rights in England the Hanse towns could not dispense with the support of the Teutonic Order, the English merchants being

supported by the court, which was more inclined to negotiate with the temporal than with mere commercial authorities. Such was the opinion of the experienced representatives of the Hanse (*Stahlhof*) in London, who wrote in 1374 that 'the above-mentioned Grand Master and the lords of Prussia are favourably looked upon by the noble king aforesaid and all his councillors.'⁴ The Knights of the Order, then, enjoyed the respect and esteem of the English court, and endeavoured to profit by it in their negotiations concerning commercial privileges, which culminated in the Treaty of Marienburg in 1388.

The Grand Master's aid was specially needed in 1385, when the English began to seize Prussian ships, on the principle that all goods in an enemy country are to be considered enemy property, no matter who is the actual owner. On receipt of this news, it was decided to confiscate English property in Prussia to the value of the ships which had been seized. At the same time envoys were sent to England, but without success, as one of them fell sick and the other died. Next year Count Rudolph von Kyborgh took up the negotiations on behalf of the Grand Master, and was assured by King Richard that he 'desired to be a friend of the Grand Master and of the Order, and would always increase and not diminish their ancient friendship, which had originated in the time of their fathers.' Nevertheless, his mission likewise came to nothing, and Conrad Zöllner von Rotenstein determined to take decisive steps. He therefore in August 1385 forbade the import of English cloth into Prussia, and the export of timber and forest products to England. It was now England's turn to desire peace. Negotiations were opened in 1388 by Albert Veer, and were brought to a successful issue by the king's envoys, who arrived at Marienburg on July 28th, 1388. On August 21st they concluded an agreement with the Order, re-establishing mutual commercial relations and granting the Prussian merchants compensation for their goods previously distrained in England. This was ratified by Richard II in the following year.

In Prussia, however, it was soon perceived that the agreement was more to the advantage of the English merchants than to those subject to the Order, for which reason the Grand Master delayed its ratification. Moreover, fresh duties were presently imposed by the English on Prussian products. It was probably due to the Order's intervention that Richard granted the German merchants exemption from these for two years, sending Thomas, Duke of Gloucester, in 1391 to negotiate *de quibusdam materiis et negotiis inter nos et ipsum magistrum pendentibus*. The desired results, however, were not attained, and when further efforts on the part of the Hanse to procure the cancellation of the new duties were no more successful,

a demand arose in Prussia for reprisals against the English trading there. Still, the Grand Master, von Jungingen, hesitated to use extreme measures and endeavoured to negotiate; but this proving fruitless, in February 1398, he denounced the Marienburg agreement and ordered the English merchants to leave the country within the year. Notwithstanding, they were suffered to remain and trade as before, and the Order's merchants continued to visit England. It was only when, in 1404, English privateers plundered Prussian and Livonian merchants of goods to the value of 50,000 nobles, that recourse was had to extreme measures. It is curious that although the Hanseatic towns, and more especially those in Prussia, suffered very considerable losses from English policy, they yet avoided war.

They were throughout loyally supported by the Teutonic Order, which, however, notwithstanding the instigation of the Duke of Burgundy, was disinclined for war, and counted on the goodwill of Richard II's successor, Henry IV (of Lancaster), who had been on good terms with the Order ever since 1399, when he had undertaken an expedition against Lithuania in common with it. In fact, and in spite of all difficulties, it succeeded in obtaining a favourable agreement in London on December 4th, 1409.

In these protracted commercial negotiations with England, Teutonic diplomacy was more successful than perhaps in any other field, representing as it did at the English court either the whole of the Hanseatic League or at least the Prussian part of it. The Hanse obviously felt itself uncomfortable on English territory, and preferred reliance on the Order's diplomacy to warlike operations.

The establishment of good relations with the other western states in whose territory the Hanse traded was a much easier task. After the agreement of 1360 with Flanders, there followed a period of comparative peace, permitting the League to enjoy its privileges undisturbed until 1430. Only once, in 1383, when Hanse trade in Flanders had suffered in consequence of war, Conrad Zöllner von Rotenstein endeavoured to obtain compensation from Lewis, Count of Flanders, for the Prussian merchants who had lost their property. The answer completely satisfied him, and is evidence of the good relations existing between the Order and the counts of Flanders, which were maintained even during the conflict between the Hanse and Flanders in 1389. In spite of the reprisals against the Flemings at Lübeck, the factor of Königsberg was allowed to purchase Malines cloth and his agent to export amber to Flanders.

The Order maintained relations even with the French court, where it protected the interests of the Prussian merchants. Its factor, Henry von Allen,

⁴ 'dey vorseghede hoomester unde dey heren van Prutsen sere wol ghemynnet syn van deme edeln conynge vorseghet unde al syme rade.'

was honourably entertained by Charles VI in 1383, and induced him to return goods confiscated from Prussian merchants and to promise freedom of trade for subjects of the Order. This the king undertook to proclaim 'in all his dominions in Normandy and Picardy and in all his towns.'

Active as it was in the interests of the Hanse in the west, Teutonic diplomacy almost completely neglected commercial affairs in the east. This was no doubt partly due to the fact that the Order carried on but limited trade with Novgorod Russia, and being always in strained relations with Lithuania might rather hurt than help the Hanse towns by its intervention. Moreover, the League consciously aimed at excluding the Order from trade with the east, and in this was completely successful. When, at the Congress of Lübeck in 1381, Henry von Allen demanded on behalf of the Grand Master that his agents should be admitted to the same rights as other Germans at Novgorod, the Hanse representatives returned him an evasive answer and left matters 'as they were of old'.

Poland, cut off from the sea since 1309, had no direct influence on the trend of events on the Baltic. But the Hanse, and more particularly its Prussian members, was quite as anxious to develop its trade with Poland as to maintain relations with Flanders and England. Poland and Lithuania were, indeed, along with Novgorod Russia, the chief markets for western goods, and at the same time lay across the route from the Hanse coast to Russia, Hungary and Silesia. In no other quarter was Hanse trade so dependent on the state of political relations.

At first everything went well. The Hanse merchants had a clear route to Poland, and through Poland to Russia, Hungary and Silesia. The Polish dukes not only offered no objections to the establishment by foreign merchants of trade relations with Poland, but actually encouraged it. We have quite a number of documents issued by King Ladislas Łokietek (the Short), granting the Lübeckers, in return for financial assistance, various trading privileges in Danzig and Poland itself and promising them a far-reaching measure of protection. Incidentally, we may remark that these same Lübeck merchants seem to have acted in 1315-16 as mediators between the Danish king Eric Menved and Ladislas Łokietek, who both alike had accounts to settle with the last of the Ascanians, Margrave Waldemar of Brandenburg. Nevertheless, Lübeck was never able to profit by the preference given it by the Polish duke, being constantly opposed by its rival Danzig, while the state of war which existed between the Teutonic Order and Poland from the year 1309 onwards could not but have an unfavourable influence on the oversea trade of the Prussian towns. Such a state of affairs from 1310-33 was intolerable, and so the Grand Master Winrich von Kniprode endeavoured at all

costs so to conduct the dispute that it should not have an unfavourable effect upon the trade relations of Prussia with Poland. It was fortunate for the Prussian towns that the throne of Poland was at this time occupied by King Casimir the Great, who, while fully maintaining his rights to Pomerania, yet clearly distinguished politics from economics, and gave a favourable reception to every proposal of the Teutonic Knights which was calculated to promote the growth of mutual economic relations. We may even say that the reigns of Grand Master Winrich von Kniprode in Prussia and of Casimir the Great in Poland coincided with the greatest development of the oversea trade of the Order's towns and the greatest growth of the Polish trading centres — Poznań, Lwów and Cracow.

Affairs took quite a different turn under Casimir's successors, the Jagiellons. Understanding very well the effects of trade restriction, the first Jagiellon decided on a strong measure, which certainly was not expected by his opponents: in 1394 he closed the route to Prussia and simultaneously granted Poznań the right to be an emporium, and opened to Polish merchants the 'Flanders route' through Stettin to the west. The course of this first and important Polish trade war is clearly depicted in the works of S. Kutrzeba, E. Daenell and H. Oesterreich, and it is an ascertained fact that the Prussian Knights immediately made concessions. It was only the circumstance that the new route through Stettin was hampered by many difficulties that caused Jagiello to turn again to the ancient Prussian route and permit the Teutonic Knights to trade with Poland.

The dispute between Poland and the Teutonic Knights and its conclusion by Jagiello in 1394 have revealed to us, not for the first time, the false situation in which both the subjects of the Order and of the Polish Crown found themselves in 1309. The former were completely dependent on the maintenance of free trade with Poland, which was a life and death matter for them, and consequently were ready at any moment to sacrifice the rights of their feudal superiors if only they might secure their own economic privileges and the freedom of trade by land and sea. The Polish Crown was in a position to grant both, and, realizing how important was the possession of a stretch of coast, began to push strongly towards the sea. Accordingly, by the middle of the fourteenth century, the interests of the subjects of the Order and the aims of Poland coincided, and finally triumphed during the Thirteen Years' War.

GENERAL REMARKS ON THE BALTIC POLICY OF THE ORDER BETWEEN 1230 AND 1410

After thus assembling the facts, it becomes advisable to express certain general considerations with reference to the Baltic policy of the Order between

1230 and 1410. The latter date is of great importance, marking a turning-point in the maritime policy of the Order and likewise in the domestic history of its state.

The whole period of two centuries which has been discussed above may be divided into three sub-periods, marked by certain fundamental events in the internal development of the Order, and the standpoint it adopted with regard to particular Baltic problems.

In the first of these, embracing the earliest expeditions of the Teutonic Knights and the conquest of Pomerania in 1309, the Order perfectly comprehended the importance of the sea, as is evidenced by the direction of its advance down the Vistula and then along the coast. The Ancient Prussians were thus cut off from the sea long before the defeats they suffered in 1258 and 1283. Pre-occupied as they then were with the conquest and organization of fresh areas, the Knights had no time to think of maritime expansion; they were, moreover, hampered by their conflicts with the dukes of Pomerania, as well as by domestic troubles. This was the period when they laid the foundations of the later power of Prussia by building towns and conferring on them freedom of overseas trade.

During this period also the co-operation of Lübeck with the Grand-Masters both strengthened the Order and opened a field of activity on the Baltic for the future Hanseatic League. This alliance between the Order and the Queen of the Baltic was based on community of interests in the east; it was on occasions severely tested, but endured till the end of the Middle Ages, forcing on the Knights certain maritime tasks. Its fruits were seen in the economic and political expansion of the Hanseatic League and the Order, and the complete change in political power on the southern coasts of the Baltic. As Konopczyński says: 'The German element, having freed itself from the direction of the Empire, which drew it beyond the Alps and to the Holy Land, moved north and east like the back-flow of a wave recoiling from the Alps and the trans-Rhenane districts. Two organizations led the way: the Hanseatic League and the Teutonic Order... The Hanse merchants dealt with weights and measures, the Knights of the Order wielded the sword, and both alike served the German cause. The first settlement of the Knights in Prussia, their union with the Brothers of the Sword, the first agreement between Lübeck and Hamburg, and the union of Wendish and Saxon towns about 1256: all these events modified the course of Baltic affairs to the advantage of the Germans and the great prejudice of the Scandinavians.'

But these problems carry us into the second of our sub-periods, embracing the years between the conquest of Pomerania in 1309 and that of Gottland in 1398. The former of these gave the Order a further stretch

of coast, and the possession of Danzig, the chief trading-centre in this region; the occupation of Gottland drew it on to the sea and forced it to consider the great problems of the Baltic.

By the middle of the fourteenth century, the Knights of the Order were masters in their own house, and the support of the Prussian and Pomeranian cities enabled them to reach an independent solution of several maritime problems. The most characteristic feature of their policy at this time was their co-operation with the Hanseatic League. The Grand Masters, especially Winrich von Kniprode, maintained good relations with Lübeck and urged their own cities to come to an understanding with the future members of the League. But about 1360 there came a change. Hanseatic trade in England was threatened by new, high duties; the privileges of the Germans in Flanders were annulled, and in Scania were limited. When Waldemar IV Atterdag captured the Hanse town of Visby, and Denmark abolished their long-established privileges, the cup was full. Determined action was now necessary, and the aid of the Teutonic Order was enlisted: not without success. Indeed, we may say that in some cases the Hanse would never have attained its ends without the support of Teutonic diplomacy. Such was the case particularly in England between 1378 and 1409; such was also the case in Flanders before the conclusion of the agreement of 1360. This collaboration of Order and League continued also in the third sub-period, between 1398 and 1411, although by that time the latter had overcome its greatest difficulties, caused by Waldemar's attitude towards its privileges in Scandinavia, and that of the Flemings towards its factor at Bruges. This third sub-period of the Order's Baltic policy is perhaps the most interesting of all. Gottland was occupied in 1398, and we try in vain to find an explanation for this one appearance of a Teutonic fleet on the waters of the Baltic. It is true that von Jungingen, in his lengthy defence of his rights to the island, written in 1401, states that he was forced to occupy owing to it by the exploits of the pirates established on it, but this seems scarcely credible, for he had cleared the Baltic in 1398, and driven the last pirate on to the North Sea.

It might have been expected that the Knights would have been glad to get rid of Gottland, which had cost them much money from the very beginning. Yet they continued to hold it, and there is evidence in support of the view that they aimed at establishing themselves on it permanently; for example, the terms of their agreement with Albert III, which were such as to render it impossible for him to redeem his pledge. The Order purchased the island from a king whose own title to it was doubtful, thereby reminding us of its curious purchase of Danzig Pomerania from the margraves of Brandenburg in 1310: when, however, the king of Poland, as third party, was in a far

less favourable position than Denmark. Again, we know from Jungingen's defence that the Order expended large sums on fortification and maintenance, which indicates an intention of keeping the island in its own hands. It was too valuable a possession to be given up easily and at a loss: the Swedes, Danes and the Hanse were well aware that the master of Gottland and its fortress controlled the western waters of the Baltic; and so, assuredly, was the Grand Master.

And yet after ten years he returned it to the Danes on conditions which were far from favourable to his Order, in spite of the fact that his armies had won a great victory over the Swedes and were certainly in a position to face even the combined forces of the three northern kingdoms. In 1409 the forces of the Order were unbroken and its treasury full, whereas Denmark was faced by fresh internal troubles and was still uncertain of its footing in Sweden.

None the less, the withdrawal of the Order from Gottland was due to stern necessity. We have already spoken of the pan-Scandinavian plans of Waldemar IV and Margaret, and their intention of controlling the Baltic, in which field they were not at first opposed either by the Hanse or the Teutonic Order. Indeed, the former actually helped Waldemar to strengthen his position at home, while the latter took no step which might be called unfriendly to Denmark until 1398. And yet events had happened in the meantime, the full significance of which was not yet understood at Marienburg or Lübeck, though it was duly appreciated at the court of the Grand Master.

In January 1397, Eric of Pomerania was crowned king of Denmark, and of Sweden in June of the same year, while the Union of Calmar was formed on July 20th. This could not but be displeasing to the Order, which saw itself faced by one large kingdom instead of a divided dynasty, and accordingly we find it active in opposition, supporting the Hanse in its occupation of Stockholm, and subsidizing the Prussian towns which undertook to garrison the place. But Daenell is also justified in asserting that the meeting of representatives of Denmark, the Teutonic Order and the Hanseatic League at Copenhagen in August 1398, really covered a struggle for hegemony in the Baltic between Queen Margaret and the Order.

The latter, however, found itself isolated, inasmuch as the Hanse supported the Danes, and Henry Westhof, burgomaster of Lübeck, was regarded as one of the creators of the Union of Calmar. At this critical moment in the fortunes of the Hanse and of Denmark, the Order determined upon the dangerous step of occupying Gottland, in the conviction that it would thus set a term to Danish expansion on the Baltic. This, then, was the true reason for the Teutonic expedition against Gottland and the occupation of the island in 1398.

Knowing the Teutonic Knights as we do, we may safely assume that they would not have evacuated it had they not been compelled by circumstances. Since they might have defended it successfully against Denmark, there must have been some special reason which led them to restore it to Margaret, and this, surely, is to be found in the strained state of political relations with Poland after the death of Lewis of Hungary. Polish historians have long leaned to the opinion that none of the kings of Poland, not even Lewis of Anjou, really renounced their claims to Danzig Pomerania, in spite of the fact that Casimir the Great formally ceded it to the Order in 1343. This last of the Piasts continued to the end of his life to bear the irritating title, conferred on him by the Knights, of 'heir to Pomerania', but he was too wise a politician to quarrel with the Order and risk disturbing the economic relations between his country and Prussia. In the reign of Lewis of Hungary, likewise, both sides avoided accentuating their differences. But in the meantime came the unexpected agreement of Krewo in 1385, whereby Poland and Lithuania were united, and in this the Order undoubtedly saw a still greater danger than in the Union of Calmar some ten or fifteen years later. It was recognized alike, too, at Marienburg and at Cracow, that it was only a question of how soon the conflict over Pomerania would come to a head, and that the interval must be used for preparation. If war did not break out at once, it was due in the first place to the Grand Master Conrad von Jungingen, who preferred to pursue a strong policy at sea, and in the second to Queen Jadwiga, to whose influence it was due that hostilities were postponed until her death in 1399. The Order, so long as she lived, felt itself safe on land and free to devote its whole energies to its English, Hanseatic and Danish problems, and was able to undertake the conquest of Gottland.

Soon afterwards, however, Jadwiga died, and Margaret, whose hands were free now that she had regained Stockholm, began to remember the island. Accordingly, in 1400, the Order found itself faced by Jagiello of Poland, Witold of Lithuania and their allied Pomeranian dukes on the one hand, and Margaret and Eric on the other: a situation which must have given it serious cause for thought. It would seem that it counted on success both by land and by sea, and was loath to give up either Gottland or Danzig Pomerania. But these designs were too far-reaching, and Margaret, unable to come to terms with the Grand Master, detached the Hanse towns from him and opened negotiations with Poland.

Again, although the Order skilfully endeavoured to make use of Grand Duke Witold as an ally against Jagiello, he showed himself but an untrustworthy friend, and from 1406 onwards an outright enemy. Hence the Teutonic diplomatists doubtless very soon convinced themselves that it was not feasible to defend

both their conquests, and that they must jettison one in order not to lose both. Their choice fell on Gottland, perhaps because the new Grand Master Ulrich von Jungingen was in favour of a continental policy and proposed to 'liquidate the political bankruptcy' of his predecessor. This withdrawal from the Baltic was certainly well-judged, for it is extremely likely that the crisis in the *Ordensstaat* resulting from its defeat by Polish arms in 1410 would have been yet more serious had it had to fight against Denmark and Sweden as well. It began the Battle of Grunwald with all its forces intact and confident of victory.

If it had had to devote half its strength to the defence, of Gottland, it would probably have been incapable of that stubborn resistance after the day of calamity which ultimately saved it from total ruin. Margaret would certainly have taken advantage of its misfortunes, and would probably have regained the island.

Be that as it may, however, there is no doubt that the events of 1410 compelled the Teutonic Order to initiate a new policy, very different from the Baltic policy of Winrich von Kniprode, Conrad Zöllner and Conrad von Jungingen.

II

THE BALTIC POLICY OF THE ORDER FROM 1410 TO 1466

RELATIONS WITH THE HANSEATIC LEAGUE AND WITH THE PRUSSIAN TOWNS.

We have already shown that the fundamental feature of the Baltic policy of the Teutonic Order between 1350 and 1410 was co-operation with the Hanseatic League. This latter had, indeed, its own separate aims on the Baltic, but at critical moments the Order stood by the towns, either observing a benevolent neutrality, or allowing its subjects freedom of action. After the defeat at Grunwald, however, the complexion of affairs changed. The attitude of foreign courts towards the Order was appreciably modified, and the trade of the Prussian merchants was thereby affected. For example, Henry IV of England began to lose confidence in the future of the *Ordensstaat*, and withheld payment of the sums due to its merchants by the treaty of 1409; and a similar course was followed by the Danes.

The Order, however, did not realize even then that its most deadly enemies were the Prussian cities of Toruń, Danzig and Elbing, which sent envoys to the camp of the Polish king immediately after the defeat at Grunwald and negotiated favourable terms of peace for themselves. For this they have been accused of treachery, but it should not be forgotten that not merely the prelates, but even the high dignitaries of the Order were despairing of its future. Moreover, the Order was now paying the penalty for its treatment of the towns during the preceding decades. The commercial policy of the Grand Masters between 1388 and 1411 drove a wedge between the burghers and their lords, and it was only the authority of the latter which enforced obedience. The treachery of the towns in 1410 opened an abyss, which could only have been bridged by a policy of conciliation. Instead of this, the Knights had thoughts only for violence and revenge, and when the Grand Master Heinrich Reuss von Plauen beheaded the burgo-masters of Toruń and Danzig, and deprived those

towns of their autonomy, he created a permanent breach between the Order and the League, which led to the ultimate downfall of the *Ordensstaat*.

After 1410, the Order had too many domestic troubles to be able to uphold the interests and privileges of the Hanse in foreign countries. Even before 1410 some of the Grand Masters had endeavoured to distinguish the affairs of the Prussian towns from those of the League as a whole, and from that year onwards the Order parted company with the League and endeavoured to detach the Prussian towns from the rest, and break the bonds uniting them to the League. It may also be said that from this time till 1466, Marienburg followed the principles laid down in 1411 by the Livonian Master in his letter to the Grand Master, written in answer to the latter's demand that the dignitaries of the Order in Livonia should consider whether it would be advisable to make an alliance with the Hanse in view of approaching war with Denmark. His answer is characteristic, and throws light on the views of the rulers of the Teutonic Order concerning the Baltic problem: 'We have come to the conclusion,' he says, 'that it would be advantageous to be on terms of friendship with the Hanse, so long as we did not enter into any formal alliance. The towns are too many, and if it happened that the secular princes declared war on them, or they on the princes, and it became necessary for us to aid them, the interests of our Order would be prejudiced.'⁵ Heinrich von Plauen followed this suggestion, and for a time even supported Denmark against the Hanseatic League.

The Grand Masters took up a similar attitude to the Prussian towns, through which the Order indirectly influenced Baltic affairs. We do not propose here to enquire into the origin of Prussian municipal opposition to the Order between 1411 and 1454, but will content ourselves with pointing out its importance in the quarrel of the Estates of the

⁵ 'Wir haben do uff mit unser gebitigern getrachtet und gar ebn obirgewegen, unde duochte uns gar nuotte wesen, konde men ene vrentschafft mit en gemachen suonder harden vorsigelten vorbund; anders en dunket id uns mit

nichte geraden, wente der stete gar vill is, unde welden die wertlichen fuorsten en beseten ken en krygen edder sie kegen die fursten, solde ir dan en bysten in eren noten, daz were mit nichte vor unsen orden.'

Ordensstaat with their lords, which is directly or indirectly connected with the Order's Baltic policy at the period.

One of the things which helped in a notable degree to inflame the relations between the burghers of Prussia and the Grand Masters was the imposition of the so-called 'poundage' (*Pfundzoll*, *Pfundgeld*) on all products exported by sea. It was one of the means whereby the trade of the Prussian towns was made dependent on the Order; and incidentally it may be remarked that the Hanseatic sea-coast towns themselves had pointed the Knights the way to this rich source of income. For when in 1362 they decided to declare war on the king of Denmark, they covered the costs by customs duties levied in all the Hanseatic ports on all ships and goods. The same course was followed between 1368 and 1372, and enabled the League to defeat the hitherto successful Waldemar IV. It is true that after the peace of 1370, poundage ceased to be levied, but the Prussian towns and the rulers of the Order did not forget that at that time its exaction had in no way injured the interests of their subjects, and they perceived that a tax on oversea exports could produce large sums without interfering too much with trade. Accordingly, only a few years after the conclusion of peace with Denmark, we find the Prussian towns deciding, at the Congress of Elbing in 1389, to levy customs duties on 'all those who wish to land and to export goods in this country', and from the proceeds of this tax to repay the Grand Master the expenses of the Prussian embassy to Lübeck and Holland. The duties were at first imposed for one year, but were levied unbrokenly in the following years under the pretext that the money was needed for various expenses and for operations against pirates in the Baltic. The Grand Master Conrad von Jungingen, who was anxious to secure the debts owed him by his subjects, agreed to the towns' decision, stipulating only that one-third of the duties levied should go to the reduction of debt, amounting to 1,500 marks, the rest going to the maintenance of the garrison at Stockholm.

The Order, however, did not overlook so convenient a source of income, and, distrusting the honesty of the burghers, appointed an official (*Pfundmeister*) to control it. After 1408 we find the Grand Master taking two-thirds of the receipts: a considerable sum, since the total levied between 1397 and 1417 amounted to 32,835 marks 7 scots — eloquent evidence, by the way, of the extent of the oversea trade of the *Ordensstaat* at this period.

The year 1410 brought a weakening of the Order's power, and its defeats had an unfavourable effect on the sea-borne trade of the Prussian towns. Consequently, they felt all the more keenly the burden of the poundage duties, from which they desired to free themselves at all costs. They had not consulted the Hanse towns when imposing them, but now, as

Grand Master Michael Kuchmeister remained deaf to their prayers, they turned to the Hanse and begged it to intervene. The representatives of the League, gathered in congress at Wismar in 1416, did in fact request the Grand Master to cancel the poundage, but without success. Under Kuchmeister's successor, Paul von Russdorf, the question of the abolition of poundage was constantly before the Prussian estates, where it was united to various other charges which the towns had against the Order, and contributed in no small degree to increase the tension existing between the feudal superior and his Prussian vassals. Possibly under external influence, Paul von Russdorf abolished the duties shortly before his death in 1441.

Unfortunately they were soon restored. Conrad von Ehrlichshausen, his successor, made it clear from the beginning that he intended to re-introduce them and at the same time give them a fundamentally different character. We have seen that they were originally imposed and collected by the Prussian Hanse towns, the Grand Master approving, on condition that the proceeds should be used in the first place for the defrayal of the debts which the towns owed to the Order. The appointment of a controller in 1410 was a suspicious step, although the maintenance of the duties still depended on the decision of the Estates. In the succeeding years it is true that the Order shared the proceeds of poundage with the towns, but when they proposed its abolition, the Order refused to agree. The embittered quarrels over poundage between the estates and the Order in the years 1437-42 afford evidence that at that period the whole of the proceeds went into the treasury of the Order. When this state of affairs came about has not been ascertained: we only know that by hostile Prussian chroniclers Paul von Russdorf is named as the re-introducer of poundage.

Conrad von Ehrlichshausen had to meet the obstinate resistance of the towns over this question. He paid no attention to the protest of the Danzigers concerning the serious effects of the duties on their oversea trade, declaring the question to be one of life and death for him, and threatening to bring it before the Emperor, where the towns would undoubtedly have found themselves no match for his diplomacy. Accordingly, we find them assenting to the re-institution of poundage, which was formally proclaimed by the Grand Master in January 1443. They negotiated a promise that one-third of the proceeds should fall to them, and that no further burdens should be laid on the merchants without their assent. After the Grand Master's death, complaints against the duties again make themselves heard, and there is plenty of evidence to show the extreme unpopularity of this form of tax.

The whole course of relations between the estates and the Order show what an extraordinarily critical

question this one of poundage was from the very beginning, for it affected the prosperity of six important towns, and thereby inclined them to take up a position decidedly hostile to their rulers. Merchants can never regard taxes with approval, and this tax of poundage was the more oppressive in that it was high, and prejudiced the whole oversea trade of Prussia.

The proceeds of poundage in the years 1443-46 amounted to 22,570 marks; in 1447 to more than 7,332; and in 1448 to almost 5,396. Of this the towns received one-third for their needs, which grew greatly when they were in open conflict with the Order, to which they were compelled to relinquish the remainder. Further, the institution of poundage was unknown in any of the other Baltic ports and naturally disinclined the Hanseatic merchants from carrying on trade with Prussia: a point frequently emphasized by the Danzigers in their protests to the heads of the Order. Unfortunately, we have no figures whereby we may compare the annual trade of Danzig at this time with that of other ports, but we know that poundage was regarded by foreigners with the greatest dislike. The Dutch and the English, who were the most interested in trade with Prussia, appealed to the Grand Master against its imposition, but without success. Lübeck issued threats to which the Knights ought to have listened. In 1417 the Hanseatic League considered the advisability of bringing a charge against the Order at the Council of Constance, and in 1420 matters looked threatening. But the Grand Master thought little of all this, though the Livonian dignitaries showed a better understanding of his interests when, in 1421, they advised him to abolish the duties if he did not wish to involve the Order in vexatious difficulties.

The exaction of poundage was not the only abuse of which the subjects of the Order had to complain. The proceedings of the Estates between 1390 and 1454 afford ample evidence that the Order systematically competed with its seven great towns in a field which concerned their very existence. Incidentally, the morality of the age looked askance at clerical trading; though it might be reconciled with medieval practice. More important was the fact that the Order disposed of great resources, and as a trading corporation might and did carry on a policy prejudicial to the Prussian merchants. This will become clear from a glance at the economics of the *Ordensstaat* at the time of its greatest prosperity, between 1350 and 1410.

Even in the thirteenth century the Order engaged in trade, but it is only at the middle of the fourteenth that we have any information as to its organisation and extent. The oversea trade of the Order, we find, was carried on under the supervision of an administrator called a *Scheffer*, with subordinate factors. There were two *Grossscheffer*, one at Marienburg and

one at Königsberg, the former controlling the export of grain and timber, the latter that of amber, in which the Order from the beginning enjoyed a monopoly. The factors (*Lieger*) were sent out as authorized representatives to the greatest markets of the west: in Flanders, Scotland, England, at Lübeck and, it would seem, at Novgorod. Both *Scheffer* and *Lieger* had considerable freedom, and were supported by the rulers of the Order.

The most important article of the Order's trade was grain, of which it received large quantities as a tax in kind, and from its own estates. Its account books have been preserved, and give us the following figures. About 1400, Marienburg had in storage 153,600 bushels (*Scheffel*: about 1/25 of a metric ton) of rye, 53,000 of oats, 2,700 of barley and malt and 570 of wheat. The largest stocks of oats elsewhere were at Elbing, Ragnit, Königsberg and Christburg, namely 10,000, 17,000, 16,500 and 11,200 bushels respectively. At Königsberg were stored principally barley and malt (13,000 bushels), and wheat (4,000 bushels). In addition, the granaries of Danzig contained 6,000 bushels of barley and malt, and those of Christburg, Elbing and Osterode 3,240, 3,638 and 3,720 bushels respectively of wheat. Finally, about 1400 we find the following stocks of grain in thirty castles belonging to the Knights: 462,971 bushels of rye, 24,014 of wheat, 47,338 of barley and malt, and 203,401 of oats, or altogether 737,000 bushels of grain. But there were years of plenty when stocks increased. The granaries of Marienburg and seven other castles contained over 360,000 bushels of rye at the end of 1400, and in the fertile year 1379 there were 294,000 bushels of rye in the capital of the Order alone.

The famine year of 1382 was succeeded by fat years in Prussia, while there was a shortage of grain in the west. The Order understood very well how to make profit out of this situation. The *Mehlmannsche Chronika des Landes Preussen und Polen* tells us how the Grand Master bought up great stocks of grain at five marks the bushel, stored it in castles near the sea, and when there was famine in England and France and three hundred vessels came to Danzig and Balga for grain, allowed the Prussians to sell first, at nine marks the bushel, and afterwards sold his own grain at twelve marks.

Having these enormous stocks of grain at its disposal, the Order was able, through its administrators (*Scheffer*), to carry out a grain policy highly favourable to itself. As in the case of poundage, there was a conflict of almost a century between the Prussian estates and the Order over the free transport of grain through the Baltic to the west. The proceedings of the Hanse and the Prussian Estates in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries afford evidence that the Order prejudiced the interests of its burghers in three separate ways: by arbitrarily closing the Baltic to merchants, in opposition to their wishes and in pursuit

of a purely self-interested policy; by granting export licences as it thought fit, charging for them too dear, and exempting its own administrators and factors; and by permitting abuses on the part of its officials, who, under the pretext of storing the castles, forced the people to sell grain at a low price, and afterwards sold it again at one considerably higher. Disputes about this began as early as 1388, but did not become exacerbated until after the Order's defeat at Grunwald.

After this event, in 1410, the Order's financial position was desperate, and in consequence it endeavoured to replenish its treasury by the profits of the grain trade. The Grand Masters, though before they seem to have admitted that trading was a reproach, began in the fifteenth century openly to defend it. When at the Congress of Elbing in March 1439 the towns accused the monkish knights of trading, Paul von Russdorf answered shortly that they had every right to do so: 'Why should they not? Have you merchants a charter forbidding them to engage in trade? You may be sure that their present commerce is not a tenth part of what it once was, in the days when the dignitaries of the Order had one or two *Scheffer*, and when one *Scheffer* handled more business than all of us do now. When, however, you complain that the people are compelled to sell to the castles instead of to the towns, they have no right to do that. If you hear of an instance of this, let us know, and we will try to prevent its occurrence again, but let us engage in trade as you do.'⁶ Trade was in fact a necessity for the Order's continued existence. These were its lowest days, and W. Naudé, who has made a special study of the Order's grain policy, perhaps does not exaggerate when he says: 'Almost the whole of the Order engaged in commercial operations, while buying and selling between town and country was hampered at every step, even during the annual fairs and weekly markets.'⁷ The *Ordensstaat* at this period had completely forgotten its original mission, as another German historian admits.

But the knight-merchant of the Order was hateful to the Hanse on other grounds than those of principle: he was a dangerous rival, whose profits would rouse the envy of any trader. The Order's accounts, published by K. Sattler, enable us to compare the trading and financial operations of both *Scheffer* at the time of the *Ordensstaat*'s greatest prosperity and in the period after the defeat of 1410.

When Conrad von Muren took over the administration from Walter von Nedarhofe in 1393, he received from him 30,280 marks in goods and credits, or nearly £800,000 at present day values, and after

ten years of wise administration the revenues of his agency amounted to 56,544 marks, equivalent to £1,461,000. Equal activity was shown by the *Schefferei* of Marienburg under the rule of the later Grand Master Michael Küchmeister. When he took office in 1403, he received in cash and goods 60,031 marks, equivalent to £1,550,700, and his gross turnover reached 64,000 marks (£1,638,800).

These are considerable sums, if we remember that the trade of the *Scheffer* developed with the aid of special privilege, and enjoyed more favourable terms than that of the Order's subjects. Amber, for example, a principal article of the Knights' trade, was exempt from poundage.

If the monkish trade administrators and their subordinate factors had obeyed the general trading regulations of the country and if the Grand Master himself had seen that they did so, the complaints of the Prussian merchants would assuredly have not been so loud. But the greatest abuse was just that: the Order interfered with oversea trade by various rules and regulations, from which its own *Scheffer* and those of its members who were engaged in trade were exempt. Consequently, there were endless complaints at the congresses that export oversea ought to be forbidden to both alike, that all ought to be treated equally as regards the export of grain, and that it was unjust that the burghers should be compelled to sit idle while the officers of the Grand Master voyaged over sea.

The 'Proceedings' of the Prussian estates, especially during the rule of Paul von Russdorf (1422-41), are full of similar accusations against the Order, which harassed its subjects by various abuses. The most vexatious was the export license, granted to home and foreign merchants in exchange for a large fee. In the 'Proceedings' it is called *geloven*. It increased the price of goods, made export oversea dependent on the goodwill of the Grand Master, and provided him with a considerable source of income. Thus in 1417, when war with Poland seemed likely and the Order was without funds, Grand Master Michael Küchmeister gave the towns the choice: either they must furnish him with 100,000 gulden or he would begin to export grain and grant licenses. If the home merchants did not pay him that sum, he would get it from the English and the Dutch. Such were the methods of the authorities at a time when England was short of grain and unusual rainfall had ruined the harvests in Prussia. We do not know the towns' response, but it is certain that the gulf between them and the Order was deepened.

⁶ 'Worumme sy nicht konfslagen mögen? ab dy stete brieffe haben, das sy nicht konfslagen sullen?... Ir sehet wol, das das kowfslagen das czeende teyl nicht also groes ist, also es in vorzeiten ist gewest, wente vormoels die gebieteger gemeynlich einen adder czwene scheffer gehat haben, und uff die zeit eyn scheffer meher handeitung und kowfenschacz hatte denne wir u walle. Aber also ir vorebrenget, wy men die lewthe twun-ge das sie das getreyde uff die hwser und nicht in die stete

muessen fueren, das sal men nicht thun: Wisset ir das sulch eyns erne gescheen ist, das laeset uns vorsteen, wir wellen bestellen das es nicht soll gescheen, aber das ir uns ouch guennet in unsern steten gleiche euch czu koewffen.'

⁷ 'Fast der ganze Orden gab sich mit Kaufschlagen ab, während der Verkehr zwischen Stadt und Land selbst auf dem Jahr- und Wochenmärkten in unerhörter Weise gehemmt und gestört wurde.'

Under Conrad von Ehrlichshausen (1441-49) the tension was somewhat relieved. The Grand Master aided the towns in the export of grain, but in return re-introduced poundage, which had been abolished by his predecessor in 1440.

The closing and opening of the sea, the grain policy, export licenses and the prejudice of oversea trade, and, finally, the imposition of poundage: all these measures proved very dangerous to the Order and wrought it no good for the future. For it must be remembered that the conflict thus aroused between the Prussian estates and the Order could not be localized within the borders of the country. The Order did not seem to perceive that its trade policy injured above all the Prussian towns of Danzig, Toruń, Elbing and Königsberg, which together with Chełmno and Braunsberg formed an organic part of the Hanseatic League. It thus directly prejudiced the interests of the League, war with which was nevertheless decidedly dangerous.

The Hanse regarded the Baltic as its own peculiar domain, within which it would endure no rival. Though its members might quarrel among themselves, they presented a united front to danger from without, and whenever the freedom of sea-borne trade was threatened. How strong was the hatred aroused among them by the Order may be gathered from the account of one of the latter's agents at Lübeck in 1442.

'The matter discussed by the merchants,' he says, 'is so insulting, so unheard of, that I hesitate to repeat it to Your Excellency. They say that if the Order got possession of Prussia, it was by the help of the men of Bremen and Lübeck. That they helped the Order, in the expectation that this latter would defend Christianity and preserve freedom and not load them with taxes. And if they aided them to get possession of the country, they could find a way, with the help of the lords and the towns, to get rid of them again.'⁸

Such was the attitude of the Hanseatic League a few years before war broke out between the estates and their feudal superior, at a time when, in spite of everything, much might still have been put right. But the Order apparently did not see the danger, and if some of the Grand Masters saw it, they despised it. In his discussion of the relation of the *Ordensstaat* to the Hanseatic League, Erich Keyser criticizes the former's trade policy as contrary to the historical vocation of the Knights, but he is convinced, nevertheless, that it was justified in view of the contemporary development of the territorial states in Germany and the desired development of the *Ordensstaat*

itself. With this, however, we cannot agree. Apart from the fact that in the west the relation of the towns to the reigning princes was different from what it was in Prussia, it should be remembered that none of the western states was interested in Baltic problems to the same extent as was the Order, nor was the situation between the subjects and their ruler anywhere so strained as it was in the *Ordensstaat*. Was there any country, in Germany or Scandinavia, where the rulers came forward as the commercial rivals of their subjects? Even in England such a phenomenon was unknown; much less was it likely where the Hanse could appeal against its superiors to the Emperor. It is true that in the west, England occasionally closed the sea for both export and import, but the measure was always directed against the foreigner in defence of home trade.

The imposition of poundage prejudiced the Order not only at home but also abroad, as is evidenced by the intervention of Hanseatic Congresses and western rulers. It was a violation of the League's privileges in Prussia, and put the Order immediately in a state of war with its former ally. From the point of view of general Baltic policy, the trade policy of the Order cannot be defended.

On the other hand, there are circumstances which explain the Grand Masters' trade policy subsequent to 1410. Before the defeat at Grunwald the Teutonic Knights were renowned throughout Europe for their almost legendary wealth, and their account books and other sources prove that they did indeed dispose of enormous sums of money. According to L. Weber's calculations, their average yearly surplus from 1382 to 1409 was 9,949 marks, making a total of 298,487 marks available for increasing their possessions. Weber assesses the cash in their treasury on the eve of Grunwald at 100,000 marks. But after their defeat this money vanished completely, having been spent on the hire of mercenaries, repair of war damage, and the like, and they had recourse once more to extraordinary taxes, which gradually exhausted the paying power of the taxed; the more, inasmuch as the latter were knights, impoverished by continuous warfare, and merchants, prevented by the same warfare from carrying on oversea trade.

The institution of poundage, the arbitrary and pernicious closing of the sea, the ban on exports, and, above all, the fact that monkish officials engaged in trade, increased the discontent of the Prussian Hanse towns, and could not but lead to catastrophe. The Grand Masters conceived their trade policy in the old style, entirely overlooking the fact that it was a policy ruinous to their subjects and from the Baltic

⁸ 'Dy rede, dy geen under kaufleuten so groff, so endar ich sy euveren genoden nicht, wen dy redy sint gross und ungehort, und sprechen das der orden in Preussen ist komen, des haben dy von Bremen und dy Lubeke gemachet, und dy haben orden eirst in Prussen geholfen, und haben sy dorumme in das lant gebrocht, dass sy dy crystenheit sollen vorfechten und

eyn fry lent halden und keyne czolle, und hot man in in das lant geholfen, und so welle nsy auch wolrat fynden myt herren und mit steten weder uns czu brengen und das synt dy gemeny rede under den gemene folko sunder was dy rette der stete sagen das enweis ich nicht, sunder sy haben euveren genode is vol gescreben, wen sy seint al bytter.'

point of view prejudicial to themselves. Instead of standing shoulder to shoulder with the Hanseatic League and helping it to conquer new markets, the Order parted company with it and withdrew from the Baltic altogether. Instead of protecting its subjects and allowing the merchants to enrich themselves by oversea trade, it oppressed its own burghers by a protective system, forbade exports, and itself commenced to engage in commerce. Historians have not attempted to justify the Order's economic policy; in fact, they have frequently been unsparing in their censure. It cannot be denied that by it the Order made enemies of its own subjects, prejudiced the oversea trade of the Prussian towns, and hampered its own action on the Baltic.

THE ORDER'S REACTION TO THE POLICY OF ERIC VII

It has been shown above that the most important field of Hanseatic trade, and more especially of its Wendish branch, lay in Scandinavia. It has been shown, too, amid what difficulties the Hanse towns succeeded in negotiating the Peace of Stralsund, which assured them far-reaching freedom of trade in Denmark, and afterwards in Sweden. During the long reign of Queen Margaret, who avoided wars on account of her struggle for Sweden and her plans for a union with that country, the agreement of 1370 was observed in the north, although the Danish government more than once made it very clear, how unwillingly it suffered the Hanseatic League's privileges in Scandinavia. In 1412 Margaret died and her successor, Eric of Pomerania, began a war for Schleswig, which ended with the Peace of Vordingburg in 1435. The Hanse long preserved neutrality, but in 1426 Eric's proceedings at last compelled it to declare war against him. Though he was a foreigner in his kingdom, yet he was more nationalistic than the Waldemars, and planned to establish a class of native merchants; to which end he abolished the Hanse privileges in Scandinavia and the autonomy enjoyed by their fish-hatcheries in Scania. Even Waldemar IV Atterdag had not gone as far as that. But the severest blow of all those dealt to the Hanse was the imposition by the king of a duty on all goods passing through the Sound.

This act was aimed principally at Prussian trade, since Lübeck and the other Wendish towns engaged in trade with western Russia and Scandinavia could dispense with sailing through the Sound; whereas for the towns of the Order's territory, which traded with England, Bayeux and Flanders, freedom of navigation through that strait was almost a necessity of existence. The question therefore arises, how the Order and its subject towns responded to Eric's Baltic policy.

The Order could not remain indifferent in face of a war between Denmark and Holstein, since the Danish king sought support on every side, and ap-

proached both the Hanse, its ally, and Poland, its enemy. Relations with Denmark had been strained ever since Margaret's death, principally owing to the fact that the Grand Master supported the Wendish towns, with whom, as his envoy at Lübeck told him in 1411, 'war was inevitable'. The Order was therefore in a difficult position, all the more difficult since the defeat at Grunwald had left it diminished in strength and financial resources. In preparation for a conflict with Poland, Heinrich von Plauen assured himself of the armed assistance of some of the Hanse towns, and endeavoured to maintain peace with Eric, sending envoys to Denmark in 1413, and even making gifts to the king; but he was unable thus to buy his friendship. In 1416 we find Grand Master Michael Kuchmeister complaining that Eric 'behaved very strangely to him', and proposing to forbid his merchants to sail westward through the Sound. Nor did the former succeed in preventing an alliance clearly aimed against the Knights, between Denmark, Poland and Brandenburg. On the other hand, the Order maintained relations with the League, but made diplomatic excuses whenever it was asked to intervene at the court of Denmark. Even the Prussian towns refrained from negotiations in common with the Wendish towns, fearing to displease the Grand Master.

Accordingly, the Order endeavoured to preserve neutrality, which, however, in view of the seriousness of the conflict with Poland, was by no means easy. The Danish-Polish alliance was concluded in 1419, and two years later Jagiello made an alliance with Brandenburg. Thus the Order was cut off from the west both by land and sea, and was faced by a coalition stronger than before Grunwald. In these circumstances, it sought a *rapprochement* with the Hanse. There were difficulties in the way, for the Grand Master had but recently refused concessions regarding poundage and grain export licenses. But since the Hanse needed the support of the Order, an agreement was reached without much delay. To secure himself against an attack by Denmark, the Grand Master made an alliance with the Wendish towns, according to the terms of which they were to supply him, in the event of war, with 2,000 armed men in Prussia and 500 in Livonia. In return, the Grand Master pledged himself to abolish poundage, to refrain from imposing new taxes on the Hanse towns in the future, and not to put any difficulties in the way of co-operation between the Prussian and the other sea-coast towns.

This agreement of September 1st, 1421, aroused the Danish king's anger, for he had been convinced that he would be able to draw the Baltic towns to his side. When Siegfried Steglitz, the Grand Master's envoy, appeared at the Congress of the Hanseatic and Danish towns at Vordingburg on August 1st, 1422, Eric threatened to unite with Jagiello and other

princes, and swore to break up the alliance at the first opportunity.

For the rest, it held together none too well from the beginning. In February 1422, Sigismund of Luxemburg informed the Grand Master of secret negotiations between the Archbishop of Riga and Denmark, and of a proposed alliance between Eric and the Hanseatic towns, in which matter the archbishop was most probably the mediator. The Hanse, for their part, had not found much advantage in the agreement, since the Grand Master declined to give them any aid. When in 1422 they requested him to intervene on their behalf in Holland, he had replied that he had just established himself independently there, along with the Prussian towns, and could not, therefore, act for them.

On the other hand, we do not hear of the Hanse towns having furnished the assistance foreseen in the agreement, although in the war with Poland it would have been very welcome. On the contrary, when in July 1422, Paul von Rusdorf called upon the city of Rostock for archers, the Councillors replied that they must leave that matter for the consideration of the confederates, who were shortly to meet. Likewise, when Sigismund of Luxemburg ordered the towns to furnish aid to the Order, which was threatened by the Hussites, they declined to obey, on the ground that peace had been signed at Melno between the Grand Master and Witold, the Hussite emissary. We see, therefore, that the alliance between the League and the Order, when put to the test between 1421 and 1423, brought neither side the expected advantage.

It was soon to be seen, too, that there was a basis for Sigismund's report of an impending alliance between the Wendish towns and Denmark. As early as 1422 negotiations were begun, and on the 6th January in the following year, Eric VII concluded an agreement with them, whereby the privileges of the Hanse in Scandinavia were confirmed and the parties promised mutual aid. The king's one reservation was that only those who specifically accepted the agreement should profit by the privileges it conferred. This excluded from its operation both the Livonian and the Prussian groups, who had not set their hands to it at Flensburg. The Livonian towns hastened to make good their remissness, but the Prussians were compelled to refrain from such a step on account of the Grand Master's commands. Thus the Order again found itself isolated, and thanks to the Grand Master's policy, the Prussian towns offended both the Hanseatic League and the king of Denmark. Only the Danzigers recognized the folly of such procedure and insisted on co-operating with the rest of the Hanseatic towns. It was fortunate for the Order that various causes led the king to desire their support. He had quarrelled with Poland to such an extent that by the summer of

1422 the Grand Master could count on his aid against it, and in 1423, while he was in Pomerania, he established direct relations with the Grand Master. Paul von Rusdorf, profiting by the occasion, offered to enter into an alliance with Denmark and the Hanseatic League, at the same time re-introducing poundage. The negotiations did not fully ripen, but they brought the Order that which was most important: an alliance with Denmark and Eric's Pomeranian relatives. The parties promised mutual armed aid and reciprocal freedom of trade, with the reservation that the subjects of both states were to pay duties according to the decision of the authorities of the given state.

This agreement, as E. Daenell has remarked, was rather singular, in that it protected the Order's rear against Denmark and at the same time gave the Grand Master a free hand as regards the levying of poundage. That is to say, Eric sacrificed the interests of the Wendish towns on this point, while himself gaining incomparably greater advantages. He secured himself against the Wendish towns, and obtained the Grand Master's consent to the tax on goods passing through the Sound. On this point the Order sacrificed the interests of its Prussian merchants, for whom the Sound duties were just as vexatious a burden as poundage was for the Wendish towns. Such procedure on the part of the Grand Master was in direct conflict with the policy of his fourteenth century predecessors.

Politically, the alliance was directed against Poland and Holstein, and soon had to pass the fiery test. In the middle of 1425, Eric returned from abroad with a decision of the Emperor's in his favour in the Holstein question. It had only to be carried out, and to this end the king summoned representatives of the Wendish towns and of the Order to Copenhagen in June 1426. The former did, indeed, send delegates, but declined to recognize the imperial decision and offered to mediate. Whereupon Eric broke with them and began to interfere with their trade in Scandinavia. Efforts for peace proving futile, the Wendish towns united, entered into an alliance with Duke Henry of Schleswig, and on October 17th, 1426 declared war on Denmark. This war lasted nine years, being only concluded by the Peace of Vordingborg in 1435.

In Prussia it was recognized that the maintenance of neutrality would be difficult, inasmuch as the Order was Denmark's ally, pledged to military aid, whereas the towns, in view of their overseas trade, either had to act in harmony with the Grand Master against their fellow towns, or come forward in support of the latter against Eric VII. None the less, and though the rôle of mediator seemed a natural one, the Order decided to remain neutral, and forced its subjects to do the same. In April 1427, only a few months after the outbreak of hostilities, envoys came

to Prussia from Lübeck, Wismar, Rostock and Stralsund to seek help from the towns and the Order against Eric; while simultaneously there appeared an envoy from the latter, Viko of Vitzén, who reminded the Knights of the Prusso-Danish alliance resolved upon in 1423. Forced thus to come to some decision, Paul von Russdorf sent Walrabén von Hunsbach, Grand Marshal of the Order, to mediate between the Holsteiners and the Hanse and Denmark. His mission, however, came to nothing, and the war had to go on for an indefinite time.

Meanwhile, there occurred an event which surely should have moved the Grand Master to positive action against Denmark. On July 11th, 1427, there was a sea-fight in the Sound between the Hanseatic fleet and the naval forces of the Danish king, in which the former was completely defeated. Shortly afterwards, a powerful fleet sailed up with salt from Bayeux and goods from Flanders, but was attacked and seized by the Danes in spite of the fact that the greater part of it belonged to neutral Prussia. But in spite of the indignation of the Prussian merchants, Paul von Russdorf confined himself to forbidding navigation through the Sound 'until better news should arrive'; nor did he change his attitude even when, in the summer of the same year, nine Livonian salt-ships were plundered and compensation refused; nor, again, in September, when the Congress of Hanse towns at Stralsund begged his advice and aid, and especially that he would permit aid to be given to the Prussian towns, which were members of the League, and therefore had a right to expect it.

Even had he been willing, however, it would have been difficult for him to render the required aid. He therefore confined himself to sending a fresh embassy to Denmark at the end of the year. It was needed, for Eric was disturbed by the news of an alliance between the Prussians and the Wendish towns, and desired to know when he might expect the Grand Master's aid. The latter's envoys, Tymme Scoling and the Danziger Bertold Burammer, carried on negotiations with the king, but without the least success in promoting an understanding between Denmark and the towns. All they could do was to procure the restoration of the Prussian merchants' plundered goods.

The weakness of the Order at this time reacted most unfavourably on the commerce of the Prussian towns. Not only had the latter to put up with the closing of the Sound by the Danes and the Hanse, but they were compelled by the prevalence of piracy, as they had been during the war between Albert III and Margaret, to refrain altogether from trading by sea. At the Congress of Elbing in December 1428, they discussed, in the presence of the Grand Master, the best way to restore freedom of navigation and to obviate the losses following from its discontinuance. It was decided that any one might sail

at his own risk (*uff sejn ebentur*), with the single reservation that neither enemy ships nor enemy goods might be taken through the dominions of the Danish crown. The Grand Master promised to try and secure permission from the Wendish towns and from Eric VII for free passage for Prussian vessels through the Sound.

The Hanse imprudently rejected the Prussian delegates' request, but in February 1429, the Danish king permitted passage through the Sound. Accordingly, early in April, a large Prussian fleet sailed to Denmark with letters of recommendation from the Grand Master, and passed through the Sound without paying duty. The Grand Master then took action against the Wendish towns, forbidding trade with them and seizing the property of their merchants. He might have proceeded to still more violent measures, had the Prussian towns not begged him to maintain good relations with the Hanse. Eric's readiness to make concessions to the Prussians may be explained by his desire to secure the support of the Order in his negotiations with the Hanse and the Holsteiners, which took place in May and June 1423, at Copenhagen, and later at Nyköping, on the isle of Falster.

The Grand Master sent his own delegates to the conference, in the persons of Burchard Gunsterberg and the Knight-Commander Johann von Pommersheim, but gave them express instructions to avoid as far as possible entanglement in the quarrels between Denmark and the towns, while at the same time endeavouring to procure the restoration of the property plundered from Prussian merchants. But nothing came of the negotiations; indeed 'both sides parted in anger', as Paul von Russdorf wrote to the Livonian Master after the delegates' return, adding that 'in the near future we must expect the worst from the robbers who infest the seas.'

It might have been expected that the Order would be repaid for its favourable policy towards Denmark and its neutral attitude toward Eric's quarrel with the Hanse. But things turned out otherwise. After the breakdown of negotiations at Nyköping, the Danish king began once more to exact duties from shipping passing through the Sound, and the Order was left with the choice, either to give up the struggle for its ancient privileges of navigation on the Baltic, or to suffer the trade of its subjects to fall a prey to Lübeck.

The situation of the Order at this period was sensibly affected for the worse by its strained relations with Poland. The Prussian towns made good use of the position, and began to think of co-operating with the Hanse in defence of their privileges in Denmark. Only then, aware of his dependence on the towns in the event of war with Poland, did the Grand Master adopt a more considerate attitude towards them.

In general, the year 1430 marks a change in the anti-Hanseatic policy hitherto pursued by the Order; it was now found advisable to co-operate with the League in the hope of regaining lost rights in various countries. It was the Danzigers who called upon Lübeck to bring together representatives from *all* the Hanseatic towns, that they might deliberate on means to restore the League's prestige; and this fact is very significant, if we remember that ever since the dissolution, at the beginning of the fifteenth century, of the Confederation of Cologne (founded in 1367), the bonds uniting the Hanseatic League had been perceptibly loosening, and each of its four sections had been pursuing an independent policy.

In any case, the Grand Master was compelled by the orders of Sigismund of Luxemburg to take an active interest in the affairs of the League, for Sigismund, anxious to gather forces for the war against the Hussites, sought to bring about peace between the German towns and Holstein, and Denmark, and commissioned the Grand Master to be his mediator. After considerable difficulty, a five years' truce was concluded at Giedser in 1431.

This was one of the most successful, and at the same time one of the last achievements of the Order in the field of international diplomacy. It did not, indeed, culminate in a lasting understanding between the parties, but led at least to the Peace of Vordinborg in 1435. At the same time, Sigismund's choice of mediator is a tribute to the knowledge of affairs possessed by the Knights. It is not too much to say that Grand Master Paul von Russdorf by his diplomacy saved the reputation of the Order at a very critical time. Notwithstanding the strained state of relations between Denmark and the Hanse, he contrived to remain on good terms with both; Eric VII assured him of his friendship in 1432, and four years later made him arbitrator in his quarrel with his Swedish subjects. These latter likewise appealed to the Order for aid against the king, but received the answer that any peace is preferable to war, and that in dealing with a monarch it is advisable to make concessions.

Finally, attention may be called to the good relations existing between the Order and the Hanse from 1430 to 1436, which recalled the best times of the fourteenth century. It is true that the League was harassed almost everywhere at this juncture, losing its privileges in Flanders and England and even at Novgorod, and being oppressed with taxes and unjust confiscation of goods. This refers not merely to the Wendish towns, at odds with Denmark, or to the towns of Livonia, but to all the Hanseatic cities without exception.

This was perfectly well understood by their delegates gathered at Lübeck in June 1434, when they decided as the first necessity to send envoys to the Grand Master with a request for aid. He responded, and developed such diplomatic activity on

their behalf in Flanders and England as had not been seen since the times of Winrich von Kniprode and Conrad von Jungingen.

But these diplomatic successes were not equalled by the Order's military operations against Poland, and were in part invalidated by its unsatisfactory relations with its subject Prussian towns. Ever since the defeat at Grunwald the *Ordensstaat* had been approaching the abyss, from which it might yet have been saved by a wise policy towards its Estates. It is perfectly true that even before 1410 it had prejudiced the interests of the towns in various ways, and the fruits of this policy had shown themselves during the first war with Poland. But at that period of economic growth and prosperity the injuries had not been so sharply felt as they were now in the fifteenth century. Besides, the Knights in that case had made up for them by supporting the towns in their trading relations with the west.

The year 1410 brought a striking change. The Order broke with the Hanseatic League, detached the Prussian towns from it, and had recourse to measures which sooner or later were bound to bring it to disaster. Notwithstanding its discomfiture at Grunwald, it emerged from the war with undiminished territory, and obtained the most favourable peace possible in the circumstances. But instead of making the most of the peace, it indulged in war and provoked its mortal foe, for which even German historians cannot forgive it. It is not surprising that with such domestic troubles, and preparations against Poland, an active, forceful policy in Baltic affairs was out of the question. The Order's diplomatic efforts were of short duration and, though sometimes crowned with gratifying results, were not such as to evidence a serious maritime programme or an independent Baltic policy. In the lasting peace of 1422 the Poles and the Knights of the Order mutually agreed that in case of a resort to arms, the subjects of the aggressor had the right to refuse obedience. This was a clause obviously directed against the Order, which, as subsequent years were to show, had no intention of keeping the treaty of Melno, but cherished plans of revenge against Poland. Again, Hermann Reusapp, burgo-master of Toruń and representative of his estate, declared to the Grand Master during the war with Poland in 1433, that if the Order 'will not make efforts for peace and harmony, then the estates will do so themselves, and will look for a master who can assure it to them'. Thus the Order could not move, faced as it was at home by its Estates, and abroad by a watchful Poland. The period between the peace of Brześć Kujawski, between Poland and the Teutonic Knights, and the outbreak of the Thirteen Years' War, was a period of increasing decay in the *Ordensstaat*, unfavourable to any development of force on the Baltic, however inviting the situation might be owing to the turn of events in Scandinavia.

Even before 1454, the conflict between the Prussian estates and their rulers had ceased to be a purely domestic concern. It occupied the attention of the Apostolic See in 1452, and in the following years was twice raised at the court of the Emperor Frederick III. When his subjects refused the Grand Master obedience, and king Casimir Jagiellończyk proclaimed the incorporation of Prussia with Poland, the Order was faced by a fresh and final struggle, no longer for dominion on the Baltic, but for the mere maintenance of its hold on the coast. It was not only Poland which proposed to displace it from its seat in Prussia and send it to the east, where it might fulfil its original missionary task. It succeeded, it is true, in maintaining itself in its castles in Prussia, but when the war was transferred to the sea it was defeated, and had to make way for the Danzigers.

The task of these latter was to cut off the Knights from the west and from Livonia by sea, as they were already cut off from Germany by land. This conflict on the Baltic revealed the full weakness of the Order. For the Danzigers organized large numbers of privateers, secured command of the sea, and won a notable victory over the fleet of the Order's ally, the king of Denmark. The Thirteen Years' War produced no great deeds of arms, but it is noteworthy that it ended at a critical moment for the Order with a single, decisive battle at sea. This was in the summer of 1463, a few months after the defeat of the Knights at Żarnowiec, when the confederates endeavoured to give the Order a decisive blow by capturing the well-stocked fortress of Gniew. Conscious of its importance, the Grand Master Ludwig von Ehrlichshausen endeavoured to relieve it and at the same time destroy the besieging armies.

To this end he collected 1,500 warriors, placed them on board forty-four ships, and set sail from Königsberg for the mouth of the Vistula, where he proposed to concentrate the whole of his forces and then move on Gniew, relieve the fortress, and free the whole of Pomerania from the enemy. But this plan, well conceived as it was, was upset by the confederates, who, though they had no more than twenty-five vessels, attacked the Grand Master's fleet and completely defeated it, in September 1463. Gniew did not, indeed, fall immediately, for it held out for a further three months, but the effect on the further course of the war was decisive.

The importance of this victory was realized by contemporaries, as is evidenced by the words of Długosz, who says that 'from that time the Knights of the Cross, defeated first in the land battle of Puck and shortly afterwards in the sea-fight at Elbing, began to decay and slide down to their ruin', and modern students take the same view. Thus Karol Górski in his most recent book on Pomerania says that 'the unsuccessful operations connected with the relief of Gniew were the decisive factor in the

Thirteen Years' War. Neither the redemption of Marienburg, nor the battle of Świecin was the turning-point. There were, in fact, two such moments: the Battle of Chojnice in 1454, with which the long and obstinate war commenced, and the sea-fight which frustrated the attempt to relieve Gniew and brought about the gradual disappearance of the armed forces of the Order on the left bank of the Vistula. It should be observed that the struggle for Pomerania and Prussia was decided, not on land, but at sea; without the fleet which the king of Poland at that time possessed it would have been impossible to break the Order's power. Superiority at sea was the fundamental condition of victory on land.'

CONCLUSION.

We are justified in arraigning the Teutonic Order before the tribunal of history, and asking for a verdict on its Baltic policy: we may accuse it of neglecting this or that aspect of maritime affairs, and point out obvious mistakes, but we must be very careful in pronouncing our verdict. In considering a wide and complex problem like this, we must not lose sight of the whole tangled skein of affairs, nor of the complete political life of the *Ordensstaat*, in which maritime problems formed but one of many important issues.

W. Konopczyński writes in one of his works that 'although wherever peoples are settled by the sea, problems concerning the right of access to its waters must arise, there was never a time, since the fall of the Roman Empire, when the right to the sea took so many varying forms, dependent on the ascendancy of particular interests, and never a place where it gave rise to so many geographical and political complexities as in the region between the Sound and the Gulf of Finland, from the Melar to the Vistula.' The first questions, then, which we may raise at the end of the present article are these: Had the Teutonic Order a fixed maritime policy, or had it not? Did it substantiate its rights to the Baltic or not? and if it did, how? For there was a time when the Knights dominated extensive tracts of the southern coastal region, and established themselves, though but for a short time, on the island of Gottland. They held in their hands the mouths of the Vistula, Dvina and Memel, which, together with the Sound and the delta of the Oder, enabled their possessors to exercise a controlling influence on Baltic affairs.

The Baltic had a two-fold significance for the Order from the beginning: economic and political; and the Order had to solve problems in both these spheres if it was to secure its existence on the sea.

The Order came into contact with the Baltic as an economic centre only indirectly, through the Hanse, and more particularly through its Prussian section. There was, it is true, a period when the Knights themselves carried on an extensive oversea

trade, and had their own factories in the west, but at the same time they were beginning to co-operate with the Hanseatic League and to accommodate their own needs to its needs and aims. This co-operation might have been seen in the very first years after the Knights had appeared on the Baltic, and became closer in the thirteenth century, when the Hanse merchant and the Teutonic Knights both alike realized that union was better than isolation in the hostile region between the Vistula and their own native soil. This consciousness was expressed in the fourteenth and fifteenth century alliance between the Order and the League, and in the common diplomatic action taken at foreign courts by the towns and the Knights. In 1261 the Livonian Master wrote to the Lübeckers controlling the policy of the Hanse: 'the land of faith is saturated with the blood of your fathers and brothers, with the blood of your sons and friends, as it were a garden enclosed,' wherefore, as the men of Reval wrote a few years later to the same Lübeckers, 'let us hold together like two arms of one cross'.

In truth the long alliance of the Order with the Hanse is a unique phenomenon. For the Hanseatic towns, when they found themselves in danger, never sought aid at the court of the Emperor, their official superior, nor did they ever find real support in that quarter. They sent to Marienburg, and found there complete understanding of their economic interests. It is no wonder that at Bruges the Grand Master was regarded by the members of the Hanseatic chamber of commerce as their 'superior', or that the Lübeckers called him their protector and ally. But we must not think that the alliance was based on patriotic considerations, at any rate as far as the Hanse was concerned. It is enough to recall that in 1307 Lübeck, the leading city in the League, put itself under the protection of the Danish king Eric Menved, and that at the beginning of the sixteenth century the coastal towns proposed to choose as protector of the League none other than Sigismund the Old, King of Poland. Or can there be any better evidence than that afforded by the Prussian towns, when, in 1454, they broke with their legitimate superior and guardian and threw themselves into the arms of the Polish monarch, who was hostile to the Order?

The Hanse's aims were economic, and it was therefore more or less indifferent to the political complexion of affairs in the Baltic. It only temporarily upheld a Mecklenburger on the Swedish throne, in spite of the fact that he was a German and supported the Germans settled at Stockholm. It deserted him as soon as it was sure that his opponent, Margaret of Denmark, would maintain its privileges in Sweden and allow it freedom of trade in Scandinavia. Similar procedure was followed by the Hanse in relation to the Teutonic Knights in 1454, and by Lübeck in

relation to the Counts of Holstein in 1307. In both cases it failed to note that, though its policy might benefit the Hanseatic League as such, it was bound to react most unfavourably upon German interests in the Baltic.

From what has been already stated, we see that the relations between the Order and the League were not always uniform. It may be said that previous to 1340 the towns allowed their policy to be guided by the Order and refrained from moving a step without its aid, whether it were in Flanders and England, or in Poland or Scandinavia. The following period, down to 1410, was one of co-operation on equal terms. There were moments, as in 1370 and 1385, when the towns began to be disquieted by the protection of the Grand Master, and endeavoured to solve fundamental Baltic problems without him. But this did not prevent their accepting money from him for the upkeep of the garrison at Stockholm. And it is curious that the Order at such times did not force its action upon them, nor did it betray their cause, even though it had to forgo considerable advantages by such a course. And if the Order during this second period does appear as the commercial rival of the towns, this is not so important as the fact that its merchants accepted the same duties and bore the same burdens as the rest of the Hanse towns, not only abroad, but also at home in Prussia.

The succeeding period, after the Battle of Grunwald, is marked by growing discord between the Hanse and the Grand Masters, and is closed by the war between the Order and its Prussian Estates. The Hanseatic League wrested economic control in the Baltic from the hands of the Order, but when the ground became uncertain under their feet in Flanders and England, in the Scandinavian countries and at Novgorod, they once more had recourse to its aid. Notwithstanding the renewal of co-operation, however, especially between 1430 and 1436, the Order lost touch more and more with the Hanse, and at the same time weakened the ties uniting it with the Baltic. With strong pressure from the Hanseatic towns on the one side, in favour of gathering the League closer and giving it a broad and compact organization such as it had between 1368 and 1397, and with disputes between the Prussian towns and the Order on the other, it was difficult for the Grand Masters to control the policy of the League, and to harmonize their relations to the Prussian municipalities with their relations to the League as a whole. Since any other course would have led to the dissolution of the Hanseatic League, the Order was forced to disassociate itself from it, and sometimes to take an actually hostile attitude toward it. At the same time, it committed mistakes leading, in the final result, to the decay of its subject towns.

In spite of these obvious faults in its economic and political system, the merits of its policy of co-

operation with the Hanse are indisputable. We may speak of its maritime policy, for it really had a certain programme and certain fixed principles to guide it in this sphere. If, therefore, we use the term 'Hanseatic Period' for the years 1250—1523 in the history of the Baltic, we must not forget that the domination of the Hanse merchants and towns on that sea was signally supported by the arms and diplomacy of the Teutonic Knights. But for their aid, which, as for example in England, was constant and positive, the Hanse would never have acquired the independent political position which it enjoyed on the Baltic in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and would never have conquered markets outside the Baltic area. We do not propose always to ascribe to similar events similar causes, still less to unite them in a single chain of dependence. But surely it is not mere chance that the period of the Hanse's economic and political prime coincides with the most flourishing period of the *Ordensstaat*, and that the decline of the latter coincided with the decay of the Hanse's power on the Baltic. It was only by the help of the Knights that the League was able to maintain itself at sea, and it could not but share the fortunes of the *Ordensstaat* alike in its prime and on the eve of its fall. When knightly aid was withdrawn, the merchants lost their foreign markets and their privileges, and saw the Baltic intruded upon by their worst foes, the English, Dutch and Flemings.

Somewhat different conclusions have to be drawn when we come to consider the attitude of the *Ordensstaat* to its neighbours on the coast, and the way in which it conceived the political problems in front of it. For the Order was faced by certain tasks and certain broad possibilities, especially in the fourteenth century. The Baltic was dominated by that power which at any given time might hold the Sound in the west, the mouths of various rivers in the south, and the island of Gottland in the north. This was well understood by the Norsemen, and after them by the Swedes when they made inroads upon Pomerania and Prussia in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and again by the Brandenburgers when they pressed from the interior towards the mouth of the Oder and into Mecklenburg. But in the period under discussion it was only the Danes, or more strictly speaking the Danish crown, which had a clear-cut Baltic programme. For the Slavs, though they had been supreme at sea in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, now contented themselves with the economic exploitation of the region, and never embarked on campaigns of conquest against their neighbours.

It was otherwise with the Danes. It may be said that after the end of the Viking raids in the west, every great king of Denmark devoted his efforts to the acquisition of supremacy on the Baltic, and that sea became the centre of Danish interest from the

twelfth century onwards. The aim was the same in each case, only the means were different. The Waldemars and Eric Menved chose the route from the south, Canute the Great and Margaret advanced from the north. There were times when the Danes came near to realizing their plans and making the Baltic into a Danish lake. At the beginning of the thirteenth century they held the whole of the Sound and almost the whole southern coast-line of the Baltic, and under Eric of Pomerania they possessed Sweden and Gottland and a considerable part of Pomerania. The Danes were an element with whom the Germans had to fight from the first moment of their appearance in this region. Waldemar's defeat at Bornhöved, the Peace of Stralsund — humiliating for Denmark — and the agreement of Vordingborg in 1435, are merely the most important dates in the struggle of the Danes and the Germans for supremacy at sea.

The Order, as we know, was not unconcerned with this conflict, but at the same time never drew the sword in it. The incident of Gottland under Conrad von Jungingen was an exception, impossible to harmonize with its general Baltic policy. Marienburg in its procedure towards the Hanse maintained the principle laid down by two of its diplomats at the beginning of the fifteenth century: friendship with the League may be good and advantageous, but outright armed alliance against foreign rulers must be injurious: therefore avoid military intervention in outside quarrels. In fact, it may be asserted that the most fundamental characteristic of the Order's Baltic policy was close diplomatic co-operation with the Hanse in defence of its economic rights abroad, but complete neutrality in all armed conflicts at sea. All the Grand Masters remained faithful to this principle, from Winrich von Kniprode to Conrad von Erlichshausen.

Nevertheless, E. Daenell is right when he says that even the armed neutrality of the Order was directly advantageous to the Hanseatic League, and that after the breaking of the Order's military power in 1410, the League's position in the west and in Scandinavia was greatly weakened. We may recall Eric VII's anger at the news of a proposed alliance between Lübeck and the Order, which was formidable at sea after its victories in Gottland and at Calmar. The consciousness that behind the Germans on the Baltic stood the *Ordensstaat* with its considerable strength inclined the Kings of Denmark to make concessions to the Hanseatic League and its protectors, and contributed much to the attitude taken up by the English crown to Baltic trade.

All who know the Teutonic Knights, their aggressiveness against their Polish and Lithuanian neighbours, and their obstinacy in warfare by land, may wonder at first sight at their neutrality in maritime affairs. Such neutrality usually bears

witness to lack of political sense, and may be evidence of weakness. But in the present case it was the result of a well thought out plan, consistently developed.

From the beginning to the end the Order had its mortal foes, reconcilable only by the relinquishment of its conquests and its military policy. Such foes were, in the thirteenth century, the Prussians and Lithuanians, and after 1309 the latter and the Poles, to whom in course of time were added the Pomeranian dukes. The Order, thus hemmed in from the south, from the inland side, and compelled constantly to stand on the defensive, was not in a position to undertake aggressive action against its Scandinavian neighbours, or dream of realizing a definite programme at sea. The risk to its possessions on land would have been too great.

We have seen that on one occasion only, in 1398, did the Order undertake a warlike expedition on the Baltic, when it even established itself on Gottland and faced war with Denmark. But note the outcome, even though the Knights had been victorious and shown their enemies their superiority at sea: Denmark immediately placed them on the horns of a dilemma: either they must relinquish their conquest and the policy which led to it, in return for retaining their annexations on the mainland, or they must sacrifice the latter and struggle to maintain themselves on the island. The conclusion of an alliance between Denmark and Poland forced them to choose the former of these alternatives, for fear of yet more serious loss. And it is clear beyond possibility of doubt that it was Poland above all which weighed upon the Teutonic Order whenever it desired to settle any Baltic question, just as it is clear that the reason for the Order's neutrality in Baltic affairs is to be found in the hostile relations existing between it and the Polish-Lithuanian monarchy.

This neutrality was not an absolute mistake. The policy, in fact, brought the Knights certain advantages at critical moments in their history. Before Grunwald we learn that Polish and knightly diplomats worked hard at foreign courts to secure armed aid, and that both sides strove to convince western powers of the justice of their cause. We learn also that the envoys of the Grand Master and of Ladislas Jagiello met at the English court, and that the latter was unsuccessful in drawing Henry IV to his side. When Ulrich von Jungingen's ambassador prayed the king not to listen to the Polish envoy and not to be persuaded to action against the Order, the king laughed and said: 'Why should I have to fight against the Knights, I who am a child of Prussia?' and remained neutral throughout the war between Poland and the Order.

Still more favourable was the attitude of Denmark, as regards which country the Order had maintained its neutrality even when such a course was

contrary to the interests of the Hanse and of Germanism on the Baltic. In 1410 the Danes had to remain neutral, since in the preceding year they had commenced a war for Holstein and were threatened in Sweden by the opponents of the Union of Calmar. But during the Thirteen Years' War, King Christian of Denmark supported the Order by force of arms against Poland and the Estates, declaring war against them on June 1st, 1455. The Knights could even count on the aid of the Dutch, since after the commencement of privateering warfare by the Danzigers they began to avoid the Danzig ports and transferred their trade to Königsberg, at the same time offering the Grand Master their aid. As a result of their exertions, Duke Philip of Burgundy deprived the Danzigers of their privileges in Holland and Zealand, and the merchants of Amsterdam took possession of their goods.

The Wendish towns, headed by Lübeck, likewise declared for the Order and against the Confederation. The Hanse towns were, it is true, too cautious to take arms on either side, and maintained neutrality in spite of the Confederation's efforts to raise money in the coastal towns and the Order's efforts to raise troops. On the other hand, the councillors of Lübeck repeatedly offered their services as mediators in the war between Poland and the Teutonic Order, not concealing their sympathy with the latter.

Accordingly, during the Thirteen Years' War the Order had the support of Denmark, the Hanseatic League and Holland, three powers which controlled Baltic trade. Poland and the Confederates could count only on the Swedish king, Carl, who, however, was driven from Sweden in 1457 and forced to take refuge at Danzig.

Criticism of the Order's Baltic policy is most frequently made from the point of view of the present-day distribution of nationalities throughout the southern part of the Baltic region. Such is the approach of German historians when assessing the historical significance of the Hanseatic League and the Teutonic Order, and Polish scholars likewise willingly adopt it. But it should be remembered that such an approach — in spite of its justification in the light of modern conditions — is narrow and does not permit the problem to be viewed as a whole and from every angle. The aims and tasks of the German element on and round the Baltic must be clearly distinguished before the Baltic policy of the Teutonic Order can be properly appraised. The former question is well known, and requires no extensive treatment here. The case is different with regard to the second, which hitherto has been formulated almost always in connexion with the history of the Hanse.

We have stated above that in its intercourse with Baltic countries the Order was forced to maintain neutrality and avoid armed conflicts, and that from the beginning to the end it pursued a policy of non-

interference with its maritime neighbours. It followed that the *Ordensstaat* never maintained a fleet nor endeavoured to build up naval power. It was only Sigismund the Old, King of Poland, chosen by the Hanse as its protector even before the fall of the *Ordensstaat*, who moved the last Grand Master to provide and maintain a fleet on the Baltic. On the other hand, the Danzigers had a naval force and used it at a critical moment for the Order. It was then that the consequences of the Order's neglect were seen for the first time in their full significance, and it was then that it was demonstrated what one single city could do if it disposed of an armed force at sea.

The neutrality of the Order in maritime matters is a feature not characteristic of it alone, but of the whole medieval imperial system. This lessens the blame attaching to the Order in this respect. We know that none of the Emperors, including even Charles IV, had any Baltic plan, just as we know that the desire to create a strong fleet on its waters and to make it into a German lake is a phenomenon of the most recent times.

If the Teutonic Order is to be regarded as the forerunner of the German nationalistic idea on and round the Baltic, and if historians discover its chief historical merit in such an interpretation of its rôle, their conclusion is only partly just and well-founded. The Germans may claim that the Order accomplished great things in the east, but they must at the same time admit that on the Baltic it accomplished nothing at all, as neither did its distant protectors, the German emperors. This was really neglect of opportunity: a neglect, moreover, which was to be avenged, not merely on the heirs of the Teutonic Knights, but on the whole Empire in the east. The German element, deprived of the support given it by the Teutonic Order in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, was unable to stem the advance of the Swedish invaders in the two following centuries, and was compelled to relinquish to them not only the Baltic, but a considerable section of its southern sea-board. Thus the *dominium maris Baltici* passed from German hands into the hands of the Scandinavians, where it remained for almost two hundred years.

A bibliography on the subject of this paper, prepared by the author, will be found in Part IV.

TRANSLATED BY B. W. A. MASSEY