

# XVI

## THE GERMAN CRUSADE ON THE BALTIC

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**B**y the German crusade on the Baltic is meant the medieval expansion beyond the Elbe-Saale frontier to the shores of Lake Peipus. It is not historically possible to separate crusades from expansion and colonization in this area. It would not make sense, for example, to consider the Crusade of 1147 against the Wends without reviewing the history of the Slavic trans-Elbean lands since the days of Otto the Great, nor to separate the crusades of bishop Albert from the expansion of the German aristocracy and bourgeoisie into Livonia. It would likewise lead to a faulty understanding of the history of the Teutonic Knights in Prussia if an attempt were made to separate crusades against the Prussians from colonization and settlement. The campaigns to subject the Slavs and other Baltic peoples coincided with the campaigns to convert them. To some princes it made little difference whether they became converts so long as they became subjects; to some churchmen the reverse was true, but ordinarily it was realized that both went together. There could be no subjection without conversion, no conversion without subjection, and no permanence in either without German settlement.

An introductory bibliography on the history of the Teutonic Order is Rudolf ten Haaf, *Kurze Bibliographie zur Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens, 1198-1561* (Kitzingen am Main, 1949). The chronicles of Helmold of Bosau, Arnold of Lübeck, and Henry of Livonia will be found in *MGH, SS.*, XXI, pp. 1-99 (Helmold); XXI, pp. 100-250 (Arnold); and XXIII, pp. 231-332 (Henry). The narrative sources for early Livonian and Prussian history will be found in *Scriptores rerum livonicarum*, vols. I and II (Riga, 1848, 1853), and *Scriptores rerum prussicarum*, vols. I-V (Leipzig, 1861-1874). The documents of the archives of the Teutonic Order formerly at Königsberg and now at Goslar have been listed and described, with (if published) place of imprint indicated, by Erich Joachim and Walther Hubatsch, *Regesta historico-diplomatica Ordinis S. Mariae Theutonicorum, 1198-1525* (Göttingen, 1948). The author has incorporated into the text extensive quotations from Helmold's *Chronicle of the Slavs* and Henry of Livonia's *Chronicle*. The translator of the former is F. J. Tschan, *The Chronicle of the Slavs by Helmold, Priest of Bosau* (Columbia Records of Civilization, no. 31; New York, 1935), and of the latter, James Brundage, *The Chronicle of*

Obviously we have here to do with an early phase of the displacement of peoples and power responsible for the central and eastern Europe of today. It is this which makes the German Baltic crusade of such intense and even tragic interest. It is not necessary, in order to give it this meaning, to transfer to these medieval centuries the precise notions of national and ethnic conflict with which we have become only too familiar. The German state of the Middle Ages was not national. The German crusade was not directed by German kings or emperors. The peoples against whom it was directed had no national political organization. This was no conflict between anything that could be called national states. The crusade was directed by German princes, secular and ecclesiastical, against Slavic, Baltic, and Finnic tribes headed by native chieftains. There was not in the mind of any German participant the concept of a German nation fighting against a Slavic people, or in that of any Slavic, Baltic, or Finnic defender the notion of protecting his own from a Germanic "race."

*Henry of Livonia* (Madison, Wisc., 1961). The following are brief general accounts of the German expansion eastward, helpful in the writing of this chapter: A. Bruce-Boswell, "Poland, 1050-1303," *The Cambridge Medieval History*, VI (1936), 447-463; Hermann Aubin, "The Lands East of the Elbe . . .," *The Cambridge Economic History*, I (1966), ch. VII-4; G. Barraclough, *The Origins of Modern Germany* (Oxford, 1947), chap. 10; A. Bilmanis, *A History of Latvia* (Princeton, 1951), parts I-II; K. Hampe, *Der Zug nach dem Osten* (4th ed., Leipzig, 1939); and R. Köttschke, *Geschichte der ostdeutschen Kolonisation* (Leipzig, 1937). Köttschke has also published a useful collection of source material: *Quellen zur Geschichte der ostdeutschen Kolonisation im 12. bis 14. Jahrhundert* (Leipzig-Berlin, 1931). More detailed accounts will be found in A. Hauck, *Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands*, vol. IV, chap. 7; K. Lohmeyer, *Geschichte von Ost- und Westpreussen*, vol. I (Gotha, 1881); E. Seraphim, *Geschichte Liv-, Esth-, und Curlands*, 3 vols. (Reval, 1897-1904); and J. W. Thompson, *Feudal Germany* (Chicago, 1928). Other helpful works are E. Caspar, *Hermann von Salza und die Gründung des Deutschordensstaates in Preussen* (Tübingen, 1924); C. Krollmann, *Politische Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens* (Königsberg, 1932); E. Maschke, *Der Deutsche Ordensstaat, Gestalten seiner grossen Meister* (Hamburg, 1935); M. Ammann, *Kirchenpolitische Wandlungen im Ostbaltikum bis zum Tode Alexander Newski* (Rome, 1936); K. Forstreuter, *Preussen und Russland im Mittelalter* (Königsberg and Berlin, 1938); H. G. V. Rundstedt, *Die Hanse und der Deutsche Orden in Preussen bis . . . 1410* (Weimar, 1937); and W. Werminghoff, *Der Deutsche Orden und die Stände in Preussen bis . . . 1466* (Munich and Leipzig, 1912). There is much important literature in such journals as *Altpreussische Monatsschrift*, *Altpreussische Forschungen*, *Zeitschrift der Altertumsgesellschaft Prussia*, and *Zeitschrift des Westpreussischen Geschichtsvereins*, in which see, for example, C. Krollmann, "Die Herkunft der deutschen Ansiedler in Preussen," LIV (1912), 1-103; O. Zippel, "Die Kolonisation des Ordenlandes Preussens bis zum Jahre 1309," in *Altpreussische Monatsschrift*, LVIII (1921), 176-213, 239-279; and A. Werminghoff, "Der Hochmeister des Deutschen Ordens und das Reich bis zum Jahre 1525," *Historische Zeitschrift*, CX (1913), 473-518.

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It is, however, possible to go too far in denying this crusade certain aspects of a national character, for the factor of nationality, though not of a national state, was present. The "crusade" lasted some six centuries or more. During this long period original ideas changed and others became prominent. In the later Middle Ages the concept of a common Germanic people emerged, superseding the earlier idea of separate German tribes. What to the German chronicler Helmold is the work of Frisians, Hollanders, Flemings, and especially Saxons in trans-Elbia is for Henry of Livonia, only a couple of generations later, the work of Germans in Livonia. It would be strange if after centuries of influx Germans from different regions had given no recognition to their common experience of settling a frontier land. The Livonian Brothers of the Sword and the Teutonic Knights were German orders. They pursued a Germanic policy with respect to recruitment and the use of the Prussian dialect by Germans. The order precipitated among Lithuanians and Poles some feeling of common nationality under their princes and kings. It is impossible not to feel in the speeches which Helmold puts into the mouths of desperate and disillusioned Slavic princes an appeal to a common Slavic people threatened with extinction.

If then the crusade on the Baltic was not a fully national or ethnic movement as we understand it, that is not to say that it did not possess embryonic aspects of nationalism. It was an aggressive movement of German Christians against pagan Slavs and other Baltic peoples. Subsequent national historians did not hesitate to interpret it as a national and ethnic conflict. Very few German historians who have touched upon the subject have been able to avoid regarding it as an extraordinary accomplishment of a very advanced people against inferior natives. It was inevitably a popular theme with Nazi historians. But a slight acquaintance with the historical literature of the other side reveals feelings of deep national hatred for the Germans and an unwillingness, often carried to absurd lengths, to recognize that anything the Germans did could be considered honest or praiseworthy.

Better than nation, people, or even nationality as a touchstone by which to interpret this crusade is the simple notion of the expansion of a comparatively advanced civilization into an undeveloped area held by primitive tribes. The civilization is, of course, early western, in its feudal Christian stage. The mediators are the Germans. The fact that the Slavs remained pagan had long injected the idea of superior and inferior into the relationship between Germans and Slavs. When

Fredegar treats of the history of Samo, a Frankish merchant who in 623 became a Slavic king, he introduces the incident of Sichar, a Merovingian envoy come to Samo's court to seek compensation for the robbery and murder of Frankish merchants by Samo's Slavic subjects. "As is the heathenish and proud way of a bad people," says the chronicler, Samo "made nothing good." The Frankish envoy then "roared out to Samo that he and his people would be made slaves" to his king and that "it is not possible that Christians, God's servants, should become friendly with dogs." Sturmi, a disciple of St. Boniface, seeking in the Thuringian wilderness a proper site for a Benedictine monastery, found "the road whereby traders came from Thuringia to Mainz, and the spot where it crosses the river Fulda. There he found a great multitude of Slavonians, who had plunged in for the sake of washing, and were swimming up and down the stream. His beast, fearing these naked bodies, began to tremble, and the man of God himself loathed the stench that proceeded from them." The stinking pagan? The stinking Slav? The stinking pagan Slav?

Thietmar, a bishop and historian serving at the frontier post of Merseburg in the early eleventh century, refers to his future Slavic parishioners as "greedy dogs." In Helmold's chronicle there are many evidences of this point of view. "With incautious and insulting words," friends of bishop Wago of Oldenburg advised him not to marry his sister to the Abodrite prince Billug, for it was "not right that a most beautiful virgin should be united with an uncultured and boorish man." In a similar case the Saxon margrave Dietrich opposed the marriage of the Slavic prince Mistivoi to a niece of duke Bernard I of Saxony, "vociferating that a kinswoman of the duke should not be given to a dog." This prince "called together all the Slavs and made known to them the insult that had been offered him, and that in the language of the Saxons, the Slavs are called dogs." Helmold can also say that "there has been inborn in the Slavic race a cruelty that knows no satiety," and can attribute to Slavs atrocities ascribed to the Turks by pope Urban at Clermont to initiate the First Crusade. Henry of Livonia reveals the same attitude toward the Livonians as that held by the Germans opening up that country.

Thus the feeling of Germanic superiority over inferior Slavic and Baltic peoples was not based solely upon the difference between Christian and pagan. It was grounded also in the differences in cultural level between west and east. The crusades to the Near East have ordinarily been interpreted as an early stage of western imperi-

alism, the aggressive expansion to the eastern Mediterranean of the western feudal state (Latin kingdom of Jerusalem, Latin empire of Constantinople), the western Latin church, and the early capitalism of the western, especially Italian, town. It would be difficult to maintain, however, that this marked the penetration of a superior civilization into an inferior one. This difficulty is not present in the German crusade on the Baltic. We have here an early chapter in German imperialism involving the expansion of the German state, the German church, and the Germanic people. For the Baltic peoples this expansion meant a loss of independence and of religion. For some of them it meant extermination, for others deportation or assimilation by the dominant Germans. For the free non-German peasant it meant ultimately the loss of his freedom.

The German conqueror and settler who moved into this area brought with him the higher civilization of the west, for his own use and, when they were converted and subjected, for Slavs and Balts. He brought western Christianity with its highly organized secular and regular branches, its stone churches, elaborate services, music, art, tradition of learning, and its, for the most part German, clergy. The new converts, to be sure, built their new churches with their own labor, and paid tithes to maintain them. The acceptance of a Christian instead of a pagan way of life obliged them to abandon—reluctantly—many cherished practices and customs. The Germans also brought the western territorial state and feudal institutions, German law, the German town, a superior military, industrial, and mining technology, superior arts and crafts, and even a superior specialized agriculture, using an iron rather than a wooden plow. These advantages of a higher civilization had to be paid for by forced labor, military service, and new taxes, and, except for a very few, by the loss of freedom itself.

The cost of this superior western civilization was so high that the Baltic peoples refused to pay. It had to be imposed upon them by conquest, crusade, and German settlement. The Baltic peoples would be made to pay for new freedom for the Germans with the loss of their own. They resisted, accordingly, with utmost determination, as few peoples have resisted, the loss of their independence, religion, primitive customs, and personal freedom. From the days of Charlemagne to those of Otto I, the Baltic Slavs had been to the Germans a pest along the frontier, an uneasy source of tribute, or ready victims

of raids to collect booty. Otto I, one of the few German kings and emperors able to devote much attention to the Elbe-Saale frontier, had planned actually to incorporate into Germany all the Slavic peoples between the Elbe and the Oder, by means of a systematic subdivision of the country into military districts controlled from strongpoints (*Burgwarde*), and by the creation of five new marches on this frontier, one each for the northern and middle Elbe, and for Merseburg, Meissen, and Zeitz.

This military and political organization was accompanied by a complete ecclesiastical organization for a region that was as yet in no sense Christian: new bishoprics at Havelberg, Brandenburg, and Oldenburg, and a new archbishopric at Magdeburg with additional suffragans at Merseburg, Meissen, and Zeitz. Such thoroughgoing plans for subjection the Wends resisted at what they thought their first good opportunity, in 983, after the defeat in 982 of German military might in Calabria. As a result of bloody revolts against the Saxon nobility and the clergy of a German God (Jesus was *theutonicus deus* to the Slavs), whatever Christianity there had been on the middle and lower Elbe ceased to exist in the years following 983. Bishop Dodilo of Brandenburg had in fact been choked to death as early as 980. The bishopric of Merseburg had ultimately to be dissolved. The bishops of Zeitz finally decided that their see was too open to Slav attack and in 1032 moved back a little closer to the German frontier at Naumburg. One bishop of Meissen refused to be buried there because he was afraid of having his grave torn open by the Slavs. At Havelberg, Brandenburg, and Oldenburg the sees were maintained, but the bishops were unable to stay in or even get to them. The first bishop of Havelberg, Udo, lived in Magdeburg the life of a canon of the cathedral church. After the murder of Dodilo of Brandenburg, bishops of this see are difficult to trace.

Helmold says frankly of duke Bernard II of Saxony at the time of the second major Slavic revolt, in 1018: "through his avarice [he] cruelly oppressed the nation of the Winuli, and sheerly drove it into paganism." The Slavs, he explains, "still immature in the faith," were pursued by the margrave Dietrich of Wettin and duke Bernard with such villainy and cruelty that they were forced into apostasy and "finally threw off the yoke of servitude, and had to take up arms in defense of their freedom." The revolt crystalized in Rethra, the sanctuary of the Slavic god Redigast and the religious center of the Pomeranian Slavs. It was led by that Mistivoi whom a Saxon margrave had called a dog. Helmold describes what happened: The Slavs first wasted "the whole of Nordalbingia with fire and sword. Then,

roving about the rest of Slavia, they burned all the churches and destroyed them even to the ground. They murdered the priests and the other ministers of the churches with diverse tortures, and left not a vestige of Christianity beyond the Elbe. At Hamburg, then and later, many clerics and citizens were led off into captivity and many more were put to death through hatred of Christianity. The old men of the Slavs . . . tell how Oldenburg had been a city most populous with Christians. There sixty priests (the rest had been slaughtered like cattle) were kept as objects of derision." The oldest of them, "named Oddar . . . and others were martyred in this manner. After the skin of their heads had been cut in the form of a cross, the brain of each was laid bare with an iron. With hands tied behind their backs, the confessors of God were then dragged through one Slavic town after another until they died. . . . Many deeds of this kind, which for lack of written records are now regarded as fables, are remembered as having been done at this time in the several provinces of the Slavs and Nordalbingians. In fine, there were so many martyrs in Slavia that they can hardly be enumerated in a book. All the Slavs who dwelt between the Elbe and Oder and who had practised the Christian religion . . . during the whole time of the reigns of the Ottos, in this manner cut themselves off from the body of Christ and of the church with which they had before been united." Thus, as Helmold puts it is another place, "a country teeming with men and churches was reduced to a vast solitude."

After another start had been made by the Saxon dukes and church, the Slavs rose once more in 1066, led by a Rugian chief named Kruto. Helmold describes the general situation preceding the revolt as follows: "In those days there was a firm peace in Slavia because Conrad, who succeeded the pious Henry in the empire, wore down the Winithi [Wends] in successive wars. Nevertheless, the Christian religion and the service of the house of God made little headway, since it was hindered by the avarice of the duke and of the Saxons, who in their rapacity let nothing remain either for the churches or for the priests." The man who precipitated this revolt was the lordly archbishop Adalbert of Hamburg-Bremen, whose vision swept from Greenland to the eastern Baltic, conjuring up plans for a patriarchate of the north. He had as a helper in the Slavic mission Gottschalk, a grandson of Billug, the leader of the rebellion of 983, and himself a rebel leader about 1028, who however now thought to make his people Christian. The results of their combined efforts were monasteries in Mecklenburg, Lübeck, Oldenburg, Lenzen, and Ratzeburg, the reinvigoration of the Oldenburg bishopric, and two new bishop-

rics: Ratzeburg for the Polabians and Mecklenburg for the Abodrites. It was possible, Adalbert thought, that the whole Wendish region might soon become solidly Christian. Helmold again attributes the ruin of these plans to the "insatiable greed of the Saxons who . . . are ever more intent upon increasing the tribute than upon winning souls for the Lord. Through the perseverance of the priests Christianity would long ago have grown in the esteem of Slavia if the avarice of the Saxons had not stood in the way."

When the Slavic reaction came, Gottschalk was put to death at Lenzen and together with him the priest Eppo, "who was immolated on the altar." The monk Ansver, and with him others, were stoned at Ratzeburg. The aged bishop John, "who had out of his love for roving come from Ireland to Saxony," was taken with other Christians at Mecklenburg "and held for a triumph. And because he confessed Christ he was beaten with rods, and then was led in mockery through one city of the Slavs after another. Since he could not be turned from the profession of Christ his hands and feet were lopped off, and his body was thrown into the road. His head, however, the barbarians cut off, fixed on a spear, and offered to their god Redigast in token of their victory." Gottschalk's widow Sigrid, "the daughter of the king of the Danes," with other women, "was sent naked out of Mecklenburg. . . . When the Slavs had achieved victory they ravaged the whole of the region of Hamburg with fire and sword. . . . The stronghold of Hamburg was razed to the ground . . ." and Schleswig, "a city of the Transalbingians situated on the frontier of the Danish kingdom . . . , was utterly destroyed by a surprise raid of the barbarians. . . . And so all the Slavs who were sworn to a general conspiracy lapsed again into paganism after they had killed those who persisted in the faith. . . . And the see of Oldenburg was vacant for eighty-four years."

The Germans were led finally to realize that Wend territory would never be permanently German or Christian so long as it remained Slavic. Only through German settlement would the area become a part of the civilization of the west. At the beginning of the twelfth century Dutchmen and Flemings inaugurated the eastward movement. But it took one more effort on the part of the Germans before they were convinced that colonization was a better method than conquest to reduce the area. This was the crusade of 1147 against the Wends,<sup>1</sup> which arose when Bernard of Clairvaux could not, for all his

1. See volume I of this work, pp. 479, 492-495, for an account of this crusade, which Albert Hauck called "das törichtste Unternehmen, das das zwölfte Jahrhundert kennt."



rhetorical gifts, induce the Saxon princes to go to the Holy Land. They had their own little private war against pagan Slavs at home. When the suggestion arose that the fight against the Wends might be a part of the larger undertaking, raising it to the dignity of a war against all non-Christian peoples, and destined to topple the devil from his throne, Bernard took up the notion with enthusiasm and gave the movement its slogan, "either the Wends or their religion are to be wiped out." The crusading army gathered around Magdeburg and the lower Elbe. Czechs, Poles, and Swabians joined the Saxon army, and a Danish fleet was also there to support it. Here was an army the like of which had never faced the Wends before. It was dominated by the grasping, unscrupulous, and cruel duke of the Saxons, Henry the Lion, of whom Helmold says that in all his various expeditions "no mention was made of Christianity, but only of money." When the leader of the Slavs, Niklot, was unable to prevent the launching of the crusade, he led his people against Lübeck. "That day were slain there three hundred or more men." Eastern Holstein, and especially those regions that had been settled by the "Westphalians, Hollanders, and other foreign peoples, [were] consumed by the devouring flames." The crusading armies drew up against Dobin and then Demmin, neither of which they were able to take. The Germans suddenly realized then that they had been victimized by crusading oratory, and that they were actually devastating what they regarded as their own land. Helmold makes the "vassals of our duke and of the margrave Albert" say before Dobin, "Is not the land we are devastating our land, and the people we are fighting our people? Why are we, then, found to be our own enemies and the destroyers of our own [countries]? Does not this loss fall back on our lords?" Finally, "when our men were weary, an agreement was made to the effect that the Slavs were to embrace Christianity. . . . Thus, that grand expedition broke up with slight gain. The Slavs immediately afterward became worse."

At this moment, then, under the leadership of such Saxon princes as Conrad the Great of Wettin, margrave of Meissen, Adolf of Schauenburg, count of Holstein, Albert the Bear, the Ascanian margrave of Brandenburg, and Henry the Lion, duke of Saxony, there began what Karl Lamprecht has called "the one great accomplishment of our German people during the Middle Ages," that trek eastward which was in the course of about two centuries first of all to transform Holstein, Mecklenburg, Brandenburg, and Pomerania into German lands, and then to move into Silesia, Bohemia, Poland, the Baltic lands, and Prussia. Helmold is the chronicler of the first

surge eastward. He includes in his work the summons of count Adolf of Holstein to prospective colonists to come to Wagria and receive the benefits of its rich land:

“As the land was without inhabitants,” count Adolf sent messengers into all the regions roundabout, “to Flanders and Holland, to Utrecht, Westphalia, and Frisia,” proclaiming that all who were oppressed by want of land should go thither with their families; there they would receive the best of soils, rich in fruits and abounding in fish and flesh, and blessed with fine pastures. And to the Holsteiners and Sturmarians he said: “Have you not subjugated the land of the Slavs and bought it with the blood of your fathers and brothers? Why, then, are you the last to enter into possession of it? Be the first to go over into a delectable land and inhabit it and partake of its delights, for the best of it is due you who have wrested it from the hands of the enemy.” And when he had said this there arose a countless multitude from many regions with their families and all that they possessed, and they came into the territory of the Wagrians to count Adolf to receive the lands which he had promised them. In a series of somewhat melancholy summaries he quite clearly describes what was going on at the time he finished his work (1172):

All the country of the Slavs, beginning at the Eider . . . and extending between the Baltic Sea and the Elbe river in a most lengthy sweep to Schwerin, a region once feared for its ambuscades and almost deserted, was now through the help of God all made, as it were, into one colony of Saxons. And cities and villages grew up there and churches were built and the number of ministers of Christ multiplied.

All the land of the Abodrites [Obotrites], and the neighboring regions which belong to the realm of the Abodrites, had been wholly reduced to a solitude through unremitting warfare. . . . If there were any last remnants of Slavs remaining, they were, on account of the want of grain and the desolation of the fields, so reduced by hunger that they had to flee together to the Pomeranians, and to the Danes, who, showing them no mercy, sold them to the Poles, Sorbs, and Bohemians.

The work of God thus increased in the land of Wagria and the count and the bishop [of Oldenburg] coöperated one with the other. About this time the count rebuilt the stronghold at Plön and made there a city and market place. The Slavs who lived in the villages round about withdrew, and Saxons came and dwelt there; and the Slavs, little by little, failed in the land.

The tithes in the land of the Slavs increased because Germans came from their lands to dwell in the spacious country, rich in grain, smiling in the fullness of pasture lands, abounding with fish and flesh and all good things.

At that time Albert, the margrave, whose by-name is the Bear, held eastern Slavia. By the favor of God he also prospered splendidly in the portion of his lot. . . . In the end, as the Slavs gradually decreased in number, he sent to Utrecht, and to places lying on the Rhine, to those, moreover, who live by the ocean and suffer the violence of the sea—to wit, Hollanders, Zeelanders, Flem-



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ings—and he brought large numbers of them, and had them live in the strongholds and villages of the Slavs. . . .

Now, because God gave plentiful aid and victory to our duke and to the other princes, the Slavs have been everywhere crushed and driven out. A people strong and without number have come from the bounds of the ocean, and taken possession of the territories of the Slavs. They have built cities and churches and have grown in riches beyond all estimation.

Some three centuries and more of stubborn and rather successful resistance had finally exhausted and decimated the trans-Elbean Slavs. At the beginning of the twelfth century they were in no position to resist further the German prince, prelate, peasant, merchant, and worker who brought them, at a price, the advantages of the German adaptation of the higher civilization of the west. To the Oder at least it was no longer necessary to push this movement by the sword. Slavic princes in Pomerania and Silesia welcomed the more efficient and hard-working German colonists. Assimilation took the place of extermination by war. If, however, the Slavs were no longer to be slaughtered, they were expected to become Christian, politically docile, and, if they did not wish to lose their holdings, efficient hard-working peasants. The Germanized Slav, the *Conradus Slavus* and *Elizabeth Slava*, appear soon in the official documents. But German dominance meant, if not the total, at least the partial extermination of a people, and with assimilation the almost complete disappearance of the Slavic culture, such as it was. It is not enough, therefore, merely to listen to the hopeful songs of the colonists singing "to the eastland we shall ride." It is necessary also to try to see the faces and understand the hearts of the Slav peasants as they watch these new colonists crowd in and threaten with extinction, if no longer themselves, then their way of life. One can at least listen to the sentiments of Slavic leaders who do not like what is going on.

Helmold heard the reply of prince Pribislav to bishop Gerald of Oldenburg when, of the Slavs assembled in the market place of Lübeck, he demanded that they "give up their idols and worship the one God who is in heaven." He said, "How shall we, ensnared by so many evils, enter upon this way? . . . The people whom you see are your people, and . . . it will be reasonable for you to pity us. Your princes rage against us with such severity that, because of the taxes and most burdensome services, death is better for us than life. Behold, this year we, the inhabitants of this tiny place, have paid the duke in all a thousand marks, so many hundred besides to the count, and yet we are not through, but every day we are outdone and oppressed even to the point of exhaustion. How, therefore, shall we, for whom flight is a matter of daily consideration, be free to build

churches for this new religion and to receive baptism? Were there but a place to which we could flee! On crossing the Trave, behold, like ruin is there; on coming to the Peene, it is not less there. What remains, therefore, but to leave the land and take to the sea and live with the waves?"

"You all know," says another Pribislav to a group of his fellow-countrymen, "what great calamities and what oppression have come upon our people through the violent might which the duke has exerted against us. He has taken from us the inheritance of our fathers and settled foreigners in all its bounds—Flemings and Hollanders, Saxons and Westphalians, and diverse folk. . . . No one save me is left who thinks of the good of our nation or wishes to raise up its ruins. Again pluck up your courage, therefore, O men who are the remnants of the Slavic race, [and] resume your daring spirit!"

Twenty-eight years after Helmold finished his chronicle, in the early spring of 1200, a fleet of twenty-three ships set out from a north German port on a journey across the pirate-infested Baltic to the mouth of the Düna. There were crusaders aboard and merchants, clerics, and artisans. The expedition had been organized and was directed by a vigorous, young, and tough-minded former member of the cathedral chapter at Bremen, a scion of the noble Lower Saxon family of Appeldern, and a nephew of archbishop Hartwig of Hamburg-Bremen. He was the recently consecrated bishop of Livonia, Albert von Buxhövdén. The purpose of the expedition was to retrieve the fortunes of those Germans who had first penetrated the Düna valley.

For something like sixteen years two bishops had labored to introduce Christianity to the Livs, only to leave them unimpressed, resentful, and indeed, violent. The first of these was Meinhard, an old gray-haired Augustinian monk from the missionary house of Segeberg in Holstein. He had been inspired to join a group of Lübeck merchants who were about to explore the possibility of tapping the resources of the Russian interior by means of the establishment of a direct route up the valley of the Düna, thus avoiding Visby. Meinhard preached the advantages of Christian baptism to the Livs as they approached the stalls of German merchants. He had no appreciable success until, after an attack on Livonia by the Lithuanians, he informed his prospective converts that there was no reason why they should live in open villages, quite unprotected from the ravages of their neighbors except by their shadowy groves and dark forests. The acceptance of Christianity could bring them the stone fortifications

of the west. The impression made by this proposal led to the erection of stone forts upriver at Üxküll and Holm after stonemasons had been imported from Gotland. Yet Meinhard found his labors unrewarded. He did not enjoy the taunts of the natives when they charged that he was too concerned about the prices of goods at Visby, and he longed to return home with those merchants who had brought him. The Livs would not let him go, since, they said, he might bring back an army. He was obliged to end his life in this Baltic no-man's-land.

His successor, Berthold, the abbot of Loccum, a Cistercian monastery near Bremen, came to Livonia on his first trip without an army. There were soon conspiracies to burn, kill, or drown him. The Livs charged him with coming because he was poor. When he returned from Germany a second time, he brought with him a Saxon army. When the Livonians asked him the cause of it, he said that now he was prepared to deal with "dogs" who had returned "to their vomit." The Livs asked him to send his army back to Saxony, and to instruct them with "words and not with blows." They soon learned what it meant to their fields when the Saxons foraged for food for their horses. The bishop himself rode a horse, and, in a battle which ensued over these difficulties, "two of the Livonians surrounded him, a third, Ymaut by name, pierced him from the back with a lance, and others tore him to pieces."

The Livs near Üxküll and Holm now had their fields of ripening grain ravaged by "horses, fire, and sword." They learned that when, to forestall these consequences, they received a priest into their forts, they must pay a "measure of grain" from each plow<sup>2</sup> to cover his expenses. When the Saxon army withdrew after what it regarded as a general pacification, leaving the clerics and one ship of merchants behind, those Livs who had received baptism, concluding that this Christianity which had been so easily imposed with water could be as easily washed off, rushed to submerge themselves in the Düna, and cast the symbol of their impending subjection after the departing German ships. Together with it they threw what they thought to be an image of the hostile Saxon God, which they had discovered in a neighboring forest. There followed attacks upon the remaining clergy, and the following spring those who survived departed for home upon threat of death. The Livs decided then to make a clean sweep of it by destroying the merchants also, but the latter "took thought for their lives" and "gave gifts to important Livs." This was the situation that Albert set out to retrieve.

2. A measure of land; for different views on its size, see Brundage, *op. cit.*, p. 33, note 22.

He had calculated well how the manifold resources of the west were to be used for the conquest and occupation that must accompany the formal baptism of the inhabitants. The conquest was to be entrusted to crusaders annually recruited from the west, and to a standing army composed of the bishop's retainers, and of a new military order, the Brothers of the Militia of Christ, better known as the Livonian Brothers of the Sword. The occupation was to be carried out not only by the Brothers in that part of the conquered territory turned over to them to rule, but by the rapid organization of both the secular administration and the regular branches of the church, for which, in the case of the latter, Albert utilized the experience of the Cistercians and the Premonstratensians in the Slavic territory beyond the Elbe and the Saale. The land was, moreover, to be held by strategically located garrisons of episcopal vassals and their retainers, recruited from the Saxon nobility. The secular administration was to be in the hands of advocates of the bishop, located in the chief native villages. The powerful commercial interests behind the conquest and the occupation were to be safeguarded by the creation of a permanent urban colony at the mouth of the Düna, recruited from the north German cities, a colony whose militia would supplement the permanent military establishment and act as the capital city of the enterprise. The whole plan was conceived in a form to satisfy the ambition of the bishop and his numerous relatives. What was to be established on the Baltic was the kind of ecclesiastical principality that German bishops had had their hearts set on for centuries. Albert, as an independent bishop in Livonia, preferably even as an archbishop, was to transform a group of primitive communities of Finnic and Baltic peoples into a western church-state, a theocracy in miniature.

It cannot be said that the bishop did not labor strenuously to carry out his plans. Riga was founded in the year after his arrival, and pilgrims were set to work to raise its walls to a height capable of withstanding the hatred of the peoples in whose midst it was set. The episcopal see was moved from Üxküll to Riga and provided with a Premonstratensian chapter. From the tower of the new cathedral the bells celebrated the widening and tightening of the German grip on the land. When a fire destroyed them and the old town, bigger and better bells were cast, and the circumference of the city was enlarged. The Brothers of the Militia came in 1202, and three years later the Brothers of St. Bernard at Dünamünde. It was Albert's task, meanwhile, to organize further the support of this enterprise in the west by a personally conducted recruiting and publicity campaign.



Almost every year he returned to Germany, often bearing with him prize exhibits of converted natives, or the hostage children of defeated tribes, to bring back an army of pilgrims, knights for the order, and men to administer the new posts opening up in the ecclesiastical and secular administration. He preached up and down the highways and byways, says Henry of Livonia, and traveled through the counties and to the castles. He had, moreover, to conduct the foreign affairs of his principality. By 1207 he had arranged to become a prince of the empire, holding Livonia in fief. At the Fourth Lateran Council he managed to have the bishopric of Riga exempted from the authority of the archbishop of Hamburg-Bremen, and put directly under Rome.

By this date the conquest had proceeded with such vigor and the occupation launched with such severity that the Livs and Letts, confessing their inability to withstand them, bowed with sullenness and hatred to the inevitable new regime. By this date also had begun the incredibly vicious campaign against the Esths; participants included not only the crusaders from Germany—for whom, often, a memorable experience of their pilgrimage had to be created—but also the bishop and his men, the abbot and his men, the Knights, the Rigans, and levies of the now baptized Livs and Letts. In this war, after the booty had been taken, terms of peace were to be had only upon the promise of baptism and the surrender of boys and girls as hostages. The priests who accompanied these armies were ready to begin their mass baptisms immediately upon the cessation of the slaughter. Henry describes how, after taking the fortress of the Selonians, a tribe of Letts, “the abbot and the provost, with the other priests, ascended to them in the fort, instructed them in the beginnings of the faith, sprinkled the fort with holy water, and raised the banner of Blessed Mary over it.”

The relentless pressure of Albert's machine of conquest and occupation inspired fear and terror, hatred and scorn, in the minds and hearts of the natives. It induced them to seek every means to escape it. They were prompt to prepare conspiracies to murder advocates, priests, and the heads of the garrisons. Conrad of Meiendorf had to be installed in the fort at Üxküll by an army of crusaders. In order to supply his garrison with food, the ripened grain of the neighboring Livonian fields was cut down with sickle and sword and stored to the very roofs of the fort. The conspiracies were answered with campaigns of revenge driving the Livs and their families into the forests. When caught in their own forts they often, in the stress of a moment of victory, returned to their own gods, giving thanks with sacrificial

animals, whose carcasses they threw down from the walls into the face of the bishop. When the leaders of a rebellion were captured, their severed heads were sent to the bishop, to his great satisfaction, we are assured.

In his reduction of the Esths, Albert used the levies of baptized Livs and Letts to open the way. German troops, priests, and merchants accompanied and followed them. Henry describes the villages in Estonia before these invasions as beautiful, prosperous, and well populated. The Rigans, he relates, were urged to participate by the reminder that even before Riga was built a merchant caravan on its way up the D una to Pskov was waylaid by some Esths and plundered of goods worth over a thousand silver marks. No priestly embassy had ever been able to make this loss good. The campaigns into the various regions of Estonia finally reduced it to a wasteland and brought in their wake famine and plague. The accounts of them make sickening reading. "Moving into Sakala," begins one, "the Christian army found the men, women, and little children in their homes in all the villages and localities. From morning until night the men killed those whom they found, the women as well as the children. They killed three hundred of the more prominent and leading men of the province and innumerable others until their hands and arms, because of excessive slaughter of the people, tired and failed them. All the villages were colored with the abundant blood of the pagans. On the following day they returned and collected much spoil in all the villages, oxen, cattle, and a great many little girls. They led them all back with them into their lands."

On another campaign "they killed a great many people in the villages and took others captive. They got much loot and took back with them the women and young girls, leaving the villages deserted. Having made a great slaughter, and started a huge conflagration, they returned home." Subsequently a priest was sent to negotiate peace, and to ask about that thousand marks' worth of pilfered goods. "The Esths rushed at him with swords and lances." On another day "the army, having separated into all the roads and villages, killed many of the people in every place and took the women and boys captive. In the days following they laid waste everything and burned everything they found. They took both horses and oxen. Indeed, they took four thousand oxen and cows, not counting the horses and other flocks, and captives which were innumerable. Many of the pagans who had escaped into the woods and onto the ice of the sea froze to death. . . . When the Esths refused Christianity they seized all the captives, cut them down, and cast them into a trench." At moments of

greatest fury both sides burned and buried alive. The attacks were sometimes made in regular relays. "Upon returning home the army met on the road other Letts going into Ungannia. What they had left these took, what they had neglected these seized; whoever had escaped from the first were killed by these. Those provinces and villages not reached by them were reached by these; . . . when these returned they came across other Letts on the way. What had been left undone by the former was really completed by the latter, and they, upon their return, came across a fourth army moving into Estonia." During another "summer nine different expeditions and armies were sent into Estonia. It was left desolate and deserted and no men or provisions could be found any more." What had formerly been a "fertile, great, and populous country was laid waste and burned by our men. . . . They killed here and there until, completely worn out, they and their horses with them, they could kill no more. And so with great joy they returned to Livonia, blessing God for the vengeance granted us against the pagans." The Esths "bewailed and wept. . . . Estonia weeping for her sons could not be comforted. . . . And so God caused their pride to subside and humbled the arrogance of the strong." And in the camps of the Christians at night there were games "with great clamor and striking of shields."

The German and Christian domination in these Estonian lands was set up over a waste of slaughtered natives and burned-out villages. By 1217 (battle of Fellin, September 26) Sakala had been won; by 1224, the region of Ungannia (Dorpat, Tartu). Before Albert's death, the Esths on the island of Ösel had been subdued. The Germans, however, were not able to extend their control over all of Estonia, for the Danes from Reval (Tallinn) maintained their claims in this region. Both the Brothers and the bishop competed for their favor and support, with the result that under papal auspices a settlement was reached leaving Reval with the provinces of Wierland and Harrien to the Danes. These they would hold until 1346, when they sold out to the Teutonic Order.

The piecemeal nature of the conquest and occupation made impossible effective concerted resistance. It was inevitable, however, that both Liv and Esth should appeal to what Henry calls the "little and great kings of the Russians" to come to their rescue. Before the Germans arrived Russian princes had imposed tribute upon isolated groups—the Düna Livs, for example, and certain of the Letts. They had even introduced Greek Orthodox Christianity into the neighborhood of Lettish Tholowa, but on the whole, as one of the princes said to Albert, it was not the custom of the Russians to impose their

religion upon the conquered; they imposed tribute only. As the German power grew, and the resistance of the Livs and Esths became more desperate, these princes realized that access to the Baltic was being denied them. Their last chance to thwart these unpleasant neighbors and to keep open the opportunities for tribute was to establish themselves as allies of the rebellious natives. They began to appreciate also the value of extending Greek Christianity and made some efforts to baptize. Of the danger of the expansion of the Greek church into Livonia even Innocent III was aware. Thus the struggle between German and native developed into a conflict between German and Russian and between Latin and Greek Christianity for the possession of this part of the Baltic littoral. The Mongol invasions helped to preclude effective Russian intervention, itself limited by the difficulties of coöperation among the Russian princes themselves. Of the neighboring Russian principalities, Albert was able to destroy one, Kokenhusen (1208), and reduce another to vassalage, Gertsike (1209). The neighboring princes of Polotsk, Pskov, and Novgorod, however, were ultimately beyond his reach. Nor could he prevent the raids of the Lithuanians, now helping and now attacking the Russians, now helping and now attacking the Balts.

It was the superior military technology of the west which established the Germans in Livonia and Estonia, and checked the Lithuanians and Russians. It was the brilliant glitter of their arms that the Lithuanians abhorred, says the chronicler. It was, moreover, the new stone fortifications, hitherto unknown in this area. Albert sent stonemasons to help a Russian prince strengthen his castle. It was in addition the siege machinery—the ballista, the paterell, and those little engines called hedgehogs and swine. The word machine is used so often by Henry that one cannot avoid thinking of a technological revolution. The natives and Russians could not deal with the episcopal forts and the castles of the Brothers. The Esths, remarks Henry, had never seen such things and had not protected their homes against attacks of this kind. The Russians, he remarks, were ignorant of the art of the ballista, being used to bows. It took some time for them to learn. When at first they wounded and killed their own men with the new machines, the Germans smiled. “The Russians,” says Henry, “made a little machine, in the fashion of the Germans, but not understanding the art of hurling stones they injured a great many of their men by hurling them into their backs.” But they did learn. When Russians were introduced into the Estonian forts at Dorpat and Fellin, “they built paterells and machines to counter the machines of the Christians in all the forts, teaching each other the

ballistarian art, and dividing the ballistas of the Brothers of the Militia, of which among themselves they had seized a great many." The Esths in the Reval neighborhood learned the art from the Danes. "When the Danes besieged the island of Ösel, certain of the Öselians went to the Esths along the coast of the mainland to study the art of the paterell or of the machine which the Danes had given them. And they returned to Ösel and began to build machines, and taught others. And each one of them built his own machine."

Albert was thus a champion of Latin Christianity against paganism and Greek Christianity, and a defender of German—primarily Saxon—against Russian interests. The struggle was essentially between the Saxon nobility and church and a disunited array of primitive Finnic, Baltic, Russian, and Lithuanian peoples. It has already been suggested that the larger category into which this conflict fits is the expansion of a comparatively advanced, vigorous, and prosperous western civilization, carried by Germans, into the undeveloped regions of northeastern Europe. It is the impingement of a "higher" upon a "lower," a "superior" upon an "inferior" civilization, in many respects an unpleasant incident in the "march of progress." That these German representatives of the west felt very superior to the Baltic peoples is only too obvious from their chronicler. There was no question in their minds as to their right to impose by force the disciplinary institutions of their church. The mentality and practices of the Baltic pagans were, of course, an object of curiosity, but more especially of that scorn which western Christians had felt from time immemorial. Resistance to baptism was considered to be only pagan pride and arrogance, and any return to their own gods, sheer apostasy. These pagans sacrificed animals and an occasional Christian to their gods, cremated their dead with heavy feasting and drinking, and thought it possible to interpret the will of the gods by setting a fat priest upon a fat cow, or by seeing whether a horse raised his left or right front foot. It was infuriating to a German to watch the profanation of Christian churches by wild carousals of victorious pagans with their woman captives, or the impudence of that Lithuanian warrior who rode into a church on his horse, and finding nothing to carry away, exploded with a simple "Bah!"

The material superiority of the west has been alluded to. Its feudal civilization, as adapted by the Saxons, themselves once hardened by the Carolingian conversion, moved into the east. It was first of all military, the knowledge of strategy and tactics, how to direct the levies of militarily inexperienced peoples, how to build, defend, and besiege stone castles with what the natives regarded as new-fangled

military machines. The pagans knew so little about cement that they thought they could pull down one of these forts. There came too the civil as well as the military institutions of the Saxon west. Among these were the municipal institutions of an expanding urban economy, the knowledge of how to build, govern, and protect a town so as to make it prosperous. Because of all this activity such pagan pursuits as piracy and highway robbery were intolerable. To the morality of the established commercial practices of the western merchants these peoples were indifferent.

From the west was imported as well a higher and literate culture—the new ecclesiastical architecture, for example, and the impressive splendor of the new Christian service. There was also the new Christian drama, and those new musical instruments which the Germans brought along. On one occasion, when the Lettish fort at Beverin was being attacked by the Esths, the Letts had a priest with them, possibly Henry of Livonia, who kept up constant prayer during the course of the battle. It was going so well that individual Letts ran into the fort from time to time to join their priest in praising “the Christian God who was fighting for them.” Finally, in sheer exaltation, the priest climbed to the top of the walls and sang with a “musical instrument.” He managed to stop the battle, for “the barbarians hearing the sweet song and the sharp sound of the instrument” stood still in amazement, for “they had never heard such an instrument in their land.” They saw the Germans enter battle with the beating of drums “stirring up the souls of their men.” They heard them also, in their camps after a fine day of slaughter and collecting booty, give vent to their “great exultation” with Christian games, to the accompaniment of “drums, pipes, and musical instruments.” The Germans brought also new standards of cleanliness, for the Russians were offensively indifferent to the rules of sanitation. When the Germans were about to occupy the recently abandoned fort at Kokenhusen they found that “because of the lack of cleanliness on the part of the former inhabitants, it was filled with worms and snakes, and had to be thoroughly cleaned before they would enter it.”

At a moment, then, when the German empire was in chaos, and the papacy too preoccupied with other important matters to be able to direct what was going on in the Baltic area, expanding western civilization, adding the fervid impulse of the crusader to the attraction of an undeveloped area, entered Livonia in the theocratic form given it by a Saxon bishop. Although his plans had to be modified to accord with the intense ambitions of the Brothers, the Danes, and

the papacy, and although, after his death, Livonia fell into the hands of the Teutonic Knights, Albert had succeeded, after some twenty-five years of conquest and occupation, in laying the foundation for German control upon the sands of human misery, exploitation, and widespread devastation.

The methods pursued by Albert in setting up his ecclesiastical state in Livonia made an overwhelming impression upon his contemporaries who were confronted in Prussia with the identical problem of how to convert the heathen—upon, that is, bishop Christian (1215–1245) and his competitors, the Teutonic Knights. The earlier medieval centuries had established the tradition that Christianity was to be spread, under the guidance of the papacy, by the peaceful persuasion of native kings and chieftains, not imposed as a condition of peace by the sword. Pope Gregory the Great, Augustine of Canterbury, and the Anglo-Saxon mission to the continent had illustrated the effectiveness of this method. It taught that the state was to be the helper, and the church the director. In conversion, religious and not political or economic motives were to prevail. The missionary himself was to be, in Alcuin's phrase, the *praedicator pietatis* and not the *exactor decimarum*. The acceptance of Christianity was to bring with it a new freedom under the church.

The supporters of this point of view saw clearly the hypocrisy of preaching the liberation of the soul from heathen bondage when this liberation by force brought serfdom and the tithe. Albert and the Brothers of the Sword had been reminded of these things by the papal legate William of Savoy, bishop of Modena. The same point of view was constantly emphasized by Rome in its direction of the Prussian venture. But the impact of this advice was fatally limited by the fact that Innocent III and his successors, however interested in mitigating the effects of conversion associated with conquest, were unwilling to see the new conquests escape the control of papal theocracy. The liberty of the new Christian was to be enjoyed within the boundaries of a papal state. Nor were they willing to go so far as to risk the exclusion from their ecclesiastical empire of the new Baltic states by taking extreme measures against those whose methods they criticized. It was not easy to insist upon the peaceful persuasion of the Baltic heathen when the use of force, in the form of crusades, had already been promoted in the case of the Moslem and the Albigensian heretic. Without serious opposition from the papacy, Albert had been able to abandon the earlier missionary tradition for that established by Charlemagne with his conquest of

the pagan Saxons, and by Bernard of Clairvaux, in sanctioning the application of crusading methods to suppress and Christianize the Slavs south of the Baltic.

Bishop Christian was himself a Cistercian monk, possibly the abbot, of the Polish monastery of Lekno. The failure of all previous missionary efforts in Prussia, together with the successful inauguration of the Livonian mission, inspired him to work among the Prussians. The early successes of his mission brought him the support of such Polish princes as duke Conrad of Masovia and bishop Goslav of Plock. He had first conceived of his mission as the peaceful persuasion of Prussian princes. He had extraordinary notions about founding schools to train Prussians in the conversion of their own people and to educate young girls, whom Prussian custom considered worthless. He had brought some of his noble converts to Rome to be baptized. He had indeed even been endowed by them with land along the Vistula. By Innocent III in 1215 he was ordained the bishop of Prussia and his Polish supporters endowed the new bishopric extensively in the area of Kulm. When the Prussians became aware, however, that Christianization might lead to Polish conquests and when, accordingly, the results of Christian's missionary endeavors were threatened with extinction, he made the mistake of resorting to a crusade in order to protect Prussian Christians from the attacks of their pagan kinsmen. In vain did he seek to control and restrain the mainly Polish crusaders by securing from Rome a privilege obliging them to respect his episcopal authority, to secure his permission before crossing into Prussia, and to refrain from reducing Christian Prussians to subjects. In vain did he urge, in imitating Albert further, the formation of a new German military order, founded upon the example of the Livonian Brothers of the Sword, the Knights of Dobrzyn. The Prussians answered these steps by attacks upon the Polish frontier. Christian could maintain himself neither in Prussia nor in Kulmerland, which, together with Masovia and Kujavia, was overrun and laid waste. It was under these circumstances that Conrad of Masovia was persuaded to offer the Teutonic Knights, recently expelled from eastern Hungary, Kulmerland in return for their undertaking the defense of his frontiers by a crusade against the Prussians.

The grand master of the Teutonic Order at this time was the able Hermann of Salza, who knew precisely the conditions under which he would introduce the Knights into Prussia. These had little concern with Christian's plans for converting Prussians, or for the political needs or ambitions of Polish princes. If there were to be crusades they would have to advance the interests of the Teutonic Order, and



the interests of the Teutonic Order had to do with the establishment, under empire and papacy, of an autonomous monastic state, tolerating no competition from other monastic orders or the secular church. If the Knights could get such terms, they would march into Prussia.

The Order of German Knights of the Hospital of Saint Mary at Jerusalem was but ten years old when Hermann of Salza was elected its fourth grand master in 1209. It was the product of the frustrated hopes of those German crusaders who had joined Frederick I Barbarossa on the Third Crusade and of those who had associated themselves with the crusade of Henry VI. The early German hospital at Jerusalem, lost in 1187, was reorganized as a field hospital before the walls of Acre when the sad remnants of Barbarossa's army, under his son duke Frederick of Swabia, joined the other troops of the west in the siege of the city. It was organized with the help of German merchants from Bremen and Lübeck, moved into the city after its fall, and provided with the rule of the Hospitallers.<sup>3</sup> As such it existed until 1198, when another group of German crusaders, among whom were such men from northern Germany as landgrave Hermann of Thuringia, margrave Conrad of Landsberg, and margrave Dietrich of Meissen, undertook before returning to Germany, upon the news of the death of Henry VI, to transform the German hospital into a German military order by supplying it with knights, clergy, serving brothers, and the rule of the Templars. The new order was approved by Innocent III in the following year, and was provided by Honorius III with no fewer than 113 papal privileges, making it the equal of the older orders. Meanwhile it had become richly endowed in Palestine, Cilician Armenia, Greece, and Europe, up indeed to the very borders of Prussia. Its regional organization in Germany centered in the *Ballei* (bailiwick) of Thuringia. Its earliest foundation had been at Halle, in that northern Germany whose interests had turned eastward centuries ago, and which at the moment was cut off from the east by the expansion into northern Germany of king Waldemar II of Denmark. From this region (Langensalza) Hermann, called "the Bismarck of the thirteenth century" and "the greatest German statesman of the Middle Ages," may well have come.

The European career of the Teutonic Order was opened up by the invitation (1211) of Andrew II, king of Hungary, to occupy territory in Transylvania (the Burzenland), in modern Rumania, where the Knights were to protect his frontier from the raids of the heathen

3. A chapter in volume V of this work (in preparation) will treat the Teutonic Knights in the Holy Land, to 1291. On the crusades of Barbarossa and Henry VI see volume II, chapter III.

Kumans. It must be assumed that in accepting this invitation Hermann was aware of what bishop Albert was accomplishing in Livonia, and that he wished to guide his order in Hungary by this example. Nor can there be any doubt that Hermann profited from the experience in Hungary when about to introduce the order into Prussia. In any case he knew how to take advantage of his friendship with Honorius III to secure for the order in Hungary what it was never intended by Andrew to have. Privileges from Rome exempted it from the local ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the bishop of Siebenbürgen and took its landed endowment into the proprietorship of St. Peter and under the special protection of the holy see. The order moreover seems to have violated the privileges granted by Andrew and to have increased its holdings illegally. It also introduced German colonists into the region. Hermann's Hungarian program called, therefore, for the founding, under the papacy, of an autonomous German monastic state, not limited to the defense of a frontier. These steps made the order unwelcome in Hungary. The king, once aware of the implications of the new foundation, abrogated its privileges, ordered it to leave Hungary, and when it resisted, expelled it by force (1225).

This experience did not put an end to Hermann's plans for the future establishment of the Teutonic Knights in Europe. It only made him more careful in negotiating the conditions of any such establishment. The invitation from duke Conrad of Masovia followed hard upon the expulsion from Hungary and offered to the Knights a similar mission, the defense of an endangered frontier against pagans. It was followed by five years of negotiations with the duke, conducted from Halle. During this period Hermann, as an intimate advisor of emperor Frederick II, conducted important business with the papacy, and at the same time was in close touch with the situation in northern Germany. When king Waldemar of Denmark was taken prisoner by his vassal count Henry of Schwerin (1223), it was Hermann of Salza who was sent to negotiate terms of release that would help to remove the Danish obstacle to the expansion of northern Germany eastward. When the north German princes at Bornhöved (1227) removed this obstacle, Hermann utilized the situation for his order. In the previous year he had supported the efforts of the Lübeckers to raise their city, quite essential to the overseas expansion of the Germans, to the status of a free imperial city.

He was, of course, well acquainted with what bishop Albert had accomplished in Livonia by this date, and of the way in which it had been done. He knew the eagerness and capacity of the north German nobility, and peasantry, to participate as entrepreneurs and colonists

in a second Baltic venture in Prussia. This knowledge, combined with the outcome of the invitation to Hungary, convinced him of the great possibilities which Prussia offered. His position at the imperial and papal courts made it possible for him to get what he wanted. The political ambitions of a petty Polish prince, unable to provide for the protection of his own borders, would not be permitted to thwart the order even if his invitation were accepted. Nor would the ecclesiastical ambitions of a local Prussian bishop, with idealistic notions about how a new area should be Christianized, be permitted to interfere with conquest. If the Knights were to go into Prussia it must be with outside help to be sure, but with no outside interference. This is what would distinguish them from the Livonian Brothers of the Sword. Conquest would establish under emperor and pope a new Christian state open to German enterprise. Its government would follow the example of Frederick II, rather than that of the feudal kingdom of Jerusalem. In this state, the Livonian dualism between order and bishop would be avoided. Prussian bishops would be subordinated to, and even come from the ranks of, the Knights themselves.

The way was provided for the realization of such a program in the years following Conrad's invitation. In the very next year (1226) Hermann received from Frederick II, in the Golden Bull of Rimini, the full authority of an imperial prince (*Reichsfürst*) for Kulmerland and all Prussia that should be conquered by the Knights. In 1234, after the conquest had been begun, the territory then held by the Knights was taken into the proprietorship of St. Peter and under the special protection of the holy see. It was returned to the Knights as a papal fief owing an annual rent. Meanwhile, by 1230, hastened by the formation of the Knights of Dobrzyn, negotiations with Conrad and Christian had gone far enough to permit, under the above conditions, the dispatch of Hermann Balke with seven knights across the Vistula at Nessau to begin the conquest. In a document—if it is not a forgery—then prepared in Italy for Conrad to sign, the original terms of his invitation were reformulated in terms freeing the order from any Polish interference. Christian was persuaded to abandon his temporal holdings in Kulmerland in exchange for a guarantee of his episcopal rights in the Prussian territory to be conquered. In this the good bishop was to be disappointed. In 1233 he was captured by the Prussians and held for six years. This convenient circumstance the Knights did not undertake to modify by exchanging notable Prussian prisoners for Christian. The papal grant of Prussia as a fief of the order (1234) ignored him. Two years later the papal legate William of

Modena was instructed to take over the ecclesiastical organization of Prussia.

When Christian was finally released, he protested the violation of his rights, and complained that the Knights were more interested in making subjects than Christians, and that they were driving the Prussians back into heathendom. For protests of this sort it was too late. They postponed until 1243 the ecclesiastical organization of Prussia, but they did not change the nature of the conquest nor alter the proposed subordination of the secular church to the order. Christian had in fact been abandoned by the papacy as well as by the order. As compensation for the loss of his position as missionary bishop of all Prussia, he was offered, in fact ordered, to take one of the four bishoprics into which Prussia was to be divided. But this, until his death (1245), the embittered and disillusioned missionary could not be persuaded to do. After conquest and forcible conversion Hermann of Salza in Prussia no less than Albert of Riga in Livonia meant to establish a little Baltic theocracy, but monastic rather than episcopal.

The conquest of Prussia by the Knights began in 1230, the year following Albert's death, and lasted for the rest of the thirteenth century, for only by its close may Prussia be said to have been completely subdued. It was accompanied by the consummation of Albert's plans for the conquest of Livonia. In 1237 the surviving Livonian Brothers of the Sword, after a serious defeat by the Lithuanians at Saule (1236), were formally received into the Teutonic Order, which two years earlier had incorporated the Dobrzyń Brothers. Yet despite the union the history of the Livonian branch of the order with its own *Landmeister* was still a separate history. In both areas primitive tribes with no common political organization were obliged hopelessly to protect their lives, farms, tribal independence, and religion against the superior might of the west, and a fanaticism compounded of crusading zeal and contempt for the un-Christian and uncivilized. Prussia, like Livonia and trans-Elbia before it, was a new area to be opened to western German enterprise. No less than the Livonian Brothers could the Teutonic Knights manage this conquest alone. Indeed, the two areas competed for the aid of the aristocracy and burghers of northern Germany. This aid took the form of crusades, promoted from Rome and recruited by the respective agents of the orders.

The spiritual rewards which these crusaders sought, no less glitter-

ing than the rewards to be sought in the Holy Land, and more easily procured, were less tangible than the material rewards which successful conquest would bring. The north German aristocracy which participated in these crusades had become successful colonizers of Slavic trans-Elbia. It had been well established that without colonization mere conquest and superficial Christianization were impermanent. There were huge landed estates to be had in Prussia, in return for support without which the Knights could not hope to hold the area. The German burghers who participated in these crusades, the counterparts of those Venetians, Genoese, and Pisans who crusaded to Syria, comprehended well the economic possibilities of opening up the Baltic and its hinterland as a market for a vigorous young western industry, and importing therefrom the raw products and surplus of an improved agriculture. Prussia then, like Livonia, was confronted not only by the highly organized Christianity of the west, but by new political, economic, and social forces breaking through the restrictions of a feudal society. The Prussians were able to withstand this combination no better than other primitive peoples inhabiting the southern Baltic shore. They, too, were victims of the German expansion of the west.

The strategy of the Knights for the conquest of Prussia was well conceived, and the military power developed was extraordinary. The strategy involved the protection of all advances by forts and castles, built by the forced labor of conquered Prussians in accordance with principles of military architecture imported from Syria. Alongside these strongholds urban settlements of German burghers were immediately founded, and in some areas German nobles were granted, on feudal tenure, large holdings. From these well fortified centers the conquest of the surrounding territory followed, making use again of enforced Prussian military service. Accompanying these crusading armies were Dominican priests who performed the wholesale baptisms required as a condition of peace. The general plan involved going down the right bank of the Vistula from Kulmerland as a base to the Frisches Haff and along its shores and that of the Kurisches Haff to meet the advance from Livonia, thus opening up contact by sea with Lübeck and the German homeland. Thence the conquest was to proceed into the interior.

After clearing Kulmerland of the Prussians, the Knights advanced from the castles of Thorn (1231) and Kulm (1232) down the Vistula with the help of the crusading army of burgrave Burchard of Magdeburg. In the territory of the Pomeranians they built Marienwerder (1233). In the fall of 1233 with the help of an army of crusaders led

by Polish and Pomeranian nobles, including duke Conrad of Masovia, his son Casimir of Kujavia, duke Vladislav Odonicz of Great Poland, duke Henry of Silesia and Cracow, and duke Svantopelk of eastern Pomerania and his brother Sambor, the Knights won a victory over the next pagan group to the east—confusingly called the Pomesanians—and built Burg Rheden further to protect Kulmerland. With Henry of Breslau came the first burghers from Silesia and Breslau for Thorn and Kulm, and one of the first sovereign acts of the Knights was to grant them the *Kulmer Handfeste* (1233), a charter of self-government based upon the law of Magdeburg. With the help of the crusading army of Henry, the margrave of Meissen, all Pomesania (between Marienwerder and Elbing) was occupied. The advance then continued down the Nogat to Lake Drausen, and finally (1236) to the shores of the Frisches Haff, where in 1237 the castle of Elbing was built and immediately supplied with an urban community from Lübeck. These crusades left such Germans as Bernard of Kamenz, John von Pak, and Frederick of Zerbst with large holdings in Pomesania, Kulmerland, and the Elbing area. The campaign against Varmians and Natangians along the southern shores of the Frisches Haff to the Pregel was supported by the castle at Balga (1239), from which an advance was made into the interior against Pogesians, Varmians, and Bartens. With the help of duke Otto of Brunswick, a grandson of Henry the Lion, castles were built in the midst of these peoples, Kreuzburg in Natangia, Bartenstein and Rössel among the Bartens (1241), Braunsberg in Ermland, and Heilsberg in Pogesania (1241). This further advance left Dietrich of Depenow (Tiefenau) from Hanover with a huge estate near Marienwerder.

The determination of the Knights to deprive duke Svantopelk of eastern Pomerania of control of the navigation of the Vistula delta led to war. The whole conquered territory except Pomesania was now lost by the order in the first Prussian revolt (1240). In the south only the castles of Thorn, Kulm, and Rheden were able to withstand the rebels; in the north only Elbing and Balga. The peace of Christburg (1249) with the Prussians was made under papal mediation. Peace with Svantopelk (1253) brought control of the navigation of the lower Vistula. Meanwhile, while the revolt was being suppressed, expansion continued. In 1246 Lübeckers were crusading in Samland, taking home natives to be baptized in Germany, and leaving behind in Braunsberg and Frauenburg the important Fleming and Baysen families. By 1252 the Livonian branch had advanced southward down the coast to Memel. In 1254 an impressive crusading force under king Ottokar II of Bohemia, Rudolph of Hapsburg, and Otto

of Brandenburg carried the advance into Samland, where in honor of Ottokar Königsberg was built (1254).

While the Pogesanians, Varmians, Bartens, Natangians, and Samlanders were being incorporated into the order's state, a second revolt broke out in 1260. It was precipitated when the Lithuanians seriously defeated the Livonian branch of the order at Durben in Samogitia (Samaiten, September 20, 1260). It was again only the Pomesanians who remained aloof from a merciless attack upon the Christians. On this occasion the Prussians were well organized under native leaders such as Glände (Samland), Herkus Monte (Natangia), Glappe (Ermland), Auttume (Pogesania), and Diwane (Bartens). The Knights held out only in the strongholds of Thorn, Kulm, Elbing, Christburg, Balga, and Königsberg. Braunsberg and Heilsberg were starved out and burned; Kreuzberg and Bartenstein were taken. The revolters were assisted by the still pagan and unconquered Nadravians, Schalavians, and Sudavians of the south and east, and these in turn by the Lithuanians. New crusades enabled the Knights ruthlessly to put down this revolt. They were led by duke Albert I of Brunswick and landgrave Albert of Thuringia (1264–1265), margrave Otto of Brandenburg (1266), king Ottokar of Bohemia (1267), and margrave Dietrich of Landsberg (1272). After the Nadravians, Schalavians, and Sudavians had been virtually exterminated, deported, or driven into Lithuania, and over half of Prussia had been turned into a wilderness, the revolt came to an end (1283). Thereafter there were but sporadic outbursts, notably a revolt in Samland in 1295 under the leadership of Naudote.

The ferocity with which the revolt of 1260 was suppressed marked the final escape of the order from the limitations which the papacy had tried to put upon subjection and conversion of the Prussians. The treaty of Christburg in 1249 had sought to establish the principle that a voluntary return to Christianity would bring the Prussians, under the immediate but mild suzerainty of the order, a guarantee of the liberties they had formerly enjoyed, and the new Christian freedom of citizenship in a large papal community. The treaty was made with the rebelling Pomesanians, Pogesanians, Varmians, Natangians, and Bartens as a group and as equal partners in the negotiation. They were guaranteed their personal freedom and their property. The conditions under which the latter was to be bought, sold, and inherited were precisely regulated. They were to engage in no further conspiracies against the order. The pagan burial and marriage customs to be abandoned were enumerated and the new Christian obligations, including tithes and participation in crusades, prescribed.

The Prussians were promised that they could become clergy and even, if of noble birth, members of the order. It was made clear, however, that to abandon the newly accepted cult would entail loss of property with severe punishment and even deportation.

The peace of Christburg had made it possible for the crusades against the still remaining heathen Prussians to go on. When the revolt of 1260 was suppressed, the order had abandoned all pretense of dealing mildly with the natives. They were treated as apostates and rebels, despisers of Christianity and traitors. The original plans for an *Ordensstaat* could now be carried out. The dreams of missionaries and popes could be forgotten as unrealistic. In suppressing the revolt the Knights repeated bishop Albert's Livonian and Estonian horrors and evoked similar retaliatory Prussian reprisals. There were slaughter, murder, burnings alive, human sacrifice to pagan gods, devastation, extermination, and deportation. Samland was reduced to a desert; the Pogesanians were wiped out; the Nadravians, Schalavians, and Sudavians were driven into Lithuania and deported into Samland and elsewhere—a wilderness was created into which new colonists might move, and conditions evolved under which the Prussians as a people were in time to disappear. This time the rebelling Prussians could have peace only by surrendering their freedom. The order made treaties with individuals and separate groups whom it treated according to their recent behavior. Those who had remained loyal to the order—these were for the most part the Prussian nobility—were established as landowners under German law, intermediate between the German nobility and the peasantry. Those Prussians who had persisted in the revolt lost their freedom. They were made virtual serfs on the estates of Germans, Prussians, high churchmen, and the order. By the end of the thirteenth century, reconstruction in the form of large-scale German colonization and Germanization was ready to begin.

The Prussian and Livonian conquests were completed together. A temporary settlement of the German-Russian issue was made at the same time. Before Albert of Livonia's death, attempts had been made to bring the Kurs and the Zemgals into the western Christian fold. The Kurs had taken advantage of the order's defeat at Saule to revolt, and the Zemgals had revolted the year before the order's defeat at Durben (1260). Both were put down after fierce repressions. Peace with the Kurs was not established until 1267, and only after the foundation of a castle at Goldingen. Mitau (1265) was used as a fortified center against the Zemgals, who were not actually crushed until 1290, and then driven into Samogitia rather than subjected.



The union of the Livonian Brothers with the Teutonic Knights had given great impetus to plans for expansion against the Russian principalities. After 1237, the Germans had moved north and south of Lake Peipus, northeastward into Watland, Ingria, and possibly Karelia, establishing a fort at Kaporje, and southeastward, capturing Irboska (Izborsk) and then Pskov (1240). This eastward expansion against Novgorod had been cut short, however, when Alexander Nevski of Suzdal retook Kaporje (1241), Irboska, and Pskov (1242), and on April 5, 1242, had set a limit to further expansion in this direction by defeating the order in the bloody battle on Lake Peipus.

This setback had not put an end, however, to papal dreams looking to a union of the Russian church with western Christianity and a common struggle against the Mongols led by the Teutonic Knights. The papacy had been much encouraged when the Lithuanian prince Mindoug had become a Christian (about 1251), in order to ward off attacks of the order upon his country. It had promptly taken Lithuania under its special protection, provided it with a bishop, and had bishop Heidenric of Kulm crown the new Christian prince-king. It had moreover set up a new archbishopric of Prussia (1245), which it entrusted to an ambitious prelate from the Bremen chapter, Albert Sürbeer, who was also made a papal legate for Russia and Galicia. In return for union with the western church the Russian princes were offered assistance against the Mongols.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, in 1260 the papacy had gone so far as to give the Prussian master command of a campaign against these pagan invaders, and the order was to have all lands taken from resisting Russians and Mongols. But the actual character of the Baltic crusade at the moment, and the theocratic pretensions of Rome, did not attract the Lithuanian or Russian princes. The defeat of the order at Durben had led Mindoug to return to paganism (1262) and to ally with Alexander Nevski against the Germans, but the alliance did not work well; in any event, both princes died the following year. Further plans of the western church for incorporating the Russians came to nothing.

In Prussia the German branch of the order continued to expand westward. It took unprincipled advantage of the dispute between the dukes of Great Poland and the margraves of Brandenburg over eastern Pomerania to acquire this whole area with its important city of Danzig (1308–1310). The subsequent acquisition of the Werder region from the duchess of Kujavia cut off all immediate hope of

4. On the Mongols and the papacy see above, chapter XV.

Poland for access to the sea. The purchase of the Neumark from Brandenburg (1402) would help to strengthen the western approach to Prussia, at the cost of precipitating war with Poland-Lithuania.

The early stages of the conquest in both Livonia and Prussia had brought German noble and bourgeois colonists into these lands. Bishops and cathedral chapters, in addition to military orders, had been set up as the over-all directors of this movement. When the actual conquest was over (about 1290) a heavy stream of peasant colonization began, but only to Prussia, where for sixty years peasants—chiefly from Silesia, Lower Saxony, Westphalia, Meissen, and the Elbe-Saale area—poured in in sufficient numbers to form some fourteen hundred village settlements with a total population estimated at 150,000. For as long as the German towns at home were unable to absorb the surplus rural population, this stream continued populating trans-Elbia more heavily, as well as colonizing Prussia. When the German towns in the late fifteenth century began to absorb the surplus, the Teutonic Knights would find it necessary to encourage Polish peasants from Masovia to come into the wilderness of southern and eastern Prussia and the Masovian lake district, and to bring Lithuanian peasants into the area about Memel. In addition to colonization from Germany proper there was, of course, a good deal of internal movement from older to newer colonial areas. In Livonia, however, the Germans formed a thin upper crust of aliens unsupported by peasant colonization from home. Thus Prussia was actually Germanized while Livonia was not.

The peasant colonization of Prussia was a movement carefully planned by the central authorities of the order and turned over to the individual commanderies (sing. *Komturei*) for execution. To bring in the German peasant, their commanders, as well as German landlords, bishops, and chapters, employed a special type of professional developed by this eastern frontier, the locator, or colonizing agent. For a price, the locator guaranteed to bring in and to set up a peasant village. He recruited the peasants; surveyed the village fields, allocated the plots, and organized the government of the village community. For this service he received an allotment of village land larger than the peasant's (usually one-tenth of the whole), the position of village judge and overseer (*Schulze*), and often the ownership of the mill or inn. The ordinary Prussian village set up by the locator consisted of about sixty hides of forty-two acres each to provide for a population of some eighteen or twenty peasant families. Each peasant held from two to three hides, with the remainder going to the locator and the church.

The German peasant moving eastward to Prussia with his superior agriculture escaped the limitations of the manorial system at home. He moved out to an area where he was unquestionably a free man, cultivating a larger amount of land on a rental basis only, and free to leave his holding as and when he saw fit. He colonized more thickly where the Prussians had been wiped out or diminished by warfare. Yet there was turned over to him land to drain and forest to cut down, hard work that he was willing and able to do. Prussians who had remained loyal in the course of the thirteenth-century revolts were given land and status equivalent to those accorded the German immigrant (the so-called large and small Prussian freemen), and in rare instances their peasant communities might profit from an extension to them of German law. For the most part the Prussian peasant was unfree and held his much smaller plots of land by rent and labor services. He was in fact reduced to an agricultural proletariat that would be unable to survive the wars of the fifteenth century. After 1400, when the Prussians and Germans were about equal in number, the former were to be gradually absorbed into the German immigrant mass.

In 1309, when eastern Pomerania was being incorporated into the order's lands, the grand master Siegfried of Feuchtwangen moved the center of the order's administration from Venice, where it had been since 1291, to Marienburg in Prussia. For about a century after this date the order continued to expand its holdings by purchase, if not by the conquest of pagan peoples. It perfected an efficient administration of the lands, the like of which is hard to find in fourteenth-century Europe, and the purpose of which was chiefly to build up its own economic and political power, rather than to nourish neophyte natives in the faith, or even to expand this faith. If indeed the combination of Christian monk and knight was originally incompatible and unfortunate, a century of conquest made it more so, and, except in superficial aspects, transformed the order from a religious into a political and economic institution, in effect a state, and thus prepared for its collapse in competition with the other states of the Baltic area.

Christian Europe never failed to concern itself with the propriety of conquering pagans and imposing Christianity upon them. The enemies of the order did not permit it to. When it became obvious, in the cases of Samogitia and Lithuania, that even this justification for the European support of the order was a sham, the moral basis for its position disappeared. It became clear also that however efficient its political administration it really did not know how to govern, for it succeeded only in antagonizing those very Germans whom it encour-

aged to come into the area. It remained indeed an institution of the German aristocracy, organized to provide for a small number of its younger sons, living as the political, economic, and social elite of a state composed of natives and German colonists. It was accordingly repudiated by both its external and its internal enemies. Prussian, Baltic, and German, these hostile forces were well established by the end of the fourteenth century.

The sovereign powers granted to the order by the empire were in the hands of the grand master, resident at Marienburg and elected to his office for life by a chapter-general of the order. He shared his authority with a deputy, the grand commander (*Grosskomtur*), and with the heads of the chief departments, the military (*Ordensmarschall*), the hospital (*Spittler*), the commissary (*Trapier*), and the treasury (*Tressler*). Together these five formed the council of the grand master. The local administration was in the hands of provincial masters (*Landmeister* of, for example, Greece, Italy, Germany, Prussia, and Livonia) and, in some cases, of regional commanders (*Landkomtur*, as of Kulm). The ordinary unit of administration was the commandery (*Komturei*) governed by a commander (*Komtur*) and a convent consisting of at least twelve brothers. More remote commanderies were governed by advocates (*Vögte*) without convents; within the commandery the *Waldamt* contained the forest lands available for colonization. The trade of the order was in the charge of the two chief agents (*Gross-Schäffer*) at Marienburg and Königsberg. There were also masters of the mint and directors of the post. The whole business of the order was soon reduced to written reports centering in the chancery at Marienburg and still preserved in remarkable archives. In Prussia the order shared its sovereignty over the land with four bishops (Kulm, Pomesania, Ermland, and Samland) and they with their respective chapters. Of these only Ermland was not incorporated into the order; that is, its chapter was not composed of priests of the order and its bishops, therefore, were not necessarily members of the order. In Livonia, on the contrary, there were no incorporated bishoprics, and the Livonian branch never quite succeeded in overcoming the preponderance of the bishops which Albert had originally impressed upon the Livonian settlement. Hence the interminable feud between the archbishops of Riga and the order, a feud leading to constant open warfare, and at one point to the pagan Lithuanian defense of the archbishop and city of Riga against the Knights. The archbishop's Livonian suffragans were Dorpat, Leal-Ösel, and Kurland. The bishop of Reval was, until 1346, a suffragan of Lund, in Sweden.

The chief cities of Prussia and Livonia were members of the Hanse, and as such enjoyed its privileges in northern and western Europe, carrying western goods not only to Prussia and Livonia, but to Silesia, Poland, Bohemia, Hungary, Lithuania, and Russia, and carrying from these through the Baltic ports to the west the raw materials, timber, timber products, and furs of these countries. The order, itself treated as a virtual member of the Hanse, was a major source of its security, but as the sovereign of the Prussian and Livonian Hanse cities it often found itself at odds with them. This position became more delicate when, on the authority of a falsified papal privilege, the order itself engaged in trade on its own behalf, and therefore in competition with its own towns and other members of the League. This trade was centered in the *Gross-Schäfferei* in Marienburg and Königsberg, the former specializing in the export of grain and the latter managing the order's monopoly in amber. The order carried on its large and lucrative trade through an extensive organization within and without Prussia. Such a practice, however, caused fundamental discontent on the part of the Prussian and Livonian towns which found themselves discriminated against by their own rulers, the order, on behalf of the latter's trade. The grain from the order's depots could by exception go to the west when that of the towns could not. Indeed, the order went so far as to take over for itself the income (*Pfundzoll*) collected by the towns to pay for their participation in the Scandinavian wars of the Hanseatic League. Not only did the order use its grain surplus (in part the payment of its native and German subjects) to engage in an extensive and forbidden trade, but it employed its monetary surplus (in part the taxes of its subjects) in banking operations and the purchase of rents.

Like many another important Englishman and European of his day, Chaucer's "parfit gentil Knyght . . . hadde reysed in Lettow" as well as in "Pruce" and "Ruce." By the end of the thirteenth century the completed conquest of Prussia, Kurland, and Zemgalia brought the Knights into direct contact with the last remaining pagans in this area, the Lithuanian tribes of Samogitia and the Lithuanians themselves. If the two branches of the order were to be able to coöperate with each other effectively inside Prussia and Livonia or against Lithuania, it was necessary that the Samogitian gap between Prussia and Livonia be closed. This the order was never able to do for any long period and indeed never tried very seriously to do. It preferred to keep this pagan neighbor as some justification for its existence as a crusading order and to expand against Christian neighbors (eastern Pomerania, Werder, Danish Estonia, Gotland, Neumark). After a

desperate peasant revolt, the Danes in 1346 sold Harrien and Wierland to the Knights.

The order was in no position to think of conquering or colonizing the powerful Lithuanian state of the fourteenth century. But across the wilderness separating Prussia from Lithuania, operating from fortified centers on the Niemen and Memel, it could conduct raids into Lithuania and thus act as host to a western chivalry anxious at this late date to fight the pagan and to gain knighthood as a reward. Thus there came to be organized from Livonia, and more numerous from Prussia, the notorious Lithuanian raids, a belated caricature of the western crusading spirit. There were two regular Prussian raids annually in summer and winter. They were initiated with elaborate festivities which the Knights prepared in Marienburg for their most distinguished guests. For his "Tanz mit den Heiden" in 1377 duke Albert of Austria came with two thousand knights and his own poet. The raids provoked furious counter-raids across the Livonian and Prussian borders, raids making the colonization of the Prussian wilderness practically impossible. The real spirit behind the raids is revealed by the fact that the order did not stop them when the Lithuanians became Christian.

The latter event was a condition for the dynastic union of Poland-Lithuania formed by the marriage of the Lithuanian grand duke Jagiello to the Polish queen Jadwiga in Cracow (February 1386) and the coronation of Jagiello as Vladislav II, king of Poland, on March 4 of the same year. A further condition of this union was that Jagiello should undertake to recover for the Polish crown eastern Pomerania and Kulmerland. A halt was thus called to further German expansion eastward, both in theory by removing the justification of crusading war against the heathen and in practice by uniting to recover from the Knights lands not completely colonized. German colonization had penetrated the towns but only barely touched the countryside of eastern Pomerania. In Kulmerland large elements of the Polish nobility and peasantry had maintained themselves. Thus the advance of the Knights as the instrument of German rather than Christian expansion precipitated a kind of national reaction among those who had suffered from this expansion and who were cut off from future expansion to the Baltic, the Russian princes of Novgorod and the Polish-Lithuanian nobility. The order had reached the limit of its power.

If the dynastic union of Poland-Lithuania of 1386 was an external threat to the order, the formation of the Lizard League (*Eidechsen-*

*gesellschaft*, 1397) was an internal one. It was organized among the nobility of Kulmerland by George of Wirsberg, the commander of Rheden, and Nicholas of Renys, to defend the local privileges of the region against the order's encroachments. From the beginning it was friendly to Poland. It envied the independence of the Polish nobility with respect to both taxation and justice. These events obliged the order to prepare for war by forming alliances with west Pomeranian and east German princes able to furnish the aid of mercenary troops. In a war against Christians, the order could not expect sufficient crusading aid from the west. The acquisition of Samogitia from the new grand duke of Poland, Vitold, in 1398 and of the Neumark in 1402 helped to bring on the war. The abandonment of Gotland (taken in 1398 from the Mecklenburg pirates) to Sweden in 1407 meant a conservation of resources for the oncoming struggle. A revolt in Samogitia helped to precipitate it. When it came (1409), bringing a motley army of Poles, Lithuanians, Samogitians, Czechs, Russians, Galicians, Mongols, and Cossacks down the right bank of the Vistula, it was more than the order could withstand.

The main battle came near Tannenberg, at Grünwald, on July 15, 1410. What promised to be a brilliant German victory turned out to be a disastrous defeat, what Treitschke calls "the first signal victory gained by the Slavs over our nation." In the course of the battle the contingent from Kulmerland under Nicholas of Renys deserted, and when it was over, the grand master Ulrich of Jungingen, the chief officials of the order, many of the commanders, and some two hundred of the order's eight hundred knights lay dead on the field. From Tannenberg the troops of Vladislav and Vitold swept on to Marienburg, hoping to engulf the order in total disaster. Yet an eight weeks' siege of the order's chief fortress could not break the defense of the commander and future grand master Henry of Plauen. The Polish army withdrew, permitting the order to retake most of the territory and towns originally lost. The treaty which ended the war (the first treaty of Thorn, February 1, 1411) was thus, on the face of it, not disastrous for the order, though it lost Samogitia and Sudavia to Lithuania for the lifetimes of Vladislav and Vitold, while the Dobrzyn area and a large war indemnity went to Poland. Those Prussian towns which had sought to make separate peaces with the enemy were harshly treated. The burgomasters of Thorn and Danzig, together with Nicholas of Renys, were beheaded.

Tannenberg was, however, much more serious for the order than the first treaty of Thorn reveals. It obliged all classes in Prussia—the nobility, the bourgeoisie, and the Prussian and German peasantry—to

answer the question of whether they were willing to pay the cost of restoring to the order sufficient power to withstand future attacks. For Tannenberg had not settled the political issues between the order and its neighbors. Their promise to Prussia was war, continuous war, until the order should be so weakened that it could not thwart the Baltic ambitions of its enemies. The economic consequences of Tannenberg were serious enough. The order's treasury was exhausted, and so to pay the huge war indemnity new and unpopular taxation was necessary. Indeed, the grand masters immediately resorted to a debasement of the coinage. After 1410 the foreign trade of the *Gross-Schäfferei* at Marienburg and Königsberg was ruined. The campaigns of 1409–1410 had devastated the order's estates, with the result that a surprisingly large percentage of them became and remained uncultivated. Indeed, after 1410 the population of Prussia declined.

The economic consequences of war hurt the order's subjects no less than itself. They could avoid constant war for the future either by means of an accommodation with Poland-Lithuania or by restoring to the order its former strength. The order had not built up in Prussia, among either Prussians or Germans, the loyalty necessary to call forth this support. To an important section among all classes in Prussia the order's sway had become an alien occupation by relatively few squabbling German aristocrats for whom it was worth sacrificing nothing. Indeed, since Prussia no longer needed the order, it was worth sacrificing much to get rid of it.

In the years following Tannenberg, therefore, the order had its last chance to win over its subjects by removing the sources of complaint that had created the *Eidechsenengesellschaft*. It failed to do so. The Prussian towns had come to look upon the freedom of the Hanse towns in much the same way as the Prussian nobility looked upon the independence of the Polish nobility. The order had not learned how to associate the nobility and townsmen with itself in the government of Prussia. It did not learn how to do this in the first half of the fifteenth century, in spite of constant demands and many attempts. The representatives of the Prussian nobility and towns, in their almost regular meetings, kept demanding that the grand master share his authority with some kind of *Landesrat*, and that he permit some kind of appeal from the arbitrary violence of the order's officials and the arbitrary appropriation of income from the towns (*Pfundzoll*) for the order's treasury. The very condition of the order itself inspired no respect. The constant deposition or resignation of the grand masters; the outrageous insubordination of lesser officials,



leading to conspiracy and murder; the flagrant importation into the order of the tribal disputes of the German aristocracy, between Swabians and Franconians, for example, or Rhinelanders and Westphalians; and finally the separatism in the order, the desire of the Livonian branch and the German bailiwicks to free themselves from the grand master—all this pointed to serious incompetence. The chief purpose of the Knights had in fact long since disappeared, and the order itself was constantly assailed before councils of the church (Constance) and the imperial and papal courts.

Under these circumstances it is not surprising that the spirit of revolt contained in the earlier Lizard League grew after 1410. Under the leadership of men like John Czegenberg and Hans von Baysen and supported by towns like Danzig and Thorn, it took final shape in the powerful Prussian League, formed on March 14, 1440, at Marienwerder by some fifty-three nobles and eighteen towns of western Prussia. The efforts of this League to come to terms with the order after 1440 were unavailing. The order sought rather to have it dissolved by both emperor Frederick III and pope Nicholas V. When the imperial decision for dissolution was made (December 1453), the League chose rather to fight and started the civil war that was to cost the order its independence, or as Treitschke has put it, to bring about "this unnatural state of affairs that Slavs should rule Germans." After occupying most of the order's fortifications, the League sent Hans von Baysen to Cracow to negotiate terms of surrendering Prussia to king Casimir IV of Poland. The Polish declaration of war against the order came on February 22, 1454. The document incorporating Prussia into Poland was completed on March 6, and three days later Hans von Baysen was made the governor of Polish Prussia.

The final struggle between the order and Poland and the Prussian League lasted until 1466 (the Thirteen Years' War). It was largely an unedifying struggle between the mercenary forces of each side. With no money to pay the wages of its troops (Danzig supplied most of the money for the troops of the League), the order was obliged to turn over its towns instead, and Polish-Prussian League victories were won by buying these towns from the order's mercenaries. Thus on June 4, 1457, after the grand master Ludwig von Erlichshausen had been removed on the previous day never to return, Marienburg was delivered to Poland for a very high price. The taxes which Prussian towns such as Danzig, Thorn, and Königsberg levied on their citizens caused furious revolts of protest. When the end came (second treaty of Thorn, October 19, 1466) the order lost to Poland Kulmerland and eastern Pomerania, including Thorn, Kulm, Danzig, Marienburg,

the town of Elbing, and the bishopric of Ermland. The rest of Prussia, including the important sections of the commanderies of Christburg, Elbing (without the town of Elbing), Osterode, Balga, Brandenburg, Königsberg, Ragnit, and Memel, were to be retained by the grand master as a fief held of the king of Poland. It was provided also that half of the order must thenceforth consist of Poles. The second treaty of Thorn thus separated what was called in the 1930's the Polish Corridor to the Baltic, the less heavily German-colonized West Prussia, from Germanized East Prussia.

The second treaty of Thorn for all intents established the independence of the Livonian and German branches of the order. In Prussia after this date the grand masters were able to undertake the colonization of the wilderness with the aid of Polish and Lithuanian peasants, but they were unable to prevent the deterioration of the status of both the German and Prussian free peasants to a position of virtual serfdom. Unable to pay in cash the mercenaries they had brought to Prussia, the Knights had to reimburse them with lands, and thus enlarged the original class of noble colonists with further members of the aristocracy from which these mercenaries came. Through its policy of selling to the nobility lands it could not cultivate, the order lost its predominant position as a landholder in a state now largely agricultural. The flight of the peasants to the remaining towns—in an effort to escape the pressure of an aristocracy struggling to restore the ruined economy by creating large commercially managed estates—was stopped only by binding the peasant to the soil and then imposing upon him additional labor services. The order thus deepened the hatred of the peasantry.

It would finally attempt to save itself by associating the grand mastership with the petty dynasties of Germany. In 1498 the Wettiner Frederick of Saxony would be elected grand master, to be succeeded in 1511 by the Hohenzollern Albert of Brandenburg-Ansbach. Albert would bring the order in Prussia to an end in 1525 by transforming it into a hereditary duchy of Prussia, to be held by the Hohenzollerns as fiefs of the Polish crown. The dissolution would take the form of a treaty with king Sigismund I of Poland, and it would not be made until Albert, after consulting with Martin Luther in 1523, decided, together with many of the Knights, to become Lutheran. The Prussian knights would offer little resistance to this transformation; as administrators of property formerly belonging to the order they would join the ranks of the Prussian Junker aristocracy.

The Livonian branch of the order would manage to prolong its

existence until 1561, because of the energy of its provincial master Walter of Plettenberg (1499–1535) in saving Livonia from Russia. It was to end like the Prussian branch. The last master of Livonia, Gotthard Kettler, would be permitted to transform Kurland and Zemgalia into a secular duchy of Courland with its capital at Mitau, to be held by Kettler and his family under the suzerainty of Poland-Lithuania. The remainder of Livonia would be incorporated into Poland-Lithuania as the principality of Transdaugava. Its extent, however, would by then have been reduced by neighboring states struggling for that control of the Baltic which the order had failed to establish: by a Denmark which had acquired the estates of the bishop of Ösel; by a Sweden which had taken Reval; and by a Russia which had taken Dorpat and eastern Estonia.