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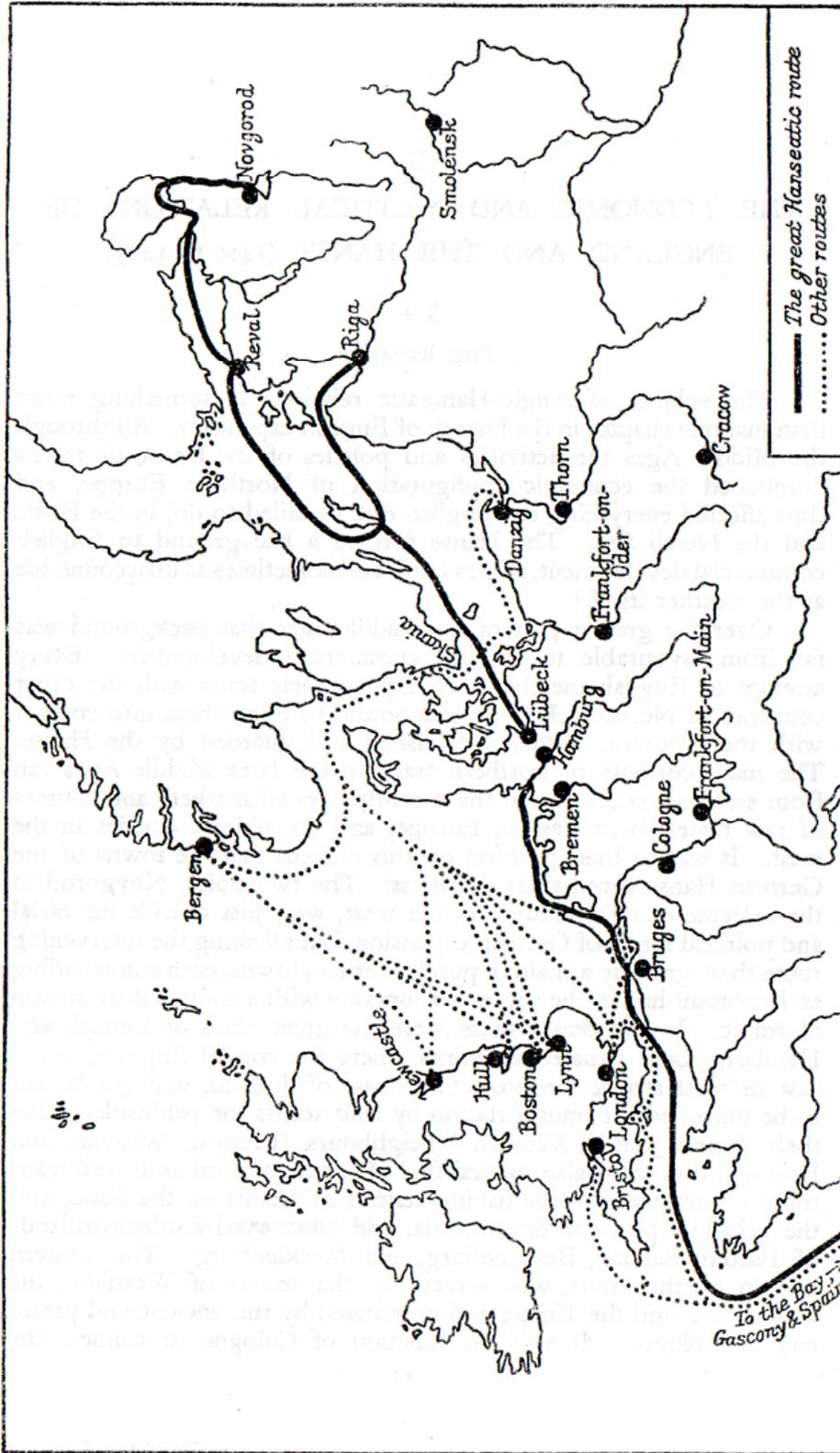
III THE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL RELATIONS OF ENGLAND AND THE HANSE (1400 to 1475)

§ 1 THE RIVALRY

The subject of Anglo-Hanseatic relations is something more than just one chapter in the history of English expansion. All through the Middle Ages the activities and policies of the Hanseatic towns dominated the economic configuration of Northern Europe, and thus affected everything the English did, or failed to do, in the Baltic and North Sea. The Hanse formed a background to English commercial development, as inevitable and sometimes as unaccountable as the weather itself.¹

Over the greater part of the middle ages that background was far from favorable to English commercial development. Every attempt of English merchants to expand their trade with the other countries of Northern Europe was bound to bring them into conflict with the economic system established and guarded by the Hanse. The main currents of northern trade in the later Middle Ages ran from east to west, between the recently opened markets and sources of raw materials in Eastern Europe, and the older countries in the west. It was to their position on this current that the towns of the German Hanse owed their greatness. The two poles, Novgorod in the extreme east and Bruges in the west, were just outside the racial and political limits of German expansion, but all along the intervening route there grew up a chain of purely German towns, each commanding an important halt in the route or a junction with a contributory stream of traffic. In the centre there were the great cities of Lübeck and Hamburg, both situated at points where the coastal shipping going east or west struck the projecting coast of Jutland, and goods had to be unloaded for transportation by land across the peninsula. Like the Saxon and "Wendish" neighbors (Bremen, Wismar, and Rostock) they were also natural foci of the northward and southward traffic: northward to the fishing centres of Skania and the Sund, and the principle ports of Scandinavia, and southward to the cornlands of Eastern Saxony, Brandenburg, and Mecklenburg. The western section of the route was served by the towns of Westfalia, the Zuider Zee and the Rhine, and dominated by the ancient and proud city of Cologne. It was the function of Cologne to connect the

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The Principal Routes of English and Hanseatic Navigation in Northern Europe in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries.

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Great transcontinental current with reservoirs traditionally her own – the Rhine valley, England, and the Netherlands. To the east of the Lübeck-Hamburg combination there were the towns of Prussia clustering round the new and rapidly growing port of Danzig. These formed the next stage in the journey through Livonia to Russia, and tapped the interior of Prussia and Poland. In the extreme northeast were the towns of Livonia guarding the approaches to Novgorod and the intermediate regions of westernmost Russia.²

These towns lived on, and by, the great route. They exploited it not only directly, but also indirectly, by the power it gave them in foreign fields. The industrial centers of Western Europe were badly in need of the East European markets; the industrial, wool-growing and fishing regions of the west were badly in need of East German corn and of the sylvan products of Poland and Russia. As long as the North German towns dominated the route to the Baltic East they possessed a virtual monopoly of trade to the east, and as long as they possessed that monopoly their merchants were welcome and indispensable in more than one foreign country. In England the merchants of the North German towns acquired, by the end of the thirteenth century, liberties and privileges, which in some matters placed them well above all other foreigners, and even above the English merchants themselves. In Flanders they formed, from the middle of the thirteenth century, a privileged body of merchants occupying an exceptional place in the commerce of Bruges and well protected by treaties with the Dukes and the "four members" of Flanders. In Novgorod they succeeded a generation earlier in ousting their Scandinavian predecessors, and establishing a monopoly in Russian trade. But nowhere was their power greater than in Scandinavia. In the course of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries they acquired a hold over the mineral wealth of Sweden, the fisheries of Skania, and the fish and fur trade of Norway, established their dominion in the municipal government and law of Sweden and Denmark, and came very near to ousting the Norwegian merchants from their own port of Bergen. The four great German factories: the "Steelyard" in London, the Hanseatic "commonality" in Bruges, the Court of St. Peter in Novgorod, and the German Bridge in Bergen, were outlying termini of a commercial system spreading, in centipede formation, all along the great route and all over Northern Europe.³

An economic dominion so thorough over a territory so vast was bound to be inimical to the maritime and commercial enterprise of outsiders, English, Dutch, or Scandinavian. But at no time was its enmity more pronounced than at the end of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth centuries. The very emergence of the Hanseatic league as a political organization in the middle of the fourteenth century was symptomatic. The war against Denmark in 1367 was the first of the great trade wars which the Hanseatic towns

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were to wage in defense of the economic position in northern trade, and it was also the first official debut of the Hanse as a political and military league. Throughout its subsequent career the league remained true to the objects of 1367. It existed to defend the economic foundation of the Hanseatic monopoly; its object was to organize military and political action against possible economic change and commercial competition. This policy of political resistance to economic change was forced upon the Hanseatic towns by the whole trend of contemporary developments. In the late fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries the economic positions which the Hanseatic towns had won for themselves in the course of the preceding century were rapidly changing, and could not endure without constant political protection. The changes were manifold. Some of them affected the international situation in Northern Europe, others occurred in the inner structure and mutual relations of the Hanseatic towns. But whether external or internal, they undermined the very foundation of Hanseatic prosperity, and forced upon the league a policy of rigorous and jealous protection.

In the first place, the situation in Northern Europe as a whole was no longer the same as in the first half of the fourteenth century. In the west the Flemish cloth industry was being rapidly overtaken by the English, and in the fifteenth century also by the Dutch industries. The day was not distant when the Hanseatic colony at Bruges would be unable to control the flow of western produce to the east. Further east and north the Dutch were showing the first signs of commercial activity. By the beginning of the fourteenth century, Holland had completed the main part of her defensive work against the sea, and was entering upon a period of rapid economic development. The native shipping which had always been very active in the North Sea was now steadily penetrating into the Baltic, and towns like Amsterdam and Rotterdam were beginning to claim a far greater share in the east to west trade than the most vital interest of the Hanse would permit. Further east and north the Scandinavian countries were undergoing an experiment in unification which threatened to emancipate them from the Hanseatic tutelage. The great Margaret was able to rule unhampered by the Hanseatic towns, thanks rather to her good sense than to Hanseatic indifference, but her predecessor and successor were led into a conflict with Hanseatic interests in the fisheries of Skania and the domestic trade of Denmark and Norway.⁴ Lastly, as will be shown further, England made her appearance as a serious rival in the Baltic.

The changing international situation was in itself bound to make the Hanseatic towns fearful for their future. But their fears were made greater still by the fact that by the beginning of the fifteenth century they were already losing their mutual cohesion and sense of harmony. The towns composing the Hanse formed from the

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geographical and the economic point of view at least three distinct groups: the central body and two wings. The western wing, comprising the towns of the Zuider Zee, Westfalia, and the Rhine, was chiefly concerned with the trade of Western Germany, England, and the Low Countries. The eastern section, formed by the towns of Prussia and Livonia, was economically bound up with the markets of Prussia, Poland, and Russia. It was the central group, the Saxon and Wendish towns, and above all Lübeck, that gave cohesion and unity to the system. Lübeck's position was central in more than one respect. Its situation on the Jutland peninsula made it a geographical link between the eastern and western wings, and its position as a link enabled its merchants to assume the economic function of intermediaries, as carriers and traders, to the different regions of the Hanseatic territory. It is therefore no wonder that Lübeck became the "head" of the Hanse, the builder and defender of its unity. As long as it kept its position of intermediary it stood to benefit by the economic development of the other sections, and could easily reconcile their interests with its own. The integrity of the Hanse was Lübeck's interest, and therefore became Lübeck's policy.

Unfortunately for the Hanse the relations between Lübeck and the other parts had begun to change towards the end of the fourteenth century. In the second half of the century the Zuider Zee towns established direct connections with the Baltic by sea, and this *Umlandfahrt* was becoming more and more popular according as the English and the Dutch were finding their way into the Baltic. This new route gave a stimulus to Dutch and English enterprise in the Baltic, but, what was equally important, deprived Lübeck's position on the Jutland peninsula of its old importance, and thus brought out a conflict of interests within the Hanse. Lübeck was the chief sufferer from the new route, and its own interests forced it to take a lead against the foreign penetration. On the other hand the towns of Prussia, with their bulky goods, availed themselves readily of the new opportunities for direct shopping to the west and of the competitive services of foreign, above all Dutch, carriers. Different, again, was the attitude of the western towns. Some of them had initiated the *Umlandfahrt*, all of them were closely bound up with Dutch trade, and Lübeck could expect no support from them for its conservative and anti-Dutch policy. The harmony of Hanseatic interests was thus rapidly becoming a thing of the past.⁵

This cleavage, or rather the threat of a cleavage, contributed greatly to the anti-foreign policies in the Hanseatic counsels. Itself a product of economic and geographical change, the cleavage justified and intensified Lübeck's resistance to what was the most conspicuous feature of the change: the rise of rivals in the west. The sacred name of unity could now be invoked on behalf of the *status quo*. The

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recurrent separatism of Cologne or Prussia may often have impeded and weakened Hanseatic action, but it also raised up fears and forebodings, which the end only strengthened Lübeck's policy of rigid protection and conservation.

The spirit of monopoly and exclusiveness, so strong in the counsels of the Hanse as a whole, was also finding its way into the internal policies of the individual Hanseatic towns. The middle of the fourteenth century saw the end of the pioneering era in Eastern Europe, during which the rest of the East German towns had been founded and settled. But the passing of the pioneering age meant also the passing of the pioneers. The earlier period in the history of the German towns was a time of constant expansion and adventure; its authors were men of expansive and adventurous mould. The leaders of the urban policies of the thirteenth century, the typical east-going families of Westfalian and Saxon origin, had no need to be exclusive in the local markets of their towns. Their interests were flung far and wide, all along the Hanseatic route, in Northern Europe and beyond. Their prosperity was based on their ever-growing foreign trade, and foreign trade, especially when it is growing, invariably favors free trade. But in the late fourteenth century and the fifteenth centuries the influence of these men on urban policies was fast declining. With the Hanseatic expansion at the point of saturation, the interests and the policies of individual towns were turned more and more upon the local markets. The considerations of local trade began to predominate over those of foreign trade, and the voice of men whose connections and horizons were local, began to predominate in the councils of the towns. In some of the Hanseatic towns a series of democratic revolts in the second half of the fourteenth century, and especially at the very beginning of the fifteenth, for a short time delivered the power into the hands of the petty bourgeoisie. But even in those towns and in those times, in which the government of the patriciate remained uninterrupted, the prejudices and interests of the democracy dictated the commercial policy. The exclusion of the outsider, and above all the alien, from the local trade became the settled object of municipal policy. And this new policy was bound to make the Hanseatic system in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries even more inimical to foreign penetration than it would otherwise have been.⁶

Unfortunately for the future of Anglo-Hanseatic relations, it was in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries that the English penetration into the northern markets began in earnest. The causes of this spurt in English commercial activity are sufficiently obvious. In the second half of the fourteenth century large quantities of cloth began to be produced in England for export. The English merchants, some of whom were themselves cloth manufacturers, possessed those local connections and contacts with production which foreign

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exporters lacked. They were also assisted by a mildly protective customs tariff. Thus favored they early acquired a large share in the new branch of the export trade, and the larger share the greater was their need of foreign markets and their power of penetration.⁷

The penetration proceeded along each of the traditional channels of English trade. The main line of traffic led to the great fair towns of Flanders, Zealand, and Brabant, the chief intermediaries in the trade with the continental interior and the Mediterranean South. Two other channels led directly to the markets of Southern Europe by way of the ports of Aquitaine and Iberia, and to the markets of Scandinavia and Central Europe by the way of the Baltic and the North Sea. In this last direction the English penetration was quite recent. Of the English trade with Scandinavia there are traces in Anglo-Saxon evidence; the connections were not interrupted in the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries, and were still active in the fourteenth century. On the great herring mart of Skania – the threshold of the Baltic – they may have been active as early as the late thirteenth century. That they traded there in the sixties and the early seventies of the fourteenth century is shown by the Hanseatic measures directed against them at the time. On the whole, the trade of the English there seems to have been fitful and irregular. Although the continued trading in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, they never acquired a footing as permanent and valuable as that of the principal Hanseatic towns or even as that of the Dutch. But their trade to Prussia, though more recent, seemed to become more and more important according as the production of cloth was providing them with an incentive and an opportunity. Prussia supplied the most important Hanseatic imports – corn, timber, pitch, tar, and ashes; Prussia was the chief distributor of English cloth in Poland and Western Russia. It was, therefore, towards Prussia that the English directed their *Drang nach Osten*. In the second half of the thirteenth and the beginning of the fourteenth centuries we find them occasionally in different Baltic ports, but in the second half of the century they planted themselves in Danzig. By the end of the century they formed a numerous and influential foreign colony, trafficked with Danzigers and foreigners, sold wholesale and retail, owned houses and warehouses, and possessed something in the nature of a corporate organization.⁸

Unfortunately this penetration, rapid and thorough as it was, was certainly ill-timed. The English were entering into the Baltic at the very moment that the direct connections between west and east were beginning to threaten the foundations of Hanseatic prosperity and unity. They tried to establish themselves in the trade of Danzig at that very time when the protection of the local market and regional monopoly was becoming the fundamental principle of

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municipal policy. Their penetration into the Hanseatic system would have produced a considerable conflict in any case, but under the conditions of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries it was bound to result in a bitter and desperate struggle.

The struggle was further complicated and embittered by its connection with the question of Hanseatic privileges in England. Ever since their first appearance in England the merchants of North German towns enjoyed a position of exceptional favor. The merchants of Cologne and Westfalia first, the merchants of the more eastern towns later, were allowed to form in London a corporate body, the Hanse, similar and parallel to the Hanse of Flemish merchants in London. This corporate organization was soon transformed into the permanent communal settlement of the Steelyard.⁹ It held property in the City, and undertook certain communal obligations in a manner which made it a partner in the municipal defense and government. Ancient custom and royal grants invested it with rights of jurisdiction over its members and valuable privileges as to the conduct of their suits with Englishmen. Its members also claimed, and over the greater part of the middle ages possessed, the right to trade with foreigners and sell retail. And then, to crown all, a series of Royal charters, and especially Edward III's *carta mercatoria*, conferred upon the Hanseatic merchants valuable exemption from the system of customs tariffs which the government was at that time building up. Under the provisions of these charters the Hanseatics were exempt from all the subsequent increases in the tariffs, so that by the beginning of the fifteenth century they paid even less than the native merchants on their cloth exported from this country, and were not liable to the payment of the additional subsidy of poundage and tunnage.¹⁰

The privileged position of Hanseatic merchants was bound to provoke an attack from commercial interests at home. Between the attack and the general anti-foreign movement in the English towns, there was an obvious connection. But this connection was often implemented, and sometimes even overshadowed, by issues peculiarly Hanseatic. The towns endeavored to exclude the foreign merchants from direct contact with the consumers and with agricultural producers by limiting the duration of their residence and regulating the scope and the manner of their dealings. These endeavors were directed against all foreigners alike, the Venetians, the Genoese, the Flemings, as well as the Hanseatics, but the Hanseatics provided the best and easiest target. It was only natural to expect that their commercial connections in England, their exceptional fiscal privileges, and their proud position in the city, would draw upon them the greater share of the urban xenophobia. But what gave to the anti-Hanseatic movement a character peculiarly its own was the strength and the inspiration which it drew from the conflict with the Hanse overseas

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and from the rather specialized body of anti-foreign feeling among the English merchants trading to the Baltic.

It is this combination of issues, some arising from competition at home, and others from rivalry overseas, that made the Anglo-Hanseatic clashes more frequent and much stronger than they would otherwise have been. Dangerous as are speculations in the "might-have-beens" of history, one can safely say that the single issue of English trade in Prussia would never have produced a strong movement at home. The merchants habitually trading to Prussia were a limited group of men. They may have carried great weight in some of the ports on the east coast and in the neighboring industrial centers, Lynn, Hull, York, and Norwich, but they were hardly represented in the flourishing midland towns or in the great seaports of the south and west coast. In London their mainstay was the fishmongers, and, powerful as the London fishmongers were, they seldom carried with them the main body of the London patriciate. During the greater part of the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries the city and its government were led by men whose interests were in the distributive trade of London, or in the commerce with Flanders and Brabant.¹¹ At the same time the merchants of the Hanse were considerably more popular with influential opinion in England than the merchants of most other countries. They had friends and defenders among the nobility, the clothworkers, and the lower classes; even the jingo author of *Libelle of Englyshe Polycye* had a few nice things to say about them. Their goods were all essential commodities, not luxuries, and were sold "well cheap". Thus an agitation on the issue of Baltic trade would have provoked the opposition of the consumers' interests, without at the same time enlisting any active support from the bulk of the English merchant class. A situation of this kind apparently did arise once in the fifteenth century, when the Genoese nipped in the bud the English attempt of 1412 to trade in the Mediterranean. On that occasion the government organized reprisals against the Genoese, but in the absence of any strong pressure from organized merchant opinion, the whole conflict degenerated into a mere question of compensations, the anti-Genoese measures were revoked and the English kept away from the Mediterranean for another fifty years.¹² What made the anti-Hanseatic agitation so persistent and so effective was the fact that at one and the same time it represented the grievances of merchants excluded from the trade of Prussian towns, and the appetites of merchants anxious to exclude the Hanseatics from the trade of English towns. A common enemy produced a sense of common interest, and a sense of common interest ranged the mass of the English commercial classes behind the agitation.

This combination of interests found its natural expression in the "programme of reciprocity". By the end of the fourteenth century the English demands finally crystallized into a formula irresistible

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in its logic and simplicity. As an English petition put it, all that the English demanded was that they should be given the same treatment in Prussian and other Hanseatic centres as the Hanseatics enjoyed in England, and that, as long as the Hanseatics refused to concede the English demand, their privileges in England should be revoked.¹³ This demand of "parity" eventually became the constant theme of English petitions and complaints. The official spokesmen of English merchants used it with great effect whenever they felt a need to be convincing; the Hanseatics found it very hard to parry; it became the battle-cry of the anti-Hanseatic party in Parliament and the Council, and the bugbear of the Prussian die-hards. But it was not in logic alone that the strength of this programme lay. Essentially an "omnibus" programme, it imposed a tactical unity upon fundamental differences of aim. The merchants trading to Prussia were not prepared to accept a rebuff there, even if it resulted in a revocation of Hanseatic privileges in England; nor were the bulk of the London retailers likely to agree to the continuance of the Hanseatic privileges in England, even if they were accompanied by similar privileges for the Englishmen in Danzig. But as long as the claims of the former and the grievances of the latter were still unsatisfied, the demand for reciprocity provided a convenient formula for a temporary unity of front.

This unity of front added to the strength of the English attack in the same measure in which want of unity in the Hanseatic ranks weakened the effect of their opposition. On no other point of Hanseatic policy did the variance between the component parts of the Hanse manifest itself more fully than in the conflict with the English. The merchants of the Western ring, i.e. the towns of Westfalia, the Zuider Zee towns, and above all Cologne, were very active in the English export trade. The distribution of English cloth became in the fifteenth century one of the principle branches of Cologne's commerce; the Cologne *Englandfahrer* formed a very influential body of merchants in their city as well as the most numerous section in the London Steelyard. At the same time they were not concerned with the dangers of the English competition in Prussia, and not over anxious to lose their privileges in England for the sake of Lübeck's or Danzig's safety. As a result the leaders of the Hanseatic policy had always to reckon with possible separate action on the part of the western towns. In the second half of the century, at a most critical period in the Anglo-Hanseatic relations, Cologne formally repudiated the official policy of the Hanse, and very nearly destroyed the whole Hanseatic system in the west. The attitude of the western wing had its counterpart in the independent attitudes of Prussia and Danzig. In its policy towards England Danzig was torn between two mutually exclusive objects. It wanted to keep the English out of the local market, and at the same time it was

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anxious to maintain the highly important commercial connections with England. Thus while Danzig's local monopoly provoked conflicts with England, Danzig's interest in the English trade prevented it from decisive action. On more than one occasion it shirked violent measures advocated by Lübeck, and on more than one occasion it was the first to break a Hanseatic blockade of England and seek separate ways out of a struggle which it had itself begun. The Prussian attitude was further complicated by the independent policy of the Prussian Order. For although the Order was formally a member and a protector of the Hanse, it often embarked on separate policies towards the other powers of Northern Europe.

In these circumstances it is no wonder that out of the several clashes in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries the English merchants emerged undefeated. Every time the Hanseatic charters came up for confirmation the whole question of Hanseatic privileges in England and of the position of the English in the Baltic was raised, and every time it was raised the pressure of mercantile interests was sufficiently strong to force the programme of reciprocity upon the Council and the Parliament. The Hanse, divided against itself, could not offer an effective opposition. More than once the English negotiators very nearly managed to detach both Prussia and Cologne from the League, and not until 1468 was the Hanse able to organize a war or a successful blockade against England. To an informed observer in the late thirties of the fifteenth century the English position would have appeared full of promise; they seemed bound to win.

As we know now they did not win. Before the third quarter of the century was over the English merchants had been definitely shut out of the Baltic, and it was left to the Dutch to fight out the problems of Hanseatic monopoly on the northern seas. The English settlements in Prussia and Scandinavia had either disappeared or ceased to play an important part in the direction and organization of English trade. The Hanseatic returned to London in full possession of their ancient privileges, and extended their share of the English cloth exports far beyond the point it had reached in the first half of the century. It was much later, in the sixteenth century, that the English penetration of the Baltic was resumed, and it was not until then that the attack against the Hanseatics in London produced the first important curtailment of their privileges.

The causes of this defeat were too many and too various to be summarized in a single phrase. They formed a chain of unforeseen occurrences of the kind that make up the story of history and upset all the schemes of cause and effect. The only generalization which the facts permit is the rough statement that the chain of occurrences was of a political and not an economic order, and was due more to the vicissitudes of government than to the action or inaction of

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merchants. It is not that the government was unfriendly to the merchants, ignorant of the situation, or indifferent to the needs of English trade. It never was definitely pro-Hanseatic or anti-merchant. On the contrary, as long as the fifteenth century government functioned as government, and as long as it could define its attitude to the Hanse undisturbed by other political considerations, it adopted an economic policy favorable to the interests and opinions of the merchant classes. The iconoclastic researches of Professor Unwin have cast a doubt over the whole question of the economic policy of the English crown in the later Middle Ages. Economic historians, he thinks, antedated the birth of the mercantilist and protectionist policy. Cunningham was too simple in asserting that a medieval king like Edward III was capable of a consistent course of economic action towards objects definitely national and nationalistic. Such a king lived from hand to mouth; most of his economic measures were produced in response to the exigencies of the moment; they had purely fiscal ends in view, were always personal or dynastic in motive and were unrelated to any underlying economic principle.¹⁴ These views of Edward's policy are now generally accepted, and it is not the object of this essay to revise them. But at the same time they must not be allowed – and Unwin himself does not allow them – to decide our estimate of the economic policies of the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In the first place, we know very little, much less than historians often assume, about the medieval conceptions of state and nationality; and until we know more all the discussions of economic nationalism are bound to be somewhat unsubstantial. Then, secondly, we must guard ourselves against too rigid a test of what constitutes an economic policy. "Continuous unity of purpose" is not the only test, and the motives, however hypocritical, which a government professes, must not be excluded from the discussion of its policy. Throughout the greater part of history, even in our own times, and even in *anno domini* 1932, the legislative and the administrative record of a government is often a joint product of wish and necessity, of conscious policies and of the exigencies of the moment. And inconsistencies in the record of a government are as much a measure of its want of policy as they are of the strength of the needs of the moment.

A conflict of this nature between the economic *desiderata* of the fifteenth century governments and their actual record provides the key to the Hanseatic riddle. Their *desiderata* fully reflected the nationalist bias of the times. No student of the period can fail to observe its insistent and conscious Englishry. The demarcation of things English and foreign was grounded well enough to be taken for granted in the popular parlance, literature, and political utterances of the time. And the nationalism of the age was bound to reflect upon the prevalent notions of state policy in general, and economic policy in particular. The *Libelle of Englyshe Polycye* was saturated with

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it, but the *Libelle* did not stand alone. We find its sentiments echoed in diplomatic and commercial correspondence, in parliamentary petitions, and let us add, in the preambles of acts of Parliament. Sarcastic as historians are apt to be about the motives alleged in such preambles, it must not be forgotten that the object of a preamble was to justify the act by relating it to those moral and political principles which could command a general acceptance; the more hypocritical they were the more conclusive they are as evidence of the spirit of the times. The author of the memorandum on the war aims of 1449 was abreast and not ahead of his time when, among the principal objects of the war in France, he included the destruction of Breton and Norman shipping, "in order that the English merchants may have the shipping of the seas." So also was the anonymous author of the rhymed memorandum on English commercial policy with his insistence on the wealth of England and his motto: *Anglia, propter tuas naves et lanas omnia regna te salutare deberent*. These sentiments were unquestioningly accepted by the draftsmen of Richard's navigation acts, the Lancastrian bills in restriction of imports from Flanders, and the bullionist acts of the fourteenth and the fifteenth century. A student of the century could find many more instances of similar mentality and phraseology, all revealing the strength of the precocious "mercantilism" of the later Middle Ages.¹⁵

This being the tempter of the age, it was easy for government to respond to the pressure of the anti-Hanseatic interests, and to understand their motives and language. Naturally enough the different elements of the fifteenth century government could not be expected to be more united on the Hanseatic question than they were on other diplomatic and political problems of the day. But the difference of the emphasis and tactics often concealed a common attitude which was almost identical with that of the merchant community. The House of Commons was constantly prepared to voice the point of view of the urban middle classes, and its middle class bias was repeatedly exploited in the commercial interests of the merchants. The City of London had evolved in the fifteenth century an efficient machinery for propaganda in Parliament; the provincial towns sometimes elected special commissions to "make suit in Parliament against the Hanseatic privileges". Their combined pressure seldom failed to carry the Commons, and the Hanseatics justly regarded Parliament as their chief adversary, and never expected from it any favor or concession.¹⁶

This attitude of the Commons was reinforced by the activities of the civil servants in charge of Hanseatic policy. There is no other subject in the constitutional and administrative history of the fifteenth century more obscure and at the same time more important for the understanding of foreign and economic policies than the functions, power, and personnel of the chief clerical offices in the government.

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In the limited field of Hanseatic policy the influence of the clerks of the council responsible for the official correspondence and negotiations was much greater than a superficial view of events would suggest. Men like Russell, Hatcliff, and above all, Thomas Kent, represented definite policies towards the Hanse, and those policies were, during the greater part of the fifteenth century, fashioned on definitely nationalistic lines. Thomas Kent was apparently the moving spirit behind the negotiations with the Hanse in the middle decades of the century; his memoranda and speeches contained the clearest exposition of the programme of parity and reciprocity, and it is not surprising that the Hanseatics regarded him as their arch-enemy in England.¹⁷

Less obvious and certainly less definite was the policy of the lords and of the King's Council. The "lords and prelates" sometimes shielded the merchants of the Hanse from the enmity and vindictiveness of the Commons, and were often referred to in the correspondence of the Hanse as its only friends in England. It will also be shown further that in the end the triumph of personal and mercenary interests in the Council, and the conflicting claims of the foreign and military policies which it tried to pursue, prepared the way for the Hanseatic victory. Yet as long as the Council was capable of comprehending and obeying the *raison d'état*, the underlying assumptions of its policy towards the Hanse were little different from those of the merchant classes. The German historians of the Hanse have tried to explain the vacillations of the Council by the influence of the "consumers' interests". The nobility of England were producers of wool and consumers of imported goods and their representatives on the Council were led by the interests of their class to oppose the monopolistic attempts of the English merchants to exclude foreigners from immediate contact with the English consumers and agricultural producers. Yet the importance of these consumers' interests can easily be exaggerated. Lancastrian and the Yorkist councils contained members with interests and investments in trade and shipping: men like Lord Hastings, Lord Roos, Lord Buckingham, the Bastard of Fauconberg, Lord Say, the Duke of Suffolk, and Cardinal Beaufort.¹⁸ But to assume that the policy of the Council was dictated by the interests of the noble "merchants" would be as crude a simplification of the facts as to assume that it was dictated by the interests of the noble "consumers". The Gloucester party, and presumably the Yorkist party in its early years, courted the favors of the merchants and defended their point of view; while Cardinal Beaufort, in spite of his commercial activities, resisted the anti-Hanseatic irreconcilables in Parliament and Council. In time of war was the Council as a whole was more anxious to placate the Hanse than in time of peace, while during the anarchy immediately preceding the Civil War the lords of the Council were anti-Hanseatic for the mere reason that the Hanseatic sheep were fat, and the baronial wolves were hungry. The attitude

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of the Council constantly fluctuated, and the fluctuations were due to a variety of causes: the struggle of baronial parties, the relations with Parliament, the military and the diplomatic situation. But on those occasions when the personal and party interests of the magnates were not involved, and the military and political situation was favorable, it was the considerations of English trade and the interests of English merchants that determined the policy of the King and his Council. These occasions were quite frequent in the first forty and in the last twenty years of the century. Whenever they occurred the Hanseatics were as bitter about the opposition of the Council as they were about that of the Commons.¹⁹ But they were not frequent enough to provide the English merchants with the constant and uninterrupted political and military backing which their programme of monopoly and penetration demanded. Over and over again in the course of the century, considerations of war on the continent led the Council into a conflict with the objects of its Hanseatic policy. The objects were completely neglected in the middle decades of the century, when the violent outbreak of part struggles overshadowed all other issues, Hanseatic and non-Hanseatic alike. And during that interval a foundation was laid for the Hanseatic triumph of the seventies.²⁰

It is in this sense that the "vicissitudes of government" are to be considered responsible for the failure of the English offensive. It is not that the government did not possess or was incapable of conceiving of an economic policy, or that the policy was inconsistent with the programme of the merchants. What happened was that a policy, nationalist in origin and objects, was partly neutralized by a political and military situation on the continent, and partly destroyed through the destruction of all policy and all government in the War of the Roses. In this light the story of Anglo-Hanseatic relations becomes one of a frustrated development, of an economic process defeated by a play of political accidents. To this story we shall now pass.

§ 2

THE THREE SUCCESSES (1400 TO 1437)

The year 1400 found Anglo-Hanseatic relations broken and confused by a conflict several years old. This troubled opening of the century was something of a forecast, but it was also something of an epitome, for it was in the preceding twenty-five years that the issues of 1400 had matured, and the main groupings of interests formed. The first signs of an organized agitation against the Hanse appear

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in 1375, when the English merchants addressed a petition to the King complaining against unfair treatment at the hands of the Hanse. The petition was probably provoked by the arrival of the Hanseatic delegation in 1375, and its attempts to obtain for the Hanse an exemption from the subsidy of tunnage and poundage. Nevertheless the grievances of the English east-going merchants were real enough. In the seventies of the fourteenth century English cloth had penetrated far into the heart of the Hanseatic *Verkehrsgebiet*, and at the same time the economic policy of the Hanseatic, and especially Prussian, towns had become definitely protectionist and anti-foreign. When in the years 1377-8 the accession of Richard II provided the English merchants with another opportunity for an anti-Hanseatic agitation, they could point to a whole series of "injustices" inflicted upon them in Danzig, Skania, and Norway.²¹ Their grievances were now substantial enough to force the problem of English trade in the east to the forefront of the negotiations, and for the first time in English history the commercial monopoly at home and the English penetration abroad were exhibited as complementary parts of one and the same programme. Both were incorporated in the "four points" of the English demands. According to these demands the Hanseatics were, first, to admit the English to trade in Hanseatic regions (including "Revele, Pernowe et Cyflandia") as freely as the Hanseatics traded in England under the royal charters of privileges, secondly, to give them similar rights in Skania, thirdly, to relieve them of collective responsibility, and finally, to specify the names of the towns composing the Hanse. Those four points contained the first clear statement of that programme of reciprocity which was to dominate the Anglo-Hanseatic policies in the subsequent hundred years.²²

It is the emergence of this programme that gives importance to the negotiations. Their immediate and practical outcome was a minor victory for the English point of view. The sponsors of the anti-Hanseatic petition, led by the merchants of London, exploited well the pro-London and anti-foreign turn of national policy at the beginning of the reign. The new government, however unlikely to revoke for good and all the privileges of the Hanse, behaved as if it indeed understood and supported the principle of reciprocity. It made the continuation of the Hanseatic privileges contingent on similar privileges to the English in Hanseatic town, and in the meantime suspended the Hanseatic charters. And although a year later a Hanseatic delegation to England managed to obtain letters of protection for a year, the Government continued to insist on its condition. It was only in 1380, after the Hanseatics had formally recognized the right of Englishmen to trade in its territories, that Richard's government gave way and confirmed the charter.²³

This outcome was not sufficiently decisive to establish anything

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in the nature of a durable arrangement. It merely defined the issues instead of settling them, and, with the issues clarified, a serious clash was bound to occur sooner or later. The restoration of Hanseatic privilege in 1380 did not put an end to the agitation in England or to the friction abroad. Prussia persevered in her animosity to the English, and used the pretext of England piracies to put off her acceptance of the treaty. The English on their part continued their agitation against Hanseatic trade in England. In the absence of a definite arrangement as to the principles of Anglo-Hanseatic trade, the English authorities, both national and municipal, interpreted the provisions of the charter in a way which did away with many of the fiscal liberties of the Hanse. The Hanseatic merchants were made to pay the subsidies of tannage and poundage, additional customs on cloth, and even the subsidies of the fifteenth and the tenth – all payments from which they would have been exempt if their privileges under the charter had been faithfully and loyally observed.²⁴

An additional cause for mutual recriminations was provided by the activities of pirates. Piracy on the high seas in the middle ages was as constant and as inevitable a feature of the shipper's routine as inclement weather, or bribes at the ports. But at times of international friction, with its opportunities for reprisals and counter-reprisals, its accumulating ill-feeling, and its unemployment among shippers, piracy could easily assume the dimensions and do the harm of a naval war. Piratical activity of this kind went on in the seventies, and culminated in 1385 in the capture of a Hanseatic fleet off Swyn. With this capture the crisis came to a head. A series of reprisals, at first in Prussia and later in other towns of the Hanse, as well as of counter-reprisals in England, completely interrupted the trade between the two countries. In Prussia all import from England and all export of Baltic goods to England were prohibited. The English merchants moved out of Danzig to Stralsund, and the English government prohibited all journeys to the Baltic lands.²⁵

The crisis was now very acute, but its very acuteness made for its healing. The Prussians had for some time felt themselves isolated in their opposition to the English "four points". In 1381 the Wendish towns demanded that the English should be allowed and tolerated in the country. They were not subject to the competition of English traders, and were consequently satisfied with an agreement embodying the English claims to parity. The friction was above all an Anglo-Prussian one, and the Prussians had to rely solely upon their own determination. Unfortunately, even their determination proved unreliable. In this, as in all the subsequent Anglo-Prussian conflicts, the merchants of Danzig found themselves torn between their fear of English competition and their need of English trade. In the end it was their need of English trade that prevailed. So that when the events of 1385 resulted in the virtual cessation of

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intercourse, the Prussian resistance gave out and the main obstacle to an agreement on the lines of the proposals of 1380 disappeared. The agreement of 1388 reaffirmed all the Hanseatic freedom and privilege in England, and at the same time recognized for the English their "old rights" and their freedom to come to the lands of the Hanse and Prussia, to settle there and traffic freely and undisturbed.²⁶

Thus ended the first serious clash. It is its place in the evolution of issues, rather than its effect on the respective positions of England and the Hanse, that gives it importance. The treaty of 1388 produced no immediate and definite change in the position of the English in the Hanseatic regions. They continued to trade in Danzig after 1388 in very much the same manner as they had done before the troubles of the seventies broke out. Altogether the wording of the clause dealing with English "rights" was too vague and too general to stand comparison with the very definite provisions of the Hanseatic charter in England. But vague and shadowy as the English gains were, they marked the conclusion of an epoch and the beginning of a new one. The troubled period of 1375-90 provided the English with an opportunity for formulating the principles on which their subsequent claims were to be based. It also compelled every one of the protagonists – the Hanse as a whole, the Prussian towns, the English government, the English merchants – to define and announce their attitudes. For another sixty years the successive stages of the Anglo-Hanseatic rivalry were all enacted round the same issues, and evoked the same responses. They were all variations on the themes of 1380 and 1388.

It is in the midst of one of these variations that the story of the fifteenth century begins. The nineties of the fourteenth century and the opening years of the fifteenth century witnessed a revival of friction and a second outbreak of the Anglo-Hanseatic conflict. As at the time of the first clash, the friction began simultaneously in London and Prussia. The grant of the subsidy of tannage and poundage in the Parliament of 1381 definitely included the Hanseatic imports and exports, and provoked an immediate outcry from the Steelyard. These difficulties in England had their counterpart in the accumulating difficulties in Danzig. With the settlement in 1388 the English resumed their penetration of Prussia. The English "liggers" (i.e. resident representatives of English firms) took up what seemed to be a permanent residence in Danzig. Some of them brought over their families, acquired houses and shops. They dominated the trade in English cloth, and also took part in some of the local trades. Their commerce and mutual relations were regulated by a corporate organization, which they seem to have possessed in the nineties, presumably with a communal house, periodical assemblies, and elected officials. To this growth of trade the Prussians could hardly remain

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indifferent, and they struck out against it as soon as relations with the English were showing the first signs of strain.²⁷

With this feeling in the air, it is no wonder that the centre of friction, which was in the first place the English fiscal measures, was soon transferred to Prussia. Regarded from the point of view of the Hanse as a whole, the events in England did not justify anything in the nature of violent retaliation, especially as Henry IV confirmed the Hanseatic privileges within a few months of his accession. The Hanse as a whole seemed consequently unwilling to quarrel with England. The only group clamoring for retaliation was the one which would have welcomed any opportunity for a quarrel, the Prussians, and the measure of retaliation upon which they decided was the one which they would have taken in any case: the curtailment of English trade in Danzig. In February, 1398, Prussia officially terminated the treaty with England; in 1396, the diet of Prussian towns had decided to restrict the English rights of residence, and in 1402, when the conflict passed into an acute stage, the rules against the English settling with "wife and children" and trading with foreigners, or in the interior of Prussia, were singled out for immediate enforcement.²⁸ The Prussian towns also tried for years to organize a boycott of English cloth. At first these attempts failed through the indifference of the other parts of the Hanse, but in the end the other towns were won over. It was English piracies that decided the attitude of the non-Prussian towns. The prevailing tension provided a good incentive for mutual attacks on the high seas, and the English did not confine their exploits to Prussian shipping alone. By 1405 the successive acts of piracy had raised the whole of the Hanse against the English; and in March, 1405, the Hanseatic diet at Lübeck prohibited both the trade of English cloth and the export of Baltic goods to England.²⁹

It looked as if the conflict might pass into a formal war; and if a war at this point did not break out, it was entirely due to the fact that the hostilities on the high seas had carried the dispute much farther than the real interests of both Prussia and England permitted. Whatever their respective interest had been at the time of the first skirmishes in the late nineties, they were far from warlike in 1405. The embargo on English trade was not sufficiently complete to have any immediate political effect in England, but it was sufficiently complete to produce economic difficulties in Prussia. The other parts of the Hanse evaded the prohibition of trade; and even some of the Danzig men imported English cloth from Holland and Skania and shipped Baltic goods west. Now, as in 1388 and again several times later, the whole purpose of Danzig's measures was defeated by the inner contradictions of its economic interests, and the determined policy of its anti-English majority was checked by the separate interest of the merchants trading to England. Within

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a few months of the Lübeck decision, the Prussian towns themselves began to consider the possibility of revising it. At a diet in Falsterbo they proposed the raising of the embargo, and threw the trade open at the first opportunity. It was in vain that the Hanseatic factory in Bruges exhorted the Hanse to hold out "because the Hanse can do without the English cloth much better than the English can do without Hanseatic goods". For judging by the frequency of evasions it was Prussia, and not England, that found the cessation of trade in 1405 difficult to bear. As a Prussian ambassador to England had himself to acknowledge some time later, the Prussians "der Engelschen nicht entbehren mögen".³⁰

Important changes had also occurred in the English position. England was in conflict with Burgundy, and John, Duke of Burgundy, had been trying to draw the Hanse into an anti-English alliance. An alliance of this kind, apart from its political and military danger, also threatened to close to England that channel of Flemish and Dutch trade, which was then the only alternative in Western Europe to the troubled Hanseatic routes.³¹ In the circumstances there is no wonder that the English Government appeared more anxious than before to proceed with the negotiations which had been lazily dragging on since the beginning of the century. In 1405, an English delegation arrived in Prussia, and in October of the same year a draft treaty was ready for confirmation. Before the confirmation could take place – and the English were still somewhat dilatory – a new complication was created by an English capture of five Hanseatic boats on their way to Spain.³² But Prussia was now too anxious for peace to be put off by a piratical attack. The negotiations for the renewal of trade continued much to England's advantage; the English negotiators succeeded in reducing the Hanseatic demands for damages to a relatively small sum, and they even managed to create a serious cleavage in the Hanseatic ranks. Lübeck and the Wendish towns, when drawn into the conflict, had none of Danzig's economic motives for anti-English action; now that the problem of peace was under discussion they had none of Danzig's economic motives for hurry and impatience. The consideration which in the first place decided their attitude to the English was the English piracies, and they consequently saw no reason now for concluding peace without adequate compensation for their losses at the hands of the pirates. Moreover, the Hanseatic factory in Bruges, with its interests in the Flemish cloth trade, was more perturbed by the prospects of peace than by the possible losses and dangers of war. It advised the Hanseatic towns to hold out against the English, and to force them to submission by tightening up the blockade.³³

It was in spite of this advice, and in the face of the opposition of the Wendish and Saxon towns, that Prussia in the end concluded peace with England. And it was against the settled policy of Danzig

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that the treat, which was finally concluded between Prussia and England, embodied a general recognition of the principle of "reciprocity".³⁴ The English were confirmed in their right to come to Prussia, and there to *conversari, libre more mercatorio tam cum Prutensis quam aliis, cuiuscumque nacionis vel ritus fuerint, mercari, ibidemque morari ad lares et domicilia propria redire.*

Thus ended the second important clash, the first in the fifteenth century. It occurred over the same issues and brought out the same alignment of interests as the preceding clash of the fourteenth century. Like the preceding clash, it ended in favor of the English, and the years immediately following the conclusion of the treaty. A series of democratic revolutions in the Wendish towns in 1408 and 1410 disabled for a time the central section of the Hanse, and deprived the league as a whole of any effective leadership. At about the same time the Teutonic Order was overwhelmed by a disastrous war with Poland, and after the defeat of Tannenberg (1410) was not in the mood or in the position to enforce the execution of England's obligations to Prussia. The English government made use of the opportunity to withhold the further installments of the sum due to the Hanse under the treaty; delegation after delegation failed to extract full payment from England, and most of the sum was still unpaid in the thirties. In Prussia itself the High Master of the time, Henry of Plauen, who was no friend of Danzig's, helped the English to protect and consolidate the positions they had won in 1408. Thus favored, the English developed their trade in Danzig to a remarkable extent. The English custom accounts record large and regular shipments to and from Prussia. In Danzig the English residents were taking a firm root.³⁵

Yet, advantageous as the issue of this second clash was, the settlement was by no means permanent or secure. After a few years, events in England and Prussia began to move again towards another impasse, and the subsequent conflict was not to be settled till 1437. The treaty of 1408 itself contained the roots of the revived strife. From the English point of view it was at least as good as that of 1388, but not as good as the one for which they had clamored. The general formula of reciprocity could not confer privileges as tangible and as valuable as those which the Hanseatics enjoyed under their charter in England. As long as full parity and reciprocity remained unrealized, the English programme could not satisfy English merchants in Prussia nor arrest agitation of English merchants in England. It was not enough that they could come to Danzig, settle there, and trade wholesale and retail with Danzigers and foreigners. They also wanted to be admitted to the Livonian and West Russian markets, and to be given fiscal exemptions equivalent to those which the Hanseatics claimed in England; above all, they wanted an official

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permission to form a corporate body with a communal seat, a "Hanse" of their own. We have already seen them insisting upon their "right to a society" after the treaty of 1388, and the very fact that the treaty of 1408 contained no provision for a "society" made the English demand for one even more insistent than before. In some of their later petitions the English merchants justified their insistence by considerations of practical, and largely social, convenience. The society was wanted, they argued, in order to keep their members out of taverns and the company of loose women. But the real value of a "society" lay elsewhere. The existence of a corporate body involved the right of jurisdiction over its members, and the power to enforce its own rules and regulations, or, in other words, the opportunity for escaping the jurisdiction of Danzig's courts and the rules and regulations of Danzig's municipality. A common "house" combined with English-owned lodgings and shops meant a virtual exemption from that oversight and control, which Danzig, like most mediaeval municipalities, exercised over its foreign residents through the machinery of licensed hosts and hostleries. The "society" was meant to be the English counterpart of the German Steelyard in London, an institutional embodiment of the guarantee of the exceptional position of the English in Danzig. Without the "society" the parity provided by the treaty was incomplete and unreal.³⁶

The treaty was equally unsatisfactory to the Danzigers. The formula of the English "rights" was too vague to give complete satisfaction to the English, but it was sufficiently vague to alarm the Prussians. They were afraid that it might, after all, be construed into a body of privileges as extensive as those of the Steelyard in London. But what they feared most was the attempt to read into the treaty the "right to a society". They feared it for the same reasons for which the English wanted it. In some of their memoranda to the English Government they tried to justify their opposition by the assertion that the English had used their communal house as a "prison". On other occasions they alleged political motives. The English, they feared, were congenial Empire-builders; if allowed to settle and trade in Danzig, they would soon annex the country of Prussia, as they had annexed Bordeaux and Gascony.³⁷ But behind all these official motives, however genuine, there was the determination to prevent the English from developing their trade outside the control and jurisdiction of the town, and thus making the *Gastrecht* impossible to enforce.

With both the English and the Prussians in this mood, the struggle was bound to break out anew, and in the thirties all the issues were again in the melting-pot. As on the previous two occasions the crisis followed after a long period of steadily accumulating friction; and friction began to accumulate before the ink was dry on the treaty. Some of that friction was undoubtedly due to the English refusal to

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honour the financial obligations of the treaty. Much ill-feeling was created by piracy and mutual commercial reprisals. Attacks on the high seas were more or less inevitable in the international commerce of the time, but the period between 1417 and 1430 received more than its rightful share of naval perturbations. Most of these were due to the war between Denmark and the Hanse in 1427, in the course of which the Hanse was compelled to close the Sund, and the English suffered equally from King Eric's agents and from Hanseatic privateers.³⁸ But it was the revived dispute over the English position in Prussia and the Hanseatic position in England, that provided the main source of conflict.

The dispute revived first of all in Prussia. The Danzigers, who had never accepted the English interpretation of the treaty, tried to assert their point of view as early as 1410, when, according to an English complaint, the burgomaster proclaimed that the English should no longer traffic with foreigners, and sell their goods retail or possess a corporate organization. Fortunately for the English, Henry of Plauen was then the High Master of the Order, and through his intervention the English merchants obtained the revocation of the measure. But within a year of his intervention Henry of Plauen was deposed by a revolution, and his successors were not inclined to fight Danzig on behalf of the English. For another three years the position of the English apparently remained unchanged, and then, in 1414, the municipality of Danzig again re-enacted the order as to English trade, which the High Master had overridden in 1410.³⁹ But even this action had little immediate effect upon the trade and economic position of the English merchants, for the English trade to Danzig continued to flourish all through the second decade of the century. It is in 1418, after the failure of the Hanseatic appeal to the Emperor, that we observe the first signs of the English counter-agitation. In that year we find Henry V addressing to the High Master a complaint against the maltreatment of the English merchants in Danzig, reminding him of the maxim that "the English should be treated in the Hanse even as the Hanseatics are treated in England". This reminder was accompanied by an anti-Hanseatic offensive in London. In January, 1418, the merchants of the Steelyard complained before the Mayor's Court of the exactions of certain local dues, from which they considered themselves exempt under the terms of their charter. On this occasion the Mayor's Court decided for the Hanseatics, but two years later the sheriffs of London proclaimed their determination to collect the dues from the merchants of the Hanse and the King's Council overruled the verdict of the Mayor's Court. London's official attitude was underlined by the refusal of the Mayor and Corporation in 1419 to appoint an English alderman to the Steelyard: a refusal which went against an explicit provision in

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the Hanseatic charter and an established practice of the City. If we are to believe a later petition of the Steelyard of 1423, the fiscal "oppression" of the preceding few years had been prompted by the English merchants and above all by the merchants of London. Their agitation redoubled its vigour on the death of Henry V in 1422. With the accession of a new king the Hanseatic charter came up again for confirmation, and the whole machinery of organized pressure was now brought into play to prevent the renewal of the "privileges". The records of Lynn have preserved an illuminating account of a meeting of merchants, at which an impost was levied for the costs of the anti-Hanseatic campaign in Parliament; and the merchants of Lynn were no doubt well supported by merchants of other towns. A formal case against the Hanse was provided in the petition of merchants trading to Prussia, enumerating all their grievances against Prussia and Danzig. Within a few weeks of the petition, and while the question of the charter was still under consideration, the Government granted the Hanseatic merchants protection for a year. But during the same year a decision of the Council made the Hanseatics liable to the subsidy of tannage and poundage, and the Steelyard had a grievous tale of "oppression", actual and threatened, to report to the Hanseatic towns.⁴⁰

In the Hanseatic towns the events in England produced an immediate, though not a very violent, repercussion. The Danzig municipality continued that policy of curtailment of English right which it had begun in 1414. It tried to prevent the permanent settlement of the English in the town, to stop their retail trade, and their intercourse with "foreigners". It was in vain that the English merchants complained at what they considered a breach of their rights and pressed their demands for an organization in a series of petitions and deputations to the High Master of the Order, for both their complaints and their demands remained unsatisfied. But at the same time the Order and the municipality of Danzig carefully avoided the violent courses advocated by others. When in 1423 the Hanseatic diet at Lübeck recommended that the English merchants resident in the Hanseatic towns should be imprisoned, and their goods confiscated, as reprisals and protest against the recent events in England, the Order and the Prussian towns refused to carry out the decision, and the English trade to Prussia continued uninterrupted.⁴¹

This moderation was temporarily successful, for neither party was at the time prepared to court the danger of a formal rupture. The English trade had been badly hit by the Dano-Wendish war and the closing of the Sund, and was threatened by the renewal of Flemish measures against the English cloth in 1428. Prussians, in their turn, were not over-anxious to bring about a complete cessation of their English trade. It is therefore no wonder that the counsel

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of moderation for a time prevailed on both sides, and during the four years between 1426 and 1430 the brewing trouble was somewhat allayed by a number of conciliatory measures. In February, 1426, the government, in response to a Hanseatic petition, appointed an English alderman to the Steelyard, thus overriding the decision taken by the City of London seven years before. For a few months the City tried to resist, but a repeated royal order in January, 1427, broke its opposition. Direct negotiations between the Steelyard and the City led to a general compromise, by virtue of which the City sanctioned the appointment of the English alderman. The same compromise also settled the outstanding question of municipal dues, and the merchants of the Hanse were exempt from the payment of most of the local imposts. As their part of the compromise, the merchants of the Steelyard undertook to intercede with the High Master and the town of Danzig on behalf of the English merchants there. When, a year later, the English merchants in Danzig tried again to draw attention to their unsatisfactory position in Prussia, the Steelyard addressed a carefully worded request to Danzig to respect the old customs of the English in Danzig for the sake of the position of the Hanse in England. Whether as a result of this intercession or for other reasons, the Order and the towns seemed for a time to modify their attitude to the English demands. In its reply to the Steelyard, Danzig expatiated on the exceptional favours which the English, in spite of their complaints, continued to enjoy there. At the same time, the Englishmen in Danzig obtained their first important concession on the question of corporate organization. In December, 1428, the High Master, while still refusing to recognize the formal claim of the English to exceptional treatment, conceded to them the right to have an elected governor to lead and rule over their members. In 1429 a Prussian delegation visited England to exact the payment of further instalments under the treaty of 1409 and to settle the outstanding differences. In its financial mission the delegation fared no better than the previous delegations, but it apparently obtained from the Government a confirmation of the Hanseatic freedom from all taxation not specified in the charter and the trade showed signs of revival after the ominous slump of the year before.⁴²

Unfortunately, this spirit of moderation could not, and did not, endure for very long. The mutual concessions of the years 1426 to 1430 did a great deal to relieve the growing tension, but they left the important issues unresolved, and therefore could not prevent another change for the worse. The English in Danzig, in spite of the High Master's concession in 1428, continued to clamour for full parity and to protest against recent taxation. The English merchants in London and other town, in spite of the compromise with the Steelyard in 1427, were preparing to renew their agitation against Hanseatic privileges. The slightest pretext was likely to lead to an outbreak,

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and the pretext was found in the ever unsettled problem of Hanseatic liability to tunnage and poundage. When in 1431 the subsidy of tunnage and poundage was granted to Henry VI for two years, the merchants of the Steelyard were made to put up sureties for the payment of an additional "increment" of 6*d.* for each pound worth of goods and 3*s.* for a tun of sweet wine, imposed upon foreigners. As might be expected, the imposition raised a storm in the Hanseatic towns, and the threat of reprisals in Prussia forced the English Government to suspend the collection of the additional "increment", pending the decision of Parliament and Council. But by that time the damage had already been done, the agitation on both sides had been resumed, and was not to be stopped. The Prussians began to behave as if the day of reckoning had come at last. They forced the English merchants in Prussia to produce sureties to the sum of 1,200 nobles, to be forfeited if the "increment" were exacted in England. For his own part, the High Master resuscitated all his ancient financial claims, satisfied some of them by seizing English goods, and threatened to settle the others in a similar fashion. For a time, the position of the English became so difficult that it seemed as if they would have to leave the country altogether. Their deputation to the High Master did not help much, nor did the somewhat half-hearted intercession of the Steelyard. If anything the anti-English movement grew. In June, 1434, a Hanseatic diet in Lübeck elaborated a plan of action against the English; a delegation from the diet to the High Master extracted from him a promise to expel them from Prussia; and in fulfillment of his promise, he sent a letter to Henry VI, which was worded as a complaint, but conceived as an ultimatum. The extension of the campaign was probably due to simultaneous events in England. In spite of the fact that in December, 1433, the government extended the protection to the Hanseatics for another year, the goods of Wendish towns seem to have been arrested. This, and the new regulations as to the manner of valuation of goods for customs purposes, threatened to stop the entire flow of Hanseatic trade to England.⁴³ The breach was now as wide as it had ever been before; correspondence and mutual recriminations obviously could not heal it; and if a commercial war or, what was practically the same, ruinous reprisals on the high seas, were to be averted, the whole problem of Anglo-Hanseatic relations had to be resubmitted, as in 1388 and 1408, to a complete revision by a fully authorize peace conference.

It is doubtful whether a conference of this nature was intended when the Hanse sent out its great delegation of 1434-6. But the seriousness of the situation, the comprehensive scope of Hanseatic claims and grievances, and the English instance on matters of justice and right, were bound to focus the negotiations on fundamental principles. The head of the delegation, Henrich Vorrath, the

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Burgomaster of Danzig and probably the greatest statesman among contemporary leaders of the Hanse, soon realized the position, and was prepared to go considerably beyond his limited terms of references. In the end the negotiations, however small their practical consequences proved to be, struck a balance of the events of the preceding twenty-five years, and would up the third successive clash in the history of Anglo-Hanseatic relations.

Yet the debut of the delegation in England was far from auspicious. The Hanseatic memorandum contained an enormous claim for compensation, and the English were as yet in no haste to consider it. Moreover, the international situation on the eve of the conference of Arras was still too uncertain, and the English attitude to the Hanse could not be defined while war and peace hung in the balance in Flanders and Northern France. The Hanseatic address elicited from the government "vele soter wort na older Engelschen gewonheit", but beyond "sweet words" nothing of importance was done or said and the negotiations were adjourned, to be resumed in Flanders in the following spring. But even in the following spring the negotiations did not produce any material results. The peace conference with France and Burgundy was yet to take place, and the English delegates were probably relieved to find that the instructions of the Hanseatic delegates prevented them from the discussion of those subjects in which the English were most concerned, and in the first place the situation in Danzig. The negotiations were postponed again, and the delegation had to try and accelerate matters by pressure. In order to force England to immediate negotiations, and to safeguard the Steelyard from possible reprisals, the delegation ordered a formal cessation of trade with England. It commanded the Hanseatic merchants to leave England, warned them to avoid English waters, and urged the towns to expel the English merchants. In the meantime the Hanseatic towns were preparing materials, lists of grievances, and instructions to ambassadors for the coming negotiations.⁴⁴

As these grievances and instructions show, the expectation of Prussian towns had run very high. Their representatives were to demand payment of all the old debts and damages for the attacks of pirates and breaches of privileges; they were to insist on the full and unequivocal restoration of the charter, and at the same time to refuse to concede to the English any definite privileges in Prussia. But even before the negotiations were due to begin the political and economic situation made the Prussian programme impossible to carry out. The political situation after the conference of Arras, with its formal breach with Burgundy, made the English anxious to restore economic relations with the Hanse, and weakened their position in the negotiations. But it also weakened the position of the Hanse and Prussia, for their relations with Flanders were

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almost as uncertain as their relations with England. When the news of the possible outbreak of war between England and Flanders reached Danzig, a letter went to Vorrath urging him to arrange a truce with England as soon as possible, and at any rate before the hostilities with Flanders began, so that at least one avenue of trade with England should remain open. Even more unfavorable was the economic position. The very measures Vorrath had taken and recommended in the spring rebounded against the Hanse. The embargo on English trade, like similar embargoes in the past, was impossible to enforce, and merely revealed the economic disunion of the Hanse and its dependence on English trade. As on previous occasions it provided an opening for neutrals and intermediaries, and above all for the Dutch. But there were men and towns within the Hanse itself only too willing to break the injunction. The Cologners treated the whole dispute as no concern of theirs, continued their trade with England, and, to make their position more secure, contemplated separate negotiations with the English government. The Zuider Zee towns, and especially Campen, whose allegiance to the Hanse had always been loose and somewhat wayward, acted now in complete independence of the rest of the Hanse. The Bergen factory, in spite of its connections with the Wendish towns, issued permissions of trade to England. In the circumstances it is no wonder that in the winter of 1436 we find the Steelyard still functioning in London, and entries of Hanseatic imports reappearing over and over again in the customs accounts. It is equally no wonder that the Prussians themselves found it impossible to observe the embargo. Prussian goods were carried by land to Flanders in spite of prohibition, and some Prussian goods belonging to merchants of Danzig were shipped directly to England. In April, 1436, the High Master for a certain sum of money (*gegen Entgelt*) allowed a group of English merchants to come to Prussia with "six great ships". In the circumstances, Danzig had to confess its inability to make the prohibition effective. "We must let things go as best they can; we cannot do more than is in our power."⁴⁵

Danzig was now obviously hard pressed. In July, 1436, it furnished its delegates with another set of instructions much more moderate than those of 1435. The tone of the dispatch was now distinctly troubled and anxious; Vorrath must use all the possible means to restore mutual traffic if the men and land of Prussia "are not to lose their livelihood". But moderate as the tone of the Hanseatic instructions now was, it was still impossible to carry them out without wrecking the negotiations. They still withheld from Vorrath the power to treat about the English privileges in Danzig, which were the central issue and the stumbling-block of the negotiations. In the conversations of autumn and winter of 1436, Vorrath's position was very difficult, almost tragic. He knew that the negotiations could not succeed as long as he adhered to the Danzig

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instructions, and the failure of the negotiations might mean the break-up of the Hanse. The non-Prussian parts of the Hanse were loth to lose their hard-won privileges in England for the sake of Danzig's monopoly over its local market. Their spokesmen were careful to remind the Prussians that the towns had won the privileges for their merchants two hundred years previously, "while the Prussians were still pagans." Rather than suffer from Danzig's intransigence, the Wendish towns, the leaders of the Hanse, would sooner have concluded a separate peace with England.⁴⁶ It was therefore obvious that if the old privileges and the unit of the Hanseatic policy were to be preserved, Vorrath would have to go beyond Danzig's instructions. After a great deal of hesitation he was forced to break his undertaking to his own town and negotiate about the position of the English trade in Danzig.

The concessions made, Vorrath was able to report progress to the Hanseatic towns, and in the early winter of 1437 the treaty was in sight. The Hanseatics obtained the renewable of the privileges and the confirmation of their freedom from new taxation, including the tannage and poundage. They also obtained from the English a promise to pay the outstanding installments of the debt under the treaty of 1409. But they had to forgo all the financial claims of more recent date, and what was most important of all, had to include in the treaty a general clause defining and safeguarding the English position in the Hanseatic regions more exactly and fully than any similar formulas had done in the past. In addition to the general and conventional reciprocity clause restating the English right to enter Prussia, settle there (*morari*), and trade unrestricted with whomsoever they pleased, it gave the English financial exemptions as exceptional as those the Hanseatic possessed in England, for they were to be free of all taxes imposed in the course of the last hundred years and more.

Even these concessions fell short of the *maximum* of English demands, and might not have been accepted had it not been for the moderation of the lords and the open advocacy of Cardinal Beaufort. The English merchants tried to prevent the ratification of the treaty, or, as Vorrath believed, to postpone it so as to be the first in the field with their cloth fleet.⁴⁷ Yet the treaty was an undoubted English triumph. It again demonstrated the strength of England's position, and it again concluded a period of violent disagreement by reasserting in favor of England those very principles about which England and the Hanse had in the first place disagreed. Vorrath tried to justify himself before the Hanse by insisting that his concessions did not involve a definite grant of privileges to the English. But the Danzigers themselves refused to accept his interpretation and regarded the treaty as a complete capitulation, while the English merchants, as soon as they reappeared in Danzig, spoke and behaved as if a charter of privilege had indeed been granted to them.

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§ 3

THE FAILURE (1437 TO 1475)

The treaty of 1437, though never confirmed by Prussia or recognized by Danzig, attained the furthest limit of Hanseatic concessions to England. For the third time the Prussian resistance to English demands was broken and for the third time the Hanseatic league had to sacrifice the interests and prejudices of the Danzig merchants in order to save its political unity and its trade to England. After half a century of agitation, the English merchants trading to Prussia and the Baltic acquired the substance, if not the form, of the "privileges" which would serve as counterpart of the Hanseatic charter in England. Whether Vorrath actually delivered and sealed a grant of "privileges" apart from and in addition to the treaty can well be doubted. No traces of a grant of this kind have come down to us, and in spite of the repeated challenge from the Hanseatics, the English negotiators in the second half of the century were unable to produce any documentary evidence of the grant. But whether a document of this kind was ever issued or not, both the English and the Prussians were convinced that the treaty of 1437 embodied a concession of "full privileges". On the strength of it the English merchants and official representatives in Prussia claimed full parity with the Hanse. They presented a formal statement to that effect to the High Master and the municipality of Danzig the moment they appeared again in Danzig, and repeated it over and over again in the negotiations which took place in the fifties. In these subsequent negotiations the English claims never went beyond the provisions of the treaty, and from 1437 till the end of our period their demands were all narrowed down to the contention that the treaty of 1437 be confirmed and observed. The treaty obviously gave a full, or at any rate the fullest possible, satisfaction to their fifty years' old claims, and marked the furthest point they had as yet attained in the offensive against the Hanse.⁴⁸

This point was not to be passed or even reached again until the Tudor era. The English success of 1437 was the last success in the fifteenth century, and marked the end of one epoch and the beginning of another. Hitherto every clash had ended to the advantage of the English merchants; with every successive peace treaty they were brought a step nearer to the coveted position of parity. But in the forties a reverse process set in. The same issues, interests, and ambitions continued to dominate the situation, and conflict broke out as frequently and as easily as before. But the results were no longer the same. The successive clashes brought the English merchants no advantage, real or fictitious; most of them were disastrous to English shipping and trade; and after thirty years of

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unrest they terminated in the Hanseatic triumph at the peace conference of Utrecht.

No single fact or group of facts will explain this reversal of fortune, but the student of the fifteenth century will find an easy and an obvious connection between the English position in the Baltic and the general political situation of England during the middle decades of the century. The late thirties saw the beginning of that disastrous period of Henry VI's reign which ended in the loss of Normandy and Aquitaine and the civil war at home. Of this general decline of English fortunes, the defeat of English ambitions in the Baltic was merely a part, and was due to the same set of causes as the other defeats of a mid-century: the disintegration of the Lancastrian government. The very year, 1437, in which the peace with the Hanse was concluded, witnessed the formal end of Henry's minority, and a new turn in English government and policy. The government of Henry VI's minority, however venal and inefficient, had been saved from complete subservience to a clique by the balance of parties on the Council. But Henry's quasi-personal government established the domination of a single baronial party, which was only more reckless and selfish for being shielded by the saintly figure of the King. The ruin of the government now proceeded by rapid and irretrievable steps. The retirement of Beaufort from active politics in 1443 and his death in 1447, led to the brief but disastrous ascendancy of Suffolk. And then the assassination of Suffolk in 1450 delivered the deranged King and the distracted country into the incompetent hands of the Queen and the Beaufort litter.

The new regime was bound to affect the course of Anglo-Hanseatic relations. Its foreign policy, or rather the absence of it, destroyed the advantages of England's economic position. A great deal of England's strength in the first phase of the struggle was due to the fact that her direct commercial connections with the Hanse, however valuable, were not indispensable. There was no need for English cloth to remain unsold and for her imports of continental, or even Baltic, goods to cease, as long as the markets of Flanders, Zealand, and Brabant remained open to English merchants. These markets were kept open in the last quarter of the fourteenth and the first quarter of the fifteenth century by the policy of Burgundian alliance during the first phase of the Hundred Years War. Unfortunately, after the conference of Arras the relations between England and Burgundy were steadily getting worse. England's mismanagement of the war, and the French military successes, forced the shrewd Duke Philip to withdraw from the unprofitable entanglement. But the withdrawal would not have led to a definite breach or to war, had it not been for the faults of the English government: its incapacity to see and accept a reverse, its political inconsistency in relation to

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France, and its bellicosity against the Burgundian "traitors". To these standing causes of friction, there were added difficulties arising from Philip's protective measures against English cloth, with the result that the two countries were constantly at loggerheads and the English trade to the great marts of Flanders, Zealand, and Brabant was repeatedly interrupted.⁴⁹ And whenever these interruptions occurred England had to maintain peace with the Hanse in order to keep at least one channel of North European trade open to the merchants. On these occasions the English government was forced into an attitude of anxious moderation, and was prepared to give in to the Hanse both in the question of privileges in England, and in that of the English position in the Baltic.

But it was the political situation at home that affected most the course of Anglo-Hanseatic rivalry. It is not that the domestic policy of Henry VI's "personal" government was inspired by any new and different principles. Its worst failing was that it ceased to be inspired by any new principles whatsoever. The mercenary interests of the ruling magnates in, and out of, the King's council were allowed full license. Matters of state policy were made to serve the private gains of party chieftains. And as there were easy and substantial gains to be derived from attacks on the Hanseatic commerce, the anti-Hanseatic piracy developed with every successive stage in the disruption of the English government. Persons with grievances, real and imaginary, found it easy to obtain letters of marque against the Hanse. With these letters and without them, attacks on Hanseatic shipping became more frequent than at any other period in the fifteenth century. And for the first time in the fifteenth century the attacks proceeded not only without opposition, but also with the assistance of the government. The ordinance for the keeping of the seas of 1442 established an organized system of privateering, free from the cumbersome restrictions of the earlier laws as to safe conducts and truce on the high seas. Thus freed, the English privateers were able in a short time to revolutionize the relations of England and the Hanse, and lead, through the great "coups" of 1449 and 1465, to the naval war and the Hanseatic triumph of the sixties and the early seventies.

The revolutionary effect of this privateering outburst is hard to overestimate. In the first half of the century piracy had been an accompanying feature of the Anglo-Hanseatic rivalry, disturbing and annoying, but never sufficiently important to overshadow the economic and political issues. Now from being a mere incident piracy became, by its very magnitude and blatancy, the central issue in the relations of England and the Hanse. It was now the main subject of Hanseatic grievances, the main cause of conflict, and the main topic of negotiations. And with the change of issue there came a change in the grouping and the attitudes of the combatants.

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As long as the issues were predominantly economic and related to the English demand for equal treatment in Danzig, the quarrel was very largely confined to England and Prussia. Lübeck and the central section of the Hanse remained largely unaffected, and their indifference to the Prussian point of view very largely explains the isolation and the defeat of Danzig in the successive clashes of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. But now that piracy was becoming the principal issue, Lübeck and the Wendish towns entered the fray, and eventually assumed the leadership against England. Lübeck was the principal victim of the successive attacks on the Hanseatic fleets and was determined to wrest penalties and reparations. The very paucity of its direct trade to England, which explains its want of sympathy with Prussian intransigence in the first half of the century, enabled it now to adopt a radical policy. It had little to lose from the interruption of trade with England, and it might even benefit by a naval war involving the closing of the Sund and the diversion of all the west-to-east traffic to the old trans-Jutland route. If we are to believe a Prussian allegation, Lübeck's taste for naval war had been whetted by the conflict with Holland, when it diverted to itself the shipping and the profit of other towns.⁵⁰ Its action against England was thus bound to be more vigorous, and consequently more successful, than that of Prussia, and the vigour of this action, as well as the cohesion of the anti-English coalition, grew with every important capture of Hanseatic shipping. Under Lübeck's leadership the different groups in the Hanse, with the single exception of Cologne, succeeded in establishing a real unity of front against England, and found themselves in a position not only to wage a naval war, but also, for the first time, to enforce a really effective embargo on the direct trade between England and the Baltic.

Thus the combined effect of anarchy at home and slap-dash policy abroad was to weigh the scales heavily against England in her struggle with the Hanse. The whole situation, international and domestic, was unfavorable to the policy of expansion and reciprocity, but even on those few occasions on which the general situation happened to favour the English, unforeseen but inevitable events intervened against them. The clash of parties at home, the war abroad, and above all the piracies on the high seas, could always be relied upon to produce a catastrophic event of this kind and destroy again the revived hopes of success.

The first of these catastrophic events did not occur till the capture of the Bay fleet in 1449, but the twelve years which had elapsed since the conclusion of Vorrath's treaty were filled with rumblings of a gathering storm. Much of the unrest was due to the Prussian opposition to the Vorrath treaty, and more still to the agitation of the English merchants in Prussia. Yet the principal centre of

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disturbance was to be found not in Prussia, but in the confined world of English baronial politics from which most of the mid-century storms were to come.

The English complaints at the non-fulfillment of the treaty began almost as soon as the English merchants set foot again on Prussian soil. In 1439, they tried to obtain from the municipality of Danzig the recognition and concession of their rights under the treaty. In 1440 they approached the High Master with a similar request. In the same year, a petition was addressed to the English government complaining against the new taxation in Danzig, and the imprisonment of the boats and goods of several English merchants. In 1441 the merchants of England were petitioning the King and Parliament that the High Master should be called to seal the Vorrath treaty on pain of forfeiture of Hanseatic privileges. In 1442 another petition with a comprehensive list of English grievances against the Hanse was submitted to Parliament.⁵¹ Nevertheless, the real position of the English in Danzig and their prospects there would not in themselves have created any serious difficulties with the Hanse. For one thing the Danzigers were completely isolated in their opposition to the treaty. The rest of the Hanse, including Lübeck, not only confirmed it themselves, but were urging Danzig to do the same. The Steelyard in writing to Danzig had to admit the justice of some of the English complaints. Even the other Prussian towns differed from Danzig, and were prepared to ratify the treaty. And the Danzigers themselves, in spite of all the show of obstinacy, were very anxious that the traffic with England should remain uninterrupted and undisturbed. They opposed the imposition of the pound-toll (*Pfundzoll*) by the High Master in 1442, on the plea that it kept the English merchants away. In reply to the English complaints of 1439, 1441, and 1442, they were careful to point out that the English enjoyed greater favours in Danzig, and traded there more than other foreigners. The official representatives of the English merchants in Danzig swore an affidavit in 1422, repudiating all responsibility for the complaint of the previous years, and denying its allegations against Danzig. This affidavit was no doubt extracted from the English merchants by a great deal of pressure, but the statements which it contained, whether voluntary or not, were not all fictitious. In their petitions of 1439 the English merchants themselves claimed that they were frequenting Danzig more than any other nation, and they apparently extended their trade during the war between the Hanse and Holland in 1440. In 1440 the Livonian towns complained of the unusual abundance of English cloth in Novgorod and Livonia, some of which must have come via Danzig; and at the end of the decade, after the capture of 1449, the Prussian authorities were able to lay their hands on an amount of English merchandise which they themselves described as very plentiful and exceeding in value their very

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considerable claims for compensation. All through these years the English maintained in Prussia a corporate organization which official represented them in their negotiations with Prussia and Danzig.⁵²

It was therefore not in Prussia that the real source of the unrest was to be sought. The real source was now in England, where a succession of events in the forties was slowly preparing the way for a rupture with the Hanse. The first harbinger of the coming trouble was the official revival of aggressive anti-foreign policy in the Parliament of Reading in 1440. By an act of that Parliament the foreign merchants in England were again subjected to the limitations and control of their hosts. Their freedom of trade was limited by the obligation to sell all their goods within a prescribed period of time, to employ all the proceeds on the purchase of English goods and confine their dealings to wholesale transactions with Englishmen. In short, the maximum of the anti-foreign demands of English towns, which had been checked and opposed by the early Lancastrian governments, was now carried into effect. Taken by itself this measure is somewhat hard to explain, but fitted into the political situation of the time it acquires its proper meaning as an attempt to draw the middle-classes into the struggle of the baronial parties. In some of his previous clashes with Beaufort's party, such as that of 1426, Gloucester had been able to mobilize a certain amount of middle-class support, at any rate among the burgesses of London. Whether his middle-class party was still alive by 1440 we do not know. What we do know is that throughout the intervening years the Beaufort party persisted in those very same policies and actions which had originally brought it into conflict with London opinion. Thus even if we are not entitled to assume the survival in London of the active pro-Gloucester sympathies, we can safely assume the survival of the anti-Beaufort antipathies. And, according to private reports to Germany, these antipathies descended to Suffolk and the younger Beauforts together with the rest of the Cardinal's heirloom. In the circumstances the anti-Council interests in the City, unless previously bribed and reconciled, could be expected to side with the Gloucester faction as soon as the conflict broke out anew. As the conflict broke out again with Gloucester's memorandum against Beaufort in 1440 and the counter-attack on Eleanor Cobham in 1441, it is natural to assume that the anti-foreign legislation in the Parliament of 1440 was something in the nature of a bribe. That is the coincidence of the two events was no mere accident is further suggested by the recurrence of a similar situation in 1447. And if it was not an accident, then what it meant was that the economic interests of the merchant class were being exploited by the ruling party for its political ends, and the issues of commercial policy made a mere pawn in the inter-baronial struggle.⁵³

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The act was therefore bound to affect the future of Anglo-Hanseatic relations. The Hanseatic merchants were excluded from its provisions, but they could not be excluded from the changed atmosphere in Parliament and the City of London, or from the partisan manipulations of economic policy. It was the changed temper and the partisan politics at home rather than the position in Danzig that instigated the sequence of anti-Hanseatic petitions in 1440, 1441, and 1442, and determined the attitude of the Parliament of 1442. The petition which the English merchants in Danzig were made to disclaim apparently preceded from individuals with personal grievances and claims against the Hanse. But at the Parliament of Westminster in January, 1442, a petition of the Commons demanded resolute action against Prussia and, in accordance with the demand, an ultimatum was issued to the High Master threatening the annulment of privileges in England if the Vorrath treaty were not ratified before Martinmas.⁵⁴

Equally ominous were some of the other measures of the Westminster Parliament, and none of them more so than the so-called act for the safe-keeping of the seas. The act provided for the equipment and maintenance of a fleet of twenty-eight ships for the protection of English shipping from attacks at sea. Judged by its face value it was a genuine measure for the policing of the seas, not unlike similar provisions repeatedly made in the first half of the century. But judged in the light of some of its special clauses, and in conjunction with the other acts of the same Parliament, it was itself a menace to peace, more likely to extend piracy than to suppress it. The fleet had to be provided by private individuals, mostly powerful men like Sir William Bonville, Sir Philip Courteney, Lord Pons, John Howard, John Church, High Taverner, and others who, as the subsequent events showed, were closely related to certain members of the King's Council. The distribution of prizes was arranged in a manner extremely generous and profitable for the masters and owners of boats. Legal obstacles to captures at sea were raised by several acts limiting the validity of safe-conducts and virtually revoking the earlier law against the breaking of truce, under which the English privateers had found it very difficult to "faire de guerre pur le sauf gard du mer". But whether the act was a genuine measure of national policy or a piece of mercenary legislation, it became in the end a cloak for extensive privateering and a source of anarchy on the high seas. And what the official privateering under an act of Parliament left undone, private captures and reprisals completed.⁵⁵

The troubles, thus begun, were slowly mounting in the subsequent years, until in 1446 the political situation of 1440 and 1442 was re-enacted, and a second decisive action against the Hanse was taken. Gloucester, defeated over the trial of Eleanor Cobham, could still be expected to oppose Suffolk in the matter of the royal marriage and the cession of Maine, and was now to be annihilated. The ground

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had been prepared for his impeachment, and at the end of 1446 a Parliament was called to Bury St. Edmunds, "away from his friends the Londoners," to accomplish his destruction. At the same time the much-prorogued Parliament of 1445-1446 had shown its temper by refusing to vote new supplies until its final session in 1446. It was, therefore, not a mere coincidence that at that last session, and only a few months before the writs for the anti-Gloucestre parliament were to be issued, the 1442 ultimatum to the High Master was recalled, and a similar ultimatum issued threatening the revocation of privileges if the treaty were not ratified.⁵⁶ As the Steelyard correctly observed, what the English wanted was not so much the confirmation of the treaty as the revocation of privileges and freedom of reprisals and piracy against the Hanse. All sorts of claimants were alleging damages and grievances as a pretext for letters of marque against Hanseatic shipping. The letters of the Steelyard to Lübeck, Cologne, and Danzig struck a note of real panic: there were no friends left in Parliament or Council. When in the summer of 1447 a Prussian delegation visited England, the government could not negotiate because the king and everybody else were "away in the country for the summer vacation". But in the opinion of the Steelyard the "vacation" was merely a subtle pretext for prolonging the state of indecision until the last day of August when, under the terms of the ultimatum, the Hanseatic privileges would lapse and "no end of letters of marque would be issued".⁵⁷

Most of these fears came true, though not immediately. The charter was made to lapse, but the anti-Hanseatic move in England was too insincere, and the Hanse too pacific, for an immediate and final rupture. In March, 1449, after a year of manoeuvring, a conference between the Hanse and the English took place in Lübeck, which very nearly succeeded in postponing a crisis. The beginning of the conference was not very promising. The English delegates, with Thomas Kent at their head, were uncompromising. They took a stand by the treaty of 1437, and demanded the exclusion of Prussia from the conference as a preliminary condition of negotiations. The Prussians on their part were equally determined not to recognize the treaty and to remain at the conference. Yet both sides were unwilling to close all the roads to peace. A new conference was arranged for 1451, and in the meantime private and separate conversations between the English and the Prussian delegates led to mutual promises of truce and toleration.⁵⁸ Thus a path was still open to a compromise, and a compromise might well have been attained in 1451 if, within two months of the closing of the Lübeck conference, the misgovernment in England had not culminated in the "great capture" of the Bay fleet. On 23rd May, 1449, a fleet of 110 vessels, Flemish, Dutch, and Hanseatic, on its way from the Bay of Bourgneuf, was attacked and captured by the English privateers under Robert

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Winnington. The boats were taken to the Isle of Wight, the vessels and the goods belonging to Flemish and Dutch merchants were released, but the bulk of the booty, which belonged to Hanseatic merchants, was made a lawful prize of the privateers.⁵⁹

The news of the capture burst upon the unsuspecting world like a bomb, and provided a turning-point in the relations of England and the Hanse. The effect was only partly due to the great number of ships and the high value of goods captured. Its real importance lay elsewhere. To begin with, it was the first important attack on the Bay fleets. Ever since the opening of the Hanseatic navigation to the saltworks in the Bay of Bourgneuf, large fleets had passed within a few miles of the English coast. The safety of the Bay route must have weighed heavily with the Hanse in their dealings with England. In the words of the *Libelle of Englyshe Polycye*, the Hanseatics, who "adventure full greatly into the Bay", were compelled to seek England's friendship, for "if they would not our friends be, we might lightly stop them in the sea". Now for the first time the peace of the Bay route was broken, and broken in a mere quest for booty, without direct cause or provocation. In the second place, the assailants were no mere pirates, outlaws at sea, or merchants seeking revenge and compensation, but the king's privateers, a fleet maintained and equipped on the same vicious principles as that of 1442. What is more, its leaders were connected with an important party in the Council. At least some of Winnington's boats belong to Thomas Daniell, an influential member of the Council, and it is quite probable that Winnington was merely Daniell's agent and representative at sea. Immediately on the capture of the fleet, Winnington wrote to John Trevelyan, a member of the Council and an active partisan of the Suffolk faction, informing him of the coup and asking for his good offices. The request obviously was not made in vain. Within a few days of the capture, the Steelyard had to report to the Hanse that the "lords" were making it known that the booty would not be restored to its owners. The names of the members of the Council in league with pirates were no secret to anybody. The merchants of the Steelyard and the popular opinion in London imputed the guilt to the whole of the Suffolk clique in the Council, and above all to Lord Say, Thomas Daniell, and John Trevelyan.⁶⁰ Finally, the capture had an immediate and disastrous reaction upon the position of the English merchants. On the morrow of the attack on the Bay fleet the country was filled with rumors of further and better exploits to come. And if the narrow seas were not at once plunged into the anarchy of mutual and general piracy, it was probably due to the fact that the English merchants were made to bear the cost of the capture. The Hanseatics promptly arrested the English goods in their territories, and the Prussians noted with satisfaction that the English merchandise in Danzig was sufficiently plentiful to cover

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all their losses. It goes without saying that the English government protested against the confiscations, and that the protest was not much more than a hollow formality. The Council threatened to compensate the English merchants out of Prussian and Lübeck goods in England, and the Steelyard was afraid that the English rulers might "rob Peter to pay Paul". Yet, in spite of the Steelyard's fears, Paul remained unpaid.⁶¹

It is in this abdication of all pretensions to state reasons that the real significance of the episode lay. By a single stroke the official policy divested itself of its connections with the interests or demands of the merchants. No sooner was the booty bagged than the government turned to the Hanseatic towns with pacific overtures. Its chieftains had had their fill, and it had every reason to feel friendly and satisfied.⁶² Its concern for the merchants' programme and its bellicosity of 1449 were unsuited to the occasion, and quickly dropped. In their turn, the English merchants, deserted and betrayed by their fickle allies of 1442 and 1446, ceased to press for parity and reciprocity. They had suffered almost as much as the Hanse at the hands of the government. They saw the trade with the Hanse interrupted, and interrupted not for the sake of their economic demands, but for the private gain of well-connected adventurers. To them the present conflict was both senseless and unprofitable. It is, therefore, no wonder that a Prussian agent in London could report a short time after the capture that everybody was blaming the governing clique for the rupture with the Hanse, and that everybody wanted peace. One may or may not believe his report that the rebels of Kent had marched into London demanding the restoration of the Hanseatic trade, and the punishment of the pirates. But it was no mere accident that the men whose lives the rebels demanded were in the first place those very "statesmen" whom everybody thought responsible for the Bay capture.⁶³

Equally striking were the repercussions in the Hanse. Only a few months previously at the conference of Lübeck, Prussia had, alone against the whole Hanse, resisted the English demands. But now a single stroke put Lübeck in Danzig's place as England's implacable foe. Lübeck was one of the chief sufferers in the attack of 1449, and Lübeck had always regarded itself as the guardian of the Hanseatic routes. But what counted most of all was the fact that unlike Danzig it had no English goods within its walls to cover its losses. As a result, the attitudes of Lübeck and of Prussia came to be completely reversed. Prussia, with all her losses made good, was not at all anxious to break with England. The High Master vetoed all proposals for the cessation of English trade or prohibition of English cloth, refused to take any violent measures against the English, and readily agreed to the English proposal to separate negotiations. The arrangements for a conference at Deventer, made

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before the Bay capture, were now cancelled, and an English delegation with Thomas Kent at its head was sent to Prussia, there to negotiate a separate settlement. But this arrangement only stiffened Lübeck's attitude. Anxious to recover its damages, and enraged at what it considered the Prussian betrayal, Lübeck merely redoubled its demands for strong measures against the English.⁶⁴

Unfortunately for the future of Anglo-Hanseatic relations, events soon provided Lübeck with an opening for "direct action". The boat with the English ambassadors to Prussia was captured on 20th July, 1450, by the Lübeck *Bergenfahrer*, and brought to Lübeck together with a rich booty in cloth and no less a person than Thomas Kent on board. The goods were confiscated to cover Lübeck's losses, and the ambassadors were put under arrest. Yet the capture, striking and profitable as it was, did not satisfy Lübeck's thirst for retaliation, and in the years immediately following Kent's imprisonment, accident and design combined to harden Lübeck's temper. To begin with, Thomas Kent, with some of the other prisoners, was let out on parole in order to go to England and obtain there compensations for Lübeck. But he broke the parole and stayed in England, to resume there his work on the Council and to remain for another fifteen years in charge of English policy in Northern Europe, and probably in command of the anti-Hanseatic forces in England.⁶⁵ Then, partly in retaliation for the capture of the ambassadors, and partly through the continued state of anarchy on the high seas, the English pirates redoubled their attacks on Hanseatic shipping, and especially on that of the Wendish towns. Finally in 1458, at the very time when the epidemic of piracies seemed to have quieted down, there occurred the second capture of the Bay fleet, for which the Earl of Warwick himself was responsible. On the pretext that the Hanseatic boats refused to salute the English arms, Warwick engaged them in a battle from which he emerged with easy honours and an immense booty.⁶⁶

It is, therefore, no wonder that throughout those years Lübeck persevered in its anti-English attitude, and refused to respond to the pacific invitations of England or the counsel of moderation from the rest of the Hanse. When in 1451 the English sent a delegation to a conference in Utrecht, Lübeck refused to negotiate with the head of the delegation, Thomas Kent, and the other "escaped prisoners", and insisted on their return to captivity and the compensation for the Bay capture as a preliminary condition of negotiations. The expostulations of Prussia and Cologne were of no avail. Nor were the repressive measures against the Hanseatic merchants which the English government adopted a few months later. Lübeck meant war and prepared for it. By arrangement with Denmark it closed the Sund to English shipping, and prohibited the passage of English cloth in the East.⁶⁷ Several times during the subsequent years, in 1452, 1453, and 1454, the English made attempts to arrange another

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conference, and met with a willing response from every part of the Hanse, including Hamburg. But Lübeck still held out, kept the Sund closed to English shipping, and strained every effort, in the face of wholesale evasion on the part of Prussians and Cologners, to stop the trade in English cloth in Hanseatic regions.⁶⁸

These relations between England and Lübeck were a direct result of a decade and more of misgovernment and piracy and the first step towards England's defeat in the late sixties and seventies. Yet during this first phase, in the fifties, the English position was far from hopeless. At times it even seemed as if, in spite of the political disorganization at home, and Lübeck's activities abroad, the clash might yet end again in a reaffirmation of England's claims in the Baltic. The English piracies had certainly succeeded in raising Lübeck's opposition, but the opposition was not formidable as long as Lübeck remained alone. And throughout this first phase of England's retreat Lübeck did remain alone. The other parts of the Hanse were showing every sign of an accommodating temper. The Prussians, ever since their abortive attempts at separate negotiations with England in 1451, were all tact and moderation. Danzig continued for a time to hug its old fears of English competition, but by 1453 even Danzig ceased to trouble about the English danger, for, as we have seen, the English seem to have dropped for the time being their old demands of parity and reciprocity. Under the protection of safe-conducts repeatedly issued to the English merchants during those years, the English trade to Prussia struggled on, and with Prussian assistance the English merchants sometimes succeeded in evading Lübeck's barrier across the Sund. Even for several years after the outbreak of war in Prussia between the Order and the Estates, the English merchants were still to be found in the Baltic East. The same is true in a still greater measure of the English trade with the western towns, and especially Cologne. There, Lübeck was powerless to interfere with the course of traffic, and the towns seldom considered themselves bound by the interests or decisions of the Hanse as a whole. But what must have completed the isolation of Lübeck was the attitude of Hamburg, its ancient ally and satellite, and now a determined advocate of peace with England. In the end, Lübeck was compelled to raise the embargo in 1454, and give a grudging consent to a peace conference, and although the civil war in Prussia prevented the conference from taking place, the trade could continue under the eight years' truce proclaimed early in 1456.⁶⁹

Thus from the English point of view the prospects of the mid-fifties were not all black, and what made them rosier still was the fact that throughout those years and ports and the fairs of the Low Countries were open to the English. The situation continued to be promising until 1458, when the second capture of the Bay fleet by

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Warwick raised new difficulties. Yet even this second capture did not alter the situation, or the issues, at all profoundly. Lübeck's interests and pride suffered again, and its wrath was as overwhelming now as it had been in 1449. But the other towns remained as anxious as ever to maintain the trade with England, and Danzig implored Lübeck not to do anything that might prevent the prolongation of the eight years' truce, due to expire in 1459.⁷⁰

The isolation of Lübeck and the consequent strength of England's position were all made still greater by the arrival of the Yorkists. The change of dynasty reopened the question of Hanseatic privileges, and at the same time revived the hopes and ambitions of the middle-class party. The demands of the English merchants, forgotten and neglected during the preceding period, were again resuscitated. The Council and the Parliament were again, as twenty year earlier, snowed under by petitions and complaints recalling the Vorrath treaty, and reasserting anew the programme of reciprocity. London resumed its anti-Hanseatic offensive, organized pressure on the Council and Parliament, and attempted to deprive the Steelyard of its constitutional position in the City. In deference to the pressure of the towns – and the Yorkist party apparently inherited the middle-class policy, genuine or false, from the Gloucester faction – Edward announced to the Hanse his intention to revise the whole question of Hanseatic privileges. The government renewed the privileges by a number of temporary grants of 1461, 1463, and 1465, but pressed for a more permanent arrangement every time the temporary extensions expired.⁷¹ If it continued at all to extend the privileges in this way, it was partly because the relations with Burgundy were much too uncertain for a definite breach with the Hanse, and partly because every successive year emphasized the isolation of Lübeck and seemed to prepare the way to its defeat. An abortive Hanseatic conference in 1465, at which English delegates were present, must have demonstrated to the Wendish towns the utter hopelessness of their position. At last, in 1467, Lübeck seemed to give way. In a manner as yet guarded and careful, its leaders notified the other Hanseatic towns that it would be prepared to waive the preliminary conditions on which it had insisted ever since 1451, and to enter into negotiations with England. With Lübeck thus humbled, and the other parts of the Hanse anxious to maintain peace and preserve their privileges, it looked as if the story of English penetration and political success were going to be resumed.⁷²

It was at that moment that the arrests and the "verdict" of 1468 shattered the prospects of a renewed English offensive, and opened the second and final phase of the defeat of English expansion in northern seas. Already at the end of 1467, and the beginning of 1468, the Hanseatic observers began to notice a change in the Yorkist attitude toward the Hanse. The truce for thirty years, which Edward

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concluded with Burgundy in the winter of 1467-1468, secured for England one channel of trade to the continent and the Parliament became less anxious to maintain good relations with the Hanseatics. And when in June, 1468, an English fleet bound for the Baltic was captured by the King of Denmark off the Sund, the government seized the Hanseatic goods in London as compensation for the English losses. A quasi-judicial verdict of the Council confirmed the seizure on the ground that a few Danzig boats were at the time serving in the Royal Navy of Denmark, though neither the Hanse nor Danzig had any part in the capture of any previous knowledge of it. The Danish government insisted that it was alone responsible, and that it was acting in retaliation for the English malpractices in Iceland. But whatever was the real role of the Hanse in the affair, all the Council wanted was formal ground for seizure of Hanseatic goods in London. "They know that they cannot obtain any redress from the Danes, who do not trade to England, and have no goods in London and on the seas, and they have invented the accusation to cover their losses out of our possessions." Such was the Hanseatic complaint and such was apparently the actual position.⁷³

The light-heartedness with which the Council acted on this occasion was doubtless due to the friendship with Burgundy, but it was also to a great extent due to the personal influence of certain men on the Council. The Hanseatics in their protests against the verdict alleged that the several members of the Council were themselves an interested party in the case they were judging. The contention was apparently well-founded. It was only through that personal influence in the Council that the claims of the fifteen Englishmen who had suffered at the hands of the Danes were given preference over the views and desires of the bulk of public opinion, including that of the merchant class. The Archbishop of Canterbury was reputed to have warned the government of the folly of the verdict; the clothworkers of Gloucestershire, mobilized for the purpose by the Steelyard and its well-paid friend the town-clerk of Bristol, intervened on behalf of the German merchants, and so did also the Merchant Adventurers in the Low Countries in the person of their governor, William Caxton. But public opinion at home was no more effective than the pressure of almost all the princes and political powers of Northern Europe. The Emperor, the Pope, the Bishop of Utrecht, the Duke of Burgundy, the towns of Flanders, the feudal rulers of the Low Countries and Western Germany wrote to England to advocate the cause of the Hanseatic prisoners. But the Council remained adamant, the relations of England and the Hanse were thrown into confusion again, and the possibility of a peaceful solution of the Anglo-Hanseatic conflict favourable to England and advocated by the merchants was thrown away for the second time since 1449.⁷⁴

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The only compensation the English merchants could derive from the episode was the definite separation between the Hanse and Cologne. The Cologne merchants were at the time of the capture passing through a period of estrangement from the rest of the Hanse. The Hanseatic policy in Flanders at the time and Lübeck's irreconcilable attitude to questions of English policy had raised in Cologne a great deal of opposition to the Hanse. At the time of the "verdict" the separatist opinion dominated the town government in Cologne; the leader of the Cologners in London, Gerard von Wesel, was himself something of a separatist. So that when the verdict, however illegal and unjustified, made the goods of Cologne responsible for the reputed crimes of the other part of the Hanse, the Cologners decided to take the final step and break with the Hanse. The Council, where Thomas Kent was still active, did its best to help the split along, freed the arrested Cologners, exempted their goods from reprisals, and eventually reissued the privileges for the sole enjoyment of Cologne and the exclusion of the other towns.⁷⁵ The policy of splitting the Hanse, pursued since the middle of the century, thus seemed to triumph at last.

This triumph, however, was more than offset by its reactions on the rest of the Hanse. From the point of view of the Hanse as a whole the events of 1468 merely completed the reorganization of anti-English forces begun in 1449. If they succeeded in detaching Cologne from the Hanse, they also succeeded in restoring cohesion and unity among its other parts. Prior to 1449, Danzig had been alone and unaided in its opposition to England; between 1449 and 1468, Lübeck was similarly isolated in its struggle for compensations; but after the "verdict" the struggle against England became a joint concern of all the Hanseatic towns from Westfalia to Livonia. The moderate counsel was discredited, Lübeck's intransigence stood vindicated; England indeed appeared the deadly foe and the menace to Hanseatic unity that Lübeck had made her out to be. The Danzigers now resuscitated their ancient anti-English attitude as suddenly as they had abandoned it in 1449, and events in Prussia facilitated their reconversion. The breach between the Prussian Estates and the Order had by now removed all extraneous restraints and moderating influences over Danzig's economic policy, while the continued state of civil war in Prussian territory made direct trade with England almost impossible. The Danzigers could now easily afford a naval war with England, for there was little that they could lose by a war of this kind which they had not already lost through the cessation of trade. The other Hanseatic towns merely followed the united lead of Danzig and Lübeck.⁷⁶

The immediate result of the new alignment was the outbreak of the naval war which Lübeck had vainly tried to organize since 1450, and the war continued until well in the seventies. The varying

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fortunes of the combatants, the complications introduced by France and Flanders, the stalemate eventually reached have all be faithfully chronicled by the German historians of the Hanse, and need not be repeated here. What requires stressing is the fact that although the war undoubtedly prepared the way for the triumph of the Hanse in 1473, it was not immediately and directly responsible for it. The fortunes on the high seas constantly fluctuated, and not always to England's disadvantage. In the first phase of the war the English had the worst of the struggle. But in the end the losses suffered by neutral shipping at the hands of Hanseatic and above all Danzig privateers provoked the hostility of Flanders, while the entry of France into the struggle created a state of triangular warfare equally damaging to the Hanse and to England. In the end the Yorkist government managed to equip a strong fleet under Howard's command, and to inflict great losses on the Hanseatic shipping. From this time onwards the contest was leading to a draw, with the odds slightly in England's favor.⁷⁷

If the war was, nevertheless, disastrous to the interests of English trade and English merchants it was not through its unsuccessful issue of the high seas, but from other and more general causes. To begin with, war was disastrous because it was war; it preyed upon all shipping in the north seas, and thus intensified that state of anarchy which had prevailed there ever since the late forties. In the second place, it perpetuated the political relations and attitudes dangerous to the future of England's position and peace on the northern seas. Lübeck and Danzig were now cementing their friendship and unity, directed against England, while the separation of Cologne was not producing good results expected from it. True, English cloth continued to be sold abroad throughout the war years; denied access to the old east to west channel, it went by the Southern route via Frankfort, Nuremburg, and Breslau. The Prussians themselves began to complain in 1471, as they had done in previous blockades of England, that an embargo on English cloth could not be enforced. They were themselves accused of smuggling English cloth into the Hanseatic lands. It is also true that the cessation of direct traffic between England and the Baltic did not result in serious shortage of Baltic goods in England. Timber, pitch, tar, ashes, and furs, both from the Baltic and from other parts of Europe, were obtainable in the neutral markets of Zealand and Brabant, and from there the Cologners, the Dutch, and the English regularly shipped them to England. Yet the new channels of cloth export and the new sources of Baltic goods were mere makeshifts, and not very satisfactory ones at that. The cloth exports of the Cologners after 1468, large as they now were, fell far behind the combined exports of the Hanse as a whole in the preceding period, and the decrease was not accompanied by a corresponding rise of the exports of the English merchants themselves. The customs

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returns of the principal cloth-exporting ports show a considerable decrease in the export of cloth during the middle decades of the century. This decrease may well have been exaggerated in the customs figures, for it is not unlikely that the collection of customs suffered during the years of anarchy, yet the decrease revealed by the figures is too regular to have been entirely due to the fault of the returns themselves. It must have been due to a variety of causes, of which the Anglo-Hanseatic war and the cessation of Hanseatic trade to this country, was certainly one. An examination of the particular customs accounts of London, Lynn, Boston, and Hull also reveals a decline in the importation of the Hanseatic commodities, while occasional references elsewhere would indicate a corresponding rise in their prices.⁷⁸ It is, therefore, no wonder that the country soon began to show signs of weariness and opposition to the struggle. The very "clothworkers of Gloucestershire", whose support the Cologners had mobilized in 1468, refused now to lend themselves to any further plans of Cologne against the Hanse. Apparently, the cloth producers, the general body of the consumers in the country, had all lost from the cessation of Hanseatic trade more than they had gained from the separate arrangement with Cologne. If the merchants of London and the East Coast continued to support the war party, the rest of the country was now anxious for peace.⁷⁹

Still it can be doubted whether the peace would have come when it did, and would have been bought, as it was, at the price of English surrender, had it not been for the accompanying political developments. In the first place the War of the Roses was resumed in 1470 with the return of Margaret and the flight of Edward. The Hanse was drawn into the renewed struggle, and soon found itself in the position of *tertium gaudens*. Margaret, while planning her return, had approached the Hanse with requests of assistance, promising in return to restore the privileges in full and redress all the Hanseatic grievances. On that occasion the Hanse refused to commit itself, but when Edward in his turn began to plan an expedition to England, he was able to do so with the assistance of the Hanse. The Hanse may have acted on the advice of the Duke of Burgundy who sponsored Edward's enterprise, or it may itself have gauged the chances of the combatants and decided to back the winner. But whatever were its reasons, the fact remains that it was on Hanseatic boats and under Hanseatic escort that Edward sailed to England, there to resume the war, and to emerge victorious on the battlefield of Barnet. For these services he promised to satisfy the Hanseatic complaints and demands, and these services were alleged as the official motive for the far-reaching concessions made to the Hanse at the conference of Utrecht.⁸⁰

An unofficial liaison was established between the English and the Hanseatic agents in 1472 in Bruges, and in 1474 the Conference

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met at Utrecht. From the very first, difficulties arose on which the negotiations nearly broke. The Hanseatics demanded complete restoration of their old privileges, unequivocal exemption from all taxation not specified there, compensation for the losses suffered by their shippers and merchants, annulment of the "verdict" of 1468, and restoration of goods arrested on that occasion. They intended to obtain special guarantees from the principal towns as to the observation of the future treaty. Above all, they demanded the withdrawal of privileges from Cologne. The English negotiators took a stand against every one of these demands; on their part they recalled the Vorrath treaty, and insisted on the principle of reciprocity. But in the end they had to give way. After two adjournments, the conference ended in a peace treaty embodying almost all the Hanseatic demands. A formula of reciprocity was included in the treaty recalling that of 1408, but less definite and extensive than that of 1437. It promised in a general manner that the English should enjoy in the Hanseatic lands their old rights, but it did not contain the provision for the exemption of taxes. The point on which the English negotiators were most unyielding was that of Cologne's status, but even on this point they gave way in the end, and Cologne, deserted by the English and spurned by the Hanse, was deprived both of her privileges and of her position in the Hanse. It was only several years later that she was readmitted to the Hanse and the Steelyard.⁸¹

In 1475 the Hanseatic merchants returned to England in full possession of their ancient privileges, armed with the additional guarantees of London, Lynn, Boston, and Hull, and with their financial claims secured on their customs payments to the sum of £10,000. They immediately stepped into the place they had occupied in English economic life in the first half of the century, and this place they were to preserve until well into the Tudor era. Their share in English foreign trade soon passed the highest point it had reached before. While they exported on the average about 6,000 cloths annually between 1406 and 1427, and about 10,000 annually between 1438 and 1459, their exports rose to well above 13,500 between 1479 and 1482. Some of this rise may have been due to changes in the administration of the customs, yet it continued throughout the early Tudor reigns.⁸²

The English derived whatever profit and comfort there was to be derived from the restoration of peace and the resumption of Hanseatic trade. But their attempts at direct relations with the markets of Central and Eastern Europe received a set-back from which they were not to recover until the age of Elizabeth. The formula of reciprocity would not have been of much avail to them now. Danzig under the sovereignty of Polish kings enjoyed almost a complete *Landeshoheit*, involving full autonomy in matters of government and economic policy. It refused to admit even the vague and shadowy claims to reciprocity in the new treaty. For some two years it refused

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to confirm the treaty in spite of the expostulation of all the other towns. When, in the end, it decided to confirm it, it did so on the understanding that the English were to be treated as all other foreigners. The English merchants themselves ceased to press for parity in the old and full sense of the term. According to the report of the Hanseatic delegates to Utrecht, all the English meant by "old rights" in Prussia were the "rights" actually exercised there on the eve of the war. But even these claims, modest as they were, ceased to be of great importance to English trade. The whole Baltic trade was no longer vitally important. Whether as a result of the continued friction with Denmark and consequent closing of the Sund, or as a result of the war-time rearrangements in the organization of English trade, the direct trade of English merchants to Danzig was dwindling very fast. While on several occasions in the first half of the century there were over thirty English boats anchored in the port of Danzig, only twelve boats arrived from England during the three years following the cessation of hostilities, and in 1497, when the registers of the Sund tolls begin, not a single English boat passed the Sund. As late as 1503 there were only twenty-one English boats passing the Sund and it was not until 1547 that the English shipping to the Baltic could again stand comparison with that of the Dutch.⁸³

§ 4 THE TRADE

To pass from the story of the Anglo-Hanseatic rivalry to an account of the trade itself, its commodities, business routine, and corporate forms, is to exchange the shifting scene of politics and war for the enduring scheme of economic needs and habitudes. The needs which the trade with the Hanse served, and the forms which it took, were seemingly unaffected by the Anglo-Hanseatic conflict. Its economic basis was provided by the economic development and structure of Northern Europe, and could be neither easily destroyed nor fundamentally altered by the course of the struggle. Nor could the prevailing methods of trade and forms of commercial organization be affected, for these were determined by the transport, communications, and social structure of the later Middle Ages. Yet this constancy of economic facts can easily be exaggerated. Within the traditional channels of exchange, and the enduring framework of commercial organization, there was room for a certain number of variations, and some of these were undoubtedly due to the development

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of the Anglo-Hanseatic rivalry. It is not the object of this chapter to exhibit these variations to the exclusion of the other and the more static facts. But no student of the period will fail to note them, less in the account of the commodities and markets, more in the story of the business forms and the corporate organizations of the English merchants.

Occasional references in the previous chapters must have made it clear that the bulk of the commodities exchanged between England and the Hanseatic regions consisted of Baltic goods and English cloth. It goes without saying that the Baltic goods were by no means the only article of Hanseatic import. In the first place, some Hanseatic merchants took part in the trade between England and the great markets of the Low Countries, whence they imported all the miscellaneous commodities of Europe. In the earlier centuries, and as late as the middle of the fourteenth century, the trade to and from Flanders was one of the main Hanseatic activities in England.⁸⁴ In the late fourteenth and the fifteenth century the overwhelming bulk of that trade was already in English hands, yet even at this time there were to be found Hanseatic merchants, especially Cologners, who regularly exported cloth into the Low Countries and imported from there a most varied assortment of goods. In the second place, miscellaneous commodities other than those of Baltic origin were imported directly from the regions of the Hanse. Of these, canvas, linen, and linen yarn ("Cologne thread"), were probably the most important. Fish, chiefly the cured "white" herring of Skania, and fish oils, were imported by merchants of almost every region in the Hanse. Beer produced by Bremen and Hamburg, madder of Westfalian origin, a certain amount of woad, as well as metal goods from Cologne, Westfalia, the Harz mountains and Hungary, have also left a trace on the records of Hanseatic imports.⁸⁵

But compared with the goods of Baltic origin, all these commodities were of only secondary importance in the Anglo-Hanseatic trade. They could be, and in part were, imported into England from lands outside the Hanseatic regions. In the linen trade important sources of supply were situated in certain districts of South Germany, Northern France, and the Low Countries, and from these large quantities of linen were imported into England, both directly and through the great continental fairs. Some of the English demand for linen was met by Irish production. The same in a still greater measure applied to woad and metal goods, of which by far the most important sources were situated in France, Spain, and Italy. Even the white herring could be, and often was, of Dutch origin, imported by English and Dutch merchants, and beer could also be brought from the recently established breweries of Holland. These commodities, therefore, would not have drawn the English merchants to the Hanseatic regions in the face of Hanseatic opposition,

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and would not have made the Hanseatic trade as important to England as it actually was.⁸⁶

It was the goods of the Eastern Baltic that provided the basis of Hanseatic imports. One of these was corn. England's demand for corn considerably exceeded the immediate needs of her population. For the greater part of the century she had garrisons to feed in the marches of Calais, Guisnes, and Aquitaine. She supplied corn to Gascony in exchange for wine, and sometimes exported cereals to Iceland in exchange for fish. In years of plenty England had a surplus sufficient to cover all these needs, but in years of scarcity she was badly in need of supplementary imports, not only to meet outside liabilities, but also to feed her own population. The easiest and most obvious sources of these supplementary supplies were the cornlands of the "colonial Germany" to the east of the Elbe and of Western Poland, with their natural geographical and commercial center in Prussia. These Baltic sources were not directly tapped by industrial regions in their immediate vicinity, as were those of South Italy and Northern France, and they were above all plentiful and reliable. We consequently find the English turning to Prussia for supplies in years of dearth such as 1417 and 1439, and also carrying on a direct corn trade between Danzig and Gascony.⁸⁷

Less urgent, but more regular and constant, was the demand for sylvan products of the Baltic. The extent which the deforestation of England had reached by the fifteenth century is hard to estimate. But it is clear that already in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries England depended on foreign and especially Norwegian supplies for the high-grade timber used in construction and ship-building. The opening up of Prussia in the fourteenth century introduced Western Europe to the untold reserves of forest possessed by the Baltic lands, Poland, and Russia; and from the beginning of the fifteenth century Prussia became the only important source of timber. The kinds most commonly imported were wainscot, bowstaves, masts, the so-called "clapholt", and "trenchours". But timber was also imported in the shape of manufactured wooden articles – boxes, coffers, furniture (counters) and, above all, boats.⁸⁸ Danzig, with its unlimited supplies of all the raw materials employed in the construction of boats, developed an important shipbuilding industry, of which the English merchant made wise use, and for obvious reasons. The nature of the return cargoes to England very often necessitated the employment of additional shipping. The English imports, chiefly cloth, were compact and valuable, while the Prussian exports, corn and sylvan products, were bulky and cheap. Thus the English merchants required larger shipping space for the westward than for the eastward journeys. Some of this additional freightage they obtained by hire. But some of it they bought, and as a great deal of Prussian exports into England consisted of materials for

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naval construction, there was every commercial reason for the importation of these materials "ready made up" into vessels. It is, therefore, no wonder that the Danzig shipbuilding industry attracted a great deal of English custom, and that the use the English made of it provoked alarm in the Hanseatic Councils. In 1428 we find the Hanseatic diet in Lübeck complaining that the sale of boats to the English and Dutch was raising up harmful competition to Hanseatic shipping. One of the first measures of the municipality of Danzig against the English in Prussia was to prohibit the sale of boats to them. The frequent re-enactments of the prohibition suggest that it was by no means easy to enforce, but it automatically became effective with the general decline in the direct trade with England to the great disadvantage and displeasure of the ship-building interests in Danzig.⁸⁹

As important as timber, if not more so, were the other sylvan commodities: pitch, tar, and ashes. Ashes were one of the most important materials in the industrial chemistry of the Middle Ages, and were employed in England in the manufacture of cloth. Pitch and tar were chiefly used in shipbuilding. The same use was also served by some of the other commodities of East European origin, such as hemp and sail canvas. Two of the other typically Hanseatic commodities, wax and furs, were also of Russian and Polish origin; these, however, were also brought in by the merchants of other Hanseatic groups and from places other than Prussia. Hungarian copper, the high quality of iron (osmund) of Sweden, and local varieties of ordinary iron formed also quite an important category among Prussian imports.⁹⁰

The importance of all these Baltic goods will more than explain the special value which the English put on the Hanseatic, and above all on the Prussia trade. This importance was further enhanced by the extent and character of English cloth exports. Of course, cloth was not the only commodity habitually exported from England by the Hanseatics, or imported by the English into the lands of the Hanse. In the early part of the fourteenth century Hanseatic merchants had played an important part in the wool trade between England and the Low Countries, and wool formed the main basis for their exports.⁹¹ But the consolidation of the staple system and the working of the preferential tariffs gave the English merchant the virtual monopoly of the wool trade to Northern Europe, and reduced the Hanseatic share in it almost to nothing. It is therefore only occasionally that we find Hanseatic merchants exporting small consignments of wool and wool-fells, chiefly of the kind that over the greater part of the century was exempt from the action of the staple laws – thrums, shorlings, lamb-fells, etc. Equally irregular were the exports of other foodstuffs and raw materials, cheese, rabbit skins, tallow, red herring, and sometimes mineral coal. Somewhat more important were the

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exports of metals and metal goods. Tin from the West Country and pewter vessels manufactured in London were bought in large quantities by Hanseatic merchants, chiefly Cologners, and figure constantly in customs accounts and in the records of the English dealings with the Hanse merchants. A scrivener's book of 1442 shows that, in the course of a year's trade, the purchases of a group of Hanseatic merchants included tin and pewter vessels valued at £300. The other purchases of the same merchants included in the same book were valued at about £4,000.⁹²

The English merchants trading to Prussia exported from England very much the same commodities; but in addition, they also brought into Prussia a certain amount of goods of foreign origin. The herring which they imported into Prussia was probably the red herring of Yarmouth, for it was salted and packed in England. But some of the other commodities undoubtedly came from those regions on the Atlantic seaboard of the Iberian Peninsula and France – especially Gascony – with which English merchants were in constant and close contact throughout the fourteenth and the greater part of the fifteenth century. We find them selling southern fruit ("figs and raisins"), and Gascon wine in Danzig, and some of the salt sold by them may well have come from the Bay of Bourgneuf.⁹³

Yet both in the export trade of the Hanseatic merchants and in that of Englishmen trading to Prussia, cloth was overwhelmingly the most important commodity. The annual averages of Hanseatic cloth exports, exclusive of worsteds, varied from 6,000 in the years between 1406 and 1427, and 10,000 between 1438 and 1459, about equal to those of all the other foreigners and about half as large as those of English merchants. Compared with cloth, the other articles of Hanseatic exports fade almost to insignificance. Evaluated at the official rates adopted for the purposes of customs, the average annual value of the Hanseatic cloth exports between 1438 and 1459 was well above £20,000, while the value of their other exports could not much have exceeded the sum of £1,200.⁹⁴

The cloth which the English themselves exported into the Hanseatic regions went almost invariably to the Baltic countries, and especially to Prussia. It has been shown that one of the motives of their penetration into the Hanseatic regions was their quest for Baltic goods. It was, therefore, in Danzig that the focus of the English-born cloth trade was to be found. At the end of the fourteenth, and the very beginning of the fifteenth century, the herring markets of Skania attracted some of the English merchants with their cloth. As long as the English maintained these commercial relations with Scandinavia, and especially Norway, they also took their cloth there. But after the beginning of the fifteenth century direct references to English trade in Skania disappear from the records. As for the English trade in Norway, its history in the fifteenth century, when

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it is written, will reveal little more than a series of fitful and irregular endeavours by English merchants to resume the position they had occupied there in the previous century, and to penetrate into markets completely monopolized by the Hanseatics. In the second half of the century even these attempts came to an end, owing to the uninterrupted state of conflict with Denmark. Thus of all the regions of the Hanseatic *Verkehrsgebiet* Prussia stood out as the only important centre of the English-borne cloth trade.

On the other hand, the cloth exported by the Hanseatics was distributed on the continent through several channels. A small part of it, especially that carried by the merchant of Cologne and the *Zuider Zee* towns, was taken to the great international marts of Northern Europe – Bruges, Antwerp, Bergen-op-Zoom, and Middleburgh – to be sold there, partly for further manipulation by Flemish and Brabantine cloth workers, but chiefly for distribution in different parts of the continent. The bulk of the exports, however, went directly without the intermediary agency of the great fairs to the regions of the Hanseatic *Verkehrsgebiet*. In this direct distribution of English cloth there was a certain amount of territorial specialization between the different groups of Hanseatic merchants. The Cologners distributed the English cloth all along the valley of the Rhine; and from there, through the market of Frankfort-on-Main, it penetrated into Southern Germany as far east as the valley of the Danube and Galicia, with its great markets of Lemberg and Cracow. A certain amount of the cloth carrier by the Cologners went east along the great Hanseatic route, but that was a secondary line of Cologne's trade, important only at the time when the other sections of the Hanse were prevented from direct trade with England. During the greater part of the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the Rhine valley drew to itself the bulk of Cologne's trade, and Frankfort was the second seat of Cologne's *Englandfahrer* – the corporation of merchants trading to England.⁹⁵

The merchants of Prussia, whose share in English exports was second only to that of the Cologners, distributed the bulk of their cloth in Prussia, Lithuania, and Poland, and took it as far east as Western Russia, Hungary, Wallachia (modern Romania), and the north coast of the Black Sea. For a short time an attempt was made to establish a Staple for cloth in Elbing, but the continued economic growth of Danzig and its political importance defeated the project of the Staple. By the end of the first decade of the fifteenth century Danzig was the central market for English cloth in Prussia, with Thorn as a secondary outpost on the way to Poland and Western Russia. It was also from Danzig, and by Danzigers, that a great deal of English cloth came to Livonia for distribution there and further east in Novgorod. In the latter market the English cloth had become a serious competitor of the Flemish cloth in the first quarter of the

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century and the local demand for it was strong enough to raise serious alarm among the Hanseatic groups with vested interests in Bruges and the Flemish cloth trade.⁹⁶

The other sections of the Hanse carried English cloth all over the Hanseatic *Verkehrsgebiet*, including Livonia and the lands beyond. The Wendish towns – Lübeck, Bremen, Wismar, and Rostock – dominating as they did trade with the Scandinavian countries, easily arrogated to themselves the bulk of the trade in English cloth in Norway, Denmark, and Sweden. In connection with that trade the Wendish towns founded an important intermediary station at Boston. Their boats commonly called at Boston on their way to Bergen, sometimes discharged there goods for the English market, and sometimes did not, but invariably took on board English commodities for sale in Scandinavia, partly victuals, but mostly cloth.⁹⁷

It will be seen that the bulk of English cloth exported by the Hanseatics or by Englishmen trading to Hanseatic regions, was distributed among the “ultimate” consumers of cloth. Most of the regions where the Hanseatics sold it belonged to the “flax and linen” areas of Europe, and did not possess important cloth industries of their own. A certain amount of cloth was produced in different parts of Germany, especially in the Rhineland, Brunswick, and Silesia, but most of this production was purely local, employed local wool and served local needs. Even in its principal centres the market was served by cloth of Flemish and English origin. Unlike Flanders, Brabant, or Holland the regions of Hanseatic trade took and demanded not so much wool, yarn, or unfinished cloth, as fabrics that could be sold directly to the consumers. Therefore the cloth imported there could be, and was, brought in a fully finished state, dyed, pulled, and shorn.⁹⁸

The same fact emerges also from what we know of the English end of the trade. On the whole it will be true to say that the Hanseatic merchants drew their cloth from all the manufacturing regions in England, and exported all the varieties of cloth produced in this country. Although most of their shipping, and consequently the bulk of their trade, was concentrated in London and the ports on the sea-coast – Ipswich, Boston, Lynn, Yarmouth, Hull, and Newcastle – they did not confine their dealings to the production of the eastern cloth-producing regions, Essex, East Anglia, and Yorkshire. We find them buying and exporting large quantities of cloth of the western and southern counties, the Southampton broads, the Western says, the Welsh friezes. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries England was more of an economic unit than it is fashionable to imagine. The main branches of her trade were as much inter-local and inter-regional, as they were to be at any time before the arrival of the canal and the railway. The Hanseatics found it possible to concentrate their shipping in the ports on the East Coast only because they were

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not compelled thereby to confine their activities to the production of the near-lying Colchester, Norwich, or York. We find them dealing with cloth merchants and cloth producers all over the country, and those dealings were greatly facilitated by the part played by London as a national market of the cloth trade.⁹⁹ If the Hanseatic merchants sometimes concentrated on certain branches of cloth export, the concentration was largely fortuitous, and due to the accident of mediaeval taxation more than to any other cause. At the end of the fourteenth century the so-called kerseys and straits, cheaper and narrower fabrics than the standard cloth of assize, were not yet subjected to the payment of the general cloth custom and the Hanseatic merchants had every inducement for exporting them in large quantities. Apparently the same happened with worsteds. Judging by the indirect evidence in the customs accounts, worsted cloths of different varieties – cloths and beds, double, single, and semi-double – formed a greater share of Hanseatic cloth exports than they did of the cloth exports of other merchants, and the difference was apparently due to the fact that the Hanseatic exports of worsteds were taxed very lightly.¹⁰⁰ The only feature of the Hanseatic exports which cannot be put down to a fiscal cause, and which marked them off from the exports of the Low Countries at the end of the fifteenth, and in the sixteenth century, was the fact that they were made up of finished cloth. This fact has already been stressed once, in the analysis of the cloth markets, and it will stand out again in its full significance in connection with the story of English commercial organization.

The business organization of the English trade to the Hanseatic lands and that of the Hanseatic trade to England possessed many features in common. Some of the similarity was doubtless due to the cosmopolitan origin and nature of merchant customs, for in Northern Europe the conventions of merchant law, the commercial terminology, and the business routine differed comparatively little from country to country. But a great deal of the similarity was due to the economic character of the trade between England and the Hanse, and above all to the nature of the commodities exchanged. It has been shown that the exchange between England and the Hanse was very largely confined to English cloth and Baltic goods. Both commodities had to be carried across long distances and disposed in distant markets. The carriage and the disposal required longer and more continuous action than, to take an obvious example, the importation of onions from Flanders or the sale of pewter vessels to the Italians in London. Then, at both ends of the trade, in the purchase of cloth in England and its sale in Prussia, or in the purchase of timber in Poland and its sale in England, the transactions were based on credit.¹⁰¹ This use of credit, coupled with the "reciprocal" character of the trade, called into being a complicated system of payments and assignment, and required constant and

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"continuous" activity on the part of the merchant. Finally, the trade in cloth and in Baltic goods lent itself very easily to that combination of wholesale and retail trade, which characterized big business in the Middle Ages. Recent discussions of the problem of wholesale trade in the mediaeval towns have established beyond dispute the fact that wholesale trade, i.e. purchase and sale in bulk between merchant and merchant, was very common, but that at the same time it was generally combined with dealings in retail. This relation of wholesale and retail prevailed also in the business of the Hanseatic merchants in England and in that of the English merchants in Danzig. The cloth brought by the English merchants was often sold in bulk to the local traders, but a great deal of it was retailed to consumers. It was this retail trade that provoked the opposition of the Danzigers, among whom the cloth merchants (*Gewantschneider*) were very influential. And it was this retail trade which formed the main, and at times the most disputable, point of the English programme of reciprocity. On their part the Hanseatic merchants in London had engaged in retail trade since their first appearance in England. In the fifteenth century the English records of debts show them selling Baltic goods not only to merchant intermediaries, but also directly to consumers.¹⁰²

Now, the essential feature of an important trade combining wholesale with retail transactions is its "continuous" nature. The wholesale disposal of an imported cargo need not take more than a few days, or even a few hours, but its retail distribution is a matter of weeks and months. And if we remember that the Anglo-Hanseatic trade also involved a complicated machinery of payment and a difficult system of transport, we shall easily understand the comparative complexity of its commercial organization. This organization was even further removed from a "primitive mediaeval" type than the organization of some other branches of English trade. It can well be doubted whether the conventional picture of a vagrant trader, traveling with his goods to the foreign markets and bringing back his return cargo, ever represented the upper strata of the mediaeval merchant class. It certainly did not represent English merchants engaged in foreign trade in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The buying and the preparing of goods in their country of origin, their transportation, their sale abroad and the management of credit and payments, were all activities of a "continuous" character requiring the constant attention, and often simultaneous presence, of several persons in different places. The Merchant Adventurer of the old-fashioned textbooks, the artisan trader of Sombart's classification, a mere sea-going huckster, would have fared very badly in the trade between England and the Hanse. The trade was, and could only be, conducted by merchant firms, each employing a group of men, and each assisted by a well-developed system of commission trade.

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It is not the object of this essay to describe the inner organization of the mediaeval firm or to trace the development of the mediaeval commission trade. The former has in part been done in connection with the English wool-trade in the previous essay, while the latter will have to be done by students specializing in the history of mediaeval partnerships. Both these subjects interest us here only in so far as they illustrate and explain some of the most significant features of Anglo-Hanseatic trade.

In theory, the "integral" firm, i.e. the business unit continually employing several persons, and the system of commission trade, were two alternative ways of serving the same economic ends. But in practice, both were used by the same merchants at the same time. The "integral" firm enabled the merchants to cope with the complexity of foreign trade by assigning the different members of his organization to the different departments or geographical centres of his trade. This system of "local branches" or "agencies" was common both among the Hanseatic merchants trading to England and the English merchants trading to Prussia. A merchant like Robert Garr, habitually trading to Prussia, employed a resident "servant" in Danzig, and apparently several other men in England. But he could also make use of persons occupying a position intermediate between that of a permanent member of a merchant firm and an independent commission agent. The agents or factors of the English merchants representing them in the different localities, especially abroad, were sometimes their servants and sometimes their partners. In itself the distinction was not of great importance, for junior partners commonly described themselves as the "servants" of their senior partners, while elements of partnership were commonly entered into the ordinary contract of service. What is important is the fact that the designation of "partner", "factor", or "attorney" could also represent the relations of independent agents to their habitual clients overseas. A person representing a merchant in a distant place need not be a real member of his firm, his partner or servant. His services to the merchant could be temporary or occasional; they could be enlisted for individual transactions and relate to single consignments of goods. The records of mediaeval trade abound with instances of partnerships and associations concluded for the duration of single deals. Most of these were *commenda*-like arrangements ("depository partnerships") by which merchants of Lynn or London could entrust their goods to merchants crossing over to Prussia for sale there. And from a *commenda*-like arrangement of this kind, it was only a short step to the equally common practice whereby merchants resident in England sent goods to merchants for the time being in Danzig, with a request and instructions to sell. This practice was widely used by the Hanseatic merchants in their foreign or inter-urban trade, and received a separate recognition in German law and language under the name of *sendeve*.

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It was equally common, though it did not possess a separate name, among the English merchants trading to Prussia. The students of English records will be familiar with the merchant sending his goods to persons in other towns or abroad, with instructions to do their "best" to his "use and avail". And with these requests to do their "best" we enter into the realm of commission trade pure and simple.¹⁰³

There was thus no distinct line between the association of several persons within the framework of the "integral" firm and the conduct of trade by means of commission agents. The majority of mediaeval business firms combined both methods. They maintained permanent associates – partners or servants – in important centres of their trade, and sold or bought their goods through "commissionaires" in all those places where they did not at the time maintain agents of their own.

This organization of trade explains a great deal of what is otherwise unintelligible in the history of the commercial settlements and factories abroad. Above all it accounts for the conspicuous place which the problem of foreign factories occupied in the commercial policies of the time. The English settlement in Danzig and the Hanseatic settlement in England were largely composed of agents trading on behalf of merchant firms at home. These agents were – to use an expressive middle-German term – "liggers". They were resident factors spending most of their time in the foreign centres. Their commercial activities were vitally affected by the condition of their residence and their rights of trade; these, in their turn, depended upon the organization and the status of the factory. Viewed in this light, the English and the Hanseatic claims on behalf of their respective settlements merely embodied the conditions required for the smooth functioning of the system of resident factors. It was because of that system that the commercial policies of the fifteenth century were so much concerned with the problems of corporate organizations and communal centres for the merchants abroad.

Of the actual organization and routine of the factories we know relatively little, though, thanks to the work of Lappenberg, Weinbaum, and Engel, we know more of the German settlements in England than we do of the English settlements in Danzig. At one time there was a whole chain of Hanseatic factories in England. The evidence of the thirteenth, and the early fifteenth, century suggests the existence of over twelve branches. In the fifteenth century, however, only four seem to have functioned – London, Lynn, Ipswich, and Boston, and these settlements were the only ones concerned in the transactions and land-transfers carried out under the treaty of 1475. In origin, and to some extent in behaviour, the provincial factories were independent of the Steelyard, but in theory the Steelyard was regarded as the headquarters of the Hanse in England, and successive measures

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in the fifteenth century strengthened its control over the provincial factories. The latter were dominated by merchants of the central and eastern towns, while in London, at any rate prior to 1475, the majority of the members and the leading part in the government belonged to Cologne. In the fifteenth century the membership of the Steelyard was, for the purposes of government, divided into three parts – the western with Cologne at its head, the Westfalian-Saxon, and the Prusso-Livonian. The division was designed to prevent the domination of any separate group of towns in the government of the factory, for each part was to be represented by the same number of members in the governing court. But the method of election, by which the part under-represented among the members could have its places at the court filled by the other towns, gave Cologne much more than her constitutional share in the government of the Steelyard.¹⁰⁴

The functions of the Steelyard government were manifold. It had to manage the finances of the settlement, to impose and collect the "schoss" payable into its treasury by the Hanseatic merchants trading to England, and to distribute the payments, both open and clandestine, to the national and municipal authorities in England. In the second place it represented the Hanseatic merchants in England before the English government and officials. This work of representation was done with the assistance of the English alderman of the Hanse, appointed to the government of the Steelyard under the Hanseatic Charter of 1303. The primary, though not the official, function of the English alderman was to serve as liaison between the Steelyard and the English authorities, and in this he was assisted by a whole body of English intermediaries, mostly lawyers. But he also had extensive rights and powers in the exercise of jurisdiction in the mixed suits between the English and the Hanseatics, as well as the enforcement of internal discipline within the Steelyard. The maintenance of this discipline was the third important function of the government of the Steelyard. The Steelyard itself, with the houses rented in its immediate neighborhood, formed the residential centre of the Hanseatic community. It was there that the goods were warehoused and the commercial transactions carried out, and that the bachelor merchants (the junior partners and factors were unmarried) resided.¹⁰⁵ It is therefore no wonder that the Ordinances of the Steelyard are filled with regulations concerning morals and manners, both commercial and private, of the resident members of the factory, regulations which were sufficiently minute and sufficiently strict to suggest to an ingenuous and bewildered historian the theory that the Hanseatics in London were all knights of the Prussian order.¹⁰⁶

Unfortunately no constitutional enactments comparable to the Ordinances of the Steelyard have survived for the English Association in Prussia, and we are consequently not in a position to reconstruct

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fully or coherently its fifteenth century organization. Some of its features, however, emerge clearly enough. Its government consisted of a governor and aldermen, and during the greater part of the century the post of governor was held by important merchants, heads of English firms trading to Prussia. Their functions were chiefly those of representation before the authorities in Prussia, and jurisdiction over matters arising between the English merchants themselves. When in 1428 the High Master finally gave his recognition to the corporate government of the English merchants, he did so "in order that the governor should keep order and hold court among the English". The scope of that jurisdiction we do not know, but at a certain period it must have been very extensive. One of Danzig's replies to the English grievances mentions the prison in the English house – a statement which the English did not expressly deny or disprove. It was also alleged that the English society levied an impost from its members comparable to the "schoss". But whatever the functions of the governing body, they certainly were less extensive than those of the government of the Steelyard. Unlike the Steelyard, the English factory in Danzig was not a communal settlement. Common residence was not enforced among the English in Danzig, nor is there any trace of common warehouses. Even at those times when the English possessed a "common house", they also owned private lodgings and shops in the town, and the "house" was apparently nothing more than a meeting-place and the seat of the corporate government.¹⁰⁷ Hence the absence of evidence as to the regulation of the lives of individual Englishmen comparable to the disciplinary regulations of the Steelyard. The social and the business needs of the merchants and the activities of the governor and aldermen required something in the nature of a communal centre, and explain the agitation for the right to possess one. But neither the absence of a communal centre during a considerable part of the century, nor the want of official recognition, could prevent the government of the factory from functioning. We find "the governour and aldermen of the English merchants" addressed, or referred to, throughout the first half of the century and in those years during the second half in which trade between England and Prussia was maintained. It is only in the late sixties and the seventies, which saw the general decadence of the Anglo-Prussia trade, that references to the "governour and aldermen" became rare and cease altogether.

The eclipse of the society of the English merchants in Danzig throws a flood of light on the problem of the origin and the progress of the Merchant Adventurers. It is not the object of this essay to deal with this problem in its entirety. The early history of the Merchant Adventurers is closely related to certain important developments in the trading guilds at home, and will form the subject of a separate investigation. What interests us here is the connection which

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existed between that history, on the one hand, and the fortunes of the English in Prussia, on the other. That connection is clearly indicated in the very event which historians commonly begin their accounts of the Merchant Adventurers in the fifteenth century. By a series of charters of between 1404 and 1408, a legal recognition and a corporate status were conferred upon three companies of English merchants trading abroad. One of these embraced merchants trading to the Low Countries, and the other two, merchants trading to Norway and the Baltic respectively. It was the company of the merchants trading to the Low Countries that came in the end to be regarded and described as the Company of the Merchant Adventurers *par excellence*. The story of its origin is the story of its relative growth: the growth of one organization at the expense of the other two. The problem, therefore, is not to discover how the English merchants trading abroad came to form a company (there is nothing strange or difficult in that), but how they came to form a *single* company; it is essentially not a problem of origin, but one of concentration.¹⁰⁸

To this problem an answer, albeit an indirect one, has already been given. The rise of a single company of Merchant Adventurers was merely the converse of the eclipse of the company in Prussia. If at the beginning of the century we find several companies all functioning, it is because in the beginning of the century the several channels of English trade were all active. Of these channels the one leading to the Low Countries was doubtless from the beginning the most important, but it was as yet not sufficiently important to embrace the overwhelming bulk of English trade and thus to overwhelm and overshadow the other channels and the other organizations. What happened between the beginning of the century and its last quarter was that trade in the Low Countries attracted to itself the bulk of English commercial enterprise. The English trade to the Low Countries was now the only branch of English foreign trade that mattered, and consequently the organization of the English merchants there was the only organization to function.

Why and how this happened we already know. The net result of the Anglo-Hanseatic rivalry was to interrupt the expansion of English trade in the east, and to sever its connections with the Scandinavian countries and Prussia. In Norway the Hanseatics had tightened their hold over the trade of Bergen and defeated all the attempts of the English merchants to restore their position. It was very largely the cessation of the Bergen trade that sent the English merchants to Iceland. But this new enterprise, however important in itself, only completed the ruin of the English trade in Scandinavia. It plunged England into a state of chronic conflict with Denmark and in the second half of the century definitely shut the Dano-Norwegian waters to English trade and navigation. Even more significant, and to the readers of this essay more familiar, was the

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English defeat in the Baltic. In the second half of the century the English trade there was much reduced by recurrent conflict with the Hanse, by the civil war in Prussia, by the triumphant protectionism of Danzig, and by growing insecurity on the high seas. By the end of the eighties the direct trade to Prussia had been reduced to vanishing point. The traffic in Baltic goods had been taken out of English hands; some of it proceeded indirectly by way of the Brabantine fairs, and some of it was carried on by Dutch and Hanseatics. And with the end of the Baltic trade there came also the end of the Baltic trader. The English merchants were forced to restrict their maritime and commercial ventures in Northern Europe to the trade in the Low Countries, and the "Merchant Adventurers" absorbed the bulk of English trade and the mass of English merchants.

The story of this absorption emerges very clearly from the records of English foreign trade. The municipal records of the East Coast towns contain a number of references, mostly indirect, to the existence of distinct groups of merchants trading to the Baltic, Scandinavia, and the Low Countries. But these distinctions almost disappear from the records in the sixties and the seventies, while the references to piracy in the North Sea in the same period begin to abound with the names of merchants once active in the trade with the Hanse. More direct and conclusive is the evidence of the particular customs accounts. The customs accounts of London reveal the existence in the first half of the century of a specialization among merchants trading to foreign countries. Throughout the early part of the century the accounts record the regular shipments of a large group of merchants, mostly drapers, grocers, and mercers, and varying from 50 to 120 persons, exporting cloth to the Low Countries and importing miscellaneous commodities from the great fairs. These shipments are interspersed with those of a smaller group, which, judging by their cargoes and sometimes by their ships, must have traded with the Baltic lands. A few of the shippers in this group were grocers, mercers, or drapers, but most of them, and certainly those whose names recur most often together, are fishmongers and stockfish-mongers. Similarly, some of them occasionally participate in the shipments of the Netherlands group, but the majority seems to keep away from the trade to the Low Countries. If there is any branch of trade which they combine with that to the Baltic lands, it is the trade to Spain and Portugal, or Gascony – a very natural combination, considering the connection between the Gascon wine trade and the Prussian corn trade, and the identity of some of the staple commodities of Iberian and German trade (iron, bowstaves, etc.). But whatever the lines of specialization in the southern trade, those in the English trade of Northern Europe ran clearly between the merchants trading to Prussia and the Baltic on one hand, and the merchants trading to the Netherlands on the other. This differentiation, however, does

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not continue beyond the middle decades of the century. When at the beginning of Edward IV's reign a new and a very complete series of particular customs accounts begins, it has already lost almost all trace of the old demarcation. The shipments to the Low Countries are as regular as ever, but they now comprise the overwhelming bulk of English merchants active in the port of London. The shipments to Gascony follow an irregular curve corresponding to the fluctuations of peace and war with France. But the Baltic group has gone. Some of the erstwhile Baltic merchants have died in the meantime, some must have retired through old age or the cessation of the direct trade with Prussia, while others now ship regularly to the Low Countries together with the majority of English merchants. And, to accord with this tale of the exports, there is a remarkable change in the composition of the imports. The Baltic goods continue to be imported, but they are no longer brought by English merchants from Prussia. Some, especially after 1476, are imported by Hanseatics. Most of them come in from the Low Countries as part of the general cargo from the great fairs.¹⁰⁹

The predominance of the Netherland group, i.e. of the Merchant Adventurers *par excellence*, and of their trade to the fairs, is merely the other side of the English withdrawal from Prussia and the Baltic. In this light, the rise of the "Company of the Merchant Adventurers" loses a great deal of its conventional glory. It was not a "landmark in the history of English expansion", for it occurred at a time when English trade was temporarily contracting. It did not open to the English trade any new "fields of enterprise", though it may have adjusted it to the loss of the old ones. In the last quarter of the century, and in the Tudor era the Company may have enabled the English merchants to extend their trade beyond the highest peak it had ever reached before 1475, but Unwin has argued that such growth of the English cloth trade as took place in the sixteenth century proceeded independently of the Company of the Merchant Adventurers, and in spite of its policy of restriction. Further research may add still more to Unwin's detractions. The historian of the wool-trade may find the Company helping to organize the premature demise of the wool-staple. The historian of the cloth industry may find a connection between the concentration of English trade in the Netherlands and the concentration of English production on undyed and unfinished cloth. But even if the conventional story of the Merchant Adventurers in the sixteenth century survives the onslaught of historical criticism, the story of its rise in the fifteenth century will have to be revised. It will have to be interpreted not as a victory, but as the by-product of a defeat; not as a stage in an inexorable growth, but as a sign of temporary concentration and contraction.

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III

THE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL RELATIONS OF ENGLAND AND THE HANSE (1400 to 1475)

¹ The references to the Hanse in Chapter I are, when not otherwise stated, based on the accounts in E.R. Daenell, *Die Blütezeit der deutschen Hanse*, W. Vogel, *Geschichte der deutschen Seeschifffahrt*, and D. Schäfer, *Die Hanse*.

² W. Stein, *Die Hansestädte*, in *Hans. Gbl.* (1913-15), Jahrgang, 1913: Erstes Heft, pp. 233-94, Zweites Heft, pp. 519-60; Jahrgang, 1914: Erstes Heft, pp. 257-89; Jahrgang, 1915: Erstes Heft, pp. 119-78.

³ C. Bahr, *Handel und Verkeer der deutschen Hanse in Flandern*, pp. 57-111; L.K. Goetz, *Deutsch-Russische Handelsgeschichte des Mittelalters* (Hans. Geschichtsquellen, Neue Folge, Band V; Ver. f. Hans. Geschichte; Lübeck, 1922), pp. 30-74; F. Schultz, *Die Hanse und England*, pp. 9-12; A. Schück, *Die deutsche Einwanderung in das mittelalterliche Schweden und ihre kommerziellen und sozialen Folgen*, in *Hans. Gbl.*, Jahrgang, 1930 (1931), pp. 78-89; Brugge, *Der Untergang der Norwegischen Seeschifffahrt* (VSWG, 1904); *Die Lübecker Bergenfahrer*, ed. Burns (1900), pp. iii-vii.

⁴ *Aussenpolitische und innerpolitische Wandlung in der Hanse nach dem Stralsunder Frieden*, pp. 149, 144-6, and *Die Hanse und die nordischen Länder* in F. Rörig, *Hansische Beiträge zur deutschen Wirtschaftsgeschichte* (Breslau, 1928); E. Daenell, *Holland und die Hanse im 15. Jahrhundert* in *Hans. Gbl.*, Jahrgang, 1903 (1904), pp. 3-41; H.J. Smit, *De Opkomst van den handel van Amsterdam. Onderzoekingen naar de economische ontwikkeling der stad tot 1441*. (Amsterdam, 1914.)

⁵ F. Rörig, *Die Hanse und die nordischen Länder*, op. cit., pp. 162-5.

⁶ F. Rörig, *Aussenpolitische und innerpolitische Wandlungen*, op. cit., pp. 150-3; W. Stein, *Über die ältesten Privilegien der deutschen Hanse in Flandern und die ältere Handelspolitik Lübecks*, pp. 113-22, in *Hans. Gbl.*, Jahrgang, 1902, pp. 51-133 (1903).

⁷ For the growth of the English cloth exports in the fourteenth century, see H.L. Gray, *The Production and Exportation of English Woollens in the Fourteenth Century*.

⁸ A. Bugge, *Handelen mellem England og Norge*; *idem*, *Den Norske Traelasthandels Historie*, pp. 165-6; *H.R.*, I, viii, Nos. 1167 and 1168; Schultz, op. cit., pp. 13-14.; D. Schäfer, *Das Buch des Lübeckischen Vogts auf Schonen* (Hansische Geschichtsquellen, vol. iv) Halle a. S., 1887), p. 93, par. 58; *H.R.* I, i, No. 51, par 11 (p. 470), No. 522, par. 7; *U.B.* ii, No. 206 (Stralsund, 1312), iii, No. 507; T. Hirsch, *Danzigs Handels- und Gewerbsgeschichte*, pp. 98-100. In 1385, the goods of at least eighty-five English merchants were arrested in Danzig: *H.R.*, I, iii, No. 404 A, par. I (cf. list in B, par 1).

⁹ According to Dr. M. Weinbaum, *Stalhof und Deutsche Gildhalle zu London*, in *Hans. Gbl.*, Jahrgang, 1928 (Lübeck, 1929), pp. 45-65, there were originally two separate settlements in London, that of Cologne and that of the other North German towns.

¹⁰ See below, sections 2 and 3. The customs rates on cloth were: 1s. 2d. per cloth (English), 12d. (Hanse), and 2s. 4d. (other aliens).

¹¹ See below, p. 152. *H.R.* 2, iii, No. 669; *K.R. Cust. Accts.*, *passim*; cf. the lists in *H.R.* I, iii, No. 404 A, par. I, and B, par. I. Among the London aldermen in the fifteenth century there were thirteen fishmongers as against forty-one mercers, thirty-three drapers, thirty-one grocers, sixteen goldsmiths, thirteen skimmers, seven ironmongers, and three vinters; in the fourteenth century there were forty fishmongers. A.B. Beaven, *The Aldermen of the City of London*, vol. i, pp. 329-30.

¹² *Libelle*, ed. Warner, line 420; the Hanseatic trade "is encrease ful grete unto thys lond". *Cotton MSS.*, *Nero*, 27; see below, p. 133.

¹³ A statement of the claim to reciprocity was already contained in the English complaints of 1379; *H.R.*, I, ii, No. 212, par. 1.

¹⁴ *Finance and Trade under Edward III*, ed. G. Unwin, *Introduction*.

¹⁵ *Letters and Papers Illustrative of the Wars of the English in France*, ed. J. Stevenson (R.S.), vol. ii, part 2, p. 724, par. 7; *Johannis Capgrave Liber de Illustribus Henicis*, ed. F.C. Hingeston (R.S., 1858), p. 155; *Libelle*, ed. Warner, lines 6-7: "Cheryshe marchandyse, kepe thamiralte, that we be maysteres of the narowe see"; *Political Poems and Songs*

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relating to English History (R.S., 2 vols., 1859-61), vol. i, part 2, pp. 282-7. The policy underlying the phraseology of legislation in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries is too vast a subject to be treated *en passant*. But a few things may be noted. To begin with, economic legislation is commonly justified by reference to the "bien universelle" of the kingdom (e.g. *Stat.* 14 Hen. VI, C. 2). That the notion of "common wealth" could have an economic meaning is shown by the constant reference to "profit", "lencrece", "la prosperité", "encrece de riches", "grande richesse" as the subject of legislation. It is also clear that the underlying concept of the "roilme" was national: "Engleterre," "cest terre" (e.g. *Stat.* 4 Edw. IV, C. 2); Englishmen rather than king's lieges, "natifs englois" contrasted to the "persones dautri lange et destranges terres et nacions" (*Stats.* 18 Hen. VI, C. 1, 3 Ric. II, C. 3). It is also clear that the concept of national "wealth" was sometimes linked up with the abundance and prosperity of merchants ("lors esteantz plusours en nombre et de grande richesse", *Stat.* 27 Hen. VI, C. 2), the accumulation of treasure and, above all, the growth of the navy (*Stats.* 3 Ric. II, C. 3, 4 Hen. V, 2, C. 7, 14 Hen. VI, C. 8, 15 Hen. VI, C. 2 – C. 4, 18 Hen. VI, C. 2). In other words, the mercantilism of the fifteenth century, however tongue-tilted, knew its text: "the navie and merchandises of this realm" (*Rot. Parl.*, vol. V, p. 31).

¹⁶ *H.R.* 1, vii, No. 594, 2, V, No. 173, 2, ii, No. 65, 2, iii, No. 283, 2, V, Nos. 206 and 263 par. 7; *U.B.* viii, No. 285.

¹⁷ The career of Thomas Kent will, it is hoped, soon form the subject of another study; cf. W. Stein, *Die Hanse und England*, pp. 83-4. Hatcliff began to play a very conspicuous part in the Anglo-Hanseatic relations after the "verdict" of 1468, see below, pp. 132 ff.

¹⁸ *H.R.* 2, ii, No. 65: "dat de oversten herren namlik de prelated dis landes nicht willen des dutschen copmans ut dem lande entberen"; *ibid.*, 2, V, Nos. 206 and 263 par. 7, contain clear indication of the council's attempts to circumvent the anti-Hanseatic policy of the Commons. For commercial activities of nobles see *L.T.R. Cust. Accts.*, *passim*. Beaufort: Sir J.H. Ramsay, *Lancaster and York*. (Oxford, 1892), vol. ii, p. 34, Hall's Chronicle (1809): "he standing the chief merchant of woods" (Gloucester's allegation); Suffolk: W.J. Haward, *Economic Aspects of the Wars of the Roses in East Anglia*, *passim*; Buckingham: *H.R.*, 2, iv, No. 25; the Yorkist nobles: C.L. Scofield, *The Life and Reign of Edward the Fourth*, vol. ii, pp. 417-20. Not all the noble recipients of export licenses necessarily traded on their own account, yet Warwick, Fauconberg, Howard, Northumberland, and Hastings took a hand in trade. Cf. the Hanseatic allegations in *H.R.* 2, vi, No. 97.

¹⁹ *H.R.* 2, i, No. 147 (p. 99), 2, iii, No. 283: "wy hebben weynich vrende manck den heren unde der gemeenheit"; *Proc. and Ord. P.C.*, vol. V, pp. 167, 170, 177, 228, 233.

²⁰ Cf. Stein, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

²¹ *H.R.* 1, iii, Nos. 317, 318 (Norway), 319 (Skania); *U.B.* iv, No. 600; *H.R.* 1, ii, Nos. 210, 211, 212, iii, Nos. 102, 103.

²² *H.R.* 1, ii, No. 212.

²³ *H.R.* 1, ii, Nos. 102, 210, 211; *U.B.*, iv, Nos. 645, 647, 674; *H.R.* 1, ii, Nos. 224, 225 (1380, not 1381?), cf. F. Schultz, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 34-5; *H.R.* 1, ii, No. 236; iii, Nos. 142, 143; *U.B.* iv, Nos. 753, 759, 761, 762, 806, 835, 910, 1054; *Hanseakten aus England, 1275 bis 1412*, ed. K. Kunze, No. 327 pars. 1-2.

²⁵ *H.R.* 1, iii, No. 204, §3, ii, Nos. 309, 329; iii, Nos. 197, 404; *U.B.* iv, Nos. 849, 850, 888, 933, 934; *C.C.R.*, 1385-9, p. 535.

²⁶ *H.R.* 1, ii, No. 236; *U.B.* iv, No. 888. The negotiations took place in Prussia. *H.R.* 1, ii, Nos. 402-6: "quod ligei mercatores Anglie quicumque liberam habeant facultatem se applicandi cum navibus bonis etc. ad quemcunque partem terre Prussie... transferendi ibique cum quacumque persona libere contrahere et mercari, sicut antiquitus et ab antiquo extitit usitatum; quod quidem in omnibus et per omnia Pruthenis concessum est in Anglia." The rest of the treaty is devoted to the subjects of claims and jurisdiction bearing directly on the immediate causes of the conflict.

²⁷ *H.R.* 1, iv, Nos. 124 par. 2, 192 par. 3; *ibid.*, Nos. 360 par. 4 ("dat se alle land emit erem wande vorvullen"), 397 par. 8 (retailing cloth in fairs), v, No. 101 pars. 2 and 3; Daenell, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 64; *ibid.*, n. 1; *H.R.* 1, iv, No. 5: the corporate organization in 1391. The right was not provided in the treaty in spite of the English demands: *H.R.* 1, iii, No. 403 par. 4, cf. F. Schulz, *op. cit.*, p. 51, n. 1; *H.R.* 1, iv, Nos. 397 par. 8, 537 pars. 3-6, 100 par. 4, 101 pars. 2 and 3; *Hanseakten*, ed. Kunze No. 322 par. 9; F. Schulz, *op. cit.*, p. 45, n. 2 (J. Beby, Governor of the English in 1391).

SOURCE: *Postan, M.M. "The Economic and Political Relations of England and the Hanse (1400 to 1475)." In Studies in English Trade in the Fifteenth Century, ed. Eileen Power and M.M. Postan, 91-153. New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1966.*

²⁸ *U.B.* V, Nos. 386, 387, 391; *H.R.* 1, iv, Nos. 433, 345 par. 2, V, No. 101 pars. 2 and 3.

²⁹ *H.R.* 1, iv, Nos. 397 par. 19, 413 par. 7, 503 par. 11, 539 par. 6, 541 par. 23, 559 par. 11 ("blibet steende czu gutir geduld"); *ibid.*, v, Nos. 74 par. 2, 83; *Hanseakten*, ed. Kunze, Nos. 317, 326, 329, 334-7, 345, 357, 359, 361; *H.R.* 1, v, Nos. 100 par. 1, 130; *C.C.R.*, 1402-5, pp. 101, 337, 419; *U.B.* 5, Nos. 542, 569, 570, 597, 603, 613, 615, 618, 620, 621, 633, 634; *H.R.* 1, v, Nos. 211, 212, 225 pars. 3-5, 15.

³⁰ *H.R.* 1, v, Nos. 274, 302 pars. 1-15, 308 pars. 1-10, 20, 24, 25, 27, 311 par. 12, 255 par. 5, 262, 275, 659. But the same factory wrote in 1405 that the imports of Hanseatic goods into England and the Low Countries was, in spite of the embargo, so abundant that no shortage was felt ("neyn ghebren is"); *H.R.* 1, v, No. 274.

³¹ *H.R.* 1, v, Nos. 255 par. 8, 256, 257, 271, 272, 390, 392, 404.

³² *H.R.* 1, v, Nos. 265-9, 276 par. 4, 296 par. 7, 339 pars. 16-17, 343, 348, 350, 351.

³³ *H.R.* 1, v, Nos. 484, 525, 526, 537; cf. No. 319. That the English tried to sow dissent from the very beginning is clear from *H.R.* 1, viii, No. 1061. The attitude of the Bruges factory was the same throughout the period; *H.R.* 1, v, Nos. 313, 392 par. 6, 659.

³⁴ *U.B.* 5, No. 830; *H.R.* 1, v, Nos. 525, 633.

³⁵ Both sides were influenced by the bad harvest and the high prices for corn in England in 1409: *H.R.* 1, v, Nos. 547, 548, 643; Daenell, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 162-8, 174; *H.R.* 1, v, No. 620; vi, Nos. 24, 114, 195, 304, 500. *K.R. Cust. Accts.*, *passim*.

³⁶ *H.R.* 2, ii, Nos. 169 par. 3, 318 par. 3.

³⁷ *H.R.* 1, vii, Nos. 708, 649, 821; viii, Nos. 454, 668; *H.R.* 2, ii, No. 76 par. 25; *H.R.* 1, vii, No. 708 pars. 2-6.

³⁸ The attempt of the Hanse to enlist the support of the Emperor Sigismund at the Council of Constance ended in a fiasco: *H.R.* 1, vi, Nos. 186, 187, 381, 446 pars. 7-10, Having engineered the appeal to the Emperor, the Bruges contor found it almost impossible to exact from the towns a definite statement of grievances against England: *ibid.*, Nos. 400 par. 21, 450, 451; *U.B.* vi, Nos. 661, 694, 712; *H.R.* 1, viii, Nos. 218, 240 par. 3, 414, 507, 508 A, 775, 777, 784, 794, 1167; *H.R.* 2, i, Nos. 53, 105. Until the outbreak of the Dano-Wendish war in 1427, the mutual attacks and arrests were not as frequent or important as alleged in the English and Hanseatic complaints at the time, e.g. *U.B.* vi, Nos. 187, 418, 447, 635, 934. The most important were: the arrest of the Hanseatic boats in 1417 (*H.R.* 1, vi, No. 451, where it is much exaggerated) and the arrest of the English in Greifswald in a dispute twenty years old: *H.R.* 1, vi, Nos. 556 A par. 57, 581, 582, vii, No. 592 par. 7.

³⁹ *H.R.* 1, v, Nos. 655, 674; vii, Nos. 592 pars. 1-6, 593; viii, No. 452 pars. 1-2; *ibid.*, 2, ii, Nos. 76 par 20, 169 pars. 2-3.

⁴⁰ *H.R.* 1, vii, Nos. 87, 88; *U.B.* 6, No. 238; *H.R.* 1, vii, Nos. 592-4; *U.B.* 6, No. 528, and *Entry Book*, ii, f. 3 (Archives and the Corporation of King's Lynn); *U.B.* 6, Nos. 474, 475, 479, 482, 613, 643, 611, 612, 651, 504, *Proc. and Ord. P.C.*, vol. iii, pp. 110-11; *H.R.* 1, vii, Nos. 609 par. 6, 671.

⁴¹ *H.R.* 1, vii, Nos. 461 pars. 1 and 19, 708, 746, 773 pars. 7-8, 800, 821; *ibid.*, Nos. 609 par. 6, 611, 623, 624 par. 5.

⁴² *H.R.* 1, viii, p. 358 n. 5; *U.B.* vi, No. 767, n. 1; Smit, *Bronnen*, vol. i, No. 1012, p. 627, n. 1; *U.B.* 6, Nos. 533, 764, 767; cf. *H.R.* 1, viii, Nos. 451, 611, 777, 784, 794; *Rot. Parl.*, iv, p. 303 (27); *C.P.R.*, 1422-9, p. 346; *U.B.* 6, Nos. 651, 658; *L. Bk. K.*, f. 33 (MS.); *U.B.* 6, No. 723; *H.R.* 1, viii, Nos. 32, 433 par. 10, 453 par. 2, 546 par. 7; *U.B.* 6, No. 888; cf. the Danzig account of the active trade and privileged position of the English in Prussia; *H.R.* 1, viii, Nos. 454, 668.

⁴³ *Rot. Parl.*, iv, pp. 366, 389, 426, 503; *U.B.* 6, Nos. 942, 991, 992, 1005, 1011, 1021, 1046, 1061; *H.R.* 2, i, Nos. 146, 147, 168, 319; *U.B.* 6, No. 1065; *H.R.* 2, i, Nos. 146, 147, 168, 319; *U.B.* 6, No. 1065; *H.R.* 2, i, Nos. 169, 241, 192, 321 pars. 1-3, 324, 355 pars. 1-7, 356, 357; *U.B.* 6, No. 1099; *H.R.* 2, i, Nos. 319, 320; *Rot. Parl.*, vol. vi, 493.

⁴⁴ *H.R.* 2, i, Nos. 383-5, 406, 407, 421, 429-32, 435, 437.

⁴⁵ *H.R.* 2, i, No. 436, Ramsay, *op. cit.*, vol. i, pp. 475-80; *H.R.* 2, i, No. 522. The problem of English cloth trade in Flanders had become acute again in 1433 and 1434; *H.R.* 2, i, Nos. 191, 192, 215, 268 par. 13, Smit, *Bronnen*, vol. ii, p. 668, footnote 2; *H.R.* 2, i, No. 567: "up date men yo von hynnen eyne side vrii hadde to besoken", cf. Daenell, *op. cit.*, vol. i, pp. 376-8; *H.R.* 2, i, Nos. 501, 568, 563, 577; ii, Nos. 4, 19, 25-8, 31, 37, 65, 70.

⁴⁶ *H.R.* 2, ii, No. 16, 4: "Doch hadden de stede vor 200 jaren, eer dat lant to Prusen

SOURCE: Postan, M.M. "The Economic and Political Relations of England and the Hanse (1400 to 1475)." In *Studies in English Trade in the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Eileen Power and M.M. Postan, 91-153. New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1966.

cristen was, in vel enden vryheit unde privileje von den kopman vorworven, de hope se wol to beholden, al moten se darumme lyden"; *H.R.* 2, ii, No. 53, and p. 14.

⁴⁷ *H.R.* 2, ii, Nos. 29, 46, 63, 65-8, 70, 73, 79, 84. According to the Hanseatic version, the opposition to the ratification was led by the merchants of the "nortcost" anxious "ere laken dar... bringen und allene den markt holden"; *H.R.* 2, ii, No. 71, also Nos. 67 and 73. On Beaufort's action, see *H.R.* 2, ii, p. 15; *H.R.* 2, ii, Nos. 220, 224, 226.

⁴⁸ *H.R.* 2, ii, Nos. 539 par. 2, 540 par. 1, 647 par. 1. The documentary evidence of a separate agreement regarding the status of the English in Prussia, if it existed, would have been seized by the "Bergenfahrer" together with the other documents of the English delegation; *H.R.* 2, iii, No. 687. *The Antient Kalendars and Inventories of the Treasury of His Majesty's Exchequer*, ed. Sir F. Parlgrave (1836), vol. ii, pp. 213 and 221, refers to the original of the Anglo-Prussian *appunctamentum* in the hands of the delegation. Cf. the instructions to the English delegation to Utrecht in 1473: *H.R.* 2, vii, No. 22 par. 11.

⁴⁹ It is hardly possible to speak, as Professor Pirenne does, of the continued economic peace between England and Burgundy from 1439 onwards: H. Pirenne, *Histoire de Belgique* (Brussels, 1903), vol. ii, p. 233. Yet it remains broadly true that from the mid-fifties onwards the English trade to Brabantine fairs and to Middleburgh was rarely interrupted. See below, footnotes 70, 72, 108.

⁵⁰ *H.R.* 2, iii, Nos. 647, 669: "so schiffet man abir di gutir kyn lubeke, dormete krigen si di fart und gedeyen."

⁵¹ *H.R.* 2, ii, Nos. 318, 346, 380, 539, 644; *Proc. and Ord. P.C.*, vol. V, pp. 167, 170, 177; *Rot. Parl.*, vol. V, pp. 64-5.

⁵² *H.R.* 2, ii, Nos. 314, 570 par. 2, 318 par. 3; 638, 639, 647, 655, 682; *ibid.*, Nos. 434 (date?), 458, 325, 329; *ibid.*, iii, No. 536.

⁵³ *Rot. Parl.*, vol. V, p. 24. Most of the English chronicles stress the anti-foreign legislation of the parliament. : *Chronicles of London*, ed. C.L. Kingsford, p. 146; Caxton, *Polychronicon*, chap. 22. The chronicles abound with stray references to Gloucester's party in the City in connection with the disorders of 1425: *Incerti Scriptoris Chronicon Anglia de Regnis Trium Regum Lancastrensiū, Henrici IV, Henrici V, et Henrici VI*, ed. J.A. Giles (1848), p. 7, "cives Londonie favebant parti duces," *Chronicles of London*, *op. cit.*, p. 76, "to stande by the Duke of Gloucestre... and ... agent the Byshop of Winchestre"; cf. also p. 83 (Gloucester organizing military protection for himself in the City), and p. 81 (popular opposition to Beaufort). Direct evidence of the existence of a definite Gloucester party in the City at the time of the Cobham trial is lacking, yet the events of that year combined in a significant manner; cf. Caxton's assortment: Eleanor Cobham's trial, the affray between the Court and the men of London, the struggle of parties in the City, and the distribution of titles among Suffolk's followers.

⁵⁴ Of the sponsors of the petition of 1441 (*Proc. and Ord. P.C.*, vol. V, pp. 167, 170, 177), two at least, Thomas Kymberley and John Hatterby, had personal claims against the Hanse: *H.R.* 2, ii, Nos. 539 par. 7, and 644 par. 42.

⁵⁵ *Rot. Parl.*, col. V, p. 59. At the same time the Parliament definitely swept away the older legislation for the keeping of truce on the high seas: *Stats.* 2 Hen. V, 4 Hen. V, 14 Hen. VI, c. 8, 15 Hen. VI, c. 2-c. 4, 20 Hen. VI, c. 11.

⁵⁶ Caxton, *Polychronicon*, chap. 24; *Rot. Parl.*, vol. V, p. 65. Cp. Suffolk's speech in *Proc. and Ord. P.C.*, vol. vi, p. 33: "language is sowed upon me in London." *H.R.* 2, iii, p. 150, footnote 1, Nos. 265, 267, 283.

⁵⁷ *H.R.* 2, iii, Nos. 283, 286, 287, 294, 295; *ibid.*, p. 164, n. 1; *ibid.*, Nos. 479, 289, 317 par. 2.

⁵⁸ *H.R.* 2, iii, Nos. 479, 460, 464; *ibid.*, Nos. 288, 289, 293, 308, 317-19, 353, 402; *ibid.*, Nos. 480-7; *ibid.*, Nos. 475, 488; *ibid.*, 503-5; cf. Stein, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-37 and p. 37, n. 2.

⁵⁹ *H.R.* 2, iii, Nos. 530, 531, 533, 535; *Paston Letters*, No. 68; Stein, *op. cit.*, pp. 48-51.

Winnington's commission for the guarding of the seas was dated 3.4.1449 (*Letters and Papers illustrative of the Wars of the English in France*, vol. i, p. 489), but his fleet was not a new venture but a direct descendent of the fleets equipped under the act of 1442.

⁶⁰ *Libelle*, ed. Warner, lines 326-7; cf. A. Agats, *Der hansische Baienhandel* (Heidelberg, 1904), pp. 25-6, 38; his assertion that Lübeck's trade was relatively unimportant is not borne out by the evidence; *H.R.* 2, iii, Nos. 531, 638, 647, 669, 670. Very characteristically Hans Winter associates Thomas Kent with the party on the council accused of the capture. The same party, he thinks, was responsible for all the

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ills of the time. The king himself was not to blame, considering that he "is very young and inexperienced and watched over as a Carthusian"; cf. Stein, op. cit., p. 47, n. 1.

⁶¹ *H.R.* 2, iii, Nos. 531, 535 (postscript), 570, 626; *ibid.*, Nos. 533, 536, 555 par. 2, 557, 559. The English merchants in the Low Countries had to shoulder responsibility for the capture of the Flemish and Dutch boats; *H.R.* 2, iii, No. 560; Caxton, *Polychronicon*, chapters 25 and 26.

⁶² *H.R.* 2, iii, Nos. 591, 563, 569, 570, 572; iv, No. 103; *U.B.*, viii, No. 100. According to *H.R.* 2, iii, No. 569, the privileges were restored to the Hanse, though not in full, in the early autumn. The exclusion of Danzig, unlike that of Lübeck, from the grant proved to be a mere formality, as the subsequent negotiations with Prussia and the safe-conducts clearly indicate; cf. below, n. 68.

⁶³ *H.R.* 2, iii, Nos. 638, 647, 669, 670. Winter was working hard to embroil Prussia with Lübeck and may well have been in the English pay. He himself constantly paraded his connections with high English functionaries.

⁶⁴ *H.R.* 2, iii, No. 555 par. 1, alleges the pressure of "other estates", but cf. the attitude of Prussian towns themselves in *ibid.*, Nos. 607, 574, 608, 651; cf. *ibid.*, Nos. 638, 647, 669, 670; Stein, op. cit., pp. 54-8.

⁶⁵ *Die Lübecker Bergenfahrer*, ed. Burns, p. 352, par. 18; *H.R.* 2, iii, No. 638; *U.B.*, viii, Nos. 1, 6. On Kent's and Stocker's flight, cf. Stein's version, Stein, op. cit., p. 76.

⁶⁶ *U.B.*, viii, Nos. 20, 21, 84 (especially pars. 1-50), 215, 780; *Three Fifteenth-century Chronicles*, ed. J. Gairdner (Camden Society, new series, 28, 1880), p. 71. See below, n. 70.

⁶⁷ *H.R.* 2, iii, No. 709, especially par. 8; *U.B.*, viii, Nos. 40, 47; *H.R.* 2, iii, Nos. 636, 654; iv, Nos. 19, 21, 41, 46; *U.B.*, viii, No. 87; *ibid.*, No. 79; *H.R.* 2, iii, No. 662; *ibid.*, No. 663; iv, Nos. 14, 20, 23, 24, 51 par. 3, 80; *U.B.*, viii, Nos. 261, 264.

⁶⁸ *H.R.* 2, iv, Nos. 55, 78 par. 3, 100, 102, 114, 122, 135, 168, 176, 127, 196 par. 32; 235, 248 par. 8, 263, 304; *U.B.* viii, Nos. 180, 280, 281 (p. 117) n. 1, 285; Stein, op. cit., pp. 79-89; *H.R.* 2, iv, Nos. 69-71, 80, 87, 101, 105, 106, 159, 160, 174, 176, etc.; *U.B.*, viii, Nos. 137, 140, 149, 171, 174, 178, 249, 261, 264, 305.

⁶⁹ *H.R.* 2, iii, No. 693 par. 1: 694 par. 1: 695 par. 1: *ibid.*, No. 694 par. 12: iv, Nos. 16, 51 par. 3, 101, 133, 236, 354, 355; *U.B.*, viii, Nos. 27, 46; *H.R.* 2, iii, Nos. 567, 697; iv, Nos. 235, 236, 238, 399, 400, 401, 450-2; *U.B.*, viii, Nos. 574, 754. The proclamation of truce (*H.R.* 2, iv, No. 452) did not involve the restoration of privileges but even the suspension of privileges could not stop the Hanseatic merchants from coming to England: *U.B.*, viii, No. 100 (1451). On all these problems, cf. Stein, op. cit., pp. 89-90 and 109-25; his explanation of Lübeck's change of attitude is hard to check, and a different hypothesis is suggested by the evidence in *H.R.* and *U.B.*, e.g. *H.R.* 2, iv, Nos. 101, 105, 106. The same applies to Stein's explanation of the Prussian attitude, which was Danzig's as well as the Order's (cf. above, n. 64). What counted a great deal with the Prussians was the fear, freely admitted, that they could not afford a quarrel with both Burgundy and England at the same time: *H.R.* 2, iv, Nos. 693 pars. 2-3, 694 pars. 2-4.

⁷⁰ The political truce of four years concluded in 1447, was not interrupted by Philip's measures against English cloth. It was very nearly broken by the Bay capture, but was saved by the payment of compensation and renewed in 1451. *H.R.* 2, iv, Nos. 666-9; *U.B.*, viii, Nos. 769, 780. Prussian attitude: Smit, *Bronnen*, vol. ii, pp. 849 (footnote 1), 883 (footnote 1). *H.R.* 2, iv, No. 670; *U.B.* viii, No. 772.

⁷¹ *H.R.* 2, v, Nos. 146, 117, 147, 173, 263 pars. 3, 10, and 32, 712 par. 8. The English programme went even beyond the treaty of 1437, and included the demand that the Hanseatics should not be allowed to import goods from the Bay and the Low Countries; *U.B.* viii, No. 1067; *H.R.* 2, v, Nos. 161, 165, 167, 168, 169, 176-9, 206; *H.R.* 2, v, Nos. 179, 263, 284, 537, 646, 647, 649, 655, 769, 770; *U.B.*, viii, Nos. 1110, 1116, 1117; ix, Nos. 71, 211, 212.

⁷² *H.R.* 2, v, Nos. 176, 177, 218, 285, 327, 318, 542, 543, 548, 568, 583, 643, 644, 659-66, 693, 712 pars. 7, 9-12, and 36, 713-16, 719, 720, 731; *U.B.* ix, Nos. 253, 387; *H.R.* 2, vi, Nos. 53-5, 87; *U.B.* ix, Nos. 415, 433. A good measure of Hanseatic anxiety is given in the letters of the Bruges factory and of Hamburg: *U.B.* viii, No. 1190, and *H.R.* 2, v, No. 719. Relations with Burgundy in 1464-5 were upset by the tightening of anti-English cloth regulation and the migration of the Merchant Adventurers to Utrecht: Stein, *Die Merchant Adventurers in Utrecht* Hans. Glb. 1899; Smit, *Bronnen*, vol. ii, No. 1543; *U.B.*, ix, p. 91, footnote 4. But the trade to the Low Countries was not really interrupted for more than nine months.

⁷³ *H.R.* 2, vi, No. 87, "de sake nu kortes met deme selven heren konyng und deme heren hertogen van Burgundien in sunderlinges bestant und vruntschop gestalt

SOURCE: *Postan, M.M. "The Economic and Political Relations of England and the Hanse (1400 to 1475)." In Studies in English Trade in the Fifteenth Century, ed. Eileen Power and M.M. Postan, 91-153. New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1966.*

syn und dagelik mer gestalt werden, so dat de Engleschen deshalven den copman van der hense des de myn achten sullen"; *Faedera*, vol. xi, pp. 591-9; *H.R.* 2, vi, Nos. 97, 99, 103, 111, 119, 162, 165, 185; *U.B.*, ix, No. 467, 482, 526, 527, 530; *H.R.* 2, vi, No. 111; *U.B.*, ix, No. 467 pars. 1-4.

⁷⁴ *H.R.* 2, vi, No. 97, gives the names of Warwick, Northumberland, Fogge, and the Archbishop of York among those involved in the Danish capture, and further investigations would reveal names of other nobles. Thus Richard Outlaw, the nominal owner of the "James" and the "Mary" of Lynn (*U.B.*, ix, No. 478) captured by the Danes, was closely connected with Howard: Howard, op. cit.; *U.B.*, ix, No. 478; *ibid.*, Nos. 431, 490, 497, 501-7, 511, 549, 554; *ibid.*, No. 525 (clothworkers).

⁷⁵ *H.R.* 2, iv, Nos. 14, 115, 164, 182, 222, 356 par. 74, 106, 114, 115, 358; *U.B.*, ix, Nos. 479, 603, 698, 699. Cologne cultivated the friendship of the pro-Hanseatic party: the Bishop of York, the Privy Seal (the Bishop of Rochester), Master Lampport and Master Hatcliff. The latter was to play an important part in preparing the peace of 1474. Cf. *H.R.* 2, vi, Nos. 219 and 592, 223; *U.B.*, ix, No. 699.

⁷⁶ *H.R.* 2, vi, Nos. 161, 184 pars. 47-74, 185 pars. 11 and 22; 202, 221 pars. 21, 24, and 25, 283.

Once the breach had become inevitable, it was to Danzig's interest to make the stoppage of trade as complete as possible.

⁷⁷ *H.R.* 2, vi, Nos. 283, 321, 322-4, 316, 316a, 347; *U.B.*, ix, Nos. 691, 692; *H.R.* 2, vi, Nos. 317, 331 pars. 2-4; 352, 362, 371. It is interesting to note the fluctuations of the Burgundian policy on the Anglo-Hanseatic issue with the ups and downs of the Yorkist fortunes in England. *H.R.* 2, vi, Nos. 418, 420, 434, 444, 509, 531. The naval war definitely turned to England's favour in the late summer of 1472: *H.R.* 2, vi, No. 558; *U.B.*, x, p. 83; cf. Schulz, op. cit., p. 120.

⁷⁸ *H.R.* 2, vi, Nos. 547, 481 par. 1, 589. On the development of the southern route, see Daenell, op. cit., vol. ii, pp. 111, 112, 145. Prussian goods had been imported from Flanders during the previous conflicts: *H.R.* 2, ii, No. 4, *K.R. Cust. Acct.*, 73/25. For Prussian goods so imported, see *K.R. Cust. Acct.*, *passim*. *U.B.*, ix, No. 541 contains a Prussian complaint that at the time of the 1468 conflict there came to England "eyn floet van schipen ut Selant mit onsen nacien gueder tegen onseen wyllen". In the following year it was alleged that the English traded freely in the Low Countries "und dar allerley ware glik hir bynnen landes kopen und vorkopen", *H.R.* 2, vi, No. 283; Smit, *Bronnen*, vol. ii, No. 1628. Yet of Baltic goods thus brought in, there was bound to be "a dearth and a shortage"; e.g. bowstaves, *Stat.* 4 Edw. IV, c. 2. A similar situation had arisen in 1450, when, during the interruption of trade following the capture of the Bay fleet, Prussian goods were imported from the Low Countries and rose in prices: *H.R.* 2, iii, No. 670, cf. below, n. 109.

⁷⁹ *H.R.* 2, vi, Nos. 547, 594. The English representatives in the preliminary peace negotiations of 1472, made it clear that on the question of peace "sze in Engelant in twen partien ryden": *H.R.* 2, vi, n. 550. In May, 1472, London was still against peace, but "de anderen van den Engelschen begheren se al pays to hebben myt den Duitschen": *ibid.*, No. 594. On the attitude of the towns, see *ibid.*, vii, No. 103.

⁸⁰ *H.R.* 2, vi, Nos. 315, 331 pars. 2-4, 434, p. 399, n. 1; *ibid.*, vii, No. 22 par. 7, "because divers persones of their nation and company have acquitted themselves thankfully towards his highness at the time of his great business." From the very beginning of his reign Edward tried to obtain political support from the Hanse in exchange for the confirmation of their privileges: *H.R.* 2, v, No. 147. To what extent Edward's attitude was affected by the fear of an understanding between the Hanse and France it is difficult to say; cf. Daenell, op. cit., vol. ii, p. 124.

⁸¹ *H.R.* 2, vi, Nos. 547, 548, 550, 592, 593, 595, 596, 608, 638, 639, 651. In these negotiations an outstanding part was played by William Hatcliff, who, according to *H.R.* 2, vii, No. 259, "der sake eyn procurator alle tiid gewest isz"; cf. n. 75, *H.R.* 2, vii, No. 103; *U.B.* x, No. 241; *H.R.* 2, vii, No. 22, 30, 34, 37, 43, 103, 105, 106, 259.

⁸² *L.T.R. Cust. Accts.* (See App. iii); Schanz, op. cit., vol. ii, p. 28, footnote 1.

⁸³ *H.R.* 2, vii, Nos. 63, 65, 66, 131, 132, 161, 188, 189, 288, 151, 325 par. 14. Lauffer, *Danzigs Schiffs- und Warenverkehr*, in *Zeitschrift des Westpreussischen Geschichtsverein*, part xxxiii, tables i and iii; N. Ellinger Bang, *Tabeller over Skibsfart, etc.*, vol. i, pp. 1-50; *H.R.* 2, ii, No. 36, par 26 (36 boats arrested in 1429).

⁸⁴ R. Hápke, *Brügges Entwicklung zum Mittelalterlichen Weltmarkt* (Abhandlung zur Verkehrs- und Seegeschichte. Band 1. Berlin, 1908), p. 63; A. Schaube, *Die*

SOURCE: Postan, M.M. "The Economic and Political Relations of England and the Hanse (1400 to 1475)." In *Studies in English Trade in the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Eileen Power and M.M. Postan, 91-153. New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1966.

Wollausfuhr Englands von Jahre 1273; Hanseakten, ed. Kunze, Nos. 365-75; Bahr, op. cit., p. 134.

⁸⁵ *K.R. Cust. Accts.*, e.g. 76/17, 203/1, 194/19. Commodities: *K.R. Cust. Accts.*, e.g. 73/5, 73/10 (beer, madder), 76/11 (thread), 8/21 (fish). For their countries of origin, see J.B. Hurry, *The Woad Plant and its Dye*, pp. 120-1, 127-31; K. Hoyer, *Das Bremer Brauereigewerbe*, p. 194, in *Hans. Glb.*, Jahrgang, 1913: Erstes Heft (1913), pp. 193-232; G. Bens, *Der deutsche Warenfernhandel im Mittelalter*, p. 63 (madder); Bahr, op. cit., pp. 135-6, *Das Buch des Lübeckischen Vogt auf Schonen*, ed. D. Schäfer, pp. xix-lv; B. Kuske, *Der Kölner Fischhandel vom 14-17. Jahrhundert*, pp. 230-2, in *Westdeutsche Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Kunst*, Jahrgang 24, Drittes Heft (Treves, 1905), pp. 227-313; L. Beck, *Die Geschichte des Eisens in technischer und kulturgeschichtlicher Beziehung* (5 vols., Brunswick, 1884-1903), vol. i, pp. 829-30; *Handelsrechnungen des Deutschen Ordens*, ed. C. Sattler (Verein für die Geschichte von Ost- und Westpreussen, 1887), pp. 258, 321, 353 and *passim* (copper).

⁸⁶ *K.R. Cust. Accts.*, *passim*. An early fifteenth-century account (51/39) enumerates among the imports the linen of Westphalia, Hainault, Brunswick, and Brabant; cf. A. Schulte, *Geschichte der grossen Ravensburger Geselleschaft*, vol. iii, pp. 73-86. Hurry, op. cit., pp. 94-104, 176-82; *Libelle*, ed. Warner, p. 18; Kuske, op. cit., p. 232 ff.; Smit, *Bronnen, passim*; J. G. van Dillen, *Het economisch Karakter der middeleeuwsche Stad.*, (Amsterdam, 1914), pp. 190-3. Smit, *Bronnen, passim*.

⁸⁷ *H.R.* 2, iii, Nos. 386, 390, 644 par. 9; *K.R. Cust. Accts.*, *passim*, e.g. 76/32, 73/10; Sattler, op. cit., pp. 21, 77, 165 ff.; Hirsch, op. cit., pp. 116, 181, 186; *U.B.*, vi, No. 111; Caxton, *Polychronicon*, chap. 21; *H.R.* 2, vi, No. 26 par. 21; Bens, op. cit., pp. 15-16.

⁸⁸ *K.R. Cust. Accts.*, e.g. 76/17, 62/4, 10/7, and 8; Bugge, *Den Norske Traelasthandels Historie*, p. 27; Hirsch, op. cit., p. 116.

⁸⁹ Vogel, op. cit., pp. 538-9; E. Baasch, *Beiträge zur Geschichte des deutschen Seeschiffbaues und der Schiffbaupolitik* (Hamburg, 1899), pp. 5-7, 197-8; *H.R.* 2, ii, Nos. 421, 434; *U.B.*, viii, No. 225.

⁹⁰ *K.R. Cust. Accts.*, e.g. 10/7 and 8, 96/37 (Reval wax), 62/4, 76/11; Hurry, op. cit., pp. 32, 177 nn.

⁹¹ See n. 84; Schaube, op. cit.; Häpke, op. cit., pp. 63-4.

⁹² *K.R. Cust. Accts.*, *passim*; *K.R. Var. Accts.*, 123/37.

⁹³ *H.R.* 1, viii, Nos. 578 par. 3, 579, 583; *ibid.* 2, ii, Nos. 318 par. 2, 644 pars. 14-15.

⁹⁴ *L.T.R. Cust. Accts.*

⁹⁵ See n. 8. For Cologners carrying cloth eastwards: *Quellen zur Geschichte der Kölner Handels und Verkehrs im Mittelalter*, ed. B. Kuske, vol. ii, Nos. 23, 24, 30, 69. The Cologners in Frankfurt: *ibid.*, *passim*; *U.B.*, viii, Nos. 87, 93; A. Dietz, *Frankfurter Handelsgeschichte* (4 vols. Frankfurt a. M., 1910-25), vol. i, pp. 60-1, vol. iii, pp. 313-14; J. Müller, *Geleitswesen und Güterverkehr zwischen Nürnberg und Frankfurt a. M. im 15 Jahrhundert*, pp. 192-4, in *VSWG. Band 5*, pp. 173 -96 and 361-400. Stein, *Die Hansebruderschaft der Kölner England-Fahrer*, in *Hans. Glb.*, Jahrg. 1908; Smit, *Bronnen*, vol. ii, No. 1076.

⁹⁶ Schulz, op. cit., pp. 16, 46; Goetz, op. cit., p. 516; Hirsch, op. cit., pp. 165, 182, 186, 198; *H.R.* 2, ii, Nos. 325 and 329 (Novgorod), *U.B.*, viii, No. 514 (Wilno).

⁹⁷ *Die Lübecker Bergenfahrer*, ed. Bruns, pp. xc, xl-lix, xi-xii, 302 ("Englandvarer von Bergen uth Norwegen to Busten vorkerende"); *H.R.* 2, ii, No. 354.

⁹⁸ *K.R. Accts. Var.* 102/128/37. *Libelle*, ed. Warner, lines 321-3; *Quellen*, ed. Kuske, op. cit., vol. i, No. 1160; vol. ii, Nos. 264, 265; Schulte, op. cit., vol. iii, p. 111; *Die Lübecker Bergenfahrer*, ed. Bruns, pp. 131, 150; cf. Bens, op. cit., p. 46; van Dillen, op. cit., pp. 77-8, 82-4.

⁹⁹ *Quellen*, ed. Kuske, op. cit., vol. ii, No. 1160; Schulte, op. cit., vol. iii, p. 111.

¹⁰⁰ *L.T.R. Cust. Accts.*, *passim*; *Hanseakten*, ed. Kunze, p. xxxix, *H.R.* 1, viii, Nos. 909, 921 par. 7; *U.B.*, iv, Nos. 998, 1054, 1074; *Rot. Parl.*, vol. iii, pp. 272, 281, 294.

¹⁰¹ *Chancery Brevia Regia or Files: Tower Series. G. (Statute Merchant and Statute Staple Certificates)*, *passim*; *K.R. Accts. Var.*, *passim*; M. Postan, *Credit in Medieval Trade*. For advances on corn and timber in Prussia and Poland, see Hirsch, op. cit., pp. 232-4.

¹⁰² G. von Below, "Grosshandel und Kleinhandel," in his *Probleme der Wirtschaftsgeschichte*; see below, p. .

¹⁰³ *H.R.* 2, ii, No. 644 pars. 27, 28, 45; *U.B.*, viii, Nos. 122-3; W. Schmidt-Rimpler, *Geschichte des Kommissionsgeschäfts in Deutschland*. Band 1. (Hall a. d. S., 1915), *passim* and pp. 57-61.

SOURCE: Postan, M.M. "The Economic and Political Relations of England and the Hanse (1400 to 1475)." In *Studies in English Trade in the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Eileen Power and M.M. Postan, 91-153. New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1966.

¹⁰⁴ K. Engel, *Die Organisation der deutsch-hansischen Kaufleute in England im 14. und 15. Jahrhundert*, pp. 173-7, 199-212.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 177-9, 192-6, 221-5.

¹⁰⁶ Walford,

¹⁰⁷ Hirsch, *op. cit.*, p. 100; *H.R.* 2, ii, No. 655 (taxation and jurisdiction); *ibid.*, No. 655 ("prison"). *U.B.*, viii, No. 45; *H.R.* 1, vii, No. 25 (aldermen). Some kind of oath is implied in *U.B.*, viii, No. 76. *H.R.* 1, vii, No. 593 par. 4, presupposes the possession of a coat of arms and a "bannere". In 1428, the English in Danzig describe themselves as a "cumpenye": *U.B.*, viii, No. 451. "Good stone houses," *H.R.* 2, ii, Nos. 380, 539 par. 2.

¹⁰⁸ *Foedera*, vol. iv, i, pp. 67, 107, 125; G.S. van Brakel, Gz., *Die Entwicklung und Organization der Merchant-Adventurers* in VSWG., Band V (1907), pp. 401-32; Edward III's charter of 1353 contains the earliest reference to an organization of English merchants abroad (Cunningham, *Growth of English Industry and Commerce*, vol. i, p. 623), but the charter of 1407 is the first definite grant to an organization in the Low Countries distinct from the Staple. The charter of 1462 is characteristically restricted to the Merchant Adventurers in the Low Countries, and a petition of 1497 refers to the Brabantine marts as the only important ones. The trade to Brabantine fairs suffered only one severe interruption, that of 1464-5; see above, notes 70, 72. For the earliest reference to the organization in Prussia, see above, note 27.

¹⁰⁹ *K.R. Cust. Accts.*, *passim*, e.g. London, 76/11 (Barr, Pelican, Swan), 77/3 (Saxby, Coke, Church, etc.); the same to Portugal, 77/1 (Gervoy, Pelican, Green, Barry); Hull: 62/4 and 16.